Education Policy Influence Efficacy:
Teacher Beliefs in their Ability to Change Education Policy

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Guided by Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) this study sought to understand how teachers view themselves as educational policy actors and to construct an instrument that measures teacher beliefs about their aptitude to advocate for changes in educational policy. This study employed a sequential explanatory design, characterized by quantitative data collection from approximately 250 teachers followed by qualitative interviews with seven teachers. Findings reveal that teachers are not overly confident in their ability to make change and see themselves as implementers more than creators of education policy.

Since the dawn of public education in the United States, there has been a failure to acknowledge the expertise of teachers when deciding and implementing policies for education. Journalist Mary Abigail Dodge argued in 1880 that "teachers ought to run schools exactly as doctors run a hospital" (Tyack, 1974, p. 82). Olson (2002) echoed the sentiment 120 years later: "Such a need to consult those who do the work can be seen dramatically in the case of nurses, who, in Canada at least, are now being recognized as sources of important information for purposes of assessing how hospitals work…. Teachers, like nurses, know what it is to make the system work under conditions of duress" (pp. 129-130). However, unlike those working in the medical profession, teachers are often not consulted in the development of the very policies that they are expected to implement. Furthermore, teachers are forced to make sense of the policies handed down to them. Spillane (2005) explained, "Policy implementation is much like the telephone game: the player at the start of the line tells a story to the next person in line..., the story is morphed as it moves from player to player," (p. 8) and the unfortunate truth is teachers are sometimes the last person in line to receive the message.

Instead of being seen as a valuable resource in the design of educational policy, more often than not reformers discuss teacher beliefs and knowledge as aspects that need to be managed by policy and reform (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Olson, 2002; van Veen & Sleegers, 2006). The purpose of this study was twofold: (a) to gain an understanding of how teachers view themselves as educational policy actors and (b) to construct an instrument that measures teacher beliefs about their aptitude to advocate for changes in educational policy.

Background

The scholarly literature on education policy and teachers is a diverse body of work, most of which is theoretical in orientation or narrowly focused on the implementation of instructional policy. This review includes historical, theoretical, and policy-implementation scholarship background describing teacher interaction with education policy. In essence, it argues that policy structure in the United States was designed to minimize the influence of teachers; however, teachers have been able to exert immeasurable power during the implementation phase until recently. Briefly overviewing the federal policy climate post No Child Left Behind, the review reasons new accountability policies are undermining teachers' autonomy and professionalism,

causing the need to investigate how teachers perceive their ability to influence educational policy in this context of diminishing power.

The History of Teacher as Policy Implementer

Cuban (1988) argues that throughout history (particularly since the creation of public schools in the United States) there have been two prototypes of teachers, defined in essence by what educational leaders and policymakers deem is needed from the teaching force in a particular moment. These two archetypes, the *moral teacher* and the *technical teacher* reappear at different moments seemingly in response to policy demands. Cuban (1988) describes the technical teacher as one who "matches the needs of large organizations impelled to provide standardized services to many students" (p. 3). The technical teacher emerges from the late 19th- and early 20th-century reforms during the initial shift to more centralized education. Tyack (1974) explains,

> The superintendents of the latter half of the nineteenth century sought to transform structures and decision-making processes in education. From classroom to central office, they tried to create new controls over pupils, teachers, principals, and other subordinate members of the school hierarchy….Directives flowed from the top down, reports emanated from the bottom…. (p. 40)

This revamping of the educational structure, from local, usually site-based control, to a more centralized, managerial structure is called scientific management. The adoption of scientific management as a protocol for running schools in the 19th century led to "excluding community members and teachers from decision making" (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 43). However, as the reform pendulum vacillated from ideas such as site-based management to centralized control and back again, the type of teacher required changed.

Autonomy in the teaching profession has played its role throughout history as well. It is in the autonomous classroom where the moral teacher emerges. Autonomy was not always a policy directive but, rather, sometimes taken advantage of in the absence of extensive oversight. While most literature on management and reform look primarily at mainstream (White) schools, African American schools often enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy because they were not a priority of school officials. As Baker (2006) explains, "school officials didn't care if children attended school…" (p. 1). Siddle Walker (1996) corroborates the sentiment of autonomy in the segregated setting: "The segregated school is most often compared with a 'family' where teachers and principal, with *parent like authority* [emphasis added], exercised almost complete autonomy in shaping student learning" (p. 3). This autonomy experienced in African American schools partnered with the institutional care exemplifies the moral prototype of teaching. Cuban (1988) defines the moral teacher as one for whom "teaching is a moral activity that requires skills, knowledge, critical judgment, and an eye cocked on imagining what each person can become" (p. 4). The moral teacher trusts his or her assessment of what each pupil needs, understanding the needs may differ greatly from one student to another, yet works to ensure they receive it. In his blog, Cuban (2011) expands his ideas on the moral teacher, explaining that the emphasis of the moral teacher is not only the students' achievement and job prospects but also in possessing

[a] moral attentiveness [that] means to concentrate on helping students grow as persons in grace and sensitivity, becoming more rather than less thoughtful about ideas, becoming more rather than less respectful of others' views, and becoming more rather than less responsible for reducing social injustice. (para. 9)

Cuban (2011) argues this part of teaching is missing from the discourse on how to improve teachers.

History erected a structure for the teachers' role in educational policy. The top-down configuration was put in place a century ago and continues to shape the policy landscape.

Autonomy in the Classroom

While the system was designed to be hierarchical in nature, as evidenced by the historical script, scholars have acknowledged the myriad ways that the bottom maintains power over the top. Antithetical to the general discourse around top-down policy, there is a body of work that discusses the unique power of teachers within the policy structure. Croll, Abbott, Broadfoot, Osborn, and Pollard (1994) discuss four models for teacher interaction with education policy: (a) teachers as partners, (b) teachers as implementers, (c) teachers as opponents, and (d) teachers as policymakers in practice. Teachers as partners in policymaking seems to be the ideal. However, Croll et al. (1994) do not say it is a conflict-free model, "It does mean that various actors must see each other's roles as legitimate and that there must be a measure of agreement about common goals" (p. 335). Grossman (2010) contends that "educational change literature largely conceptualizes school-based educators' power embedded in the loose coupling that has existed between classroom practice and school reform" (p. 657). Organizational theorists explain the power of teachers over the top-down policies in terms of the relationship between policy and practice being *loosely coupled* (Coburn, 2004; Grossman, 2010; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The idea of loose coupling points to a subtle way of pretending in the workforce. Teachers pretend to comply with a policy they do not agree with, behaving in ways that may actually ignore the policy or even contradict it. Coburn (2004) gives an example of *loose coupling* in her analysis of teacher responses to reading curriculum reform in California. One teacher, she explains, placed a district rubric on the wall in her classroom but did not utilize it in her actual assessment of student work. Loose coupling could be applied to two of Croll et al.'s (1994) models: teachers as opponents to policy and teachers as implementers. Policy implementation scholars described teachers as street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1971; McLaughlin, 1987; Anagostopolous, 2003). Lipsky (1971), in particular, defined them as "government workers who directly interact with citizens in the regular course of their jobs; whose work within the bureaucratic structure permits them wide latitude in job performance; and whose impact on the lives of citizens is extensive" (p. 393). The street-level bureaucracy framework aligns with Croll et al.'s (1994) policymaker in practice, whereas the nature of teaching embeds policy decisions.

