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Looking into the Black Box of Teacher Education Policymaking in the U.S.
A network analysis of stakeholder engagement in the development of state ESSA Title II plans

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Abstract

Looking into the Black Box of Teacher Education Policymaking in the U.S.

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While interest in influencing policymaking in teacher education has moved beyond politicians and policy makers to a wider range of actors, little is known about stakeholders who are involved in the policymaking process and how they interact with each other. This multiple case study employed a mixed-method approach to examining the engagement and collaboration of organizational stakeholders in developing teacher education policy in six states in the United States and analyzed the formation and dynamics of policy networks in U.S. teacher education policy. Quantitative social network analysis (SNA) was performed to construct policy networks of stakeholders involved in the development of state *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title II* plans and to investigate whether distinct coalitions emerged in the planning process. This was followed by qualitative, semi-structured narrative interviews to examine the stakeholders' engagement in the policy making process. Quantitative analysis identified different patterns among the six states in terms of the kind of stakeholders involved in their respective state *ESSA Title II* plan development, the overall structure of the policy networks constituted by these

stakeholders as policy actors, and the ways in which policy actors within the policy network interacted and collaborated with one another.

Narratives of selected policy stakeholders revealed that they came to the *ESSA Title II* policy making work from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds and were driven by very different motivations. As a result, they shared different accounts about how they perceived their engagement experiences, their interactions with other members in the policy networks, and their views of the final policy outcomes. This study contributes to the field by addressing the intersection of policy network analysis, teacher education policy development, and the theories of policymaking and decision-making. It is among the first studies to apply SNA methods to investigate the impact of policy networks on the policy making process in the field of teacher education. It also is one of the few existing studies that identifies policy coalitions in education policy networks. Additionally, it has expanded our understandings of education policy making by situating the analysis within a broader body of theoretical perspectives.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACF: Advocacy Coalition Framework
AIR: American Institutes for Research
AMSD: Association of Metropolitan School Districts
ARRA: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
ASCD: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
BOCES: Boards of Cooperative Education Services
CAEP: Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
CCSSO: Council of Chief School State Officers
CDE: Colorado Department of Education
CMO: Charter Management Organizations
Co.: County
CO: Colorado
CPT: Consolidated Plan Team
DL: William D. Ford Direct Loan Program
DoE: U.S. Department of Education
ESD: Educational Service Districts
ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act
FFEL: Federal Family Education Loans
HEA: Higher Education Act
IAD: Institutional Analysis and Development Framework
IDM: Innovation and Diffusion Models
IHE: Institutions of Higher Education
INTASC: Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
IRB: Institutional Review Board
LEA: Local Educational Agency
LIFT: Leading Innovation for Tennessee Education
MAPSA: Michigan Association of Public School Academies
MASSP: Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
MDE: Michigan Department of Education
MEA: Michigan Education Association
MI: Michigan
MNDE: Minnesota Department of Education
MN: Minnesota
MSF: Multiple Streams Framework
NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCATE: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NCLB: No Child Left Behind Act
NCTAF: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

NCTQ: National Council on Teacher Quality
No.: Number
NPF: Narrative Policy Framework
OSPI: Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
PA: Pennsylvania
PDE: Pennsylvania Department of Education
PEBC: Public Education & Business Coalition
PESB: Professional Educator Standards Board
PET: Punctuated Equilibrium Theory
PFT: Policy Feedback Theory
PTA: Parent Teacher Association
RTTT: Race to the Top Program
SBE: Tennessee State Board of Education
SCORE: State Collaborative on Reforming Education
SEA: State Educational Agency
SES: Social Economic Status
SNA: Social Network Analysis
SSD: Special School District
TDOE: Tennessee Department of Education
TEAC: Teacher Education Accreditation Council
Title II: “Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders”
TN: Tennessee
U.S.: United States of America
WA: Washington

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, who supports me the most through my academic journey and my husband, for bearing my mood swings while completing this dissertation.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The role of federal government in developing and regulating teacher education is a controversial and contested issue in the United States. Many scholars agree that before the federal government's increasing enactment of various policies on teacher education, it was mostly individual states that formulated teacher education policies and regulations (Bales, 2006; Imig & Imig, 2008). In spite of the numerous changes in the fields of teaching and teacher education, there are two major views about teachers that continuously influence teacher education policy: teachers as professionals versus teachers as technicians. Each perspective has enjoyed some influence over the history of teacher education policy and the tensions between these two conceptions have led to the unstable and conflicting policies at both the federal and state levels (Sykes & Dibner, 2009).

Currently, there are three distinct policy camps with regard to teacher education reform. First, there are "defenders" who are satisfied with university-based teacher preparation that are currently the majority of U.S. teacher education programs. The second group is the "reformers" who have challenged what they perceive as the monopoly of university-based programs and who have aimed to deregulate teacher education through market-oriented policies and promote non-college and university programs including entrepreneur-led charter schools and teacher education programs. Finally, the third camp, the "transformers" are seeking substantive transformation of the current system of teacher education while maintaining its public nature (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015).

Despite inconclusive research evidence regarding the efficacy of these approaches, those who belong to the "reform" camp believe that eliminating requirements ostensibly posting

barriers to teaching, such as extensive teacher education and certification requirements, is the solution to teacher shortage (Chubb, 2014; Schorr, 2013) while the “transformers” argue that maintaining a comprehensive system of support for university-based initial teacher education is essential for improving the effectiveness of teachers and the learning of their students (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner & Hollar, 2016). Recent calls to “reform” teacher education, in part, emerged as a response to continuing unequal distribution of teacher quality and epidemic teacher shortages in select subjects and school/district types, and in particular in schools with a higher concentration of minority students and students living in poverty (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Cowan et al., 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, the interest in influencing policy making in teacher education has moved beyond politicians and policy makers to a wider range of policy actors. Education policy scholars across the world have recognized a fundamental shift in governance away from (or at least in addition to) elected public systems toward networks composed increasingly of actors from the private sector, including non-profit and for-profit organizations, charter management organizations (CMOs), and philanthropic foundations (Ball & Junemann, 2012; Bulkley & Burch, 2011; Powell, 2019; Rhodes, 2008; Rogers, 2015; Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). One of the most noteworthy findings from this thread of research on private engagement in public education and education policy advocacy is the influence of philanthropic organizations (Reckhow & Snyder, 2014; Tompkins-Stange, 2016).

A growing body of literature has revealed philanthropic organizations’ evolving practices of endorsing policy initiatives that are aligned with their values and agendas and directing the flow of funding towards jurisdictional challengers and providers of alternative education services (e.g. credentialing, school management, teacher training) (Mehta & Teles, 2011). These and

other studies illustrate the complex and increasing participation of private sector actors in education as a public institution, as well as the intertwined relationships among educational entrepreneurs, venture philanthropies, and advocacy groups that constitute pervasive and powerful networks that are actively shaping the landscape of education and teacher education through networked action (Kretchmar et al., 2014; Scott, 2009; Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). Despite the increasing scholarly attention in recent years to policy networks in education, few studies have systematically examined these policy actors and their interactions with regard to teaching and teacher education policy making (Kretchmar et al., 2014). This dissertation study aimed to abridge this gap and contribute to better understandings of the complexity of the teacher education policy making process by analyzing the formation and dynamics of policy networks and the “battles” among members from different policy camps.

This multiple case study examined the development of the state plans for the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title II (“Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders”)* in six selected states in the United States. Drawing from research on policy networks and coalition-forming, I adopted a mixed-method network analysis approach to exploring how policy actors with an interest in teacher education policy engaged in this particular policy making process, their positions on teacher education, experiences and perceptions towards working with one another, and their perceptions of the ultimate policy outcomes as a result of their engagement and interactions. Below is an overview of each chapter.

Chapters Two and Three outline the substantive and conceptual foundation of this study. In Chapter Two, I critically review and discuss research that has examined influences on education policies with a particular focus on state and federal education policies that govern

teacher education in the United States (e.g. money, incentives, past practices, political power, and ideology). I synthesize what we have learned about the shaping of education policy from this body of literature and I identify existing knowledge gaps. I then present in Chapter Three a holistic review of relevant literature in the fields of political sociology and political science related to understanding the complex nature of policy making, policy actors, and the interactions between the two. I critically incorporate the concepts of bounded rationality, social networks and policy networks, as well as the advocacy coalition framework to create an integrated theoretical framework for this dissertation research with the hope of contributing a more comprehensive understanding of the policy networks that influence teacher education policy making in the United States.

I explain the research design for this study in Chapter Four. After summarizing the research questions, I explicate the rationale of choosing a multiple case study design. I then give an overview of the *ESSA Title II* and the stakeholder engagement requirement mandated by the U.S. Department of Education, followed by a justification and selection criteria of the six states included in this analysis. I then describe in detail the mixed-methods approach in Chapter Five. Briefly, a mixed-methods design allowed me to assess data collected from multiple sources in order to gain a comprehensive insight into the complex policy networks and policy making processes in the selected cases within the context of *ESSA Title II*. I explain in this chapter how the social networks were specified and the procedures of collecting, analyzing, and visualizing the quantitative data constituting the networks, followed by an explanation of the qualitative component of the design in terms of interview development, data collection, and analysis. Chapter Five concludes with discussion and reflection of how quantitative and qualitative approaches were integrated in this mixed methods dissertation study.

Chapters Six and Seven present findings from the network analysis of stakeholders involved in the development of selected states' *ESSA Title II* plans and their experiences and perceptions about their engagement with both quantitative and qualitative data. Specifically, Chapter Six illustrates the policy network membership, overall structures and characteristics of the policy networks, and coalitions, or subgroups, within the policy networks. Chapter Seven further shows how stakeholders from different coalitions engaged in the policy making process, primarily supported by interview data, including their policy beliefs, motivations, interpretations of the dynamics of the network, and their engagement in the process.

The final chapter, Chapter Eight, summarizes and discusses research findings. I also analyze in this chapter the strengths of the study and its contributions to relevant methodological debates, educational policy research, and teacher education policy making in the United States. I conclude this dissertation with implications for policy, advocacy, and future research.

CHAPTER 2 TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES

Policy can be defined, in a broader sense, as the practice of social control that includes “both text and action, words and deeds. It is what is enacted as well as what is intended” (Ball, 1994, p. 10). From a discourse perspective, policy making involves many policy actors at multiple formal and informal levels, all of who are constructing meaning (Bacchi, 2000). In other words, policy making is always a struggle over ideas because “each idea is an argument... in favor of different ways of seeing the world” and a struggle over power because how these ideas are “created, and how they are manipulated [are] part of policy strategy” (Stone, 1997, p. 11).

Policy changes in education are ongoing. A new change in education policy often indicates that something is wrong with the current state of affairs, and that the system is deficient in either its goals or its accomplishment, or both. When such deficiencies are detected, new policies are articulated to solve the problems (Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004). Despite the fact that decision makers have become more aggressive in teacher education policy making, scholarship on teacher education policy has been limited. While political scientists have developed a variety of models or theories attempting to explain what really happens in the policy world (Heck, 2004; Weible & Sabatier, 2017), it is generally believed among scholars that there are currently few to no sufficient models for explaining teacher education policy due to its dispersed nature, various contradictions, the problem of policy lag, and the condition of teacher education in the United States (Earley et al., 2011).

In the United States, teacher education is governed by many agents at different levels. At the institutional level, there are policies requiring data gathering and meeting professional standards for program accreditation purposes, such as the academic program reviews that are required for all programs in most colleges and universities. At the state level, there are laws and

regulations to which a teacher education program needs to comply and specific educator certification and licensure requirements. At the national level, there is national program accreditation which is required in a few states but is optional in most (e.g. Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation); and some reporting regulations under *Title II* of the federal Education Act. Additionally, the federal government exerts some leverage over teacher education programs by choosing to award grants in certain areas (e.g., The Teacher Quality Partnership Program under the Obama administration) and in stipulating particular program features to be present for teacher educators to receive these grants.

Because of the ongoing changes in teacher education policy, the limited scholarship on teacher education policy, and the complexity of teacher education, this chapter focuses the analysis on the forces and contradictions that continuously and/ or currently shape the policies of teacher education in the United States and in order to identify existing knowledge gaps regarding the shaping of state and federal education policies that govern the U.S. teacher education.

The literature analyzed in this chapter was mainly identified through a review of research published between 2000 to 2019, except for the historical documents that were used to contextualize the development of teacher education policies in the U.S. Section 2.1 outlines the major teacher education policies at the federal level. In section 2.2, key factors shaping the policies of teacher education are presented based on a systematic review conducted between February 2019 and May 2019. The search terms “teacher policy” “teacher education policy” “teacher preparation policy” “teacher policy making” “teacher education policy making” and “teacher preparation policy making” were used to identify relevant studies through the University of Washington Libraries Search Engine, which contains major literature databases in

education and social sciences , including Education Source, ERIC (EBSCO), ERIC (ProQuest), and JSTOR.

2.1 The Development of Teacher Education Policies in the U.S.

The role of the federal government in developing and regulating teacher education is controversial partly because education in the United States is largely a responsibility of each state which individually formulates its teacher education policies and regulations (Bales, 2006; Imig & Imig, 2008). In spite of the many changes in teacher education policy, there are two major views of teachers that continuously influence the policy discourse: teachers as professionals versus teachers as technicians. Briefly, there have been efforts to prepare teachers as “reflective professionals” who are not only able to teach based on the curriculum, but who also reflect and adapt the curriculum and instruction to best teach their students (Swarts, 2001). A second group believes that the cost of preparing teachers should remain relatively low and that teachers are “good enough” if they can follow a scripted curriculum and comply to prescribed teaching practices (Zeichner & Ndimande, 2008). Each perspective has enjoyed some influence over the history of teacher education policy, and the tensions between these two orientations have led to unstable and even conflicting policies at both the federal and state level (Sykes & Dibner, 2009).

Sykes and Dibner (2009) identified eight major strategies employed by the federal government to influence teaching and teacher education over the last 50 years. These policy strategies include 1) recruitment; 2) training; 3) accountability; 4) incentives; 5) qualifications; 6) class size reduction; 7) teacher working conditions; and 8) human resource management and the overall coordination of teacher policy (Sykes & Dibner, 2009). According to Sykes and Dibner (2009), each strategy is marked by a series of new policies and initiatives launched by the federal

government. For example, the federal government has tried to recruit teachers through the loan forgiveness programs, such as the *Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL)* and the *William D. Ford Direct Loan Program (DL)* (aka *Stafford Loans*), and has made investments in teacher education, including initial preparation, mentoring and induction, and ongoing professional development by creating partnerships between universities and school districts to form the “National Teacher Corps” (Sykes & Dibner, 2009).

In addition to the various federal policies and initiatives, the centerpieces of legislation directed to teachers and teaching have been the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* and the *Higher Education Act (HEA)*, both of which “have included substantial funding for a range of programs that aimed to recruit and train teachers for shortage areas, provide professional development, and more recently, impose accountability requirements and experiment with qualifications and incentives policy” (Sykes & Dibner, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, understanding the context of these two major acts, as well as their important reauthorizations in subsequent decades, is critical for understanding the development of teacher education policies and initiatives in the U.S.

The *Higher Education Act (HEA)* was developed and passed in 1965. It was first implemented to support college students with federal grants and loans. *Title V* of the *HEA* act included initiatives related to teacher education although most of these initiatives were rarely funded throughout the years. It was not until the year of 1998 when the Congress was considering a reauthorization of the *HEA* that discussion in revising *HEA Title V* emerged among policy makers, education organizations, and think tanks. The teacher education provisions included in the reauthorized *HEA* turned out to be very controversial due to the increased eagerness by policy makers to embrace a market-oriented, alternative teacher preparation

program strategy as one of the ways to ameliorate the teacher shortage (Ballou & Podgursky, 1999; Ballou & Soler, 1999; Riley, 1999). The 1998 *HEA* reauthorization included additional teacher education provisions in *Title II*, that allowed programs to recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds into teaching, that supported partnerships between higher education institutions and K-12 schools, and that established an accountability report.

Different from the *HEA* with its focus on providing loan forgiveness, scholarships, and fellowship programs to students who are willing to teach, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* became a major source of funding for teacher professional development (PD), and for new initiatives focusing on teacher qualifications and training (Sykes & Dibner, 2009). In 1994, President Clinton signed into law the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* reauthorizing *ESEA* in which the Eisenhower program was redesigned to help students achieve high standards of learning by improving teacher quality (Plecki & Loeb, 2004). Also, in the *Goals 2000*, teacher quality was addressed in its fourth goal statement: “Teachers will have access to training programs to improve their skills” (Cookson, 1995, p. 406).

The *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* reauthorization of *ESEA* in 2001 represented a significant expansion of federal involvement in education and marked by far the most ambitious federal regulation and intervention into teacher preparation (Earley et al., 2011). This was the first time the federal government created minimum qualification requirements for all teachers of core subjects, to which all states’ efforts for teacher preparation, testing, and certification needed to comply (Plecki & Loeb, 2004). Another notable change in *NCLB* was the “highly qualified teacher” provision that required each state to assure in policy that all teachers met the federally determined “highly qualified” criteria if the state expected to receive *NCLB* funds. Specifically, *NCLB* defined “highly qualified teachers” as those who have full state certification or licensure,

obtain a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate knowledge in the subject(s) they teach (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). However, because of the vague definition of "high quality" of teachers (Earley et al., 2011) and the different guidelines for charter school teachers and teachers who had earned certification through alternative routes (Plecki & Loeb, 2004), a consequence was the flourishing development of alternative teacher preparation programs (Michelli, 2005).

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, which was the most recent iteration of ESEA, was signed into federal law on December 10, 2015. One of the most distinct features of *ESSA* was that it granted state and local educational agencies more authority in policy making and more flexibility for programs to meet state-specific requirements. The biggest change made by *ESSA* regarding teacher preparation and qualifications was the elimination of the "highly qualified teacher" requirement of *NCLB* and replacing it with a single requirement: that *Title I* program teachers should meet applicable state certification and licensure requirements.

Moreover, it maintained that alternative routes to teaching had the potential to help state and local educational agencies to mitigate educator shortages by recruiting individuals from diverse backgrounds who have the potential to become effective teachers (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015).

Despite the notable shifts in teacher education policy at the federal level, the state remains an important player because the power for approving teacher education programs and awarding teacher certification lies in state laws and regulations. For a long time, state policies have affected the qualifications of beginning teachers in numerous ways, including regulating entry requirements, providing incentives for graduate degrees, and subsidizing preparation programs at public universities (Henry et al., 2014). Most of the state level policy initiatives related to the quality of teachers and teaching can be categorized into five areas: the development

and promotion of high standards for teaching and student learning; efforts to attract, reward, and retain teachers; support for high-quality initial preparation and induction of new teachers; attempts to motivate and support teacher professional development; and the enhancement of the school workplace environment (Hirsch et al., 2001).

2.2 Influences and Forces

The scholarship on teacher education policy in the United States remains relatively limited and few studies have examined the influences and forces that drive changes in teacher education policy. Therefore, here I presented a focused review of research that has directly targeted these driving influences and forces while weaving in underlying themes that were generated from the broader body of literature on teacher education policy. Several factors emerged from this review are discussed below, including ideology, education reforms and initiatives, information, politics, fiscal resources, and policy actors.

2.2.1 Ideology

Policy controversies are struggles over values, world views, and underlying ideologies (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2002). The shift of policy in teacher education often reflects the change of ideological stances on teaching and learning (Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004). Among many of the ideologies, neoliberal values have had the greatest influence on education and teacher education around the globe since the 1980s, including in the U.S. (Hartley, 2003; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Ross & Gibson, 2006; Tang, 2015). Organizing education based on neoliberal perspectives is regarded as a way to meet the needs of the global economy and to ensure the competitiveness of the educated workforce and the national economy (Ross & Gibson, 2006).

While there is no simple or single answer to the question of how the global popularity of neoliberal ideologies has been affecting education reform policies, it is widely believed that the global aspects of neoliberalism such as standardized testing and market-based strategies are mediated by local factors, including traditions and structures in individual countries (Paine & Zeichner, 2012). Because states and public school systems are no longer trusted to prepare teachers and students to compete in the global economy, new ways of doing “education business” have been promoted to ensure the economic power of the country (Hartley & Whitehead, 2006; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014).

The call for global competitiveness and new models for the “education business” directly influences teacher education in the United States, at both the federal level and the state level. For example it has become the trend that states are increasingly forced to collaborate with external organizations and corporations as a condition of receiving federal funds (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Slaughter, 1998). In addition, business roundtables and large corporation representatives are more frequently seen participating on education commissions and forcefully putting pressure on the enactment of new reforms and movements in education with a focus on preparing students for the competitive global market. As Kuehn (1999) reminds us, the issue of this trend is that:

“business is increasingly interested in defining the nature of education so that it produces workers who fit the need of business. When education is seen as largely in the public rather than private interest, it is more likely to have a range of social and cultural objectives... When it becomes privatized and part of the market, social and cultural concerns become much less important” (p. 3).

In light of this takeover of the public good of education by private economic interests, an ideology of cost-effectiveness and choice has also emerged, with reducing funding for public

education as the states' default response to financial pressure (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Slaughter, 1998). This collusion between state government choices and global economic interests has led some to conclude that education policy is increasingly becoming a subsector of economic policy focusing on such issues as human resources and labor management, disengaged from concerns with social policy (Groof et al., 1998). As a result, fewer resources are allocated to address issues like multiculturalism, equity, and social justice in teacher education policies because they are considered less relevant and valuable to the market economy (Burbules & Torres, 2000).

2.2.2 Education Reforms and Initiatives

Joshee and Johnson (2005) contended that policies were developed formally and informally on multiple levels similar to the rings of a web. A policy web suggests that specific policy issues must be interpreted within a larger and broader web of related policies (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2011). Therefore, it is natural to infer that policy discussions about teacher education are also a part of, and/or intertwined with, larger discussions about other education-related issues (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2011). In other words, policies about teacher quality and teacher education are not developed and enacted at a single level by a single agency, but at multiple levels and by many actors via different education reforms and initiatives.

Teacher education policy is greatly influenced by reforms and initiatives in K-12 education, among which the standards-based reform movement and the *Race to the Top* Program (RTTT) are two examples of great significance. The standards-based reform movement, beginning in the mid-1980s, was a response to the perceived failure of previous reform efforts in improving the performance of students and schools (Hamilton et al., 2008). One of the strategies of this reform was a more authoritative definition of curriculum nationally stipulating curriculum

development and learning standards for students. Professional standards and evaluation systems for continuous teaching certification to go with the curricula and standards for students were also developed (Delandshere & Petrosky, 1994, 1998, 1999).

Around the same time, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) was formed under the auspices of the Council of Chief School State Officers (CCSSO) to focus on developing standards for the initial licensing of teachers. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) then adopted these new standards as the basic principles for accrediting teacher education program (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium [INTASC], 2003). Through state partnerships (Potts et al., 2002), these principles, standards, and procedures set forth for teacher education and the new curricula and standards in K-12 education became an integral part of the policies regulating the aims, stakeholders, and activities of teacher education programs (Hartley & Whitehead, 2006).

The *Race to the Top* program, as part of the federal *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)*, was a grant program encouraging education innovation and reform. While focusing primarily on PreK-12 education, the *RTTT* program identified increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution as two of the most important areas for funding (Crowe, 2011; Lohman, 2010). The *RTTT* grant moved beyond the *NCLB*'s focus on teacher qualifications by giving higher scores to states that directly linked teacher effectiveness evaluations to student performance (Lohman, 2010) and required states receiving the funding to expand teacher education programs and teacher credentialing options beyond college and university-based programs (Crowe, 2011). As a result of the \$4.35 billion grant, states were eager to launch new teacher education policies and initiatives that were aligned with the *RTTT* goals and requirements.

In addition, initiatives by the teacher professional organizations and accreditation bodies are molding and affecting teacher education policy (Earley et al., 2011). For example, the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010) launched by NCATE with a purpose of providing guidance on changes in educator preparation gained national attention and was cited by the then Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, who said that he could not agree more “with the recommendations of that Panel which include increased selectivity, accountability, and clinically-based preparation in educator preparation” (Duncan, 2011).

The merging of the two educator accreditation agencies, the NCATE and the TEAC (Teacher Education Accreditation Council), into the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), provided additional opportunities for the profession to respond to issues related to teacher education. Accordingly, CAEP claimed that it has “established state partnerships that are responsive to each participating state’s individual needs and policies, and are designed to promote excellence and continuous improvement in educator preparation by combining the benefits of meeting national standards with those of maintaining state program approval” (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2020).

Another initiative by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), an independent think tank and advocacy organization, ranked the 2,653 teacher preparation programs in the U.S., including a total of 2,506 undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs offered by 1,120 public and private institutions of higher education, 129 alternate route programs, and 18 teacher residencies leading to elementary and secondary certification (National Council on Teacher Quality [NCTQ], 2020). With resources provided by a wide range of donors supporting this effort, NCTQ established several standards, designed an evaluation system, and began

collecting documents, handbooks, textbooks, and other supporting documentation as evidence to be used in evaluating schools and colleges of education for potential consumers. Regardless of the many criticisms of the NCTQ rankings within the teacher education community, these NCTQ reports have received significant national and state attention and have been widely shared among policy makers and the mass media (Zeichner & Conklin, 2017). While the standards and processes used to compile these reports have been criticized by scholars who have examined teacher education accountability (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2018), they likely will have implications for future teacher preparation policies.

2.2.3 Information Flow

Policy makers make decisions using the information or knowledge they have access to at the time. In the field of education, it is believed that a more productive policy environment can be achieved by identifying a research base with shared, agreed-upon knowledge about “effective” teaching and “high quality” teacher preparation (Wiseman, 2012). Ideally, all newly established policies need to be informed by research evidence yet this ideal is often not realized in current teacher education policy making practices (Wiseman, 2012).

It is not a secret that we are woefully short of reaching the critical goal of providing all students with a high quality education (Ciccarelli, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hess, 2002). However, there seems to be no consensus among researchers about what a “high quality” teacher and teacher education program would look like or about what research evidence is needed to support such claims. Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) have observed that “the professionalization vs. deregulation debate has been carried on in scholarly journals” with a specific focus on “what the evidence actually says” (p. 4). The debate between Dale Ballou and Michael John Podgursky and Linda Darling-Hammond is among one of the most prominent cases. Briefly, Ballou and

Podgursky (2000) critiqued Darling-Hammond and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) for allegedly overstating their conclusions about the importance of teachers to school quality as measured by students' test scores, and for what they believed to be a "fundamental" error in her statistical analysis. Ballou and Podgursky claimed that Darling-Hammond's research thus overstate[d] their policy implications (Ballou & Podgursky, 2000). Conversely, Darling-Hammond (2000) asserted that Ballou and Podgursky "variously ignore[d] and misconstrue[d] the research evidence presented" (p. 30). These kind of disagreements and heated debates among researchers about what evidence truly says about the effectiveness of different models of teaching and teacher education, while necessary and important by themselves, nevertheless present conflicting information for policy makers in decision making.

Compared with academic information and research evidence, policy makers are more likely to be influenced by isolated anecdotes, reports, and media (Spring, 2010; Wiseman, 2012). For example, the movie "*Waiting for superman: How we can save America's public schools*" produced by Davis Guggenheim (2010) showed stories of worthy school students struggling to find good schools. This movie captured national attention and was viewed as a dramatic wake-up call for teacher education (Wiseman, 2012). It also highlighted the Teach for America program as a noteworthy way to reform teacher preparation in order to send the best and brightest to the classroom. As a result of this and similar media products, policy makers have attempted to restrict federal expenditures on public education and to remove federal funds from several teacher education programs sponsored by the federal grant programs (Wiseman, 2012). In other cases, media have been criticized for simply citing the claims of politicians about test scores as indicators of teacher quality and the quality of education thus preventing the public from

understanding the complex issues related to testing and other education policies (Gerstl-Pepin, 2002; West et al., 2009).

2.2.4 Politics

Policy making and politics often go hand-in-hand. The politics of knowledge construction and dissemination is central to the work of those involved in public education (Gallagher & Bailey, 2000). Lagemann (1989) argued that politics is related to policy making in three ways: the first involves which fields of knowledge and which approaches within different fields are recognized as authoritative and therefore are associated with the expertise considered relevant to policy making. The second centers on enfranchisement and participation in public affairs and policy discussion, i.e., how decision should be made and by whom. And thirdly, who can get access to the political arenas of knowledge production that are often reserved for a small group of political elites (Lagemann, 1989).

Politics also influences policy making through policy makers' engagement and interaction within and outside policy making circles. For example, researchers have found that the "high quality teacher" provision in *NCLB* was created partly because of federal policy makers' intentions to appear tough on low quality schools and unqualified teachers (Earley et al., 2011). In addition, a number of newly formed corporate philanthropists have been active in gaining control of the education domain by pouring large amounts of money into education reform efforts (Colvin, 2005; Scott, 2009). These philanthropists have joined policy makers by increasing the flow of funding to "jurisdictional challengers" of education, who are individuals and organizations providing educational services which are parallel to the public education system (e.g., credentialing, school management organizations, teacher recruitment and training.) (Mehta & Teles, 2011).

The most notable examples of this private-public partnership are the fast-track teacher preparation programs, such as the Teach for America (TFA), The New Teacher Project (TNTP), and the Relay Graduate School of Education, all of which have received support from state and local educational agencies in addition to their philanthropic support.

2.2.5 *Fiscal Resources*

Any policy design involves considerations of the fiscal resources needed to sustain the initiative or expand the current programs and services (Plecki & Loeb, 2004). Some policy initiatives require funding from a combination of federal grants and state and/or local school district funding. Therefore, the policy decision-making process is also influenced by the allocated resources and the specific state and local financial situations (Plecki & Loeb, 2004). For example, Plecki and Loeb (2004) analyzed state teacher quality initiatives in New York, California, Washington, and North Carolina and found that these states typically experienced more difficulty finding and allocating new resources to support the professional development of teachers compared with other policies, such as recruitment, teacher testing, mentoring, and salaries.

It is widely recognized that high-poverty schools are more likely to experience difficulties in retaining teachers (Boyd et al., 2003; Ingersoll, 2016) and few policy initiatives have been effective in distributing resources in more equitable ways. Moreover, many public universities in the United States where the majority of teachers continue to be prepared are experiencing decreasing budgets (Lyall & Sell, 2005; Zeichner, 2011). It is not surprising that many university-based teacher preparation programs have had limited resources available for innovation compared with the fast-track alternative pathways to teaching sponsored by business elites, private foundations, and philanthropists.

2.3 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented a focused review of teacher education policy making and has identified key factors shaping the teacher education policy in the United States, namely ideology, educational reforms and initiatives, information, politics, and fiscal resources. However, I do not intend to suggest that these factors are the only forces that drive the policy making process in the context of teacher education, given the complicated nature of teacher education itself and the limited number of available studies.

It has been an ongoing effort for educational researchers to investigate state-level teacher education policy variations with regard to teacher preparation and retention. The majority of this research has focused on the financial strategies and human capital incentives used to attract and retain high quality teachers. What has been given less attention in this literature is an examination of the variety of social factors contributing to the teacher workforce. For example, research with an attention to social capital of policy makers could help identify the interconnected relationships between policy actors and stakeholders and introduce new perspectives in understanding the policy making process and the policy outcomes.

For instance, Kretchmar et al. (2018) found in their research that TFA and its partner organizations had made significant lobbying efforts in Texas to advocate for the Texas Bill *HB 1060* that would limit public dissemination of information on teacher retention. Also, Au and Ferrare's research (2015) on how affluent business elites and their affiliated philanthropies campaigned for the Yes On 1240 in Washington state was another example of how networked policy advocacy has influenced the perceptions of both the public and the policy makers.

Policy-making and decision-making theories have both been well explored in the fields of political science and political sociology, and have been applied in many other disciplines,

including environmental science, business, and health sciences. However, these theories have been less employed in the study of education, including education policy in general and teacher education policy making in particular. Therefore, there is a latent space for educational policy researchers to utilize these well-established theories to expand the terrain of education policy study while exploring their theoretical potential from the perspectives of education.

