A comparative study of state educational policies: Systemic models of equitable reform

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES:
SYSTEMIC MODELS OF EQUITABLE REFORM

by

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ABSTRACT

A Comparative Study of State Educational Policies: Systemic Models of Equitable Reform

by

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Substantive attention to disproportionate gaps in achievement between minorities and non-minorities has led state educational agencies to institute responsive policy mandates. The implementation of equity and multicultural policies has resulted in the development of strategies and evaluative measures that assist in building capacity within educational environments to meet the needs of diverse groups of students. This comparative case study examines the ways in which two states have addressed issues of low educational attainment among ethnic and linguistic minority students by instituting equity policy mandates. The two state departments of education have reached out to stakeholders, developed action plans, and attempted to evaluate their own progress in infusing the tenets of multicultural education and principles of equity into educational contexts. This study concludes that state education agencies have taken extensive measures to ensure that policy mandates on multicultural education and equity are systemically implemented. Despite this, the two states continue to rely on local
education agencies to evaluate their own progress in aligning organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the specifications set forth in the policy mandates under review. Considerable differences in academic performance and resistance to policy implementation have not persuaded this two states to conduct on-site district or school reviews using instruments specifically designed to measure the extent to which all students are provided equal access and opportunity.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The 1954 Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka declaring segregated schooling unconstitutional, and a number of successive court decisions highlighted the need for equalizing policies and programs for ethnic and linguistic minority students (Garcia, 2001; Gollnick, 2001). Schools were ordered to restructure as a means of providing marginalized students with equal educational opportunity. To this end, state and local officials, directed by court orders, revised old policies and wrote new ones as an effort to equalize funding and resources, modify existing programs, and improve the quality of instruction provided to underrepresented groups of students. In spite of this, conflicting societal attitudes toward the integration of racial groups persisted and systemic conventions operating in public institutions remained in tact. Even widespread enforcements of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discrimination in school and supported federal desegregation initiatives, did not assist in significantly building inclusive environments for minority and low-income students or change instructional practices to alleviate bias treatment in classrooms (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 2001).

The struggle to provide quality and equal educational opportunities to all students attending public schools in the United States has remained a fundamental challenge for policy makers and educational authorities. The democratic ideal of improving the
human condition made evident by social and economic advancement has been astutely tied to educational contexts that hold promise of upward mobility for its participants, especially for those from marginalized or oppressed communities. However, contradictions tied to unequal treatment and institutional practices that marginalize students based on cultural factors make it difficult to conceptualize the ideology of democracy. Darling-Hammond asserts, “As a consequence of structural inequalities in access to knowledge and resources, students from racial and ethnic ‘minority’ groups in the United States face persistent and profound barriers to educational opportunity” (2001, p. 465). Thus, the self-determination of cultural groups and issues of civil rights have lead to an examination of conflicting notions of the potential of educational experiences to improve life opportunities for each and every child (Spring, 2000).

In the new century, the relationship between race and low academic performance has gained national attention (Gonzalez, 2002; Noguera, 2001). Countless studies document significant gaps in achievement between ethnic and linguistic minority students and their White counterparts (Johnson, 2002; Fryer & Levitt, 2002). Although well-intended, the goal of getting educational leaders to creatively attend to issues of diversity by infusing multicultural and equity principles into schools and classrooms as workable solutions to ending disparities in education has not been fully realized. Educational research on ethnic and linguistic minorities suggests a need to shift public institutions toward acknowledging individual and group differences when setting reform initiatives (Gollnick, 2001; Gollnick & Chinn, 1994; Grant & Miller, 1992).
Research Focus

Recent accountability systems have caused members of the educational community to review multicultural education and equity theories in order to determine how to proceed with planning, implementing, monitoring, and assessing reforms that promote access and opportunity. It is my contention that a review of policy mandates on multicultural education and equity can assist in building capacity to develop responsive solutions. Sleeter (1995) defines multicultural education as “...a process of school reform that is based on reciprocal dialog among diverse socio-cultural groups and on genuine power sharing among groups” (p. 164). Educational equity rectifies issues of discrimination that have taken place in schools due to the suppression of opportunity (Garcia, 2001). Through the lenses of multicultural education and equity, changes in schools are expected to eliminate dominant relationships and to transform educational experiences for all children. Ironically, evidence in the last few decades has shown that multicultural and equity reforms recognize the reproduction of inequality in curriculum, pedagogy, school policies, and instructional materials. The reforms, however, do not directly challenge the decision-making power of education or the hegemonic strongholds that continue to flourish despite federal and state interventions (Jackson & Solis, 1995). Therefore, this study concentrates on the ability of the reform movements to end systemic educational practices that maintain dominant control and move beyond the boundaries of traditional discourses.

In this new era of accountability, proponents of multiculturalism recommend that policy officials demonstrate willingness to enhance life opportunities for subordinated children by attempting to understand the oppressive realities that they face and by
integrating these realities into schooling (Jackson & Solis, 1995; National Association of State Boards of Education, 1991). Grant and Millar (1992) advocate for a more intense examination of multicultural policies aimed at improving equity among minority and low-socioeconomic students. Research literature confirms that educational policy and program implementations are contingent on conditional elements that operate in contextual and historical realms (Hall, 1997 a; 1997 b; Placier et al., 2000; Miron, 1997; Grant & Millar, 1992). Understanding state conditional contexts for which multicultural education and equity policy mandates have been implemented is necessary to effectively debate the reasons for and significance of infusing specific processes and strategies into the reform process.

For decades, states across the nation have been involved in developing policies and implementing programs to meet the needs of diverse youth. A large continuum of initiatives has been imposed by state education agencies ranging from writing general statements that direct local districts to be cognizant of the ramifications of educating diverse groups of students to deliberate reforms that oversee the development and implementation of policies and programs that are intended to equitably meet the needs of the culturally different (Gollnick, 1995). An expanded collection of research on the ways in which states educational authorities interpret multicultural theories, develop policies, and implement initiatives as a means of obtaining educational equity is essential in avoiding the perpetuation of reforms that recycle unproductive practices and stifle the performance of diverse learners.

By concentration on the implementation of multicultural policy mandates and equity legislation, this study adds relevancy to educational research literature three
distinct ways. First, most reform initiatives on multicultural education take place at the
district and building levels (Grant & Millar, 1992). Extensive studies on the achievement
gap have concentrated on district or school efforts to improve educational equity;
however, few studies look through the lens of state government to access the nature of
strategies used to address similar issues. This raises questions as to whether state
departments of education and legislatures are partially relieved of their responsibility of
equalizing educational opportunities for ethnic and linguistic students, as set forth by
policy guidelines and court orders (Placier et al., 2000; Gollnick, 1995). Secondly,
research in the area of multicultural education is concentrated heavily on curriculum and
instruction (Grant & Millar, 1992; Placier et al, 1997). Studies that involve a closer
analysis of systemic leadership initiatives, professional practices, and processes that
result from state policy directives are underrepresented in educational research. This
study provides descriptive analysis of these factors. Finally, the information presented in
this discourse uncovers analytical processes and strategies used by state personnel to
resolve issues of inequity and to improve educational outcomes for high risk ethnic and
linguistic minority students.

Sociocultural Influences on Learning

An alarming percentage of students from low-income and minority backgrounds
are resistant to authority in school, unmotivated, and score disproportionately low on
performance measures (Miron, 1997; Gordon & Yowell, 1994). Research literature
asserts that this is mainly due to academic resistance, which is linked to feelings of
powerlessness and the need for acceptance. When all else fails, Shor (1992) contends
that minority students often *play dumb* in oppressive environments in order to navigate through dehumanizing or uncomfortable situations. The tendency of educators to ignore conditions of culture causes students to become detached from learning situations, engage in self-doubt, and resent school authority figures (Shor, 1992; Powell, 1999; Nieto, 2000). For this reason, critical educators continue their efforts to advocate for reforms that are reflective of the diverse languages, beliefs, and values of students of color and their families.

Educational leaders, practitioners, and advocacy groups today search for reasons to explain differences in achievement between dominant and minority student groups. According to Noguera (2001):

The relationship between race and academic achievement is once again the focus of national attention. Periodically, the issue has become the subject of debate in the national news media, and on each occasion various experts are called on to put forward explanations of racial differences in performance... (p. 18).

Research studies conducted in the last decade have revealed that even African American, Latino, and Native American students from affluent and middle class backgrounds lag behind Asian and White students in academic performance (Noguera, 2001; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Ogbu, 2003). Likewise, linguistic minority students, who attend schools with significant amounts of supplemental services, continue to experience gaps in achievement when compared to their white counterparts attending the same schools (Rumberger, 2000).

In his theory on minority status, Ogbu (1995) and Ogbu and Simmons (1998) point to societal influences as the root cause of low school achievement among Mexican
Americans, African Americans, and American Indians. These involuntary minorities have not fully integrated into the mainstream, position themselves differently in society in comparison with Anglo Americans, and face persistent problems in educational settings. According to Ogbu, conflicts in interpersonal and intergroup relationships, differences in communication styles, and oppressive conditions found in public intuitions explain the variations in academic performance among those from mainstream and involuntary cultures. The cultural anthropologist asserts:

...involuntary minorities do not seem to be able or willing to separate attitudes and behaviors that result in academic success from those that may result in linear acculturation or replacement of their cultural identity with White American cultural identity (Ogbu, 1995, p. 10).

To avoid camouflaging student issues or superficially adapting curricula, Ogbu (1995, 2003) poses solutions to educators who want to increase academic engagement among subordinated minorities. In addition to the prerequisites of understanding cultural and language differences, Ogbu suggests that educators use students’ cultural backgrounds and community experiences in classroom interactions and set up programs to help involuntary minority students’ bridge the gap between school success and cultural differences.

In a study conducted of high achieving and underachieving Mexican American students, Pena (1997) found that students denied aspects of their ethnic membership in order to feel socially accepted in school. Mexican American students viewed their cultures and languages as barriers to assimilating into the school’s overall structure. The resilience demonstrated by high performing students who participated in the study was
summed up by their statements expressing the need to out-perform Anglo students attending the school. One student claimed that stating one's ethnic background or that wearing clothing which could be easily attributed to a specific group sometimes led to negative attitudes and consequences. According to the student:

When I'm alone and not with anybody I don’t tell people that I’m a Mexican right away. My last name is Mexican but a lot of people don’t know my name before so I don’t say nothing and they think I’m American or Italian sometimes. Then sometimes when my friends in school get on me about my shoes or my clothes or what I bring to lunch or whatever, I pretend like it doesn’t bother me and I make fun too (Pena, 1997, pp. 9-10).