Whether being described in terms of street-level bureaucrats or coupling, a great deal of literature speaks to the phenomenon that teachers have the power to close their doors[1] and do their own thing despite the policy agenda. The classroom is a space that is, or once was, highly autonomous and somewhat buffered from the educational policy that rolls down from on high.

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[1] Closing one's door is seen as a micropolitical action, in which the teacher carries out his or her own agenda in the classroom behind closed doors, despite the policies of the larger school building.

New Policy Context

Current waves of educational policy de-professionalize the teaching force, minimizing the autonomy once experienced by closing the classroom door. The shift in federal educational policy from an emphasis on equity to accountability has had real consequences for the nature of teaching. Catalyzed by the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, subsequent reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 offered different interpretations of the federal government's role in the education policy landscape. When reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (1971), the "Act sought to shift the federal education policy from its historic emphasis on redistributing money and regulating how money was spent to a focus on the performance of students, schools, and districts" (Hess & Petrilli, 2006, p. 27). NCLB put forth the goal of universal proficiency by the 2013-2014 school year, required annual achievement testing in grades three through eight and once in high school, required disaggregation of achievement data by subgroups, evaluation of schools according to "Adequate Yearly Progress," and mandated that every classroom be staffed with a highly qualified teacher.

Soon after the reauthorization of ESEA as NCLB, the legislature reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004—a version of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. While there were not any sweeping changes, one amendment was to use NCLB language in requiring *highly qualified* special education teachers. The Act continued to require a free and appropriate public education as the original legislation outlawed "discrimination and guarantee[d] educational services" for students with disabilities (Yudoff, Kirp, Levin, Moran, 2002, p. 703). IDEA requires that students with disabilities have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that parents partner in designing. Smith (2005) explained that the IEP process has real consequences for the work of teachers: "The level of paperwork associated with special education has increased significantly since the passage of P.L. 94-142. In some cases, special education professionals seem to spend as much time on paperwork as on programs for their students" (p. 316). Bagenstos (2009) criticized IDEA for placing "excessive focus on process over substance" (p.122). He believed the IEP process took precedence over substantive support for students with disabilities. Despite the criticism, IDEA remains the pinnacle federal law governing special education as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is for general education.

NCLB (ESEA) was slated to be reauthorized in 2007, but was not reauthorized until 2015 due to congressional gridlock. While the federal endorsement of standards-based reform has continued, it has done so without legislative mandate. McGuinn (2016) explains,

> Many initially assumed that Obama with one of the most liberal voting records in the senate would embrace the vocal criticism of NCLB expressed by many democrats (particularly the influential teachers unions) and call for a move away from school accountability and a reassertion of the traditional liberal focus on school recourses, integration, and social welfare programs. But to the surprise of many, this was not to be. (p. 393)

In the absence of legislation, federal influence on accountability manifested itself in unconventional ways—using grant competitions and executive waivers; the federal hand in policy maintained its relevance in multiple facets of education including curriculum and teacher evaluation.

Race to the Top (RTT), a grant competition funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, illustrates a shift in the fundamental philosophy of the federal role in education, "away from being a compliance-monitoring organization to being focused on capacity building and innovation" (McGuinn, 2010, p. 3). States applied for Race to the Top grants and were evaluated in six areas: (a) state success factors, (b) standards and assessments, (c) longitudinal data systems to support instruction, (d) great teachers and leaders, (e) failing school turnaround, and (f) a general category, which included STEM initiatives and the expansion of charter schools. Part of what made a competitive application was the adoption of rigorous standards—often interpreted as Common Core—and the revamping of teacher evaluation to include measures of student performance. States established large networks to accomplish the goals set forth in the grant applications. Russell, Meredith, Childs, Stein, and Prine (2015) examined applications and analyzed the composition of Race to the Top state networks—and found that teacher union/professional organizations on average comprised about 6% of the actors involved in the implementation plan. The National Education Association's (NEA's) (2008) statement addressed to Arne Duncan about Race to the Top illustrates dismay of teachers after the applications were made available:

> Up to this point, the NEA has been a vocal supporter of the Obama Administration's plans to transform public education by being "tight" on goals, but "looser" in how you achieve them….Given the details of the July Race to the Top grant proposal, NEA must now ask: Where did that commitment to local communities go? The details of RTT proposal do not seem to square with the Administration's earlier philosophy….Now seems to be tight on goals and tight on the means, with prescriptions that are not well-grounded in the knowledge from practice and are unlikely to meet the goals. We find this top-down approach disturbing; we have been down that road before…. (Brilliant, 2008, p. 2)

In addition to Race to the Top, the federal government began accepting waivers from No Child Left Behind. Wong (2015) explains, "The broadening of waiver approval started in 2011 when the Obama administration invited state applications for waivers from meeting the original NCLB goals of attaining 100 percent student proficiency in core subjects by 2014" (p. 410). More than 80 percent of states received waivers from NCLB. The waiver applications were evaluated on four reform areas: (a) systems and processes, (b) college and career-ready expectations, (c) differentiated intervention, and (d) effective instruction and leadership (Wong, 2015). While the waiver ostensibly gives control to states to determine how they reach educational goals, the reality was that in order to receive the waiver, states had to include policies approved by the federal government. For instance, Washington State was the first to have its waiver revoked and Wong (2015) argues, "The main reason behind Washington's flexibility waiver loss was its refusal to alter its teacher-evaluation system" (p. 416). While there is no legislation, the application process serves as a means to inculcate federal priorities.

Both Race to the Top and executive waivers upheld federal sanctioning of standards-based accountability. While not mandated, both application processes encouraged the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Common Core standards were developed as an attempt "to establish consensus on the expectations for student knowledge and skills that should be developed in Grades K-12" (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011, p. 103). Coburn, Hill, and Spillane (2016) explicated, "Teachers are experiencing CCSS and new

accountability schemes concurrently…. The co-location of these policy strategies in the current era offers a unique opportunity to investigate how alignment and accountability interact and the consequences of that interaction…" (p. 246). When influencing curriculum and evaluation procedures, the federal policy machine is touching the classroom in ways more intrusive than before.

