

FLORIDA'S K-20 EDUCATION MODEL: A POLICY ANALYSIS OF LEGISLATION
RELATED TO POSTSECONDARY READINESS AND PARTICIPATION OF
STUDENTS OF COLOR

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2014

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To my mother Incell Rogers, who told me I could accomplish anything I would like to do
in life

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I am thankful to God for the grace and strength to complete the accomplishment of this study. Without Him, this study would not have been possible. Therefore, I glorify Him in this achievement. This study is close to my heart, because it offered me the opportunity to set a new trend of college participation for my students and my family. I extend my appreciation to my family for providing the encouragement and motivation to achieve my postsecondary education and ultimately my doctoral degree. I would particularly like to thank my mother for supporting my dreams through her encouragement. Each of my family members has contributed to my success by setting high academic expectations as a standard for our family. I dedicate this accomplishment to all of them and I am eternally grateful for all who contributed to the events of my life.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Bernard Oliver for his guidance to focus and complete this study. Dr. Oliver, thank you for sharing your passion for learning with me in the creation of this study. This study is particularly dedicated to all of my students and fellow faculty and staff members at R.J. Murray Middle School and Allen D. Nease High School. This study is evidence that any student can attain his or her goals despite the challenges and difficulty faced in life. The path to college attainment is for every student, family, and community. I would also like to thank the governing committee; it is with sincerest appreciation that I extend a warm thank you for your guidance and support for the study. Lastly, I thank Dr. Louis Pon Juan and Dr. Linda Hagedorn for helping me to continue my path to degree attainment and not to be deterred from my path toward completion of my goal.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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May 2014

Chair: Bernard Oliver

Major: Higher Education Administration

College readiness and participation for students of color is an abundant issue across the United States. State K-12 and higher education agencies are challenged with the mandate of remediating student academic deficiencies prior to a student's postsecondary college experience. The joint effort between K-12 and postsecondary education sectors to prepare students for college called for a national movement to increase both accountability and collaboration between local, state, and federal education agencies. Federal and state legislators sought to develop initiatives to address legislation to increase our nation's standing in competitiveness in education with neighboring countries.

Florida attempted to become a national leader in education by aligning departments, education sectors, and education agencies into a systematic K-20 education system. State legislators in Florida developed college readiness legislation to adhere to federal mandates for instructional accountability to better prepare high school students for college. The intent of the legislation in Florida was to increase the number

of college students and to decrease student attrition in postsecondary institutions. The intent of the K-20 legislation was to establish a coherent and comprehensive education governance structure. The underlying challenges associated with remediating student learning deficiencies prior to postsecondary study were addressed through imposing mandates on both K-12 and postsecondary sectors to increase collaboration and cross-departmental planning between state education agencies.

This study examined the development and re-organization of Florida's education system into a consolidated K-20 governance structure. In addition, the study evaluates implementation of college readiness legislation in Florida. In particular, this study focuses on the effectiveness of initiatives in increasing student preparedness for postsecondary education and examines the alignment of Florida's education sectors.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The United States saw a growing movement in instructional accountability as a method for increasing academic achievement and equity in K-12 classrooms. The purpose of increasing instructional accountability existed as a mechanism for inducing a change in the approach toward preparing our nation's high school students for postsecondary education. National efforts to unify K-12 and higher education sectors developed as a result of our nation's goals to maintain its stance in leading college completion by 2020 (United States Department of Education, 2010). Further, the goal included an agenda to be competitive with neighboring countries, prepare a ready workforce, and create equitable learning experiences for all students. The basis of this policy study is to evaluate the national and state efforts to enhance the transitions of minority students to postsecondary education based upon the permeability and transparency framework. This analysis is specifically focused on the comprehensive reform efforts of Florida and the impact of relevant legislation on minority student readiness and participation in postsecondary education.

The increasing complexity for state education agencies to prepare students for postsecondary education required federal and state legislators to re-evaluate the current approaches to educating our nation's students. Federal legislators developed initiatives which mandated standards-based education and state-level academic assessments in all classrooms in the United States (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Academic accountability measures in student learning unveiled curriculum disjuncture between K-12 and postsecondary instruction. Fragmented learning between K-12 and freshmen years in college resulted in a mass exodus of students who were unable to meet

postsecondary entrance expectations. As a result of the absence of appropriate college preparation, our nation's graduating seniors' aspirations for college failed to carry them to degree completion (Roderick, Nagoka, & Cocam, 2009). Students matriculated into postsecondary education without exposure to the rigorous course curricula required for success in postsecondary education. The absence of vertical curriculum alignment between secondary and post-secondary institutions resulted in an aspiration-attainment gap among K-12 students. In the current study, the policy methods created to formulate a student's matriculation from K-12 to postsecondary education are evaluated utilizing the Permeability and Transparency framework. The goal of the study is to evaluate policy implementation which impacts and facilitates students' transition to postsecondary institutions.

Federal College Readiness Legislation

States' approaches evolved regarding educating students in both K-12 and higher education. Initially, the focuses of state education agencies were on preparing students for postsecondary education through attaining proficiency on state assessments prior to graduation. However, misaligned exit assessments did not properly predict students' academic performance for postsecondary education, and the resulting misaligned exit requirements did not align with college entrance expectations for postsecondary students. A critical need existed in the United States to both increase the quality and equity of K-12 education and create a coherent college preparation experience for students in the United States.

Bush Administration: Age of Academic Accountability

President George W. Bush's administration focused on implementing deeper accountability for K-12 education (NCLB Act, 2002). Although the Bush administration

was able to successfully implement accountability mechanisms for K-12 education, there was yet more to be completed to incorporate a focus on postsecondary education. The administration advocated for equality for all students regardless of race and socio-economic status. The federal legislation for K-12 education promoted by the Bush administration included a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary education act. The act was originally proposed by Lyndon Johnson and later reauthorized in 1994. President Bush reauthorized and renamed the legislation “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) legislation. NCLB legislation called for several key areas of implementation:

- **Annual testing.** Each state was required to test students in all core academic subject areas. The annual assessment would measure students’ performance in math and reading as the onset of the legislation and continue to include other subject areas as time progressed.
- **Academic progress.** States were mandated to remediate student learning deficiencies by the school year 2013-2014. Students were required to be proficient in core academic subject areas, and schools were required to meet Annual Years Progress (AYP) with all students. If schools were not able to meet mandated AYP expectations, parents of students who attended the schools were eligible to receive the opportunity for their students to attend another school of their choice.
- **Teacher qualifications.** Teachers were required to become “highly qualified” in their subject area taught. The “highly qualified” certification deemed the teacher as proficient in their respective subject areas.
- **Reading First Initiative.** The NCLB legislation created opportunities for funding, “scientific research-based” reading programs for elementary schools for kindergarten through third grade students. The funding is specifically designed for high-needs schools.

NCLB legislation mandated accountability in instructional areas not previously mandated by federal legislation. The legislation was instrumental in establishing a precedence of instructional accountability. The foundational concept of implementing high standards for K-12 education set the stage for instructional accountability along the K-20 continuum. The NCLB set standards for state education agencies to test student

academic performance and measure students' instructional progress. The purpose of the legislation was to provide a measurement tool for determining a student's proficiency and the school's performance in providing academic progress to each student. Although the NCLB legislation created a platform for deeper instructional accountability, the legislation did not appropriately align K-12 instruction to higher education college entrance expectations. Additional federal and state legislation was required in order to provide more appropriate preparation for college among students graduating high school.

Spelling's Perfect Storm

United States Secretary of education Margaret Spellings formed the Commission on the Future of Higher Education to review the progress of education in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Federal legislators analyzed the conditions of education in the United States and determined that the nation's education systems were grossly misaligned in terms of college readiness and student academic persistence. The commission was a 19-member team appointed to analyze vital issues of accessibility, affordability, accountability, and quality of postsecondary education. Its purpose was to create an opportunity for national dialogue on building the capacity of the higher education sector to educate students in the United States. The commission determined that higher education made exceptional progress in the education of our nation's postsecondary students. However, our nation's students were limited as a result of inadequate college preparation, lack of information regarding college, and financial barriers to postsecondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Furthermore, the commission determined that our nation's education system should

have been able to view the high school diploma as an indicator that students completing high school are prepared for postsecondary education. The report states the following:

A high school diploma should signify that a student is ready for college or work. States must adopt high school curricula that prepare all students for participation in postsecondary education and should facilitate seamless integration between high school and college (U.S. Department of Education, 2006.)

The report emphasized that a high school diploma should serve as an indicator that a student is both academically prepared to gain admittance into college and able to succeed in postsecondary education. Although a high school diploma should have met college entrance expectations, students were graduating high school unprepared for postsecondary study. States struggled with remediating student learning in K-12 education, which posed a challenge for postsecondary institutions. In particular, community colleges were faced with the task of remediating students in the areas of reading and mathematics. Preparing students for postsecondary institutions was delegated to K-12 institutions of learning; however, the postsecondary sector began to share the responsibility to collaborate, plan, and help prepare students for postsecondary entrance expectations. The Commission on the Future of Higher Education concluded as follows:

The commission believes higher education must assume responsibility for working with the K-12 system to ensure that teachers are adequately trained, curricula are aligned, and entrance standards are clear.

The Commission specifically outlined the responsibility for postsecondary institutions in the United States to work jointly with K-12 institutions to help ensure that K-12 educators are thoroughly trained through their respective education programs. In addition, the course curriculum between both K-12 and postsecondary education were charged to achieve systematic alignment between the education sectors. This element

of the document proposed for strategic change in planning for the instruction for our nation's students. This change entailed a new approach to planning across education sectors. The commission determined that all education sectors participate in vertical planning for streamlined curriculum for optimal student learning experiences.

Furthermore, the committee presumed that this critical curriculum alignment and collaboration should be implemented across the United States. This massive initiative was intended to call to action all states for systematic alignment of K-20 education for the sole purpose for improving college preparation and persistence. The committee stated as follows:

The effort underway in a number of states to align K-12 graduation standards with college and employer expectations should be implemented in all 50 states. States should provide incentives for higher education institutions to make long- term commitments to working actively and collaboratively with K-12 schools and systems to help underserved students improve college preparation and persistence (U.S. Department of Education, 2006.)

The purpose of the collaboration between K-12 and higher education included an endeavor to help prepare students for postsecondary education. The primary goal of the committee's recommendation was to increase student persistence with postsecondary education after entrance into postsecondary institutions of learning. The lack of preparation creates need among a plethora of students for academic remediation or an increased number of students unable to attain success within the first year of college. Student attrition posed a critical challenge for postsecondary institutions across the United States. The goal of the committee's evaluation was to set forth a precedence of our nation to increase the number of college graduates in our country with endeavors to maintain the stance with competing countries in terms of education. The United States regressed in its progress in educating the nation's youth in comparison to competing

countries (Davies, 2006). The United States failed to rank among the top five countries in the number of students who attain a high school diploma (Wagner, 2006). In addition, the United States ranked 27th in the number of students who attain a college degree or certificate. Deviation from the goal of creating a ready workforce led to a new movement of focusing on preparing graduating high school students for college.

Obama Administration: Age of College and Career Readiness

President Barack Obama aimed to intensify the previous efforts of the Bush administration to mandate instructional accountability in grades K-12. Obama's objectives were to include postsecondary education in a national effort to create collaboration with K-12 and postsecondary education sectors. College preparation was not only a requirement for K-12 education; it was also a joint effort of postsecondary education, employers, and stakeholders on all levels. Critical to this movement was the ideology of an entire generation of college-ready students equipped with the academic skills to attain college success and completion. This generation would be prepared by the year 2020 through endeavors of programs such as TRIO and Gear UP, which focus on creating a "college-going culture" beginning in middle school through the student's academic experience in college.

Every child in America deserves a world-class education. Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow. We must do better." (United States Department of Education, 2010).

President Barack Obama

The president defined the nation's academic agenda to retain our standing in taking the lead in possessing the highest number of college degree completers in comparison to

other nations. President Obama outlined that our nation is slipping in its competitive stance with other nations in terms of citizens graduating with a college degree.

Together, we must achieve a new goal, that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college completion. We must raise the expectations for our students, for our schools, and for ourselves – this must be a national priority. We must ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for college and a career (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Increasing the number of college graduates in the United States is a national priority; thus it involves all stakeholders to include all education sectors and support organizations. The Obama administration worked to organize all education sectors and stakeholders in the process to increase the number of college graduates in our nation. Additionally, there were barriers to this goal which are specific to the areas as follows: affordability, access, college readiness, awareness, and curriculum misalignment between education sectors.

A world-class education is also a moral imperative – the key to securing a more equal, fair, and just society. We will not remain true to our highest ideals unless we do a far better job of educating each one of our sons and daughters. We will not be able to keep the American promise of equal opportunity if we fail to provide a world-class education to every child (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

A Closer Look at Florida

Florida legislators responded to the national call to increase accountability for the state's education of students in grades kindergarten through twelfth by implementing a series of reform measures targeted at student learning (FDOE, 2002). These measures, mandated student performance regardless of race or ethnicity. Rather, the measures focused schools in areas of assessing growth models to promote growth of all students but critically focused on “lower quartile” of students performing in core subjects of mathematics and reading. The underpinnings of Florida's legislative measures was

challenged by the continued gap in academic performance of minority students. In order to frame the basis of this research, we classified Florida's policies on the basis of permeability and transparency, determining how policies shape students experiences toward the path to postsecondary readiness (Stephan & Rosenbaum, 2009). In considering how policies shape a student's experiences in the context of postsecondary participation we evaluate policies on two measures of the ease of maneuvering through Florida's K-20 system and the ease of planning a path towards college access.

Framework of the Study

Our nation's students exited high school under-prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education. This trend of academic underperformance was exacerbated for minority students, particularly students of color in gaining admission into 4 year institutions (Couturier, 2006). ACT (2012) determined 19% of students test takers of the ACT college entrance exam were prepared for college level coursework. This score is representative of the 70 percent of students completing high school in Florida in 2013. A closer analysis of the metrics of the exam, there was a significant gap in performance between African American students and White students in measuring three of four exam areas of the test. For example, 8 percent of African American students met three or more benchmarks of proficiency for postsecondary readiness while 46 percent of White students met proficiency benchmarks in three or more areas. There was a significant gap in performance in terms of minority student performance on college entrance exams in Florida.

This trend critically affects student aspirations, student academic success, and ultimately degree completion. The challenge of exiting high school underprepared is a growing phenomenon especially amongst minority students. Ostensibly, the goal of

attaining a high school diploma is predicted to prepare students for the academic rigors of postsecondary education. However, more than 60 percent college students in the United States require remediation during their first year of post-secondary study (SREB, 2010). The lack of appropriate college preparation, cross-system planning, and policy revisions for alignment of educational systems has served as a detrimental deterrent to college access for minority students (Kirst & Venezia, 2006)

The framework utilized for this study characterizes the relationship between education policy and minority postsecondary participation. Hamilton (1994) discussed the relationship between the education system and the workforce based on two key areas of permeability and transparency. The basis of Hamilton's research stemmed from his prior work in analyzing the labor market in Germany. The framework focuses on two elements of permeability and transparency of the workforce and higher education system for students transitioning from high school into employment or postsecondary education.

Statement of the Problem

Growing challenges existed for state education agencies to create and align legislative policies to prepare students for postsecondary education (Bueschel & Venezia, 2006). Challenges were attributed to disjointed curriculum alignment between K-12 and higher education sectors, which created an incoherent academic learning experience for our nation's aspiring college students (Conley, 2007). K-12 institutions historically experienced difficulties with remediating student learning deficiencies prior to students entering college (ACT, 2010). In particular, ethnic minority and students of color struggled to reach proficiency in core academic subject areas. The lag in academic

performance in minority students resulted in an academic achievement gap between white students and students of color in students in the United States (Cooper, 2009).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purposes of this study were to analyze Florida's legislation regarding postsecondary participation and readiness for minority students. Specifically the study was designed to analyze Florida's legislative measures and relevant research related to postsecondary participation and readiness of minority students. In viewing the relationships that exist between public education policies and college going behaviors of students of color, the researcher sought to understand the relation between education policy and the path to postsecondary access. In understanding this concept, the researcher resorted to applying the policy framework of Transparency and Permeability which define policies in terms of the fluid transition between kindergarten through postsecondary study. The researcher evaluated both federal and state initiatives which motivated legislators in Florida to implement measures to consolidate all education sectors into a systematic K- 20 education governance structure. In addition, Florida's policies were evaluated in terms of the state legislation intent to prepare students for postsecondary study:

Research Questions

This study was designed to analyze the following questions:

1. What state legislation and initiatives did Florida enact to increase postsecondary participation and readiness for students of color?
2. What extent was Florida's education policies Transparent and Permeable in terms of college readiness and participation for minority students?
3. What trends in college participation and readiness were existent for students of color in Florida?

For this study, the goal of the research was to view the relationship between public education policy and the attributes of participation and readiness of students of color. In analyzing the questions for this study, the researcher considered several qualitative research methods to include: meta-analysis, case study, and a policy study. The researcher considered several types of methodological approaches to answer the research questions. First, we considered utilizing a meta-analysis to research the findings of research on the topic. This measure required an analysis of related research and would have resulted in comparing the effect sizes across multiple data sets of research studies. However, the goal of research was to understand the relationships that exist between education policy and a student's path towards degree attainment for the state of Florida. The research utilized for the synthesis would have to be unique to the state of Florida. In comparison, the case study was considered for this study as a means to understand why students of color participate at lower rate than white students. However, as a result of the researchers goal to linking public policy to practice the education policy study served as the most suitable measurement for this study. The overall goal of the research was to trace legislative efforts of Florida and report specific steps the state has completed to build approaches to increasing student performance, preparation, and participation for higher education study.

Limitations

The policy study evaluated state efforts to address learning gaps, postsecondary readiness, and participation amongst Florida's most critical students. The research method selected for this study was selected to understand how state education policies frame a minority student's trajectory from early education through graduate study. The research outlines policy measures the state used to promote increased academic

performance and provide rigorous opportunities for struggling learners, namely African American students an opportunity to increase in preparation and attain admission for higher education.

In order to formulate public education policy, the researcher situated the state of Florida's education policies related to participation and readiness into the Permeability and Transparency Framework. This framework was based on analyzing trends of legislation in terms of how well policies make the path to post- secondary study an easier flow of transition and create measures to communicate necessary information for students to make informed decisions about postsecondary aspirations. In placing Florida's respective legislation into the Permeability and Transparency framework, the outcome of the evaluation of this policy is generalizable to the United States. However, some states may possess more permeable legislation than others. The comparison to other states was not completed in the scope and nature of this study respectively. Although we reference comparative states such as Texas, Georgia, and California, there may exist states which have opted to progress towards governance structures which communicate the message of college readiness and participation above the state selected for this study.

However, Stephan and Rosenbaum (2009) noted that the academic policies regarding participation are concluded to be highly permeable and low in transparency in the United States in general. However, this conclusion should lead to further study in state comparison of policies which form students experiences based on conceptualizing state policy for other states based on a student's experience from early education through graduate study. In terms of this study, the limitation of the study is as follows:

- States are currently developing initiatives to remediate historical disadvantaged populations in terms of education and preparation for postsecondary study. The study is limited to the efforts for the state of Florida. Further study may be conducted to analyze efforts of other states.
- This study analyzes policies from the time period beginning in 1999 through 2012. The issue of education reform in the state of Florida has resulted in new more current policies which may not be included in this study.
- This study evaluates the legislative efforts for the state of Florida only. The research is limited to Florida's efforts to address achievement gaps in students of color and does not include an equal comparison of policies of other states. Further study will need to be conducted to determine additional efforts of states within the United States.
- Trends of student readiness performance was limited to reviewing trends of ACT and SAT scores. Thus, performance trends are limited to student populations which participated in college assessment testing and may not be representative of all students in Florida.
- Florida has begun the effort to embed college readiness indicators in the high school curriculum. However, Florida has yet to align high school exit requirements to college entrance expectations. As a direct result, the impact of results of an aligned system will not be included in this study. Further study will need to be conducted to measure the state legislation's impact after alignment.

Florida's measures to begin the process of requiring students to graduate college ready were encompassed with students meeting college readiness indicators determined by student scores on ACT and SAT scores. The study is limited to analyzing Florida's initial measures to implementing a fully aligned college ready K-20 system based on evaluating education policies and trends from 1999-2012. Further study will need to be explored as Florida implements and aligns college readiness assessments to college entrance requirements.