By contrast, underachieving Mexican American students participating in the Pena’s study did not associate with high achieving Mexican American students, did not seek academic recognition, and clung to peers from their own neighborhoods. The researcher notes that underachieving students felt uncomfortable in the school due to contradictions in cultural philosophies and personal interactions. Underachieving Mexican American students viewed high achievement as mimicking Anglo student behavior and held low opinions of Mexican American students who tried to “fit in.”

When imposing reform initiatives to accommodate the needs of linguistic minority children, Hernandez (1992) guides policy officials and educational administrators toward the examination of issues related context, process, and content. Many challenges that linguistic minorities experience in school are brought on by broader societal contexts that need to be fully understood by state policy-makers seeking to change conditions in schooling. Hernandez argues that a student’s home and family life,
socialization patterns, and literacy practices should be interwoven into strategies used to raise academic performance among culturally diverse children.

As educational reform reaches new heights in this millennium, many educators fail to acknowledge that culture is often a precursor to learning and achievement. In one account, Schwartz (2000) asserts that Latinas are committed to the overall well being of their families. Individual aspirations are often not as pressing a priority in many Hispanic communities as compared to non-minority communities. The desire to contribute economically and socially to the family prompts many Latinas to deter long-term educational goals. Cultural dissonance occurs in school when educators create environments that are contradictory to lived experiences. Researchers suggest that implementing educational strategies aimed at assisting Latinas as they fulfill their familial and social responsibilities serves as better means of enhancing learning, combating feelings of isolation, and reducing dissonance.

This study centers on the notion that ignoring differences is non-productive. Critical proponents of educational reform assert that aggressively incorporating the tenets of multicultural education or the principles of equity can set a course for a closer examination of the causes of disproportionate gaps in achievement between dominant and subgroups of marginalized students (Shor, 1992; Freire, 1970; Jackson & Solis, 1995). Research literature astute in sociocultural frameworks purports that cultural responsiveness combined with the principles of educational equity recognizes the burdens that dominant groups and traditional institutions place on marginalized children and serves as a vehicle for emancipation in schooling.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative case study was to examine the manner in which two state departments of education have interpreted policy mandates, reached out to stakeholders, and evaluated their progress in infusing the principles of multicultural education and equity into educational contexts. More specifically, this comparative case study examined the ways in which two state educational agencies have addressed issues of low educational attainment among diverse students enrolled in public schools by instituting equity legislation and a regulation on multicultural education. Recent attention on organizational structures and pedagogical practices that contribute to disproportionate gaps in achievement has led state leaders to institute responsive guidelines, strategies, and evaluative measures. The states under investigation publicly acknowledge that they have failed to adequately serve the needs of ethnic and linguistic minority students. As a result, aggressive reform initiatives have been put in place to improve educational opportunity and to close gaps in achievement among minorities and non-minorities.

The goal of transforming educational environments into institutions that respect the cultures and languages of the students enrolled is fundamental to reforms initiatives in each state. Since significant amounts of minority students in the two states under review have not performed at expected academic levels, a review of policy implementations assists state-level reformers in 1) assessing their practices and processes directed toward meeting critical educational priorities and 2) instituting systemic changes. Therefore, uncovering the processes used by key state educational employees to appropriate change for the academic benefit of all students is central to this study.
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical base for this study derived from a synthesis of theories. A convergence of cultural ecology theory (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998) and social systems theory (Owens, 2001) served as a foundation for research. Depth of student learning and performance can be explained through an understanding of the relationship between school experiences and culture. In the United States, students of color and those who speak English as a second language experience higher levels of academic failure. This has been attributed to a lack of understanding among policy makers, administrators, counselors, and teachers of the lived experiences and cultural backgrounds of ethnic and linguistic minorities (Ogbu, 1999; Neito, 2001). Further, a vast majority of educational policies, programs, and practices operate under conditional elements that serve as barriers to educational opportunity (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998: Spring, 2000). An examination of the cultural ecology and social systems theories lays a foundation for 1) diverse groups of stakeholders to create organizations which eliminate conditions in schooling that have prevented students of color and linguistic minority students from reaching their full potential and 2) efficacy when implementing educational policies aimed at improving equal educational opportunity.

When conceptualizing sociocultural frameworks, Valenzuela et al. (2000) assert that an individual's cognitive and psychology development advances through processes dependent on signs and symbols appropriated by personal experience. The ability to engage students from marginalized and culturally different backgrounds depends on an understanding of cultural tools used by students to navigate within social and academic contexts. Cultural ecology theory provides explanations of the ways in which systems
affect minority school performance (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998) by examining environment, perception, and behavior. Box 1 captures the essence of this theory as it relates to state education agency initiatives aimed at improving the performance of low achieving ethnic and linguistic minority students.

<table>
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<td>1. Student performance may be linked to treatment or mistreatment in education and student perceptions and responses to such treatments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. An understanding of the ways in which systems affect minorities is crucial to resolving issues of low achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Collective problems” originate from instrumental (employment/wages), relational (subordination/mistrust) and symbolic discrimination (denigration of cultural/language) leading groups to find “collective solutions.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Pedagogical implications for helping minority students succeed can be obtained by building trust, engaging in cultural responsive instruction, explicitly dealing with opposition and ambivalence, providing role models, setting high standards, and involving parents and the community.</td>
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This study focuses attention on the state’s responsibility in instituting “collective solutions” to Ogbu’s cultural ecology theory. The two state education agencies that serve as cases for this research have implemented policies to guide educational authorities and teachers toward actions that are aimed at eliminating differences in school performance.
among minority and non-minorities. An implication of the policy mandates under investigation was to improve the treatment of minorities in schools by eliminating structural barriers that lead to low school achievement. An examination of issues and challenges that arise when the cultures and experiences of minority groups operate in direct opposition to the culture of schooling provides unique insight for reformers.

Organizational theory builds upon the foundations within social structures that guide collaboration, decision-making, actions, and resources toward the realization of formal goals (Selznick, 1996). General systems theory, a subcomponent of organizational theory, describes individual and organizational behavior as inputs are put through a series of processes in order to generate a specific output (Gibson et al., 1984). Throughout the twentieth century, system theories have expanded to include a study of the relationship between the real world and organizational tendencies. Social systems theory builds upon general systems theory and begins with an understanding of interdependent relationships that affect the realization of organizational goals (Owens, 2001). Figure 1.0 depicts the main elements of social systems theory. The diagram shows a cyclical interaction that occurs within organizations which involves inputs (knowledge, values, goals, and human and material resources), processes (strategies, timelines, targets), environment (internal/external factors), and outputs (changed forms/individuals) (Owens, 2001; Gibson et al., 1984).
Social systems theory rests upon open systems that motivate leaders and employees to consider how actions will influence those affected by new initiatives (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Inputs, processes, outputs, and the environment work as interdependent components of social systems theory (Owens, 2001; Gibson et al. 1984). The values, beliefs, and tendencies of those responsible for assisting the organization in meeting its objectives are considered and juxtaposed with individual struggles to survive or to maintain institutional norms. Therefore, behavior of individuals and groups within organizations is guided by internal and external factors and adjustments based on demands (Gibson et al., 1984).
The roles of participants within organizations compel leadership to stabilize authority and communication (Selznick, 1996) and to build coalitions that further the range of identified objectives (Cyert & March, 1996). Social theorists have called into question the practice of organizing and operating educational institutions without consideration of the lived experiences of diverse student populations (Hildalgo et al., 2001). Discrepancies exist between the organizational cultures of schools that operate under traditional ideologies and the cultures of growing numbers of ethnic and linguistic minority students. The connectedness between social/family influence and student learning has led reformers toward a critical review of organizational norms, policies, and practices that are intended to "motivate, socialize, and educate children" (Hildago, et. al, 2001, p. 499).

The two state departments of education under investigation in this study interacted with inside and outside agents to implement policy mandates on multicultural education and equity. The values and assumptions of those responsible for change became apparent as initiatives and targets passed through multiple channels. Grant and Sleeter (1998) argue that 1) educational organizations must come to terms with prejudices and structural barriers that prevent culturally diverse groups from achieving and that 2) critical evaluation of dominant ideologies that permeate state and district educational policies and programming should be self-imposed and stimulate reflective change. To this end, transforming educational institutions so that all students learn at high levels is crucial to systemic reform movements.
Confronting Belief Systems: *All Children Can Learn*

The principles of multicultural education and educational equity address belief and value systems influenced by knowledge of cultural groups. The belief that *all* children can learn moves educators toward a shared sense of responsibility for student achievement outcomes. To this end, philosophical shifts are beginning to permeate educational systems throughout the country. An uncompromised commitment to calling attention to students who are not benefiting from the educational process is demonstrated by Secretary Paige's statement:

In order to eliminate the achievement gap and improve student performance across the board, we must hold educators accountable to the bold proposition that every child can learn. This is a belief that President Bush takes very seriously, and he means no child left behind quite literally. He does not mean that, after you siphon off the children who have disabilities, or were never properly taught how to read, or never learned English, or disrupted their classrooms, then the rest can learn. He means that all of our students, even the ones our system calls "hard to teach," can learn. There is no middle ground or room for excuses (Paige 2002, p. 6).

Since state policy makers and educational authorities are ultimately responsible for educating all students, critical researchers assert that they must come to terms with their own biases concerning ethnic and linguistic minorities for the sake of equitable change (Nieto, 2000; Hall, 1997 b; Gollnick & Chinn, 1994). This is important because state educational officials, who may be unfamiliar with the equity pedagogy or the daily
experiences of marginalized students, write and are responsible for overseeing a wide variety of policies.

At present, it is unclear as to whether the majority of public school officials are interested in abandoning assimilationist models for pedagogical and organizational structures that nurture power sharing and the affirmation of diverse cultural characteristics. In order to transform learning environments into culturally sensitive settings that positively affect the academic potential of high-risk children, researchers maintain that state and local authorities must 1) ask themselves challenging questions related to multiculturalism, 2) become informed of the values, native language issues, and mainstream perspectives of diverse groups, 3) support initiatives that build positive relationships across cultures, and 4) monitor and evaluate curriculum, programs, and policy developments seeking to counteract organizational barriers and traditional conventions (Hall, 1997a; Placier et al., 2000).