Standards-based reform policies have made it difficult for teachers to maintain the buffer between classroom instruction and educational policy, "tight[ly] coupling" practice and policy in ways unseen before (Grossman, 2010, p. 680). In this climate, Baird and Heinen (2015) contend the obvious:

> Educators have lost considerable political power as evidenced by revamped teacher evaluation procedures; attacks on tenure; marked increases in merit pay; decreased discretion over curriculum and instruction; and the focus on standardized testing. (p. 148)

They continue to say this loss in power is due to both an attack on teacher voice and the disorganization of teacher voices. The tight coupling of policy and practice in the new accountability climate has real consequences for the teaching profession.

De-professionalization and the Reduction of Classroom Autonomy

Scholars find that high-stakes testing, a component of standards-based accountability, changes the nature of teaching. Au (2011) argues that high-stakes testing is "promoting the standardization of teaching that both disempowers and deskills teachers" (p. 30). Endacott et al. (2015) found "school leadership drastically restricted their [teachers'] professional autonomy over teaching methods and selection of materials" (p. 425). For over a century, there has been a quest for teacher-proof curricula that would provide equal opportunities for pupils regardless of the classroom assignment. The goal, while laudable on some accounts, is believed to impede the skills that well-trained, expert teachers possess, or the capabilities of the moral teacher (Au, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 1990, 1997; Delpit, 2006; Olsen & Sexton, 2009). In a study of teachers under No Child Left Behind, Olsen and Sexton (2009) report teachers found the accountability climate to be de-professionalizing, stating, "The teachers spoke about how the macro-policy climate of standardization, conformity, and high-stakes-testing. . . ignore the teachers' training, talent, artistry, and skill as educators" (p. 23). Moreover, Au (2011) examines the consequences of the "rise of scripted curriculum" and rationalizes, "teachers are mandated [in some cases] to use pre-packaged curricular materials that require no creative input or decision making on the part of the teachers, literally providing verbal scripts that define and limit what teachers can say as they teach" (p. 32). It is a complete embrace of the technocratic teacher and a denial of the moral teacher.

In addition to high-stakes assessment, the reporting of testing data has consequences for the professionalism of K-12 teachers. Cuban (1988) argues the advent of publicizing individual school test scores in the late 1960s led to another swing in the direction of the technocrat teacher. Milner (2013) suggests the advent of value-added assessments measuring growth have only exacerbated the problem. He articulates,

When news and other media report about the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of teachers and teaching based mostly on the rise or fall of test scores and without other necessary information [such as the intricacies of value added models] to make well-rounded judgments, the field of teaching is subject to unwarranted public criticism and consequently de-professionalization. (p. 5)

The rise of accountability is not unique to the K-12 education sector but the response to the rise of accountability is quite different in higher education. Mehta's (2014) discourse analysis on federal or national reports on the status of K-12 and post-secondary education finds that the rhetoric surrounding the two educational sectors is very distinct. He explains that, "despite the similarities of these calls for accountability, the reports reveal significant and consistent differences in the treatment of the two sectors. Reform in K-12 has tended to be fairly prescriptive, as teachers in schools are generally on the receiving end of reform policies…" (p. 906). On the other hand, he explains that "reform calls in higher education have been much more hands-off…reformers have been much more respectful of the need for faculty input." (p. 906). Mehta (2014) goes on to explain that this "divergence" is an illustration of the way "professional power has been an important factor in how accountability has played out" (p. 907) in K-12 versus higher education.

While there is some consensus about the withering away of autonomy, there are scholars whose work shows a departure from that general trend. As stated earlier, Goldstein (2008) found the kindergarten teachers in her study have a tremendous amount of autonomy concerning their pedagogical choices. Bangs and Frost (2012) surveyed and interviewed teachers and teachers' organizations' representatives from 13 different countries, including the United States, and found the majority of teachers indicated "the belief in autonomy, at least as far as pedagogy is concerned, is alive and well" (p. 20). In the survey, nearly 75 percent of the teachers in their international sample believed, "they are able to exert some influence over policy and practice in their schools" (p. 19). The authors caution that despite this high level of agreement with the survey item, "this tells us nothing about the extent of this influence" (p. 19). When asked about their influence beyond their school building, the teachers' beliefs in their influence waned. Bangs and Frost (2012) wrote, "There is a sense of despair about the gap between policy and what we know and experience as practitioners" (p. 20). Their work illustrates that uncovering teacher beliefs about influence has to consider influence in what realm—classroom, school building, district, state, and beyond.

The literature paints the picture that standards based-reform accompanied by high-stakes testing and reporting has resulted in diminished autonomy and professionalism in teaching (Au, 2011; Milner, 2013; Olsen & Sexton, 2009). However, Datnow (2012) clarifies, "Note that even in this policy environment, teachers are still active agents, either actively engaging with reform agendas, passively accepting them, or rejecting them…" (p. 194). The primary goal of this work is to understand how teachers view their own political agency in this context of diminishing power and de-professionalization.

Theoretical Framework: Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) frames this line of inquiry. SCT describes human behavior by positing there is an interplay between environment, cognition, and behavior—and neither factor alone determines the other (Bandura, 1986). The two underlying premises of the theory, agency and self-efficacy, are critical to understanding SCT. Efficacy precedes the agency or action. Self-efficacy is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Agency, on the other hand, is defined as "intentionally [influencing] one's functioning and life circumstances" (Bandura, 2002, p. 270).

Both agency and self-efficacy are critical to understanding how teachers act upon their environment. Self-efficacy is domain specific: An individual may have high self-efficacy in mathematics and low self-efficacy in reading. Self-efficacy is developed through four ways: (a) mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal persuasion, or through (d) physiological responses. Mastery experience, or personal experience(s) being successful at a particular task, is the most salient way to develop an individual's efficacy. Vicarious experience, or watching others similar to oneself model success at the desired task, is another source of efficacy. Verbal persuasion is being told one can achieve the task; and physiological responses, such as stress and anxiety when approaching a task, influence beliefs about one's ability to accomplish the task. When an individual's self-efficacy is higher, he or she is more likely to persist at a task in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1997).

The road for teachers to impact education policy is chockfull of obstacles, so it is important to understand that teacher efficacy beliefs, as they precede agency, are necessary for persistence and sustained efforts.