Significance of the Study

This research is useful for K-20 administrators, policy makers, policy researchers and constituents interested in understanding how education policies impact student opportunity for postsecondary access. Particularly, the study informs public education

policy and provided suggestions for researchers in presenting recommendations for future practice. The study evaluated K-12 and higher education policies in Florida to create an approach to education planning for both P-12 and postsecondary institutions..

In addition, this study will be of interest to educators of all levels with interest in college preparation at the institutional level and at the state level in policy making. This research is useful for K-16 administrators, policy makers, and constituents researching and analyzing measures to create strategies for planning pupil success for postsecondary education. In addition, this study should be of interest to educators involved in teacher preparation institutions and policy makers at the state level.

This research is intended to inform K-20 legislators concerning the history of legislation regarding minority participation and readiness in the state of Florida. The following terms were important to this research and defined specific terminology in relation to the study. The focus of this research was to analyze how policies impact college readiness and participation experiences for students of color. Specifically, the study refers to African American students interchangeably throughout the research. This reference is posed as minorities, students of color, or African American Students which in terms of this study refers to African American students. Throughout this research reference to this population of students is utilized interchangeably.

Definition of Terms

- ACCESS-Availability of high-quality educational opportunities for all students regardless of race.
- COLLEGE READINESS-Level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed in college without remediation in a credit bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution.

- **SEAMLESS** -Describes a system in which expectations for student knowledge Education and skills are aligned at the pre-school, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary.
- **P-16 EDUCATION** -Education system that integrates a student's education beginning in preschool and ends with a four-year college degree.
- **P-20 EDUCATION** -Education system that integrates a student's education beginning in preschool and ends with a graduate school degree.
- **K-16 EDUCATION** -Education system that integrates a student's education from kindergarten through a four-year college degree.
- **K-20 EDUCATION** -Education system that integrates a student's education from kindergarten through graduate school.
- **UNIFIED EDUCATION**- Integrated governance of all education systems as a holistic functioning educational unit.
- **EXPECTATION GAP**-The lack of expectation for secondary students to complete high school college ready.
- **ACHIEVEMENT GAP**-Disparity of student academic achievement between groups of students, especially groups defined by gender, race, ability, and socioeconomic status.
- **NEXT GENERATION**- Academic learning standards aligned with postsecondary entrance expectations.
- **ASPIRATIONS**- Difference between student aspirations and academic ability.
- **POLICY GAP**- The difference between current legislative efforts and legislation needed to impact a change to current practice.
- **MINORITY STUDENTS**- In terms of this study, the reference is alluding to primarily African American students.
- **College Knowledge** -Students contextual skills and awareness of college opportunities relating to college admission, types of colleges, college culture, and aspects of college experience.

Organization of the Study

The researcher selected the Permeability and Transparency framework based on the goal of understanding how policy impacts student academic readiness and preparation for postsecondary study.

Chapter 1 provides information regarding the significance and purpose of the study. Specifically, the study is purposed to analyze and report trends of participation rates of students in Florida. In addition, the study reported efforts of select states efforts to increase postsecondary readiness and participation amongst minorities and students of color. Collectively, state and federal policies were reported to provide the foundation of the basis for the study. Research questions for the study were provided in chapter 1.

Chapter 2 presents relevant literature related to student postsecondary participation and higher education success. Chapter two of this study provides the foundational background of prevailing research and theories of postsecondary preparation and college participation. The literature review provided an overview of prevalent participation and readiness of minority students.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed summary of the methodology used to organize the theories of the study. In chapter 3 of this study, the study is classified in two primary categories of permeability and transparency. The policies were divided within the categories of the research framework to construct meaning of specific policies into two aspects of the framework of postsecondary and participation. The policies are classified into two facets which form both students ease of transition into postsecondary education and the feasibility of minority students to enter prepared for the rigors of postsecondary study and gain access to 4 year institutions.

Chapter 4 outlines the results of the policy study which reflects an analysis of policy measures in Florida with the intent of increasing student readiness and participation. The chapter summarized policy measures and situates the policies within permeability and transparency framework.

Chapter 5 elaborates on suggestions for policy makers and implication for K-20 education policy regarding suggestions for state legislators. The recommendations and implication for K-20 education are discussed within this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review was composed of several sections which analyzed various aspects of minority college readiness and participation. Ridley (2012) determined that the literature review is an extensive reference to related research in the dissertation study. Further, the literature review encompasses connections which assists the researcher gaining an understanding of the issues of a specific topic and poses the guiding questions for the course of the study. Based on Ridley's definition of the literature review, the structure of this study initiates with various research aspects of issues which relate to postsecondary participation. Specifically, our study began with an overview of state and federal legislative initiatives which served as an impetus for Florida's measure to prepare an approach to addressing readiness and participation of African American students. The study encompassed Florida's policy levers which were designed to induce reform to its education governance system. Based on the pragmatism of implementing a K-20 system to create a more coherent learning experience for students, this study explored Florida's legislation regarding postsecondary participation and readiness.

This study is a policy analysis of the legislation which shapes students' academic transition from high school to postsecondary education. For the purpose of articulating both the ease of transition from K-12 education to postsecondary education and the students' ability to visualize a clear path to postsecondary education attainment, our study is based on a framework which constitutes a focus on the trajectory of readiness, access, and ultimately attainment. The study is situated within the Permeability and Transparency Framework, which explores a conceptual framework that predisposes that

permeability is the ease of transition from one point in education to another (Sykes, Schneider, & Plank, 2009). Furthermore, the study explores transparency in terms of students' ability to plan a path of both entering college and attaining their goal of degree completion.

The review of the literature is multi-faceted, in that it focuses on three tiers of education policy as it relates to the K-20 education pipeline. The literature review addresses several areas, to include postsecondary readiness and access. In particular, the literature review examined postsecondary readiness in K-12 education in terms of preparing students for postsecondary entrance expectations through alignment of policies, resources, and planning efforts in both K-12 and postsecondary educational sectors. The review discussed the feasibility of access to postsecondary institutions for minority students, particularly the ability to tract a clear path of college acceptance in postsecondary study.

Postsecondary Access through the Lens of Social Capital Access: An Investment in Human Capital

Stephan and Rosenbaum (2009) determined student aspirations for postsecondary study were undermined by absence of counseling resources. The resources to provide students with necessary information related to postsecondary access include information such as financial aid, test scores, and critical course work necessary to prepare for the rigors of postsecondary study. This information, often provided by high school counselors are required for students to be able to maneuver through the college application process. School counselors assist students with matriculating through the postsecondary enrollment process through providing detailed information concerning high school exit requirements and postsecondary entrance

requirements. Bell, Kenyon, & Perna (2014) furthered the idea of students struggling through postsecondary access process as a result of a lack of information regarding postsecondary opportunities. The research determined that students with lower levels of information about college are less likely to attend college due to the absence of information about the requirements of postsecondary study. This case in point is predominate in low-income, minority, first-generation, and other “vulnerable” students who are less likely to attend postsecondary institutions (Simmons, 2011).

Simmons (2011) described “vulnerable” students as students who were at risk, first generation, or minority students who experienced difficulty which hindered from postsecondary aspirations. Instrumental to minority students experiencing difficulty were social relationships built within the confines of the school culture. Specifically, Simmons discussed that relationships of teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators assisted with recreating the cultural bond to help further students aspirations for postsecondary study. Thus, school personnel create the “college going culture” for students to gain required information to matriculate into postsecondary institutions of learning. Conversely, Simmons (2011) determined improper training or missing professional development policies regarding postsecondary entrance for school counselor’s further limits a student’s ability to know and understand requirements or processes required to attain postsecondary admission. The research concluded that further training and education policies must be developed to increase opportunities for students to receive necessary counseling to sheppard students through the process of gaining college admission.

Perna (2006) discussed two useful theoretical perspectives in guiding research on college access to include a human capital investment and sociological model of status of attainment. The demands for higher education increases the difficulty of minority students of gaining access to high interest slots for the institution. Perna (2006) noted that this impact has the greatest impact on student's low-income minority students. Duncan (2010) furthered this theory by concluding that college access conditions are worsening particularly for low-income families. These conditions are a direct result of the absence of information concerning postsecondary opportunities, process for gaining admission into postsecondary education, and financial aid.

In reviewing Perna's (2006) model of student college choice, four layers of influence exist when determining a student's decision to gain admission into postsecondary education to include: Habitus (layer 1), School and community context (layer 2), Higher education context (layer 3) and social/economic/policy context (layer 4) (Perna, 2006). The fourth layer depicts a conceptualization that college choice is influenced by other contextual layers to include demographics, economic conditions, and public policies. In this context, we focus on the implication that public policies influence student aspirations for postsecondary education.

Perna (2006) determined that aspects of the school context limit postsecondary choice for low-income students and racial minorities. Further, the institutional agents such as teachers, counselors, and peers make access resources and opportunities available to students. However, the institutional structures of these organizations limit the ability of students to develop relationships with students and create meaningful relationships with students which foster development. The multiple tasks provided to

guidance counselors hinder the ability of the counselors to work with students to build the network of support and guidance to attain skills and interactions necessary for postsecondary attainment (Perna, 2006). Consequently, students are limited to the short-term interactions which vaguely provide information in an adequate manner to make an informed decision about one's choices in access and selection of postsecondary institutions of learning. This is a critical issue for students who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to attend college. Historically disadvantaged students are less informed about the process of preparing for postsecondary study (IHEP, 2012). Academic and social supports are inadequate for properly servicing students to create the structural support for students need to be successful with attaining college admission.

Minority Postsecondary Readiness & Participation

Courtier (2006) determined that students from traditionally underserved populations were less likely to gain admission to four year institutions and selective institutions. The patterns of characteristics of students who were likely to experience some difficulty with maneuvering through the college admission process were both low and high performing minority students. The trend existed based on two critical areas of postsecondary access disparities unique to African Americans within two profiles to include: low achieving/low income and high achieving low income students of color in selecting college placement (Simmons, 2011). Simmons (2011) alluded to two areas of disconnect with students matriculating through the Kindergarten through postsecondary pipeline, where both profiles of students result in misplacement and lost postsecondary opportunities.

Duncan (2010) determined that gaps for ethnic minorities in college participation have grown wider creating a need for states to address their current policies. This disparity known as the participation gap in minorities, first generation students, and low income students in opportunities hinders students from the selection of premier institutions and in some cases hinders from four year institutions. Methods state policy makers utilized to ensure student matriculation into postsecondary institutions have generally been unsuccessful as a direct result of the types of strategies used to address these issues (Simmons, 2011).

The emphasis on college readiness evolved into creation of both state and federal legislation as a method at the forefront of policy makers' agenda. ACT (2012) defined college readiness as the acquisition of knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing first-year courses at postsecondary institutions without remediation. Recent federal measures within our nation's plans to create more prepared students included the establishment of legislation to encourage states to take measures to refine educational practices in schools. Specifically, the states enacted legislation to address college and career readiness.

Challenges with Postsecondary Readiness & Access

Preparation

Kirst and Bracco (2004) determined that the bridge between K-12 education and higher education does not exist in terms of coursework preparation for incoming students. The lack of curriculum continuity has created exceptional dilemmas for both K-12 and postsecondary sectors of education (Pitre, 2007). Important to the process of providing students a total experience of gaining admission into our nations local and state colleges is the provision of the necessary institutional support with appropriate

academic services. Conley (2007) defined college readiness is as the level of preparation our students need to enroll in college and ultimately succeed in their academic endeavors. Unfortunately, students enter college with deficiencies that hinder them from gaining admittance into college and completing their first goal of completing the college program.

Awareness

Kirst (2004) asserts that students, parents, and educators are not receiving clear and direct information concerning the skills students need to enter and succeed as postsecondary students. The lack of dissemination of information is causing students to blindly attend college without the understanding or the ability to meet postsecondary reading expectations. The missing link of information concerning college success requirements is seriously devastating the future of students. The students most affected are low-income and minority students who often start grade school at a disadvantage (Venezia, 2006). Educators assume students will receive the instruction they are missing in college through remediation measures and individual determination of the student. However, this extra task of remediation lowers a student's chances of completing college with the two-year or four-year degree the student endeavors to receive (Kirst, 2004).

The pressing issue is the absence of dissemination of information regarding postsecondary access in institutions of learning. Kirst (2004) discusses that teachers are the most effective in providing students with academic resources for postsecondary education. However, the requirements for post-secondary education are rarely provided to them to provide students and parents with this information. Information is more likely to be given to students who complete college preparation coursework in high school,

leaving their lower performing counterparts without knowledge of entrance requirements, requirements for college success, or courses necessary to close the reading achievement gaps that the student demonstrates (Kirst, 2004).

Addressing Social Capital Deficits Through School Counselors

The approach of policy makers to address the academic achievement gap was to implement K-12 reform measures, promote college discretion for diversity admissions decisions, and increase need based aid for low income students (Simmons, 2011). However, Simmons (2011) noted that this approach to addressing students' academic performance has yielded minimal results because it neglected to address the social aspects of needs of disadvantaged students. Further, students who meet the profile of "vulnerable students" or students who have suffered one or more respective disadvantages have an array of needs that must be addressed to render the desired result of increasing participation. We define the risk factors of vulnerable students by depicting the needs as follows: lower socioeconomic status, historical disenfranchisement, geographic isolation, minority status/ethnicity, and limited parent educational attainment (Simmons, 2011). Although these factors are not all inclusive, we reference these needs as Social Capital Deficits. Social Capital is defined as the ability of individuals to secure benefits through familial networks.

Stephan & Rosenbaum (2013) elaborated on the barriers minority students face in terms of several areas to include: social support for college, college knowledge, and lack of parental support in the process of accessing postsecondary study. Further, students face social and personal risks in pursuing college that are unique to disadvantaged students. In comparison, middle class parents were more often involved in providing assistance with their students in process of preparing students for tasks

needed for postsecondary study (Stephan & Rosenbaum, 2013). Simmons (2011) noted that there is needed change in the school counselor function in schools. Stephan and Rosenbaum (2013) propose an alternative function of college coaches in schools. The role of the college coach provides proactive outreach, mentorship, and guidance in the college selection process. Additionally, this function of schools provides active reach out and engagement to students to participate in postsecondary study and facilitates student progress towards college access. The American Association of school counselors (2013) reported the appropriate ratio of student to counselor is 1:250 students per counselor. However, in many states that number is as high 1:1000 ratio per pupil to counselor (ASCA, 2011).

National K-20 Initiatives

The essential role of state education agencies was to better prepare students for the rigors of postsecondary study and the workforce. Although the high school diploma was considered an accolade of academic completion, the credibility of the high school has wavered in terms of equivalency to college entrance expectations. Federal and state reform efforts clearly identified the role of school districts to remediate student learning deficiencies prior to students transitioning into postsecondary study. Increased accountability mechanisms of student learning created a necessity to develop more streamlined approaches for academic planning between education sectors. In order to achieve this measure of continuity between education sectors, state legislators developed initiatives to create conjoined planning between state education agencies.

As a result of the state's goals to increase student preparedness, some states sought to increase student preparedness through streamlining resources and creating platforms to plan with education stakeholders. Specifically, states began to select

several measures for migrating towards cross system planning. Further, two strategies for increasing the presence of K-20 planning began with states migrating into education governance structures which combined education sectors or states created K-16 or K-20 education councils. Most states elected to create education councils to inform their education governance sectors with perspectives of stakeholders in terms of needs for the workforce and increased rigor in their current education delivery systems.

History of K-20 Initiatives

Historical practices of improper collaboration between agencies created a nationwide climate of state and local agency isolation and disconnect. Periods of separation between elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools evolve back as early as the 1960's (Rasch, 2004). Each educational sector gravitated towards focusing on curriculum standards within its own instructional educational level and strayed from collaborative measures of planning. Therefore, agencies progressed to practices of isolated planning and governance, which soon became problematic in terms of instructional accountability of student learning at each agency level (Van de Water & Rainwater, 2001). As a direct result of this concern, a period of national renewed interest has developed in collaboration between k-12 and postsecondary sectors.

Efforts to unite higher education and k-12 sectors have existed as early as the late 1800's (Azinger, 2000). Disagreements festered concerning the inconsistent standard of learning for rising graduates of the local high school. The same debate is currently exacerbated as a result of initiatives to close academic achievement gaps and increase student postsecondary education degree attainment. Various issues surround challenges to collaboration between K-12 and post-secondary sectors to include:

governance, politics, curriculum, proximity issues, organizational structure, culture, and finance. The barriers to unification serve as a deterrent to remediating student learning.

K-20 Collaboration Purpose

The absence of streamlined course standards between institutions of learning and state policy issues caused students to lag behind their counterparts in instructional advancement (Venezia, 2006). These inadequacies from institutions of learning and policy makers continue to cause difficulty for students throughout their studies in grade school and ultimately continue to their performance in college. It sends a false message of hope concerning the college dream to children who in many cases have suffered disadvantage. The quality of a student's K-12 education is the strongest predictor of academic success (Caboni & Abisu, 2004).

Rigor At Risk (2007) developed by ACT discussed the misalignment between the expectations of post-secondary and K-12 institutions of learning. The national Curriculum Survey suggests that there is vast difference in the perceptions of how the state's standards prepare students for college course work. This survey completed by over 20,000 educators showed a range of differences of opinions between secondary educator's views of academic preparation and postsecondary educator's perceptions of preparation. Educators are misinformed concerning the requirements for student success, which ultimately affect the student's aspirations (Kirst, 2004). There were significant challenges with student preparation for college. There must be an alignment of academic standards for P-16 institutions to ensure students meet postsecondary requirements for text difficulty in higher education coursework (ECS, 2006). Venezia (2003) discusses in most cases, there is no alignment of curriculum reading requirements amongst K-16 institutions.

Exacerbating the challenge of collaboration are the communication barriers between local and state education agencies. The communication barriers between agencies consist of an absence of a longitudinal data system, which to link critical state agency data systems (Data Quality Campaign, 2009). The combination of curriculum, policy planning, and data analysis between educational institutions, parents, and students contributes to student retention and college success.

The “Expectation Gap” in education, exists when expectations are set beneath the goal of academic mastery level of student performance measured against postsecondary entrance and success requirements. Requiring students to meet postsecondary academic expectations has been inhibited by continual isolation in planning for student academic performance. Substandard expectations produced below college performance in students in all subject areas. Communication between education agencies was nearly non-existent in terms of vertical planning between grade levels K-20. The lack of communication between educational agencies, an absence of curriculum alignment, and a lack of communication of expectations for entrance requirements for postsecondary study neglected to manifest a reality of college to students in Florida. Communication barriers of academic performance expectations inhibit students from properly preparing for academic expectations for postsecondary education.

Student academic preparation for post-secondary education mandates for students to complete high school with skills necessary for the academic rigor required for higher education. Movement towards integrating educational agencies involved developing collaborative planning and state legislation to connect educational agencies

in terms of curriculum, planning, and communication which governs educational agencies. Florida began to make progression towards a unified education model through developing legislation to include pre-school, elementary, middle, high, and postsecondary schools into centralized planning and collaboration. Critical measures were placed into action to bring all of the educational departments and agencies together to collaborate and develop educational policies that coincide between agencies. To achieve unification, legislative initiatives must guide the process of transforming the previous disjointed system into a new unified K-20 system of learning.

K-20 Planning & Collaboration

Vertical planning between K-12 and postsecondary sectors for student success was a critical component of communicating expectations for postsecondary entrance requirements. Although communication of expectations was a dire requirement for students and families to understand postsecondary expectations, Chait & Venezia (2009) noted that students rarely received information regarding options for college in order to make an informed decision regarding postsecondary study (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2008).

Kirst and Usdan (2009) determined that K-12 and postsecondary institutions planned in silos, neglecting to address critical issues between the educational divide of both K-12 and postsecondary education. The sector divide and the separation and isolation between K-12 and postsecondary institutions in areas of curriculum alignment and policy have posed enormous challenges for preparing minority students for postsecondary education. Specifically, the disconnected learning experiences in K-12 education have created a gap between student performance upon completion of high

school and college entrance expectations (Venezia, 2006). In essence, students completed high school without the skills and knowledge required for degree attainment.