Noting that disaggregated student performance information assisted principals and teachers in "buying into" equitable philosophies, Koschoreck (2001) asserts that educational officials were challenged when it became apparent that transformation was to become an expected reality. In his study of the Aldine Independent School District's system of accountability, the researcher noted:

The disaggregation of student achievement data available through the state accountability system provides district administrators with knowledge concerning the achievement gap between and among racial/ethnic groups. Although the availability of this knowledge represents a crucial step toward the promotion of educational equity inasmuch as it provides a clear and measurable indication of

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the inequities present in the current educational system, alone it is insufficient to
guarantee a change in behavior of district and campus personnel (Koschoreck,

On first inspection, it seems almost impossible to overcome barriers to equitable
and responsive school reform. To counteract personal biases that restrict pluralistic
developments, Lee (1994) challenges school administrators to search within themselves
to determine if they have the courage to take a position to implement reforms that
embrace the fundamentals of multiculturalism. Educational leaders who intend to be
responsive to the current needs of ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse
students must also be prepared to engage in crucial debates on a variety of critical issues.
This argument is best framed by Lee’s position on multicultural transformation. The
theorist states:

Confronting the hard questions both in preparation for transformation and in the
implementation of the multicultural educational practices are part of our civic
responsibility to our students, whomever they may be and wherever they may be
(Lee, 1994, p. 4).

The states under investigation in this study maintain that public debates are crucial to the
effective implementation of equity policy mandates. In addition, the states have moved
beyond the sole dissemination of data and have required local school leaders to identify
targets, strategies, and outcomes as a method of measuring educational initiatives.

Skrla’s and Scheurich’s (2001) study of recognized or exemplary schools in
Texas points out state accountability factors that displaced deficit thinking and
significantly contributed to increases in performance among low-income and children of
color. Prior to the implementation of the state accountability systems, educators blamed lack of achievement among minorities and low-income students on societal, family, and motivational limitations, rather than examining systemic inequities. According to the researchers, the primary characteristics of the state’s accountability system, which supported responsive processes and practices included: 1) releasing data on educational inequity to the public, calling attention to superintendent explanations and educator lack of responsiveness to performance indicators, 2) reducing political risks of superintendents as they implemented district mandates aimed at eliminating inequities directly related to racial and socio-economic group performance, 3) expanding the role of the superintendent beyond management toward growth as instructional leaders, and 4) setting higher expectations of student performance for each and every child.

The Era of Accountability

The passage of Goals 2000 placed the standards-based movement at the forefront of each state’s educational agenda (Johnson, 2002; Gonzalez, 2002). Schools were made more accountable for assisting students in reaching their academic potential by focusing on raising expectations (Johnson, 2002). Content and performance standards were written by state education officials and national organizations and served as a means to add credibility to student learning. High stakes testing soon followed as states sought to improve academic the performance of low achieving students. Wider audiences now speak publicly about the ways in which deliberate measures and program interventions initiated by state legislators, departments of education, and local school systems cultivate operational principles necessary to reduce or eliminate issues of underachievement.
The newly revised Elementary and Secondary Reform Act (H.R.1), signed into law in early 2001, has caused educational officials nationwide to pay particular attention to issues of equity and access. The act is a comprehensive course of action designed to close achievement gaps using a system of accountability, flexibility, research-based practices, and choice (United States Department of Education, 2001). States are required to generate an annual state report card that contains information on student achievement disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and economic status. Policy makers hope that former elusive attempts to reform educational systems to rectify inequity in the delivery of services to ethnic and linguistic minority will potentially be eliminated by calculated federal mandates.

Research literature supports the notion that the problem today in eliminating the gaps in achievement between dominant and non-dominant student populations does not revolve solely around educational indifference. One of the primary issues that state and local agencies are confronted with centers on the need to understand what it means to be culturally different in school systems that uphold traditional ideologies (Nieto, 2000). Therefore, the current challenge as it relates to this study lies in state educational leaders' ability to use policy mandates to assist in equalizing opportunities for students who have been left behind by traditional practices.

Research Questions and Design

This study examined state multicultural and equity policies directed at decreasing gaps in achievement among minority and non-minority students. To date, few policy studies have attempted to analyze the state's role in obtaining educational equity as
indicated by frameworks intended to improve the academic attainment of ethnic and linguistic minority students. The following research questions served as a guide for reviewing literature and for investigating cases in a southeastern and a mid-Atlantic state:

1. How have state educational officials implemented legislation or regulations that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity?

2. To what extent have state education agencies used policy mandates to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students?

3. To what extent do state educational officials monitor and evaluate policy mandates specifically targeted toward improving academic performance among culturally diverse students?

4. How have state education agencies attempted to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity policy mandates?

The case study approach was used to frame state policy initiatives in two states. With the assistance of state-level educational informants, the process of implementing legislation and regulations was critically investigated and recorded. Research methodology consisted of a comparative case study analysis of data collected from multiple sources including, educational reports, questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Each qualitative case study includes a description of state legislation or a regulation and an analysis of key themes. Moreover, a multiple case design was used to provide substantive support to conclusions drawn across units (Yin, 1994).

The case study approach provided 1) an effective means of sharing information regarding state initiatives on multicultural education and equity and 2) a framework to
maximize opportunities to uncover meanings within state contexts (Merriam, 1992). I traveled to the two states under investigation and collaborated with insiders identified as state educational employees in the case studies (Spradley, 1980). Insiders or informants were made aware of research aims and provided with field notes for review and for verification toward the conclusion of the data collection process. After the data collection and investigation processes where complete, coding and triangulation techniques enabled me to organize identified information into themes, analyzed results, and confirm findings. The triangulation of data across sources allowed me to uncover meanings and to make interpretations as they relate to legislation in a southeastern state and a regulation in a mid-Atlantic state. In addition, constant comparative methods were used to analyze multicultural and equity issues in order to derive at conclusions on individual cases (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Assumptions and Limitations

Primary assumptions related to the research questions centered in two areas. According to research literature and educational officials, efforts have been made to improve performance among minority and low-income students by instituting policy changes at all levels. I first assumed that policies, practices, and processes were developed as a direct result of state laws posed by legislatures and regulations adopted by state boards of education aimed at enhancing minority student performance. To avoid running the risk of losing funding, potential audits, and low ratings, I assumed that local school systems generally complied with state policy guidelines. Secondly, I presumed that organizational structures and pedagogical practices were considerably transformed as
a result of the implementation of policy initiatives and the increased attention on accountability within the states. Policy statements are intended to guide the actions of those who choose to work within an organization. I anticipated that policy changes would solicit more of a possibility of behavioral and attitudinal shifts necessary for systemic transformation within each state. From my vantage point, reforms that include evaluative measures monitored by state educational officials have more of a potential to lead to institutional change in local school systems. In other words, one cannot expect local school systems to sufficiently regulate themselves considering all of the variables that weigh heavily on reform initiatives.

In addition to a review of assumptions related to this research, three basic limitations were identified. First, I studied the ramifications of a senate bill in a southeastern state passed by legislators and a regulation adopted by a board of education in a mid-Atlantic state. The policy mandates do not exactly run parallel in regards to their authority; however, the regulation under investigation in the mid-Atlantic state "carries the weight of the law," and the state's educators are held to the same standard for its implementation. Secondly, the cases in this study are structured around the duties of specific divisions responsible for the interpretation, implementation, and evaluation of the policy mandates under investigation. Thirdly, responses of state officials who served as participants in this study were critical to answering research questions. Participant views were based on their own knowledge and experiences of state educational contexts. A limitation stems from participant responses that may not align with other educational leaders and policy-makers throughout their respective states. Furthermore, the results of this study should not be over-generalized when comparing the implementation of policy
mandates in the two cases under study with other state educational systems undergoing changes in order to create more equitable environments for ethnic and linguistic minority students.

Definitions

Culturally Competent -- An acute understanding of what is relevant, valued, and offensive in various cultures as well as a heightened sensitivity of communicative tendencies and behavior style which leads to the inclusion of this knowledge into professional practice.

Culturally Different -- Ethnic and linguistic minorities who possess distinctive behavior and social differences (which are embedded in their cultures) when compared to dominant populations.

Dominant Cultures -- Specific groups of individuals of European heritage who are issued non-minority status, share common socio-historical and socio-cultural characteristics, and experience privileged positions in the United States.

Ethnic Minority -- Specific groups of individuals who share common socio-historical and socio-cultural characteristics. Ogbu's (1995) framework on involuntary minorities applies in this study distinguishing African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans as ethnic groups whose cultural differences conflict with schooling.

Equity -- Principles of transformation that eliminate dominant relationships in education through the development of organizational structures, policies, practices, and processes responsive to the individual needs of students.
**High-Risk (Low Performing)** -- For the purposes of this dissertation, the term is used to identify ethnic and linguistic minority students who are at-risk of academic failure due to:

1. underachievement in school as identified by grades, dropout rates, and scores on state and national assessment tests;
2. sociocultural mismatches between schooling and home/community realities;
3. barriers resulting from policies intending to eliminate inequities but which cultivates decision-making that is biased and discriminatory;
4. organizational frameworks and pedagogical practices that limit student academic potential.

**Legislation** -- Legal provisions for governing schools that have resulted from court orders or public opinion which protect the educational interest and civil rights of all students in the state.

**Linguistic Minority** -- Student populations whose primary language is not English and who maintain their native languages in the United States. This study concentrates on linguistic minority students who have not performed well in school.

**Minority** -- Refers to students of color. Specifically, those of African, Latin, Asian, and Native heritage whom have been historically marginalized in society and experience high levels of low achievement in schools.

**Multicultural Education** -- A philosophical belief that infuses the contributions, beliefs, and experiences of culturally diverse groups into the educational process, advocates for positive intergroup relationships, calls attention to the reproduction of social inequalities, and focuses on the different ways in which learners construct meaning.

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**Policy** -- Statements that human guide behavior within an institution in effort to obtain desired outcomes.

**Regulation** -- Directives adopted by a state board of education to guide human behavior toward processes that afford all students equitable opportunities to obtain a quality education.