Measuring teacher self-efficacy related to policy. Several scholars have developed measures to assess teacher efficacy related to policy influence. With the exception of the "ability to influence decision making" subscale in Bandura's (2006) teaching efficacy scale, most of the scholarship developing and validating such instruments is found within doctoral dissertations. Hammon (2010) developed the Teacher Political Self-Efficacy (TPSE) scale, explicating that such an instrument is necessary to "encourage development of interventions for an improved condition of classroom teacher voice in education policymaking" (p. 20). Hammon's scale consisted of 20 items and was designed to measure self-efficacy in behaviors that may directly or indirectly impact policymaking. She found that TPSE scale did predict engagement activities of the teachers in sample. Cobb (2012) borrows from political science and uses measures of internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, and perceived political self-efficacy to predict teacher educational policy engagement. Cobb (2012) found a teacher's internal political efficacy and perceived political self-efficacy had a positive and significant relationship with their policy engagement. She also found teachers with coursework in education policy were more likely to be engaged. Estes, Owen, and Zipperlen (2010) developed the Political Advocacy Scale of Efficacy for Teachers (PASET) for measuring "ones degree of efficaciousness toward political advocacy (para.1). Unlike the others, Estes et al. (2010) validated the instrument, and then utilized in a pre-test, post-test design to determine if exposure to policy information via a conference influenced the PASET score. The small but present gains found in the sample corroborated the inclination that policy knowledge and coursework were related to efficacy in policymaking.

Not all scholarship-examining teachers approach policy interaction from a social-cognitive perspective. Brosky (2011) developed the Teacher Leader Questionnaire, which moved away from understanding efficacy to incorporating measures of political skill and aptitude for influencing others. With the exception of Brosky, most measures of political efficacy of teachers include items that fail to include day-to-day micropolitical practices and focus narrowly on traditional methods of influencing policy (e.g., voting, contacting officials, etc.). Implementation scholars have argued that day-to-day decisions impact policy implementation, and traditional engagement behaviors impact policy creation and transformation. To understand teachers' aptitude and propensity to influence education policy, one must examine both—micropolitical and traditional engagement efficacies and behaviors.

Methods

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-method design, characterized by quantitative (survey) data collection followed by qualitative interviews (Creswell, Plano-Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The interviewees selected were stratified to ensure qualitative data represented a variety of perspectives on quantitative measures. Data analysis took place in four phases: (a) scale validation, (b) quantitative analysis, (c) qualitative analysis, and (d) data integration.

The data were collected in the Spring of 2013 after the adoption of Common Core and the awarding of Race to the Top in Georgia. The participants come from two districts in Georgia, Artis County and Wooten County[2]. Artis County Public Schools has approximately 95,000 students enrolled in 136 schools. Wooten County Public Schools has approximately 41,000 students enrolled in 50 schools. In both districts, the majority of students are students of color.

Thirty principals from the two districts consented to having their teachers participate, 21 from Artis County and 9 from Wooten County, which yielded a survey sample of 264 teachers. Artis County teachers accounted for 66% of all respondents and Wooten County teachers accounted for the remaining 34%. Of the teachers included, 86% were female, 57.6% were White, 34.5% were African American, 3% were Hispanic, and 2% were Asian. The majority of the respondents were elementary or high school teachers, with 41% teaching pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, 46% teaching high school, and 13 percent teaching middle-grades. The response rate varied greatly by school, with a range from 1.3% to 50%. The total response rate for all the schools in the study was 15.91% (note that if the seven schools with a single respondent were removed, the overall response rate would be 19.05%).

Survey participants indicated whether they would like to be contacted for a follow-up interview. After initial survey analysis, potential interviewees were stratified based on their scores on key constructs, creating a qualitative sample containing a variety of voices. When initial responses to interview participation were lower than expected, all respondents who indicated willingness to participate in the survey were invited. Interviews were conducted with seven teachers, five from Artis County and two from Wooten County. Of the interviewees, five were White, one was African American, and one was Latina. Six of the seven were female. Their experience ranged from three to 33 years (see Table 1).

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[2] Artis County and Wooten County are pseudonyms for the actual school systems.

Table 1

Interviewee Demographics and Measures on Variables of Interest

Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Years of Experience	Grade Level	Stress Level	Overtly Political	Micro Political	Policy Knowledge
Julee	F	44	White	13	HS	high	moderate	moderate	low
Bella	F	49	Latina	23	EL	low	moderate	low	high
Alice	F	59	White	33	HS	high	low	low	moderate
Leslie	F	33	White	9	EL	high	high	high	moderate
Bob	M	31	White	3	HS	high	low	moderate	low
Jasmine	F	32	African American	8	HS	low	moderate	high	moderate
Sabrina	F	29	White	6	MS	high	moderate	low	low

Instrumentation

The survey instrument utilized in this study contained a combination of established and researcher-constructed scales (see Table 2). The established scale, Perceived Stress Scale, measured teacher stress. The researcher-constructed scales were validated as the first part of the data analysis.

The knowledge of educational policy (KEP) scale is an 18-item scale that asks teachers to rate from one to six how much they know about different aspects of federal policies. The policies assessed in the scale are the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NLCB), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Race to the Top. While each of these policies is spelled out by name, the scale also asks about key components of each policy; for example, while IDEA is an item stem, so is Individualized Education Program (IEP). Because it depicts the current policies at play, it is context specific. While this scale asked questions about federal policies, the implementation played out at the state level. Item stems about Teacher Keys and College and Career Readiness Index, while related to Race to the Top, were specific to the state's application.

The researcher modified the Perceived Stress Scale created by psychologists Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983). The fourteen-item scale was designed to fill the gap of a global measure of stress, asking individuals to answer questions about how they have felt within the past month. The creators also created an abridged four-item scale, which maintained similar reliability. In three samples, the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was between 0.83 and 0.85. This study used the abridged version of the scale, adding to the end of each item "at work" or "at school" to make the stress measure particular to the workplace. Furthermore, instead of looking at stress within the last month, the items were modified to ask teachers, "in the past semester."

Table 2
Survey Instrument Scales

Scale	Items	What it Measures	Sample Item
Knowledge of Education Policy*	15	Teachers' perception of their knowledge of education policy.	How much do you know about Common Core? Never Heard of It – I'm an Expert (6 choices)
Perceived Stress Scale	5	Global measure of teachers' work related stress.	In the last semester, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring at work? Never- Very Often (5 choices)

Note. *Researcher Constructed Scale

Finally, the instrument also assessed demographic information on teachers and their schools. Teachers were asked to provide their age, gender, and ethnic information as well as information about how long they have been teaching and their teacher preparation.

