On-Going Legacy of NCLB: The Institute of Education Sciences

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ABSTRACT: The early 2000s provided a perfect storm within the educational policy arena on a federal level. While No Child Left Behind is considered one of the most influential policies implemented in this period, this paper explored a corollary policy around this same time that established the Institute of Education Sciences. Using a Modified Multiple Streams Framework, Mechanisms of Policy Feedback for Mass Politics, empirical literature, and various data and information sources, the ongoing and long-lasting influence the Institute of Education Sciences is having on educational practices and explored research on a micro and macro level. The paper then concludes with implications and offers suggestions for future study.

INTRODUCTION

Federalism’s influence on education took on new significance shortly after the turn of the millennium. George W. Bush ran his campaign on an education platform (Kirst & Wirt, 2009), and one long-enduring legacy of the Bush administration was the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002). An analysis of policies implemented in and around the early 2000s indicates that a possibly more significant and enduring educational legacy was the adoption of Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) in 2002 within which the federal government established the Institute for Education Sciences (IES; “H.R. 3801,” 2002).

METHODS

Analysis of Policy Passage

• The analysis commenced with a study of news articles, news video clips, blog posts, editorials, websites, qualitative and quantitative researchers’ academic papers, political majorities in House and Senate, as well as the Republican and Democratic political agendas of the early 2000s surrounding the passage of NCLB.

• Based on the multiple constructs of this study, Herweg et al.’s (2015) Modified Multiple Stream Framework (Figure 1) helped explain the ‘perfect storm’ these events provided, allowing agenda windows to open and policies to be passed.

• This framework illustrated how an agenda window opened due to the rhetoric, political players, and momentum from passage of NCLB. Hence, a second stream capitalized on these components to get ESRA passed, thereby establishing IES.

• Embedded in this multiple stream framework was Stone’s (2012) four steps for causal argument by (1) challenging the existing institution, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Sroufe, 2003); (2) blaming poor school performance on lack of quality educational research (Sroufe, 2003); (3) establishing researchers as the fixers of the problem (Schneider & Ingram, 1993); and (4) forming new political alliances (Stone, 2012) with quantitative researchers privileged within the ‘allowable’ research.

Events Following Passage of ESRA

• Following the passage of ESRA, an analysis of the affects and civil impact IES had on sectors within the research community as well as its epistemological impact took place.

• Based on these constructs, Mettler’s (2002) Mechanisms of Policy for Mass Politics (Figure 2) best illustrated the cyclical nature of these effects and impacts.

• IES implementation and impact were then examined from the perspective of those most impacted by the organization, schools, teachers, and students (Figures 3-5 and Table 1).

REFERENCES

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