This dissertation hoped to achieve these goals. Because the newly enacted federal *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* has given individual states greater flexibility in policy design and decision making, it is both of interest and significance to identify the policy actors who were involved in state *ESSA* policy making process, especially those considered “non-traditional” policy actors, and to understand the coalitions, interactions, and relationships among stakeholders and policy makers grounded in the broader socio-economic and -political contexts. Examining the state policy variation would also contribute to a better understanding of how local contexts, intertwined with networks, resources, and policy beliefs, can shape the policy decision-making process. With these goals and rationale in mind, I will explain the conceptual framework of this study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 NETWORKED POLICY ADVOCACY

The previous chapter synthesized evidence from extant research showing that teacher education policy in the United States has been influenced by many forces and attracted much attention from a diverse array of stakeholders. Despite the well-developed and researched policy making and decision-making theories and their applications in many social science fields, the literature clearly shows that these perspectives are currently under-considered in the literature on teacher education policy making. In this dissertation research, I examined the interplay of competing interests, beliefs, and social values in relation to the policy making process in the context of state *ESSA Title II* policy with the hope of contributing a better understanding of the interactions and relationships among stakeholders and policy makers in the policy networks that formulate teacher education policies.

In order to understand the complex interactions among the issues, policies, policy actors, and events in the context of the state *ESSA Title II* plan-making process, I explain in this chapter the conceptual frameworks that I used to analyze stakeholder engagement in the development of state teacher education policy. My theoretical framework for this research relies heavily on the theories and concepts from the fields of political sociology and political science. I explore a variety of concepts that had previously been used to analyze political processes drawing from various resources (e.g. Hill & Varone, 2017; John, 2012; Parsons, 1996), including the overarching concepts of governance (Rhodes, 1997, 2017) and multi-level governance (Bache & Flinders, 2004; Hooghe & Marks, 2003).

I also examine the use of more specific concepts exploring the policy cycle from a political and organizational perspective (Jenkins, 1978), including policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000), policy convergence (Bennett, 1991), interest representation (Greenwood, 2017),

lobbying (Mahoney, 2007b), and epistemic communities (Haas, 1992). After the extensive review and considerations, I determined that the concepts of bounded rationality, policy networks, and advocacy coalitions were most relevant to this study and would lend the greatest explanatory power in analyzing stakeholder engagement in the U.S. teacher education policy making at the state level. I explain each of these concepts below before presenting the integrated theoretical framework for this research that is informed by these ideas.

3.1 Rational Choice and Bounded Rationality

Rational choice theory applies notions from the economics (and to some extent mathematics) to the analysis of the ways in which individuals' self-interested behavior may influence the policy making process. Rational choice theory suggests that predictive propositions can be derived from generalizations that equate self-interest and rational behavior with the assumption that these behaviors and propositions are dominant. It assists the analysis of the policy making process by highlighting the importance of policy makers' self-interests and reveals the extent to which public policy problems emerge from the incapacity of market mechanisms to solve many collective action problems.

Bounded rationality focuses on the complex situations and the lack of complete information, or the cognitive capacity to process it, that often restrict choices. This recognition has led to a reconceptualization of the rational choice models. Bounded rationality is an essential concept for explaining individual and collective decision-making in organizational and social network theories (Kadushin, 2012). This research drew from the concept of bounded rationality as the foundation for understanding the policy making process and the policy decision-making in the context of state teacher education policy.

3.1.1 *Conceptions of Rational Choice*

There are a number of economics-informed approaches to analyzing the policy process that share the assumption that the same mechanism made by economic choices in competitive market situations can be applied to political processes. While they have been given various names, they are essentially all variants of what is called rational choice theory or public choice theory. This group of theories is premised on the belief that individuals act in their own best interests, hence the term “rational.” Specifically, scholars of this school consider individuals to be rational by imposing the following two conditions: completeness and transitivity (McCarty & Meirowitz, 2007). When individuals have to make a political choice, they¹ can rank all potential outcomes that result from a course of action, i.e., completeness. In addition, if this individual prefers A to B, and B to C, then they will also prefer A to C, i.e., transitivity.

Many rational choice scholars consider that individuals have a “thin” rationality (Elster, 1983; McCarty & Meirowitz, 2007), which describes an ideal conception of rationality. On the other hand, “thick” rationality refers to a more constrained form of rationality when making choices and selecting preferences. For example, Arrow (2012) found that when a group of individuals faced three options or more, they tended to make choices “socially” in order to prevent inconsistencies. Also, Downs (1957) showed that political candidates would converge with their programs toward the preferred policy of the median voter. More precisely, Downs (1957) argued that, unlike politicians who chose policy programs with the single goal of being elected, voters would support the candidate offering the program closest to their preferred policy outcomes represented on a single dimension. Clearly, this conception of preferences is much

¹ In this dissertation, “they” is used as a non-binary gender pronoun.

more constraining and thus leads to a “thick” view of rationality. Similarly, Olson (1965) assumed that in addition to achieving their self-interests, individuals would choose to contribute to producing public good. Therefore, holding everything else constant, obtaining the public good would always be preferred by individuals.

3.1.2 *Bounded Rationality*

The theory of bounded rationality centers on the complexity of many choice situations and the lack of complete information or the cognitive capacity to process such information. It has led to a reconceptualization of the rational choice models, which have been dramatically transformed from a neoclassical economics approach to a sociological rational choice theory by drawing a more complete and nuanced picture of institutions, organizations, and action (Kiser & Bauldry, 2003).

The sociological version of rational choice theory is a multilevel theory pertaining to the motives and goals of individual actors and the conditions within which their action takes place (Kiser & Bauldry, 2003), combining both micro foundations and macro level models of structures and relations (Coleman, 1986, 1994; Friedman & Hechter, 1988; Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997). In short, the focus on motives derives from methodological individualism with an emphasis on the orientations to action and the goals of action (Kiser & Bauldry, 2003). In addition to understanding individual motives and goals, rational choice theorists also try to explain macro level outcomes, such as conditions, structures, and relations, by building models from both rational choice theories, (e.g., agency theory and various types of game theory), and other sociological theories that are consistent with the micro foundations of rational choice theory, such as the network theory and the Weberian ideal types. (Adams, 1996; Coleman, 1994; Kiser, 1994).

For a long time, rational choice theory has been criticized for its insufficiency to incorporate institutions, culture, and history because of its methodological orientations and its neoclassical economic origin (Granovetter, 1985; Green & Shapiro, 1994; Oberschall & Leifer, 1986; Somers, 1998). One of the notable moves in the transition from neoclassical economics to a broader version of sociological rational choice theory has been eliminating the assumption of perfect information, especially in situations where information is incomplete and unequally distributed across actors (Kiser & Bauldry, 2003). As a result, the reconceptualization of rational choice theory with an emphasis on the complexity of many choice situations and the lack of complete information (or the limited cognitive capacity to obtain it) led to Simon's (1958) work on bounded rationality (Takahashi, 2015).

Simon in this work redefined the concept of rationality from "comprehensively rational" to multiple aspects, such as subconscious or conscious, objective or subjective, unintentional or deliberate, organizational or individual, and, ultimately, comprehensive or bounded (Mingus, 2006). According to Simon, while decision making can be rational, this is far from comprehensive rationality because "complete and absolute knowledge of all the data in a given situation is seldom available" (Chandler & Plano, 1988, p. 155). Instead, Simon maintained that external factors, such as cost, time, and available technology, combined with internal factors, especially the limited human analytical capabilities, could constrain individual choices. Specifically, Simon proposed three limits of objective rationality, including "the incompleteness of knowledge; the difficulty of anticipating or predicting what will occur in the future (and the value we will attach to future events when they occur); and the inadequate scope of alternative behaviors that is considered or analyzed" (1976, p. 80-84).

Bounded rationality theory assumes that policy actors, similar to other decision makers, are bounded by cognitive and institutional limitations when making decisions in an information-rich environment. Instead of making decisions by clarifying the values, studying all possible alternative choices to the desired outcomes, and choosing the most effective and efficient means to that goal through a comprehensive analysis, policy actors in reality are more likely to make policy decisions under the influence of their own values, information they have, the way they process the information (Munro & Ditto, 1997; Munro et al., 2002; Simon, 1957, 1985), and the positions of and power relations among the policy actors (Etzioni, 1967).

This dissertation research drew on the bounded rationality theory as the foundation for understanding the decision-making process in the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans.

Specifically, I posited that state education policy actors may:

- lack sufficient information;
- lack the time and ability to fully investigate all the alternative choices;
- be bounded by their own individual beliefs;
- be bounded by their organizational affiliations; and
- be significantly influenced by the context in which the decisions were made

Additionally, bounded rationality theory also served as a theoretical foundation for the other two theories that this research relied on: network theory and the advocacy coalition framework.

Briefly, the assumption of human bounded rationality renders it necessary for individuals to learn to infer information from others in their networks, thus promoting coalition and collaboration among individuals (Hu et al., 2011).

3.2 Social Capital, Social Network, and Policy Network Theories

Social capital in its various forms and contexts is one of the most salient concepts in the social sciences (Lin, 1999). In more recent years, the theory of social networks has been applied to determine the social capital in a community or group, with the emerging concept of policy network as a significant subfield to understand the public policy making processes (Granados & Knoke, 2003). In this dissertation research, both social network and policy network theories were applied to explore how social and political structures influenced the policy making processes, policy outcomes, and to understand the social and political interactions in the context of the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans.

3.2.1 Social Capital

Social capital, together with human capital and cultural capital, are considered as the three main forms of capital within neo-capital theory. Neo-capital theory distinguishes itself from the classical theory in its potential investment and capture of surplus value by the laborers or masses (Lin, 1999). Despite its many forms and definitions, the most straightforward and consistent assumption underlying social capital theory is that investment in social relations leads to profits (Lin, 1999). It is generally believed that embedded resources in social networks will enhance the outcomes of actions by information, influence, social credentials, and reinforcement (Lin, 1999).

Before Putman popularized the concept of social capital, it was first introduced and developed by Bourdieu and Coleman. Bourdieu defines social capital as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance

and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51). According to Bourdieu, the existence of a network of connections is the product of individual or collective investment strategies to establish or reproduce social relationships by consecration, exchange, and exclusion (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992); and the volume of social capital depends on “the size of network connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51).

Different from Bourdieu, Coleman sought to define social capital in a broader way. Social capital, Coleman contended, was made up of two components – social structure and the facilitation of action by individuals within the structure (Coleman, 1988). Therefore, social capital refers to the extent to which the “quantity and quality of interactions and social relationships among people affect their access to knowledge and information; their sense of expectation, obligation, and trust; and how far they are likely to adhere to the same norms or codes of behavior” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 90). Therefore, Coleman believed that individual actors sought to maintain and establish new relations purposefully when the relations continued to provide benefits (Coleman, 1988).

Built on Coleman’s functional interpretation of social capital, Putnam defined social capital as “the feature of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995, p. 67). Putnam further identified two ways of looking at social capital, which he termed as bridging (inclusive) and bonding (exclusive) (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital concerns network formation between homogeneous groups that is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity.

Bridging social capital includes networks forming between heterogeneous groups of people across diverse social cleavages (Putnam, 2000). In other words, bonding social capital provided crucial social and psychological support for its community members while bridging social capital functioned in ways that supported linkages to external assets and information diffusion (Putnam, 2000).

3.2.2 *Social Network Theory*

Starting from Putnam's way of looking at social capital from a network-based perspective (Täube, 2004), Burt (1995, 1997) and Lin (1981, 1986, 1999, 2001) led discussions and debates about building a network theory of social capital. Although there is a considerable variation among the different sides in the social capital debate (Adler & Kwon, 2002), researchers have been able to reach a consensus that networks themselves are a form of social capital and that "social capital is related to networks in terms of size, strength, and resources possessed by those in the network... [and that] analysis of social capital should focus on social relations and networks" (White, 2002, p. 256). This study approached social network analysis from this perspective.

A social network is a set of individuals and/or groups who are connected to one another through socially meaningful relationships, which can include friendships, advice sharing, work relationships, and many more (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988). These relationships can be mapped out to see the patterns and frequencies of the interactions that emerge among individuals, groups, or organizations (Prell, 2003). The differences in social capital come when individuals hold certain positional advantages and disadvantages from how they are embedded in a community or other social structures (Burt, 2004). Therefore, a structural hole will be created if there is a gap

between two individuals who have different yet complementary sources of information, which may lead to brokers who can help to bridge the gap.

The concept of social network has been applied to a diverse fields of social sciences, from corporate directorships (Alexander, 2003) and employment opportunities based on individuals' social contacts in business studies (Granovetter, 1973), to the behavior and influence of individuals and interest groups in studies of politics (Knoke, 1990) and public policy (Lewis, 2010). Within the network literature, Klijn and Koppenjan (2012) have identified three main types of networks: 1) the policy network coming from political science with a focus on the actors who take part in and have the power to access to policy decision making; 2) the interorganizational network emphasizing the resource-sharing and coordination among organizations; and 3) the managing network focusing on the utilization of networks to solve policy problems. In this dissertation, I considered both the network structures and mechanisms and the individual actors consisting of the networks. It is also worth noting that social network theory is different from social network analysis (SNA), which is a group of both quantitative and qualitative methods for analyzing the social ties among individuals. Both ideas are relevant to this dissertation and SNA as a method will be further explained in the methodology chapter.

3.2.3 *Policy Networks*

Policy networks, as a specific subfield of social network theory, are “sets of formal and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared and endlessly negotiated beliefs and interest in public policymaking and implementation” (Rhodes, 2008, p. 424). These individual policy actors are considered as independent and policies emerge from the interactions between these actors. In recent decades, the concept of policy network has been regarded as not only a change in the structure of the polity, but also a distinct form of governance

(Newman & Clarke, 2009) moving beyond the public bureaucracy state to a new kind of governing mechanism (Hood, 1990) that relies “on a dense fabric of lasting ties and networks that provide key resources of expertise, reputation and legitimization” (Grabher, 2004, p. 104).

There are two main schools of thought about policy networks: network governance (NWG) and policy network analysis (PNA). Briefly, the NWG aims to answer a set of macro-level questions about the changing nature of governing mechanisms while the PNA has been applied to solve more meso-level questions about the relationship between policy making outcomes, the structure of a network, and the inclusion or exclusion of certain individuals or groups from the network (Fawcett & Daugbjerg, 2012). Meanwhile, researchers have suggested a combination of these two groups in order to interpret the functions of policy networks as both a mediating factor in the relationships between the state and organized interests and a necessary solution to collective action on problems by sharing resources across individual actors (Adam & Kriesi, 2007; Blanco et al., 2011).

Consistent with the social network theory, policy network theory makes three basic assumptions about mutual influences among networks and actors in a specific policy domain (Knoke, 2001). First, stable repeated interactions constitute the social structure. Second, these interactions and relations are assumed to be the primary explanatory units of analysis instead of each individual actor’s attributes and characteristics. And third, the perceptions, attitudes, and actions of policy actors are shaped by multiple structural networks within which they are embedded, which in turn can change these networks’ structures (Knoke, 2001, p. 63-64). As a result, from a policy network perspective, problem solving and decision making occur through a series of interactions around policy issues among actors within networks (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2006). During the policy process, actors select their strategies based on their own perceptions of

the problem, desired outcomes, and other actors within the network. The ultimate outcome of the policy process is, therefore, a result of the interactions of different strategies influenced by individual actors' perceptions, power, and resources in the network, in addition to the rules of the network (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2006).

The application of network theories into the study of policy reflects the common trends toward decreased governmental regulation, greater privatization, and more reliance on market transactions in various policy domains (Granados & Knoke, 2003). Despite the amount of research on social networks and policy networks in the social sciences, there is still limited attention on how networks function in education policy settings. This research aimed to describe and conceptualize a particular set of policy networks in the context of the teacher education policy making process, with a specific focus on the interactions among policy actors and groups, their influences, and the resources they brought into play to achieve policy goals.

3.3 Advocacy Coalition Framework Theory

Advocacy coalition framework (ACF) theory posits that policy outcomes are a result of competition among rival coalitions of political actors and that it is particularly helpful in analyzing major policy changes dealing with issues that are both ideologically divisive and technically complex (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Sabatier & Weible, 2007). In policy network theory, the advocacy coalition framework has been frequently used to articulate the mechanisms of group formation, or why certain policy actors choose to cooperate with one another (Henry, 2011). In this research, the ACF was used to identify the factors influencing policy actors' choices of with whom to network as well as how policy actors from different coalitions interpreted the policy decision-making process.

3.3.1 *The Formation of Advocacy Coalitions*

Coalition building as an activity allows actors to come together around a shared goal, share information and knowledge, identify major points of contention and agreement, pool resources, and act collectively (Hecl, 1978). The extant literature suggests that network actors with a joint understanding of and interest in a policy issue often form coalitions (Keck & Sikkink, 2014; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) postulated that a policy network could be divided into smaller sets of actors. These actors could be members of various institutions with shared values, beliefs, and positions and with some kind of relationship with one another that allow them to interact regularly over extended periods of time to influence policy within a specific policy area (Sabatier, 1998; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

Coalitions are believed to have the benefit of increasing the success rate of political actors (Bomberg & Peterson, 2016; Watson & Shackleton, 2008) by providing a frame for sharing information and for pooling and improving the stewardship of resources (Mahoney, 2007b). The relationships among coalition members help to facilitate access to information that is relevant to the political debate, ensure the quick and effective dissemination and channeling of information, expertise, and interests, and thus constitute a significant advantage when engaging in policy making (Keck & Sikkink, 2014). By showing solidarity, agreement, and support of a considerable number and variety of stakeholders for a certain policy position, coalitions can garner decision makers' attention and support and increase their members' influence on the policy process (Keck & Sikkink, 2014; Mahoney, 2007b). Scholars have contended that strategic collaboration between coalition members can further motivate, encourage, or pressure decision makers to adopt policies that have been adopted elsewhere, resulting in policy transfer and

international policy coordination (Haas, 1992; Long & Lörinczi, 2009). Coalitions have also been proven effective in monitoring policy compliance and holding policy makers accountable to their promises and commitments (Keck & Sikkink, 2014).

While forming coalitions are considered beneficial in policy advocacy, the development of coalitions can be hampered by such difficulties as agreeing on acceptable messages and strategies, unwillingness to modify positions and compromise, and the primacy of actors' own interests (Mahoney, 2007b; Sabatier, 1998). Coalition members are also restricted by the structure and culture of coalitions, by their positions within a group, and by their "path dependency" (Kay, 2005, p. 553), all of which can decrease a coalition member's ability to generate innovative ideas or challenge the prevalent position or strategy (Marsh & Smith, 2000).

3.3.2 *The Determinants of Advocacy Coalitions*

Researchers have identified a number of factors, including policy issues, networks, and context characteristics, that are instrumental in moderating coalition formation, performance, and success (Keck & Sikkink, 2014; Mahoney, 2007a). Features of the policy issue being debated have been identified as crucial determinants of coalition-building and coalition success (Mahoney, 2007a). Issues of high salience and controversy seemed to be more likely to trigger coalition-building due to the stronger urge to join forces in response to common or immediate threat (Mahoney, 2007b). Moreover, issues that involve ideas about right or wrong, arise from the intentional actions of identifiable individuals, involve bodily harm to vulnerable individuals, or concern legal equality are in particular amenable to stakeholder engagement (Keck & Sikkink, 2014). If stakeholders are successful in finding a persuasive frame and in telling a causal story that shows who is responsible for an unsatisfactory situation, the issue at stake is more likely to be perceived as worthy of political debate (Keck & Sikkink, 2014).

The characteristics of coalition members and their relationships with each other have also been identified as factors determining the performance and success of coalitions (Keck & Sikkink, 2014). Stakeholder characteristics have appeared to influence whether coalitions are successful. Stakeholders engaged in coalition-building within organizations that have many resources at their disposal are more likely to form successful coalitions. On the other hand, in organizations with fewer resources, stakeholders are less likely to form successful coalitions (Mahoney, 2007b). Research also suggests that different aims of coalitions require different relationship structures. Granovetter's work (1973), for example, points to the effectiveness of loose connections and the "strength of weak ties" in the acquisition of information, whereas Keck and Sikkink (2014) argues that dense networks with strong connections are better at transmitting information.

3.3.3 *The Advocacy Coalition Framework*

Created in the early 1980s by Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, the advocacy coalition framework has served as an alternative policy process theory to provide insights into ideological disagreement and policy conflicts beyond the very limited scope of government institutions (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2017). The ACF theory posits that policy actors act to form coalitions in order to compete for certain policy outcomes within a policy subsystem, defined by the policy topic and its territorial scope. It also suggests that policy actors directly or indirectly influence policy subsystem affairs (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2017). This view of policy actors expands beyond the traditional understandings of political actors who are typically members of legislative committees, government agencies, and interest groups, to include any actors involved in the policy subsystem affairs, such as "officials from government, representatives from the private sector, members from non-profit organizations, members of the news media, academic

scientists and researchers, private consultants, lobbyists, think tanks, and even members of the courts” (Hjern & Porter, 1981, as cited in Jenkins-Smith et al., 2017, p. 140).

Advocacy coalitions comprise “actors who share policy core beliefs and who coordinate their actions in a nontrivial manner to influence a policy subsystem” (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2017, p. 148). In this definition, policy decision-making outcomes need to be interpreted not only as the results of governmental actions, but also the translations of belief systems involving non-governmental actors (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). According to the ACF, each policy actor has a three-tiered belief system consisting of 1) “deep core beliefs” dealing with fundamental normative values and general ontologies; 2) “policy core beliefs” dealing with policy preferences bounded by the scope of a particular policy subsystem; and 3) “secondary beliefs” dealing with the specific strategies for achieving the desired outcomes bounded by the “policy core beliefs” (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2017). Notably, Sabatier and Weible (2007) believe that coalitions can be identified mainly based on the “policy core beliefs.” Therefore, change in policy always indicates significant shifts in the direction or goals of a policy subsystem.

The original conception of ACF also offered four conceptual pathways to policy change, including external source, internal events, policy-oriented learning, and negotiated agreement (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Major policy change may result from any of the pathways or, according to Weible and Nohrstedt (2012), some combinations of the four. Accessing and exploiting various political resources are important for advocacy coalitions as they seek to influence public policy. Therefore, exceptional actors who always bring powerful political resources into the policy subsystem can serve as the principal coalition actors. The ACF theory suggests that other categories of policy actors, for example, policy brokers and policy

entrepreneurs², might also play important roles in shaping the policy outcomes, especially in the pathway of policy-oriented learning (Ingold, 2011; Ingold & Varone, 2012; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

Different from the network theories, the ACF theory is helpful in understanding how policy coalitions form, as well as how different policy beliefs influence individual and group behavior. Therefore, I found ACF to be particularly useful in this study in identifying what factors might have influenced state education policy actors' coalition choices in relation to their different interpretations of the same decision-making process. Moreover, the ACF is useful for understanding how different subsystem attributes, issues, and characteristics might influence advocacy coalitions, policy-oriented learning, and policy change. This feature of ACF is particularly suitable for the comparative analysis approach taken in this dissertation of state variations in teacher education policy making.

Three premises of the ACF are particularly salient for our understanding of educational policies (Scott et al., 2015). First, theories of the policy process should include an understanding of the role of technical information on policy makers (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). In teacher education policy, this stance is especially helpful for us to examine the roles played by think tanks and policy analysts in the policy process as information providers. Second, the unit of analysis for this study is a policy subsystem at the state level, which consists of “those actors from a variety of public and private organizations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue, and who regularly seek to influence public policy in that domain” (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999, p. 119). Third, ACF considers the role of untraditional policy actors in the

² In policy studies, the concept of “broker” has been used to describe the agency between different groups representing key factors in the equilibrium of policy subsystems, while in institutional and organizational studies, the terms “entrepreneur” and “leader” are used to identify prominent actors in the policy-making process.

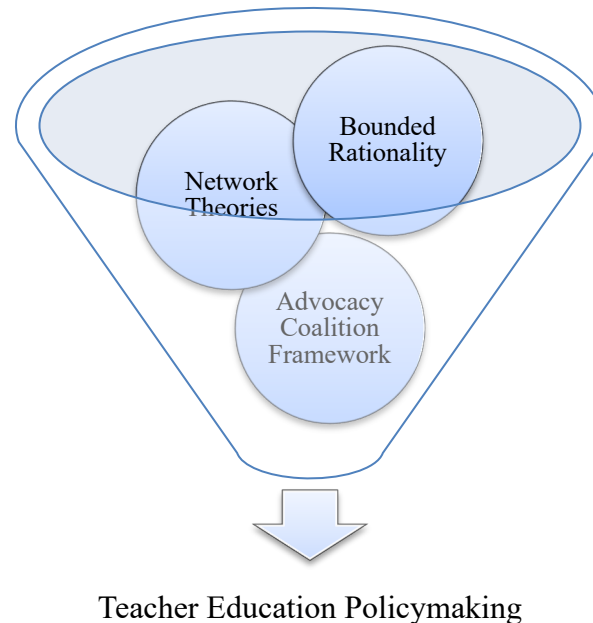
policy making process, including journalists, policy advocates, and policy analysts, which implies that traditional research organizations, such as higher education institutions, might have increasingly lost their influence on policy making if they are not active coalition members or serving as policy brokers.

3.4 An Integrated Theoretical Framework

Policy study is often complicated both in its content and context. As such, a single theory is insufficient to offer a complete and comprehensive explanation of a policy issue. In addition, each theoretical perspective may have its own advantages and limits and can benefit from other theories for a fuller understanding of policy issues. Therefore, integrating multiple theories in policy studies offers great potentials in illuminating new perspectives and advancing the research agenda. Cairney (2013) suggested three approaches to linking theories in public policy studies, namely, synthesis, complementary, and contradictory. In a synthesis approach, researchers produce a theory based on the insights of multiple theories. In a complementary approach, researchers use different theories to produce a range of insights or explanations. In a contradictory approach, researchers compare the insights of different theories before choosing one over the other (Cairney, 2013). Considering the complex nature of teacher education policy, I chose in this study to create an integrated theoretical framework using the synthesis approach to develop a more thorough understanding of the policy networks that influenced the teacher education policy making process at the state level. Figure 3-1 approximated the visualization of the integrated framework.

Figure 3-1

Integrated Theoretical Framework for Understanding Teacher Education Policymaking Process



My decision to create an integrated theoretical framework for this research by using the synthesis approach was informed by John's (2003) argument that new synthetic theories are needed for understanding and analyzing the complex and dynamic world of policymaking. Specifically, I embraced five broad theoretical perspectives: institutional perspectives, groups and networks perspectives, exogenous perspectives, rational actor perspectives, and ideas-based perspectives (John, 2012). While each of the theories has been broadly applied in public policy studies, "they all [told] an incomplete story – often because they fail[ed] to incorporate key aspects of the other perspectives" (John, 2012, p. 12). For example, the groups and networks perspectives focus on the relationships among policy actors, but they fail to consider the impact of the rules of the institutions where the decisions take place. Similarly, the institutional

perspective falls short of explaining why particular policy changes happen within the same institution.

This dissertation provides a unique opportunity to experiment with an integrated theoretical framework because of the complexity of and limited research on teacher education policy making. Much of the current scholarship analyzing teacher education policy has taken a single focus on either the influences of politics and ideologies on teacher education or on the increasing involvement of non-traditional policy actors in the policy decision-making process. Rarely has there been research attending to the entire policy network structure in teacher education policy or the ways in which policy networks and coalitions are formed to exchange resources and information in the policy making process.

Each of the three theories discussed in this research, bounded rationality, network theories, and the advocacy coalition framework, made unique yet intersecting contributions to this framework. Specifically, bounded rationality's emphasis that individual actors are bounded by the policy environment and resources connects well with the network theories to analyze how individual policy actors, each of who was bounded by their own knowledge and access to information, exchanged resources to achieve collective policy goals within the network. Additionally, ACF helps to identify and analyze the network structures within policy subsystems in order to understand whether or not subgroups of policy actors existed within a policy network and if yes, why such coalitions among policy actors were formed. I believe that such an integrated framework is appropriate and sufficient in guiding this study of the state *ESSA Title II* policy making processes.

3.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has reviewed and discussed key concepts framing this dissertation research, i.e., bounded rationality, social networks and policy networks, and the advocacy coalition framework. The integrated theoretical framework adopted for this study is a synthesis of these theories to maximize their interpretational power in illustrating a more wholistic picture of stakeholder engagement in state teacher education policy making.

In sum, section 3.1 reviewed the origin and development of rational choice theory and the concept of bounded rationality, followed by a discussion of their limitations. Due to the limit of information and other factors, decision makers are bounded in make choices. Section 3.2 outlined policy networks as a helpful concept to explore stakeholder engagement in the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans, taking into consideration the hierarchical nature of policy making structures and the interdependence of policy actors. Section 3.3 elaborated the concept of coalition building with a focus on the advocacy coalition framework model to describe attempts of political actors to use partnerships and collaboration to increase their success in the policy process.

This chapter concluded with the presentation of the integrated framework, building on John's recommendation for a new synthetic approach in analyzing the complex and dynamic world of policy making (John, 2003, 2012). The complex nature of teacher education and the limited research on teacher education policy warrant such a framework in exploring stakeholder engagement and coalition-building in teacher education policy making in the U.S., with state *ESSA Title II* plan development process as an example. The research questions concerning this dissertation study, the rationale for this study, and research design will be explained in more detail in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4 THE STUDY

Chapter Two and Chapter Three collectively identified the needs for more research on policy stakeholder engagement in teacher education policy making and suggested that bounded rationality, social and policy networks, and coalition-building as useful frameworks for this research. This chapter explains the rationale, context, and purposes of this dissertation research. I first provided a rationale for an analysis of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, the most recent federal teacher education policy, and in particular for the selection of the six states examined in this study. I then explain the policy context of *ESSA* and the specific stakeholder engagement requirements mandated by the U.S. Department of Education. I conclude this chapter by explicating the purposes of this research, the research questions, and the significance of this study.

4.1 The Focus on *ESSA* and the Selection of Six Case States

I adopted a multiple case study design (Yin, 2009) to analyze the development of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title II* (“*Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders*”) in six selected states as cases of the ways in which organizational policy stakeholders engaged and collaborated in the policy making process. Case study was selected as the approach because it is suitable to explore complex organizational and political phenomena and to provide an in-depth understanding of the contextual parameters of contemporary, real-life processes (Yin, 2009),

My selection of *ESSA Title II* as a focus in this study was primarily driven by its relevance as one of the two current and most recent U.S. teacher education policies at the federal

level.³ Another reason for choosing the *ESSA Title II* state plans as the focus of analysis was its “stakeholder engagement” requirement that required each state to engage representatives of the many stakeholder groups affected by the law in the state-level policy making process. This particular requirement offered a unique opportunity to examine the stakeholders who had an interest in teacher education policy. The state plans further lent themselves to studying policy networks in teacher education because of the availability of publicly published documents, including state policies submitted to the federal government, documents recording the stakeholder engagement, and early drafts of the policies, all of which were produced during the process of state *ESSA* plan development.

The policy network in six states—Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Washington—were selected for analysis in this research based on the availability of relevant data and primarily the size of the particular *Title II* network (explained later) in each state. I started by examining the stakeholder engagement documents from all 52 state plans, of which only sixteen included a detailed list of stakeholders who participated in the *Title II* plan development. The rest of the states either had a list of all stakeholders engaged across all components of *ESSA* plan or did not list specific individual and organizational stakeholders.