Instrument Validation

CFA for the established scale was utilized to confirm that the internal structure holds to what literature has stated (see Table 3). Reliabilities were calculated for each researcher-constructed scale as well. All scales on the instrument were reliable with α levels above .70. Furthermore, CFAs on the stress scale illustrated what the underlying structure held.

Table 3
Instrument Validation

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Confirmatory Factor Analysis Indicators		
		χ^2 (DF)	RMSEA	CFI
Knowledge of Education Policy*	.906	χ^2 (47)=122.22	.085	.942
Perceived Stress Scale	.783	χ^2 (4)=6.36	.051	.991

Note. *Researcher Constructed Scale

All of the scales were found to be reliable with Cronbach Alphas above .70. Though the RMSEA for the KEP scale was high, the Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio and the CFI were in the range that indicated good fit.

EPIE Scale Validation

The Educational Policy Influence Efficacy (EPIE) scale (see Table 4) was designed to elicit responses on teacher beliefs about their confidence in their ability to influence education policy. Items were designed to capture teacher beliefs about their ability to engage in two types of behaviors: micropolitical behaviors and overtly political behaviors (see Table 5). Micropolitical behaviors include "daily interactions, negotiations, and bargaining of any school" (Brosky, 2011, p. 2). Overtly political behaviors are actions directed at changing current policy or creating new policy. This scale, unlike several previous scales, attempts to capture efficacy in impacting formal power structures, authority, as well as informal power and influence among colleagues and peers. Items were piloted on a convenience sample in 2012 and vetted by an expert panel. During model specification, one micro-political item was dropped due to its low factor loading, .20. When examining the item more closely, the wording seemed to capture an individual's ability to adapt to new policy more so than their ability to change it. Cronbach's alpha showed the scale to be reliable (.719), and the CFA show that the two-factor model is approaching a reasonable fit to the data. Composite scores were calculated for each teacher in the same for both factors.

Table 4
Reliability and Goodness of Fit Indicators for Model of Educational Policy Influence Efficacy

		Confirmatory Factor Analysis Indicators		
Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	χ^2 (DF)	RMSEA	CFI
Education Policy Influence Efficacy	.719	χ^2 (33)=63.82	.064	.946

Table 5
Unstandardized and Standardized Loadings for 2 Factor Education Policy Influence Efficacy

Item	Overtly Political		Micro Political	
	Unstandardized	Standardized	Unstandardized	Standardized
1. Once a school policy is in place, I cannot do anything to challenge it. (RC)	1.00 (--)	.45		
2. Once a federal policy is in place, I cannot do anything to challenge it. (RC)	1.08 (.19)	.48		
3. I can determine when to speak out about decisions made in my school.	1.52 (.25)	.75		

Note. Dashes (--) indicate standard error was not estimated. RC denotes an item that was reverse coded.

Table 5 Continued

Item	Overtly Political		Micro Political	
	Unstandardized	Standardized	Unstandardized	Standardized
4. I can influence school leaders to consider my opinion in decision-making.	1.44 (.23)	.69		
5. I can contribute ideas when discussing solutions to educational problems.	1.66 (.29)	.74		
6. I can contact policymakers to share my insights on education.	1.53 (.27)	.63		
7. I can influence education policy by working with other teachers in groups like the National Educators Association (NEA) or subject specific groups like NCTE or NCTM.	1.21 (.23)	.56		
8. When policies are implemented I disagree with, I can close my classroom door and do my own thing.			1.00 (--)	.69
9. When policies are implemented I disagree with, I can convince other teachers not to follow the policy.			.55 (.12)	.41
10. If I believe a policy is not in the best interest of my students, I can seem like I'm adhering to the policy, even when I am not.			1.08 (.25)	.72

Note: Dashes (--) indicate standard error was not estimated. RC denotes an item that was reverse coded.

Quantitative Findings

Confirmatory factor analysis did confirm the scale had two major factors: (a) micropolitical efficacy and (a) overtly political efficacy. The reliability measure was acceptable for micropolitical EPIE ($\alpha = 0.63$) and good for overtly political EPIE ($\alpha = 0.63$). The sample was higher in overtly political efficacy (M = 3.46, SD = 1.09) than micropolitical efficacy (M = 2.25, SD = .75), and that difference was significant, showing t(223) = 14.98 and p = 0.00. Self-efficacy scales are usually positively skewed, but in the case of educational policy influence factors their distributions are normal and near or below the middle of the scale, meaning that while individuals are usually overconfident and overestimate their abilities, this may not be the case when it comes to influencing education policy.

Contributors to Educational Policy Influence Efficacy

Pairwise correlations (see Table 6) were examined to see if relationships existed among demographic factors and educational policy influence efficacy. Data illustrate that a number of demographic factors, including policy knowledge and stress, are related to a person's educational policy influence efficacy. However, the correlations below show that micropolitical and overtly political efficacy have different relationships with different variables.

Table 6
Pairwise Correlations with Demographics and Educational Policy Influence Efficacy

	Micro-political	Overtly Political	Avg. Policy Knowledge	Experience	Age	Highest Degree	Stress
Micropolitical	1						
Overtly Political	0.185**	1					
Avg. Policy Knowledge	0.068	0.221**	1				
Experience	-0.052	0.079	0.223**	1			
Age	-0.148*	-0.031	0.144*	0.652**	1		
Highest Degree	0.047	0.164*	0.2163**	0.238**	0.196**	1	
Stress	0.030	-0.429*	-0.184*	-0.021	-0.065	-0.091	1
Mean	2.25	3.46	4.26	13.91	42.77	3.05	2.93
Standard Deviation	0.75	1.09	0.79	8.88	11.17	0.81	0.76

Note. *Significant at the .05 level. **Significant at the .01 level

Policy knowledge is positively correlated with overtly political efficacy but not micropolitical efficacy. Micropolitical efficacy is negatively correlated with age, meaning younger teachers are more efficacious in their ability to engage in micropolitcial behaviors than older teachers. Overtly political efficacy and micropolitical efficacy are positively correlated with each other. Teachers can be efficacious in both factors and can utilize both micropolitical and overtly political tactics to try to influence policy. Moreover, overtly political efficacy is positively correlated with policy knowledge and highest degree. Highest degree and average policy knowledge are also correlated with each other. There is a relationship amongst continued education, policy knowledge, and overtly political efficacy. What is most telling in the pairwise correlations is the relationship between overtly political efficacy and teacher stress. The ability to articulate your concerns and advocate for one's beliefs is related to lower levels of job-related stress.

These correlations only begin to uncover the qualities and experiences that may lead to the development of micropolitical and overtly political efficacy. In addition, while correlations are significant, their magnitude is not very large, below .3. However, the data do show some relationship between policy knowledge, higher education, and overtly political efficacy, a starting point for considering ways to build this efficacy amongst teachers.