The result of the increase of freshman students entering community college in need of development was traced to the number of students exiting high school without the mastery of skills necessary for postsecondary education. Venezia (2006) attributed the lack of preparation for postsecondary study to several problematic areas related to the following: absence of information concerning postsecondary entrance expectations for students and families and dissemination of information to families concerning existence of financial aid. Bueschal (2009) determined that the number of students entering community college underprepared has steadily increased in recent years.

Kirst & Usdan (2009) noted that the institutions have historically planned for education within the confines of the institutions education sector. Extensive planning at the K-12 level will place greater accountability on educators, students, and parents if the issues are not carefully addressed at the local and state levels. The process for achieving the desired outcome of accountability across the board would likely be educational and self-reflective to provide our nation a picture of where we are in terms of student readiness (ACT, 2009). The national movement towards academic accountability policies promoted student performance utilizing the measuring stick of college readiness. The disjuncture between postsecondary education and K-12 systems created a difficult process for educating ethnic minorities and students of color (Venezia et al., 2003). The lack of planning between agencies in curriculum, legislation, and data collection served as a barrier to preparing students for the rigors of postsecondary education.

State Level K-16 and K-20 Initiatives

K-16 and K-20 Education Council

There are 30 states at some stage of movement towards an integrated education system through establishment of a K-16 or K-20 education council. The states are implementing measures of integration in various forms in order to influence planning and preparation of state agencies and resources for alignment between education sectors. Regardless of the system each state chooses, each system serves a common goal of integrating to systems of learning and increasing access to postsecondary education (ECS, 2006). Critical methods to prepare students for college are conceptualized through implementation of college readiness standards in K-12 curriculum. Implementing curriculum measures to align K-12 standards and higher education entrance expectations provides students with the necessary academic tools for rigorous postsecondary education curricula. College readiness is developed in students through implementation of four required sets of skills to include: content knowledge, core academic skills, behavioral skills, and college knowledge.

Education Governance Systems

State goals to create a streamlined governance structure resulted in states erecting a full or partial consolidation of education governance structures (Zinth, 2011). K-16 or K-20 governance structure. Several states elected to create a combined governance structure which allowed for states to combine early learning, K-12, and postsecondary education in a single entity. Four states have transitioned to a full P-20 governance structure. Florida, New York, Idaho, and Pennsylvania have created a joint P-20 governance structure which includes early child. Florida's P-20 governance structure was implemented by constitutional amendment and solidified with the Florida

Education Governance Reorganization Act of 2000.

In comparison, New York's P-20 education system was implemented by state statute charging the governance of the public schools to the state education department. In comparison, Idaho convened a K-20 governance structure excluding primary learning. Pennsylvania created a P-20 governance structure implemented by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. The four states created this approach to better articulate student learning through curriculum, collaboration, and planning.

Institutional Policies and Initiatives

Evolving changes in legislative purposes for college acceleration initiatives required innovative approaches to providing services for incoming freshman students. Collegial relationships with K-12 and community college institutions were required to provide a closer collaboration to accomplish requirements of Senate Bill 1908 initiatives. As a result, student affairs professionals extended outreach efforts to recruit and heighten awareness of college opportunities within Florida's K-12 institutions. As students in need of remediation matriculated into community college programs, there was an increased need for developing incoming freshman students.

Incoming freshman students require development and mentorship as they acclimate to instruction in the higher education setting. Serving underrepresented populations requires higher education professionals who understand the dynamics of the populations whom they serve. Students transitioning from secondary education require personal development and direction for their aspirations and goals. The changing needs of servicing underrepresented populations created a greater need for student professionals in community colleges to facilitate the transition of secondary students into the higher education learning setting. Community colleges in Florida

developed various initiatives to impact the transition from learning in a secondary institution to transitioning to newly admitted freshman student.

Community Colleges

Historically, the mission of the community college was to serve as a platform of remediation for students underprepared for the rigor of postsecondary education. The open-door policy of community colleges increased opportunities for students in need of remediation to complete and transfer to universities and attain a bachelor's degree. The evolution of community colleges has expanded beyond remediation to opportunities for students to receive four-year degrees (Floyd & Walker, 2009). Community colleges have transformed their institutions into baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. Although some institutions have increased their capacity to address the increasing demand for education in our nation through becoming four-year-degree-granting institutions, the community college has a specific place in K-20 education. Specifically, community colleges provide accelerated learning options for students in high school and the institutions expanded the vision of our nation in providing equal access for all per 1008.30(4)(a), Florida Statutes, and Rule 6A-10.0315, F.A.C.,. The focus of community colleges has changed over time, isolating the institutions from the initial purpose of remedial education beyond grade 12.

The increased need for the remedial education of students entering college presented a serious need for the re-evaluation of the exodus of graduating high school students. The growing phenomenon of students exiting high school without the academic resilience to succeed and attain a degree created an epidemic in need of reversal. Community colleges serve a large percentage of low-income, ethnic-minority, and first-generation college students. Addressing issues of remediation prior to high

school completion increases the capacity of minority groups to gain the critical skills necessary for postsecondary education.

Senate Bill 2682 (2009) revised the primary mission of the community colleges to include upper level instruction and included awarding baccalaureate degrees as authorized by state law. Exacerbating the current trend for graduating students underprepared for postsecondary education is the enormous academic achievement gap in minority students. Both have been attributed to student attrition in minority students.

Awareness of Postsecondary Entrance Expectations

Educators are misinformed concerning the level of reading ability required for students to continue their studies in college. The lack of information concerning the importance of student reading mastery and college-level reading expectations serves as a misfortune for students. Cox, Friensner, and Khayum (2003) discuss longitudinal study findings that under-prepared students are greatly adversely affected by the lack of appropriate preparation in reading. Furthermore, students who are lacking in reading skills are the most affected. Children who were in remedial reading courses were over 60 percent more likely also to have a deficiency in math. Whereas students who were deficient in math were 42 percent more likely to have a deficiency in reading, the students who were deficient in reading had a higher likelihood to have deficiencies in other areas. The linkage to underperforming readers and poor academic performance in additional areas of study is critically high for math (Cox, Friensner, & Khayum, 2003). The increasing numbers of students entering college with deficiencies is causing higher institutions to develop additional college remedial courses in reading and other subject

areas that require reading of difficult text for postsecondary students (Cox, Friensner, & Khayum, 2003).

Community Colleges Redefined

Historically, the mission of the community college was to serve as a platform of remediation for students underprepared for the rigor of postsecondary education. The open door policy of community colleges increased opportunities for students in need of remediation to complete and transfer to universities and attain a bachelor's degree. The evolution of community colleges has expanded beyond remediation to opportunities for students to receive four year degrees. Community colleges have by transforming their institutions into baccalaureate degree granting institutions. Although some institutions have increased their capacity to address the increasing demand for education in our nation through becoming 4 year degree granting institutions, the community college has a specific place in K-20 education. Specifically, community colleges provide accelerated learning options for students in high school and the institutions expanded the vision of our nation in providing equal access for all. The focus of community colleges has changed over time, isolating the institutions from the initial purpose of remedial education beyond grade 12.

The increased need for remedial education of students entering college posed a serious need for re-evaluation of the exodus of graduating high school students. The growing phenomenon of students exiting high school without the academic resilience to succeed and attain a degree created an epidemic in need of reversal (Gulley & Mullendore, 2014). Community colleges serve a large percentage of low income, ethnic-minority, and first generation college students. Addressing issues of remediation prior to high school completion increases the capacity of minority groups to gain critical

skills necessary for postsecondary education. Florida, has encountered over 60 percent of graduating high school seniors in need of remediation during the freshman year in college. Exacerbating the current trend to graduating students underprepared for postsecondary education is the enormous academic achievement gap in minority students. Both have attributed to student attrition in minority students.

State Efforts to Address Postsecondary Readiness

Movement Towards College Readiness

College readiness initiatives required K-12 school districts to collaborate with postsecondary sectors to create aligned curriculum measures in preparation for postsecondary study. This collaboration is based on the necessity for K-12 and higher education leaders to have vertical planning for student access through the K-20 education pipeline. College readiness benchmarks for ACT testing for students tested in 2009 consisted of academic proficiency in college curriculum areas of English composition, college algebra, social sciences, and biology (ACT, 2009). There was a mismatch between high school exit requirements and testing requirements for college admission. The curriculum disconnect hinders students from entering higher education opportunities as a result of low performance on college admission testing requirements and the inability to progress through degree completion. As a direct result of the disjuncture between K-12 exit assessments and college entrance assessments, students completed high school without necessary academic proficiency for college level coursework. Critical barriers to student success were the disconnection between secondary and postsecondary education systems. The educational systems must be conducive to operations that support student academic success. Aligning these systems

require a multifaceted approach of systematic collaboration between educational sectors and curriculum alignment.

College Readiness and Participation Legislation in Texas

Texas has created legislation which specifically targets four areas of performance for postsecondary education. Each of the strands of legislation was designed to increase completion of high school and create an awareness of postsecondary opportunities and preparation for college success. Texas legislature created a joint legislature funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation targeting the re-design of the high school completion model. The initiative was designed to increase high school completion amongst students in Texas. The initial legislative measures created in Texas were the creation of the P-16 council. The council was developed to create continuity in planning for education between education systems in the Texas education system. An additional measure enacted by Texas in 2003, which served as a joint public and private venture aimed at increasing graduation rates and preparing students for college and career success, was the Texas Graduation Project.

College Readiness and Participation Legislation in Kentucky

Kentucky legislators enacted several legislative actions under state senate bill 1. For example, Senate Bill 1 section (2) and (13) (2009) designated a process to change state content standards in all core academic subject areas to create increased preparedness in K-12 students for postsecondary education. This legislation was implemented to develop academic standards which increased depth and masterly learning needed for college success. Additionally, the legislation was designed to increase collaboration between elementary, secondary, and post-secondary faculty. A

critical component of the legislation is aimed at a plan to disseminate the standards to all stakeholders, the legislation reads as follows:

During the revision process the department shall consider standards that have been adopted by national content advisory groups and professional education consortia. Using a variety of strategies and technologies, the proposed revisions to the academic content standards shall be widely disseminated throughout the state to elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education faculty and administrators, parents, citizens, private professionals in the content areas, and others for comment and recommendations. The results of the revision process shall ensure that the specifications in paragraph (b) of this subsection are met. (Senate Bill 1, 2009)

Kentucky legislation outlined the plan to create a stream of legislation designed to better prepare students in Kentucky for postsecondary. Critical to the purpose of Senate Bill 1 legislation is the plan to disseminate information to stakeholders to provide an awareness of the curriculum changes in the new legislation.

College Readiness and Participation Legislation in Illinois

Several areas of legislation were enacted in Chicago to increase participation in postsecondary institutions. Senate Bill 1883, Collaborative Baccalaureate Degree Program was implemented to create more opportunities for upper division course work and bachelor degree programs. The purpose of the legislation is to provide more geographic locations for degree programs. Illinois legislators enacted Senate Bill 858 (2007), which created the College and Career Readiness Pilot Program. This program was intended to provide remedial coursework in during the student's senior year in high school. In addition to providing remedial coursework to students during the 12th grade year in high school, the intent of the legislation was to align high school and postsecondary curriculum. Further, the program served as a means to identify postsecondary readiness and placement for advanced courses.

College Readiness and Participation in Colorado

Colorado enacted House Bill 1057 (2005) which focused on communicating the college readiness opportunities available for students in Colorado. The legislation required communication to all parents of eighth grade public school students concerning postsecondary requirements, opportunities, and needed remediation for students interested in attending postsecondary institutions of learning. The parent notification communicates the courses offered by the district that satisfies Colorado's higher education admission guidelines. Additionally, the notification required to parents focuses on four areas to include: (1) completion of the listed courses are necessary but does not guarantee admission to state university; (2) a student may need remediation prior to admission to a respective institution; (3) student who fails a course may complete a remedial course to satisfy the higher education admission requirement; (4) availability of financial aid (4) Tuition cost and similar cost associated with tuition of state institutions. The critical determinant in Colorado's policy is that the legislation provides communication regarding the states availability of college readiness opportunities. This legislation communicates to families' financial aid opportunities available.

State Level Reforms Towards College Readiness

Roderick, Nagoka, and Coca (2009) determined that policy makers must implement educational policies that prepare students for postsecondary education. Critical methods to prepare students for college are conceptualized through the implementation of college readiness standards in the K-12 curriculum. Conley (2007) determined that implementing curriculum measures to align K-12 standards and higher education entrance expectations provides students clear expectations for admittance for postsecondary study. The appropriate measures of college readiness is developed in

students through implementation of four required sets of skills: content knowledge, core academic skills, behavioral skills, and college knowledge (Conley, 2007). The composite of the four skills builds students' foundational, analytic thinking, reading, and understanding of postsecondary requirements required for academic success.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education conducted a study which concluded that aligned state policy increases readiness for postsecondary education (SREB, 2010). Furthermore, lack of readiness contributes to lower college graduation rates as a direct result of the absence of postsecondary readiness. Although students are able to gain admission into college, they are not successful in their postsecondary coursework. The central theme of the study was based on the notion that states must move forward to a comprehensive college readiness focus in order to better prepare students for postsecondary education. The components of the College Readiness Model are as follows: readiness standards, assessments, curriculum, teacher development, college placement, and state-level accountability. The primary instruments of change of the state agenda are comprehensive state initiatives and policies designed to mold the students' experiences through high school and ultimately to college.

First-generation college students and low-income students have struggled to gain access to postsecondary institutions due to a lack of educational expectations, academic preparation, parental support, and financial support (Reid & Moore, 2008). Different challenges exist for students whose parents attended college and for first-generation college students. Students who are first in their families to attend college were the central information sources for determining requirements for entrance into

postsecondary institutions. In most cases, the students' parents did not have knowledge of the process as a result of not attending college. The missing element of a "college-going culture" created in families is due to the absence of college completion as an expectation for low-income students and students of color. As a direct result of the absence of the expectation for attending college, K-12 institutions are charged with the responsibility of creating a "college-going culture" in schools beginning with a student's academic learning experience as early elementary education. In family structures in which college attendance is an expectation, the dream of postsecondary education is established as an expectation, and continual preparation for the aspiration is engrained in the students' expectations.

K-20 Academic Remediation

The learning experiences in K-12 education have historically neglected to remediate student learning deficiencies prior to entering college (ACT, 2009). Although our nation's graduating seniors' aspirations for postsecondary education have increased, their aspirations for college failed to translate into higher rates of degree completion (Roderick, Nagoka, & Coca, 2009). Students aspire to attain a college degree, yet complete high school without the necessary skills for college success and degree attainment. The measure between aspiration and attainment, named the aspiration-attainment gap, is the difference that exists between student aspirations for postsecondary education and the disparities in college readiness for K-12 students. The disparities in college readiness and student access have historically served as a barrier for first-year college students (ACT, 2009).

Education as a Comprehensive System

A major component of education reform is a view of education in the United States as a comprehensive education system. The comprehensive education system approaches education as a holistic unit, rather than separate parts. College readiness is implemented during a student's K-12 years of academic instruction. A subset of the populations that receive readiness instruction is unable to progress through the system properly (Ranis & Stein, 2008). Students in the pipeline have difficulty at certain stages of learning with mastering grade-level curriculum expectations during K-12 instruction.

ACT (2009) discussed the strategies for improving college readiness in high school students as to implement six policies: essential standards implementation, common expectations, clear performance standards, rigorous high school courses, early monitoring and prevention, and data- driven decision making. The composite of these areas provides students with focused academic standards, college-level coursework, aligned curriculum, and assessments that expose areas of academic deficiencies prior to college enrollment. There was a mismatch between high school exit requirements and testing requirements for college admission, which causes academic struggle with acclimation into rigorous postsecondary study.

In comparison, Baker, Clay, and Gratama (2005) determined that college readiness consists of college awareness, college eligibility, and college preparation. The three areas of college readiness are developed over the course of the students' academic experience beginning in middle school and proceeding through the high school years. Communication concerning college opportunities, financial aid, and the entire facet of college life should be articulated to parents and students of college-bound students.

The K-20 College Pipeline for Disadvantage Populations

The experience for disadvantaged, low-economic, and minority student populations is a pathway with additional barriers to degree completion. The social support system for disadvantaged students is critical to the success of the student. Risk factors for student academic performance include low socio-economic status, dropping out, participation in violent activities, neglect, and poverty. These risk factors exacerbate the students' challenges in the mastery of skills necessary for postsecondary education and serves as problematic for student aspirations (Burley et al., 2010). The challenge of properly preparing disadvantaged students can be eased by providing students learning opportunities that equal the "playing field" for students with equitable instructional resources (Schott Foundation, 2010). Specifically, the basis of the theory of equalized instructional resources is based on the research of the Schott Foundation, which noted four areas critical to student success: high-quality early childhood education, highly qualified instructors in a K-12 setting, college preparatory curricula for college and work, and equitable instructional resources. The four areas of emphasis measured the opportunity to learn of disadvantaged populations. A major contributing factor to the under-preparedness of disadvantaged populations is quantified by the Opportunity to Learn Index.

Several factors help to substantiate the risk factors and challenges of students as they travel through the educational pipeline, including support from family, friends, teachers, and community. This support system assists students with increased academic performance and serves as a motivator for academic success. Conley determined that the most critical element to college preparation for minority students and students of color is creating an expectation of success in postsecondary education.

This expectation for success begins with the students' support structure. In particular, parental and family support serves as a basis for dissemination of critical information concerning college entrance requirements and availability of financial aid. Furthermore, students from families with higher incomes generally have a higher rate of completion than students who come from homes with lower incomes.

Open-access institutions such as community colleges allow disadvantaged populations to gain admission into postsecondary institutions. However, the pathway to degree completion is difficult for low-income and minority students. Nearly 45 percent of students entering community college fail to complete the degree within six years of beginning the degree program (Kurlaender & Long, 2009).

Curriculum Alignment & Common Core

A major reform effort induced by federal legislation was the Common Core Initiative. This reform method was as a tool to encourage states to adopt more rigorous standards of learning for kindergarten through twelfth grades students in an effort to better prepare students for the academic rigor required for postsecondary study (Mathis, 2010). The goal of the legislation is to promote every student graduating from high school, "college and career ready", meaning students will be able to complete postsecondary coursework with achievable success. Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang (2011) noted that there were curriculum shifts in core subject areas of English, Math, and Language Arts which were widely adopted in state policy. The shifts were focused on regulating the content taught and not the particular strategies utilized to the curricula. These content shifts were explicit in detail aimed at alignment of coursework to college entrance expectations in terms of student skills and understanding of the content. In

comparison, determined that there is no evidence that Common Core Standards will remediate and close the academic achievement gap for students (Zhao, 2009).

K-20 Collaboration and Planning

Initially K-12 and postsecondary institutions planned in silos, neglecting to address critical issues between the educational divide of both sectors (Kirst & Usdan, 2007). Collaboration and planning between state educational agencies were non-existent, creating educational policies that systematically failed to connect to college readiness standards (Conley, 2007). Collaboration barriers between state education agencies were exacerbated by the absence of a longitudinal data system, which linked critical state agency data systems (Data Quality Campaign, 2008). State education agencies and policy makers hearkened to national goals to produce higher percentages of college graduates and ready workforce by transitioning to an integrated system of learning (AASCU, 2010). State education agencies implemented policies aimed at re-aligning curriculum and creating a closer collaboration with postsecondary institutions of learning. The integrated governance system allowed for closer working relationships between educational departments, sectors, and agencies at both K-12 and higher education levels.

Federal Legislation

Regardless of the system each state chooses, each system serves a common goal of integrating to systems of learning and increasing access to postsecondary education (ECS, 2006). Critical methods to prepare students for college are conceptualized through the implementation of college readiness standards in the K-12 curriculum. Implementing curriculum measures to align K-12 standards and higher education entrance expectations provide students with the necessary academic tools for

rigorous postsecondary education curricula. College readiness is developed in students through the implementation of four required sets of skills, including content knowledge, core academic skills, behavioral skills, and college knowledge. The composite of the four skills builds students' foundational, analytic thinking, reading, and understanding of postsecondary requirements required for academic success.

Strategies for improving college readiness in high school students involve the implementation of six policies to include essential standards implementation, common expectations, clear performance standards, rigorous high school courses, early monitoring and prevention, and data-driven decision making (Conger & Tell, 2007). The composite of these areas provides students with focused academic standards, college-level coursework, aligned curriculum, and assessments that expose areas of academic deficiencies prior to college enrollment. College readiness consists of college awareness, college eligibility, and college preparation. The three areas of college readiness are developed over the course of the student's academic experience beginning in middle school and proceeding through the high school years.