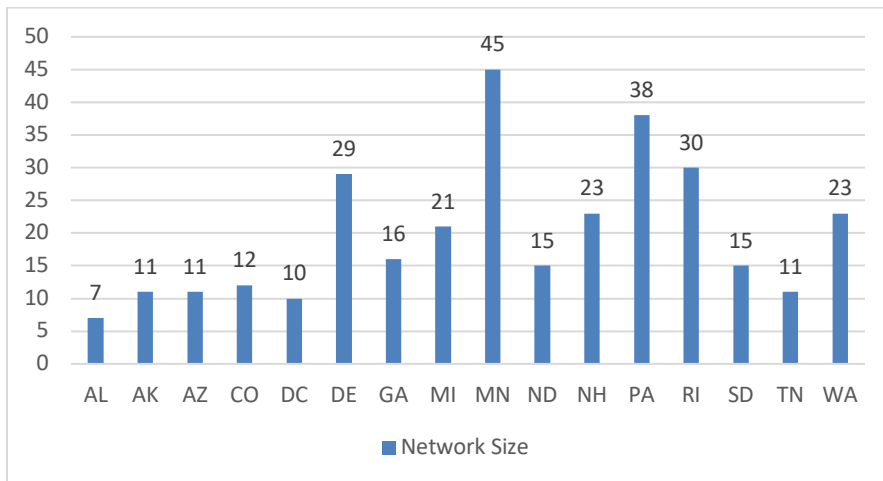
Figure 4-1 displays the size of *Title II* networks in all 16 states with available data. The average number of stakeholder organizations engaged in these states *Title II* committees was 20. Aiming to capture variation in the structural patterns of relation that, in theory, had consequences for network effectiveness (Provan & Kenis, 2008), I sought to sample states with varying network sizes. Specifically, Minnesota (45) and Pennsylvania (38) were selected as states who had the largest number of stakeholders involved in the making of state *ESSA Title II* plans while

³ As mentioned earlier, the Higher Education Act is the other policy.

Colorado (12) and Tennessee (11) were among the states with the smallest *ESSA Title II* committees, and Michigan (21) and Washington (23) were chosen because the sizes of their *Title II* policy networks are around the average.

Figure 4-1

Distribution of State Title II Stakeholder Network Size



Case studies are most powerful in studying an individual case intensively in depth yet have been criticized for not allowing the comparison or generalization of findings outside the investigated cases (Hammersley, 1992; Lewis et al., 2014). In response, researchers have explored the inferential and theoretical generalization of case studies, i.e., instead of focusing on the representational generalization of findings specific to the case contexts, some propositions and conclusions of case studies could be transferable to other settings similar to the case studied (Lewis et al., 2014).

In this study, I focused the analysis on the development of *ESSA Title II* plans at the state level in order to achieve a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of stakeholder engagement

in state teacher education policy making. As such, multiple states were selected as cases for comparative analysis purposes with the hope of strengthening the transferability of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition, a multiple case study design allowed for a wider range of perspectives of participants from diverse state policy making contexts. Considering the complex nature of teacher education policy in the U.S., in particular the greater policy making flexibility given to states in the *ESSA* era, the multiple case study design was appropriate to capturing the variations among state policy making processes. I paid particular attention to the similarities and differences during the data analysis process with regard to the broader state context and specific stakeholders' perceptions and experiences in relation to their policy making engagement.

4.2 Teacher Quality and Teacher Preparation in *ESSA*

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* was signed into law on December 10, 2015. It reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, the nation's 55-year-old education law that sought to achieve educational equality for all students. It also replaced the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* version of *ESEA* enacted in 2002. One of the most distinguished features of *ESSA* was that it provided state and local educational agencies with more decision-making authority than *NCLB* and offered more flexibility for teacher education programs in meeting state specific needs. The 2016-2017 school year was stipulated as the transition year to meet the major requirements of *ESSA*. States were required to create new plans and fully implement those new plans starting from the 2017-2018 school year.

The biggest change made by *ESSA* regarding teacher preparation and qualifications was the elimination of the "highly qualified teacher" requirement of *NCLB*. "Highly qualified teachers" were defined in *NCLB* as teachers who had achieved full state certification or licensure, a bachelor's degree, and demonstrated competency in the subject(s) they taught. The

law required states to assess students' access to "highly qualified teachers," to develop accountability systems to ensure that all teachers met those criteria, and report on their progress towards achieving these goals (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). While this "highly qualified teacher" requirement was somehow watered down in practice due to a waiver that the U.S. Department of Education later granted for several years, *ESSA*'s elimination of the "highly qualified teacher" provision signaled a major policy shift. It replaced it with a single requirement that Title I program teachers should meet "applicable" state certification and licensure requirements, which left much power to the hands of state educational agencies and policy makers.

Under *ESSA*, states could use *Title II, Part A* funds (up to a maximum of 4.85 percent) to establish or expand teacher preparation academies (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015, [section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xii), 2101(c)(3)]). A teacher preparation academy needed to be established by a public or other nonprofit entity, which could be an institution of higher education (IHE) or an IHE-affiliated organization, with an agreement with a State authorizer that specified the goals of the academy (ESSA, 2015, [section 2002(4)]). However, the term "state authorizer" was defined in the policy as an entity designated by the State Governor, which could be a nonprofit organization, State educational agency, other public entities, or a consortium of such entities (ESSA, 2015, [section 2002(3)]).

In fact, states were encouraged by the U.S. Department of Education to learn from the large variety of charter authorizers when designating their own state teacher academy authorizers. Prospective teachers prepared by these academies were required to have clinical preparation while receiving concurrent instruction from the academy in the content area and to demonstrate success in increasing student academic achievement. The states establish academies

must allow candidates attending an academy to be eligible for state financial aid to the same extent as teacher candidates trained in other state-approved teacher preparation programs (TPPs) (ESSA, 2015, [section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xii)(II)]). Successful completers would receive a certificate of completion or degree that may be recognized by the state as at least the equivalent of a master's degree in education for the purposes of hiring, retention, compensation, and promotion (ESSA, 2015, [section 2002(4)(D)]). The reduced requirements for teacher preparation academies compared with other TPPs, especially the removal of “unnecessary” restrictions on the academy's faculty, physical infrastructure, required course credits, and accreditation requirements, encouraged a *de facto* double standard in teacher preparation.

SEAs and local educational agencies (LEAs) may also use *ESSA Title II, Part A* funds to establish, improve, or support school-based teacher residency programs. These programs were defined as school-based teacher preparation programs in which a prospective teacher would teach alongside an effective mentor teacher, as determined by the state or the LEAs, for at least one academic year while taking courses taught by LEA personnel or by faculty of partner university teacher preparation program (ESSA, 2015, [section 2002(5), 2101(c)(4)(B)(xi), 2103(b)(3)(B)]) in conjunction with a state agency of higher education (ESSA, 2015, [section 2101(c)(4)(A)]).

Additionally, it would also be possible for SEAs to use *ESSA Title II, Part A* state activities funds to support programs that would establish, expand, or improve alternative routes to state certification for educators, especially for special education, English language learner education (ELLs), and the subjects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (ESSA, 2015, [section 2101(c)(4)(B)(iv)]). This stipulation was developed under the assumption that alternative routes to teaching could help LEAs to recruit individuals from

diverse backgrounds with the potential to become effective teachers into teaching (ESSA, 2015, [section 2103(b)(3)(C)]). However, the definition of what program is considered as “alternative” was left to be determined by individual states.

The final part of the law gave states greater flexibility and responsibility in planning holistically about improving educational outcomes for all students (U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DoE], 2016). It asked each state to describe strategies to support and develop excellent educators, including efforts to enhance and expand their systems of professional development, retention, and career advancement (DoE, 2016). Additionally, the final regulation also required each state to integrate its previously developed “Educators Equity Plan” into the consolidated state *ESSA* plan to operationalize its requirement that historically underserved students in Title I schools would not be taught at higher rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers (DoE, 2016).

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement in *ESSA*

ESSA also required that states must outreach to and gather input from various stakeholder groups to inform the development of their state plans. Stakeholders engaged in this process must reflect the geographic diversity of the state and include the following individuals and entities (ESSA, 2015, [section 1111 (a)(1)(A)]):

- The Governor, or appropriate officials from the Governor’s office;
- Members of the state legislature;
- Members of the state Board of Education;
- Local educational agencies (LEAs), including those in rural areas;
- Representatives of Native American groups located in the State;

- Teachers, principals, other school leaders; paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and organizations representing such individuals;
- Charter school leaders;
- Parents and families;
- Community-based organizations;
- Civil rights organizations, including those representing students with disabilities, English learners, and other historically underserved students;
- Institutions of higher education (IHEs);
- Employers; and
- The general public

States must allow the public at least 30 days to comment on the plan before submitting plans to the U.S. Department of Education for review and approval (ESSA, 2015. [section 1111(a)(8)]).

While *ESSA* required stakeholder engagement, there were no specific guidelines for states regarding stakeholder engagement procedures or for documenting stakeholder engagement efforts and outcomes. Focus groups, public meetings, webinars, online surveys, Twitter chats were among the outreach efforts adopted by states in this study to engage their stakeholders. Some states chose to use their Introduction part of the plan or added a separate section to their plan to map out a high-level overview of how stakeholders had been engaged throughout the plan development process and how they would continue being engaged during the implementation phase. For example, Colorado dedicated 15 pages to detailing how they had engaged with their stakeholders and New Mexico included in Section Two of its plan a list of stakeholders and a summary of how the SEA had consulted with American Indian tribes.

Other states directly referred to how input from stakeholders had been used to inform key decisions in each section. For example, North Dakota mentioned the “State *ESSA* Committee” and specific subcommittees throughout their plan to show when consensus had been reached with specific stakeholder groups. Additional states chose to add such information in the Appendix of their plans. For instance, New Jersey explicated the ways in which feedback of stakeholders was incorporated into the final state plan in Appendix while other states, such as Massachusetts and Connecticut, published summary documents, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and other materials stakeholders were invited to review and comment on.

The majority of the states started their stakeholder engagement efforts in January 2016 by conducting in-person and virtual meetings with stakeholders and distributing electronic public surveys. Many SEAs, in collaboration with their partners, planned meetings and reached out to collect input and feedback from groups that represented the diversity of local schools and the communities. These engagement and outreach efforts included sessions at statewide meetings that targeted a wide range of stakeholder and advocacy groups, face-to-face forums with groups of district Superintendents, strategic planning meetings and focus groups with state education professional associations and teachers, as well as online surveys open to the public.

4.4 Purpose of the Study

The chronological synopsis of *ESSA* plan development at the federal and state levels presented in the previous sections of this chapter did not capture the complex and complicated process of the state-specific *ESSA* plan construction process. Nor did it illustrate the roles that various education stakeholders played in this process. The overarching goal of this dissertation was thus to analyze the engagement and collaboration of organizational stakeholders in the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans in six selected states as cases, with the hope of revealing

the formation and dynamics of the policy networks in each state. As explained in the previous chapter, theories drawn from bounded rationality, social networks and policy networks, and coalition building were used to inform this analysis

4.5 Research Questions

This dissertation research was guided by the following research questions in achieving the aforementioned goals:

- Who were the stakeholders constituting the policy networks in the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans and what did the policy networks look like in each of the six sample states?
- Did sub-coalitions emerge in policy networks within states? What are the features of different coalitions (their membership, their members' positions on the policy issues and their relationships with each other)?
- How did stakeholders from different coalitions engage in the policy process and what were their specific views, their motives to engage, their interpretations of the dynamics of the network/coalition, and their experiences in engaging in the policy process?

4.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the literature on policy network analysis, teacher education policy development, and to theories of policymaking and decision-making. Methodologically, by applying social network analysis (SNA) to the study of the development of teacher education policy, this study will provide evidence for the applicability of SNA as a method in analyzing stakeholder engagement and policy networks in education settings, and in teacher education policy making in particular. While previous research has acknowledged the importance of policy

networks and coalition-building in the study of policy making (Rhodes, 2008; Sabatier & Weible, 2007), this study will be among the few existing studies in applying SNA to investigate potential subgroups in a policy network (Frank, 1995). Another methodological contribution of this study will be in addressing the ongoing debates within the SNA literature on the antagonism between qualitative and quantitative SNA approaches. By employing a mixed-method SNA approach, this research will provide insights into how qualitative network analysis that considers motivation and ideology can help identify the importance of particular actors within a policy network and lead to a more comprehensive understanding of collaboration and coalition-building among policy actors within a policy network.

Few studies - to my best knowledge - have systematically investigated the interactions of stakeholders engaging in the development of teacher education policy in the U.S. context or have empirically illuminated the policy process with respect to the formation, composition, and dynamics of policy coalitions. This study will be among the first to present empirical evidence about the complexity of coalitions in teacher education policy making at the state level. It analyzed the overall networks of actors involved in the policy making process and the variety of their perspectives, including those from philanthropic organizations, whose increasing interest in shaping education policy has been documented in research (Kretchmar et al., 2014, 2016). This study was also able to compare and contrast the actions of philanthropic actors with other network actors and situate the philanthropic engagement within the broader context of political interest representation.

From a conceptual perspective, policymaking and decision-making theories have both been extensively explored in the fields of political science and political sociology and applied in many other domains while generally being given less attention in the study of education policy.

By applying an integrated theoretical framework of policy making, this study not only contributes to the existing policy making and decision-making literature by providing new perspectives and contexts from the perspective of education, but it also offers a more wholistic illustration of teacher education policy making by incorporating key aspects of different theoretical perspectives from neighboring disciplines.

CHAPTER 5 METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodological approach of this dissertation study. This study employed social network analysis (SNA) to analyze the policy networks of actors involved in the selected states' development of *ESSA Title II* plans. SNA has been gaining attention in a variety of disciplines in social and natural sciences (Butts, 2009; van Duijn & Vermunt, 2006) . Data collected from public documents and semi-structured, narrative interviews with participants involved in the state *Title II* plan development process were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed to investigate the composition, structure, and functioning of the policy networks.

This chapter outlines the key features of SNA with a discussion of the advantages of quantitative and qualitative approaches to network analysis and the mixed-method SNA design. Section 5.2 explicates the methodological assumptions underlying the selection of the two data sources, documentary data and semi-structured, narrative interviews. The next section explains the quantitative network analysis approach in policy research and the specific network boundaries defined in this study. I also explain how textual data from policy documents were converted, analyzed, and visualized with the assistance of network analysis software.

Section 5.4 describes the qualitative network analysis, focusing on the ways in which the participants were selected and recruited based on the quantitative network analysis results, the development interview questions, and the thematic analysis of interview data. The final section of this chapter explained how quantitative and qualitative network analyses were integrated and triangulated in this mixed methods study.

5.1 Social Network Analysis

Traditionally, social scientific research used to treat individual characteristics as key determinants of behavior and assesses whether a particular outcome would occur more often among certain groups of individuals with particular characteristics (Marin & Wellman, 2011). In recent years, researcher have paid more attention to the interdependence of individuals and the importance of networks and relationships among social actors in explaining social phenomena (Thompson, 2004). Crossley (2010), for example, argued that social actors' behavior is influenced by their "social worlds" and that they share "meanings, purposes, knowledge, understandings, identities, [...and] conventions" with others they interacted with (pp. 1, 7). Social network analysis (SNA) is thus a helpful research method to understand the patterns of interaction among social actors (Emirbayer, 1997; Marin & Wellman, 2011). SNA provides both a theoretical perspective and a set of techniques that take account of the complexity of social interaction and the interdependence of actors (Compston, 2009). The crucial difference between a social network explanation and a non-network explanation of actors' behavior is the consideration of relationships (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The aim of SNA is therefore to analyze relationships, information, and resource flows among people, organizations, political entities, and other units, and the ways in which these connections affect behavior (Compston, 2009).

5.1.1 *Social Network Research on Education Policy making*

SNA is in particular helpful to study interactions among policy actors, the constraints and opportunities as a result of the patterned relationships among them, and the impact of the policy environment on policy action (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994). The complexity of public

education and the well-integrated and compound social networks and discourse communities associated with education policy making provide unique opportunities for SNA to investigate the stakeholder engagement in the process of education policy development. Several recent studies have adopted SNA to study education policy reforms (Au & Ferrare, 2015) and corporate sponsorship in education policy (Sondel et al., 2015). However, much of the literature on the conceptualization and description of education policy networks is concerned with network structures rather than with their operations (Ball & Junemann, 2012; Provan & Kenis, 2008).

5.1.2 *Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Network Analysis*

Social network studies that apply a quantitative approach gather data in numerical form and transform them into matrices, graphs, and statistical measures to analyze the structure of a network (Crossley, 2010; Edwards, 2010). Quantitative approaches also ensure that possible relationships and network actors are systematically captured and analyzed, including relationships that are less obvious or completely absent (Crossley, 2010). Quantitative network analysis minimizes relational data about network actors, their attributes, and relationships - which are often complex and convoluted and therefore difficult to store, retrieve and analyze - in a numeric format (Crossley, 2010). By simplifying the complexity of social relationships and making data accessible in an alternative format, quantitative approaches can help researchers handle intricate information about a multifaceted network and grasp complex social phenomena (Crossley, 2010). Quantitative SNA also allows the researcher to systematically analyze the position, structural constraints and opportunities, and the relationships among network members, which may lead to more in-depth, qualitative exploration of a network (Crossley, 2010). One of the limitations of quantitative approaches to network analysis is its over-abstraction and simplification (Crossley, 2010). Relationships, for example, are not merely either absent or

present and the position of actors in a network alone cannot provide conclusive insight into their actual importance, performance or strategic behaviors (Crossley, 2010).

Alleviating some of the limitations of quantitative network analysis, qualitative approaches to SNA pay more attention to the content of networks and what happens within a network (Crossley, 2010). These approaches are particularly appropriate in exploring social actors' interpretations, opinions, and perceptions of a network, the process and quality of their interactions and relationships with other network members, and the meanings social actors attach to these relationships (Edwards, 2010). Analysis of network data in non-numerical form can also unearth in-depth features of a network and improve understandings about the complexity and dynamics of a network, as well as the social situations within which networks are embedded (Crossley, 2010). These nuanced understandings of social networks are crucial in order to contextualize and complement meanings derived from statistical and sociometric analysis (Crossley, 2010).

5.1.3 *Social Network Analysis in Mixed-Method Research*

SNA is most frequently associated with quantitative analysis of social networks, including statistics, network measures, and the simulation of networks, with qualitative methods comparatively lagging behind (Crossley, 2010). As a result, a methodological debate within network analysis has resulted in “bitter recriminations” among researchers who employ different methodological techniques (Knox et al., 2006, p. 114). This division seems to mirror “the fruitless polemic” between qualitative and quantitative methods that has been observed broadly in social sciences (Bauer et al., 2000, p. 8).

Many scholars have acknowledged that multifaceted research questions that are common addressed in social scientific research often require insights gained from both quantitative and

qualitative approaches and that it should be the research questions that drive the choice of proper methods (Bauer et al., 2000). Therefore, recent literature on SNA has shown the promises of a mixed-methods approach that combine the strengths of quantitative and qualitative network analysis in creating a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the investigated networks (Crossley, 2010; Edwards & Crossley, 2009; Jack, 2010). Social network researchers also postulate that quantitative and qualitative network analysis can be mutually informative (Crossley, 2010; Edwards, 2010; Jack, 2010) and that the mixed-methods approach will allow researchers to simultaneously examine the network structures from an “outsider’s view” and the network content and quality with an “insider’s view” (Edwards, 2010, p. 2).

I adopted a mixed-methods design for this dissertation after considering the benefits and limitations of both quantitative and qualitative network analysis methods. A mixed-methods approach was chosen because it allowed me to use results from one type of analysis to inform the other, thus expanding the breadth and depth of the analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Additionally, a mixed-methods design also allows for complementarity where quantitative and qualitative methods are used to “measure overlapping but also different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon” (Greene et al., 1989, pp. 258-259). Specifically, I chose the mixed-methods explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) by starting with a quantitative social network analysis to construct the policy networks of stakeholders involved in the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans and to examine the distinct coalitions that emerged within the policy networks. I then conducted semi-structured interviews based on the results of the quantitative SNA to examine the experiences of stakeholder engagement from different coalitions.

5.2 Data Sources

The triangulation of different data sources was not simply a question of functionality and data management but rooted in more fundamental considerations about research paradigms. I decided to assign importance to a variety of policy actors' perspectives and interpretations of the process leading to the selected states' *ESSA Title II* plans, and therefore I chose to follow an interpretive epistemological approach (Ormston et al., 2014). Having previously been employed in organizational research (e.g. Sandberg, 2005), an interpretive approach offers the promise of providing valuable insights into the actions of organizational actors in the development of policy. Selecting an interpretive epistemological approach was also premised on my beliefs that the "reality" of policy making was socially constructed and that individual policy actors' narratives were specific to their lived experiences in their specific policy situations and their negotiations with others in the process (Sandberg, 2005).

Complementing this epistemological approach, I decided to base this research on subtle realism as described by Hammersley (1992), who contended that a social phenomenon can only be captured through the interpretation of individual narratives. Subtle realism conceptualized in this way recognizes the importance and explanatory relevance of meanings assigned to an event, and process, interaction, or other social phenomena. It also emphasizes the significance of the context of the investigated phenomenon. Following this ontological position, I saw my main task in this research as describing, interpreting, and constructing a narrative based on information obtained from different data sources that lead to a comprehensive understanding of the policy actions taken in developing the state *ESSA Title II* plans by comparing and contrasting various perspectives of policy actors. In order to achieve this goal, I decided to gather written data from existing documentary sources and data collected from interviews with a variety of policy actors.

Combining documentary data with interview data has been identified as helpful in providing a multidimensional account of a process or an event, including policy incidents (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Lewis & Nicholls, 2014; Lilleker, 2003) and it has also been applied in education research (Carolan, 2014).

Publicly available documents have been recognized as important data sources in policy research (Collins, 2000) because they provide a form of “naturally occurring data” (Ritchie & Ormston, 2014) that is increasingly available through online archives and public websites. These documents can provide valuable information about the policy phenomena, policy decisions, and the contexts in which they occur (Ritchie & Ormston, 2014). In the context of this study, state educational agencies (SEAs) were required by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DoE) to form *ESSA* stakeholder committees and post on their websites documents about the membership of these committees and about their stakeholder engagement progress. These documents served as the data about network actors and their affiliated organizations. Additional data about relationships among these policy actors were extracted from the most recent annual reports, websites, tax forms, and publicity and marketing materials from the identified organizations.

After identifying organizational stakeholders from public documents, I conducted semi-structured, narrative interviews with selected decision makers, stakeholders, and other individuals, such as SEA staff members, involved in the development of the selected states’ *ESSA Title II* plans to gain an understanding of their experiences, views, and interpretations of the policy making process. Interviews allowed participants to not only recall but also make sense of, attach meanings to, and find explanations for what happened and what they experienced (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Interview data thus captured implicit assumptions about how policy actors understood and interpreted the policy situations (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000) and

revealed information about the participants' perspectives with respect to what aspects of the policy making process that mattered to them (Frank, 2002). Additionally, interview data helped to explore the internal mechanisms of policy processes and the activities that took place behind closed doors from the perspectives of policy participants (Lewis & Nicholls, 2014; Lilleker, 2003). Richards (1996) maintained that interviews with policy actors could provide information that was not officially recorded and reveal their perceptions, motivations, reactions and analysis of policy events (Lilleker, 2003). These data thus complemented the official records and reports of the policy process with personal and individual narratives of policy actors.

I chose to conduct narrative interviews in particular because interviews as a research method have been criticized for the question-response schema and for imposing a rigid structure of topic selection, question wording, and ordering (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). The narrative interview instead aims to minimize the impact of the interviewer by emphasizing the respondents' perspectives during the conversation by encouraging them to report what they felt to be most important and relevant to the events under investigation (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000).

In addition, narrative interview is uniquely appropriate to study potentially contentious issues, such as the policy making process that inevitably invoke different views, because it allows the participants from different groups and backgrounds to construct their narratives in relation to their specific social contexts and experiences (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). I believe that semi-structured, narrative interviews are suitable for the purposes of this study because they encourage both policy actors to construct their own narrative accounts and provide me with additional opportunities to follow up with semi-structured interview questions that allow me to compare different narratives across participants and stakeholder groups.

5.3 Quantitative Network Analysis

The importance of networks and relationships among actors has long been acknowledged (Marin & Wellman, 2011) and quantitative approaches to network analysis have been extensively applied to analyze human interaction in a variety of disciplines, including political science, medical and health studies, psychology, anthropology, sociology and business studies (Valente, 2010). For the purpose of quantitative analysis, social networks are normally defined as a set of nodes (or network members) that are tied together by one or more types of relationship (Marin & Wellman, 2011). Accordingly, Wasserman and Faust, two of the most prominent scholars associated with quantitative network analysis, assert that “a social network consists of a finite set or sets of actors and the relation or relations defined by them” (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 22). Quantitative approaches to SNA also adopt mathematical foundations of graph theory and include a set of predominantly descriptive statistics of the network’s structure (Carolan, 2014).

5.3.1 *Network Boundaries*

In quantitative network research, data are collected on two features of a network: nodes and relationships (Knoke & Yang, 2020; Scott, 2017; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The actors comprising the network are defined as nodes, which can be individuals, organizations, websites, political actors, and states or other entities (Knoke & Yang, 2020; Marin & Wellman, 2011; Scott, 2017; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Data collected on nodes include the identification of relevant actors and the retrieval of information about them, for example, their characteristics or attributes (Knoke & Yang, 2020; Scott, 2017; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The relationships, or ties, among the nodes constitute the second type of quantitative network data (Knoke & Yang,

2020; Scott, 2017; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Relationships can take a variety of forms, including collaborations, friendships, formal or informal relationships, associations or affiliations, and resource or information flows (Knoke & Yang, 2020; Marin & Wellman, 2011; Scott, 2017; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Selecting actors and defining relationships among actors are central tasks of quantitative network analysis and are often called boundary specification. Research has found that network boundaries are often unclear and that it is often difficult to determine definitely whether or not an individual belongs to a network (John, 2012). The boundaries of a network, however, have important implications for the statistical analysis of network measures because omitting a key actor or crucial links within a network can distort the overall configuration of actors in a network (Laumann et al., 1983). Many network studies are found to be less clear about boundary specification and fail to justify their choice of nodes and relationships (Laumann et al., 1983). While network boundaries are necessarily artificial constructs and capturing and depicting a network in its entirety is impossible in reality, defining network boundaries in a way that is justifiable and suited to the research question is of great significance for network analysis (Heath et al., 2009). Boundary specification is likely to be even more important when studying policy networks, which are fluid, complex and difficult to grasp (Compston, 2009).

Distinctions have been made between network specification that is based on the limits imposed on the network by actors themselves, and strategies based on researcher-imposed boundaries (Laumann et al., 1992; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Laumann et al. (1983, 1992) has further distinguished three approaches for researcher-imposed boundary specification that are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

- An attribute-based approach, which is the most commonly applied approach in quantitative network analysis that considers only those actors that hold a specific formal position to be part of the network (Laumann et al., 1983). Studies that apply an attribute-based approach might identify a population or a naturally occurring cluster like a classroom, organization, corporate group, or neighborhood, and investigate every member of this population (Laumann et al., 1983). Alternatively, all people who live in a particular area or meet specific inclusion criteria may be recorded as members of a network (Laumann et al., 1983).
- A relation-based approach begins with a small set of actors that are deemed to be key players within the population of interest and expands to others who share a particular type of relation with those initially identified (Laumann et al., 1992).
- An event-based approach is applied when all actors that participate in a key event or activity are included as nodes in the network (Laumann et al., 1983). In order to avoid arbitrariness and allow for some degree of generalization, events or activities need to be carefully chosen and justified (Laumann et al., 1992).

In addition to the considerations above, practical restrictions including feasibility, manageability, and access can all influence the specification of network boundaries. As a result of expediency and the challenges associated with the collection of data on policy networks, some studies have chosen to focus on a selected number of actors within a wider network (e.g. Au & Ferrare, 2015).

In this study, I selected the event-based approach to define the scope of the policy networks around the single policy event of developing state *ESSA Title II* plans. An event-based approach has previously been used in policy making studies (Laumann et al., 1992) and is a suitable strategy for exploring stakeholder engagement. In this study, nodes were defined as

stakeholders who were listed on state *ESSA* websites as members of a committee specifically focusing on teacher quality and teacher education, which is the main focus of *ESSA Title II*. Other actors, such as the public audience, who participated in open meetings and workshops were not included as nodes in this research based on the assumption that their feedback would be more general and less specific on teacher education.

5.3.2 *Quantitative Network Data Collection*

After selecting the event-based approach to boundary specification and locating public websites and policy documents for quantitative network analysis, the next step was to convert the data from continuous text into a format that could be analyzed with network analysis software. I explain the procedures I followed in identifying nodes and analyzing data below.

5.3.2.1 Nodes

Each organization that was listed on state *ESSA* websites as a member of a *Title II* related committee was designated as a node. It is worth noting that in some states, more than one committee was formed to cover different topic areas under *ESSA Title II*. When that was the case, members from all *Title II* related committees were considered to be nodes in that state's *Title II* policy network because the final state *Title II* plan was a policy outcome collectively produced by members involved in these committees. Moreover, in some states, SEA staff members were listed as “facilitators” of the state *Title II* committee. These staff members were not considered as “nodes” in the quantitative network analysis because they were not listed as the formal committee members. However, a few SEA staff members were interviewed during the qualitative analysis phase of this study in order to provide an “outsider’s” observation of the

policy process and the interactions among stakeholders. The number of nodes for each of the six states' *ESSA Title II* policy networks was listed in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1

Number of Nodes in Each State

| <i>State</i> | <i>CO</i> | <i>MI</i> | <i>MN</i> | <i>TN</i> | <i>PA</i> | <i>WA</i> |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <i># of Nodes</i> | 12 | 21 | 45 | 11 | 38 | 23 |

5.3.2.2 Relationships

For the quantitative analysis of policy networks, a relationship was assumed to exist between an organization *i* and an organization *j* if at least one of the following conditions was met:

- Organization *i* and organization *j* had a partnership
- Organization *i* and organization *j* had a sponsorship
- Organization *i* and organization *j* had personnel flow

Organizations were defined as having a partnership—and assumed to be generally willing to collaborate with each other—if one of the organizations officially declared such a relationship with the other organization. In order to identify partnerships, the website of each organizational stakeholder identified as a node was carefully reviewed and searched. If an organization mentioned a membership, partnership, or collaboration with another organization that had also been identified as a node in the same policy network, the two organizations were coded as having a partnership.

A sponsorship relationship was identified if one organization in the network had offered financial support to another organization in the same network, using data collected from the organizations' most recent annual reports, websites, tax forms, and publicity and marketing materials. Due to the limited and often incomplete information about organizational partnerships and sponsorships that was made available to the public, personnel flow was also considered as an indicator of an organizational relationship. That is, if one organization in the network was founded by a former staff member or alumni from another one in the same policy network; or when one or more former staff member or alumni from one organization were serving in senior executive positions at another organization in the network, the two organizations were considered as having a relationship.

A matrix was created with data coded as binary, that is, when one of the two or both organizations mentioned some type(s) of relationship with another it was coded as 1, and when neither of the organizations mentioned a relationship with another it was coded as 0. Because the data did not always allow reliable assertions about the direction of the relationships, I decided to code the data as undirected. As a result, all relationships were symmetrized: if a relationship was identified from organization i to organization j , the same relationship was assumed from organization j to organization i , i.e., the relationship between actor i and actor j in the network could be described as $n_{ij} = n_{ji}$. Self-partnerships were disallowed.

5.3.3 *Quantitative Network Data Analysis*

Networks can be analyzed at both the network or group level and at the individual level (Valente, 2010). Network level measures provide insight into the overall structure of a network and one or several smaller groups within a network (Carolan, 2014). When the analysis centers on a network, the entire network and the relationships among all network actors are considered.

If the focus of analysis is on a group (which is also referred as a “subgraph” or “component” of a network [Marin & Wellman, 2011, p. 21]), a subset of nodes and their links are analyzed. In contrast, analysis at the individual level sheds light on the positions, constraints, and opportunities of individual network actors (Carolan, 2014). A number of network level and individual level measures were calculated for the policy networks in this research and the analytical approach is described below.