**Stakeholders** -- Individuals and groups including students, parents/guardians, school faculty and staff, state and local educational officials, policy makers, business and community members, and university staff who take special interest and play a central role resolving issues related to providing an equitable and quality public education to *all* students.

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**Overview of Chapters**

The chapters that follow present a review of literature, discuss the research methodology used to collect and to analyze data, and synthesize conclusions related to the cases studied. Chapter two conceptualizes multicultural education, identifies limitations and criticisms of the paradigm, and examines possibilities of using the framework to obtaining educational equity in public schools. The chapter also describes the context of educational policy making, identifies state policy initiatives and systemic barriers to aligning organizational structures and pedagogical with equity principles. Chapter three details the methodology used for data collection and analysis. Ethical issues are discussed briefly and the criteria used to select states are identified. As a final point, a description of each state that frames the cases under study is presented. A presentation of findings and an analysis of data are found in chapter four. The study ends...
with conclusions and implications for multiple stakeholders, and for further studies in chapter five, and outlines a model for systemic excellence that results from a synthesis of best practices used in the states under investigation.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative case study was to examine the ways in which two state educational agencies have attempted to build capacity to provide quality education and to improve the academic achievement of diverse students enrolled in public schools by instituting equity legislation and a regulation on multicultural education. Recent attention on organizational structures and pedagogical practices that contribute to disproportionate gaps in achievement has led state leaders to institute responsive guidelines, strategies, and evaluative measures. The two states publicly acknowledged that they have failed to adequately serve the needs of ethnic and linguistic minority students and aggressive reform initiatives have been put in place to close present gaps in achievement. State departments of education have interpreted policy mandates, reached out to stakeholders, and evaluated their progress in infusing the principles of multicultural education and equity into educational contexts. Although other legislation and regulations that either directly or indirectly speak to improving minority achievement exist in both states, this study concentrates on policy mandates managed by a pre-select office within each state department of education, thereby, limiting the focus of this research.
Two theories were used to focus this research. The cultural ecology theory challenges educational officials and teachers to 1) gain an understanding of cultural experiences and 2) consider how the relationship between culture and school affects academic performance when instituting reforms (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Social systems theory concentrates on behaviors and processes within institutions that are used to lead inside and outside agents toward a common goal (Owens, 2001). Collectively, the theories assist in explaining the methods used by each state education agency to directly address issues of low achievement among ethnic and linguistic minorities and to create organizational systems that eliminate structural barriers and improve equity. Educational authorities in the states under study have worked to heighten sensitivity toward cultural groups in effort to improve access and opportunity for members of minority groups. Policy makers, state and local educational employees, task forces, and community groups have examined issues in and out of school that explain differences in achievement among culturally diverse groups. This community of stakeholders determined that policies, processes, and practices needed to be modified to enhance knowledge of culture and to improve educational opportunities.

Research Question

1. How have state educational officials implemented legislation or regulations that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity?

2. To what extent have state education agencies used policy mandates to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students?

3. To what extent do state educational officials monitor and evaluate policy mandates specifically targeted toward improving academic performance among
4. How have state education agencies attempted to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity policy mandates?

This chapter reviews relevant literature in key areas pertinent to answering the above research questions. The literature focuses on the themes of state policy-making, multicultural education, and educational equity. Collectively, the body of literature provides a comprehensive understanding of state initiatives on multicultural education and equity in states and the ability of the reform movements to 1) respond to the needs of culturally diverse learners, 2) transform educational environments, and 3) raise achievement among marginalized groups of students. Because of the complexities involved in equitably educating growing populations of ethnic and linguistic learners, the literature reviewed in this chapter seeks to present a synthesized rationale for state educational officials to apply the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity into aggressive accountability systems.

Conceptualizing Multicultural Education

To keep pace with changing attitudes toward minorities in society, traditional philosophies that were once revealed through frameworks of assimilation shifted toward multiculturalism in the late 1960s. Banks (1994), one of the early pioneers of the reform movement, asserts that 1) holding positive attitudes and expectations toward minority groups, 2) transforming curriculum to reflect diversity, 3) instituting empowering pedagogy, and 4) utilizing teaching materials that present diverse perspectives are fundamentals of the paradigm. Collectively, these guidelines serve as benchmarks for the
reform movement in terms of building inclusive environments that challenge all students, regardless of their backgrounds.

Early theorists advocated for three basic approaches to multicultural education (Banks, 1994). Curriculum reform was an early approach advocated by multiculturalists to restructure traditional educational programs by including ethnic, cultural and gender perspectives and experiences. The basic goals of implementing a multicultural curriculum were to give students opportunities to understand differences and to explore misrepresentations of cultural groups, and to affirm student identity (Derman-Sparks, 2000). Additionally, multicultural educators concentrated on the achievement approach, which identified aims and strategies designed to raise performance among non-traditional and marginalized students. Further, critical reformers encouraged the infusing of the intergroup approach, which assisted students in relating to and developing positive attitudes toward individuals from various cultural and gender groups.

Nieto (2000) asserts that multicultural education is antiracist, basic, important, pervasive, education for social justice, a process and critical. Table 1.0 that follows presents is a brief description of each of Nieto’s characteristics of multicultural school reform.
Table 1.0 Nieto’s (2000) Characteristics of Multicultural School Reform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antiracist</th>
<th>Calls attention to favoritism based on race in teacher interactions, curriculum, and materials.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Provides instruction in the core areas of reading, writing, arithmetic, and computer literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Acceptance of the perceptions, struggles, and experiences of all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pervasive</td>
<td>Apparent in the school’s formal and hidden curriculum, climate, adult-student interactions, and instructional resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Prepares students to take a stand on social issues, derive at resolutions, and empower themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills to bring about change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>An ongoing infusion and evaluation of inclusive student experiences and learning environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Pedagogy</td>
<td>Expects students to challenge traditional views that serve as suppressive forces in their lives and encourages them to use education to take charge of their own lives.</td>
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These essential characteristics:

1. serve as a guide for beginning the process to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the language on equity;
2. work collectively to provide a basis for decision making by reflecting on practice and social change;
3. transform experiences for disempowered children and youth who habitually experience academic failure;
4. supply as a framework for policy officials and school administrators when addressing issues of changing demographics (Banks, 1994; Placier et al., 1997; Carrasquillo, 1998; Nieto, 2000).

The paradigm shift toward multiculturalism that was originally developed in previous decades was meant to be far-reaching and lead to equitable institutional changes throughout society (Banks, 1994). Multicultural theorists and advocates maintain that the promotion of multicultural infusion is standard protocol that educational officials at all
levels must utilize to equalize achievement among students. In addition to the creation of service departments that deal with racial issues and disseminate information on underrepresented minority groups, Martínez (1998) challenges state governments and school districts to create multicultural offices that commonly work in a research capacity to 1) track needs relative to minority, bilingual, and other culturally diverse populations, 2) track access to academic and social services, 3) disseminate and develop resources, programs, and activities that lead to increases in the educational attainment of low-performing students from various cultural groups, and 4) monitor the progress of the implementation of recommendations and training programs. Crumpton (1992) asserts that leadership should give high priority to the long-term planning and evaluation of approaches and programs.

Currently, the majority of state educational departments has no comprehensive plans or evaluated measure to successfully implement multicultural education initiatives (Mitchell & Salsbury, 2000). Most local undertakings are left afloat and depend heavily on district and site-based administrative support to assist in realizing pre-identified outcomes (Crumpton, 1992; Lee, 1994). Jackson (1995) surveyed fifty state departments of education to determine their “perception of the need to infuse multicultural issues into public school curriculum” (p. 31). Most of the states that responded to a survey admitted to having programs when infusing multiculturalism into the curriculum but added that they left such issues up to local school officials.

Stevenson and Gonzalez (1992) sampled thirty of the largest school districts in the nation with high minority populations to examine the implementation of multicultural curricula. Schools districts acknowledged having instituted multicultural curricula since
1985; however, multicultural education programs had been in existence since 1965. Overriding themes of multicultural curricula include: an emphasis on behaviors, values, and experiences of all cultures, an appreciation of and respect for diversity, and integrated learning approaches. It is important to note that the one state in this study overwhelming decided to implement multicultural policies and programs due to student requests, court-order desegregation directives, and community advocacy. Findings indicate that in the state's superintendent endorsed multiculturalism and required school site-based personnel to infuse inclusive principles into their programs. Further, the majority of school districts offered in-service training in multicultural education for teachers and administrators.

**Limitations and Criticisms of Multicultural Education**

Presently, theories view multicultural education as a broad concept that stretches beyond curricula and extends itself to issues of racial oppression, educational decision-making, and social criticism. Sleeter (1995) defines multicultural education as “…a process of school reform that is based on reciprocal dialog among diverse socio-cultural groups and on genuine power sharing among groups” (p. 164). Through this lens, changes in schools are expected to eliminate dominant relationships and transform instruction. Ironically, evidence in the last few decades has shown that multicultural reforms recognize the reproduction of inequality in pedagogy, school policies, and instructional materials. The reforms, however, do not directly challenge the decision-making power of education or the hegemonic strongholds that continue to flourish despite federal and state interventions (Jackson & Solis, 1995). Table 2.0 denotes three of the major limitations of the paradigm. Theorists maintain that contemporary definitions...
focus primarily on cultural diversity and social justice, research on multicultural policies is limited, and the process of implementation must be explored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.0 Limitations of the Paradigm</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contemporary definitions typically include a process of comprehensive school reform; however, the focus of the paradigm still remains primarily on infusing cultural diversity and issues of social justice into teaching and learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Few research studies exist on the ability of multicultural policies to “promote equity for all students and [identify] when they fall short of this goal.” Moreover, limited records of systemic factors instituted by state or local educators that either support or contradict multicultural and equity policy mandates exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanations of the effects of policies and programs after statements have been written, distributed, and implemented in response to state directives are virtually non-existent.</td>
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Research literature illustrates that opponents of critically affirmative agendas typically argue against disrupting traditional methodologies in public education (Giroux, 1995; Shor, 1992). In contrast to the popularity of multicultural education throughout the 1960s and 1970s, conservative educators embraced assimilationist models that stressed individualism and equality of educational opportunity. Traditionalists challenge the notion that deliberate action is needed to begin to eliminate cultural conflicts that take place in society and school. On the other hand, critical multiculturalists assert that assimilationist models view students from minority cultures as deficient in educational settings and primarily placed them at blame for their own underachievement (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994). Even more discouraging, research shows that deficit thinking is elusive among school district leadership (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). This viewpoint becomes evident as low-income and children of color are tracked into lower level classes, disciplined more frequently, and sorted into remedial and special programs.
Demonstrating the effects of systemic resistance to the paradigm, Combleth and Waugh (1993) conducted a study of infusing of diverse cultural perspectives into curriculum in California and New York. The Board of Regents in California selected scholars and educators to serve on a history and social studies review committee in 1990. Prior to assembling the committee, debates on the fair representation of diversity in content knowledge had reached an all time high. During the first committee meeting, Schlesinger, an adamant critic of multiculturalism, stated that there was no significant connection between African Americans today and African history or culture, and he dismissed the African legacy as ‘tribalism, slavery, and tyranny’ (Combleth & Waugh, 1993, p. 35). Although tempers flared, the committee was able to reach a consensus and the Board of Regents approved a more multicultural social studies syllabi. Unlike educational policy-making in California, Combleth and Waugh (1993) assert that New York made consciousness efforts during the early 1990s to infuse ethnic and immigrant perspectives into course content without trying to accommodate those who espoused European nationalistic ideologies. When developing history and social studies curriculum during the summer of 1991, state educational officials in New York accepted a broader view of Americanism and required that diverse perspectives transfer into classroom practice.