Communication concerning college opportunities, financial aid, and the entire facet of college life should be articulated to parents and students of college-bound students.

Impact of Politics on P-20 Education

Marginson (2010) determined that the political sphere of influence on education is largely impacted by national government. In evaluating the United States and the current movement towards deeper educational accountability, consideration must be given to these factors of influence. Further, Marginson (2010) determined this press towards globalization, which refers to internalization of goods, services, money, people, and ideas has developed an impact creating limits through the politics in education. In

reflecting on issues relative to increasing participation, consideration must be given to issues the invisibly impact the progress of decisions which directly impact the decisions which control levers of influence in terms of college attainment.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate legislative policies which impacted postsecondary readiness and participation for students of color in Florida. The study evaluated education policies proposed by state legislators to make postsecondary education more accessible and attainable for minority students. Specifically, this study evaluated and reported legislative language utilized in education policy as it related to college readiness and participation for minority students. Legislators enacted education policies that increased vertical articulation between education departments, K-20 education curricula, and collaboration between education sectors. The researcher utilized this information to determine what measures Florida enacted to impact African American postsecondary readiness and participation opportunities in higher education.

Florida's measures to create an articulated system of governance were purposed to create policy levers to reform student academic performance in K-20 education. African-American students underperformed in areas of mathematics and reading in comparison to white students, resulting in an academic achievement gap. The consistent underperformance in academic areas for minority students posed a challenge to policy makers to create legislation to address issues related to academic success for disadvantaged students. This study analyzed and categorized legislation which impacted minority student's experiences and transitions in the K-20 education pipeline in Florida. Based on the Permeability and Transparency Framework, our study is centered in reporting Florida's legislative efforts to create postsecondary opportunities for minority students in the K-20 education pipeline.

In order to frame the study, the researcher situated the education policies evaluated in this study in the Permeability and Transparency Framework. This framework was selected as an effective measure to report and classify policies which shape minority students' learning experiences in the K-20 education pipeline in the state of Florida. The research method utilized for this study was a policy study. The study evaluated education policy enacted during the 13 year time period of 1999 through 2012. The researcher categorized legislation based on an analysis of the legislative language and intent of the education policy. Stephan & Rosenbaum (2009) determined that the constructs of the postsecondary education system could be characterized by how educational policies shape the pathways of students into and through higher education based on two aspects, namely permeability and transparency(Sykes, Snider, & Plank, 2009).

Transparency and Permeability framework is derived from the school-to-work transition in which Hamilton analyzed the relationship that exists between higher education sector and the labor market. Furthermore, Hamilton characterizes this relationship, identifying two key areas of permeability and transparency. Hamilton defines transparency as the ease of transition to move between the education system and the labor market. Conversely, permeability describes how well students can plot a course from where they are to their future goals. Stephan and Rosenbaum (2009) extended Hamilton's model by depicting that this framework could also be applied as it relates to higher education policies which impact a student's decision for postsecondary participation and making decisions concerning the future aspirations.

The study initiated an overview of Florida's re-construction from the previous separated structure of K-12 and higher education systems to an integrated K-20 education governance structure. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed academic policy which reflected Florida's efforts to create legislation which aimed to increase students' academic performance. The transition from K-12 to postsecondary education is known as the educational pipeline and is defined as a student's progression through grade levels into postsecondary education. Ultimately, the goal of the transition is student attainment of a postsecondary degree. The research focused on specific policies which shape the students' transition from high school to college.

Research Questions

This study was designed to analyze the following questions:

1. What state legislation and initiatives did Florida enact to increase postsecondary participation and readiness for students of color?
2. What extent was Florida's education policies Transparent and Permeable in terms of college readiness and participation for minority students?
3. What trends in college participation and readiness were existent for students of color in Florida?

Methodology

Glesne (2006) determined that qualitative research methods are designed to understand a social phenomenon. Bloomberg (2008) determined that the methodology refers to an approach to logistical, relational, ethical, and credibility issues. Specifically, the methods refer to a specific set of techniques, procedures, or tools used by researchers to prepare and analyze data. The study consisted of a policy analysis of education policy related to college readiness and participation for students of color in Florida. The researcher retrieved relevant legislation from 1999-2012 from the Florida

Department of Education department of governmental relations online legislation website and the Education Commission of the State's Education Policy database. In addition, the researcher utilized internet searches to retrieve original legislative bills to review legislative language in the respective bill proposed and/or enacted for legislation included in this document. The researcher selected research related to all aspects of K-20 education legislation aimed at increasing performance, readiness, and participation for minority students. Relevant legislation was categorized into two categories based on the Permeability and Transparency Framework. Legislation which sought to create a clear path towards postsecondary attainment were classified as transparent legislation. Alternatively, legislation which communicated a clear path towards postsecondary education attainment were classified as permeable legislation.

In analyzing the scope and the guiding questions leading the research study, it was determined that a multi-tiered research theoretical approach would best frame the research study. For the basis of this study, we view policies in terms of three prevailing ideas of permeability, transparency, and social capital. We utilize the permeability and transparency framework to situate policies along these dimensions. Haddad (1995) defined a policy as an explicit or implicit single decision or a group of decisions which may set our directives for guiding future decisions. For the purpose of this study, the evaluation consisted of a series of policies designed in Florida to improve the postsecondary readiness of students. The study focuses on the impact of the policies on minority students and students of color in their transition from high school to college. The study was situated within the Permeability and Transparency Framework, which provided an overview of current legislative mandates and initiatives which dictated the

ease of transition between education sectors for students of color and underrepresented students. Florida enacted various legislation designed to form a comprehensive K-20 education system which aimed to better prepare students for postsecondary education through curriculum alignment, planning, and collaboration between education sectors, agencies, and departments. The measure to create this alignment was implemented through various legislation and preparing initiatives aimed at providing a deeper collaboration between education sectors. Additionally, this work is a policy study which examines measures designed to address postsecondary readiness, access, and student success of students in Florida.

Overview of the Method

The methodology utilized to conduct this study is a policy analysis of pertinent documents, legislation, and correspondence review of relevant legislation of minority access and participation in postsecondary education. Patton (1993) determined that a policy study is attained through a six-step process to include: Problem Identification, Establishment of Evaluation Criteria, Identification and Evaluation of alternative policies, Displaying alternative policies and Selecting the preferred policy and implement the preferred policy. Patton determined that this process was a way to perform a basic and practical analysis of a given policy issue.

The data utilized in this study consisted of a relevant review of policies which attribute directly and indirectly to the participation and readiness of minority students. The researcher selected policies for this research from 13 years of legislation used a method to address student academic performance in preparation for college admission and access to postsecondary institutions. This compilation of documents, legislation, memorandums, and similar information pertaining measures enacted by the state of

Florida to impact students of color were used to analyze trends of a comprehensive education system for the purpose of increasing college readiness, access, and student success among students in Florida. Progression is determined by legislative initiatives and the language of existing policies incorporating grade levels of educational attainment of all levels of learning, to include early learning (pre-kindergarten), elementary school, middle school, high school, and postsecondary education. The guidelines of this study are based on Majchrzak guidelines for policy research (Majchrzak, 1984). Majchrzak defines a focused synthesis as a policy research method involving the selective review and integration of information relevant to particular research questions. The focused synthesis is a selective review of a variety of written materials which pertain to an essential research question. The research question guides the study; in particular, the research question of this study determines the movement of Florida's creation of a K-20 governance structure.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Hamilton (1994) discussed the relationship between the education system and the workforce based on two key areas of permeability and transparency. The basis of Hamilton's research stemmed from his prior work in analyzing the labor market in Germany. The framework focuses on two elements of permeability and transparency of the workforce and higher education system for students transitioning from high school into employment or postsecondary education.

Background of the Study

The legislative initiatives for the implementation of cross-sector education planning began in 1999 and systematically continued until the full implementation of the K-20 structure. Restructure of state agencies of all educational sectors included

elementary, middle school, high school, and postsecondary institutions. Florida's progression towards one systematic education governance structure reaffirmed the role of the 28 community colleges with high schools by reconnecting the community curriculum into secondary study beginning with the 11th grade school year. Students who express the intent to pursue postsecondary education are provided remediation during the 12th grade school year. The essential guiding focus of this study is the analysis of the formation of a K-20 model of education for the intent of producing more college-prepared students. The cross-sector planning and collaboration approach to student learning helped to improve student academic achievement. Multiple approaches have been created for states to develop initiatives for creating collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary education; however, a fully integrated educational system contains the best options for students to receive collaborative educational services from early learning to graduate study. This model includes a seamless reporting system for students which allows better tracking of student progress over time, ultimately creating easy access for information concerning students' academic growth and performance. Florida has progressed through these phases as it completed legislative initiatives targeted to the restructuring of current education sectors, incorporating school code modification, and streamlined data systems integrated with all education sectors. The aforementioned legislative initiatives assisted Florida with establishing a fully integrated K-20 education system.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Several research methods were analyzed to determine the appropriate framework for the study. The most appropriate method for the study was based on a multi-tiered framework as an approach to exploring how K-20 education policy shapes

minority students' pathways through postsecondary education. The goal of the study is to understand how K-20 policy impacts minority students' postsecondary experiences. The framework of the study follows the two dimensions of permeability and transparency. The element of permeability refers to the ease of movement from one point to the next in the K-20 continuum (Stephan & Rosenbaum, 2009). In comparison, transparency is the extent to which students can see an attainable goal through the educational system and plan a path to their future goals and aspirations. The frame was utilized to determine the impact of K-20 policy on minority students' educational experiences in the state of Florida.

The framework was used to consider three areas of K-20 education policy: college readiness, college access, and postsecondary success. Postsecondary success is determined by a student attaining the postsecondary degree of study. The study is a combination of a legislative policy study and case study for the state of Florida. Revisiting the purpose and scope of the research, the goal of the study was to analyze public policy as it related to postsecondary readiness, access, and success for minority students in the state of Florida. The purpose of the study was to evaluate legislation enacted to increase students' postsecondary degree completion.

Stokey and Zechauer (1978) determined that the initial step in policy analysis is to determine a plan of attack or a framework for policy analysis. The plan of attack must articulate the context of the problem of the study. Specifically, the framework must structure the study to establish the context of the underlying issues of the research topic.

The study is a policy study situated within the Permeability and Transparency Framework. The key components of the framework evolved from the work of Stephen Hamilton, analyzing the experiences of students transitioning from high school to the workforce. Additionally, the framework defined two elements, one of which is permeability, which exposed blockages of the pathway toward attaining gainful employment. Specifically, the study aimed to define the pathway of students from completing high school and the challenges students faced in attaining employment after completing postsecondary education. This school-to-work framework analyzed the feasibility of the students in both completing secondary education and attaining gainful employment after high school completion.

Stephen and Rosenbaum (2009) furthered the framework to conceptualize a more generalized approach to researching the experiences of students as they transition between education sectors to postsecondary education. In addition, they concluded that the framework could be utilized in flexible terms to measure the educational transition of students to postsecondary education. The study characterized the relationship of higher education in the United States as a comprehensive unit as opposed to viewing education in separate sectors. A comprehensive view of education was the basis of the approach to the study, thus allowing the researcher to frame the conceptual framework under the view of education as a holistic unit. The prevailing concept throughout the study was derived from Hamilton's research of pathways that students migrate through during a student's academic experiences.

Permeability is defined as the ease of movement from one point in education to another (Stephen & Rosenbaum, 2009). Transparency is defined as the feasibility for

students to progress through the education system and the attainment of the students' aspirations or goals. In this study, permeability is the ease of transition of minority students from high school to college. The study analyzes enacted college readiness, access, and success legislation and the legislative impact on minority students embarking on postsecondary education. Transparency is determined to be the communication of the availability of postsecondary opportunities.

Multiple theoretical approaches were analyzed to determine the most appropriate framework for the K-20 education policy study. The study combines portions of two major frameworks to form a comprehensive approach to evaluating education policy which forms a student's experience in the K-20 education pipeline. The conceptual framework for this research in K-20 education combines both the permeability and transparency framework and the student success framework. The combination of the two models provides a comprehensive approach to evaluating K-20 education policy.

The study examines the pathway to college, which includes two key elements: postsecondary readiness and access for students of color. This study provides a framework that focuses on a comprehensive approach to education. Specifically, the cornerstone of the model is based on the premise that a student's academic experience is comprehensive and is a continuum of experiences that lead to college degree attainment. Federal and state policy impacts and forms the experiences of students within the education system pipeline; thus the study is based on the following concepts:

- Policies which shaped students' experiences in the educational pipeline in Florida.
- State and federal policies which shape the experiences of minority students in Florida.

Data Sources

For the purpose of this study, the researcher utilized the Education Commission of the States Policy Database, which provided information concerning specific policy measures for all 50 of states in the United States. The researcher utilized the policy database to research policy measures for various topics of K-20 education policy. Additionally, the researcher cross-referenced information with the Florida Department of Education government relations policy resources. The policy documentation was gathered for legislative years spanning 1999 through 2012. Additionally, the researcher accessed digital copies of proposed and enacted legislation within the context of participation and readiness for students of color.

Procedures

The procedures used to conduct this research are derived from Majchrzak (1984) as they relate to this study specific policies related to participation and postsecondary readiness in Florida. This research includes a policy study which analyzed Florida's legislation which proposed an extensive education reform. College readiness was defined by the minimum scores on the ACT and SAT college entrance exams. Trends of SAT and ACT scores of Florida's students were analyzed utilizing using the College Board's and ACT's college preparedness equivalency scores. Florida's efforts for unification are analyzed through official planning and organizing documents, Florida Senate Bills, Florida School Codes, and legislative initiatives set forth to create a unified K-20 governance structure.

Theory and Rationale

Majchrzak (1984) determined that the essential guiding focus of a policy study is to determine the key policy issues of the study and to trace the progress of change

efforts of the study. Unified education has evolved from a variety of dispositions, which in some cases includes early learning with K-12 education to incorporating community college which marks the beginning of considerations for incorporating doctoral study in P-20 learning format. There are six prevailing models of unified education, which reflects the incorporation of some educational levels of learning or inclusion of all levels for a completely integrated learning model.

Conceptualizations

The basis of this study is established upon the view of education as a comprehensive structure. Within the confines of the structure, higher education policy efforts impact student achievement. The study is designed to explore how higher education policies assist minority students and underserved population's progress through the education pipeline and matriculate into postsecondary education. More importantly, the ideology is based on a comprehensive model of college readiness, access, and success of the Permeability and Transparency Framework. Venezia (2005) determined that the greatest emphasis is incorrectly imposed on postsecondary admission, neglecting to address issues of readiness and postsecondary success.

The purpose of connecting educational disjuncture is to provide students with an enhanced meaningful learning experience, which allows for each organizational part to receive communication concerning learning expectations for students. Florida's creation of the K-20 system of learning progressed from re-organization of education departments and creation of a plan for alignment of the established K-12 and higher education curriculum. The onset of this initiative began with the definition of the strategic initiatives set forth by Florida's strategic plans to create a seamless K-20 learning system. The plan evolved into action through the creation of Senate Bill 1908 to

determine Florida's effectiveness in graduating college-ready students and meeting postsecondary entrance expectations.

Student academic preparation for post-secondary education mandates for students to complete high school with the skills necessary for the academic rigor required for higher education. Movement towards integrating educational agencies involved developing collaborative planning and state legislation to connect educational agencies in terms of curriculum, planning, and communication which governs educational agencies. Florida began to progress towards a unified education model through developing legislation to include pre-school, elementary, middle, high, and postsecondary schools into centralized planning and collaboration. Critical measures were placed into action to bring all of the educational departments and agencies together to collaborate and develop educational policies that coincide between agencies. To achieve unification, legislative initiatives must guide the process of transforming the previous disjointed system into a new unified K-20 system of learning. Florida made progress towards unification through enacting laws and initiatives, which address areas of academic preparation, course credit alignment, and inclusion of pre-school programs in early preparation.

Operationalization

The measurement of concepts for this study was derived from both the literature review and state data sets of student performance on college entrance examinations as outlined in Florida State Statute. The elements of the study outlined state legislative efforts to restructure education governance, increase organizational collaboration, and align K-20 curriculum for optimum student learning. The K-20 governance structure was

selected by Florida as a mechanism to increase the number of students who complete high school and graduate prepared for postsecondary education or the workforce.

The College Readiness Revolution

ACT determined that over 70 percent of high school graduates tested in 2010 were underprepared for postsecondary education measured by college readiness benchmarks (ACT, 2010). Although the percent of students meeting all four benchmarks improved by 1 percentage point in 2009, there was a considerable percentage of students graduating without the skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education. Federal legislators enacted mandates which required state accountability for education standards in the K-12 system. This movement towards standards-based education served as a precursor for education overhaul initiatives. The recurring phenomenon of students graduating from secondary institutions underprepared for rigorous postsecondary study resulted in an expansion of initial standards-based education. State legislators began to evaluate various methods of connecting education sectors. Legislators proposed initiatives that increase coherency between grade-level transitions for secondary and postsecondary students (Spence, 2009). As a result, state education agencies began to re-evaluate and modify K-12 curriculum to make transitions toward aligning instructional standards with post-secondary entrance requirements.

Profile of Data Sources

The data for this study was provided by the Florida Department of Education and the Education Commission of the States database. The research was retrieved from the two databases to guide the researcher's search of related policies of college readiness and participation of students of color. Florida was selected for this study for its notoriety

for its K-12 and higher education reform efforts and its stance as a national model for college readiness. The information was gathered by utilizing the Florida Department of Education's analysis of state policy for the 1999 through 2012 school years. The information regarding school district student readiness is available through access of their online resources on the department's website.

Method of Data Retrieval

The primary sources of information for this study were derived from the Florida Department of Education Government Relations and the Education Commission of the States database. The database stores legislative documentation for all 50 states regarding legislation, rules/regulation, and executive orders for each respective state in the United States. The researcher utilized the database to retrieve information related to enacted legislation by date, state, and topic, searching from 1999 to 2012. In addition to utilizing the database, the researcher retrieved the respective legislative laws, orders, and rulings from the Florida House of Representatives legislature and The Florida State Senate database. First, it was vital to ensure that the information from the national database reporting from Education Commission of the states included the current legislation for the state of Florida. The researcher verified that the legislation was correct through data retrieval of both the Senate and House of Representatives reporting databases. This information from the national database from the Education Commission of the States was all-inclusive for the 1999 through 2012 school years, providing specific policy information concerning each state by year, topic, and state.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The findings of this chapter reported a history of legislation proposed in Florida to increase the postsecondary participation and readiness of students of color. Florida legislators addressed issues of college access and preparedness through the implementation of legislation which reconstructed all education sectors into a K-20 governance structure. The intention of the legislation was to increase the quality of instruction and consolidate Florida's education departments into a streamlined education governance structure. Florida's proposed centralized governance structure aimed at consolidating resources, planning, and purposes to eliminate underperformance of student learning. Florida's students were underprepared for the rigors of postsecondary study, and there was an academic achievement gap between African American students and White students. The purpose of the new education system was to address both underperformance in all races of students in Florida and address underperformance for students of color. The new system proclaimed to provide a coherent learning experience for students in Florida, particularly minority students. Thus, the legislation was implemented to serve as an alternative to Florida's prior quota-based postsecondary admission practice, and rather serve as catalyst to incorporate a high standard of learning available to all students regardless of race.

The focus of the research was to evaluate Florida's education policies along two dimensions of the Permeability and Transparency Framework. Permeability refers to a student's ease of progression through the K-12 system into postsecondary education. Transparency refers to how clearly students can see the implications of their early education choices on future postsecondary choices. Additionally, transparency refers to

policy measures designed to increase communication to stakeholders concerning the skills necessary, opportunities, and resources available for students to matriculate into postsecondary education and the workforce. The model explains how well youth can plot a course from where they are currently to a distant future goal (Hamilton, 1994). The framework is based on Hamilton's (1994) premise that students follow a trajectory of postsecondary study or enter the workforce after the completion of high school. The researcher examined educational policies which impact minority students' decision to enter college after high school (Sykes, Schneider, & Plank, 2009). In particular, this study analyzes policy measures which increase student mobility into postsecondary education.