I first analyzed the overall *ESSA Title II* policy network within each state that included all organizations identified from official state documents. I detected the following features of a network and its nodes:

- Size: number of nodes;
- Edge: number of relationships/ties;
- Density: a measure of the proportion of possible ties that are actual connections: how many ties among actors exist compared to how many ties among actors are possible;
- Node Centrality: an indicator of an actor’s power, influence, visibility, or prestige measured by three fundamental measures below (briefly, degree centrality indicates the volume of direct connections, closeness centrality measures the speed of communication, and between centrality reveals an actor’s brokerage position within a network):
 - Degree centrality: examines the degree to which a specific node is connected with other nodes in the network;
 - Closeness centrality: calculates how fast node *i* can reach all other nodes in a network;
 - Betweenness centrality: measures the extent to which node *i* is on the geodesic paths of all other pairs of nodes in a network.

- Isolators: nodes with no neighbors/no connections to other nodes (degree “0”);
- Cutpoints: nodes whose removal would lead to new separations of a previously existing group⁴

The social systems contained in networks often exhibit complex structures. For example, in his classic “*The strength of weak ties*”, Granovetter (1973) suggested that many social networks are made up of relatively densely connected subgroups that are themselves only connected via less common ties. Thus, it is important to define and identify such subgroups. As part of the theoretical framework of this research, the advocacy coalition framework posits that larger policy networks are made up of distinguishable subgroups, thus warranting the identification of the sub-coalitions in large networks.

I chose to use community detection techniques in this study because they were able to detect the “natural division” of a network into subsets of nodes, regardless of the number or size of the groups or the number of relationships within and between groups (Newman, 2010). Therefore, the community detection techniques were appropriate for this study due to the uneven policy network sizes in the examined states and the research focus on groups of policy actors with shared interests and actions. Nine of the most popular community detection algorithms were used to test the subgroups of each individual state’s *ESSA Title II* policy network:

- Edge-betweenness: a top-down hierarchical decomposition process where ties were removed in the decreasing order of their tie betweenness scores. Ties connecting different groups were more likely to be contained in multiple shortest paths simply because in many cases these were the only options to go from one group to another;

⁴ In graph theory, a node *i* is a cutpoint if “the number of components in the graph that contains *i* is fewer than the number of components in the subgraph that results from deleting *i* from the graph” (Wassermann & Faust, 1994, p. 112-113).

- Leading eigenvector: a top-down hierarchical approach that optimized the modularity function again. In each step, the graph was split into two parts in a way that the separation itself yielded a significant increase in the modularity;
- Fast-greedy: a bottom-up hierarchical approach that optimized modularity in a greedy manner. The algorithm stopped when it was not possible to increase the modularity anymore. However, communities with a small size might be merged with neighboring communities;
- Louvain: a hierarchical approach that initially assigned each node to a community on its own. In every step, each node was moved to the community with which it achieved the highest contribution to modularity. When no node could be reassigned, each community was considered as a new “node” on its own, and the process started again until the modularity score could not be increased;
- Walktrap: an approach based on random walks⁵. When performing random walks on the graph, the walks were more likely to stay within the same community because there were only a few ties that led outside a given community. The random walks results would then be used in the same way as fast-greedy algorithm to merge different communities;
- Label propagation: a simple approach where every node was assigned to one of k labels⁶. It then proceeded iteratively and re-assigned labels to nodes in a way that each node took the most frequent label of its neighbors in a synchronous manner. This method might lead to different results every time based on the random initial configuration;

⁵ A walk is defined as “a sequence of nodes and lines, beginning with a node and ending with another node, in which every node is incident with the lines preceding and following it in that sequence” (Knoke & Yang, 2020, p. 79).

⁶ Consider a finite label space S containing k distinct labels

- InfoMAP: an approach that used maps to describe the dynamic across the links and nodes in directed, weighted networks;
- Spinglass: an approach based on the assumption that each node could be in one of c spin states and that the interactions among the edges specified which pairs of nodes would prefer to stay in the same spin state and which would have different spin states. It could not be guaranteed that nodes in completely remote (or disconnected) parts of the networks would have different spin states;
- Optimal: an approach used to calculate the community structure with the highest modularity value. (Csardi & Nepusz, 2006)

I decided to apply more than one algorithm in this study because this approach was recommended by researchers conducting comparative evaluations of different algorithm. For example, Orman et al. (2011, 2012) suggested that applying multiple and complementary algorithms will perform a thorough assessment of communities. The modularity⁷ of each algorithm was calculated and compared to decide which algorithm(s) would best explain the division of subgroups in each state's *ESSA Title II* policy network. The modularity ranges from -1 to 1, with a value closer to 1 indicates a stronger community structure while the value of 0 means that the community division is no better than random.

All the network data were analyzed using Statenet, which is a suite of software packages for network analysis that includes tools for model estimation, model evaluation, model-based network simulation, and network visualization (Handcock et al., 2008). The “igraph” package (igraph.org/r) in “R” statistical software was also used to implement the community detection algorithms and to visualize the subnetworks in this research.

⁷ Modularity is a measure of the structure of the network, specifically the extent to which nodes exhibit clustering where there is greater density within the clusters and less density between them (Newman, 2006).

5.4 Qualitative Network Analysis

In this section, I explain the qualitative approach to policy network analysis adopted for this study. I describe the development and piloting of the interview protocol, the selection and recruitment of interview participants, and the interview and data analysis processes.

5.4.1 *Development of the Interview Protocol*

I developed an interview protocol informed by relevant substantive literature on teacher education policy making, the research questions of this dissertation study, interview protocols used and published in other studies with policy actors, and a number of informal pre-pilot conversations with experts in the field and researchers with experiences doing research with policy actors. The final protocol (see appendix A) was reviewed by three experts in the field of teacher education policy and piloted with two policy actors (staff members of a SEA) who were involved in the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans as meeting facilitators, hence not identified as “stakeholders” in this study. This reviewing and piloting procedure allowed me to reframe and refine some of the questions and to practice the interviewing process with regard to timing, sequence, and wording. Some of the adjustments that I made are explained below.

In accord with the semi-structured, narrative interview method, I included in the interview protocol a narrative part that allowed the participants to narrate about their professional backgrounds and career pathways, their motivations for engaging in teacher education policy making, and their reflections on their experiences and “lessons learned” from their participation in the state *ESSA Title II* plan development. I reserved all follow up questions until they finished their narratives without interruption.

Another change that I made was based on the fact that most of the interview participants were active policy actors who were not only knowledgeable about policy issues but also experienced in managing or even steering conversations. Because of this, I intentionally worded the questions in a relatively standardized way. I chose this approach to minimize misunderstanding that might be caused by the ways the questions were asked by me as a non-native English speaker with an accent. I acknowledge that this practice might have decreased the flexibility of the conversation and the left less space for unexpected information (Gaskell, 2000), but I felt that it was necessary to maintain the flow of the interview and ensure that each participant would be presented the same prompts for response.

5.4.2 *Selection and Recruitment of Interview Participants*

Purposive sampling was used to select participants from a wide range of stakeholder groups who were involved in their states' *ESSA Title II* plan development processes. This approach was selected because it allowed for systematic selection of participants who would potentially contribute the most to answering the research questions (Bauer & Aarts, 2000; Gaskell & Bauer, 2000; Lewis & Nicholls, 2014). It also would potentially elicit the maximum variation of information (Carter & Little, 2007).

I identified potential interview participants by reviewing the information included in the published state *ESSA Title II* documents and contact information obtained from organization websites once the organizational stakeholders were identified. Using the published state *ESSA Title II* committee lists as a starting point for purposive sampling, I identified 176 potential interview participants from the six states, including both official committee members and state educational agency staff members serving as facilitators. I initially reached out to all the identified individuals via email due to the expectation that the response rate to such requests

would be low. Some stakeholders had changed organizational affiliations since their participation in this policy making process and their listed email addresses were not valid. I instead tried to locate their contact information from other professional sources, such as LinkedIn, and through Google searches.

I conducted and completed preliminary quantitative network analysis during the interview participant recruitment period I and was able to identify organizations that seemed to occupy prominent positions within their networks. Therefore, I intentionally targeted representatives from these organizations in my follow-up recruitment efforts, usually one week after the initial invitation if no response was received. Other target groups included representatives from organizations that might lean towards different policy perspectives on topics covered by *ESSA Title II* based on their past engagement in teacher education and policy actors who were current K-12 education practitioners or teaching at institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Ultimately, a total of 143 potential participants were contacted, 6 of whom declined and 114 of them did not respond, resulting in a total of 23 (16.1%) policy actors accepting my invitation to be interviewed. This information is summarized in Table 5-2. In almost all instances, it took multiple rounds of efforts to confirm the participation of individuals and to secure an interview time. On average, it took two contacts and three weeks until a consent or refusal was obtained. Comparatively, it took less time to receive a response from SEA staff members and members of IHEs and non-profit organizations than K-12 education practitioners and school district leaders. Common reasons for rejecting the invitation were organizational policies against being interviewed and time constraints. Some also declined to participate citing

feelings that they would not be able to provide information due to perceived limited involvement and inability to recollect memories due to the lapse of time.

Table 5-2

Interviewee Recruitment Status by State

| <i>State</i> | <i>No. of individuals contacted</i> | <i>No. of individuals who accepted</i> | <i>No. of individuals who declined</i> | <i>No. of non-respondents</i> | <i>No. of individuals interviewed</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>CO</i> | 16 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 3 |
| <i>MI</i> | 37 | 4 | 2 | 31 | 4 |
| <i>MN</i> | 29 | 2 | 2 | 25 | 2 |
| <i>PA</i> | 30 | 2 | 1 | 27 | 2 |
| <i>TN</i> | 11 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 1 |
| <i>WA</i> | 20 | 11 | 1 | 8 | 11 |
| <i>Total</i> | 143 | 23 | 6 | 114 | 23 |

Among the 23 participants, six represented individual school districts, five were SEA employees, four were from educational professional organizations (e.g. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD]), two were representatives of associations of school administrators, two were IHE representatives, two state-level policy decision makers (former state secretary of education and state senator), one representative of a teachers' union, and one member of a non-profit advocacy organization. This sample of participants seemed to suggest that school district leaders and members of educational organizations were more involved than other types of stakeholders in the state *ESSA Title II* plan process and were more willing to share their experiences compared with teachers or representatives of teacher groups.

Demographic information about the participants and their organizational affiliation by state were included in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3

Overview of Interviewees in Each State

| <i>State</i> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Type of Organization</i> |
|--------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>CO</i> | Jane | Educational Organization |
| | Jenny | Educational Organization |
| | Tiffany | SEA |
| | Apple | SEA |
| <i>MI</i> | Peter | School District |
| | Ann | Decision Maker |
| | Bang | SEA |
| <i>MN</i> | Teddy | Association of School Administrators |
| | Han | IHE |
| <i>PA</i> | Catherine | Decision Maker |
| | Tracey | School District |
| <i>TN</i> | Marty | IHE |
| | Ashley | School District |
| | David | Association of School Administrators |
| | Michael | Other organization |
| | Jessica | School District |
| <i>WA</i> | Linda | SEA |
| | Lo | Educational Organization |
| | Cherry | Educational Organization |
| | Paige | School District |
| | Rosa | School District |
| | Olivia | Teachers Union |
| | Lu | SEA |

5.4.3 *Conducting Interviews*

Once a respondent agreed to participate, a mutually convenient date and time was arranged over email. I sent an email reminder approximately three days prior to the interview date, along with a consent form (see appendix C) for the participants to read, ask questions, and return to me signed. In a few cases, I also sent more detailed information about the study upon request. In preparing for the interviews, I spent time gathering relevant information about the participants, their organizations at the time of the policy making, and their engagement in teacher education policy in general and in their state's *ESSA Title II* plan development in particular.

All the interviews were conducted by phone, Skype, or Zoom due to the wide spread of the geographical locations of participants. Before each interview, I introduced myself and verbally confirmed with the participants that I had their informed consent to proceed. I also gave the participants chance to ask any questions they might have about the research before the interview. I started the interview by inviting the participants to tell me some background information about themselves and their experiences in teaching, teacher education, and/or education policy. This invitation often led to a first-person narrative that I interrupted as little as possible until it came to a natural end. The narrative allowed me to “tune in” to the participants’ views to get an idea about which aspects of the story and events were most important to them and where their potential policy perspective came from. I then prompted the participants about specific points that had been raised and asked questions from the protocol. I paid particular attention to the participants’ engagement in the development of their states’ *ESSA Title II* plans, their particular interests under *ESSA Title II*, and their efforts to collaborate or build partnerships with other organizational stakeholders. I also asked about the participants’ personal perceptions and experiences with the *ESSA Title II* policy making process, their perspectives on the

composition and membership of the state *ESSA Title II* committee, and the final state *ESSA Title II* plans.

Throughout the interview, I took notes and used visual aids (e.g. a timeline of state *ESSA* development events), documentary material (e.g. state final *ESSA* plan), and the list of relevant stakeholders to remind the participants of particular events, facts, or statements related to my questions. Towards the end of each interview, I invited the participants to comment on anything that they felt was important but left out in the conversation. I concluded each interview by reiterating the anonymity of their identity and the collected information and by thanking the participant for their time. I also made sure to check if and how the participants would like to be informed about the results and final product of this research. On average, the interviews lasted around 45 minutes, ranging from 29 minutes to 55 minutes. I recorded all interviews with permission of the participants.

5.4.4 *Qualitative Data Analysis*

I followed the conventions of qualitative research and analyzed data iteratively, accompanying the data collection process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I transcribed the interview verbatim with the assistance of Temi, an online speech recognition software. I listened to the recordings and checked and edited the Temi transcripts. All transcripts were member checked for accuracy. In a few cases, I followed up with the participants for clarifications or additional information the participants agreed to provide in writing. All interview transcripts were imported to MAXQDA 2020, a qualitative data analysis software, for analysis.

I analyzed the interview data using thematic analysis, a technique that allowed me to explore the themes, opinions and worldviews expressed in interview narratives (Bauer, 2000; Saldana, 2016). I developed a hermeneutic analytical procedure informed by both the research

questions and insights gained from quantitative network analysis, which involved an iterative process of identifying themes and comparing them across sub-samples, similar to Bauer's (2000) approach to qualitative data analysis. I read each interview transcript in MAXQDA 2020 several times and attached comments and annotations to sections that specifically caught my attention. I then developed a preliminary coding frame, consisting of code names, a description of each code, and the rationale underlying it. Following Boyatzis' (1998) framework for thematic analysis and code development, I systematically coded all transcripts. The preliminary codes were continuously revised and refined as more materials were collected and coded against existing data, using the constant comparative analysis strategy (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). I then compared the codes across participants and stakeholder groups, searched for connections between codes, and established themes across groups. This process helped me to identify thematic clusters, i.e., themes that occurred repeatedly and seemed to be of particular relevance to answering research questions of this study.

I then used MAXQDA 2020 to produce lists of quotations under themed headings, which helped me to identify collective and diverging narratives. I paid particular attention to the context of the quotes in order to avoid the risk of taking quotes out of context. I continued to develop my analysis through the writing and reflecting processes of this research.

5.4.5 *Ethical Concerns*

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Washington in May 2019. I described the research purposes, participant recruitment and selection procedures, sample data collection instruments, potential risks and benefits of participation, strategies to ensure confidentiality, and a copy of the consent form in the IRB

application. No human subjects were involved in the quantitative social network analysis since only documents were used. No data were collected until the IRB approval.

Policy actors are generally assumed to be able to protect themselves and guard against inconvenience (Lilleker, 2003; Richards, 1996). In addition, because the policy positions of many policy actors are publicly known, the risk associated with identity disclosure is considered relatively low. However, due to the small number of stakeholders engaged in any state's *ESSA Title II* committee, it is a legitimate concern for participants who do not want to be identified. Therefore, participants were assured about the confidentiality of their identity and the interview data. I assigned each participant a pseudonym for analysis purposes and separated the identifying information from the interview transcripts so that no identifying information would be shown in the quotes or the writing of this dissertation.

5.5 Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data in a Mixed-Method Study

Acknowledging the added value that a mixed-methods design may bring to a research project (Bauer et al., 2000; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Crossley, 2010; Edwards & Crossley, 2009; Jack, 2010), this study combined quantitative and qualitative data sources and analytical methods weaved together various pieces of evidence. Looking at the issue from multiple perspectives also allowed me to compare and contrast narratives and interpretations (Yin, 2009), of the *ESSA Title II* plan development process, and to construct plausible explanations of the complex issues (Edwards, 2010). Mathison (1988). However, it also highlighted the difficulties of having to make sense of potentially converging, inconsistent, or contradicting data. The literature on triangulation in SNA indicates that researchers applying a mixed-methods approach to network analysis should carefully consider the role of each method within the research project

and the ways in which different techniques were combined (Crossley, 2010; Edwards, 2010). I describe in the following section how I approached this task.

Mixed-methods research is more than a combination of quantitative and qualitative analytic strategies. Instead, the quantitative and qualitative components need to be integrated in meaningful ways. In this study, the integration first occurred at the level of research design because the components of the theoretical framework entailed both quantitative and qualitative strands. The mixed methods explanatory sequential design involved collecting and analyzing quantitative data, and these results were then used to inform the follow-up qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Thus, the quantitative and qualitative sampling and data collection were related to each other. Similarly, the qualitative coding of the interviews was also informed by characteristics and patterns of networks identified from quantitative SNA, which once again connected the two approaches (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017).

While adopting a mixed methods approach to study policy networks had its benefits, I encountered a number of challenges throughout the process. The primary challenge of triangulation was the resources that were required to conduct a mixed methods research. Collecting and analyzing two types of data and employing two different modes of analysis was very time consuming. Identifying the relationships within the policy networks, for example, required extensive reading of documents and reports and searching online in order to extract relevant information that could be converted for network analysis. In addition to managing the overall scope of this research, I had to administer the work sequence and time spent on the entry and analysis of the quantitative data, the recruitment of interview participants, and the transcription and analysis of the qualitative interview data. The triangulation of different data

sources was further proven to be a major challenge during data analysis phase as I had to make sense of a large amount of data and sometimes conflicting narratives. In some cases, the quantitative and qualitative data and analysis complemented and supported each other (interview and quantitative SNA identified the same major actors and confirmed active collaboration among the key actors); in other instances, however, the findings from quantitative and qualitative data were inconsistent, for example, when a partnership between two organizations was clearly identified in the quantitative network analysis, and it was denied by the interviewed representative from one of the organizations. Such inconsistencies thus required additional evidence and resources to solve.

5.6 Summary of the Chapter

I explained in this chapter the methods used to systematically analyze the networks of policy actors involved in the development of selected states' *ESSA Title II* plans. Data were collected from public documents and reports to construct policy networks and analyze the structures and relationships among policy actors in the networks. Additional qualitative data were collected from semi-structured, narrative interviews with selected participants represented in the networks. I also justified the choice of a mixed methods approach and described the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis processes and the ways in which they informed each other during the research process.

CHAPTER 6 WHO IS AT THE TABLE – ENEMIES OR ALLIES?

As stated in Chapters Four and Five, six states were selected for analysis based on the number of stakeholders engaged in the development of their state *ESSA Title II* plans. Aiming to capture the variation in structural patterns of relations that, in theory, had consequence for network effectiveness (Provan & Kenis, 2008), states were sampled with varying network sizes. Specifically, Minnesota (45) and Pennsylvania (38) were selected as states who had the largest number of stakeholders involved in the making of state *ESSA Title II* plans; Colorado (12) and Tennessee (11) were selected as states with the smallest *ESSA Title II* committees; and Michigan (21) and Washington (23) were chosen because the sizes of their *Title II* policy networks were around the average. This chapter is organized by an individual description of each of the six states: all relationship metrics were merged and the overall network structure in each state was graphically depicted to provide an overview of the entire policy network and to illustrate key features of the policy actors in each state. Sub-coalitions in each network were detected, with the attributes of different coalitions identified, including their membership, positions, and relationships.

6.1 Stakeholder Engagement in Colorado

In order to promote engagement and participation for stakeholder consultation for *ESSA*, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) established a variety of communication channels with schools, school districts, and the public through online and virtual engagement, including the “*ESSA* in Colorado Blog”, the *ESSA* E-Newsletter, a statewide *ESSA* listening tour, a HUB

committee and seven spoke committees⁸ to review and make recommendations on options to address *ESSA* state plan requirements. The committees used the feedback gathered from the statewide *ESSA* listening tour as a starting point for discussion and decision making. After recommendations and decisions were incorporated into state plan drafts, CDE circled back to the public by posting a draft plan for public review and comments. In total, through formal and informal listening events, CDE engaged with more than 1,500 people across Colorado. More than 3,800 comments were gathered. Participants represented a wide range of demographics and included stakeholders from the State Board of Education, the Colorado Education Association, Colorado Association of School Boards, Colorado Association of School Executives, school and district administrators (including superintendents and district Board of Education members), school staff (principals, teachers, and paraprofessionals), college and university administrators, parents, and members of the community, including those representing nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, advisory groups, and other interested parties. CDE also engaged with specific constituency groups and liaisons, such as the Head Start, McKinney-Vento, Gifted Education State Advisory Committee, Youth Council, Arts360, Adult Education, the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee, IDEA, and Native American groups, for their thoughts and ideas.

6.1.1 *Actors*

Following the statewide listening tour and under the direction of the State Board of Education, CDE instituted a centralized Hub Committee that would oversee the development of

⁸ There was no explanation from available documents regarding why CDE used the term “HUB” and “spoke committee” to name their stakeholder committees. However, the responsibilities of HUB committee and the spoke committees were explained in the following section.

the state plan draft to be submitted to the State Board of Education, and seven *ESSA* topical spoke committees that would be responsible for developing and appropriately vetting sections of the state plan. According to CDE, the central Hub Committee and topical spoke committee members were drawn from the public and critical education partners. The 20 members of the Hub Committee were selected by the State Board of Education in collaboration with CDE staff and critical partners from three categories: representatives of those who created and approved legislation, rules, and policy related to *ESSA* (25%); representatives of those who had to establish state and local policies/plans and implement *ESSA* (30%); and representatives of those who had a vested interest in the success of *ESSA* implementation (45%). CDE contracted with an external facilitator to conduct the discussion and decision-making process for the Hub Committee meetings.

In addition to the Hub Committee, CDE convened seven spoke committees organized around the initial topics proposed by the U.S. Department of Education for state plan requirements: Standards, Assessment, Accountability, Effective Instruction and Leadership, School Improvement, Title Programs and Assurances, and Stakeholder Consultation/Program Coordination. Each spoke committee was charged with drafting the section of the *ESSA* plan tied to their designated topic. Spoke committees consisted primarily of members of the public and were led by two or three CDE staff members. Additional CDE staff were included when necessary to provide guidance and information as subject matter experts.

CDE publicized spoke committee membership opportunities at each *ESSA* Listening Tour event and other *ESSA* stakeholder consultation events, as well as email listservs and CDE's *ESSA* blog. CDE collected committee membership requests from interested attendees and other requests of those indicating interest via emails. CDE staff then sorted through the requests and

attempted to find appropriate committee placements for each individual request up until committees reached capacity and/or committees began to meet and work on decision points. In total, more than 130 non-CDE members have served on those spoke committees, including elected officials (4%), parent representatives (7%), local educational agency (LEA) administrators (61%), business and community members (14%), representatives of charter schools (3%), and members of education advocacy and civil rights groups (11%).

Among the seven spoke committees, the Effective Instruction and Leadership Spoke Committee was mainly responsible for the development and recommendations for *ESSA Title II*. 12 individuals representing 11 different organizations (there were two members from Colorado Education Association) were listed as formal committee members (9.23% of all spoke committee members). There were also two CDE staff Spoke Leads and 5 CDE staff Group Leads. Because of the leading role instead of the facilitating role CDE staff played in this committee, that is, these CDE staff members were involved in the decision-making process, CDE was also considered as one of the network actors in Colorado's *ESSA Title II* policy network.

Table 6-1 summarizes the member organizations, number assigned to each organization for analytical purpose of this research, and the types of organizations. Individual representatives' names were eliminated for the purposes of protecting participant identity since some members of the committee were interviewed for the research.

Table 6-1*ESSA Title II Stakeholder List: Colorado*

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Organization</i> | <i>Type</i> |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Denver Public Schools | LEA |
| 2 | KIPP Colorado Schools | Charter School |
| 3 | Center for Teaching Quality | Professional Organization |
| 4 | Colorado Education Association | Teachers Union |
| 5 | Colorado State University (Center for educator Preparation) | IHE |
| 6 | Colorado Education Initiative | Professional Organization |
| 7 | Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD - Colorado) | Professional Organization |
| 8 | Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) | LEA |
| 9 | Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC – Colorado) | Education Advocacy |
| 10 | Meeker School District | LEA |
| 11 | Fountain-Fort Carson School District | LEA |
| 12 | CDE | State Department of Education |

Among all 12 organizations, there were four LEA representatives (33.33%), three education professional organizations (25%), and one representative each (8.33%) from charter schools, teachers unions, institutions of higher education, and education advocacy groups respectively. Parent representatives, civil rights groups, and community members were absent from Colorado’s *ESSA Title II* committee. The specific roles played by the representatives in their own organizations were not listed in Table 6-1 due to the fact that not all six selected states had published this type of information. Initially, I had made an effort to try to collect such information. However, I eventually decided not to include the role of every representative in the

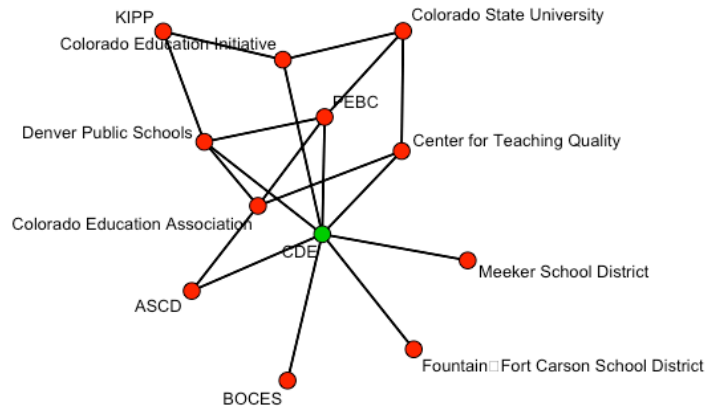
quantitative analysis because I was not confident about the completeness and accuracy of the information that was available. This was partly due to the fact that this research was conducted about three years after the policy making process, which made it difficult to locate information about stakeholders' exact roles at that time. Even so, the absence of this type of data would not influence the findings of this research since the focus of the quantitative SNA was on the organizations they represented. I was able to collection information about participants' roles in their organizations from the subsequent interviews.

6.1.2 Overall Network

The overall network of the Colorado Effective Instruction and Leadership Spoke Committee is shown in Figure 6-1. It included 12 members and a total of 36 edges. Because the concept of relationship was treated as non-directed in this study, 18 mutual relationships were identified. There was no isolated organization that existed in this network, which meant that each individual organization had at least one connection with another organization in this policy network. However, some organizations, such as the Fountain-Fort Carson School District, the Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), and the Meeker School District, had only one connection with CDE in this policy network, which suggests that they would have been disconnected from the whole policy network if CDE had not invited them to participate in the *ESSA Title II* policy initiative. The prominent role of CDE in this network was also marked as the “green” dot in this graph for being the “cutpoint” of the network, which was defined as a node that, if dropped, would have increased the number of components in the network. In other words, CDE, as the cutpoint of Colorado's *ESSA Title II* policy network, was in the position of connecting different parts in this network. Had it been not included, at least two subsets of actors in this network would not be able to communicate with each other.

Figure 6-1

ESSA Title II Network: Colorado



Density is one of the most important characteristics of a social network structure. As explained in detail in the previous chapter, density is the proportion of observed ties in a network to the maximum number of possible ties. Thus, density is a ratio that can range from 0 to 1. In general, a network with a density score closer to 1 is more interconnected. The density score of this network was 0.27, indicating that this network was not very interconnected thus a key actor was needed to connect all organizations together to ensure the function of the whole network.

The centrality of this network was measured by the degree centrality, closeness centrality, and betweenness centrality (see Table 6-2). In particular, the degree of a node is the number of ties it has with other nodes. A node that has more direct ties is more prominent than nodes with fewer or no ties. In this network, CDE had the highest degree centrality (16). It was connected to eight other nodes in the network. The Denver Public Schools, the Colorado Education Association and the Public Education & Business Coalition - Colorado (PEBC – Colorado)

ranked second, all of which had four undirected connections in the network. Closeness explains how close each node is to every other node in the network. Nodes are more prominent to the extent that they are close to all other nodes in the network. Again, CDE was much closer to other nodes in this network. Betweenness measures the extent that a node sits between pairs of other nodes in the network. A node with high betweenness is prominent because that node is in a position to observe or control the flow of information in the network. Once again, CDE was in the dominant position to observe or control the flow of information in this network while Denver Public Schools and Colorado Education Initiative also played an important role in the information flow of Colorado’s *ESSA Title II* policy network.

Table 6-2

ESSA Title II Network Centrality: Colorado

| <i>Organization</i> | <i>Degree</i> | <i>Closeness</i> | <i>Betweenness</i> |
|---|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Denver Public Schools</i> | 8 | 0.6111111 | 12.904762 |
| <i>KIPP</i> | 4 | 0.4400000 | 1.285714 |
| <i>Center for Teaching Quality</i> | 6 | 0.5500000 | 7.038095 |
| <i>Colorado Education Association</i> | 8 | 0.5000000 | 6.633333 |
| <i>Colorado State University</i> | 6 | 0.4782609 | 3.738095 |
| <i>Colorado Education Initiative</i> | 6 | 0.5500000 | 10.733333 |
| <i>ASCD</i> | 4 | 0.5000000 | 2.285714 |
| <i>BOCES</i> | 2 | 0.4583333 | 0.000000 |
| <i>PEBC</i> | 8 | 0.6111111 | 9.038095 |
| <i>Meeker School District</i> | 2 | 0.4583333 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Fountain-Fort Carson School District</i> | 2 | 0.4583333 | 0.000000 |
| <i>CDE</i> | 16 | 0.7857143 | 68.342857 |

6.1.3 Coalitions

As explained in the previous chapter, nine most popular community detection algorithms were applied to detect the subgroups and coalitions in each selected state's *ESSA Title II* policy network. The modularity score of each algorithm was calculated and compared to indicate which algorithm(s) would best explain the division of subgroups in each policy network. Analysis revealed that the modularity scores of Colorado's *ESSA Title II* policy network ranged from 0 to 0.22. The Optimal algorithm explained the clustering the best in this case. As a result, three sub-coalitions were identified by the Optimal algorithm (also see Figure 6-2⁹).

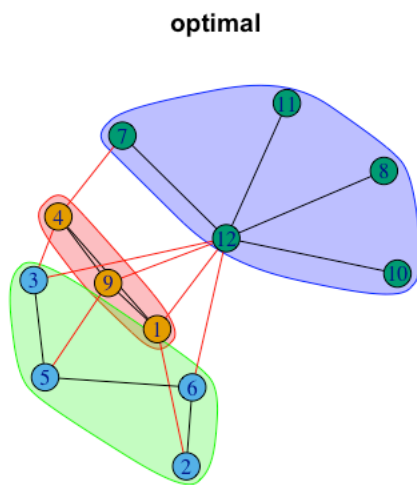
- Sub-coalition one:
 - KIPP Colorado Schools (#2)
 - Center for Teaching Quality (#3)
 - Colorado State University (#5)
 - Colorado Education Initiative (#6)
- Sub-coalition two:
 - Denver Public Schools (#1)
 - Colorado Education Association (#4)
 - PEBC - Colorado (#9)
- Sub-coalition three:
 - Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development - Colorado (ASCD) (#7)
 - BOCES (#8)

⁹ The numbers in figure 6-2 were the numbers assigned to stakeholder organizations listed in table 6-1. The numbers were also provided in the description of sub-coalitions for the convenience of the readers. I used this format of presentation for all six states analyzed in this dissertation.

- Meeker School District (#10)
- Fountain-Fort Carson School District (#11)
- CDE (#12)

Figure 6-2

ESSA Title II Policy Network Sub-coalitions: Colorado



The subnetworks identified from Colorado’s *Title II* policy network suggests that in Colorado, charter schools, non-profit education organizations, and institutions of higher education tended to work together on policy advocacy around teacher education while local educational agencies worked more closely with the state department of education. On the contrary, Denver Public Schools, as one of the largest school districts in Colorado, was more connected to the education advocacy organization and the teacher’s union than to the state department of education. It was also worth noting that the first and the second sub-coalitions identified above were more interconnected compared to the third one, which may suggest that

LEAs in Colorado were more likely to be excluded from collaborative efforts initiated by other organizations engaged in teacher education policy advocacy.