Qualitative Findings

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers and one focus group of 2 teachers, for a total of seven qualitative responses from seven teachers from Artis and Wooten counties (see Table 1 for pseudonyms and demographics of each participant). The goal of the interviews was to engage in an authentic discussion around educational policy and teaching. Interviewees were posed questions, such as (a) If you could change one educational policy, what would it be and why? (b) How do you initiate change in education policy? (c) What is your role in policymaking and implementation? To help ensure descriptive and interpretive validity, clarification probes were used throughout. Confirmatory probes were used at the conclusion of each interview. All responses were transcribed and coded using general inductive coding— specifically in vivo coding—where participants own words were used as first round codes (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014). Matrix displays were used during second round coding to visualize emerging themes.

The qualitative data revealed several unsettling images about teacher beliefs in their ability to influence educational policy. The four dominant themes were: (a) it is difficult or impossible to make a difference, (b) the role of the teacher in educational policy is during implementation, (c) policymakers cannot be trusted and are ill informed, and (d) the U.S. society does not value or respect teachers.   Throughout these larger themes, interviewees provided evidence of micropolitical and overtly political behaviors.   The interviewees varied in their micropolitical and overtly political efficacy. As evident below (See Figures 1 and 2), Leslie scored highest in overtly and micropolitical. Bob and Alice scored the lowest in overtly political. None of the interviewees scored in the lowest quadrant for micropolitical.
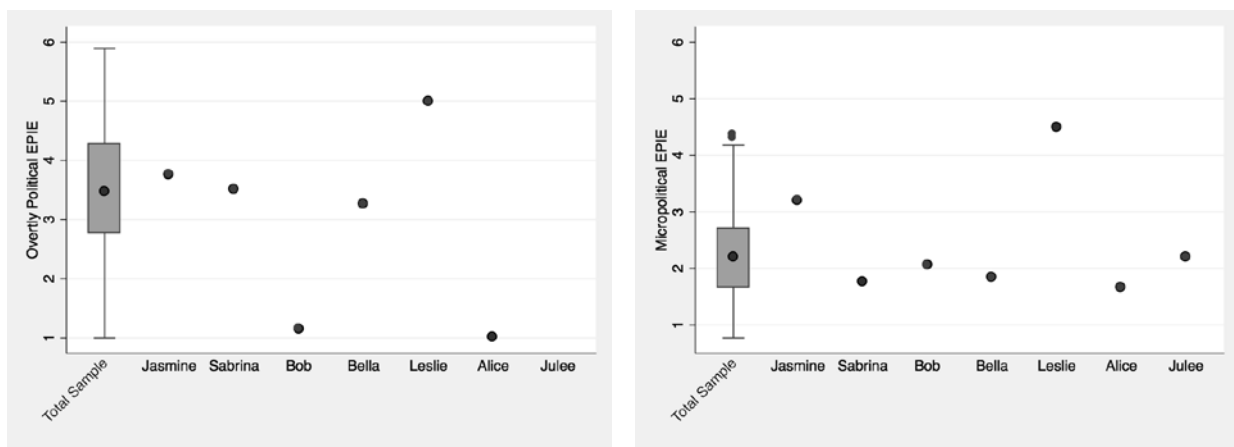
Figures 1 and 2. Boxplots of Interviewee Scores on Overtly and Micropolitical Efficacy

It Will Not Make a Difference

Five out of the seven teachers in the qualitative portion of this study articulated an inability to impact education policy. Jasmine, an 8-year veteran high school English teacher, described prototypical micropolitical behavior when she discussed the creation of her lesson plans. With a score above the majority of participants on the micropolitical subscale, she explained:

> I used to care about policies when I first started teaching and I used to be one of those teachers that would panic about the new buzzwords, and make sure that I'm using the new buzzwords, but I mean education is a game. You need to know what words to drop and when to drop them. I sprinkle my lesson plans with all the words they want to hear and they leave me alone….

Leslie described a similar secretive autonomy when discussing teachers in her school, explaining, "You can close your door and do all kinds of stuff." Leslie was a unique contributor, she scored higher on micropolitical and overtly political than most of her peers. In her many attempts to change policies effectively, she discusses why change itself is so important:

> We can really impact how society operates by helping kids figure out how to solve problems, see chances for making change and be productive prosocial people…. I realized education is not really set-up to do those things for children…. And so I really felt like I wanted to make change but I didn't really know what to do…. You know some teachers just say, oh just go in your classroom and teach the best way you know how.... Other people say, try to reach out to your teammates and influence them and help them make good decisions or get as much professional training as you can…. I've tried all those.

Leslie ended her remarks with "*I don't know how to make change* is the bottom line." Despite her admitting she does not know how, her efficacy was one of the highest in the sample. This sense of loss about what to do was not only present in Leslie's dialogue, but amongst several others as well.

According to Bandura (1997), efficacy is developed through four means: (a) mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological responses. Many of the participants believed their actions "did not matter" and would have no effect on the policies currently in place. Alice, who was extremely low on the overtly political efficacy scale, explained that some teachers did not pay any attention to policies and policy changes because "They're smarter than us. They probably know no matter what we say or do, it doesn't make a difference." Bob had similar statements explaining that policymakers are "Definitely not making us feel like we have any input. Even if we did, I kinda feel like it wouldn't make a difference anyway." Like Alice, he also does not give any insights on why he feels that is the case. Bella is more specific about where she feels she has a voice and where she does not; however, she explains having a voice does not necessarily mean she has power:

> I don't feel I have any pull at the federal level. I could stand and picket and take my signs out and stuff and protest. I don't know that that would work, but at the school level I could have my input. I don't know that I would necessarily be listened to. They're going to do what they want to do anyway, because they're governed by someone higher than them, who is making the rules and laws. There's nothing they can do about it either.

Jasmine also articulated that her actions did not matter, but discussed experiences in the past, where being active had not yielded her desired results,

> Whatever policy they come up with, I don't really care. I don't care enough to go to these meeting and stand up and say this and complain this because I've gone to different meetings in the past. I've answered different questions; I've done different surveys. I've gone to round table discussions and it really doesn't matter.

As we see above, Leslie has faced a great deal of negative outcomes to her many attempts to make change in education. Still hopeful, she explains, " I think that it's really important for teachers to have a voice in education policy, [but] I think it's really hard…to figure out how to do that in an effective way that will actually make real change." She admits the task is difficult, and attributes her lack of success to things beyond her control. She thinks it is hard but not impossible.