The researcher sorted Florida's education legislation related to participation and readiness into two categories. Category one reviewed relevant permeable legislation which impacted the ease of transition into postsecondary study. Legislation that fell within this category were policies which focused on curriculum alignment, early college initiatives, policy alignment, and similar policies which assist students with matriculating through pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade into college. The findings of policies in Florida which provided a permeable trajectory to postsecondary education through establishing specific legislature to build a K-20 system of governance were situated within this category. Based on the Permeability and Transparency Framework, this subgroup of education policies portray Florida's intentions to create policies which allow students to progress through the K-20 educational pipeline with the ease of transition through the educational sectors.

Permeability and Transparency Framework

Data Reporting Categories

The policies which were implemented to create a streamlined accountability system for K-20 education and polices which communicated the intention of the legislation were classified within two categories within the Permeability and Transparency Framework (Sykes, Schneider, & Plank, 2009). The initial category, permeability, reflected legislative efforts enacted to form Florida's combined governance structure. Legislation categorized within the transparency classification included legislative mandates which represented Florida's measures to increase communication levers between stakeholders and agencies to increase the mobility of students into postsecondary education. The researcher classified the respective legislation by analyzing the legislative language of the policy and categorizing the policies based on the intention of the legislation.

Reporting Category 1: Permeable Legislation

Reporting category 1 includes policies which were classified as legislation, thus creating a permeable system of education accountability. Legislation classified in this category included policies enacted to create an accountability system which is coherent and aligned for college entrance expectations. The first tier captured legislation designed to establish the alignment of resources, departments, and curriculum to become more suitable to college entrance expectations. This intent of this legislation was to connect resources to provide a more coherent learning experience between education sectors within the K-20 continuum. The development of policies with the connectedness of all aspects of the education continuum allowed for continuity between departments to create a coherent education experience for students within the

education pipeline. The legislation established a coherent governance structure which connected each educational sector, departments, and agencies.

Reporting category 2: Transparent legislation

Legislation classified within the transparency framework included legislation which provided communication and awareness concerning requirements for postsecondary access to stakeholders. Specifically, legislation that fell within the classification of transparent legislation referred to policies which assist students with seeing a path towards education attainment (Sykes, Schneider, & Plank, 2009). The intent of the legislation which fell into this category was to provide “college knowledge” to students, create awareness to stakeholders concerning postsecondary requirements and opportunities, and induce communication between education sectors concerning college readiness or attainment. Policies classified within the transparency context of the framework articulate the “message” of college readiness, access, and success between pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade into postsecondary education.

The End of the Post-Secondary Affirmative Action Era

One Florida Plan

The beginnings of a brand-new education governance structure came as a result of the end of the Affirmative Action Era for Florida. The implementation of Executive Order 99-281 (1999) developed as a result of Governor Jeb Bush’s directive to end affirmative action in state schools admission policies, government, and state contracting. The initiative progressed as a result of Governor Bush’s intentions to create an alternative to race-based preferences, known as “The One Florida Plan” (FDOE, 2002). This legislation would result in a newly formed initiative to unite Florida’s education system in terms of an education reform that would create equal opportunity for all

students. Implementation of the plan required racial preference in admission policies to diminish (Executive order 99-281, 1999). The new reforms that were expected to follow implementation of the One Florida Plan created equal access opportunities for all students in Florida. The intention of the legislation was to create policies which would align instruction in Florida to prepare all students regardless of race or status. Furthermore, this plan additionally increased need-based assistance. The update to the One Florida Plan stated as follows:

One Florida is an alternative to race-based preferences and quotas, not an alternative to affirmative action. One Florida is under the umbrella of affirmative action, but it is fair and equitable. Governor Bush sought to recognize the disparity of educational offerings across the K-12 system. Previously, schools were allowed to ignore the poor preparation of underrepresented students. In 1999, the Governor said: "...we have failed too many children... we have swept them under the rug." He said, "...false diversity—diversity that ignores hard work and performance—masks our failure to prepare students for success in higher education. Children in Florida's public education system, particularly from poor and minority communities, do not have equal educational opportunities for success." The One Florida Plan addresses the historical inequities in the education system. One Florida offers an infrastructure of coordinated programs to provide high quality educational offerings for all students (FDOE, 2002).

The update on the progress to the One Florida Plan outlined that the plan had achieved a level of success primarily due to increases in minority enrollment between 1999 and 2002. For example, the document stated that there was a relative 36 percent increase in full time college enrollment for minority students in the three-year span of the legislation's inception (FDOE, 2002 p.1). The document asserted that the legislation was an alternative specifically to race-based preferences and quotas and not an alternative to Affirmative Action itself. Governor Bush professed that the educational condition in Florida was given to a statewide climate of schools which ignored the poor college preparation of underrepresented students (Bush, 2013). Affirming the governor's

statement, the ACT (2012) projects that 18 percent of students completing the ACT exam were prepared for postsecondary education in all four areas of mathematics, English, science, and reading. Furthermore, Governor Bush discussed in an interview with NBC's Education Nation 2013 as follows:

Yeah, I would say that the states that have embraced robust accountability and have funded education, funded the things that are on the forefront of reform, have seen improvements. That we've seen learning gains in some parts of the country. But the gaps are huge. And there's a long way to go. There's no question that there's been some progress. But it's not enough to pause and celebrate. This is a long-term struggle (Bush, 2013).

Governor Bush (2013) expressed concerns that, although there has been progress in some academic areas, the gaps in performance of Florida's students are enormous. Additionally, the gaps between minorities and white students are considerably large and appear to remain consistent. ACT produced the five-year trends of students' composite academic performance scores for students of color. African-American students' scores have ranked consistently lowest among all races. ACT (2012) reported that the African-American five-year trend of postsecondary readiness in all 4 core assessment areas remained at an average of slightly over 16 percent (ACT, 2012). In comparison, white students scored at nearly 22 percent for the five-year period (ACT, 2012). The One Florida plan was a long-range solution to address the larger issue of Florida's need for accountability mechanisms to drive the instructional needs of all students in Florida.

One Florida plan expanded funding for students in Florida through the implementation of the Talented 20 program guaranteed to provide admission to the top 20 percent of students attending postsecondary institutions in Florida. The program was implemented under the One Florida legislation to encourage students to achieve ranking

in the 20 percent of their classes. In turn, students received priority consideration for state universities and need-based financial aid. The legislative language spelled out requirements for the program in Executive Order 99-281 (1999) as follows:

It is the policy of my Administration to support equal educational opportunities for all qualified Floridians, to prohibit discrimination in education because of race, gender, creed, color or national origin, and to promote the full realization of equal educational opportunities throughout the State. I hereby request that the Board of Regents implement a policy, prohibiting the use of racial or gender set-asides, preferences or quotas in admissions to all Florida institutions of Higher Education, effective immediately .The Office of Policy and Budget is hereby ordered to develop an implementation strategy for all other aspects of my Equity in Education Plan by December 31, 1999. (Executive Order 99-281, 1999)

Executive Order 99-281 specifically identifies that the requirements of the equal opportunities are for “qualified” Floridians. The legislative intent of the policy was to create additional opportunities for minority students and encourage students of color to continue high performance in their academic programs. For low-performing students, the requirements to meet the conditions of the programs would pose a challenge. In terms of minority students, this term referred to students with the academic ability to graduate with academic standing of performance in the top 20 percent of graduating students. The intent of the legislation was to implement equal opportunities for all individuals in terms of postsecondary education opportunities to all students regardless of race or gender. In implementation of the ban on Affirmative Action, proponents of the legislation propose that minority students have benefited from increased opportunities for admission into postsecondary institutions.

Florida Education Governance Reorganization Act of 2000

The passage of Florida Education Reorganization Act empowered the secretary of education as the Chief Transition Officer to ensure a smooth transition to the

formation of the new Board of Education. Governor Charlie Crist and the Florida Board of Education created a partnership to prepare the transition to the new K-20 structure. The new partnership, called, “The Partnership for Success” was formed to assist with the new transition to the new K-20 system (Florida Department of Education, 2001). The partnership consisted of agreements to complete joint decisions on personnel, create a timeline for implementation, communication, budget planning, collaboration on operational decisions, and coordination of public appearances regarding education.

Florida has undertaken a monumental task in reorganizing what may be the largest segment of government. Working with Commissioner Crist, I know we will successfully accomplish the transition to a new way of doing business for Florida’s students. Secretary Jim Horne (FDOE, 2001).

The new way of doing business involved collaboration to meet the goals of the Education Governance Reorganization Implementation Act. The mission was to create a seamless student-centered K-20 structure, plan a unified K-20 education budget, and rewrite the Florida School Code. The re-written code was mandated to reflect the focus of the new K-20 structure. Florida Statue 1008.31 (b) defined the requirements of the State Board of Education to create a K-20 accountability system as follows:

The State Board of Education is statutorily required to establish a single K-20 Education Accountability System that is a unified system with multiple components including, but not limited to, measures of yearly adequate progress, individual student learning gains in public schools, school grades, and return on investment. The Legislature retains authority to approve an accountability system and establish performance funding through substantive legislation and appropriations. (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

The new accountability structure combined departmental decisions, created joint communications between Department of Education departments, joint budget planning, periodic discussions of operational decisions, and integrated planning measures for instructional accountability. Governor Crist proposed a new task force which promoted

collaboration with major leaders to discuss issues of the new organizational structure. The task force made a series of recommendations which resulted in new legislation to address the concerns of the task force. The new legislation created a series of actions that assisted with transitioning into the new governance structure. The measures that the legislation promoted were as follows: created a State Board of Education for K-20, established a K-20 budget, established separate boards of trustees, added the position of secretary of education, and reorganized the organizational structure. The Reorganization Implementation Act served as a legislative tool to expedite the process of reorganization and establishment of the Florida Board of Education. In addition, the legislation created university boards. A series of legislation beginning in 1998 created the beginnings of K-20 restructuring (OPPAGA, 2009). In 1999, the commissioner convened a Blue Ribbon task force designed to provide insight into the initiatives to reorganize the new structure into a collaborative K-20 system. Major recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee were to implement oversight of full supervision of all sectors of public education. This measure would grant leadership of the new state board, local school districts, colleges, and universities. The recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task force led to the implementation of The Florida Education Governance Reorganization Act. The legislation imposed a new Florida Board of Education appointed by the governor. In turn, the governor appointed the nine-member university boards of trustees. The Act abolished the Board of Regents and the State Board of Community Colleges, transferring all powers to the Florida Board of Education. In addition, the legislation outlined that the Florida Board of Education would appoint the commissioner of education.

Florida's Reconstruction Period HB 2263: Florida's Reorganization Legislation

Florida's measures to address the subpar performance of K-12 students in terms of meeting state standards for postsecondary study was initiated with the creation of legislation which called for deeper accountability for schools to address Florida's standards of education. Although Florida enacted measures which called for statewide performance accountability, this policy measure had mixed policy implications for students of color (Borman & Dorn, 2007). The policy measure ended Affirmative Action in state universities. Although Florida's minorities were attending postsecondary schools at a considerable lower rate than their white counterparts, Florida still lacked significant legislative measures which addressed disparities in areas of postsecondary access and readiness. Florida's general measures to address issues of readiness are broad in spectrum, addressing the entire learning system. For example, Chart 4-1 reflects the legislative bills which address Florida's construction of a "seamless governance structure" or K-20 governance structures. This organizational structure combines departments and resources for all education sectors.

The beginnings of Florida's reconstruction began with the implementation of House Bill 2263, designed to Reorganize Florida's Education System. This bill implemented Florida's Education Governance Reorganization Act of 2000. Although Florida's A-Plus plan ended priority for minority students in gaining admission into postsecondary institutions, this legislation included more inclusive language of equality in education practices. Specifically, the legislation called for two primary systemic changes to both education governance and practice. The document outlined that the purpose of the legislation was to create true systemic change through the implementation of a "seamless academic educational system." This system was

designed to demonstrate a higher level of academic instruction for all students regardless of race.

Florida Education Governance Reorganization Act of 2000.
Declaration of policy and guiding principles.—

It is the policy of the Legislature:

To achieve within existing resources true systemic change in education governance by establishing a seamless academic educational system that fosters an integrated continuum of kindergarten through graduate school education for Florida's citizens. To promote enhanced academic success and funding efficiency by centralizing the governance of educational delivery systems and aligning responsibility with accountability (House Bill 2263, 2000).

The legislation states that this vision of the new governance structure would include a student-centered approach to education delivery. The underlying purpose of the legislation is to create a governance structure which would not need affirmative action legislation for students of color. The legislation was intended to be all inclusive for all students to achieve their highest potential regardless of their current performance level. The policy outlines the purposes of the legislation regarding curriculum and communications. For example, it strives for the following:

To provide consistent education policy vertically and horizontally across all educational delivery systems, focusing on the needs of those receiving education, not those providing education. To provide substantially improved vertical and horizontal articulation across all educational delivery systems while ensuring that nonpublic education institutions and home education programs maintain their independence, autonomy, and nongovernmental status (House Bill 2263, 2000).

The central focus of creating vertical articulation between all delivery systems is a systemic change from Florida's previous system of separate educational agencies. The language utilized in the legislative document denoted that this new governance structure would maximize education access through all grade levels in the new K-20 governance

system. Thus, the legislation outlined that any student would have equal access to an optimum education and receive instruction that would appropriately prepare them for success in both K-12 and postsecondary education. House Bill 2263 notes the following:

The guiding principles for Florida's new education governance are: A coordinated, seamless system for kindergarten through graduate school education. A system that is student-centered in every facet. A system that maximizes education access and academic success for all Floridians. A system that safeguards equity. A system that refuses to compromise academic excellence (House Bill 2263, 2000).

Senate Bill 1162: K-20 Education System legislation

The vision of Florida's new K-20 structure was based on three primary goals for student academic performance. The new structure was mandated to unify inter-agency operations, provide a deeper collaboration between institutional sectors, and provide shared decision making between constituents. The purpose of erecting a new governance structure was to create a collaborative approach to decision making for Florida's proposed K-20 education system. The new way of doing educational business in Florida developed as a result of new federal legislation urging states to analyze the education pipeline in terms of college readiness. The goal of federal legislators aimed at preparing students for college as early as kindergarten. This new method for preparing students for postsecondary education focused on providing rigorous coursework prior to the students' 12th grade year in college to allow students exposure to advanced coursework along the academic continuum.

The inception of a seamless education system was created with the support of Florida voters through implementation of constitutional amendment in 1998 (Florida Constitution Article, IX, §1A). The restructuring of Florida's education system was implemented as a measure to transform from the previous disconnected system to a

newly governed education system which included the knowledge base of the previous system with a collaboration of all sectors. The uniform approach systematically changed Florida's organizational structure to an integrated K-20 accountability system (Florida Constitution Article, IX, §1A). The process for transitioning to a K-20 system required extensive collaboration and planning to include all internal and external stakeholders to ensure success. This measure focused on combining oversight of K-12 institutions, community colleges, and state universities (Education Week, 2002). Florida made a critical movement towards a single governance structure which consolidated responsibility for planning and management of education (Florida Department of Education, 2002). Florida Statute 1000.02 (1) a states,

The policy of the Legislature is to achieve within existing resources a seamless educational system that fosters an integrated continuum of kindergarten through graduate school education for Florida's students.

The K-20 education continuum targeted areas of legislation, curriculum, and collaborative planning between agencies. The measure to reorganize Florida's governance structure established structure and curriculum alignment between agencies. The new structure included organizational management of all sectors under the auspices of a K-20 umbrella of leadership and support. Florida Statute 1000.02 (1) established agency restructuring and implemented alignment of all education agencies under the direction of the Florida State Board of Education. Venezia (2005) discussed the transition as follows:

Although restructuring posed many promising advantages, an administrator determined, "There was tremendous turnover; a lot of institutional memory walked out of the door (Venezia et al., 2005).

The restructuring of departments created change regarding the positions and responsibilities of multiple departments. As with any level of agency change, the

department of education experienced a loss of some employees that directly impacted the structural changes of the re-organization process. Although there were some disadvantages to the restructuring of departments, there was a tremendous benefit in strengthening the collaborative decision making of the departments as part of the organizational restructuring process.

In 1999, Senate Bill 1162 was passed as a legislative measure to induce change to the current system and to begin matriculation into a new education structure, which would include both K-12 and postsecondary oversight. Senate Bill 1162 outlined four goals targeted for the highest student achievement, seamless articulation with maximum access for students, development of a skilled workforce and economic development, and delivery of quality efficient services (FDOE, 2002). The central focus of Senate Bill 1162 was to provide a K-20 emphasis for areas of student achievement, articulation and access, and development of a skilled workforce and economic development, and it aimed to provide quality efficient services to students (Florida Department of Education, 2002). The purpose of Senate Bill 1162 was achieved though the development of a strategic plan, which addressed eight imperatives that formed the work plans for the Florida Department of Education. Senate Bill 1162 called for a “New Department of Education” which addressed education governance with a seamless K- 20 education approach. Critical measures to create this seamless collaborative function for state and local education agencies hinged on the ability of the Florida Department of Education to align inter-agency departments, K-12 institutions, and higher education institutions of learning.

Assistant Secretary John Winn described the New Board of Education and legislative efforts to frame the K-20 restructuring initiatives. Winn discussed that the work began with the Blue Ribbon Commission and continued with the work of the Transition Task Force in 2000. Senate Bill 1162 brought about an education method that would be seamless and student centered. Mr. Talmage Fair, Chairman of the State Board of Education, described the transition as follows:

In terms of a seamless system, this was more than just interlocking the pieces. The board would be blending the responsibilities of three distinct and separate delivery systems, and the Board would take the best from each delivery system (Florida Board of Education, 2001).

The movement towards the creation of the New Department of Education called for a true systematic planning between agencies and an alignment of resources within each department. The initiative was an overhaul of the existing structure to a system that proposed new measures while maintaining the existing knowledge base of the existing structure. Senate Bill 1162 served as a guiding document of change to create a systematic overhaul of the previous disjointed approach of regulating education in Florida to a movement of a collaborative approach to lead change in terms of the K-20 system development. Completing the re-organization was determined to be a task that would call for assistance from outside sources to ensure the highest level of implementation with Florida statutes concerning the reorganization. The State Board of Education operated with the leadership of elected officials and served as the chief policy-making authority for education in Florida. The governor served as the chair of the board and the commissioner served as the secretary of education. 1998 legislation called for a change in the current system of the elected board of education officials to the appointed board leadership (Florida Legislature Officer of Program Policy Analysis &

Government, 2009). The legislation specifically outlined the change to procedures for selecting board leadership in the Florida Constitution as follows:

SECTION 2. State board of education -- The state board of education shall be a body corporate and have such supervision of the system of free public education as is provided by law. The state board of education shall consist of seven members appointed by the governor to staggered 4-year terms, subject to confirmation by the senate. The state board of education shall appoint the commissioner of education (OPPAGA, 2009).

The constitutional amendment delegated authority to the State Board of Education for oversight of all state education systems. Although the existing structure provided leadership through the election process, the measure to appoint the State Board of Education members and commissioner of education assisted with maintaining the focus of the board on issues of education (Venezia & Finney, 2006). Appointment of board members presented the opportunity for members to be selected based on their experience with issues of education rather than their reputation. Prior to the reorganization mandated by the 1998 legislation, the governor and Cabinet developed all policies for public education. The governor assumed the role as chair on the board, and the commissioner operated as the secretary and executive officer. In addition, the Commission of Education's role is the head of the Department of Education.

Chairman, F. Philip Handy discussed that the priority of the Board of Education was to create a new board through reorganization, develop a strategic plan, and rewrite the school code. Chairman Handy determined that the project was extensive and that it was placed under orders to be complete in a relatively short period of time (Florida Board of Education, 2001). In addition, Mr. Handy proposed that the Department of Education prepare a proposal for a consultant to assist with the reorganization and strategic plan. The organization that was approved to assist with implementation efforts

is Aventure (Florida Board of Education, 2001). The Aventure team met with stakeholders, analyzed the existing delivery systems of the Department of Education, and shared the results with the planning team members.

Governor Jeb Bush and legislators in Florida sought deeper accountability methods to increase student academic performance and measures to develop an inclusive approach to governing education in Florida. As the accountability era evolved, policy makers in Florida sought to increase the minimum expectations of meeting high school exit requirements for the purpose of increasing the number graduates prepared for postsecondary education. The legislative agenda was to progress beyond minimum standards and migrate towards preparing students for postsecondary education.