6.2 Stakeholder Engagement in Michigan

Throughout the development of Michigan's *ESSA* plan, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) sought the input and participation of stakeholders in the process. This process took in many forms, both in-person and virtual, and respondents spanned multiple perspectives representing individuals, organizations, and different regions of the state. The initial visioning for Michigan's *ESSA* plan began with State Superintendent Brian Whiston's call for input on the state's *Top 10 in 10 plan*, where he asked respondents to share key priorities and activities needed in order for Michigan to become a top 10 education state within the next 10 years. In response to MDE's invitation for ideas, more than 30 education stakeholder organizations presented their ideas to the State Board of Education, with an additional 765 individuals responding to an online public input survey, which generated nearly 4,200 recommendations. Having already received those inputs throughout the 2015-16 school year, MDE opted not to create a duplicate structure when the *ESSA* was enacted and built on the work already underway through the *Top 10 in 10* initiative. The recommendations from each of these efforts formed the starting point for several aspects of Michigan's *ESSA* vision and shaped the direction and focus of the *ESSA* work in the state.

6.2.1 Actors

In the initial plan development stage, MDE engaged external stakeholders in nine Action Teams comprised of internal and external subject-area experts and led by state department staff

to review the new *ESSA* requirements by the U.S. Department of Education and make recommendations for specific topics to be covered by the state plan. These Action Teams were:

- Accountability System – Technical
- Additional Indicators of School Quality and Transparency Dashboard
- Assessment Implementation
- Communications and Outreach
- Fiscal
- Innovative Assessment Pilot
- Teacher and Leader Quality
- Using Data to Inform Instruction and Leadership

Each action team had its own information webpage that typically included a link to background information on the action team, its initial charge, a list of internal and external members of the team, and reports or recommendations from that team. The action teams met frequently (some as often as weekly) to review the team's charges, relevant materials of the *ESSA* policy, current practices, and input received through the *Top 10 in 10* initiative. In several cases, the action teams also conducted research and then discussed options for recommendations to the state plan. As the work continued, the teams developed surveys to seek broader stakeholder input and reviewed the survey responses.

External stakeholders also served on two larger committees charged with providing input on the combined recommendations from the nine action teams and the overall state plan. These two larger committees were:

- The Tactical Review Committee, whose members included representatives from local and intermediate school districts, as well as state organizations representing partners in

the educational system, such as school nurses, social workers, librarians, and paraprofessionals, other state agencies, and other members whose expertise spanned multiple aspects of the *ESSA* plan.

- The External Advisory Committee, comprising representatives of education associations, legislative leaders, the Governor’s office, representatives of business and institutions of higher education, state advocacy organizations, and other state agencies with primary roles in the state’s education system.

The Tactical Review and External Advisory Committees met monthly, initially reviewing and providing input on the overall structure of the state *ESSA* plan and later examining specific sections charged by the action teams. In most cases, one or two topic areas were discussed in depth in each meeting and input was then sent to the MDE staff.

Among the nine action teams, the Teacher and Leader Quality Action Team was charged to identify and make recommendations regarding state, local, and national activities related to teacher and leader quality in *ESSA* based on the alignment and consistency with the MDE’s *Top 10 in 10 strategic plan* and aligned educator workforce programs and supports, including Michigan’s *State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators*. Specifically, the Teacher and Leader Quality Action Team helped shape recommendations and guidance in *ESSA Title II*, including:

- Michigan’s prioritized focus on allowable *ESSA Title II* state and local activities;
- Michigan’s participation in *ESSA Title II* competitive national grant programs; and
- Integration of educator workforce supports into Michigan’s plan for high-needs districts and strategic partnerships. (MDE, 2016)

The Teacher and Leader Quality Action Team consisted of 38 members representing 21 different stakeholder organizations, including 14 staff members (made up of 37% of the Teacher & Leader Quality Team) from the MDE, two representatives each from the Education Trust Midwest, the Utica Schools, and the Grand Rapids Public Schools, one state senator, and one representative from each of the organizations listed in Table 6-3. Because of the heavily weighted participation of MDE staff in this action team, MDE was considered as one of the network actors in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network. Table 6-3 displays the member organizations, number assigned to each organization for analytical purposes, and the types of organizations in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network. Names of individual members were removed.

Among the 21 organizations represented in Michigan's Teacher and Leader Quality Action Team, in addition to the MDE, there were ten local education agencies (48%), two institutions of higher education (IHEs), two education advocacy organizations (10%), one (5%) charter school association, one teachers union, one turnaround school district, one LEA-partnered online education program, one business partner, and one education professional organization. Compared to the general stakeholder population involved in the entire development process of Michigan's state *ESSA* plan, parent representatives, civil rights groups, and community members were not engaged in Michigan's *Title II* action team. It was also noteworthy in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network that two of the actors (the Excellent Schools Detroit and the Education Achievement Authority) ceased to exist in 2017 when *ESSA* was in its first year of implementation.

Table 6-3*ESSA Title II Stakeholder List: Michigan*

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Organization</i> | <i>Type</i> |
|------------|--|--|
| 1 | Education Trust Midwest | Education Advocacy Org |
| 2 | MDE | State Department of Education |
| 3 | Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA) | Charter School Association |
| 4 | Michigan Education Association (MEA) | Teachers Union |
| 5 | Excellent Schools Detroit | Education Advocacy Org |
| 6 | Oakland Schools | LEA |
| 7 | Utica Schools | LEA |
| 8 | Michigan State University (College of Education) | IHE |
| 9 | Rochester Community Schools | LEA |
| 10 | Holland Public Schools | LEA |
| 11 | Education Achievement Authority | Turnaround District |
| 12 | Grand Rapids Public Schools | LEA |
| 13 | WAVE Washtenaw | LEA-partnered online education program |
| 14 | Ottawa Area ISD | LEA |
| 15 | Hampton Consulting | Business |
| 16 | South Lyon Community Schools | LEA |
| 17 | Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) | Professional Organization |
| 18 | Onsted Community Schools | LEA |
| 19 | Kent ISD | LEA |
| 20 | Van Buren Public Schools | LEA |
| 21 | Wayne State University (School Partnerships & Clinical Practice) | IHE |

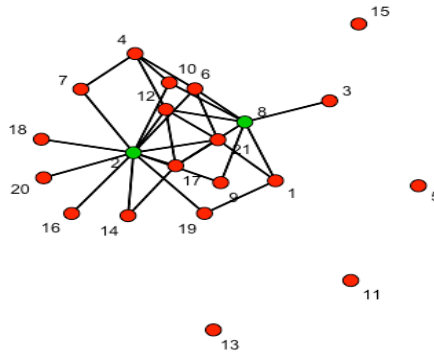
6.2.2 Overall Network

As shown in Figure 6-3, the overall network of the Michigan Teacher and Leader Quality Action Team included 21 members and a total of 60 edges. Because relationships were treated as non-directed, 30 undirected relationships were identified through the quantitative SNA. There were four isolated organizations that had no connection to any of the other actors in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network, the Excellent Schools Detroit, the Education Achievement Authority, the WAVE Washtenaw, and the Hampton Consulting. Since the Excellent Schools Detroit and the Education Achievement Authority closed down in the first year of the *ESSA* implementation, it was reasonable to treat these two nodes as outliers in this policy network. The quantitative SNA also indicated that the WAVE Washtenaw and the Hampton Consulting might not be stakeholders regularly engaged in teacher education policies in Michigan state. Furthermore, the Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA) had only one connection with the Michigan State University in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network, which signaled that the MAPSA would have been disconnected from the whole policy network if the Michigan State University had not been involved in Michigan's policy process of *ESSA Title II*.

Similar to Colorado's *ESSA Title II* policy network, the *ESSA Title II* policy network in Michigan also showed the strong connection between IHEs and charter schools and/or charter school organizations. Moreover, the MDE and the Michigan State University were both identified as the cutpoints in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network. Both actors thus occupied significant positions bridging different parts of the network. That is, two subsets of actors in this policy network would have been not able to communicate with each other if the MDE or the Michigan State University were dropped from the network.

Figure 6-3

ESSA Title II Network: Michigan



The density of this network was 0.14 indicating that this network was on the low end of the scale for interconnectedness given the possible range of 0 to 1. Therefore, key actors might exist in Michigan’s *ESSA Title II* policy network to bring all organizations to work together as a whole network.

The centrality of each actor involved in Michigan’s *ESSA Title II* policy network was measured by the degree, closeness, and betweenness (see Table 6-4). In this specific policy network, the MDE had the highest degree centrality, which was connected to 12 other nodes in the network. The Michigan State University ranked the second with seven connections within the network. The closeness scores of “0” in this network showed that in graph theory, this policy network would be considered as a “disconnected” graph because more than two nodes were disconnected. Based on betweenness scores, the MDE was in the dominant position to observe or

control the flow of information in this network while the Michigan State University also played an important role in the information flow in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network.

Table 6-4

ESSA Title II Network Centrality: Michigan

| <i>Organization</i> | <i>Degree</i> | <i>Closeness</i> | <i>Betweenness</i> |
|--|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Education Trust Midwest</i> | 6 | 0 | 6.000000 |
| <i>MDE</i> | 24 | 0 | 139.742857 |
| <i>Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA)</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Michigan Education Association (MEA)</i> | 8 | 0 | 6.333333 |
| <i>Excellent Schools Detroit</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Oakland Schools</i> | 8 | 0 | 11.804762 |
| <i>Utica Schools</i> | 4 | 0 | 3.185714 |
| <i>Michigan State University</i> | 14 | 0 | 47.057143 |
| <i>Rochester Community Schools</i> | 4 | 0 | 3.700000 |
| <i>Holland Public Schools</i> | 6 | 0 | 9.404762 |
| <i>Education Achievement Authority</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Grand Rapids Public Schools</i> | 10 | 0 | 14.204762 |
| <i>WAVE Washtenaw</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Ottawa Area ISD</i> | 4 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Hampton Consulting</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>South Lyon Community Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP)</i> | 10 | 0 | 12.100000 |
| <i>Onsted Community Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Kent ISD</i> | 4 | 0 | 5.500000 |
| <i>Van Buren Public Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Wayne State University</i> | 10 | 0 | 10.966667 |

6.2.3 Coalitions

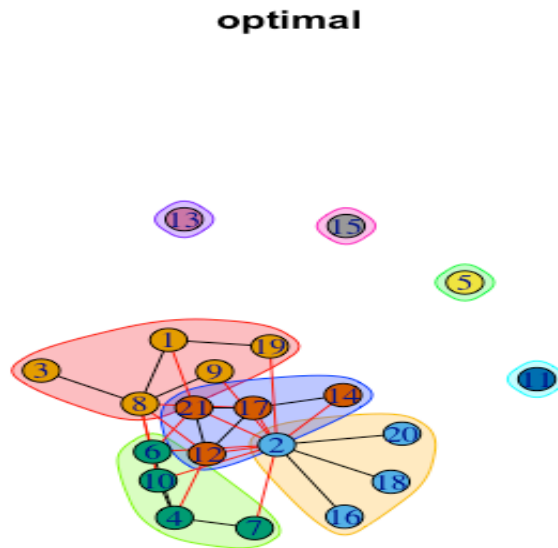
Again, nine community detection algorithms and their modularity scores were calculated to decide the subnetwork in Michigan's *Title II* policy network. Typically, as explained in the methodology chapter, a modularity value closer to 1 indicates a better detection of the community structures within a network. The modularity scores of the nine community detection algorithms ranged from 0.06 to 0.21 in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network. Four sub-coalitions and four isolators were identified by the Optimal algorithm with a modularity score of 0.21, which was the highest among all algorithms in this network. (see also Figure 6-4). The sub-coalitions were:

- Sub-coalition one:
 - Education Trust Midwest (#1)
 - Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA) (#3)
 - Michigan State University (#8)
 - Rochester Community Schools (#9)
 - Kent ISD (#19)
- Sub-coalition two:
 - Michigan Education Association (MEA) (#4)
 - Oakland Schools (#6)
 - Utica Schools (#7)
 - Holland Public Schools (#10)
- Sub-coalition three:
 - MDE (#2)
 - South Lyon Community Schools (#16)

- Onsted Community Schools (#18)
- Van Buren Public Schools (#20)
- Sub-coalition four:
 - Grand Rapids Public Schools (#12)
 - Ottawa Area ISD (#14)
 - Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (#17)
 - Wayne State University (#21)

Figure 6-4

ESSA Title II Policy Network Sub-coalitions: Michigan



The subnetworks identified in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network suggested that in Michigan, the charter school association, education advocacy groups, and the IHEs tended to collaborate together on policy advocacy around issues about teacher education, while LEAs worked more closely with the state department of education. As was the case in Colorado, large public school districts in Michigan were more closely connected to the teachers union while smaller school districts had less connections within the network and, in some cases, they were only connected to the state department of education. It was also notable that key brokers existed in Michigan's *ESSA Title II* policy network to connect different communities together. For example, MDE was the only actor who had connections with members of each subnetwork and was the only actor in sub-coalition three that had connections with other members.

6.3 Stakeholder Engagement in Minnesota

Throughout the development of Minnesota's *ESSA plan*, the Minnesota Department of Education (MNDE¹⁰) hosted and participated in a broad range of engagement activities, providing multiple means for stakeholders to provide input on the Minnesota's state *ESSA* plan, including topic specific meetings, public listening sessions, focus groups, and community meetings. In April and May 2016, the MNDE hosted ten topic specific meetings with the purpose of sharing and clarifying the *ESSA* policy, gaining stakeholder input, and understanding stakeholders' priorities. The gathered input informed the formation of the Minnesota *ESSA* committees. Smaller focus groups with community-identified representatives, including those from Minnesota's major ethnic communities, as well as teachers, parents, youth, and English language learners and special education communities, were also convened by the MNDE to

¹⁰ MDE is the official abbreviation used by the Minnesota Department of Education. This research used "MNDE" instead in order to distinguish the Minnesota Department of Education from the Michigan Department of Education.

provide feedback on specific topics under *ESSA*. The MNDE also held public regional meetings throughout the state in October and November 2016 with an additional virtual option that provided an overview of *ESSA*. Throughout the process, the MNDE website was routinely updated and the MNDE *ESSA* newsletter was made available online with approximately 1,300 subscribers for information about the process. MNDE held nearly 300 meetings and public events to engage stakeholders during the process.

6.3.1 Actors

Beginning in summer 2016, public audiences were invited to participate as members of Minnesota's *ESSA* committees focusing on specific topics in *ESSA* to provide the state commissioner of education with recommendations on what should be included in the state *ESSA* plan. Topics included a new accountability system, possible assessment changes, values Minnesota has for educators, inclusion of English language learners in the accountability system, and the roles of school districts and charters in school improvement efforts. The MNDE also worked with committee members to identify communities and organizations often not represented or were underrepresented in stakeholder engagement activities. The *ESSA* committee members and organizations, along with the MNDE staff, developed recommendations for the state commissioner of education for inclusion in Minnesota's *ESSA* state plan.

Overall, 137 organizations and communities participated in five Minnesota *ESSA* committees covering specific topic areas of *ESSA*, including accountability, assessment, English language learners, school improvement, and educator quality. However, there was no information available regarding how committee members were selected from the public initially invited to participate on the committees. Members were expected to attend and fully participate in all meetings and to articulate their views and the views of their constituencies. Members were

encouraged to build consensus on policy options by integrating the perspectives and needs of all stakeholder groups and to be creative in addressing differences among stakeholders. They were also encouraged to raise, reflect on, and find equitable solutions throughout the process and to consider equity-focused recommendations.

The Minnesota *ESSA* Educator Quality Committee was established to support specifically the development of the *Title II* section of the state *ESSA* plan that was related to ensuring access to high-quality teachers and ensuring that low-income and minority students were not disproportionately served by ineffective, out-of-field or inexperienced teachers. Members of the educator quality committee consisted of more than 50 individuals from 45 communities and organizations (accounting for 33% of the overall stakeholder population among all five committees) representing Pre-K-12 educators, institutions of higher education (IHEs), civil rights communities, and business and community stakeholders. In total, the committee met four times in the process of developing and drafting Minnesota's *ESSA Title II* plan.

No MNDE staff member was involved in the educator quality committee, even in a facilitating role, which was different from the previous two cases. Therefore, MNDE was not considered as an actor in this network. Among the 50 "external" members in the committee (MNDE used the term "external members" for stakeholder committee members in their stakeholder engagement documents), there were seven members from the Education Minnesota (the teachers union) (14% of the committee membership), three individuals representing the Educators 4 Excellence (an educational advocacy group), two representatives from the African American Leadership Forum, and one representative from each of the rest of the communities and organizations listed in Table 6-5. Table 6-5 also shows the member organizations, the

number assigned to each organization for analysis, and the type of each organization involved in Minnesota's *ESSA Title II* policy network. All names of individuals were removed.

Table 6-5

ESSA Title II Stakeholder List: Minnesota

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Organization</i> | <i>Type</i> |
|------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | St. Cloud Schools | LEA |
| 2 | African American Leadership Forum | Community Advocacy |
| 3 | Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals | Professional Organization |
| 4 | Minnesota Business Partnerships | Business |
| 5 | Minnesota Council on Disability | Community Advocacy |
| 6 | Minneapolis Urban League | Community Advocacy |
| 7 | MinnCAN | Education Advocacy |
| 8 | Education Allies | Education Advocacy |
| 9 | Generation Next | Community Advocacy |
| 10 | Minnesota Elementary School Principal's Association | Professional Organization |
| 11 | Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board | Professional Organization |
| 12 | Minnesota Administrators for Special Education | Professional Organization |
| 13 | Minnesota PTA | PTA |
| 14 | Tribal Nations Education Committee | Community Advocacy |
| 15 | Minnesota Private Colleges Council | Professional Organization |
| 16 | Education Evolving | Education Advocacy |
| 17 | Minnesota Comeback | Charter Network |
| 18 | Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) | Professional Organization |

| | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| 19 | Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education | Professional Organization |
| 20 | Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans | Community Advocacy |
| 21 | Education Minnesota | Teachers Union |
| 22 | Minnesota Association of School Administrators | Professional Organization |
| 23 | Perpich Center for Arts Education | Charter School |
| 24 | Chicano Latino Affairs Council | Community Advocacy |
| 25 | Minnesota Indian Affairs Council | Community Advocacy |
| 26 | Minnesota Youth Council | Community Advocacy |
| 27 | Minnesota Council on Economic Education | Professional Organization |
| 28 | Minnesota Education Equity Partnerships | Education Advocacy |
| 29 | Association for the Advancement of Colored People | Community Advocacy |
| 30 | Educators 4 Excellence | Education Advocacy |
| 31 | University of Minnesota (College of Education & Human Development) | IHE |
| 32 | Somali American Parent Association | Community Advocacy |
| 33 | Board of School Administrators | Professional Organization |
| 34 | Minnesota Rural Education Association | Education Advocacy |
| 35 | Minnesota Association of Charter School | Charter Association |
| 36 | Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage | Community Advocacy |
| 37 | Students for Education Reform | Education Advocacy |
| 38 | Teach for America | Charter Network |
| 39 | Network for Excellence in Teaching | Education Advocacy |
| 40 | Minnesota School Boards Association | Professional Organization |
| 41 | ISALAH Faith in Democracy | Community Advocacy |
| 42 | Coalition of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota | Education Advocacy |
| 43 | Minneapolis Public Schools | LEA |
| 44 | St. Paul Public Schools | LEA |
| 45 | Northwest Service Cooperative | Community Advocacy |

Different from the other five states in this sample, there were fewer local educational agency (LEA) representatives in Minnesota's *ESSA* educator quality committee. In particular, only three LEA representatives (7%) were listed as committee members. However, there were more community advocacy groups (14 groups in total, 31% of the committee members) involved in Minnesota's *ESSA Title II* policy network. The Parent Teacher Association also engaged in the development of *ESSA Title II* in Minnesota. Other members in this policy network were 11 education professional organizations (24%), nine education advocacy groups and organizations (20%), four charter schools and organizations (9%), one (2%) institution of higher education, and one (2%) business partner.

6.3.2 Overall Network

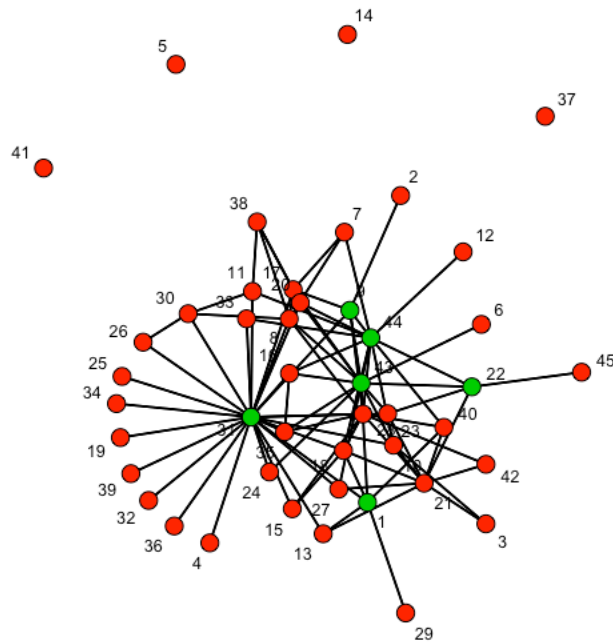
The overall network of Minnesota's *ESSA* educator quality committee included 45 nodes and a total of 182 edges, as shown in Figure 6-5. Because relationship was treated as non-directed in this study, 91 mutual relationships were identified. There were four isolated organizations in Minnesota's *ESSA Title II* policy network: the Minnesota Council on Disability, the Tribal Nations Education Committee, the Students for Education Reform, and the ISALAH Faith in Democracy. This result reflects that these four organizations were likely considered as "outliers" in teacher education policy making in Minnesota and that their engagement in this policy network might be a result of the MNDE's specific effort to reach out to a broader public population in response to the stakeholder engagement request of the U.S. DoE. Meanwhile, seven organizations, the Minnesota Business Partnerships, the Network for Excellence in Teaching, the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, the Somali American Parent Association, the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the Minnesota Rural Education Association, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, were only connected to the

University of Minnesota in this network. This suggests that they would have been disconnected from the Minnesota *ESSA Title II* policy network if the University of Minnesota were not a member of this network.

Compared with other five states, there were more cutpoints (six) in Minnesota's *ESSA Title II* policy network, including the St. Cloud Schools, the University of Minnesota, the Generation Next, the Minneapolis Public Schools, the St. Paul Public Schools, and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. This finding showed that the LEAs in Minnesota were actively engaged in the state's teacher education policy making. The density score of this network was 0.09 indicating that this network was at the very lower end of the scale of connectedness thus key actors existed to glue all the actors together in this network. The finding of a larger number of cutpoints and a lower score of density in this network are consistent.

Figure 6-5

ESSA Title II Network: Minnesota



The centrality of each node in Minnesota’s *ESSA Title II* policy network was measured by the degree, closeness, and betweenness (see also Table 6-6). In this network, the University of Minnesota had the highest degree centrality: it was connected to 26 actors involved in the Minnesota’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. The Minneapolis Public Schools, the largest public school district in Minnesota, ranked the second in the measure of degree centrality with 15 connections within the network. The closeness of this network showed that no actor in this policy network was close to all other nodes, which indicated that the subgroups in Minnesota’s *ESSA Title II* policy network were relatively isolated from each other. Based on the measure of

betweenness, the University of Minnesota was dominant in observing or controlling the flow of information within this network while the Minneapolis Public Schools, the St. Paul Public Schools, the Minnesota Education Equity, and the St. Cloud Schools also played important roles in the information flow in this network.

Table 6-6

ESSA Title II Network Centrality: Minnesota

| <i>Organization</i> | <i>Degree</i> | <i>Closeness</i> | <i>Betweenness</i> |
|---|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <i>St. Cloud Schools</i> | 12 | 0 | 101.302137 |
| <i>African American Leadership Forum</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals</i> | 4 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota Business Partnerships</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota Council on Disability</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minneapolis Urban League</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>MinnCAN</i> | 6 | 0 | 2.888889 |
| <i>Education Allies</i> | 14 | 0 | 57.504151 |
| <i>Generation Next</i> | 12 | 0 | 88.600427 |
| <i>Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association</i> | 10 | 0 | 66.997727 |
| <i>Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board</i> | 8 | 0 | 25.211111 |
| <i>Minnesota Administrators for Special Education</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota PTA</i> | 6 | 0 | 6.932424 |
| <i>Tribal Nations Education Committee</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota Private Colleges Council</i> | 6 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Education Evolving</i> | 8 | 0 | 9.252137 |

| | | | |
|--|----|---|------------|
| <i>Minnesota Comeback</i> | 12 | 0 | 38.915629 |
| <i>Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)</i> | 12 | 0 | 26.076009 |
| <i>Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans</i> | 8 | 0 | 25.030708 |
| <i>Education Minnesota</i> | 20 | 0 | 72.897619 |
| <i>Minnesota Association of School Administrators</i> | 10 | 0 | 83.701261 |
| <i>Perpich Center for Arts Education</i> | 8 | 0 | 46.580332 |
| <i>Chicano Latino Affairs Council</i> | 4 | 0 | 2.974359 |
| <i>Minnesota Indian Affairs Council</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota Youth Council</i> | 4 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota Council on Economic Education</i> | 6 | 0 | 8.580332 |
| <i>Minnesota Education Equity Partnerships</i> | 22 | 0 | 135.552431 |
| <i>Association for the Advancement of Colored People</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Educators 4 Excellence</i> | 8 | 0 | 4.752137 |
| <i>University of Minnesota</i> | 52 | 0 | 824.807486 |
| <i>Somali American Parent Association</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Board of School Administrators</i> | 4 | 0 | 4.694444 |
| <i>Minnesota Rural Education Association</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota Association of Charter School</i> | 8 | 0 | 4.092006 |
| <i>Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Students for Education Reform</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Teach for America</i> | 8 | 0 | 3.666667 |
| <i>Network for Excellence in Teaching</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minnesota School Boards Association</i> | 8 | 0 | 9.753902 |
| <i>ISALAH Faith in Democracy</i> | 0 | 0 | 0.000000 |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|------------|
| <i>Coalition of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota</i> | 4 | 0 | 0.000000 |
| <i>Minneapolis Public Schools</i> | 30 | 0 | 234.112986 |
| <i>St. Paul Public Schools</i> | 26 | 0 | 201.122687 |
| <i>Northwest Service Cooperative</i> | 2 | 0 | 0.000000 |

6.3.3 Coalitions

The network modularity scores were calculated using the nine community detection algorithms to detect the subnetworks of Minnesota’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. The modularity scores of from the nine community detection algorithms ranged from 0.0 to 0.28 in this network. Five sub-coalitions and four isolators were thus identified by the Leading eigenvector algorithm (modularity score of the Leading eigenvector algorithm was 0.28, which was the highest among the nine and thus was considered as the “best” model for community detection in this specific policy network) (see also Figure 6-6). The sub-coalitions were presented below:

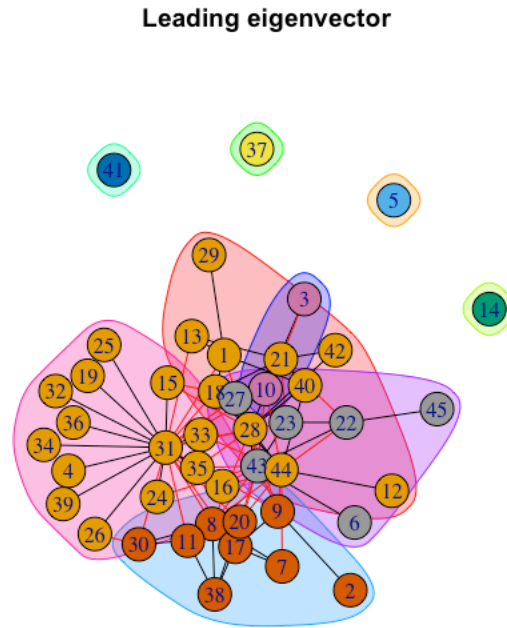
- Sub-coalition one (10):
 - St. Cloud Schools (#1)
 - Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (#12)
 - Minnesota PTA (#13)
 - Association of Metropolitan School Districts (#18)
 - Education Minnesota (#21)
 - Minnesota Education Equity Partnerships (#28)
 - Association for the Advancement of Colored People (#29)
 - Minnesota School Boards Association (#40)

- Coalition of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota (#42)
- St. Paul Public Schools (#44)
- Sub-coalition two (14):
 - Minnesota Business Partnerships (#4)
 - Minnesota Private Colleges Council (#15)
 - Education Evolving (#16)
 - Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (#19)
 - Chicano Latino Affairs Council (#24)
 - Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (#25)
 - Minnesota Youth Council (#26)
 - University of Minnesota (#31)
 - Somali American Parent Association (#32)
 - Board of School Administrators (#33)
 - Minnesota Rural Education Association (#34)
 - Minnesota Association of Charter School (#35)
 - Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (#36)
 - Network for Excellence in Teaching (#39)
- Sub-coalition three (2):
 - Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (#3)
 - Minnesota Elementary School Principal's Association (#10)
- Sub-coalition four (6):
 - Minneapolis Urban League (#6)
 - Minnesota Association of School Administrators (#22)

- Perpich Center for Arts Education (#23)
- Minnesota Council on Economic Education (#27)
- Minneapolis Public Schools (#43)
- Northwest Service Cooperative (#45)
- Sub-coalition five (9):
 - African American Leadership Forum (#2)
 - MinnCAN (#7)
 - Education Allies (#8)
 - Generation Next (#9)
 - Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (#11)
 - Minnesota Comeback (#17)
 - Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (#20)
 - Educators 4 Excellence (#30)
 - Teach for America (#38)

Figure 6-6

ESSA Title II Policy Network Sub-coalitions: Minnesota



Among the subnetworks identified within Minnesota’s *ESSA Title II* policy network, the subnetwork that had the most members was led by the University of Minnesota. However, the membership in this subnetwork was diverse, which included charter school organizations, education professional organizations, education advocacy and community advocacy groups and organizations, parent association, and business partnerships. On the contrary, the two school principal’s associations had a close relationship with each other and constituted the smallest community in Minnesota’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. It was also interesting to note that in Minnesota, the Teach for America and the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board were under the same subnetwork.

6.4 Stakeholder Engagement in Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, the process of stakeholder engagement lasted for 18 months with ongoing public notice of the processes and procedures. In April 2016, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) established a dedicated *Every Student Succeeds Act* webpage, which served as a central information hub for the state's effort to plan and implement the new federal law. This webpage included resources, data, research, and information shared with stakeholder workgroups related to assessment, accountability, educator preparation, and educator evaluation. The PDE then compiled a database of stakeholders interested in the development of the state *ESSA* plan. Stakeholder names, affiliations and email addresses were included in the database for sending information about *ESSA* related events and activities. Stakeholders included in the database ranged from superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, education advocates, legislators, school board members, union leaders, higher education faculty and administrators, early childhood education professionals and advocates, school nurses, and community members. Later in the year, the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the state presented the state *ESSA* draft plan to more than 300 registered individuals from three targeted stakeholder groups:

- Webinar 1 – Chief academic officers of school districts, charter schools, career and technical centers and Intermediate Units;
- Webinar 2 – Members and staff of the Pennsylvania General Assembly; and
- Webinar 3 – *ESSA* stakeholders drawn from PDE's database list.

The PDE also consulted with some national nonpartisan policy and technical experts in developing its state *ESSA* plan, including the American Institutes for Research, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, and the Mid Atlantic

Comprehensive Center at the WestEd, to solicit additional insights, feedback, and suggestions for specific plan components within *ESSA*.