No Role in Creation, Full Role in Implementation

Despite their efficacy to influence education policy, teachers primarily saw their role in the policy process as implementers of someone else's mandates. In the current context, while they make daily decisions about best practices, they did not express that they felt the autonomy they theoretically possessed as street level bureaucrats. Bob said tersely, "We're required to do it, but don't have any say so." Bob continued in a blunt manner, "No role in creation. Full role in implementation. The onus and pressure of performance is completely placed on our [teachers] shoulders. Poop rolls down hill kinda thing."

Sabrina concurred, "I implement more than I create." Sabrina discussed her membership in an organization, Leadership for Educational Equity. She fostered ties through Teach for America, but admitted her involvement had waned since she left graduate school. Agreeing with Leslie's opinion about the sense of not knowing, Sabrina said,

> I'm just not very politically involved. I voted for the charter school amendment, but I'm not very political. I just don't deal about policy that much. I can see the damage it does but I wonder what the alternatives are. I don't have really great alternatives.

Leslie differs from the other two respondents in that she has clear alternatives but does not know how to get the people in charge to consider those alternatives. Bob spoke about voting and actions he could take, but concluded in an exacerbated tone:

At the end of the day, decisions are coming from State or Federal. I can maybe vote from time to time, but how often if ever are there any educational referendum on the ballot? I can write a local politician and petition them maybe, but they might say something, but in a recession people don't want to talk about anything that may require spending money, especially education.

In the focus group with Leslie and Alice, they discussed potential repercussions for being too vocal and trying to have a role in policy creation. Alice explicated, "We're totally dissuaded, and if you say anything counter to anything coming down, you're either ignored or have a sense that, or at least speaking personally, we kind of understand that we're not supposed to say anything. There's some sort of implicit threat." Leslie followed Alice's comments, reflecting on and comparing her time in Georgia (a right to work state) to her time in California and the sense of security she had from the union:

> The South is really different from California in many ways, but in one of the ways is that in California you're protected by the union. And I always thought my union was just there to protect bad teachers, I always thought that—I hated my union there. But then I come here and I come to find out that my union there enabled me to have a voice to where I did not need to be fearful….We could voice what we wanted to voice and could try to make change if we wanted to.

This phenomenon of fear and impending threat was also found in Endacott et al.'s (2015) work about the rigidly and inflexibility of the workplace. Across the board, teachers saw themselves more as implementers of policy than creators. While several expressed an interest in being on the creation side, they explained they were unsure how to move to the other side of the policy equation.

Teachers' Views of Policymakers

In addition to discussing their role in the policymaking process, the teachers interviewed spoke a great deal about the people currently creating policies. There was a blatant disconnect between teachers and policymakers. Teachers seemed to have little or limited knowledge on the way education policy is formed, though they had clearer ideas on the difference between good and poor policy implementation. Teachers also appeared to distrust policymakers and their intentions, not believing all education policy was designed to do what was best for children. Lastly, the teachers believed the policymakers were ill-informed and needed classroom experience to do their jobs effectively.

Disconnect and distrust. Amongst the interviewees, there seemed to be an elusive idea of who were the actual policymakers. They were referred to, more often than not referred, with some type of pronoun, such as "them," or "they," or "those people," or even once as "whoever." For example, Bella said, "*They're* just making policies. Even *people* who are making the curriculum, *they're* just doing it and *they* have no idea what's going on in the classroom, none." Bob used "whoever," but described with more clarity his vision of the policy process than did any of the other participants,

>Policymakers and politicians whoever kinda come up with theses ideas, out it down to state and county level people, county level people come around, and put it on superintendents, superintendents on principals, so on and so forth, and everyone sort of is pressuring but not supporting.

In addition to the disconnect with who policymakers actually are, many of the participants doubted the intentions behind the policies. Leslie and Alice had a long discussion about the relationships amongst Pearson, McGraw Hill, and the Bush family, and how those companies stood to gain with the passing of the No Child Left Behind legislation. Alice concluded with, "So we have our politicians and our leaders saying this is a good idea because I can get rich off it and not what's good for our kids." Bob said the policymakers do not have a vested stake in what happens because they are not directly affected:

>Politicians' kids don't go to public schools anyway, so they definitely don't care. That's part of the problem, all of the people in charge of making decisions are not affected by the decision they make. And so, it really makes it difficult to understand the logic and legitimacy of these policies….They're not affected if it doesn't work.

Distrust of the abstract policymakers was a common theme amongst the interviewees.

Ill-informed. Almost unanimously, the interviewees said the policymakers needed first-hand experience in the classroom in order to make good policies about schools. As Julee explains in her conversation with her mother had a conversation about Michelle Rhee,

>I told my mom, until the government official that are making the decisions about our schools, until they are actually in our schools having to create lesson plans, having to sit in the classrooms with our students and make the parent conference, and have all the same demands put on them, until…they are there, instead of making up the policies without all of that, it's not going to change.

Bella had similar ideas about the insights policymakers could get from actual classroom experience. She began by saying, "Policymakers have really fallen short because they don't allow for exceptions," which is to be expected since she teaches exceptional children. However, Bella also said, "I would want those people who are making the laws to actually get their feet wet. Come to a classroom for a week. Not just a day and not just an hour. Anybody can put on a pony show for an hour, but be there for a week." Jasmine takes the idea a step further, saying it is not enough to have experience, but the experience must be recent:

>Be it the principal, people in the county level, I think within every three years, people should be back in the classroom for at least one class—for a principal or administrator, I think they should carry one class a school year, and I think if they stay in touch with children on that level, it would force them to make better policies and it would force them to identify with teachers more as opposed to saying when I was teaching and it was 20 years ago when they were last in the classroom, and they're still riding on their 20-years-ago experience.

This consistent discussion of the need for classroom experience illustrates an implicit understanding that the knowledge derived from teaching experience is valuable in the education policymaking process.

We are not valued. Throughout the interviews, teachers wove in their beliefs about how our society views education and how our society views teachers. Jasmine kept returning to the perception and value that society places on teachers. She discussed media frenzies whenever a teacher is caught in the wrong and how people have often told her she is too smart to be a teacher or the idea that anyone can do it. She explained,

> Our society makes it seem we got these cushy jobs that pay us every month, it's hard to get fired from and you're just in it for the free summers, and I just don't like the way that we are portrayed as a nation and viewed….It seems that anybody can do what we can do and that frustrates me.