Achieving the goal of graduating more students in Florida deemed as “college ready” required a strategic alignment of sectors, departments, and resources. Organizing all education sectors to conduct appropriate planning for both K-12 and postsecondary education was critical to the success of the college readiness initiative. The beginnings of implementing plans for both K-12 and higher education sectors began with the creation of Senate Bill 1162, which called for a single integrated governance structure for education in Florida. The legislation served four major purposes: increasing of student achievement, seamless articulation and maximum college access, development of a skilled workforce, and production of quality and efficient educational services (Florida Statue, 1008.30). The creation of the new legislation was purposed to create a K-20 system for education, collaboration with schools and colleges, and a commitment to implementing research-based practices.

Florida School Code Revisions

In 2001, implementation of the Florida Education Governance Act imposed additional legislation to continue efforts to expedite efforts to reorganize the current form of governance to the new P-20 structure (OPPAGA, 2009). The major steps of the legislation in 2001 led to the re-write of the education code in 2002. Systematically, the Florida school codes were amended or excluded from the school code to reflect the objectives of the new K-20 system.

The K-20 overhaul created a need for extensive modifications to the school code. Although the school code has been changed over the course of its existence since 1939, there was need for major re-modification to align the legislative language of the codes with the new K-20 system of learning (Florida Law, Section 1060 Chapter 2002-387). This modification was implemented through the 1998 constitutional legislation, Florida Reorganization Act of 2000. As a direct result of the legislation, several sections of the Florida School Code were repealed in 2003. Creation of the Florida Reorganization Act presented the opportunity for legislators to make recommendations concerning necessary changes for each of the school codes. However, implementation that was initiated by the 2001 legislation resulted in the Florida Education Governance Reorganization Act. The legislation expedited implementation of the recommendations from selected K-12, higher education, and community organization members to restructure the previous system of governance. Re-coding of the school code called for reorganization of the language of each code, deletion of codes which no longer fit the new organizational structure, and establishment of the goals of the new K-20 system. A committee was organized of members from all education sectors and organization to

define the new code system. Each of the members of the committee was assigned codes using four principles identified by The Florida Senate Report as follows:

The guiding principles were to (1) limit the review to technical corrections, (2) limit the review to identify any unintended results from changes to substantive law, (3) ensure that other legislation passed in the 2002 regular session and special sessions amending the previous school code, and (4) avoid making any major policy changes through this bill.

The Florida Board of Education created a revision document which outlines each of the amended school codes and detailed descriptions of the changes applied to each of the school codes. The document outlines the application of the current P-20 systematic changes applicable to each of the codes. For example, Florida School Code 229.00300 is referenced in the revision chart as amending the Florida Education Governance Reorganization. The new Florida School Code amends the previous disconnected K-12 and higher education structure to a streamlined K-20 structure. Implementation of the re-coding legislation consolidated and modified the code.

Florida's Age of Academic Acceleration

College Readiness and Participation Legislation in Florida

Florida's efforts to improve the quality of education began with the implementation of Senate Bill 1908 known as the college readiness legislation. This legislation called for the re-establishment of collaboration between the K-12 sectors and post-secondary sectors, specifically with the 28 community colleges established in Florida. Senate Bill 1908, established on June 30, 2008, which assisted with determining if students were prepared for the academic rigors of postsecondary education, utilizing college entrance testing as a determinant for readiness for high school students and course placement for incoming community college students. Senate Bill 1908 called for collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary sectors to

align the sectors in terms of testing students prior to the 12th grade year of high school to determine if students were completing high school being “college ready” and to identify academic weaknesses prior to graduation. The goal of the legislation was to re-align the high school curriculum to properly prepare students for the transition into the academic rigors of postsecondary education. The legislation required schools to identify students who have interest in pursuing opportunities in postsecondary education. Identified students are required by statute to take remedial coursework during the 12th grade year in college. The legislation implemented policies designed for students to make use of course under-takings for the 11th and 12th grade school years after completing the FCAT assessment (Holcombe, 2008). Community College Chancellor Wil Holcombe discussed the impact of Senate Bill 1908 as an advantageous movement towards college readiness. Holcombe discussed the bill’s focus of remediation prior to students’ freshman year in college and how the bill ensures that students will not be required to complete postsecondary remediation. Furthermore, Holcombe elaborated on the significance of the expanded testing implementation prior to 12th grade as follows:

It also provides a high school diploma designation for students who have completed four acceleration mechanism including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, and Ready to Work—those we think are important incentives for students. It also cleans up a little problem we have with grade assignments. The college readiness is an opportunity for us hopefully to have students to make better use of their junior and senior year after they have passed FCAT to prepare them for college. So we are going to work hard on that. We have a specific appropriation for expanded testing which is CPT (College Placement Testing) testing of students before their 12th grade. And then the opportunity for them to take part in what we would college level remedial work, but it is not so in the high school it’s just work to prepare students so they will not have to face remediation when they come to community college. (Holcombe, 2008)

The Florida legislation called for extensive restructuring of the use of the 11th and 12th grade years. The course sequence of the 11th and 12th grade years has introduced significant setbacks in terms of students' aspirations for postsecondary education (Conley, 2007). The reform efforts focused on producing college-ready students from Florida's K-12 institution, clear articulation of postsecondary opportunities to parents and students, and promote student retention and college completion. The legislative mandate required common placement testing in conjunction with community colleges to students expressing an explicit interest in postsecondary education (Florida Statue, 1008.30). The bill established common placement testing to be utilized as college readiness indicators for students prior to the 12th grade. The College Placement Test (CPT) served as an indicator for identifying student academic deficiencies among 12th grade students. Community colleges administer the test in collaboration with Florida's K-12 institutions. In addition, the bill implemented a requirement for schools to adhere to the regular school instructional program.

The purpose of the statute is to address academic deficiencies prior to graduation and to increase the number of students completing high school prepared for college. The statute established collaboration between K-12 and higher education through utilizing community college a platform for offering academic courses prior to graduation. College-level coursework was offered through dual enrollment, early college, and college preparation programs designed to expose high school students to the rigorous coursework required for postsecondary education. The objective of Senate Bill 1908 is noted as follows:

To improve the college and career readiness rate of high schools students and reduce the percent needing postsecondary remediation in reading, writing, and mathematics. (Senate Bill 1908.)

The major emphasis of the legislation is to remediate deficiencies among students prior to graduation by aligning course undertakings during the students' 11th and 12th grade years. In order to remediate students prior to graduation, a substantial overhaul in the secondary curriculum was completed to align them with the postsecondary curriculum. The overhaul included implementation of standards which were better aligned with college entrance expectations. Next Generation Sunshine State Standards were planned and developed by K-12 and postsecondary stakeholders to align instruction for both secondary and postsecondary education sectors in all core academic subject areas. The streamlined curriculum was implemented in phases based on academic instructional areas. Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner of Education, addressed community college presidents and district superintendents in the following memorandum concerning Senate Bill 1908:

Senate Bill 1908, passed by the 2008 Florida Legislature and signed into law by the Governor on June 30, 2008, is a comprehensive education reform initiative which encompasses several separate, but related actions that require your attention. Chapter Number 2008-235, General Laws of Florida, includes revisions to section 1008.30, Florida Statutes, relating to common placement testing for postsecondary education and extending opportunities for remediation to high school seniors. Specifically, this legislation that requires cross-sector (secondary- postsecondary) cooperative efforts calls for expanded college/career readiness testing of 11th grade students who express postsecondary intent, and further collaborative efforts to make postsecondary remediation available to 12th grade students who demonstrate a need for and interest in additional preparation (Senate Bill 1908, 2008).

The comprehensive college readiness legislation called for cross-sector collaboration and planning for assessing high school students to identify academic weaknesses prior to graduation. The primary goal of the legislation is to vacate the previous practices of

states, waiting until students enter postsecondary education and complete remediation during the freshman college year. Rather, academic weakness would be remediated prior to the student attending the first year in college. Thus, the legislation would promote student postsecondary readiness, contribute to student success, and support student retention in college. Additionally, this measure decreased the financial cost required for remediating students for postsecondary education through addressing academic deficiencies prior to graduation.

The legislation is focused on students who show intent to pursue postsecondary education, thus increasing the number of students on track for graduation and prepared for postsecondary education. The goals of the legislation were discussed as follows in the Senate Bill 1908 memorandum:

Important goals of this law are to: 1) increase the number and percentage of students who graduate from high school "college and career ready"; 2) better communicate with 11th grade students and their parents the requirements and opportunities for enrollment in college-credit courses without a need for remediation, and; 3) to provide students, whose test scores in Reading, Writing and/or Mathematics indicate any gaps, an opportunity to attain needed competencies in 12th grade prior to high school graduation (Senate Bill 1908, 2008).

The legislation aimed to address the need for communication with parents concerning the requirements for postsecondary education. Conley determined that the lack of communication regarding the academic preparation, financial aid, and opportunities available in postsecondary education discourages the dreams of aspiring minority students and their families.

Ultimately, this legislation will help us to graduate better prepared students, increase access to postsecondary opportunities, enhance career success, and promote student retention and completion in college. My expectation is that 12th grade students will have access to the same course curriculum and be evaluated and placed using the same standards which are used for evaluating and placing "regularly" admitted college

students in postsecondary coursework. I strongly urge close collaboration between high schools and colleges not only on administration of placement assessments, but also in faculty-to-faculty communication, whereby college faculty with experience in successful delivery of remedial courses can share curriculum information with their secondary colleagues. (Senate Bill 1908, 2008).

The first step taken by Florida legislators was to define college readiness and to select an assessment that will align with postsecondary entrance expectations (Florida Reading Council, 2009). Determination of college readiness was based on the high school students' ability to meet minimum scoring requirements of the College Placement Test, ACT, or SAT college entrance test. This legislation recreated and reinvented Florida's initial efforts of the Acceleration Program to a broadened college readiness program with increased awareness of the program to all students. The Common Placement Assessment required close collaboration between secondary institutions and community colleges. Dr. Eric Smith noted:

It is incumbent upon each community college and their feeder high schools to begin taking the necessary steps to move forward with compliance. Per State Board Rule 6A-10.0315(11), "...the administration of the placement test will be under the control and supervision of the community college."

The implication of Dr. Eric Smith's memorandum is that community colleges would lead in the effort to assess secondary students. Although both K-12 and higher education sectors must work collaboratively to achieve this common purpose, the community colleges are responsible for administration of the placement test. In addition, this effort provided increased opportunity for community colleges to recruit high school students to participate in various programs and acceleration programs included under its auspices. The venture to connect community colleges with secondary schools is a paradigm that encouraged college retention. Students who participate in dual enrollment programs were nearly 12 percent more likely to complete their first and second year of

college than students who do not participate in the dual enrollment program (NASSP, 2010). Florida has proposed various initiatives to bridge the gap between secondary and postsecondary education to include college success academy, open to all school districts in Florida. The initiative creates a need for the school district to work closely with local community colleges for students citing interest in postsecondary study to graduate from high school on time with two dual enrollment credits (Florida Department of Education, 2011). Nearly half of the students entering Florida's postsecondary education needed remediation (OPPGA, 2007). Over 95 percent of the students in need of remediation attended community colleges in Florida. Ensuring close collaboration with K-12 and community colleges is of critical importance to the academic success of secondary students aspiring to attend college.

The goal of the legislation is to develop a path of legislation that prepares 100 percent of students for postsecondary education and the workforce. Ultimately, a high school diploma will be evidence of student academic proficiency. The Department of Education designated that school districts are responsible for developing policies for determining student interest in postsecondary education. The statute implemented mandates to remediate students who designate interest in postsecondary education and students who perform below the cut score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. Florida Statute 1008.30 requires that schools identify students who do not meet college readiness requirements and review the students' performance on the testing to determine in which area the student needs additional instruction. After reviewing the students' test performance, the school is required to discuss the areas of academic deficiencies with the student and provide the student with the appropriate remedial

instruction prior to entering postsecondary education. The intent of the legislation was to increase the number of students who graduate academically proficient and decrease the number of incoming students who need remediation prior to beginning their postsecondary study.

Florida's K-20 Initiatives

American Diploma Project

In 2008, Governor Chris announced Florida's participation with the American Diploma Project Network. ACT and Achieve developed the American Diploma Project to convene governors, state education legislators, postsecondary education leaders, and business leaders to move forward in improving the preparation of high school seniors for postsecondary education. In addition, Achieve has worked to align high school standards and graduation requirements with postsecondary entrance expectations. The American Diploma Project was initiated to organize efforts for all 50 of the United

States to make movement towards creating a college and workforce-ready population of students. Achieve has successfully assisted over 35 states in developing standards for learning. Florida joined efforts with the American Diploma Project to increase the number of high school students prepared for college and the workforce. Dr. Judith Bilsky discussed the goals of the state's participation in the American Diploma Project College Readiness Initiative. Dr. Bilsky stated:

If students do not meet the appropriate cut scores on the CPT to enter into college-level coursework, districts are required to provide remediation prior to high school graduation. The plan includes driving community college prep courses in math and English down into the high schools so that high school students have the opportunity to graduate meeting "college ready" exit standards. The goal is to significantly drop the remediation rate for recent high school graduates entering postsecondary education immediately following high school graduation.

The purpose of the initiative was to increase the number of students ready for postsecondary education. This initiative aimed to decrease the number of students entering postsecondary institutions who need remediation in the first year of college.

Commission of Go Higher, Florida Task Force

The Go Higher Education Task Force was appointed for the purpose of developing and assisting with the implementation of Florida's college readiness initiatives. The Florida State Board of Education defined college and career readiness as follows:

Students are considered college and career ready when they have the knowledge, skills, and academic preparation needed to enroll and succeed in introductory college credit-bearing courses within an associate or baccalaureate degree program without the need for remediation.

The college and career readiness definition was recommended by the task force in 2008 and completed for recommendation in February 2011. The development of the common definition was determined by a collaboration of agencies to allow for collaboration between agencies in the development of the common definition. A collaborative cross-sector team composed of the Florida Division of Public Schools, Division of Career and Adult Education, and the Board of Governor's Office systematically developed a common definition of college and career readiness (Florida State Board of Education, 2011). This definition details the components of college readiness to include attributes of the terminology of student skills, academic preparation, and common core standards students must achieve for postsecondary education. Florida's effort included transitioning to college and career standards which were better aligned with postsecondary entrance expectations for graduating students.

Race to the Top Initiative

The most comprehensive change to Florida's education system was created under Florida's plans to enter the Race to the Top competition. This endeavor pursued by the state of Florida in 2010 resulted in the implementation of critical reform efforts to better prepare students for postsecondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The first initiative included a comprehensive evaluation system which measured student learning as an element of teacher and administrator evaluation (Boser, 2012). The evaluation system linked student learning to teacher and principal evaluation, thus calling for deeper accountability for educators with regard to student academic performance. Additionally, the Race to the Top initiative called for new measures to align the current K-12 curriculum to postsecondary entrance expectations. This measure was enacted through the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which Florida adopted in 2010. Florida's full adoption of the standards occurred in 2013-14.

Florida's Postsecondary Readiness Measures

The enactment of College Readiness legislation required school districts to move deficient students to college entrance proficiency. Although state accountability under the A-plus legislation required schools to provide students with at least one year's growth during each school year, college readiness legislation required school districts to extend its purpose to preparing students for postsecondary education. As a result of the state's goals to increase student preparedness for postsecondary education, all education sectors were required to participate in the planning process for increasing the quality of the experiences of students who transition through the K-20 education pipeline.

Florida's college readiness initiatives require K-12 school districts to collaborate with local community colleges through student participation with community colleges through professional collaboration, early college programs, and completing college assessment prior to students completing high school. This collaboration is based on the necessity for K-12 and higher education leaders to have vertical planning for student access through the K-20 education pipeline.

Minority Students Postsecondary Participation Higher Education Coordinating Council (HB 7151)

In 2011, the Higher Education Coordinating Council was implanted by state legislature to increase student access and preparedness for all students. Although House Bill 7151 does not specifically address the legislation to focus on minority students, the legislation was created to include minorities and disadvantaged students. Based on the purposes set forth in the One Florida Plan legislation, the legislative agenda was to create an overhaul to the education system in Florida. The purpose of the legislation summarized in the excerpt from House Bill 7151 as follows:

Performance outputs and outcomes designed to meet annual and long-term state goals, including, but not limited to, increased student access, preparedness, retention, transfer, and completion. Performance measures must be consistent across sectors and allow for a comparison of the state's performance to that of other states (HB 7151, 2011).

The Higher Education Coordinating Council convened as a measure to oversee student access, college readiness, retention, and student postsecondary completion.

The legislative intent of HB 711 stated that the purpose of the legislation was to build relationships and collaborate. The legislation outlined that the purpose of the bill was to further facilitate the building of the K-20 education system by strengthening

relationships. Furthermore, the committee would advise concerning the articulation of transition from one sector to the next in terms of entrance and exit requirements.

It is the intent of the Legislature to facilitate articulation and seamless integration of the K-20 education system by building, and sustaining, and strengthening relationships among K-20 public organizations, between public and private organizations, and between the education system as a whole and Florida's communities. The purpose of building, and sustaining, and strengthening these relationships is to provide for the efficient and effective progression and transfer of students within the education system and to allow students to proceed toward their educational objectives as rapidly as their circumstances permit (HB 7151, 2011).

The legislative language of policy House Bill 7151 states that the committee would build relationships to foster a deeper alignment between sectors. The team will review statewide data to provide insight regarding needs for better articulation and alignment of the statewide system. The legislation specifically states that the committee would purpose to create and foster relationships to build the K-20 system. One of the primary areas that the council will address is the integration of communications within the agencies of the system. The language of the legislation does not discuss how communication regarding parents or students will be addressed. Although the committee is organized to increase communications, there is no language in the legislation regarding measures to discuss requirements or expectations for learning of each sector. For example, parents and students of underrepresented students need to engage in early communication to prepare their families for college entrance expectations. The legislation addresses how the committee will assist the state in providing communications within the system.

Senate Bill 108: Minority or Underrepresented Student Achievement

Senate Bill 108 states within the legislation that the partnership included in this legislation would help to select minority students for rigorous course work. This

partnership would work in conjunction with school districts to select students to participate in more rigorous courses to include Advanced Placement courses or similar types of advanced courses. In addition, the partnership would communicate opportunities with regard to advanced courses to stakeholders:

An act relating to the Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement; amending s. 1007.35, F.S.; specifying that the partnership must cooperate with school districts to identify minority and underrepresented students for participation in AP or other advanced courses; specifying that the partnership must cooperate with school districts to provide information to parents regarding AP and other advanced courses; specifying that the partnership must provide information regarding Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)or Preliminary ACT (PLAN) administration (Senate Bill 108, 2007)

In addition to selection of qualified candidates for rigorous coursework, the policy is directed to train teachers in areas of content knowledge to equip students for mastery of college level coursework. The additional measure included within the Senate Bill 108 (2007) was to provide teachers with professional development for rigorous courses. Written within legislation was specific legislative language for a partnership with the College Board to create professional development for teachers to prepare them through conferences, workshops, and trainings to acclimate to college-level courses.

Governor's Access and Diversity Commission

The creation of the commission called for a diverse committee with members from multiple agencies within the K-20 education system to represent and provide advice on issues of under-represented and economically disadvantaged students. The governor's order created multiple streams of support for minority students. For example, a measure to provide professional development was implemented through a provision of funding for a partnership with the College Board. The partnership would include

professional development support for teachers and tutoring programs for students. An additional measure implanted by the legislation was the provision of funding for at-risk, low-income students through the (STARS) Stanley Tate Scholarship Tuition for At Risk Students program. In addition, the funding extended to provision for the College Reach Out Program (CROP) for after-school counseling and tutorial services. The legislation consistently referenced students who fell within the classification of first-generation, at-risk, and low-income students as a requirement for receiving assistance outlined in the legislature. A notable grant funded from the legislation was the First Generation match grant.