6.4.1 Actors

The PDE's *ESSA* stakeholder engagement strategy consisted of four phases. In phase one, four stakeholder workgroups comprising teachers, charter school and district level administrators, advocates, civil rights leaders, and former policy makers were convened. Those four stakeholder workgroups included a total of more than 100 participants and focused on four key areas under *ESSA*: assessment, accountability and school improvement, educator preparation, and educator evaluation. Recommendations that were identified collectively by the members of the four workgroups were summarized and placed in the context of relevant research by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), who was hired as an independent research organization by the PDE. Because both educator preparation and the educator evaluation were topics relevant in *ESSA Title II*, members from both workgroups were considered as actors and combined in one single *ESSA Title II* policy network for the state of Pennsylvania (see Table 6-7).

Table 6-7*ESSA Title II Stakeholder List: Pennsylvania*

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Organization</i> | <i>Type</i> |
|------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | PennAEYC | Professional Organization |
| 2 | Capital Area Intermediate Unit | LEA |
| 3 | Southern Columbia School District | LEA |
| 4 | NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference | Civil Rights Organization |
| 5 | York City School District | LEA |
| 6 | Carlisle Area School District | LEA |
| 7 | Penn State University (Certification Office) | IHE |
| 8 | Butler County Community College (PECT/Praxis) | IHE |
| 9 | School District of Lancaster | LEA |
| 10 | Central Dauphin School District | LEA |
| 11 | Allegheny Intermediate Unit | LEA |
| 12 | School District of Philadelphia | LEA |
| 13 | Perkiomen Valley School District | LEA |
| 14 | Edinboro University (School of Education) | IHE |
| 15 | Bucks County Intermediate Unit | LEA |
| 16 | Team PA Foundation | Business Partnership |
| 17 | PA State Education Association | Teachers Union |
| 18 | Drexel University (Teacher Education Program) | IHE |
| 19 | PA Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators | Professional Organization |
| 20 | The Pennsylvania Key | Education Advocacy |
| 21 | Pittsburgh Public Schools | LEA |
| 22 | Kennett Consolidated School District | LEA |
| 23 | Juniata Valley School District | LEA |
| 24 | Midwestern Intermediate Unit | LEA |
| 25 | Carnegie Mellon University (Heinz College of Information Systems & Public Policy) | IHE |

| | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| 26 | PA Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals | Professional Organization |
| 27 | Neshaminy School District | LEA |
| 28 | Derry Township School District | LEA |
| 29 | Upper Dauphin Area School District | LEA |
| 30 | Gettysburg Area School District | LEA |
| 31 | Philadelphia Federation of Teachers | Union |
| 32 | Lower Dauphin School District | LEA |
| 33 | PA School Boards Association | Professional Organization |
| 34 | Lewisburg Area School Board | LEA |
| 35 | Erie School District | LEA |
| 36 | Warren County School District | LEA |
| 37 | Upper St. Clair School District | LEA |
| 38 | Education Wyomissing Area School District | LEA |

In summary, 40 individuals (19 from the educator preparation workgroup and 21 from the educator evaluation workgroup) representing 38 organizational stakeholders were included in Pennsylvania’s *ESSA Title II* policy network, which accounted for 40% of the overall number of stakeholders involved in the state’s *ESSA* plan development process. The former Secretary of Education who was listed in the educator evaluation workgroup and was excluded from the analysis because that individual did not represent any of the organizations but served as an individual consultant. Additionally, while the School District of Philadelphia had one representative serving in both of the workgroups respectively, it was counted as only one actor in the network. As a result, a total of 38 policy actors were identified in Pennsylvania’s *ESSA Title II* policy network, including twenty-four local educational agencies (LEAs) (63%), five institutions of higher education (IHEs) (13%), four education professional organizations (11%), two teachers unions (5%), one civil rights organization, one business partner, and one education

advocacy organization. Compared to other states' *ESSA Title II* policy networks in this sample, the Pennsylvania's *ESSA Title II* policy network had no charter school or charter organization actor. Since no staff member from the PDE was listed as a formal member in either of the two *ESSA Title II*-related workgroups, PDE was not treated as a node in this policy network.

6.4.2 Overall Network

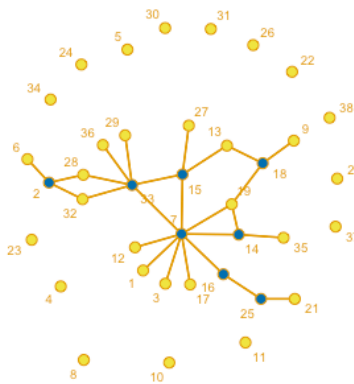
As shown in Figure 6-7, the overall *ESSA Title II* policy network of Pennsylvania included 38 actors and 52 edges. Because relationship was treated as non-directed in this study, 26 relationships among actors were identified in this network. There were 15 isolated actors in this network, including the Juniata Valley School District, the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference, the Butler County Community College, the Central Dauphin School District, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, the Upper St. Clair School District, the Pennsylvania Key, the Education Wyomissing Area School District, the Kennett Consolidated School District, the PA Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, the Gettysburg Area School District, the York City School District, the Midwestern Intermediate Unit, and the Lewisburg Area School Board. The large number of isolators in Pennsylvania's *ESSA Title II* policy network may suggest that this policy network was very loosely connected.

This speculation was supported by the low density score of this network at 0.04. The disconnected characteristic of the Pennsylvania's *ESSA Title II* policy network might be explained in two ways. First, key actors existed in this policy network to bring all other organizations together as a whole network. Alternatively, organizations in this network may have rarely collaborated with one another at the time of or prior to participating in the state *ESSA Title II* plan development, which was also suggested by the large number of isolators in this network.

The quantitative network analysis also showed that eight organizations—the Capital Area Intermediate Unit, the PA School Boards Association, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, the Penn State University, the Drexel University, the Edinboro University, the Team PA Foundation, and the Carnegie Mellon University—were identified as key brokers (cutpoints) in Pennsylvania’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. In other words, if they were dropped from the network, it would have resulted in a completely unconnected network structure. Another interesting finding was that four out of the five IHEs were identified as the cutpoints in Pennsylvania’s *ESSA Title II* policy network, except for the Butler County Community College.

Figure 6-7

ESSA Title II Network: Pennsylvania



The centrality of each node in Pennsylvania’s *ESSA Title II* policy network was measured by the degree, closeness, and betweenness (see Table 6-8). In this network, the Pennsylvania State University had the highest degree centrality. It was connected to nine other nodes in the policy network. The PA School Boards Association ranked the second with connections to six other organizations in this network. The closeness of this network showed that no actor in this policy network was close to all other nodes, which was shown by the disconnected feature of the network discussed previously. Based on the betweenness score, the Pennsylvania State University was in the dominant position to observe or control the flow of information in Pennsylvania’s *ESSA Title II* policy network while the PA School Boards Association also played an important role in the information flow.

Table 6-8

ESSA Title II Network Centrality: Pennsylvania

| <i>Organization</i> | <i>Degree</i> | <i>Closeness</i> | <i>Betweenness</i> |
|--|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <i>PennAEYC</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Capital Area Intermediate Unit</i> | 6 | 0 | 43 |
| <i>Southern Columbia School District</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>York City School District</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Carlisle Area School District</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Penn State University</i> | 18 | 0 | 316 |
| <i>Butler County Community College</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>School District of Lancaster</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Central Dauphin School District</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Allegheny Intermediate Unit</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>School District of Philadelphia</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|-----|
| <i>Perkiomen Valley School District</i> | 4 | 0 | 22 |
| <i>Edinboro University</i> | 6 | 0 | 42 |
| <i>Bucks County Intermediate Unit</i> | 8 | 0 | 88 |
| <i>Team PA Foundation</i> | 4 | 0 | 80 |
| <i>PA State Education Association</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Drexel University</i> | 6 | 0 | 46 |
| <i>PA Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators</i> | 6 | 0 | 56 |
| <i>The Pennsylvania Key</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Pittsburgh Public Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Kennett Consolidated School District</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Juniata Valley School District</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Midwestern Intermediate Unit</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Carnegie Mellon University</i> | 4 | 0 | 42 |
| <i>PA Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Neshaminy School District</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Derry Township School District</i> | 4 | 0 | 38 |
| <i>Upper Dauphin Area School District</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Gettysburg Area School District</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Philadelphia Federation of Teachers</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Lower Dauphin School District</i> | 4 | 0 | 38 |
| <i>PA School Boards Association</i> | 12 | 0 | 211 |
| <i>Lewisburg Area School Board</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Erie School District</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Warren County School District</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Upper St. Clair School District</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Education Wyomissing Area School District</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |

6.4.3 Coalitions

Similarly, the nine community detection algorithms and their modularity scores were calculated to detect subnetworks of Pennsylvania's *ESSA Title II* policy network. The modularity scores of all nine community detection algorithms ranged from 0.35 to 0.51 with the Optimal algorithm and the Edge-betweenness algorithm having the same highest modularity score and the same community detection results. Four sub-coalitions and fifteen isolators were identified by both of these two algorithms (see Figure 6-8) and the sub-coalitions were listed below:

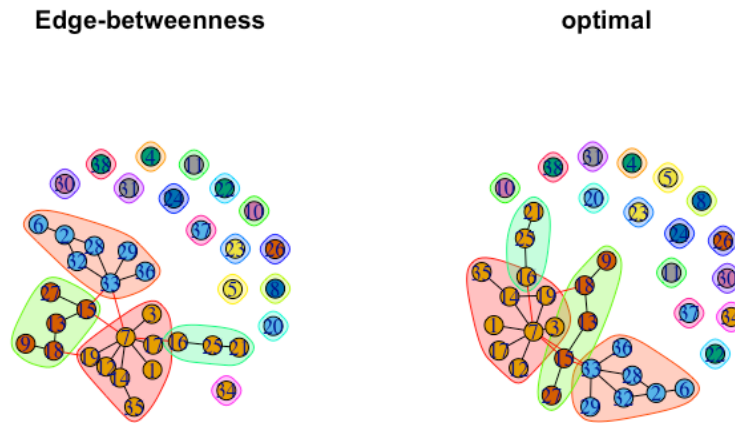
- Sub-coalition one (3):
 - Team PA Foundation (#16)
 - Pittsburgh Public Schools (#21)
 - Carnegie Mellon University (#25)
- Sub-coalition two (5):
 - School District of Lancaster (#9)
 - Perkiomen Valley School District (#13)
 - Bucks County Intermediate Unit (#15)
 - Drexel University (#18)
 - Neshaminy School District (#27)
- Sub-coalition three (7):
 - Capital Area Intermediate Unit (#2)
 - Carlisle Area School District (#6)
 - Derry Township School District (#28)
 - Upper Dauphin Area School District (#29)
 - Lower Dauphin School District (#32)

- PA School Boards Association (#33)
- Warren County School District (#36)

- Sub-coalition four (8):
 - PennAEYC (#1)
 - Southern Columbia School District (#3)
 - Penn State University (#7)
 - School District of Philadelphia (#12)
 - Edinboro University (#14)
 - PA State Education Association (#17)
 - PA Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (#19)
 - Erie School District (#35)

Figure 6-8

ESSA Title II Policy Network Sub-coalitions: Pennsylvania



The subnetworks identified in Pennsylvania’s *Title II* policy network suggests that in Pennsylvania, IHEs played a significant role in teacher education policy making. This finding was supported by the fact that in three out of the four subnetworks, IHEs were the key actors bridging the subnetworks. Additionally, IHEs, large school districts, teachers’ unions, and education professional organizations worked more closely with each other than other stakeholders in Pennsylvania’s *Title II* policy network. It was notable that subgroup three was made up of school districts and school board associations only, which might suggest that LEAs in the state were closely collaborating with one another in teacher education policy making.

6.5 Stakeholder Engagement in Tennessee

Stakeholders who were consulted in Tennessee’s development of its state *ESSA* plan included the Governor, the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE), state legislators, school

districts, educators (including school leaders, charter school representatives, specialized instructional personnel, and school staff, advocates, parents, students, and the general public. The statewide feedback tour was launched in May 2016 and the public feedback was collected through meetings, webinars, and conferences. The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), in coordination with the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, hosted three meetings with 125 school leaders representing 99 local school districts in Tennessee.

Between June and September 2016, the TDOE reached over 2,000 stakeholders representing 87 counties (out of 95) and 135 local school districts (out of 146). The department heard from a variety of educators and teacher groups both in person and through webinars, including the Tennessee's Hope Street Group fellows, the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) fellows, the TDOE's Teacher Advisory Council, Governor Haslam's Teacher Cabinet, the Tennessee Education Association, the Professional Educators of Tennessee, the Tennessee Association of School Librarians, and the Tennessee Librarians Association. Topics discussed in these meetings were broad in scope to enrich stakeholders' understandings of the *ESSA* requirements and answer their questions regarding specific areas of interest. School board members across the state were convened via webinar and the TDOE participated in regional meetings hosted by the Tennessee School Board Association to both inform and gather input from the school boards members. SCORE, a Nashville-based education advocacy group founded by the former U.S. Senator Bill Frist, co-convened several key stakeholder sessions with the TDOE to engage a variety of stakeholder groups, including superintendents from the Leading Innovation for Tennessee Education (a network of superintendents in Tennessee), business leaders, school choice organizations, community groups, civil rights organizations, and other education advocates.

6.5.1 *Actors*

To help craft the *ESSA* state plan, Tennessee's Commissioner of Education invited sixty-six individuals to join six working groups. These working groups were organized around key topics in *ESSA*, including standards and assessment, accountability, school improvement, English language learners, educator support and effectiveness, and student support. Each working group, led by two senior TDOE officials, included ten to twelve leaders from different education communities and agencies, including local school district leaders, teachers, and civil rights and advocacy groups representatives.

The working groups were charged with providing recommendations and responding to feedback from other stakeholders on Tennessee's *ESSA* plan. Members of the working groups met in person at least twice and had several follow-up calls to discuss key areas during the summer and fall of 2016. Feedback from the Commissioner's statewide meetings with superintendents was shared at these working groups' initial meetings. This process was repeated as input from other stakeholders was received. Additionally, all working group members were encouraged to go back to their communities and constituencies to gather additional feedback and ideas related to their assigned topic areas to inform the working groups' ongoing discussions and decision making.

The educator support and effectiveness working group was in charge of providing recommendations and feedback for topics covered by *ESSA Title II*. In addition to group meetings and discussions, the group also conducted several meetings with their own constituents and shared survey results from their districts and organizations. The educator support and effectiveness group was made up of 11 members representing 11 different stakeholder organizations (accounting for 17% of the overall number of stakeholders involved in all of the

six working groups). TDOE staff was not listed as formal members of group and thus was not considered as a network actor in Tennessee’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. Table 6-9 provides information about the member organizations, number assigned to each organization for analytical purposes, and the types of organizations in Tennessee’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. All individuals’ names were deleted.

Table 6-9

ESSA Title II Stakeholder List: Tennessee

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Organization</i> | <i>Type</i> |
|------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | Valor Collegiate Academies | Charter School Network |
| 2 | Greater Nashville Alliance of Black School Educators | Education Advocacy |
| 3 | Professional Educators of Tennessee | Professional Organization |
| 4 | Trenton SSD | LEA |
| 5 | Belmont University (Education Department) | IHE |
| 6 | Clarksville-Montgomery County School System | LEA |
| 7 | Maury Co. Schools | LEA |
| 8 | Tennessee Education Association | Teachers Union |
| 9 | Shelby County Schools | LEA |
| 10 | Cannon Co. Schools | LEA |
| 11 | Maryville City Schools | LEA |

Among the eleven organizations engaged in Tennessee’s *ESSA Title II* policy network, six were local educational agencies (LEAs). Other member organizations included one from institutions of higher education (IHEs), one education advocacy group, one education professional organization, one charter school network, and one from a teachers union. Different

from the broader stakeholder groups involved in the overall state *ESSA* plan development, parents, civil rights groups, and community members were not found in Tennessee's *ESSA Title II* policy network.

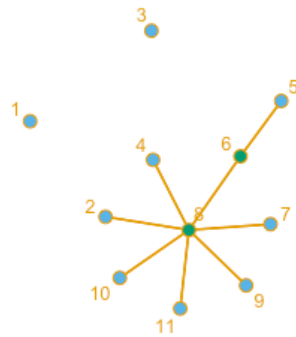
6.5.2 Overall Network

Figure 6-9 shows the overall *ESSA Title II* policy network of Tennessee, which included 11 actors and 16 edges. Because relationship was treated as non-directed in this study, eight relationships among actors were identified in this network. Two isolated organizations were detected: the Valor Collegiate Academies and the Professional Educators of Tennessee. The Valor Collegiate Academies was a charter school network and the only charter school representative in this network.

In Tennessee's *ESSA Title II* policy network, all actors, except for the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, had only one connection to the Tennessee Education Association. As a result, the Tennessee Education Association and the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System were both identified as the cutpoints. These two organizations played the most important roles in Tennessee's *ESSA Title II* policy network by connecting different network actors together. In other words, if they were not in the network, different communities of actors in this network would not have been able to communicate with one another. This was the only case in this sample where a teacher's union was identified as a key player in a state's teacher education policy network.

Figure 6-9

ESSA Title II Network: Tennessee



The density score of this network was 0.15, indicating that this network was at the lower end of the scale of connectedness. This suggested that key actors existed in this network to connect all the other actors. The centrality of each actor involved in Tennessee’s *ESSA Title II* policy network was measured by the degree, closeness, and betweenness (see Table 6-10). In this specific policy network, the Tennessee Education Association had the highest degree of centrality. It was connected to seven other nodes in the network. The Clarksville-Montgomery County School System ranked the second with two connections within the network. The Clarksville-Montgomery County School System also helped Belmont University to not be an isolator by connecting it to the whole policy network. The closeness scores of “0” in this network showed that in graph theory, this policy network would be considered as a “disconnected” graph because more than two nodes were not connected. The Tennessee Education Association was

also in the dominant position to observe or control the flow of information in this network while the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System also played an important role in the information flow between the IHEs and the LEAs in Tennessee.

Table 6-10

ESSA Title II Network Centrality: Tennessee

| <i>Organization</i> | <i>Degree</i> | <i>Closeness</i> | <i>Betweenness</i> |
|---|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <i>TIRRC Valor Collegiate</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Greater Nashville Alliance of Black School Educators</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Professional Educators of Tennessee</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Trenton SSD</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Belmont University</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Clarksville-Montgomery County School System</i> | 4 | 0 | 14 |
| <i>Maury Co. Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Tennessee Education Association</i> | 14 | 0 | 54 |
| <i>Shelby County Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Cannon Co. Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Maryville City Schools</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 |

6.5.3 Coalitions

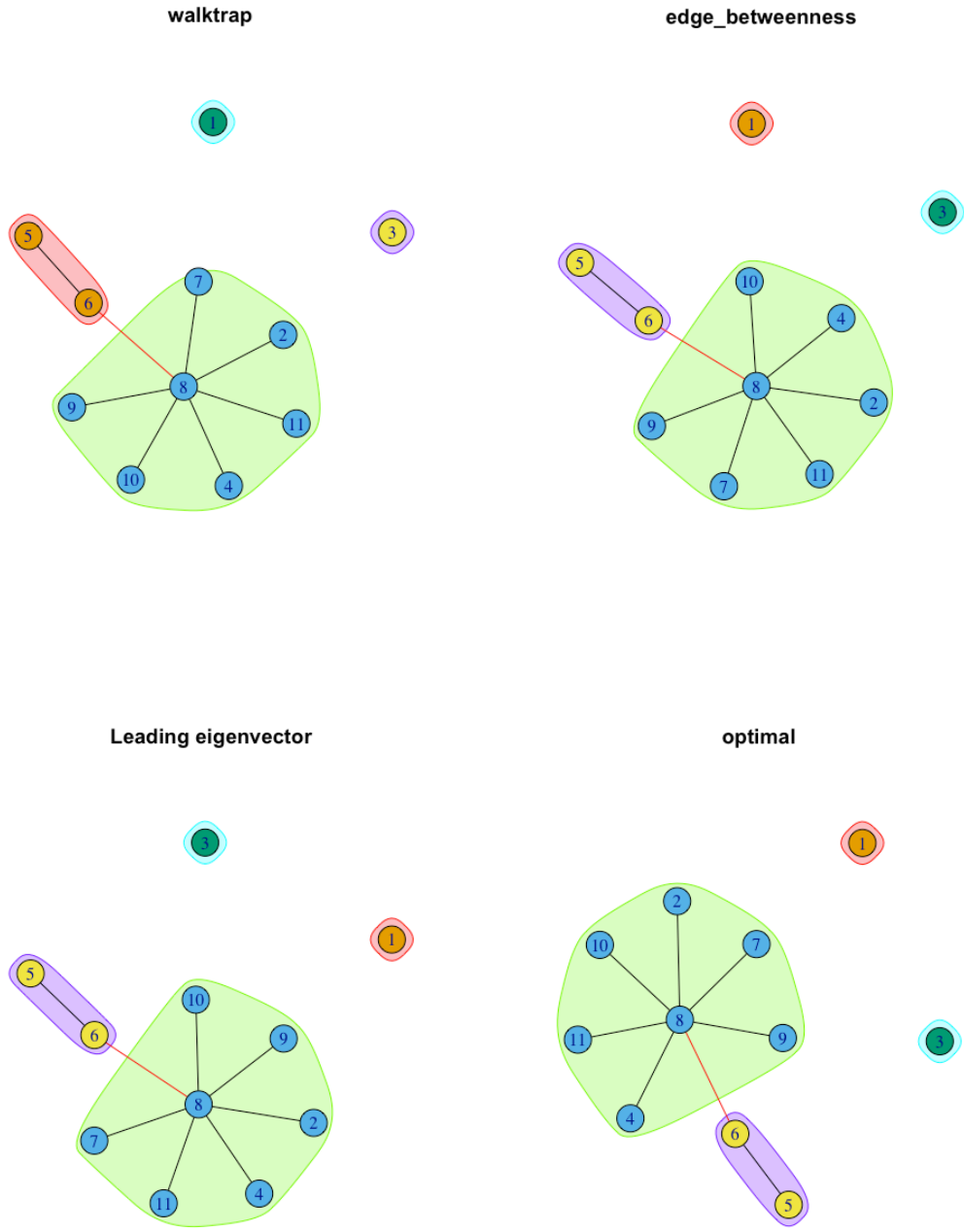
Modularity scores calculated with the nine community detection algorithms ranged from 0.0 to 0.18 in Tennessee’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. Four algorithms—the Optimal algorithm, the Leading eigenvector, the Walktrap, and the Edge-betweenness algorithm—produced the same highest modularity score. Two sub-coalitions and two isolators were respectively identified in this network (see also Figure 6-10):

- Sub-coalition one (2):
 - Belmont University
 - Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

- Sub-coalition two (7):
 - Greater Nashville Alliance of Black School Educators
 - Trenton SSD
 - Maury Co. Schools
 - Tennessee Education Association
 - Shelby County Schools
 - Cannon Co. Schools
 - Maryville City Schools

Figure 6-10

ESSA Title II Policy Network Sub-coalitions: Tennessee



The subnetworks identified in Tennessee’s *Title II* policy network suggested that the LEAs in Tennessee were the most active actors engaged in teacher education policy making. The teachers union at Tennessee, i.e., the Tennessee Education Association also played a predominant role in the state’s *ESSA Title II* policy network due to its connection to most of the LEAs. The involvement of the IHE actor—Belmont University—in this network was also a result of its connection with the LEA.

6.6 Stakeholder Engagement in Washington

The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) coordinated the state’s *ESSA* plan development by setting up a website for communication with the public regarding Washington’s *ESSA* Plan, which contained information about public meetings held around the state, the teams and workgroups drafting the plan, an *ESSA* state plan development timeline, and a list of frequently asked questions and answers. The OSPI also communicated broadly about the state *ESSA* plan development process via Twitter, social media, email listservs, news releases, professional group meetings, and other events where relevant stakeholders were present. Ten regional public fora across the Washington state were also held by the OSPI.

The ten public fora covered topics and information regarding the opportunities and challenges brought by *ESSA*, including different requirements between *ESSA* and the *No Child Left Behind* Act. Participants had opportunities to provide feedback at or after these fora. All feedback was collected, organized, and shared with the OSPI leadership team and with appropriate *ESSA* workgroups to assist the state *ESSA* plan development. The OSPI released the draft state *ESSA* plan in mid-November of 2016 for public comment for a period of 30 days, followed up a statewide review tour to collect feedback. Stakeholder groups that engaged in this process included the Washington state Governor and his education policy advisors, members of

the state legislature, members of the Washington State Board of Education, OSPI staff, state agencies/department staff, local educational agencies (LEAs) and educational service districts (ESDs), representatives of Tribes located in Washington state, teachers, principals and other school leaders, federal and state required advisory groups to OSPI, paraprofessionals and specialized instructional support personnel, charter school leaders, early learning representatives, parents and families, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, and institutions of higher education (IHEs).

6.6.1 Actors

The Washington OSPI established a consolidated plan team (CPT) to advise the state superintendent in the development of the state *ESSA* plan. This team received recommendations from the 12 Washington *ESSA* workgroups that contained a total of over 200 members from education, business, the legislature, and parent organizations across the state. These workgroups prepared their designated component parts of the plan and provided this information to the Washington *ESSA* CPT for review. Topics covered by each workgroup were: accountability system, learning and teaching, student assessment system, school and district improvement, effective educators, English language learners, fiscal issues, report card, parent and community engagement, early childhood education, students with disabilities, and the federal programs. These workgroups met monthly and at the discretion of the team leaders.

The “effective educator” workgroup that included 23 member organizations worked specifically on the *Title II* section of the state *ESSA* plan. Staff members from the OSPI engaged heavily in this group as formal group members and leader of the group. As such, OSPI was considered a network actor in Washington’s *ESSA Title II* policy network. Table 6-11 shows the

detailed information regarding the member organizations, the number assigned to each organization for purposes of analysis, and the types of organizations.

Table 6-11

ESSA Title II Stakeholder List: Washington

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Organization</i> | <i>Type</i> |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Professional Educator Standards Board | Professional Standards Board |
| 2 | Association of Washington School Principals (WSPEF, ESPAW, AWMLP, WASSP) | Professional Organization |
| 3 | Washington Association of School Administrators | Professional Organization |
| 4 | Washington State University (College of Education) | IHE |
| 5 | Washington Student Achievement Council | Council (with state agency support) |
| 6 | Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education | Professional Organization |
| 7 | Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession | Education Advocacy |
| 8 | Washington Education Association | Teachers Union |
| 9 | Bellevue School District | LEA |
| 10 | Evergreen School District (Clark County) | LEA |
| 11 | Yelm School District | LEA |
| 12 | Olympia School District | LEA |
| 13 | Franklin Pierce School District | LEA |
| 14 | Davenport School District | LEA |
| 15 | Liberty School District | LEA |
| 16 | Tacoma Public Schools | LEA |
| 17 | Educational Service District 112 | LEA |
| 18 | Educational Service District 101 | LEA |
| 19 | Tukwila School District | LEA |
| 20 | Kelso School District | LEA |
| 21 | Ellensburg School District | LEA |
| 22 | Oroville School District | LEA |
| 23 | OSPI | SEA |

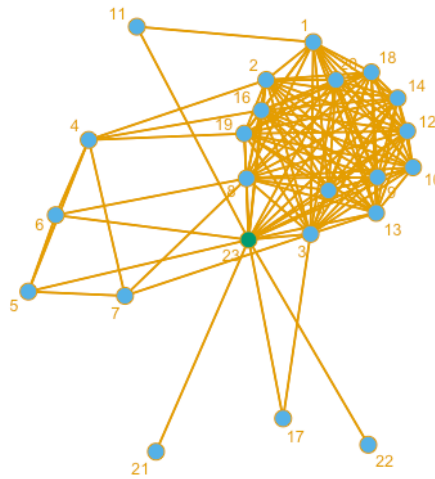
In addition to OSPI, the other 23 organizations involved in Washington's *ESSA Title II* policy network included 14 LEAs (61%), three (13%) education professional organizations (i.e., the Association of Washington School Principals, the Washington Association of School Administrators, and the Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education), the Professional Educator Standards Board, the teachers union, an IHE, a state agency supported council, and an education advocacy organization. Compared to the broader stakeholder engagement in the overall *ESSA* plan development in Washington state, parent representatives, members from civil rights groups, and community members were missing in this network.

6.6.2 Overall Network

Figure 6-11 shows the overall network for Washington's *ESSA Title II* policy development, which included 23 actors and 246 edges. Because relationships were treated as non-directed in this study, 123 relationships among actors were identified in this network. There was no isolated actor in Washington's *ESSA Title II* policy network. In other words, every member organization in this network was connected to at least one other member in some ways. The quantitative network analysis additionally showed that the Ellensburg School District and the Oroville School District each had only one connection with the OSPI, which meant that they would have been disconnected from this network had not been invited by the OSPI. Unsurprisingly, OSPI was also identified as the only cutpoint in this network, likely due to its heavy involvement in this process and the key roles it played on connecting different communities within the network.

Figure 6-11

ESSA Title II Network: Washington



The density score of this network was 0.49 indicating that this network had a moderate level of clustering, which was the highest among states sampled in this dissertation study. The centrality of each node in Washington’s *ESSA Title II* policy network was measured by the degree, closeness, and betweenness (see Table 6-12). In this specific policy network, the OSPI had the highest degree centrality and was connected to 19 other nodes in this network. The Washington Association of School Administrators and the Washington Education Association both ranked the second with 16 undirected connections. These three organizations were thus much closer to other actors in this network. Finally, according to the betweenness measure, the OSPI was in the absolute dominant position to observe or control the flow of information in this network.

Table 6-12*ESSA Title II Network Centrality: Washington*

| <i>Organization</i> | <i>Degree</i> | <i>Closeness</i> | <i>Betweenness</i> |
|---|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Professional Educator Standards Board</i> | 28 | 0.6666667 | 14.5500000 |
| <i>Association of Washington School Principals (WSPEF, ESPAW, AWMLP, WASSP)</i> | 30 | 0.7586207 | 9.6730159 |
| <i>Washington Association of School Administrators</i> | 32 | 0.7857143 | 31.3174603 |
| <i>Washington State University</i> | 12 | 0.5238095 | 7.9666667 |
| <i>Washington Student Achievement Council</i> | 8 | 0.5365854 | 4.7388889 |
| <i>Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education</i> | 8 | 0.5500000 | 2.8388889 |
| <i>Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession</i> | 8 | 0.5116279 | 2.9888889 |
| <i>Washington Education Association</i> | 32 | 0.7857143 | 28.1952381 |
| <i>Bellevue School District</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Evergreen School District (Clark County)</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Yelm School District</i> | 4 | 0.5000000 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Olympia School District</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Franklin Pierce School District</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Davenport School District</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Liberty School District</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Tacoma Public Schools</i> | 30 | 0.7586207 | 9.6730159 |
| <i>Educational Service District 112</i> | 4 | 0.5116279 | 0.0000000 |
| <i>Educational Service District 101</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Tukwila School District</i> | 30 | 0.7586207 | 9.6730159 |
| <i>Kelso School District</i> | 28 | 0.7333333 | 0.5285714 |
| <i>Ellensburg School District</i> | 2 | 0.0000000 | 10.9666667 |
| <i>Oroville School District</i> | 2 | 0.4782609 | 0.0000000 |
| <i>OSPI</i> | 38 | 0.8800000 | 153.6277778 |

6.6.3 Coalitions

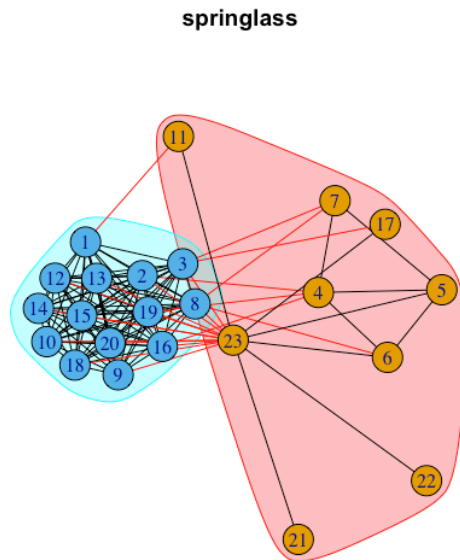
Again, nine community detection algorithms and their modularity scores were calculated to decide the subnetwork structure of Washington's *ESSA Title II* policy network. The modularity scores ranged from 0.0 to 0.24, among which the Spinglass algorithm explained the community clustering in this specific network the best. Only two sub-coalitions and no isolators were identified (see also Figure 6-12):

- Sub-coalition one (14):
 - Professional Educator Standards Board (#1)
 - Association of Washington School Principals (WSPEF, ESPAW, AWMLP, WASSP) (#2)
 - Washington Association of School Administrators (#3)
 - Washington Education Association (#8)
 - Bellevue School District (#9)
 - Evergreen School District (Clark County) (#10)
 - Olympia School District (#12)
 - Franklin Pierce School District (#13)
 - Davenport School District (#14)
 - Liberty School District (#15)
 - Tacoma Public Schools (#16)
 - Educational Service District 101 (#18)
 - Tukwila School District (#19)
 - Kelso School District (#20)

- Sub-coalition two (9):
 - Washington State University (#4)
 - Washington Student Achievement Council (#5)
 - Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (#6)
 - Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (#7)
 - Yelm School District (#11)
 - Educational Service District 112 (#17)
 - Ellensburg School District (#21)
 - Oroville School District (#22)
 - OSPI (#23)

Figure 6-12

ESSA Title II Policy Network Sub-coalitions: Washington



The subnetworks identified in Washington's *ESSA Title II* policy network suggested that the OSPI played an important role connecting the two subgroups within the network in teacher education policy making. The teacher union also had close relationships with LEAs in Washington state, which was similar to what found in Tennessee. Also, in Washington's *ESSA Title II* policy network, school administrators, such as the Association of Washington School Principals and the Washington Association of School Administrators, and the Professional Educator Standards Board were in the same subnetwork with the teachers union and most LEAs. In the other subnetwork led by the OSPI, there were more groups and organizations focusing on teacher education, including university-based teacher education program and non-profit organization with a focus on teaching and teacher education.