Jasmine was not alone in those sentiments. Leslie explicitly pointed out alternative certification programs: "TFA sends the dangerous message that anyone can teach." However, the TFA teacher, Sabrina, also talked about the value of teachers as a source of stress. Alongside the idea of value, the interviewees discussed compensation. Jasmine explained,

> The reason why I say we don't value education is we value where we put our money, and as the United States of America, we put our money in entertainment, and you can see that happening just by how much people are paying. That's how we show what we value. We are as society that's very materialistic, very capitalistic. Wherever the money is, that's where our heart is. We have athletes and entertainers that are bringing in millions and millions of dollars. We have the penal system that brings in millions and millions of dollars, but we pay our teachers as if whatever they do, anybody can do that job. We don't pay them like they are anomalies like they are something that we just have to have, and everyone can't be a teacher. So we pay teachers as if anyone can do that job.

The notion that anyone can teach embodies the de-professionalization of teaching.

While theorists point out the power teachers have over the implementation process, the teachers in this sample did not perceive their position as one of power when it comes to policy brokering. While some had clear ideas about what should be in place to create a better learning and working environment, they seemed to be unsure of how to translate those ideas into actionable steps to bring about change. Others, such as Jasmine and Bob, were not only bewildered about how to navigate the policy terrain but disillusioned. The teachers in this sample questioned the policymaker's intentions and their qualifications for making education policy and overall the society's value of teachers.

Discussion and Conclusion

Teachers have come to believe their voice does not matter and their efforts to improve education beyond their classrooms will not make a difference. These findings are discouraging and cause for concern. On quantitative self-assessments, individuals usually overestimate their capabilities, which was not the case here. Dunning, Heath, and Suls (2004) explain,

> People overestimate themselves. They hold overinflated views of their expertise, skill, and character. That is, when one compares what people say about themselves against objective markers, or even against what might be possible, one finds that the claims people make about themselves are too good to be true.

As seen in Figures 1 and 2, the distribution was not negatively skewed when it came to efficacy to influence policy. In fact, the bulk of the distribution of the micro-political scale was below the center of the scale. Leslie, the most optimistic of the interviewees, had the highest scores in terms of both types of education policy and influence efficacy of teachers interviewed. With her high efficacy, Leslie's interview responses illustrate a willingness and persistence to make change—agency—in conjunction with bewilderment about how best to do it. On the other hand, Bob had the lowest score of interviewees on overtly political efficacy. According to his responses, Bob has, albeit begrudgingly, accepted his role as a "policy implementer." In future mixed-methods validation studies, it will be critical to determine if high efficacy is actually a measure of persistence. While this scale was created for exploratory purposes, much could be gained from future validation research using IRT or Rasch to examine how well the items discriminate for different levels of overtly political and micropolitical efficacy. It would also be instructive to examine EPIE's convergent validity in conjunction with measures for teacher activism behaviors and similar efficacy scales such as the Teacher Political Efficacy Scale (Hammon, 2010) and the Political Advocacy Scale of Efficacy for Teachers (Estes et al., 2010), as well as its predictive validity with various measures of engagement. While the continued examination of the instrument is necessary, the qualitative data suggests it may have merit in capturing teacher beliefs about their ability to make change.

Creating a scale is not the real goal, no matter how great the internal structure, cross-cultural invariance, or reliability. The real purpose of this study was to begin to understand what teachers believe they can do in the realm of educational policy. The beliefs revealed in the data here are troubling for a number of reasons. First, no one understands the teaching and learning enterprise to the extent of teachers. Kirk and McDonald (2001) explain, "teachers' authoritative voice, as partners in curriculum [educational] reform, derived from their intimate knowledge of their local contexts of implementation, in particular from their knowledge of their students, available resources, and the obdurate practicalities of their work" (p. 564). Failure to include their voice and more importantly their expertise is a recipe for disaster. The bottom line is teacher expertise is valuable in the design of policies encompassing teaching and learning.

Bob's extremely low efficacy is concerning because he is a civics teacher. Teachers are unable to help children develop policy influence efficacy through vicarious experience if they do not have it themselves. Efficacy leads to agency. Before they can instill political understanding and prowess in our children, someone must instill it in them. Klehr (2015) explained that her approach to teacher education has changed because she has come to understand that, "educators

can and must be activists for children and families" (p. 290). With a similar sentiment, Coffman (2015) explains:

> Today's classroom teacher…must have the knowledge, skills, and ability to not only improve student learning but also to critically reflect and advocate for teaching and learning issues and policies….They must learn how to organize themselves around teaching and learning issues. This requires teachers with a sense of agency and some sense of their own collective power. (p. 323)

Social cognitive theory would postulate that this would begin by increasing individual and collective efficacy.

This study, exploratory in nature, only begins to uncover how teachers view themselves as educational policy actors in the new era of tightly coupled policy and practice. Limited by sample size and location, one has to question whether the responses would differ in a unionized state. The bivariate correlations only allow for educated conjecture about what factors may impact teacher education beliefs on policy influence efficacy, such as greater policy knowledge and advanced education. Estes et al. (2010) and Cobb (2012) both found that policy education increased teacher efficacy on their perspective scales. Baird and Heinen (2015) suggest, "While being trained for the classroom, future educators should be introduced to their role in the political process" as well (p. 149). Teacher educators must explore ways to increase such efficacies for pre-service and in-service teachers while maintaining their commitment to high quality instruction in content and pedagogical areas.

Despite the history, this is an age where children are likely to suffer if the environment only allows for the technocratic teacher. Au (2011) explains that accountability has encouraged teachers to adopt more "teacher-centered pedagogies, such as lectures, to meet the content and form demands of tests" (p. 31). As such, young people do not receive the rich instruction that teachers were taught to provide in colleges of education or alternative preparation programs. As policy rhetoric speaks about great teachers and college and career readiness, the policy environment could be creating a culture that will not produce 21st-century learning and hinders the skill and expertise that teachers bring to the classroom. As Peirce (2016) elucidates, teachers seem to be receiving

> incoherent messages about what students need to learn… Is it higher-order thinking skills, inquiry, and collaboration, which many teachers sense are fundamental to high-quality learning experiences? Or is it the narrow skills assessed on high-stakes tests: accountability measures that tend to penalize rather than support...? (p. 216)

While scholarship can continue to illuminate this fact, the power lies within the teacher to reclaim the classroom. The question remains what it will take to cultivate and harness that power.

Only time will tell what the newest reauthorization of the ESEA will bring. The Every Student Succeeds Act, authorized in 2015, "marks an important move toward a more holistic approach to accountability by encouraging multiple measures of school and student success" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016, p. 1). Not only does it loosen some of the mandates in NCLB, but also it shifts authority to the states to determine appropriate accountability systems. It seems policymakers are learning from some of the shortcomings of No Child Left Behind, yet it

remains to be seen whether the power transferred to states in this reauthorization will create a larger space for teacher voice and influence in policy creation and implementation.

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