Post Affirmative Action Impact on Students of Color

Florida enacted legislation to redesign its approach to educating students in Florida. This reconstruction of Florida's governance structure, curriculum alignment, and testing was used as a mechanism for addressing learning deficiencies in students of color. Although Florida's end to affirmative action intended to search for consistent widely accepted forms of fair practice in the postsecondary admissions process, Florida's One Florida Plan resulted in a decline in acceptance of minority students in postsecondary institutions (Blume & Long, 2014). Blume & Long (2014) concluded that there was a significant decline in acceptance of minority students in the six post-affirmative-action states (one of which is Florida) where the practice is banned (see Figure 4-1). Card & Krueger (2005) determined that two of the six post-affirmative-action states minority enrollment fell from 30-50 percent for Black and Hispanic students. For this study, we analyze the trends of minority acceptance and academic performance.

Trends of Minority Academic Performance in Florida ACT College Readiness Benchmark

ACT developed college readiness benchmark scores to provide a cut score equivalent to credit-bearing coursework based on the equivalent performance of students in college. The college readiness benchmark scores provided a performance score for the core subject areas of English, mathematics, social sciences, and biology (ACT, 2012). The college readiness benchmark score is determined as the minimum scores needed to obtain a 50 percent chance of completing a college-level course with a grade of B or higher. Additionally, the score was the equivalent to a 75 percent chance of obtaining a grade of C or higher. ACT (2012) determined that 18 percent of the 2012 graduating cohort of 2012 in Florida were prepared for postsecondary study in all four ACT benchmark areas. 57 percent of students in Florida performed at the minimum cut score of 18 on the ACT English subject area test, just below the national average cut score of 67 percent.

In comparison, 22 percent of students in Florida met the benchmark score in science. The state performance in mathematics in Florida was 9 percentile points below the national performance in mathematics of a 46 percent of students in our nation deemed as “College Ready” in mathematics. In subject areas of reading and science, Florida slightly lagged behind the national percentage of student college readiness proficiency. Reading performance based on the college readiness indicators prescribed by ACT reflected 6 percentile points lower than the state percentage of 52 percent of students prepared for college-level coursework in social science college-level courses. Subject area tests in reading were paired with equivalency for social science mastery in postsecondary coursework.

Florida's ACT Performance in Florida

Students in Florida increased performance in areas of mathematics, reading, and science as reflected in their average ACT scores. Although students in Florida regressed in 2008 to 2009 from an average ACT score of 19.8 to 19.5, dropping nearly 2 percent in one year, the subsequent year's students gained a 2 percent increase in average ACT score performance. Minority student performance in Florida increased over a period of five years. In particular, all minority students saw an increase in average ACT scores, with the exception of a percentage point regression in American Indian and Native Alaskan students. African-American students increased in performance since 2009. The overall performance of all students tested in ACT subject areas. The state performance score for each subject area is reflected in Chart 2. In comparison to the state average scores of performance for each subject area, African-American students' scores reflected a significant gap in academic performance in the core subject areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science. The achievement gap in testing performance demonstrates 3 percentage points difference in the gap in performance across ACT-tested subject areas between white students and minority students. The national ACT scores by race and ethnicity are depicted in Figure 3. Scores range within 20 to 21 percent across each ACT-tested subject areas as mentioned above. Florida fared below the national percentages. Students scored at 18.9 percent in English in comparison to the state average of 20.5 percent. Although students in Florida scored slightly below the national average performance on the ACT, African-American students' scores were consistent with the national average in the areas of mathematics and reading.

SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark

SAT (2012) designed a benchmark score to measure student readiness for college and career to provide postsecondary institutions with a score which predicted student readiness and success for post-secondary education and the workforce. The score set by SAT was an actual score of 1550, which projected a 65 percent expectancy for the students to achieve postsecondary success in the students first year of college throughout the students' fourth year of postsecondary study. SAT (2012) determined that college readiness is defined as the point in which a student possesses the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to successfully complete a college course of study. Additionally, college readiness is determined by both academic and non-academic factors that affect a student's readiness for postsecondary education. Students who fall below the cut score of 1550 for determination as "college ready" still have the opportunity and potential to succeed in postsecondary study and the workforce. The College Board concluded that the SAT score should not be utilized in isolation, but should rather be used with a number of other predictors of success, such as grades or other similar factors that can impact a student's academic success.

SAT College Success

SAT's predictors of college success were determined by student achievement of a minimum of 1550 on the SAT exam. Students achieving within the established cut score for readiness range were predicated to have a 65 percent chance of achieving a grade of a B- or higher during the first year of college. Thus, the student achieved a higher rate of success than the students performing below this range.

The 2012 cohort of graduating seniors who took the SAT in Florida experienced numerous gains over the national average of performance on the exam. Several areas

of notability include the performance of American Indian students in subject areas of reading, mathematics, and writing, American Indian students in Florida scored 14 points higher in reading than American Indian students in the nation. African-American and Hispanic students performed at or above the national average in reading, mathematics, and writing. As reflected in both Table 4-7 and Table 4-8, American Indian students in Florida scored 14 points higher than the national average score of American Indian students in the United States tested on the SAT exam. Minorities attained similar success scoring above the state average in reading and writing on the SAT. Additionally, African-American students in Florida scored at the same level of performance as the national average for African-American students in the United States in mathematics. Minority students in Florida faired exceptionally well in comparison with students of the same race. However, in comparison to White students, minorities scored considerably lower in the areas of reading, mathematics, and writing. The exception of minority students is the performance of Asian students versus White students. Reflecting the data depicted in Table 4-7, Asian students scored considerably higher in the subject area of mathematics. Additionally, Asian students experienced only a 2-point difference in their performance score in reading in comparison to white students.

Florida's Legislative Overview

Reviewing legislation enacted in Florida during 1999-2012, Table 4-11 reflects Florida's policies and classifies the policies based on the intent of the respective legislation. Florida predominately proposed and enacted legislation which classifies as permeable legislation. One could propose that Florida has created mostly permeable legislation due to state plans to reform its current governance and instructional quality to students in Florida. However, based on the Permeability and Transparency Framework,

we analyze Florida's policies and place the policies into the framework of high permeability and low transparency. We noticed a gap in legislation which directly articulates high school exit requirements and postsecondary entrance requirements. Although Florida enacted policies which directly impact school performance, policies which communicated high school exit requirements, postsecondary success, college knowledge, and other skills necessary for college planning were not mentioned in the legislation. In reviewing Florida's policies related to participation and readiness, there is no significant legislation which aligned with school-certified counselor programs.

Analyzing the academic performance of students in Florida, there were trends of low performance with African-American students in all core academic areas of college readiness indicators. Additionally, reflecting on the data in Table 4-7, there are gaps in participation in school and being unprepared for the rigors of postsecondary study. A review of Florida's legislation regarding the fact that curriculum measures, articulation, communication, and collaboration of the new K-20 system included legislative language which primarily addressed students in a general manner, denoting that the intention of the policies was for all students in the state of Florida. There was a growing trend for increased attendance for African American students attending schools within the Florida College System. However, the gaps in college attendance are considerably large in comparison to White students. African-American students attended postsecondary institutions at higher rates than did Hispanic students. Although the intention of Florida's was to increase the attendance of minority students at postsecondary institutions in Florida, there was a trend for minorities to increase participation at Florida institutions but not at the same rate of their counterparts.

Analysis of Participation and Readiness Legislation in Florida

An analysis of both the college readiness and participation legislation for minority students revealed Florida's legislation as primarily permeable in nature. As a result, we characterize Florida's education legislation as highly permeable but low in transparency. In agreement with Figure 4-12, we classify Florida's education legislative system as a system with many opportunities but that possesses legislative mechanisms in place to promote timely information for students and parents to make an informed decision concerning their academic future. The basis of Florida's performance as a highly permeable education structure is based on the findings of Florida's respective education policies proposed between 1999 to 2012, which focus on areas of curriculum, multiple options for high school graduation, virtual education, and a wide range of like policies which align curriculum, departmental resources, and high school completion options into an array of options available to all students regardless of race.

For example, Table 4-11 Legislation from 1999 through 2002 focused on creating Florida's K-20 governance structure but did not include legislation which communicated the plans of the education departments or the goal of postsecondary access or participation for Florida's students. There were several policy levers included during this period of restructure, including HB 2263 Reorganization Plan (2000), HB1633 School Performance (2001), and SB 1162 K-20 Education Performance Accountability (2001), which solely focused on creating a smoother path towards high school completion and ultimately college access. Legislators focused on developing Florida as a permeable entity but minimally communicated to students and families the procedures moving towards access and degree attainment. There was minimal legislative language within the statutes which provided statutory directives to communicate the requirements for

high school completion, postsecondary opportunities, and the availability of financial aid. Although these policies required the collaboration of departments to better prepare students for the rigor of postsecondary education, the policies were distinctively designed to create a smoother transition for students in the K-20 education pipeline. Florida is distinguished as highly permeable, meaning it possesses an education system with many “doors of opportunity” regarding high school completion into postsecondary study. Florida enacted a series of legislation which offered students multiple modalities of instruction to encourage students’ progress into high school completion, as depicted in Table 4-11.

Analyzing Figure 4-3, we further characterize Florida’s K-20 education governance system as low in transparency. We further classify Florida’s policies as low in transparency due to Florida’s policy makers in Florida have centered their legislative focus on increasing permeable factors which include governance structure, curriculum continuity, and similar governance structural issues . The legislative agenda in Florida regarding education was directed to establish a K-20 governance structure which would provide quality education for all students in Florida. This purpose of the streamlined system was to provide advanced learning opportunities regardless of race or ethnicity. However, the measures to increase the transparency of the system was absent in the legislature. The communication of the policies to stakeholders was not sufficiently articulated within the context of education policy in Florida.

Based on Stephan & Rosenbaum’s (2009) constructs of low transparency, Florida’s education legislation lacked communication regarding postsecondary opportunities for students and families. We analyzed Florida’s policies focusing on

related areas of college readiness and participation with regard to minority students. Based on these two areas, the researcher analyzed related areas which directly impact transparency for students of color. Legislation regarding school counselor education, communication with stakeholders regarding postsecondary opportunities, and academic remediation are areas which directly impact Florida's transparency but were not addressed in the legislature. Specifically, we focus on the impact of such policies on students who would ordinarily not have the opportunity to attend college. Although Florida created policies to assist with matriculating students into postsecondary study, there are minimal policies which address communication regarding high school graduation, postsecondary access, and ultimately degree attainment.

Before Reorganization

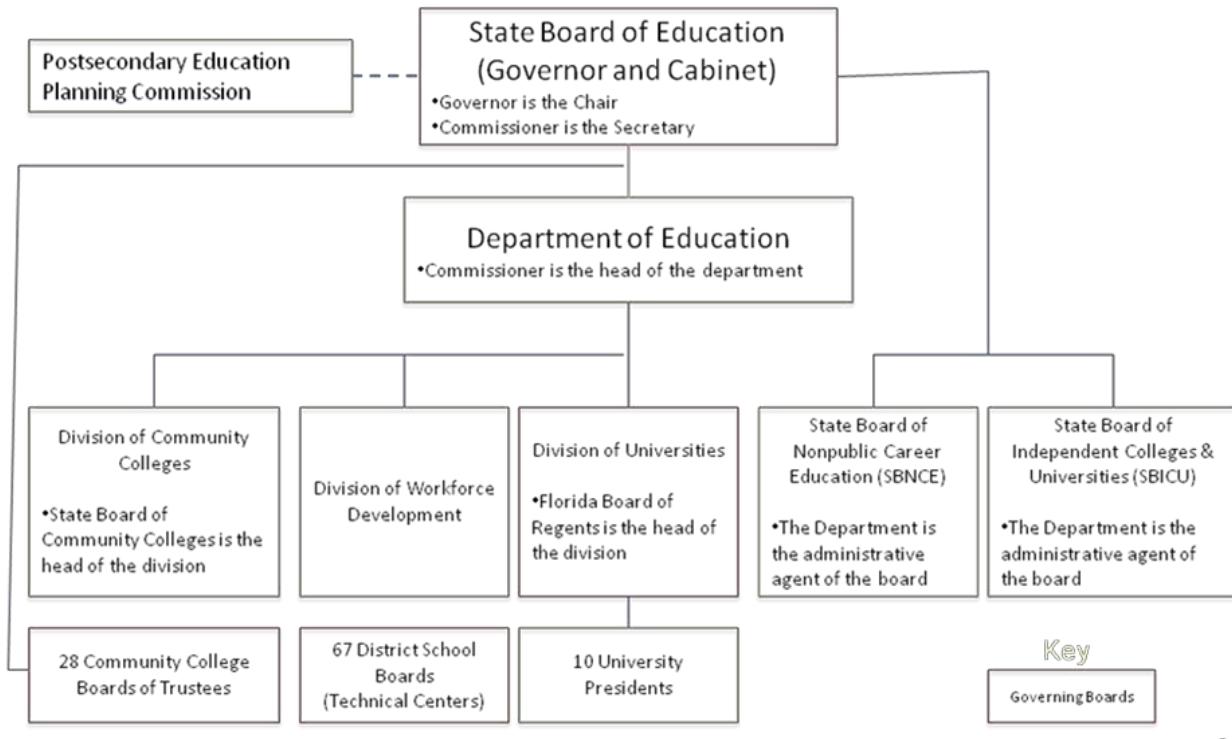


Figure 4-1. Florida Department of Education structure prior to restructure

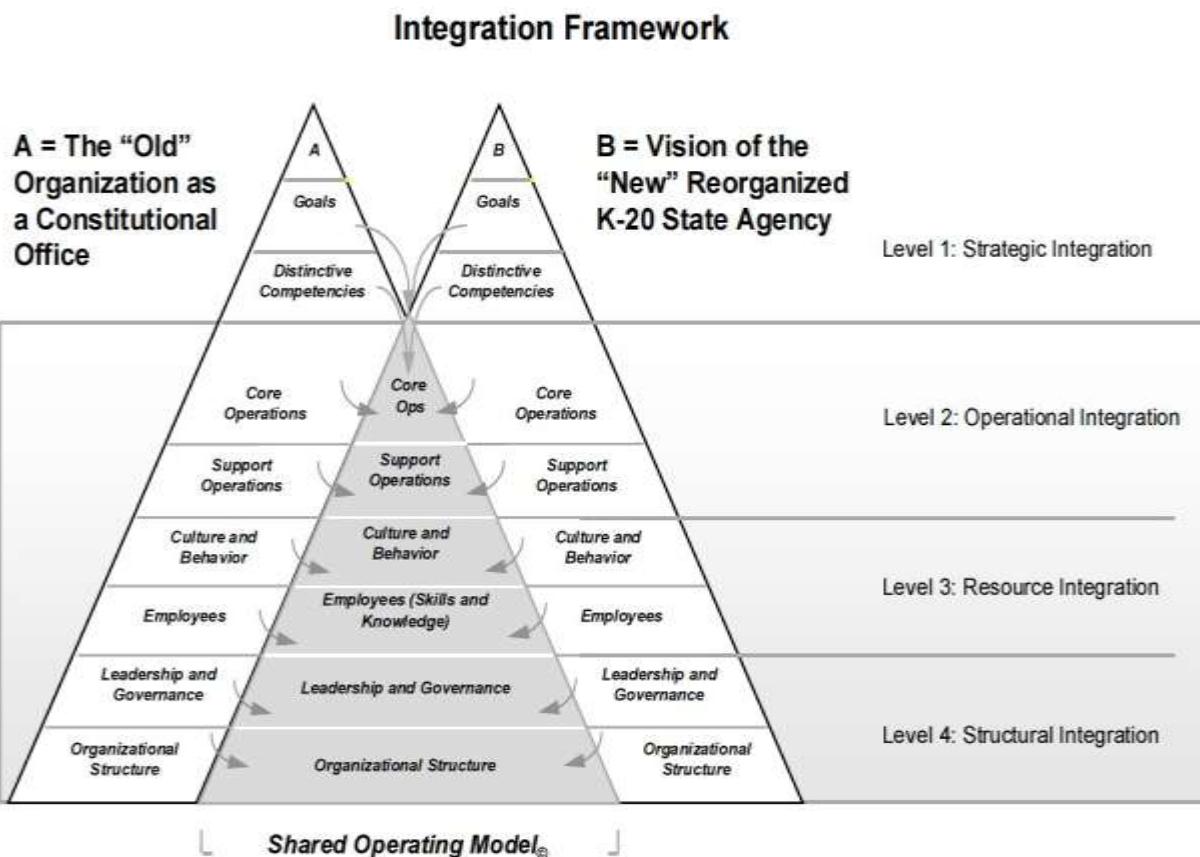


Figure 4-2. Department of Education Integration Framework

Table 4-1. Legislation addressing minority students

Year	Policy	Bill Title	Classification of Legislation
1999	Executive Order 99-281	One Florida Plan	Permeable Legislation
2004	SB 2184	Student Achievement	Transparent Legislation
2006	Executive Order 06-05	Access and Diversity Commission	Permeable Legislation
007	SB 108	Minority or underrepresented student achievement	Permeable Legislation
2011	HB 7151	Higher Education Coordinating Council	Permeable Legislation

Table 4-2. Six Post Affirmative Action States

Year	State	Ban on Affirmative Action
1998	Washington	Initiative 200
1997	California	Proposition 209
2000	Florida	One Florida Initiative
2006	Michigan	Proposal 2
2008	Nebraska	Initiative 424
2011	New Hampshire	Implemented by legislative vote

Table 4-3. ACT Florida's 5-Year Performance of benchmarks ACT (2012)

Year	State	National	State	Nat'l	State	Nat'l	State	Nat'l	State	Nat'l
	#students		English		Math		Reading		Science	
2008	93,884	1,421,941	58	68	35	43	45	53	19	28
2009	105,297	1,480,469	55	67	33	42	43	53	19	28
2010	113,480	1,568,835	54	66	34	43	43	52	20	29
2011	117,575	1,623,112	55	66	36	45	44	52	20	30
2012	118,420	1,666,017	57	67	37	46	46	52	22	31

Table 4-4. Florida's Performance on ACT by race

2008 %	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %	2012 %
All Students	19.8	19.5	19.5	19.6
Black/African American	16.4	16.2	16.2	16.4
American/Indian/Alaskan	20.3	20.3	19.5	19.4
White	21.6	21.6	21.7	21.8
Hispanic/Latino	18.8	18.5	18.5	18.7
Asian	21.9	22	22	22.2
Hawaiian	0	0	0	17.8
Two or more races	20.2	20	20.1	20.7
				20.8

Table 4-5. Average ACT Scores by Race/Ethnicity in Florida

Race	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
All students	18.9	20.0	20.5	19.3	19.8
Black	15.1	17.1	17.4	16.1	16.5
American Indian	17.7	19.3	19.9	18.5	19.0
White	21.4	21.7	22.6	21.3	21.9
Hispanic	17.9	19.3	19.6	18.5	19.0
Asian	21.1	23.6	22.1	21.5	22.2
Pacific Islander	17.5	19.5	19.4	18.3	18.4
2 or more races	18.9	20.0	20.5	19.2	19.8

Table 4-6. Florida's Minority Performance on ACT National

Race	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
All students	20.5	21.1	21.3	20.9	19.8
Black	16.0	17.3	17.2	17.2	17.0
American Indian	17.1	18.5	18.7	18.7	18.4
White	22.1	22.1	22.7	22.1	22.4
Hispanic	17.7	19.4	19.0	18.9	18.9
Asian	22.7	25.2	22.9	23.2	23.6
Pacific Islander	18.9	20.4	19.8	19.7	19.8
2 or more races	21.0	21.1	21.8	21.2	21.4

Table 4-7. Florida's Minority Performance on ACT

#Test takers		% of total	Reading	Math	Writing
Total	92,281	100.0	489	490	472
Amer. Indian	325	.4	493	486	469
Asian	4,343	4.7	518	548	502
Black	16,527	17.9	431	425	415
Hispanic	24,121	26.1	472	471	457
Mexican	2,041	2.2	451	459	436
Puerto Rican	4,338	4.7	461	454	445
White	42,085	45.6	520	523	501
Other	3,215	3.5	491	484	472

Table 4-8. National SAT Data

#Test takers		% of total	Reading	Math	Writing
Total	1,284,459	100	491	505	481
Amer. Indian	7,895	.6	479	485	458
Asian	123,583	9.6	519	573	522
Black	185,915	14.5	424	425	412
Hispanic	229,726	17.9	443	458	437
Mexican	95,530	7.4	445	464	440
Hispanic	21,163	1.6	448	451	437
White	673,080	52.4	523	533	508
Other	39,202	3.1	495	500	485

Table 4-9. National Participation Rates by Race/Year

Sex and year	Total ¹	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native
Total						
1980	26.1	27.7	19.7	16.3	—	—
1985	27.9	30.1	19.8	17.0	—	—
1990	32.1	35.1	25.2	15.9	56.9	15.8
1995	34.3	37.9	27.5	20.7	54.6	27.6
2000	35.5	38.7	30.5	21.7	55.9	15.9
2005	38.9	42.8	33.1	24.8	60.5	27.8
2006	37.3	41.0	32.6	23.6	57.0	26.2
2007	38.8	42.6	33.1	26.6	56.1	24.7
2008	39.6	44.2	32.1	25.8	57.6	21.9
Male						
1980	26.9	28.9	17.7	16.3	—	—
1985	28.4	30.8	20.3	15.1	—	—
1990	32.4	35.6	25.8	15.4	59.2	8.4
1995	33.1	37.0	26.0	18.7	55.7	27.4
2000	32.6	36.2	25.1	18.5	59.0	12.8
2005	35.3	39.4	28.2	20.7	62.0	25.7
2006	34.1	37.9	28.1	20.0	58.2	18.1
2007	35.5	39.6	32.2	20.7	56.5	11.8
2008	37.0	41.7	29.7	23.0	53.8	18.7
Female						
1980	25.4	26.7	21.3	16.4	—	—
1985	27.4	29.3	19.3	19.0	—	—
1990	31.8	34.7	24.7	16.4	54.9	21.7
1995	35.5	38.8	28.7	23.0	53.7	27.8
2000	38.4	41.3	35.2	25.4	52.8	20.5
2005	42.5	46.1	37.6	29.5	59.0	29.5
2006	40.6	44.1	36.9	27.6	55.8	35.9
2007	42.1	45.7	34.0	33.0	55.7	34.5
2008	42.3	46.9	34.2	28.9	61.1	24.3

Table 4-10. Florida College System Enrollment by Race of Baccalaureate Students.