6.7 Comparative Discussion Across the States

I presented findings from quantitative social network analysis (SNA) for each of the six states' *ESSA Title II* policy networks in the previous sections. Each policy network was examined in terms of the network membership, overall structure of the network, and sub-coalitions within each network that indicated the patterns of interaction among policy actors. Table 6-13 summarizes the main characteristics of each state's *ESSA Title II* policy network. In this section, I conduct a comparative analysis across the six states as cases to examine identified differences among state-level policy networks in relation to specific state contexts.

Table 6-13*Network Summary across States*

| | <i>CO</i> | <i>MI</i> | <i>MN</i> | <i>PA</i> | <i>TN</i> | <i>WA</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|---|--|---|--|-----------|
| <i># Actors</i> | 12 | 21 | 45 | 38 | 11 | 23 |
| <i># Ties</i> | 18 | 30 | 91 | 26 | 8 | 123 |
| <i>Density</i> | 0.27 | 0.14 | 0.09 | 0.04 | 0.15 | 0.49 |
| <i>Leader</i> | CDE | MDE | University of Minnesota | Pennsylvania State University | Tennessee Education Association | OSPI |
| <i>Cutpoints</i> | CDE | MDE, Michigan State University | St. Cloud Schools, University of Minnesota, Generation Next, Minneapolis Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, and Minnesota Association of School Administrators. | Capital Area Intermediate Unit, PA School Boards Association, Bucks County Intermediate Unit, Penn State University, Drexel University, Edinboro University, Team PA Foundation, Carnegie Mellon University | Tennessee Education Association, Clarksville- Montgomery County School System | OSPI |
| <i># Isolator</i> | 0 | 4 | 4 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| <i># Coalition</i> | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 |

A notable finding from the quantitative SNA across the six selected states was that the size of the network, i.e., number of actors within a network, did not seem to suggest more relationships among policy actors, i.e., the number of ties. For example, while more ties were identified in Washington's *ESSA Title II* policy network than those of any of the other five states, the number of policy actors in this network was around the average and smaller than two of the other states in this sample. A related finding across the states is that the density scores of these policy networks tended to be located towards the lower end of the scale of connectedness (between 0 and 1), which suggests that the clustering among policy actors within these networks was weak. One possible explanation might be that actors involved in these *ESSA Title II* policy networks were not connected very well with one another even though they were engaged in the same networks in the development of their respective state's *ESSA Title II* plan.

Alternatively, the low density observed across states might be due to the fact that the stakeholder engagement in state *ESSA* plan development was a federal mandate. Therefore, state agencies that were in charge of developing their states' plans might have intentionally reached out to a wide group of stakeholders and organizations that represented a diverse range of professional entities and communities who might not necessarily have a devoted interest or regular involvement in teacher education and teacher education policy making. As a result, they might have had few or no connections or relationships to one another prior to their engagement in this endeavor. This may also explain the discrepancy between the number of actors and the number of relationships identified from the analysis.

The centrality of network actors indicated how each actor was positioned in relation to others in the network. In states where state educational agencies (SEAs) were active in the *ESSA* plan development, including Colorado, Michigan, and Washington, the SEA tended to play the

most dominant role in their respective networks in terms of connecting to other actors in the network and observing or controlling the information flow within the network. Combined with the generally low density scores, this finding suggests that in these states, the structure of governance in education and education policy making was more state authority-centered instead of being structured around the formed policy networks. That is, actors in the policy networks were more likely to be connected with the SEAs but not with other members in the networks. In contrast, in states where SEAs were not formally involved in the state *ESSA Title II* policy networks, in particular in Minnesota and Pennsylvania, institutions of higher education (IHEs) were likely to be the key players in their networks. Tennessee, however, was unique in that it was the only state included in this sample where a teachers union took a central position in the state *ESSA Title II* policy network.

In social networks, cutpoints are the “bridges” that connect subgroups or communities within a network to one another. A cutpoint might not have the most relationships or take the central position within a network yet it is nevertheless critical for the function of the network because it bridges different subgroups within the network. In the case of *ESSA Title II* policy networks, if a cutpoint organization was not included in its network, the network as a whole would have been broken into two or more isolated subgroups that were not connected in any way to each other.

For example, the St. Cloud Schools in Minnesota, the Capital Area Intermediate Unit and the Bucks County Intermediate Unit in Pennsylvania, and the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System in Tennessee all played the critical roles in connecting different communities within their states’ *ESSA Title II* policy networks. Note that all these examples were school districts/ local educational agencies (LEAs), that were likely to have a strong interest and

motivation to engage in teacher education policy discussion and policy making and were likely to have partnership with a variety of organizational stakeholders within their states even prior to this specific policy event.

For example, school districts regularly worked with their respective SEA and partnered with IHEs for teacher recruitment and professional development activities. In addition, teachers and administrators of LEAs were often members of their states' education professional organizations. Therefore, in these cases, the LEAs would play the unique roles as cutpoints in the network to connect members from these different communities and constituencies that would not have been able to be connected otherwise.

Two or more policy coalitions were identified in each of the *ESSA Title II* policy networks in the six states examined in this study. There also existed "isolators" in all but two of the policy networks. These coalitions within policy networks suggested how policy actors were grouped with one another in the policy making process with the hope of increasing their chance of achieving policy goals. The number of coalitions existed within each policy network seemed to be related to the size of the network: Minnesota and Pennsylvania each had five and four coalitions in their networks of 45 and 38 members respectively. Michigan, with a policy network at the size of 21, also had four coalitions. The most isolators, who were policy actors not connected with others in the network, were also identified in the same three states. No isolator was identified in the policy networks of Colorado and Washington, the two states where the SEAs were heavily engaged in their states' *ESSA Title II* plan development processes.

In terms of the coalition formation, LEAs, especially large school districts in their respective states, such as the Denver Public Schools in Colorado and the St. Paul Public Schools in Minnesota, were more likely to be grouped with educator associations and advocacy groups

(e.g., teachers unions) in policy advocacy around issues on teacher education. Charter schools and charter school organizations, however, were more likely to be in the same policy advocacy coalitions with IHEs. Education professional associations within each state, such as the school principal and school administrator associations in the states of Minnesota and Washington, also tended to collaborate with one another in teacher education policy advocacy. The next chapter illustrates the stories of engagement from selected stakeholders who have been interviewed in this research.

CHAPTER 7 STORIES OF ENGAGEMENT

I presented in the previous chapter the membership, structure, and characteristics of each of six states' *ESSA Title II* policy network with the help of quantitative social network analysis (SNA), followed by a comparative analysis across the states. In this chapter, I focus on the experiences and perceptions of selected policy stakeholders who participated in their states' *ESSA Title II* policy development and present qualitative data from semi-structured, narrative interviews with the participants. Interview participants were purposively selected from the six states sampled for this study based on their respective organizational affiliations and roles at the time of the policy development and the preliminary findings from the quantitative SNA. This part of the analysis aimed to address the third research question:

- How did stakeholders from different coalitions engage in the policy process and what were their specific views, their motives to engage, their interpretations of the dynamics of the network/coalition, and their experiences in engaging in the policy process?

In this chapter, I have organized the findings from the interviews into four themes identified in the data in relation to policy stakeholders' experiences in teacher education policy making and engagement in their states' *ESSA Title II* plan development: 1) stakeholders' personal and professional experiences prior to their engagement in *ESSA Title II*; 2) stakeholders' experiences in the development of state *ESSA Title II* plan; 3) stakeholders' perspectives and interpretations of the policy network and coalition-building during the policy making process; and 4) stakeholders' evaluations of the final policy outcomes and reflections on their entire engagement process.

7.1 “What Brought You Here”

Stakeholders were asked about their professional backgrounds and experiences in teaching, teacher education, and (teacher) education policy during the interviews, as well as the organizations they worked for at the time of the *ESSA Title II* plan development. This information was important to understand these policy stakeholders’ personal beliefs, prior involvement in teacher education policy making, and the stances of the organizations they represented, all of which might have an impact on their interpretations of the policy issues and engagement experiences in their respective policy networks.

Participants drew on a broad range of personal and professional experiences during the interviews to describe what informed their engagement in teacher education policy and their specific policy networks. For example, many of the participants had extensive experiences as educational practitioners and other multiple roles in the education system:

“Well, I’ve been an educator in Minnesota for 44 years so I’ve been a teacher and a coach and an athletic director and a principal and now an executive director. And I’ve worked with the union. I was a union representative early in my career, so I, you know, worked with teachers...” (Teddy - MN)

“My bachelor’s degree was in math and physics with a minor in education. Um, so that I became a certified teacher. Um, I taught for five years in high school. Um, and then became a principal...Um, I went from being a principal and the assistant superintendent in charge of HR, um, to, uh, to the [state] Department of Education where I was the Deputy Secretary for Administration working for, um, for the democratic governor XX...” (Catherine - PA)

“So this is my 27th year in education. In my first 14 years I was a seventh and eighth grade English teacher and for the past 13 years I have been a high school librarian. Um, I am a national board certified teacher...” (Tracey - PA)

These experiences in education not only indicated participants’ devoted interests in and commitment to education and but also contributed to their professional and organizational knowledge about education at different levels and in different professional contexts.

Participants also cited their experiences as educational administrators in explaining their involvement in education policy and teacher education policy in particular. For example, many participants had current or former positions as administrators at their schools, school districts, or at the state level; or were leaders at education professional organizations and education advocacy groups. Being a leader in these organizations provided opportunities for them to be connected with local and state educational agencies and to be engaged in discussions about education policies in their states. For example, two participants from two different states shared their administration experiences:

“So my deep invested interest in the importance of information literacy and digital literacy and media literacy for our students drove me to become involved with the Pennsylvania School Librarians’ Association..... So I served as a board director for two years and over the past four years I’ve been on the presidential track...So during that time, I was deeply involved with our, um, the PA Department of Education...” (Tracey - PA)

“Um, I have worked directly and mostly at the state level education systems and policy. So I worked at the SEA, um, for about five years. And then I worked at the Professional Educator Standards Board, which has a state policy board. I was the staff there. Um, I worked there for three years and then I moved to where I am now. We’re a nonprofit educator organization...” (Cherry - WA)

While it was common for the policy stakeholders who participated in teacher education policy making in this study to have prior teaching and administration experiences in education, not all participants shared the same path:

I am a retired corporate executive with 35 years of working with a Fortune 500 company at a top-level position. My MBA and my PhD are in business administration and leadership and corporate strategic planning. And when I retired...I went back to grad school and got my teaching credentials... Then I became an adjunct professor and I taught for four years in a university’s master of Ed program...” (Michael - WA)

In this case, this participant only started his involvement in teaching and teacher education after he retired from his previous career. Yet, he shared this kind of experience with many other stakeholders in this sample, including the two participants above. While the variety of

professional backgrounds represented by stakeholders in the policy networks may reflect the states' deliberate efforts to reach to a broader group of stakeholders who might have an interest in the policy making process and help inform the *ESSA Title II* plan development and bring multiple perspectives, these different levels of prior knowledge and experience in teacher education among policy stakeholders could constitute a challenge in the policy making process in achieving consensus, especially in fields like teacher preparation and evaluation that could be potentially controversial.

Many participants also reported some prior experiences interacting with their respective state educational agencies (SEAs), either directly by serving as a staff member of their SEA or indirectly through serving on other professional organizations and committees that were connected to the SEA. This may explain why the SEAs tended to be the central actors and “cutpoints” in some of the state *ESSA Title II* policy networks as revealed by the quantitative SNA discussed in the previous chapter.

7.2 Involvement with *ESSA Title II*

I intentionally gave interview participants space to narrate about their involvement in their state's *ESSA Title II* plan development. What is most relevant to this study are the ways in which they described their motivations to be involved and the specific roles they played in the policy making process. Participants reported a variety of reasons that motivated them to engage in teacher education policy making and in the development of the *ESSA Title II* plan in particular. A common reason was the participants' continuous interests in a specific area in teacher education:

“...so I mean, my focus in education policy, like from grad schools moving to actual policy focused roles, um, has always been most interested in, uh, educator workforce aspects, um, in terms of supply and demand, uh, you know, working conditions for

educators, um, retention policies and so forth. My interest is, is in and continues to be in, even what I'm currently doing is very focused work on, uh, developing one aspect of the educator pipeline..." (Apple – MI)

Therefore, it was natural for her to want to participate in her state's *ESSA Title II* plan development as a result of her long-lasting focus on the teacher workforce and educator pipeline. Other participants shared similar statements about their interests in teacher education and development as a driving force:

"... well I do want to, you know, see that we treat teacher education programs adequately and fairly and that we're really preparing teachers for school, for needs of communities." (Marty - TN)

"Um, one of the things that we were looking at is we know leadership is going to change...So that the leadership portion really, really interested me specifically because teachers need to work from grassroots and we need to build that knowledge base and we need to provide those opportunities for them to lead without having to leave the classroom..... So I wanted to see how we could change the rhetoric to look at how can we develop ways that teachers can lead by staying in the classroom and doing what they do best." (Jane - CO)

It was clear from these narratives that these participants engaged in the *ESSA Title II* plan development work because they were motivated by their specific interests in issues related to teacher preparation, such as the teacher workforce, teacher education programs, or teacher leadership. In some cases, the stakeholders' devoted interests and experiences had been widely recognized in their districts and/or states and thus they were purposefully reached out to participate in this work:

"... like I said, I was asked, uh, volunteered in or was asked to serve on a couple of them again because I've been in several districts' committees and I've been in the profession and fairly active for a long time... I did have individual motivation. We have, we have some history, history of, of, you know, recognizing some shortcomings in teacher preparation and leadership preparation in our state. And again, that's something I wanted to be a part of. But that's probably also why people reached out to me and said, we know you're, you're concerned about this. This is the committee you should serve on." (Teddy - MN)

Relatedly, participants also reflected on their own personal and professional experiences and explained how these experiences brought them to the policy making work:

“I grew up with a lineage of educators in my family, teachers and principals, administrators. Um, I, you know, as a young person, I did not want to do what my family did, so I was very explicit about I was going to go onto a different line of work. Um, but as I went through college and I had an experience to intern for the legislature, the state legislature, and then I also worked for a Congresswoman and I started to do education issues for her. Um, it, it became very clear for me that, that was important to me. Um, and that there were good, there was lots of work to be done and it was, it was good work, um, that I could, I could feel like I'm, you know, a little bit contributing to something that has a much larger benefit in the world. Um, and then, and then I, I have two children. So I think as you have children and see the education system in a way, um, as from the parent perspective that that has just solidified. I, I can't imagine working in any other area... (Cherry - WA)

In this case, it was a combination of her family background, professional experiences in policy making, and personal concerns about education that collectively contributed to her choices. The quote below from a person of color was also illustrative:

“Kids and families and other teachers need to see more diverse adults in the, in the classroom as teachers. Right? So that was my motivation how can we really help at the policy level, kind of rethink what it means to be a teacher. Right. It goes beyond test scores and what people think is a good teacher because it's very culturally biased, right? Or can be. So things like that was, was why I wanted to be a part of this group” (Han - MN)

It is clear from the excerpt above that it was her strong motivation for diversifying the teacher workforce and the policy discourses about teaching that brought Han to her state's *ESSA Title II* development committee. Another participant, added an additional layer in his reflection:

“I think the other personal piece is, um, if educators don't engage themselves in policy work, than we are dictated to. And we've had too many examples of that in our past where some of the things are in policy that aren't necessarily the best for kids or for families or for teachers.” (Marty - TN)

What revealed in this quote is Marty's personal dedication as an educator and his perceived importance of the engagement of educators in policy conversations and policy making in order to best represent the interests of students and their families and teachers. Finally, participants also

cited what they saw as their professional obligations and a sense of professional responsibilities by advocating for the individuals working on the ground in schools. For example:

“...really just making sure that we provide the stuff, support and advocacy for our new administrators...I want to make sure that they feel adequately supported and a part of our system. And so while we are advocating for administrators to receive some of that support, I am one person that can provide some training, some professional development. And so as far as new administrators, but they really, I believe and in the research that I've been doing, they need a person in practice sitting by their side fighting for them as well to be compensated for their additional duties, responsibilities, and time.” (Ashley - WA)

In this case, it was the participant's perceived professional duty to support new administrators in her state that prompted her to want to, using her own words, “fight” for them being involved in policy making.

In addition to their initial motivations, participants were asked about their specific involvement in the *ESSA Title II* policy making committees or groups in their respective states. On average, participants spent from six to eighteen months as committee members and participated in meetings monthly or every other month during this period of time, both in person and virtually. For some of the stakeholders, performing this duty was challenging if they were located in rural districts or were full-time classroom teachers. For example, one participant reported:

“...it can be really difficult to find times. So there was a variety of efforts, uh, including some virtual meetings, some blended, you know, where there might be half of, half of the people who were there in person and the other half are online. And frankly, we never had a meeting where everyone could attend because you know..., when you're, when you're involving people who are also working a full-time job, they can't always get away. And if you wait, if you wait to find the day when everyone can be there, they will never come.” (Peter - MI)

Other participants also mentioned that being a committee member was time consuming, given the additional challenges that they sometimes faced with financial resources and family issues when participating in meetings. The quote below shows some of the constraints that existed with

regard to states' abilities to provide financial support to participants, and suggests that these constraints may have prevented certain people from being invited to participate.

"... we weren't able, for example, to provide any sort of transfers or to reimburse transportation costs and we had food at the meetings, but we couldn't provide like a stipend or things for parents because we didn't have money or capacity to do that. So we definitely weren't able to involve people, um, who had any sort of financial constraints around or had to take a day off work cause that was their situation. Um, or childcare or things like that. There's so much more that we could have done if we had that capacity."
(Linda - WA)

While it might be expected that such policy making efforts would be time consuming and that a certain amount of personal investment would be inevitable in order to meet the policy goals, it was not clear whether these time and financial constraints might have limited the stakeholders' participation in the policy making process.

7.3 Collaboration and Decision-Making

Quantitative social network analysis (SNA) showed that two or more sub-coalitions existed in each of the *ESSA Title II* policy networks in the six states. Therefore, I asked participants in the interviews whether or not their respective organizations had collaborated in the past with any other organizations that were identified in the same network, i.e., committee or workgroup. In some cases, I specifically asked the participants about the organizations that were identified as belonging to the same coalitions as their organizations with the hope of confirming what had been found from the quantitative SNA.

The majority of the participants, however, answered these questions in a very "strategic" way by simply acknowledging that they did know some of the organizations or that they were not unfamiliar with other participants in the groups, yet avoiding directly stating that they had collaborated with other organizations or naming those with whom they had collaborated with in other committees. The quotes below illustrates this finding:

“Did we have a close relationship? Yes and no... I think, um, we had a closer relationship with the school partners that we work with, obviously...” (Marty - TN)

“Yeah, I think it, I think it really kind of depends. Um, and, the answer is it certainly gets into the flow. Um, and I think maybe like, you know, we do have some political alliances on those kind of change... of public policy issues.” (Olivia - WA)

Only one participant from this sample explicitly identified another organization from the same committee that had a long-time partnership with her organization on a variety of issues in teacher education:

“Yes. Um, one of the areas or one of our big, um, bodies of work is National Board certified teachers. And we are one of three state partners that support that initiative. Um, we work with PESB as one partner. And so does the union. Um, so we, we’ve had a longstanding relationship. It’s probably, 12 to 13 years of partnership.” (Cherry - WA)

Additionally, Cherry also shared her knowledge about partnerships that existed among other organizations in the same committee. I removed the specific organization names to protect the identity of this participant:

The other, um, I would say the other two partners who work very closely are XXX, XXX and XXX, the professional educator standards board. Um, we, we do have other contracts with those organizations too.” (Cherry - WA)

In addition to the identified coalitions, the quantitative SNA also indicated the diverse membership on the state *ESSA Title II* committees, which was required by the U.S. Department of Education in the federal mandate. Interviews with the selected stakeholders from these states supported this finding. For example, members of the committees represented a variety of professional roles and experiences in education:

“I think it was a very, very diverse working group. It was representative. There were superintendents, school superintendents that were part of the group. There were teachers who were part of the group. There were folks from the, uh, teachers union... There were, um, politicians and legislators... and there was some representation from the communities.” (Michael - WA)

“There was a diverse perspective of people in the group. We had, um, a lot of practitioners, teachers, we had principals, we had district office administrators, superintendents, um, we had agency leaders in that group.” (Cherry - WA)

Diversity also came from the geographical locations represented in the groups:

“... what they try to do is pick a committee that would represent some diversity across the state, urban, rural, suburban, um, mix of demographics, um, mix of experiences. Uh, they tried to diversify that committee deliberately.” (Teddy - MN)

“So it was really important for us to have diverse geographies involved in convening and in bringing, um, educators and stakeholders together from across the table.” (Jane - CO)

These comments by the participants were consistent with the findings from the quantitative SNA that the diversity of policy actors involved in the state *ESSA Title II* policy networks might be - at least partly - a result of the deliberate efforts of the state educational agencies (SEAs). This would explain why some of the members of the networks were only connected with the SEA in the network and/or had few relationships with other organizational actors that had a devoted interest in teacher education and teacher education policies. Indeed, some participants felt that they were invited to be part of the group solely because their presence would enhance the “diversity” of the group as “window dressing” so the committee would look “inclusive.” Some diverse members felt that their “voice” was not really heard in the policy decision-making process. For example, a woman of color participant remarked that there was a “distinctly white male” style of negotiation in the group work and suggested that the policy outcomes may have been different had there been more gender and race parity at the table:

“I mean, I went, and I said what I needed to say, and I think they had me there for a specific reason. But again, when, when someone (like me) was in a homogenous group, mostly white women and men, I am not sure if or how much of my voice would be heard and addressed” (Han - MN)

These observations and perceptions of the participants, combined with the quantitative SNA results, reveal that a diverse representation did not necessarily mean an equal positioning among policy actors in the policy networks and the policy making process.

Because of the relatively large and diverse membership of the committees, it was natural to ask how consensus was reached, if ever, and how decisions were made in the policy making process. As one participant said: *“we had no problem getting people at the table. Um, but we had a problem with, you know, obviously getting them all to agree on something.”* (Catherine - PA). Participants reported different strategies on the ways to reach consensus and make policy recommendations. For example, two participants reported that members from the designated committees or workgroups decided to vote for consensus:

“I believe, I'm trying to remember if it was the consolidated plan team or the other Hub group that had to come to consensus. Um, and I think what, what we ended up doing, we voted.” (Lu - WA)

“So, um, for the consolidated plan team, they, um, did voting for, they had come up with a, a voting protocol” (Tracey - PA)

Interestingly, in the same two states, the SEAs had the final authority to determine what was written down on the policy document:

“Um, in the end, um, you know, it was my job to say, okay, I hear you, but this is what we're going to do. Because at the end of the day, someone had to make the decision because you needed to get it done and to Washington DC to the Department of Ed if you wanted money. So that's, that was basically my role at the end of saying ‘Thank you for your input. Now this is what we're doing.’ So it didn't make me the most popular person all the time, but I, that's when, you know, I had a job to do.” (Catherine - PA)

“So when we are doing that [the finalization of the state plan], I sit with superintendent XXX and he made the final decision based on stakeholder's recommendations from the consolidated plan team. So I think that he accepted the majority of the recommendations from the consolidate plan teams...I think there was a couple places that he made a different decision [from the recommendations].” (Linda - WA)

It is noteworthy that while in the State of Washington, the SEA led the policy making process and engaged heavily throughout, SEA staff in Pennsylvania did not participate formally in any of the *ESSA Title II* workgroups in their state.

In some cases, the participants reported no difficulty in reaching consensus. For example, participants from the states of Washington stated that:

“I think it was easy to reach consensus for the most part because the bottom line was what was going to be more effective for the students. And we kept in mind the whole time, um, that our primary focus was on students.” (Michael - WA)

“Um, we had, you know, again, all voices were heard, and I can remember more than one time, you know, really going around every table or every person around the table having that opportunity to speak. And then, um, as I recall, it was a consensus though. I mean we kept talking until we had an agreement that everybody in the room agrees.” (Rosa - WA)

What was common from these narratives was that these policy actors either followed certain procedures to collect feedback, achieve consensus, and make the recommendations; or left to the next level of decision making.

“Um, we really left it up to the group, but we, you know, we as staff members from the state department really just acted as facilitators. We didn't take on a decision-making role. Um, we facilitated them towards consensus and then took those recommendations to the next committee, into the state board.” (Tiffany - CO)

7.4 Reflections on Engagement and Lessons Learned

Each participant was asked about their perceptions about their engagement in the policy making process, and the lessons they learned from their engagement experiences. The majority of the participants said that they were very satisfied with their overall engagement experience and thought that this type of engagement benefited the policy making process in teacher education. For example, participants from various states in the sample reported:

“I think it helps, you know, because again, we all come from, you know, we all had our own paths through education or we have our own paths that lead our interests in public education. Whether it's from a higher ed point of view in researching or whether it's, it's from being our being boots on the ground or whether it says as a parent and as a consumer or a taxpayer, you all, you all come to the issue with the different history and therefore you all come to it with your own set of beliefs and issues. And, um, you need to hear that.” (Catherine - PA)

“I think it can be very, very helpful. Um, I think because of the challenges that we talked about before, you know, it's important to engage the voice from the field. That's really critical. And I think, I think our Department of Education made a notable effort at making that a meaningful opportunity to engage from the field.” (Peter - MI)

“I think so. I mean it always is tricky cause there's oftentimes like particularly when it's a federal policy like this, there's so much, um, parameters or whatever. But I've seen stakeholder input and impact policy, you know, in a variety of different ways over time.” (Lo - WA)

“Oh, for sure. We had very diverse stakeholders in the room and by inviting teachers and paying for the rural teachers to come and stay in hotel and paying for substitute teachers, we encourage the participation of many voices that are not normally heard in the process. For sure.” (Jane - Co)

It seemed to be the consensus among these participants that engaging stakeholders from diverse professional backgrounds helped introduce a multiplicity of perspectives into the policy making process. They also seemed to recognize and appreciate the efforts made to engage a variety of stakeholders in this process.

Participants who held neutral or negative views about their experiences tended to attribute their specific experiences to what they perceived as common problems in the policy making process. For example:

“I absolutely think that stakeholder engagement benefits the policymaking process, but I think, um, that happens when you get the right stakeholders to the table. Um, and I, I think the, the quote and quote “great” stakeholders, if there's such a thing, um, are more difficult to get to the table than the ones who are sort of most convenient. Right?” (Apple - MI)

“I mean, I am not really think the stakeholder engagement was really beneficial because we spent a lot of time trying to write, give feedback... ..So versus some of our concerns, they couldn't really capture that within what they need to do for that ... but I, but again,

it's not just them. This is everywhere, right. So I don't want to blame them for that outcome. It's just, I think they don't know what to do with that. Right. Because it's not part of their, their related experience or it's not part of how they think about education.” (Han - MN)

The first comment was related to the composition of the committee and finding the “right” and “great” stakeholders who would actually contribute to the final policy while the second one was related to the persistent issues in education policy making with respect to different views on education and what could be included in the final policy document despite the work done by the stakeholders. Nevertheless, participants generally agreed that the final state plans reflected what the committee had recommended while acknowledging that there would always be space for improvement and changes:

“Am I happy with the final outcome? Um, I was, when we had it, um, I have worked with it and watched it being used and watch, um, sometimes the lack of training or, or the, the lack of seriousness that some folks took. Um, uh, I think that there were pieces that we could improve.” (Catherine - PA)

“I'd say maybe about 80% satisfied because there were a lot of issues that we did talk through that were important that, that needed to be addressed. Um, but so not completely satisfied, but mostly I'd say.” (Ann - MI)

“We live in an environment of change...you know, with regards to the current administrative administration changes, we put challenges out there for us to take them, take consideration. So, yeah, I would say that you, you don't have a pro, a plan, an ESSA plan that remains static. It has to be, uh, can take into consideration that there's always going to be change and the environment and everything else and we have to be re reflect, you know, reacting to those changes.” (Michael - WA)

Quantitative social network analysis (SNA) indicated that some stakeholder groups were either not included in their state’s *ESSA Title II* policy network or were positioned rather marginally and disconnected within the network. This finding was confirmed by some of the participants during the interview when they were asked if they would recommend additional groups to be included in similar events. The groups that were most frequently mentioned by the

participants included parents and families, K-12 education practitioners, and representatives from the teachers unions, which was consistent with the quantitative SNA results. For example:

“On the other hand, um, we were less successful, um, engaging the teacher associations, um, in the conversations.” (Apple - MI)

“Um, and we know that our families need a lot more than that. Right? Um, so, so having that voice in that policy conversation is needed.” (Bang - MI)

“Um, I, you know, in general, I wish that there were more practitioners that had been led to the work. I think that there was, uh, you know, a lot of people that are not necessarily in those classrooms that were part of it..... I just felt like they were all, you know, on all of the committees, there was a lot of people like, you know, people that work at the, at the state agency, um, superintendents and central district people that are really far from the classroom and, you know, and then community stakeholders and of course all of those perspectives are important. Um, but there, to me, in my mind, there were just too few practitioners.” (Olivia - WA)

Participants also identified additional stakeholder groups that they felt needed to be involved in the process, such as charter school representatives, people of color, English language learners, and students.

I also asked during the interviews what lessons the participants felt they had learned from their engagement experience and what recommendations they would give for future stakeholder engagement efforts in teacher education policy making. Consistent with what they perceived as beneficial in their own participation in this process, many stakeholders acknowledged that they realized the importance of participating in this kind of policy making activity in order to have their voice heard and lend support to their desired policy goals. For example, Tracey from Pennsylvania reported:

“my first lesson learned is that my voice does matter because they were, there was one very specific thing that I was advocating for and pushing for to be in the, um, consolidated in the ESSA plan for XXX. And it ended up being in there. And when the draft came through for us to provide our feedback, it wasn't, wasn't very clear. The message wasn't very clear. So when I provided my feedback, I saw that change happened.” (Tracey - PA)

Additionally, stakeholders reported that they were able to know and collaborate with other stakeholders who had the similar interests in areas of teacher education as they were thankful for their engagement in this work and thus recommended educational professionals to take up opportunities and engage more in education policy making.