More contemporary criticisms of multicultural education theories rest largely in the lack of attention given to measuring minority student performance for substantial periods of time (Johnson, 2002), failure to hold minority students accountable for their own learning, and the lack of distinguishing minority groups who achieve from those who do not (Ogbu, 1995). Since the institution of multicultural standards by the
Minnesota Board of Education, the state has struggled to decrease gaps in performance making it difficult to draw a direct relationship between multiculturalism and enhanced achievement (Spaeth, 1997). Critics claim that the multicultural approach has not proven to do more than assist in affirming group and individual identity within institutions. In defense of multicultural education, Gay (1994) asserts, “multicultural practices are not consistent with theoretical ideals and focus too much on obvious and superficial symbols, artifacts, customs, and traditional cultures” risking a narrow characterization of the paradigm (p. 43).

**Multicultural Education as Means of Obtaining Educational Equity**

Even critics of multicultural education who note its limitations as a perspective agree that the paradigm provides a scaffold for institutional change. Multicultural education provides a lens for understanding the experiences and unique backgrounds of diverse groups. Gay (1988) asserts:

> The essence of multicultural education is the diversification of the content, contexts, and techniques used to facilitate learning to better reflect the ethnic, cultural, and social diversity of the United States. Its, intent is to improve the academic success of a broader spectrum of students... (p. 332).

This process is necessary for bridging relationships between culture and school achievement. Research literature points out that the goal of obtaining educational equity in public schools is dependent on the elimination of belief systems among senior administrators and teachers who perpetuate stereotyping and the implementation of policies, practices, and institutional norms that expect standard or above standard
performance from all students regardless of race, income, first language, or gender (Johnson, 2002; Nieto, 2000; Banks et al., 2001). Deliberate measures and program interventions initiated by state legislators, departments of education, and local school systems can cultivate operational principles necessary to reduce or to eliminate issues of under-achievement (Placier et al., 2000).

Extensive efforts have been made by state officials and departments of education to improve the quality of instruction for all children; however, it is evident that authorities do not always fully examine the need to understand cultural differences or make efforts to identify barriers to academic achievement before formulating policies. Ogbu and Simons (1998) examined the problems associated with schooling minorities and determined that the issue was threefold. First, educational policies and practices toward minorities were often self-defeating. Secondly, minority students experienced high levels of unconscious, well-intentioned academic oppression in school. The third problem is broad in effect and centers around the lack of positive rewards that society gives to minorities for their school attainment. Many educational officials hope that implementing multicultural education will assist in alleviating problems of persistent achievement gaps, high dropout rates, and substandard test scores, as well as enhance self-confidence among culturally diverse students (Stevenson & Gonzalez, 1992).

In a study of a school district in southern California, Johnson (2000) found that counselors generally sorted high school African American and Latino students in low track classes and advised them to attend community colleges rather than four year institutions. Counselors' low expectations were attributed to perceived student and parent behaviors. In addition to differential placement, low teacher expectations, and
negative student-teacher interactions, stereotypical views contribute to low performance among ethnic minority and limited English proficient students (Nieto, 2000; Gordon & Yowell, 1994). This has caused some educational officials to become more forceful in infusing a multicultural philosophy into school contexts.

Multicultural policy statements serve as guidelines for action and are specifically intended to address issues of cultural diversity, equal access, and opportunity (Placier et al., 2000). Once policies are distributed to site-based authorities and teachers, interpretations occur and planning takes root. Multiculturalists advocating for educational policy reform affirm that states and districts absent of multicultural policies 1) miss the opportunity to establish principles to guide education officials and school staff members toward understanding the meaning of difference and 2) are deprived of the benefits of becoming culturally competent which would lead to professional practices that demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultural values and communication styles. (Placier et al., 2000; Placier et al., 2000). Without support in the form of policy mandates from state educational agencies, districts are vulnerable in confronting issues of educational inequity (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001).

The Context of Educational Policy Making

Recognizing the challenge of providing quality education for ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse learners, state governments have developed and implemented strong initiatives to rectify problems of inequitable learning experiences. In past decades, state governments have 1) insisted that local districts fill classrooms with certified staff, 2) made grants available for academic programs, 3) written statues for
non-native speakers of English, and 4) provided technical assistance to school systems in the forms of human and material resources and professional development. These actions occurred in an effort to accommodate multicultural demographic changes and to raise achievement levels among low performing students (Gollnick, 1995; Placier, 1993; McKnight & Antunez, 1999). State legislatures and departments of education gambled on the notion that providing schools with additional resources and insisting on quality instruction would result in district-level reforms that would lead to equal opportunity and access for ethnic and minority low-income students. The result of such actions proved largely insufficient and disproportionate achievement between whites and non-whites persisted (Gollnick, 2001, Johnson, 2002).

State officials depend heavily on standards-based education and testing to resolve serious issues facing high-risk students (Orfield, 1988; Crumpton, 1992). It is debatable as to whether these remedies grant regard to structural barriers that prevent ethnic and linguistic minority students (commonly characterized as high-risk) from succeeding in school. In addition, many state officials assume that setting higher standards will "increase motivation to learn and eliminate the fraud involved in social promotion policies" (Orfield, 1988, p. 58). Solely concentrating on the end result of the policy process provides a limited view of what actually occurs at state and at local levels. Scholars and researchers have begun to study the implementation of policy within social organizations to gain a greater understanding of how individuals construct meanings and to review vast implications of the policy-making process. Levinson and Sutton (2001) assert:
Taking seriously the notion that implementation shapes policy has led to a wide range of qualitatively informed case studies of policy in action. These studies implicitly challenge a simple linear model of policy processes and focus attention more closely on the meaning of policy in the lives of those affected by it (p. 7).

Viewing educational policy-making through a socio-cultural lens enables those interested in equitable change to examine privilege standpoints, understand the doctrines that shape daily behavior, and uncover how individuals legitimate the marginalization of specific groups of students (Hall, 1997 b; Placier et al., 1997). In addition to conditional elements, the policy process is dependent on knowledgeable consumers astute in the change process and able to appropriately navigate through the challenges presented along the way. Learning to recognize what is meaningful or relevant to specific students is a skill that needs to be developed. The National Association of State Boards of Education (1994) asserts, “policy makers have responded by infusing multiculturalism into all facets of the school experience, and by developing curricula and instruction materials that are culturally relevant” (p. 1).

Policy statements were intended to reflect societal values, guide behavior within institutions, and serve as a basis for organizational change (Gollnick, 1995). According to Grubb (1995), low performance among members of subordinated groups can be partly attributed to one-sided attempts by policy officials and schools to decide what students need without consulting them or members of their communities about the children’s interest or backgrounds. Policy statements that reflect multiculturalism and equity can potentially become a scaffold for the establishment of site-based procedures, curriculum...
transformation, and choice of instructional method. Today’s critical proponents of multiculturalism recommend that policy officials demonstrate willingness to enhance life opportunities for subordinate children by attempting to understand the oppressive realities that they face and by integrating these realities into schooling (Jackson & Solis, 1995; National Association of State Boards of Education, 1991).

State Multicultural and Equity Policy Initiatives

When educating underachieving ethnically and linguistically diverse children in the past, state policy-makers tended to rely on federal programs and financial assistance to offset disparities in school environments (Valdivieso & Nicolau, 1994). State policymakers often do not take it upon themselves to aggressively and systemically identify factors leading to low achievement among ethnically and linguistically diverse children and youth, offer funding assistance specifically intended to correct these identified problems, or require monitoring of the implementation of reforms. One solution has been to consistently impose more specified standards, curricula, and high-stakes assessments to offset underachievement. McPartland (1994) asserts that these prepackaged school solutions infringe on learning because standardization does not take into account student interests, needs, and conditions outside of school. Only as a result of continued pressure from critical theorists, community activists, and families of students of color, have policy officials and state education agencies began to take the lead in placing ethnic and linguistic minority students at the center of learning and requiring pedagogical and climate adjustments to accommodate demographic realities (Banks, 1994; Grant & Sleeter, 1998).
Since the 1970s, state initiatives on multicultural education have increased drastically. According to Gollnick (1995), "Iowa was the first state with legislation related to multicultural education for both K-12 schools and teacher-preparation programs" (p. 56). The Iowa Code focused on the development and enforcement of multicultural and non-sexist approaches in curriculum and instruction (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1994). In 1977, 28 states identified multicultural provisions and requirements compared to 45 states in 1993. By the 1990s, several states had developed policies and programs on multiculturalism intended to improve the academic performance of students from diverse cultures (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1994). However, ambiguity surrounds the degree to which states define, develop, and implement multicultural education.

According to a study conducted by Murtadha-Watts (2001) on state systemic efforts to obtain equal educational opportunity:

Significantly, 14 states expected schools to make their curriculum multicultural, but only Maryland, Nebraska, Minnesota, and New Jersey required accountability through regular reports and implementations...The current national situation surrounding multicultural education is therefore marked by symbolic policy statements and voluntary implementations, making it subject to fragmentation and localization with few enforcement or monitoring mechanism (p. 104-105).