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
White	62.0%	59.4%	55.7%	53.7%	53.4%
Black	16.4%	18.2%	19.4%	19.9%	19.4%
Hispanic	15.2%	15.4%	16.6%	17.5%	18.2%
Other	2.2%	2.3%	2.9%	3.1%	3.4%

Table 4-11. Florida Related Participation and Readiness Legislation 1999-2012

Year	Policy #	Title	Classification
1999	EO99-281	One Florida Plan	Permeable
2000	HB 2263	Reorganizing Florida's Education System	Permeable
2001	HB 1633	School Performance Grades	Permeable
2001	SB 1162	Florida's K-20 Education Performance Accountability System	Permeable
2002	SB 20E	Education Code Re-Write	Permeable
2003	HB 915	K20 Education Accountability	Permeable
2004	SB 2184	Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented	Permeable
2004	SB 2184	Student Achievement	Permeable
2004	HB 769	Career Education	Permeable
2004	SB 364	Accelerated High School Graduation, High Stakes Testing, Reading Deficiencies	Permeable
2005	FAC 6A-10.024	Articulation Among Universities, Community Colleges and School Districts	Permeable
2006	HB 7087	Education A++ Initiative	Transparent
2006	HB 7087	K20 Quality Data Improvements	Listed
2006	HB 7087	Intervention and Monitoring Plans for Low Performing Students	Listed
2006	HB 7087	Florida Secondary School Redesign Act	Listed
2006	HB 7087	Dual Enrollment Programs	Listed
2006	HB 7087	High School Graduation Requirements	Listed
2006	HB 7087	Accelerated High School Graduation Options	Listed
2006	HB 7087	Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Workforce Program	Listed
2006	HB 7087	Revision to K-20 System Language	Listed
2006	HB 7087	K20 Performance Standards	Listed
2006	HB 7087	State Standards Review	Listed
2007	SB 1232	Workforce and Career Preparation	Permeable
2007	SB 108	Minority or Underrepresented Student Achievement	Permeable
2008	SB 1716	Postsecondary Education	Permeable
2008	SB 1906	High School Programs Career/Tech Voc Schools	Permeable
2008	SB 1908	Education	Permeable
2010	SB 4	Accelerated Graduation Options	Permeable
2011	HB 7197	Digital Learning Now Act	Permeable
2011	SB 404	College Boarding Academy Pilot Program	Permeable
2011	HB 1255	Digital Curriculum/Middle School Career & Professional Academy	Permeable
2011	SB 2120	Middle School Career and Professional Academy	Permeable
2012	HB 7135	General Education Core	Transparent
2012	HB 7135	Transfer from Associate to Baccalaureate Program	Listed
2012	HB 7059	ACCEL	Permeable
2012	HB 7135	K-20 Stem Education Plan	Permeable
2012	HB 5201	Degree Completion Pilot program	Permeable
2012	HB 7129	State Universities of Academic and Research Excellence and National Preeminence Act	Permeable
2012	HB 7059	Academic and Career Planning in Middle Grades	Permeable
2012	HB 7059	Career Themed Courses, Career Academies, & Workforce Alignment	Permeable
2012	HB 7059	Dual Enrollment, Early Admission	Permeable
2012	HB 7059	Early Graduation	Permeable
2012	HB 7059	Accelerations Option in Public Education	Permeable
2012	HB 7063	Digital Learning	Permeable

		PERMEABILITY	
		HIGH	LOW
Transparency	HIGH	INFORMED CHOICE	KNOWN LIMITS
	LOW	UNINFORMED CHOICE	UNKNOWN LIMITS

Figure 4-3. Permeability and Transparency Framework (Sykes, Schneider, & Plank, 2009).

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary Overview

The findings of this study were based on an analysis of college readiness and participation legislation in Florida related to historically disadvantaged students, primarily students of color. The purpose of this study was to answer the primary research question: What policies did Florida enact to address postsecondary participation and readiness for students of color? Reflecting on the results of our study, Florida's legislative approach to address the academic achievement gap in core academic subject areas was implemented through Florida's legislative measures to increase the quality of education for all students.

The study was focused on the state-level policies in Florida which shape the minority students' educational experience in the K-20 pipeline. The study was situated within the Permeability and Transparency Framework in efforts to conceptualize how education policies shape students' academic learning experiences. In classifying Florida's policies based on the Transparency and Permeability Framework, Florida's policies were highly permeable but were low in transparency. Based on our research findings, statutory systems which fall within these perimeters substantially limit students' ability to plot a path of entry into postsecondary study.

Although Florida's focus was to create a K-20 system prepared to appropriately prepare students for the rigor of postsecondary education, the system was designed to create opportunities for more rigorous coursework. This measure to create this system was designed to include students of color; however, graduates of Florida schools were underprepared for postsecondary study.

Discussion and Recommendations for K20 Legislators

The goal of this study was to evaluate Florida's policies regarding the path of postsecondary study in terms of legislation for students of color. From the analysis of relevant legislation, the study unveiled a trend of Florida enacting legislation which specifically addressed permeable-type policy issues. For example, Florida enacted legislation which addressed primarily K-20 governance and measures to overhaul K-12 curriculum in an effort to prepare students for postsecondary entrance expectations. Utilizing the Permeability and Transparency framework, we evaluated Florida's respective policies which address areas related to participation and readiness. The analysis concludes Florida's education governance structure fell within the categories of high permeability and low transparency in terms of the legislation which impacts student's decisions for postsecondary study. Rosenbaum & Stephan (2009) elaborated on policy systems which fell within this category assist students with movement towards postsecondary study, however poor communication regarding measures to plan a path towards graduation hinder student aspirations.

A second area of observation from our analysis of Florida's education legislation, we observed an absence of policies which address areas of social capital in terms of providing students with skills and guidance to maneuver through the college application process and financial process. Florida's overhaul measures included a number of changes to its governance structure, curriculum, graduation requirements and a number of additional areas of legislative change which neglected to include school guidance counselors. Additionally, there were gaps in the legislative efforts to increase progress in areas of communication to stakeholders. In this research, there was an absence of legislation to communicate postsecondary requirements to stakeholders. Florida's

legislative efforts were focused on increasing performance for all students in Florida.

Based on the evaluation of Florida's education policies, we make the following recommendations concluded in this chapter.

Recommendations

Reviewing the results of Florida's legislation, it is noted that there exists a vast number of education policies which addressed areas of curriculum, governance, and instructional accountability which aligned Florida's plans for a quality statewide instructional program. However, based on the Permeability and Transparency framework, there were policy gaps critical to the success of students of color in the state of Florida. Based on the application of the framework and literature review, there are several suggestions for creating policies which focus on gaps in politics as follows:

- Create education policies and initiatives which communicate the K-20 vision to all stakeholders
- Create policy streams designed to spur planning between education sectors
- Create policies and initiatives to communicate college readiness
- Create policies and programs which increase college and career readiness

Based on the aforementioned recommendations, further elaboration is provided for the policies as follows:

Policy Recommendation #1: Address Postsecondary Awareness for All Stakeholders

Since the inception of the A-plus legislation, Florida has created legislation which addressed areas of curriculum gaps from high school to college. However, there were gaps in the legislation designed to communicate postsecondary opportunities to students, parents, and stakeholders. A suggestion to state legislators is to create

legislation designed to increase awareness of postsecondary opportunities to all stakeholders. A review of legislative language in Florida's statutes revealed that legislation designed to address the awareness of postsecondary opportunities were minimal. The absence of legislation regarding communication to stakeholders regarding postsecondary opportunities left students in a position to haphazardly find out about college opportunities.

Policy Recommendation #2: Collaboration and Planning Between Education Sectors

In analyzing Florida's participation and readiness legislation, legislation related to collaboration between education sectors and planning between local agency sectors were nonexistent. There were trends within Florida's postsecondary policies which reflect a focus on the creation of the structural components of the K-20 system and less focus on the wraparound supports that assist with the transitions of students into postsecondary study. For example, a critical position within the K-20 network is that of the certified school counselors. Although certified school counselors are instrumental in the articulation of graduation requirements and postsecondary entrance requirements, there are no policies which address professional development needs and planning for the role that school counselor's play within the career and academic planning for students' success. Thus, it is recommended that collaboration between state and local agencies be created. There was a tremendous need for departments to plan for student success as they transition from one sector to the next. There was limited language within the legislation which addressed collaboration within postsecondary sectors and departments to plan for student success. Current measures in K-20 education results in Policy.

Policy Recommendation #3: Expand State Efforts to Teach College Knowledge and Skills Necessary for Postsecondary Success

Create curriculum measures to address college and career knowledge.

Stakeholders need the opportunity to be informed about requirements for postsecondary education prior to high school. Low-income populations, minorities, and students of color need more time and resources to prepare for postsecondary study. The current standard for the K-12 study for the state of Florida does not address the curriculum needs for teaching “college knowledge” or knowledge necessary for students to matriculate into postsecondary study with success. Minorities and students of color need this information early in their academic experience in order to build the skills necessary for postsecondary success. The current statutes in the state of Florida do not address the needs for building a college-going culture for students of color, minorities, or first-generation college students.

Policy Recommendation #4: Communicate Early, Create College-Going Culture in Elementary Schools

The message of postsecondary education is rarely communicated to the students who need the communication the most—struggling learners. Legislation should be created which directs schools to begin communication efforts with postsecondary planning in elementary schools with students and families. In evaluating Florida’s legislative efforts to decrease student academic achievement gaps and increase postsecondary readiness, there was limited legislation or legislative language which articulated measures to inform parents and students about postsecondary opportunities.

Policy levers will need to be enacted which communicate the vision of college to students in Florida, specifically, policies which are transparent in nature which communicate to students and families how to plot a path into postsecondary study. Low-

income and minority students need more time to prepare for the rigor and cost associated with college attendance. Furthermore, students will need to understand and form college expectation prior to high school. Communication regarding postsecondary requirements must be communicated to all stakeholders and departments to better align resources for ultimate student academic performance

Recommendations for Future Study

Several recommendations evolved from this study which serve as recommendations for future study. There are a number of recommendations which are proposed and discussed through this research. Correlations of topics in relation to postsecondary readiness were found with recurring trends in the research. However, these specific correlations was not evaluated beyond the extent of research for this study. Therefore, this group of recommendations are recommended for further study as follows:

Policy Recommendation #1: Enact Policy Levers to Address Learning Deficits among Minorities and Students of Color.

Expand policies to address learning deficits for students of color. This research explored policy areas which directly impact areas of both postsecondary participation and college readiness for minority students. There were several gaps in policy to address the learning deficits among students of color. In the analysis of Florida's policies, we noticed that there were consistent policies that addressed Florida's legislative efforts to increase alignment measures for all students and create additional opportunities for all students. However, there were no policies which specifically address students attaining these rigorous course opportunities which have academic

performance gaps. There are policies to address how Florida will remediate learning for students of color and articulate this intention to stakeholders.

Recommendation #2 Re-Focus Certified Counselor Programs & Training

Create legislation to re-purpose certified counselor education programs to create a model of best practice delivery for community college. School counselors are inundated with multiple tasks which limit their time with students to discuss career and postsecondary options.

Counselors will need training to assist with communication regarding requirements for postsecondary attainment and success. There were no policies enacted during our analysis period which directly addressed appropriate training for school counselors to facilitate communication with students, parents, or stakeholders concerning the postsecondary awareness, readiness, or “college knowledge” required to maneuver through high school exit and postsecondary entrance requirements. One of the trends observed in the state of Florida was that consistent changes in legislation occurred over time to progress towards the new vision of K-20 education program. Although changes occurred, there was no legislation that specifically addressed counselor education and teacher education programs regarding the communication of college knowledge necessary for academic success. Implementation of Common Core standards addresses the skills and knowledge necessary for college entrance expectations. However, the new standards do not incorporate the knowledge of postsecondary opportunities needed for families to create a “college-going culture” in their families. School systems will need to align their resources to ensure that certified school counselors reach students and provide adequate information regarding high

school exit requirements and postsecondary entrance requirements to all students prior to graduation.

Policy Recommendation #3 School Counselor Service Delivery Model

Based on a summary of Florida's respective legislation and current literature concerning research applicable to postsecondary participation and readiness, we recommend a reform in areas of the current school counseling model. We suggest a refined model based on the research to include a delivery service model which includes the following suggestions for providing quality guidance service to all students as follows:

- Implement a mandated counselor to student ratio of 1:250 as suggested by American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2013)
- Incorporate professional development and training in areas related to current social capital deficits (Simmons, 2011)
 - College Matching
 - Case management (Grades, GPA, & Attendance)
 - Outreach
 - Student tracking (Graduation requirements/college knowledge)
 - Stakeholder communication and engagement
 - Mentorship/student development
- Curriculum in areas of college knowledge, college selection, and admissions process of high profile institutions.
- Provide a statewide service model which requires student contact 3 to 5 times at a minimum per year.
- Require outreach efforts to students and families regarding graduation requirements, college selection, and career counseling.

In proposing this model, legislation guiding the implementation and regulation of these measures would need to be communicated and enacted to ensure proper implementation.

Implications for Higher Education

Higher education is faced with issues of participation and success for students arriving on postsecondary education campuses across the nation. The national challenge of increasing college completers by 2020 posed by our national leaders has placed charge of implementing best practice approaches to student participation at our nation's forefront. In this quest, postsecondary educators and leaders are posed with several critical actions in terms of readiness and postsecondary participation.

The initial focus is college readiness for students entering postsecondary education. Through the institutional reach of postsecondary education, readiness efforts hinge on early collaborative measures with K-12 education leaders, teachers, and students. This measure is manifested by a focus on professional development, college transition initiatives, mentorship, and student engagement through initiatives by higher education student affairs. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt (2009) determined two crucial areas to student success to be based on a student's time with activities on campus and institutional allocations of resources and learning opportunities. These learning opportunities are required for students whose immediate background does not lend itself to one from the way of previous college completers within the context of their respective families.

Evaluating through the lenses of postsecondary outreach, the focus of higher education institutions is geared to redefining the way we traditionally approach readiness through K-12 reform efforts, which neglect to completely address the needs of postsecondary students aspiring to become degree completers. Rather, this approach extends the opportunity of mentorship, personal development, and academic

refining to the reach of respective faculty mentorship opportunities, college immersion programs, and college participation outreach.

In this study evaluated the connections of three levels of policy which includes federal, state, and institutional policy as a catalyst of influence in the experiences of all students but in particular African American students. In reviewing the trends that exist in disparities in public education policies to mold the experience of students to better articulate college requirements, the message of college readiness, preparedness, and success has to be delivered at every policy level in order to communicate to families who are underprepared for the rigors of postsecondary study.

Analyzing trends of student minority student participation and access, postsecondary education professionals will need to increase measures to provide transition and reach out initiatives to students prior to entering postsecondary study. Although, K-12 reform has focused curriculum alignment through common core initiatives, higher education still plays a critical role in the education reform of K-20 education in the United States. In particular, not only does higher education play a critical, higher education leads the effort to reform, raising the bar for education performance in the nation.

APPENDIX
LEGISLATION CITED

House Bill 7237	High School Diploma Study
House Bill 7197	Digital Learning Now Act
Senate Bill 404	College Boarding Academy Pilot Program
House Bill 1255	Digital Curriculum/Middle School Career & Professional Academy
Senate Bill 2120	Middle School Career and Professional Academy
House Bill 7135	General Education Core
House Bill 7135	Transfer from Associate to Baccalaureate Program
House Bill 7059	ACCEL
House Bill 7135	K-20 Stem Education Plan
House Bill 5201	Degree Completion Pilot program
House Bill 7129	State Universities of Academic & Research Excellence and National Preeminence Act
House Bill 7059	Academic and Career Planning in Middle Grades
House Bill 7059	Career Themed Courses, Career Academies, & Workforce Alignment
House Bill 7059	Dual Enrollment, Early Admission
House Bill 7059	Early Graduation
House Bill 7059	Accelerations option in public education
House Bill 7063	Digital Learning
Senate Bill 1076	K-20 Education
House Bill 7009	Assignment of Teachers Based on Quality
Senate Bill 1076	Career & Technical Education
Senate Bill 1076	K-12 Career and Education Planning
Senate Bill 1076	Accelerated High School Graduation Options

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| Senate Bill 1076 | Middle Grades Promotion and Remediation |
| Senate Bill 1076 | Next Generation Sunshine State Standards |
| E.O.12-104 | Blue Ribbon Task Force pm State Higher Education |
| House Bill 1127 | School Improvement and Education Accountability |

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dr. Latasha L. Bowens is an educator who has worked in the field of education for more than 15 years. Her educational background includes experience in elementary, middle, high school, and postsecondary education sectors. Ms. Bowens attended the University of North Florida, completing her Bachelor of Arts in Education. During this time, she acquired a position as a high school Social Science teacher at Mandarin High School in Duval County, where she taught in the Social Studies department for 5 years. During her teaching career, she aspired to become an administrator. In fulfilling her hopes of becoming a principal, she began her study at the University of North Florida, completing her Masters of Education Leadership. Ms. Bowens furthered her studies by attaining her Specialist of Education at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. As Ms. Bowens completed her study, she was able to attain a position as Assistant Principal at Sallye B. Mathis Elementary School. During the course of this experience, Ms. Bowens served on a team which improved the school's grade of "C" to a "B".

The primary focus of Ms. Bowens's experiences evolved from her professional goal for student learning which is to create proficient learners and to prepare students for postsecondary education. She worked in two school districts in both Duval and St. Johns Counties.

During Ms. Bowens's experience as a district-level administrator, she worked in student academic engagement and postsecondary readiness. The responsibility she held included organizing and establishing a team to address issues of chronic absenteeism for over 172 schools in Duval County, servicing over 123,000 students. She served as a supervisor of Attendance and School Support Services to monitor students' daily attendance and provide behavioral support for students and families in

need of social services. As a result of the efforts of her dedicated team, student absenteeism decreased by over 11 percent.

Additionally, her leadership experience included oversight of a \$2.4 million federal grant. The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) project grant is a federally funded program designed to spread college awareness to ethnicities and income groups traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education programs. During the course of this opportunity, Bowens and her team prepared a cohort group of students for postsecondary education beginning with 7th grade until graduation. Currently, Ms. Bowens serves as a vice principal/LEA with St. Johns County Public schools in a dedicated School of the Arts and Gifted Middle School. This school offers multiple programmatic dimensions such as a dedicated school of the arts program, gifted, and a severe emotional behavior ESE program.