“My other lesson learned is that there are so many other educational entities and associations and organizations out there that as educators. We don't realize that we should tap into their expertise and their initiatives. And I think that there's a disconnect sometimes. And I didn't realize how large that disconnect was even though, um, you know, we're all in it for the same thing. And I also learned that it's, it's not as intimidating as people might think to talk to legislators and to talk to people in the department of education and other organizations that they're, they're just people too, who, you know, who want the best. For our field.” (Tracey - PA)

“Lessons learned is to get people involved upfront, as oppose to after the fact if you want total commitment to the ultimate plan.” (Michael- WA)

Overall, state policy stakeholders who were engaged in their respective state's *ESSA Title II* plan and interviewed for this study reported generally positive experiences about their engagement in the policy making process. While these policy actors recognized that the final policy did not always reflect their intended policy goals and that the policy making process could have been more genuinely inclusive and equitable, they seemed to agree that there were sufficient efforts to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the policy making process and that they personally benefited from this process by learning more about policy making procedures and connecting with likeminded educational professionals.

7.5 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I presented findings from the semi-structured, narrative interviews with selected policy stakeholders who were engaged in their respective state's *ESSA Title II* policy development, which constituted the qualitative phase of this dissertation study. These interview participants were purposefully identified and recruited based on the results of the quantitative

phase of the research. The final sample of participants represented a diversity of professional backgrounds and organizational affiliations of the overall stakeholder groups in their states.

The narratives of these participants reveal that they came to the *ESSA Title II* policy making work from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds and were driven by very different motivations. As a result, they shared different accounts about how they perceived their engagement experiences, their interactions with other members in the policy networks, and their views of the final policy outcomes. In the next chapter, I will review the entire study, discuss the research findings, explain the limitations and delimitations of this study, and offer some implications for teacher education policy, policy advocacy, and future research based on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Over the years, the interest in influencing policy making in teacher education has moved far beyond politicians and policy makers to a wider range of policy actors and stakeholders. This dissertation study analyzed the engagement of policy stakeholders in the development of six selected U.S. states' teacher education plans for the use of federal funds designed to increase the quality of teaching and teacher education, through *Title II* of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Drawing from theoretical perspectives of bounded rationality, social network and policy network, and the advocacy coalition framework, I designed a mixed-method, multiple case study integrating quantitative social network analysis (SNA) and qualitative, semi-structured narrative interviews. I purposefully analyzed stakeholder engagement in policy networks in six states that displayed a variety of patterns in terms of network structures and the ways in which policy actors interacted and collaborated with one another in the policy making process. Narratives collected from interviews with selected stakeholders in these states further contextualized the patterns identified from quantitative SNA from the perspectives of the participants themselves in order to understand the formation and dynamics of the policy networks and advocacy in teacher education. In this chapter, I will first review the main findings of this study, discuss the findings in relation to extant literature on policy networks and teacher education, and then reflect on the limitations of this study. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the implications of this study for teacher education policy, policy advocacy, and future research.

8.1 A Review of the Main Findings

Drawing on an examination of the development processes of *ESSA Title II* in six selected states, this study analyzed the complex policy networks involved in the development of teacher

education policy in these states. A multitude of policy actors and stakeholders, including those from state educational agencies, local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, charter schools and charter organizations, education professional organizations, parent associations, community representatives, civil rights groups, labor unions, education advocacy groups, and business partners, were included in this analysis of state level policy networks that were constituted by them. Quantitative SNA revealed the complex structures of *ESSA Title II* policy networks in the selected states and the ways in which policy actors were positioned and interacted with others in their respective policy networks. This study also has provided a qualitative examination of selected stakeholders' policy engagement, their respective positions in the policy networks, their motives for engaging in the policy making process, their interpretations of the dynamics of the networks and coalitions, and their experiences in engaging in the policy process.

The quantitative analysis revealed that there existed sub-coalitions within each policy network, which were, to some extent, distinct with regard to the types of the organizations, their interests in teacher education, and prior partnerships with other organizations within the network. However, there seemed to be no identifiable relationship between the number of sub-coalitions and the size of the network, i.e., number of actors in the network. In other words, a large number of policy actors within a network would not necessarily lead to more divisions among them. In addition, patterns were also identified in terms of what types of organizational actors were more likely to collaborate with one another and establish coalitions in teacher education policy advocacy.

Analysis also showed that these *ESSA Title II* policy networks tended to have low density scores, which meant that the clustering within the networks was weak. In some cases, it was the

state educational agencies (SEAs) that were active in their respective states' *ESSA Title II* plan development played the role of engaging and connecting other members in the network. Thus, they served as the central actors and “cutpoints” in the networks who were able to build the most connections with other actors and facilitate the flow of information within the networks. Such patterns were found in the policy networks in Colorado, Michigan, and Washington. This finding suggests that the structure of governance in education in these states was more state-centered instead of network-structured. In other states, institutions of higher education (e.g., Minnesota and Pennsylvania), large school districts (e.g., Minnesota and Colorado), and a teachers union (Tennessee) also played similar roles.

The membership composition of *ESSA Title II* policy networks also varied across the six states. In three states, local educational agencies (LEAs) made up more than half of the members in the networks (e.g., Washington, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania) while in Minnesota, only seven percent of the *ESSA Title II* committee members were LEA representatives. However, more community advocacy groups (14, 31%) were involved in Minnesota's *ESSA Title II* policy network than any of the other five states in this sample. In general, community advocacy groups, along with parents, community members, and civil rights groups were largely absent from the teacher education policy networks in these states despite an increasing recognition of their important roles in teacher learning and development (Zeichner et al., 2015).

Qualitative interviews with selected stakeholders from these states further revealed that actors in these state *ESSA Title II* policy networks were diverse yet not well-connected. Participants reported that they had not realized that some of the actors shared the same interests with them in teacher education policy before joining the policy making committees. They consequently recommended stronger partnerships among organizations involved in teacher

education so that more connections and collaborations opportunities could be identified.

Meanwhile, a few participants, in particular, those from diverse and historically marginalized communities, felt that their inclusion in these committees was largely tokenism and that genuine efforts to diversify the policy networks was needed beyond merely meeting the federal diverse stakeholder engagement mandate.

In addition, the qualitative interview revealed variation in governance structures across the states, showing that SEAs in some states had a more active role and authority in the teacher education policy decision-making process while policy decisions were more likely to be made through the networked policy actors in other cases. While these interviewed policy stakeholders were generally satisfied with their engagement experiences, they had mixed feelings about the final policy outcomes and desired a more diverse policy networks to include the voices of students, parents, and people of color.

8.2 Conclusions

This dissertation study identified organizational stakeholders who were interested in the teacher education policy development and analyzed their engagement in their state's *ESSA Title II* plan development as members of policy networks. The study was unique in that it applied quantitative social network analysis to map the overall policy networks in teacher education policy development in six selected states in the United States. The analysis revealed the coalitions of policy actors that emerged during the policy making process and the membership of each coalition. After analyzing the collationed networks, results confirmed previous research that identified a fundamental shift in governance of education away from elected public systems towards networks composed of actors from different public and non-public sectors and provided

new empirical evidence on the structures and characteristics of teacher education policy advocacy coalitions.

Qualitative interviews with selected policy stakeholders from the same six states further provided narrative accounts of their engagement experiences in the *ESSA Title II* plan development processes in their respective states. Participants' motivations to be part of the policy making process and their engagement in the policy making work were influenced by their personal experiences and professional backgrounds in education, as well as their prior engagement in education professional organizations and policy advocacy groups. Their narratives about their engagement in the policy making process and interactions with other members in the policy networks contextualized and complemented results identified from the quantitative analysis in terms of the network structures and relative positions of policy stakeholders within the networks.

8.3 Contributions

This dissertation study has contributed to the fields of network theories, policy network analysis and teacher education policy research. I explain below the contributions of this study to each of these areas in the sections below.

8.3.1 *Theoretical Contributions*

I have argued in previous chapters that social network analysis and policy network analysis provided a unique opportunity to apply an integrated theoretical framework for understanding policymaking processes. I have shown in this study the conceptual compatibility of network theories with established theories of decision-making and policymaking: Bounded Rationality and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF).

The Bounded Rationality, network theories, and the ACF make different contributions to our understanding of policy networks and policymaking, yet these three theories also overlap in the ways they approach to the policy phenomena. Based on the discussion in this research, there are at least two ways that this integrated theoretical framework proposed in this study could contribute to our understanding of policymaking in education.

First, bounded rationality emphasizes that individual actors are bounded by the policy environment and resources. It thus connects well with the network theories to analyze how individual policy actors, each of who is bounded by their own knowledge and access to information, are able to exchange resources to achieve collective policy goals within the network. Second, ACF helps to identify and analyze the network structures within policy subsystems in order to understand whether or not subgroups of policy actors exist within a policy network. It also explains why such coalitions among policy actors could be formed.

Therefore, by synthesizing concepts across different theories, this study has suggested that the integrated framework designed and applied in this research could result in richer analysis of policymaking process than any single theory can provide alone. Policy researchers should find this integrated theoretical framework useful in gaining a complex understanding of decision-making and policymaking processes.

8.3.2 *Methodological Contributions*

By applying social network analysis (SNA) to the study of teacher education policy development, this study provided evidence that SNA was a suitable method for analyzing stakeholder engagement and policy networks in teacher education policy making. Scholars in political science have previously identified the significance of policy networks and coalition building in policy making (Bomberg & Peterson, 2016; Coen, 2007; Marsh, 1998; Rhodes, 1997;

Sabatier, 1998; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Watson & Shackleton, 2008). The study of policy networks in education, in particular the application of SNA in identifying and examining policy actors and the coalitions they formed within networks, is still in its infancy. This study has thus contributed empirical evidence to the literature of social network analysis by demonstrating that SNA was a unique and powerful tool in analyzing the composition, structures, and characteristics of complex policy networks in teacher education policy making.

In addition to highlighting the suitability of SNA for investigating teacher education policy networks, this study has also contributed insights to the ongoing methodological debates about SNA as an analytic approach. By employing a mixed methods approach, this study rejected the traditional division between quantitative and qualitative applications of SNA (Edwards & Crossley, 2009) and responded to the call for more mixed methods studies applying SNA (Crossley, 2010). This mixed-method study also spoke to the broader literature that highlighted the unique contributions of mixed methods design in social scientific research by offering more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of complex social and political phenomena (Yin, 2009).

This study showed that quantitative analysis and a structural portrayal of policy networks was valuable in illustrating the complexity of the networks and in drawing attention to vital network characteristics, membership, coalitions, and actors holding critical positions. By providing insights into the perceptions and experiences of network actors, this study has also indicated that qualitative network approaches can expand our knowledge about the inner workings and dynamics of policy networks with the help of stakeholders' narrative accounts of their engagement in policy making.

Qualitative narratives were also helpful in identifying the roles of particular policy actors within the networks and the underlying rationale of their engagement and coalition behaviors. By triangulating quantitative network analysis with qualitative narratives, the findings of this study thus approximated the “messy results” that were closer to the “messiness” of social networks in reality (Lievrouw et al., 1987).

Therefore, the analysis in this study has indicated that the complex world of policy networks can be deeply and fruitfully understood with a mixed methods approach to social network analysis. The complex results identified from this study could potentially help policy decision makers and advocates to understand the policy contexts and relationships in which they are functioning and enhance our understanding of the networked forces shaping the teacher education policy making process and the policy outcomes.

8.3.3 *Contributions to Teacher Education Policy Research*

Teacher education scholars have identified the existence of different policy camps in teacher education and the diverse policy positions members of these policy camps hold (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). However, to the best of my knowledge, no study in the United States has systematically investigated the interactions of policy stakeholders engaged in the teacher education policy development process or empirically illustrated the formation and dynamics of policy coalitions.

This dissertation study has contributed empirical evidence drawing from a mixed methods social network analysis of teacher education policy networks that emerged in selected states’ *ESSA Title II* plan development processes. Findings of this study provided insights into the important policy actors and their roles and relationships within the policy networks and illustrate the complexity of stakeholder engagement in the development of teacher education

policy. While scholars have conducted focused analysis of the policy networks of selected actors, for example, philanthropic foundations (Kretchmar et al., 2014, 2016), this study has outlined the overall policy networks including their structures and the variety of policy actors involved in the state *ESSA Title II* policy making processes. This study has also helped expand the landscape of research on teacher education and teacher education policy by contributing unique theoretical perspectives of social networks, policy networks, and coalition building into the study of teacher education policy making.

8.4 Limitations and Delimitations

Several limitations of this study needed to be recognized and were discussed below. To start with, I want to acknowledge that policy networks constitute only one of several conceptual approaches to examining political decision making that focuses specifically on stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and coalition building. Other theories emphasizing the different aspects of political decision-making, include for example, identifying the particular stages of the policy process, examining the influence of narratives on public opinion, and the impact of policies on society (Policy Feedback Theory [PFT]). These could have all contributed important insights into the analysis of teacher education policy making at the state level.

This dissertation study, which specifically focused on policy networks, was not able to sufficiently consider other factors that were likely to have impact on policy outcomes, including policy development in other jurisdictions, political will, and the translation of ideas between experts, policy advocates, and decision makers (Marsh, 1998). I did not study in this dissertation project the nature and quality of the *ESSA Title II* plans of these six states in relation to the policy networks and sub-coalitions identified. Specifically, how the composition of the policy networks and the network structures, i.e., what organizational stakeholders were included in the networks

and how they interacted and collaborated with one another within the networks, might have influenced the final policy outcomes. While this is beyond the scope of this study, this line of inquiry warrants additional investigation in order to contribute nuanced understandings of the otherwise invisible impact of policy networks on the policy making process and products.

While I adopted an integrated theoretical framework in this study and constantly paid attention to the broader policy context and a multitude of other factors that might have influenced the development of state *ESSA Title II* plans, I need to acknowledge that this single study was unable to fully capture the complexity of *ESSA Title II* policy making process of its entirety even within the constraints of the selected states. I explained some of the other limitations of this study in the sections below.

8.4.1 *Multiple Case Study Design*

The multiple case study design was selected to analyze the *ESSA Title II* plan development processes in six selected states as a result of a combination of the time and resource constraints of this study. While it would have been ideal to conduct a comparative analysis of the policy networks of different teacher education policies, this option was not possible due to the scope of my dissertation research. Instead, I decided to focus on the single policy initiative of *ESSA Title II* and purposefully selected six states as unique cases to investigate the policy networks that emerged from these different cases. This approach allowed me to maintain a manageable project while maximizing the generalizability of results identified from this study to other similar contexts (Yin, 2009).

8.4.2 Policy Development Stages Studied

My decision to focus on stakeholder engagement in the process of drafting state *ESSA Title II* plans constituted another limitation of this study. By focusing solely on the policy development stage, I was not able to investigate earlier or later stages of the policy process, such as the agenda setting and the implementation of the policy, which poses a risk for neglecting the historical and contemporaneous developments of the policy initiatives (Pierson, 2005), as well as the network dynamics. For example, in their analysis of inter-organizational networks to implement the state *RTTT* applications, Russell et al. (2015) were able to find out that SEAs were able to design larger networks and to engage more non-system actors at the policy implementation stage for the purpose of gaining access to a wider range of resources needed for the reform. Those non-system actors thus played a formally designed and functional role in policy implementation instead of merely representing interests in the policymaking process (Russell et al., 2015).

Scholars have additionally criticized studies investigating the policy making process for emphasizing the negotiation and adoption phases while neglecting the implementation of policy initiatives (Pierson, 2005). I acknowledge that the moments of policy decision making should be understood within the longer period of time of policy design, development, and implementation and I attempted to address this issue by inviting interview participants to reflect on not only their experiences in the policy making process but also on their prior knowledge and experiences with teacher education and teacher education policy making as well as their later perceptions of the policy outcomes.

8.4.3 *Methodological Limitations and Delimitations*

I also want to acknowledge that the choice of data sources and analytical methods in this dissertation study are not without shortcomings. The content of documents, including policy documents is often influenced by the choices made by the document authors as well as the social, historical and political contexts they are situated (Finnegan, 2006; Forster, 1994). Archives of policy documents, for example, are often biased towards official documents and final reports (Finnegan, 2006) because they consolidate a breadth of views and opinions, and tend to be rather vague “consensus documents” (Iannantuono & Eyles, 1997, p. 1611). Acknowledging these limitations, I consulted a variety of documentary data in addition to the official policy documents with the hope of enriching the analysis and approaching a more realistic understanding of policy actor engagement.

Additionally, relying on textual data for the quantitative social network analysis meant that I needed to manipulate the data in ways that could be processed by social network analysis software, which involves extracting data from textual and online sources and converting it into recognizable formats. Occasionally, the available data sources did not always allow me to extract the information required for such analyses of the intensity or directions of relationships, the duration of collaboration, the specific types of relationships, policy actors’ actual level of engagement, and the power relationships between policy actors in the networks. I was able to ask these questions when interviewing the selected participants to address these limitations of the quantitative analysis. However, the purposeful sampling of interview participants could not represent all the perspectives in the complete networks, this was another limitation of this study.

One of the biggest challenges of studying political decision makers is their limited availability (Liu, 2018; Sabot, 1999) and the difficulty of getting access to these individual

(Puwar, 1997). Being aware of these factors and potential challenges, I paid particular attention in planning for the recruitment of interview participants. I put considerable effort into delineating the research purposes and procedures clearly and succinctly when making the initial contact via emails in order to not overwhelm the potential participants. I also tried to be as accommodating as I could in scheduling interview dates and times. Despite these efforts, the final sample of interview participants was still not as balanced as what I expected. Thus the missing narratives, experiences, and interpretations of the policy process from those who were left out would potentially affect the findings and conclusions of this research, which I acknowledge as a major limitation of this study.

Finally, narrative accounts collected from interviews may contain biases and inaccurate recollections on the part of the participants that may lead to omission of important information or aspects of the issues under investigation (Gaskell, 2000; Richards, 1996). In this study, policy stakeholders were asked about events and their experiences that occurred two to three years prior to the time of the interviews. Therefore, it was expected that not all of them were able to give complete and accurate accounts of what really happened. I thus made efforts to triangulate the interview data with documentary data and the quantitative social network analysis results and I used documents to remind or prompt some of the interview participants when talking with them.

8.4.4 *Researcher Positionality*

I approached this study as a teacher education researcher who was conducting her dissertation research when completing the Ph.D. program in an institution of higher education in the United States. I recognized that my professional background and institutional affiliation both had impact on my views of teacher education and the teacher education policy process, which might in turn influence my collection and interpretation of data for this research, including the

ways I selected research methods, drafted interview questions, presented myself to my research participants, and made sense of textual and interview data.

In addition to ensuring that I collected complete and accurate documentary data that captured the complex policy making process, I took special care to be transparent about my organizational affiliation and research purposes when recruiting interview participants, being aware of how my research might be viewed by policy actors from other professional backgrounds, for example, non-public sectors or governmental agencies. I was aware that such an approach might discourage some policy stakeholders from participating and was thus not surprised that stakeholders from charter school networks declined my invitation at a much higher rate than those working in institutions of higher education and school districts. In addition, I also constantly reflected on my own positions on relevant teacher education policies during the research and made efforts to explicate my assumptions throughout the writing process.

Blaikie (2019) maintained that in-depth interviews required a considerable degree of involvement in the social world. Being a Ph.D. student, a female, and a non-native English speaker with an accent, I was conscious about how I would be perceived by my interview participants, many of who held power in important decision-making positions. I consequently decided to standardize the ways interview questions were asked, which might have limited my interactional engagement and conversational involvement during the process.

8.5 Implications

This dissertation study examined the complexity of interest representation and coalition-building in teacher education policy networks and highlighted the importance of networking in understanding the policy making process. Results of this study have implications for policy makers, advocates, and researchers interested in a network approach to policy analysis.

8.5.1 *Implications for Policymaking and Policy Actors*

The findings of this research could inform policy makers and decision makers when entering or initiating policy networks. For example, it is important to recognize that policy networks rarely, if ever, operate in isolation from policy actors' professional histories. In other words, policy actors' engagement in policy networks is influenced by their existing values and opinions and their prior relationships and connections. Therefore, actors in a policy network can either marginalize other actors or be marginalized by others, depending on how "alike" they are in terms of professional values and experiences. However, policy actors form networks in order to achieve policy goals or leverage influence on policy making and they are generally willing to collaborate as long as the overall value of maintaining the network is perceived as more important than individual interests.

Understanding how policy networks and their members function would thus help those interested in influencing the policy making process and policy outcomes through a networked approach to establish and utilize networks more strategically and effectively. Additionally, understanding how policy networks function also help key actors to identify potential stakeholders they might want to introduce into the policy networks in order to broaden their network outreach and reconnect with stakeholders who might have lost policy impact over time. Finally, being able to identify sub-coalitions within policy networks may also inform stakeholders and advocates to be more strategic in terms of choosing collaboration partners in order to enhance their policy impact.

8.5.2 *Implications for Future Research*

Beyond its implications for policy stakeholders, this study also identifies areas for future research, in particular for comparative policy analysis. As mentioned previously, one of the limitations of this study was its exclusive focus on the development of *ESSA Title II* and the limited numbers of states and interview participants. Results about the dynamic nature of the teacher education policy networks provide opportunities for future comparative studies of the networked policy making processes associated with other teacher education policies, building on the foundations of what learned from this current research.

In addition, analysis of selected states' *ESSA Title II* plan development processes revealed the variation of policy networks in terms of overall structures and the coalition building patterns represented in the small number of six cases. Researchers who are interested in the policy network formation and dynamics in their own states could either conducted in-depth focused study or comparative analysis on a larger sample of states for *ESSA* or other policy initiatives. Comparing policy networks among states with drastically different political and social contexts may contribute to identifying additional contextual factors that influenced policy actor engagement in networks.

Teacher education policy is imbedded within the broader policy contexts of education, thus benefiting from studies conducted by other education policy researchers focusing on policy networks, policy actors, and collaborations. For instance, previous research on state policymaking indicated that state policy adoption was not only affected by the formal and informal networks within the state, but also at least in part the result of interstate policy networks or communities (Cohen-Vogel, et al., 2008; Ingle et al., 2007). Therefore, future studies in teacher education policy could explore specifically the impact of interstate policy collaborations

and the potential power of regional and national professional associations and consortia in teacher education. Additional studies also highlighted the roles played by intermediary organizations in brokering and disseminating research knowledge and connecting research communities to the policy makers (Hollar, 2018), as well as how evidence on educational policies is produced, promoted, and utilized within and across networks (Scott et al., 2017). Although the role of intermediary organizations was not captured in this study, future research should be able to follow this direction.

Methodologically, other researchers have suggested that instead of analyzing social network relationship only by its presence or absence, analysis can be performed by looking into the patterns of collaboration and the depth of the interactions (i.e. if more than one type of relationship existed between two organizations) (Frank et al., 2014). This would be an important area for further work in order to illustrate the nuanced nature of the social networks and their roles in policy making process and outcomes.

Meanwhile, the theoretical framework and the mixed methods approach adopted for this study can potentially inform researchers interested in other educational policy reforms or activities that might also benefit from similar analysis. For example, future studies could explore how policy actors in other education policy domains engage in the policy making process and in what ways they interact and collaborate within policy networks. Of particular interest, based on findings of this study, would be the engagement of educational researchers in institutions of higher education in education policy making and the coalitions to which they are a part within the policy networks. This and similar case studies in education policy making would thus add to a growing empirical evidence base for future innovations in education policy development.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Introduction | |
| | Thank you Thank you so much for being interviewed with me today. | |
| | Summary of projects (affiliation, advisor, content) <i>Please allow me to introduce myself and this research again to provide you with more information. My name is Weijia Wang, and I am currently doing my Ph.D. in teacher education with a focus on teacher education policy, at the University of Washington, Seattle</i> | |
| | Outline of interview (time, open questions, prompts, encourage questions) <i>The goal of this dissertation is to understand the engagement and collaboration of policy actors in the development of state ESSA Title II plans to increase an understanding of the teacher education policymaking process in the U.S I'm specifically interested in studying ESSA Title II because it is the first time the Department of Education requires each state to formally engage stakeholders in its policymaking process.</i> | |
| | Ethics (any questions, consent form official job description) <i>That's basically about this research. Do you have any questions or concerns so far? Please feel free to ask me whenever you have questions.</i> | |
| | Recording <i>Do you mind me recording our following conversation?</i> | |
| | Contextual information on engagement in teaching, teacher education and education policy | |
| 2 | Involvement in teacher education/teacher education policy For how long? In what way? Which organization(s)? What role? <i>Could you provide me some contextual information about your engagement in the fields of teaching, teacher education, and education policy. For example, how long have you get involved in these areas, in what kind of ways, in which organizations, and in what roles?</i> | |
| | | |
| 3 | Involvement in the development of state ESSA Title II plan | |
| | Personal narrative (description of experiences getting involved) <i>How did you get involved in ESSA?</i> | |
| | Important memories | |
| | Personal engagement/engagement of the organization Reasons for engagement | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | <p><i>How did you get involved? Why did you get involved? What were your motivations?</i></p> <p>Time of engagement (how long)</p> <p><i>How long did the working group exist?</i></p> <p>Level of engagement (time, resources, what is their role in relation to the plans)</p> <p><i>What was your role in the working group? How often did the group meet, and how many times did the committee meet in total?</i></p> <p>Positive factors</p> <p>Challenges</p> <p><i>What do you think are the positive factors and challenges for your engagement in that working group</i></p> | |
| | <p>Position on the issue (<i>what were the issues you are specifically interested in within Title II and why</i>)</p> | |
| 4 | <p>Policy network and coalition-building (focusing on Title II experiences only)</p> | |
| | <p>Involvement in policy network and collaboration</p> <p>Specific partners and partner organizations</p> <p>On the list and off the list</p> <p><i>Do you or your organization has collaborated with some of the other organizations who were in the same ESSA committee with you and your organization?</i></p> <p>Ways of collaboration</p> <p>Reasons for collaboration</p> <p>Benefits of collaboration</p> <p>Challenges</p> | |
| | <p>Observation of collaboration among other actors</p> <p><i>Did you notice other organizations in your working group work closely with each other?</i></p> | |
| | <p>Observation of different policy beliefs on teacher education (<i>In your working group, did you always agree with each other? Could you give me an example when there were different perspectives over an issue and decision needed to be made? How was the decision made?</i>)</p> | |
| | <p>Evaluation of policy network and collaboration</p> <p>Positive factors and challenges</p> <p>Impact of collaboration on process and outcome</p> <p><i>Do you think this kind of engagement could really benefit the policymaking process?</i></p> <p>Any comments on collaboration</p> | |
| 5 | <p>*If time: current and future engagement in teacher education policy</p> | |
| 6 | <p>Evaluation/Reflection</p> | |
| | <p>Satisfaction: outcome/final state ESSA Title II plan (Do you see any changes)</p> <p><i>Are you satisfied with the final state ESSA title II plan outcome?</i></p> | |
| | <p>Satisfaction: stakeholder engagement in the process</p> | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | <i>Are you satisfied with your engagement experience?</i> | |
| | Potential obstacles to stakeholder engagement in teacher education policy | |
| | Missed stakeholders (<i>Do you think there are actors who should have been invited to the committee but were not included?</i>) | |
| | Lessons learned | |
| | Suggestions? | |
| 7 | Close | |
| | Check whether all areas covered | |
| | Further comments? | |
| | Follow up? | |
| | Check again: Ethics and level of anonymity | |
| | Want to be informed about results? | |
| | Thank you | |

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL



HUMAN SUBJECTS DIVISION

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

June 3, 2019

Dear Weijia Wang:

On 6/3/2019, the University of Washington Human Subjects Division (HSD) reviewed the following application:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Type of Review: | Initial Study |
| Title of Study: | Looking into the Black Box of Teacher Education Policy-Making in the U.S. - A network analysis of stakeholder engagement in the development of state ESSA Title II plans |
| Investigator: | Weijia Wang |
| IRB ID: | STUDY00007644 |
| Funding: | None |

Exempt Status

HSD determined that your proposed activity is human subjects research that qualifies for exempt status (Category 2).

- This determination is valid for the duration of your research.
- This means that your research is exempt from the federal human subjects regulations, including the requirement for IRB approval and continuing review.
- **Depending on the nature of your study, you may need to obtain other approvals or permissions to conduct your research. For example, you might need to apply for access to data or specimens (e.g., to obtain UW student data). Or, you might need to obtain permission from facilities managers to approach possible subjects or conduct research procedures in the facilities (e.g., Seattle School District; the Harborview Emergency Department).**

If you consider changes to the activities in the future and know that the changes will require IRB review (or you are not certain), you may request a review or new determination by submitting a Modification to this application. For information about what changes require a Modification, refer to the [GUIDANCE: Exempt Research](#).

Thank you for your commitment to ethical and responsible research. We wish you great success!

Sincerely,

Theresa Naluai-Cecchini
IRB Administrator, Committee J
206.543.3494
tnaluai@uw.edu

4333 Brooklyn Ave. NE, Box 359470 Seattle, WA 98195-9470
main 206.543.0098 fax 206.543.9218 hsdinfo@u.washington.edu www.washington.edu/research/hsd
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APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON CONSENT FORM Interview with State ESSA Title II Policy Actors

Researchers:

Weijia Wang, Ph.D. Candidate, Teacher Quality & Teacher Education, College of Education,
(206)-488-2093

Faculty Advisor: Kenneth M. Zeichner, Ph.D., Boeing Professor of Teacher Education

Researchers' Statement

We are asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." We will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to analyze the engagement and collaboration of organizational stakeholders in the development of teacher education policy in six selected states in the U.S, and to develop an understanding of the formation and dynamics of policy networks in U.S. teacher education policy. Aiming to increase understanding of teacher education policymaking in the U.S., the study draws on research on policy networks and coalition-forming to conduct network analysis of organizational actors with an interest in U.S. teacher education policy.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This research is an explanatory sequential mixed-method framework in which the research begins by conducting a quantitative social network analysis (SNA) to construct policy networks of stakeholders involved in the development of state ESSA Title II plans. Then I will implement the second qualitative phase (interviews) based on the results of quantitative SNA to examine the experience of stakeholder engagement.

I will conduct semi-structured, narrative interviews with you to discuss about your experiences being involved in the development of the state ESSA Title II plans. With your consent, I will arrange a 45-60 minutes interview either online or in-person at your convenience.

With your permission, I will audio record your interviews so that I have an accurate record. I will transcribe this recording and destroy the recording after the study is over. I will not put your name or any other identifying information in the recordings or in the transcript. Only My research team (my faculty advisor and committee members) will have access to the recordings which will be left in a secure location. I will provide you with a copy of the transcript to review.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. We have addressed concerns for your privacy in the section below. Some people feel self-conscious when notes are taken, or interviews are recorded. If you are uncomfortable with any of the interview questions at any point in the interview, you may choose not to answer the question, or you may stop the interview completely. You will also have the opportunity to review and edit the transcript of your own interview.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

You may not directly benefit from taking part in this research study. My hope is this research will help actors across sectors better understand how to collaborate and contribute to policy making in teacher education area.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH INFORMATION

Information about you is confidential. We will assign you a pseudonym and code the study information. The link between your name and the pseudonym code will be stored in a separate, secured location until the study is complete. If the results of this study are published or presented, we will not use your name, or any other identifying information.

USE OF INFORMATION AND SPECIMENS

The information and/or specimens that we obtain from you for this study might be used for future studies. We may remove anything that might identify you from the information and specimens. If we do so, that information and specimens may then be used for future research studies or given to another investigator without getting additional permission from you. It is also possible that in the future we may want to use or share study information that might identify you. If we do, a review board will decide whether or not we need to get additional permission from you.

OTHER INFORMATION

You may refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

RESEARCH-RELATED INJURY

If you think you have been harmed from being in this research, contact the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098

Printed name of study staff obtaining consent* Signature* Date*

Subject's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, or if I have been harmed by participating in this study, I can contact one of the researchers listed on the first page of this consent form. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098 or call collect at (206) 221-5940. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed name of subject Signature of subject Date

Copies to: Researcher
 Subject