The Idaho Department of Education requires school districts to support state imposed multicultural initiatives. As a result a court settlement in 1983, the Idaho Department of Education was directed to require local school districts to submit a plan for restructuring educational programs that would better serve limited English proficient
students (Commission on Civil Rights, 1992). A task force made pedagogical suggestions that directly addressed educational problems related to non-inclusiveness and cultural incompetence which require 1) that students be taught a foreign language, specifically Spanish in schools with a five percent or higher Hispanic population, 2) the inclusion of cultural awareness in teacher training programs, 3) the development of transitional bi-lingual programs, and 4) the use of classroom techniques that were sensitive to racial and cultural differences. Despite efforts, the department was criticized for not working toward changing attitudes and belief systems, infusing diverse cultural perspectives into curricula, and unwillingness to redefine the purpose of schooling and make decisions with input using cultural and economic indicators.

One example of a progressive movement toward multiculturalism was found in New Jersey. The State Department of Education created Guidelines for Education That is Multicultural (GEM), a document that 1) enables school staff and students to appropriately respond to discrimination, 2) provides students with empowering multicultural experiences, and 3) works to improve intercultural relations (Mitchell & Salsbury, 2000). The document covers a wide variety of actions to be taken by school communities and district personnel to ensure that students are treated equitably throughout the educational process. Specifically, as an effort to transform curricular content, strengthen self-images, and improve interpersonal relations, the developers of GEM embraced the concept of a global village. Moreover, the state is one of few that provides funding for multicultural education.

Meanwhile, with the passing of Senate Bill 103 in 1999, Oregon passed a multicultural education policy for public schools. At the state level, the department of
education was directed to 1) evaluate student demographics for curricula and program planning, 2) inform educators and community members on multicultural and diversity laws and policies, 3) research and analyze multicultural curricula for various grade levels, 4) investigate multicultural education programs that could be used with other programs, and 5) determine how the state and local districts implemented and applied laws on diversity and multicultural education (Oregon Department of Education, 1999). In addition to general initiatives, more recent comprehensive studies of trends related to state action in providing quality and equitable educational services to ethnic and linguistic minority learners provide additional insight for the development of this research study.

North Carolina recently launched a systemic campaign to maximize the potential of minority students and close achievement gap (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2001). Aggressive and deliberate state-level attention has fueled the implementation of policies, processes, and strategies to guarantee progress in holding persons responsible eliminating disproportionate gaps in achievement. Table 3.0 provides a condensed description of recommendations made by the North Carolina Advisory Commission on Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps provide insight on the current climate and intended impact of state policy initiatives.
### Table 3.0 North Carolina Gap Reduction Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Strategies</th>
<th>Sample Expected Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Reduce and eliminate number of minorities assigned to special education</td>
<td>Reduced tendency to over identify minorities for special education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Expose minority students to advanced content and instruction</td>
<td>Increased access and opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Gain the attention of the public concerning gaps and efforts</td>
<td>Reduced home-school gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Prepare an action plan to improve parent-school relations</td>
<td>Enhance parental involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Design and fund flexible professional development initiatives</td>
<td>Improved teacher knowledge/skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Provide substantial time for teachers to update and to gain new skills in working with diverse populations</td>
<td>Time provided for professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Fund supports to update university teacher education faculty skills</td>
<td>Improved the quality of pre-service teacher instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Assess and rate new teacher applicants on skills and dispositions needed to work with diverse students</td>
<td>New staff capable of closing achievement gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Provide special monetary initiative for those interested in teaching in high-need schools</td>
<td>Increase teacher retention and reduce shortages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Add a “closing the gap” component to the accountability system</td>
<td>Clear standards and measurements for closing achievement gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Profile the educational history of American Indians and African Americans in the state</td>
<td>Build a credible body of knowledge about minority cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systemic Barriers to the Realization of Policy Guidelines

Critical multiculturalists and educators provide extensive lists of barriers to the goal of implementing policy mandates situated in the principles of multicultural and equity. Collectively, the researchers list 1) beliefs systems and racist attitudes, 2) budgetary issues, 3) the lack of support among educational authorities, and 4) a limited understanding of the benefits of change as inhibitors cited most frequently (Stevenson & Gonzales, 1992; Grant & Millar, 1992; Springfield, 1994). Articulating yet another observation, Springfield (1994) asserts that educational organizations are unreliable when making improvements related to multicultural programming. This unreliability stems from deeply rooted institutional racism that plagues state, district, and classroom educational settings. Bensimon (2000) contextualizes institutional racism as a barrier to fulfilling the tenets of multiculturalism by stating:
Institutionalized racism is an inexorable barrier to multiculturalism because in being embedded in the values, norms, relationships, power, and decision-making structures of the dominant group, it is visible only to the "outsiders"... (p. 21).

To rectify this, educational leaders must be prepared to institute changes that build trusting relationships in school as well as have the skills to identify and to eliminate contradictory practices.

Noguera (2001) provides a compelling testament of the political implications associated with promoting educational equity and eliminating achievement gaps. Serving as an educational research consultant, board member, and parental informant for the affluent Berkley Public Schools, Noguera asserts that the explanation for under-achievement among minority groups extends beyond educational practices. Educational policy has been shaped by segments of communities who are "willing to tolerate a degree of racial inequality in student academic outcomes that any objective analysis would indicate is quite extreme" (Noguera 2001, p. 28). A four-year study of Berkley High school revealed that affluent parents protected the educational interests of their children despite complaints made by parents of low-achieving minority students that their children were not provided with a quality education. Pressure was placed on educational authorities to alleviate concerns of African American and Latino parents while simultaneously avoiding backlash from angry, influential White parents. The researcher concluded that serves as a solution educational leaders had to "find a way to deal with the perception that advances in educational equity would necessarily come at the expense of educational interests of affluent White students" (Noguera, 2001, p. 23).
Research literature reveals that a number of parents, community members, and school staff will be resistant to policy guidelines specifically targeted at equalizing educational outcomes. Common complaints range from arguments on the decline academic rigor to concerns of unwarranted concentration on ethnic and cultural differences (Gottlieb, 1999). Further, state and local officials must confront racism, biases, and low expectations of children from minority and low-income backgrounds throughout the process of policy implementation (Hall, 1997 b; Koschoreck, 2001; Miron, 1997; Lee, 1994). Systemic barriers to the realization of policy mandates will remain in operation as long as state and local educators, policy makers, and community stakeholders avoid dialogue on issues of race and language.

Discourse and dialogues that force educational communities to come to terms with issues of inequity and discrimination is a pre-requisite for intuitional change (Weissglass, 1997; Powell, 1999; The College Board, 1999). Resistance and unproductive responses typically mount as individual and groups strive to protect systemic norms and professional identities. Weissglass (1997) classifies overt and covert resistance to equitable change in the forms of denial, intellectualizing and making pronouncements, confusing issues of oppression by equating experiences, expressing hopeless, confronting and blaming, comparing groups, and ridiculing to diminish painful emotions. Risk of counterproductive engagements is always a consideration for equity advocates; therefore, Weissglass suggests that focus is maintained by respecting others and by avoiding blaming, criticizing, and analyzing. This is a necessary condition to ensure equity and access for students from minority cultures that have experienced substantial gaps in achievement.
Equity, Access, and Minority Student Achievement

Educational equity can be defined as the establishment and maintenance of responsive policies, practices, and systemic norms that hold all students to high standards and expectations and ensure appropriate resources and environments for learning (Anderson, 2001; Koschoreck, 2001). According to Gay (1988), “… the real focus of equity is not sameness of content for all students, but equivalency of effect potential, quality status, and significance of learning opportunities” (p. 329). Substantive gaps in academic achievement among language and ethnic groups indicate that equity is a goal yet to be realized within an educational institution.

Educational studies in recent years report that a narrowing of achievement gaps among diverse groups of children during the 1970s and 1980s; however, the trend was reversed in the late 1980s as gaps began to widen (Johnson, 2000, 2002). The College Board’s National Task Force on Minority Achievement (The College Board, 1999) analyzed persistent gaps between White and Asian students and African American, Latino, and Native American students. The task force noted in their report:

It is widely recognized that these differences in educational outcomes contribute to large disparities in life chances. Viewed solely from the perspective of employment and earnings, educationally underrepresented minorities have much less opportunity to pursue well paying professional careers and are much more likely to hold low-wage jobs that provide few chances for advancement (The College Board, 1999, p. 1).

To this end, the task force challenges federal, state, and local educational leaders to

1. Increase minority access to college preparatory courses;
2. Evaluate strategies used to increase the academic performance of minority students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds;

3. Disseminate research of educational strategies known to have worked in increasing achievement;

4. Form consortia with minority communities to dialogue on educational concerns; and

5. Increase resources for whole school reform to schools with significant numbers of economically disadvantaged students.

As documentation supporting inequities becomes more accessible in the new millennium, serious changes will be made in the delivery of educational services. Alarming accounts of disparities, such as Noguera's (2001) report that White and Asian learners attending Berkley schools score in the 80th percentile on norm referenced tests, while Blacks and Latinos score closer to the 30th percentile will result in restructuring of schools, reassigning of administrators, and intense planning aimed at eliminating gaps.

In their research on the substantial gap between Black and White test scores in early grades, Fryer and Levitt (2002) assert that even when covariates such as family and community structures, income levels, and measures of school quality are factored out, test score differences persists. Reviews of data led Fryer and Levitt to conclude that Blacks in kindergarten score an average of .64 standard deviations lower than Whites on tests. By contrast, the researchers report that when observable characteristics such as mother's age at first birth, socio-economic status, and number of children's books in the home were controlled, the Black-White gap was virtually eliminated. The researchers
conclude that inequities arise as Blacks attend lower quality schools causing gaps widen over time.

In addition to test performance data, educational authorities are looking more toward non-cognitive variables to assist in identifying systemic factors which serve as barriers to academic success (Johnson, 2000, 2002). An analysis of non-assessed data, such as placement in advanced classes and programs, the results of student and parent surveys, and focus group meeting notes can potentially reveal broader problems in operations (Placier et al., 1997). States typically only provide norm-reference test data and district report cards. Therefore, finding systemic ways to link state, district, and school organizational structures to promote educational equity is a crucial model for closing gaps in achievement among subgroups (Koschoreck, 2001). The two states that formed cases in this study made conscious efforts to collect and to disseminate non-cognitive data to local constituents which has 1) alerted the educational community to limited minority access to advanced curriculum and 2) fueled dialogue on the explanation of low student achievement.

**Limited Access to Advanced Curricula**

The under representation of minority and economically disadvantaged students in academically gifted and talented programs and honors and advanced placement classes has prompted educational officials to form task forces to study barriers to access to innovative and rigorous curriculum (Noguera, 2001; Darity et al., 2001). The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction assembled a group of respected researchers to study the disparity of access to higher-level curriculum in its public schools (Darity et al., 2001). Researchers concentrated on ethnic representation in Advanced Placement (AP)
courses in grades 9-12, participation in an honors or Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program in grades 6-8, and enrollment in an AIG program in grades K-5.

Research findings indicated that minority students were significantly underrepresented in high school AP courses, but less severely underrepresented in honors courses. Minority access to advanced curriculum was pervasive in districts, which lead researchers to conclude after further analysis that more experienced, highly qualified teachers had fewer contracts with minority students in suburban and rural schools. However, urban schools with the highest minority presence were more likely to employ AP teachers with credentials in the field to which they were teaching. In addition, urban schools tended to offer more AP courses than rural schools; however, more unique AP courses were found in affluent areas. One of the most significant findings in the study derived from an analysis of a high school that had virtually no minority representation in advanced courses. Racial isolation in advanced coursework was pervasive at the high school. While examining the notion of “acting white”, teachers, principals, and counselors at the school made their beliefs evident by stating

...It is not “cool” for minority students to be smart...minority students lack self-confidence and are afraid of being “the only one” and isolated from friends....Blacks-males in particular-are “adverse to success” because success would be “betraying their brothers”...Blacks “don’t place a high value on education”...(Darity et al., 2001, p. 35).

School personnel believed that minority student family background and social problems would limit their performance and were less likely to recommend students for AIG and accelerated programs. The researchers clearly indicated that limited minority access to
advanced coursework was more prevalent in high schools; however, issues related to placement and achievement were obvious in lower grades as well.

**Explanations of Low Achievement**

Researchers have long asserted that language proficiency and socioeconomic status are not the only challenges to educational attainment among minority children. Preconceived attitudes toward ethnicity and lack of commitment among the educational community toward equity are explanations often cited. According to the 2000 Language Census, 2.3 million children in California are identified as language minority (Rumberger, 2000). As students gained proficiency in English, they were reclassified and issued less supplemental language support. Noting that academic English acquisition and proficiency takes longer than oral communication mastery, Rumberger hypothesized causes for the increasing gaps in educational attainment as English language learners progressed to higher grades. Although it is more difficult for English language learners to attain mastery in academic English, when the lack of language skills is factored out, these students achieve at lower levels compared to their white counterparts (Rumberger, 2000; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Further examination of Hispanic students from English speaking backgrounds showed that they had lower test scores that Whites from English speaking backgrounds. Achievement may be compromised regardless of language background. It is reasonable to conclude that other factors contribute to differences in educational attainment. Therefore, more complex explanations must be evaluated.

Using a different lens, Johnson (2002) argues that many school officials opt to overlook compelling data that points to causes of low student achievement. Blaming students, society, and other non-systemic factors creates a hedge of complacency around
those responsible for advancing achievement among lower performing student groups. Johnson urges practitioners to use data as a means to eliminating barriers to change. Extensive dialogue stemming from the data analysis process engages stakeholders toward the development of equitable reforms appropriately aligned with expected outcomes. According to Johnson, the reform process should 1) dispel myths about who can and cannot learn at high levels, 2) lead to the formation of teams of diverse stakeholders to study gaps in achievement and develop strategies to overcome resistance to reforms standards, and 3) evaluate the effectiveness of programs and interventions. This process is essential to ensuring that organizational structures align with equity principles.

Aligning Organizational Structures with Equity Principles

Aligning organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the tenets of multicultural education is a complex undertaking for state officials, district leaders, and building supervisors. Organizational structures are comprised of tangible and intangible components that operate under the auspices of written and unwritten guidelines. Accomplishing the goal of realigning organizational structures and pedagogical practices to reflect the goals of state educational policies depends on a shift in human and material relationships (Drake & Roe, 1999). Moreover, district and school structures must be flexible enough to allow for modifications of existing procedures and policies. In addition to studies conducted by individual researchers, leading state organizations have examined the relationship between culture and schooling. In the early 1990s, the National Association of State Boards of Education formed a study group on infusing multiculturalism into schooling. The National Association of State Boards of Education...
defines a culturally competent school as “one that honors, respects, and values diversity in theory and in practice, and where teaching and learning is made relevant and meaningful to children and youth of various cultures” (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1994, p. 1). The association has specified that schools may go through a continuum that includes 1) cultural destructiveness which is the denial of the use of cultural norms and 2) cultural pre-competence which is the inability to reasonably identify with cultural behaviors while striving to adequately provide equitable experiences for children of various cultures. At the end of the continuum, the organization asserts that cultural competency is the resulting indicator of teacher performance and should be embedded in all levels of teacher training.

The school district that served as the focus of Placier et al. (2000) study on the development of multicultural educational policies to improve race relations had previously incorporated home-school links, ethnic courses, and minority liaisons into the total scope of schooling. However, more action was needed to ensure that curricula aligned with educational outcomes and that educational authorities at all levels took action to incorporate multicultural strategies and critique progress. Thus, a committee was formed to make recommendations related to improving race relations in the district. The researchers assert that the division between the district and the community needed to be addressed by administrators if they were sincerely interested in transforming academic settings based on multicultural effort. Findings indicated that rather when seeking to aligning organizational structures with the goals of cultural inclusion and equity, administrators conformed to political processes and pressures and committee members
realized that all stakeholders needed to focused more on the relationship between culture and school procedures.

To illustrate a lack of transformative organizational change, Fletcher (2001) reported the occurrences in an Ohio school district. Shaker Heights, located in an affluent Cleveland suburb, is known for the quality of educational experiences provided to its students. Small class sizes, highly educated teachers, and abundant advanced placement opportunities are just a few of the distinct characteristics of the district. Just over half of the students are African American and the district takes pride in its attention to diversity issues. Regardless of the state's claims of educational excellence, equitability concerns are a major issue. Unlike their white counterparts, socio-economic advancement among the families of African American students attending Shaker Heights schools has not been transferable to academic achievement. Fletcher (2001) notes:

...African Americans accounted for 82 percent of those who fail at least one portion of Ohio's ninth-grad proficiency tests. They were 84 percent of those who earned F's and D's in one or more major subjects after fifth grade. In graduating classes between 1992 and 1996, Black students made up just 7 percent of the students in the top fifth of the class and 90 percent of those in the bottom fifth (p. 26).

Even though schools like Shaker Heights put into practice multicultural approaches that integrate ethnically and culturally diverse content into curriculum and acknowledge differences in student learning, the lack of contradictions in the process of education prevent transformative organizational change. Fletcher notes that the initiators of
in the case that the ethnic composition of the faculty was not representative of the multiracial student body.

After extensive testimony on multicultural education from scholars, community representatives, and state and local agencies, a study group on multicultural education made several recommendations to policy-makers in a report entitled, *The American Tapestry: Educating a Nation* (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1991). Recognizing the shortfalls in providing equitable and responsive multicultural educational settings, the Study Group on Multicultural Education recommended that state boards of education and policy-makers 1) provide leadership by (a) examining policies and practices for cultural relevance, (b) ensuring diverse representation on committees and boards, and (c) becoming more proficient at collecting demographic data and information on student performance, 2) make a commitment to professional development by (a) accrediting teacher education programs that incorporate curricula on ethnic and linguistic minorities, (b) developing policies that continuously support staff development and in-service on diversity, and (c) increasing the number minority educators, and 3) construct culturally responsive school environments by requiring schools to offer diverse perspectives in all content areas and instructional materials and by requiring multiple unbiased student assessments. Although the recommendations made by the National Association of State Boards of Education (1994) are comprehensive and intended to educate policy-makers, a more in-depth understanding of how pedagogical practices that enhance or inhabit the academic performance of high-risk ethnic and linguistic minority students is needed.
Pedagogical Implications on Student Engagement

Teacher quality has been pushed to the forefront of the professional development agenda in schools as demographic changes persist. The vast representation of non-minority teachers coupled with growing ethnic minority school populations has forced pre-service and in-service training programs to rethink curricula and experiential frameworks. An astute interest in assisting teachers to gain greater knowledge of course content in order to provide rigor in the delivery of curricula has being a primary ideology maintained by professors of education, scholars, and senior school administrators (Darling-Hammond, 2001). However, an increased emphasis on understanding how students socially construct knowledge based on personal experiences is redefining pedagogy. Achievement gaps in core subject areas, reports of marginalization, and student disengagement has motivated resisters of pluralistic change to engage in open conversations and escalate data collection in an effort to reveal causes of low performance among ethnic and linguistic minority student groups (Johnson, 2002).

Teacher expectations are communicated subtly through classroom interactions. Brophy (1983) found that teachers communicate low expectations by 1) calling on a student less frequently, 2) given less time to respond to questions posed, 3) offering answers rather than allowing the student time to respond, 3) criticizing, 4) praising less, and 5) paying less attention and disciplining the student more strictly. Underperforming groups of students are aware of low teacher expectations and internalized behaviors run contrary to school success. Miron (1997) conducted research on discriminatory school practices between 1993 and 1995 in four public high schools and found that student resistance was directly related to perceptions of unfairness and teacher stereotyping of
minority students. In his analysis, teachers held different expectations for particular minority groups and sent messages of fear and disapproval through the use of the hidden curriculum.

At the conclusion of the study, Miron (1997), challenges school leaders to take deliberate, moral action to create environments that resist discrimination. First, administrators must bridge the gap between curricula and community (Miron, 1997; Gay, 1994; Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Building on multicultural and inclusive themes, school administrators should provide participatory opportunities for students to assist in resolving conflicts within their own communities (Miron, 1997; Shor, 1992; Powell, 1999). In other words, “The strategic goal of developing a multicultural curriculum [should] be tied to the issues of meaning” (Miron, 1997, p. 28). Administrators are then challenged with implementing strategic planning that concentrates on fueling dialogue, information gathering, and reflecting or multiculturalism. Miron assets that this process is intended to lead to a system of change in school culture and to provide a platform for resolving issues related to ethnic and linguistic equity.

To illustrate a lack of cultural knowledge among central administration and school-based educators, Bennet (1991) studied the relationship between a district mandated reading program and the culture of Appalachian students. The study revealed that district policies and classroom practices created and maintained low performance among students who were from culturally diverse and impoverished backgrounds. The reading program ignored indications of how Appalachian children learned to read and interacted with each other while acquiring knowledge. As indicated by Bennett, the local school district required teachers to use basal readers and curriculum guides that neglected
student language patterns and experiences. Ironically, the district contradicted itself by directing teachers to engage in culturally responsive techniques while providing quality instruction. In the final analysis, Bennett determined that the school and the community surrounding it had vastly different identities, which resulted in low school performance among Appalachian students.

**Culturally Relevant Teaching**

Although culturally relevant teaching has gained popularity in recent years, striking a balance between complying with new accountability mandates and incorporating pedagogy that holds promise for engaging high risk student in academic encounters proves challenging (Wei, 2002). Therefore, a paradigm shift is warranted to build capacity for teachers to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to present content to low performing, minority students in ways that demonstrate relevancy to their lived experiences and future success. Ladson-Billings (1992), defines culturally relevant teaching as “...a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, economically, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 17). This conceptualization is crucial as district leaders hold teachers more accountable for increasing test scores and overall performance among student subgroups. A principle criticism of accountability policy mandates is that they concentrate heavily on the acquisition of grade level academic skills whereas culturally relevant teaching focuses on critical thinking and higher levels of learning. Equity in its purist form provides educational opportunities that do not limit potential brought on by the inappropriate use of accountability measures but cultivates life long learning among student populations that have benefited least from academic engagements (Koschoreck, 2001; Noguera,
2001). When integrated, accountability policies and cultural relevant teaching hold a similar goal of increasing student motivation through changes in instructional content and pedagogy (Wei, 2002).

Multicultural advocates claim that competent teachers recognize key cultural traits and values of major ethnic groups. Rather than learning all there is to know about cultural all groups, teachers must 1) recognize cultural difference among diverse learners, 2) know how to generate questions about cultural groups, 3) involve students in the process of discovering cultural information, and 4) understand and use differentiated techniques to promote learning (Gay, 1994). Culturally responsive pedagogy challenges traditional practices that primarily reflect unrecognizable European cultural values (Gay, 2000). The majority of high-risk learners from diverse ethnic and linguistic groups generally do not respond positively to concentrating on course objectives for long periods of time or pleas to look teachers directly in their eyes. This behavior is often mistaken as students' lack of interest in academic content, insubordination, or cognitive inability (Gay, 2001; Nieto, 2000). Advocates of culturally relevant teaching claim that it has the ability to do what other pedagogical ideologies have failed to do when addressing the needs of underperforming students. It bridges the gap between homes and community, contextualizes learning by using multicultural information, and affirms the cultural heritages of diverse learners (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2000).

In Hawaii, elementary students' reading scores have improved significantly since the implementation of the Kamehameha Elementary Education Program (KEEP) (as cited in Nieto, 2000). The developers of KEEP claim that the educational attainment of chronic underachievers advanced when instructional strategies were changed to match the
children’s cultural styles. Reformers state that modifications to curriculum and pedagogy based on cultural compatibility raised performance among these students. Banks et al. (2001) recommend that professional development opportunities assist staff in uncovering personal attitudes toward diverse cultures, learning about the experiences and different perspectives of cultural groups, and acquiring knowledge and skills necessary to implement equity pedagogy, which provides all students with equal opportunities to become successful. The developers of KEEP demonstrated and optimized equity pedagogy as evident by Bank’s et al. (2001) assertion:

Culturally responsive instructional strategies transform information about the home and community into effective classroom practice. Rather than relying on generalized notions of ethnic groups that can be misleading, effective teachers use knowledge of their student’s culture and ethnicity as a framework for inquiry. They also use culturally responsive activities, resources, and strategies to organize and implement instruction (p. 2).

In a final analysis, critical pedagogy attempts to affirm the cultural identities of minority students while enabling them to gain the knowledge and skills needed to attain social and economic equality. One strategy for affirming identity calls for implementing an agenda of values (Shor, 1992). Establishing empowering frameworks and programs that are inclusive of the values and beliefs of minority children supports critical and affirmative ideologies. Shor’s agenda of values are extensive and designed to include: participatory, affective, problem-posing, situated, multicultural, dialogic, desocializing, democratic, research-based, interdisciplinary, and activist learning engagements. According to the theorist, focusing on pluralistic and affirmative agendas assists the
academic potential of second language and ethnic minority students. As a result, pedagogy that incorporates Shor's agenda of values teaches students to extract meaning from daily academic and social endeavors and fuse knowledge construction with decision-making.

Research literature on the use of critical pedagogy to enhance multicultural education supports culturally relevant teaching. According to Ladson-Billings (1992), the meaning of culturally relevant teaching has emerged from anthropological educational literature that captures pedagogical strategies that impact minority students. Research points out that the major difference between assimilationist and culturally relevant teaching is:

. . . assimilationist teaching represents and champions the status quo. Its major function is to transmit dominant culture beliefs, values, myths and ideologies to induct students into the role that society has determined for them with an unquestioning, uncritical view of the way schools miseducate children...By contrast, culturally relevant teaching serves to empower students to the point where they will be able to examine critically educational content and process and ask what its role is in creating a truly democratic and multicultural society (Banks, 1994, p. 110).

Conclusion

Restructuring principles work best with low performing students when policy makers and educational authorities are committed to creating institutions that promote and maintain equity and excellence, accessible programming, and a climate of mutual
respect (Banks, 1994). The challenge of confronting belief systems equitable organizational change is a process that requires support and protection from state policy officials (Bell & Peel, 1992). Research literature in this chapter clearly points out that simply imposing state directives or sanctions on improving performance among high-risk minority students is not enough to bring about systemic change at district levels or in classrooms. It is necessary for state officials to find ways to work with multiple stakeholders to adequately monitor equity initiatives and reforms. This on-going process requires authorities to evaluate the effectiveness of multicultural and equity reform initiatives as well as to reflect on goals. State officials, along with local educators, should expect systemic resistance to surface when applying critical theories to processes and programs developed to meet the needs of high-risk students. The researchers in this chapter assert that interpretations and commitments must develop at all levels. Bearing in mind the complexities of transformation, state governments that have begun to advocate for pluralistic school change note that critical leadership is a necessary prerequisite for systemic organizational change. This could lead to the development of policy formations that create more equitable schools (Murtadha-Watts, 2001; National Association of State Boards of Education, 2000).
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative case study was to examine the ways in which two state educational agencies have attempted to build capacity to provide quality education and to improve the academic achievement of diverse students enrolled in public schools by instituting equity legislation and a regulation on multicultural education. Recent attention on organizational structures and pedagogical practices that contribute to disproportionate gaps in achievement has led state leaders to institute responsive guidelines, strategies, and evaluative measures. The two states publicly acknowledged that they have failed to adequately serve the needs of ethnic and linguistic minority students and aggressive reform initiatives have been put in place to close present gaps in achievement. States departments of education have interpreted policy mandates, reached out stakeholders, and evaluated their progress in infusing the principles of multicultural education and equity into educational contexts. Although other legislation and regulations that either directly or indirectly speak to improving minority achievement exist in both states, this study concentrates on policy mandates managed by a pre-selected office within each state department of education, thereby, limiting the focus of this research.
Two theories were used to focus this research. The cultural ecology theory challenges educational officials and teachers to 1) gain an understanding of cultural experiences and 2) consider how the relationship between culture and school affects academic performance when instituting reforms (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Social systems theory concentrates on behaviors and processes within institutions that are used to lead inside and outside agents toward a common goal (Owens, 2001). Collectively, the theories assist in explaining the methods used by each state education agency to directly address issues of low achievement among ethnic and linguistic minorities and to create organizational systems that eliminate structural barriers and improve equity. Educational authorities in the states under study have worked to heighten sensitivity toward cultural groups in effort to improve access and opportunity for members of minority groups. Policy makers, state and local educational employees, task forces, and community groups have examined issues in and out of school that explain differences in achievement among culturally diverse groups. This community of stakeholders determined that policies, processes, and practices needed to be modified to enhance knowledge of culture and to improve educational opportunities.

Research Questions

1. How have state educational officials implemented legislation or regulations that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity?

2. To what extent have state education agencies used policy mandates to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students?

3. To what extent do state educational officials monitor and evaluate policy
mandates specifically targeted toward improving academic performance among culturally diverse students?

4. How have state education agencies attempted to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity policy mandates?

Ethical Issues

As a process of standard research protocol, protection of human subjects was sought before data were collected and analyzed. A description of the study, inclusive of an identified purpose, methods, and procedures, was submitted to the Office of the Protection of Research Subjects at the University of Nevada of Las Vegas. Risk factors, benefits, as well as a risk-benefit analysis, were included in the description of the study. Additionally, an informed consent form, a sample the questionnaire, and prospective interview questions were submitted for approval. Informants were advised of their voluntary status and assured confidentiality. In fulfillment of the final university requirement, as directed by the Social Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, the researcher participated in an on-line training course sponsored by the National Institutes of Health which certifies knowledge of historical events, ethical principles, federal regulations, and institutional requirements related to the protection of human participants involved in educational research. Notice of Approval of Protocol was received in July of 2002.

Pilot Study

A pilot of the questionnaire and interview questions was conducted in July, 2002,
prior to confirming participation from state employees who took part in the study. The questionnaire was mailed to two state educational employees in a southwestern state who 1) held direct knowledge of diversity issues, 2) had previously organized training and provided technical assistance to local school systems on cultural inclusiveness, and 3) had experience compiling reports and disseminating information on minority student achievement. Although the state chosen for the pilot does not have as comprehensive legislation or policy guidelines as the states under study, an assembly bill passed during the late-1990s in the southwestern state directs equity staff members to work with local school systems in creating equitable environments for culturally diverse students.

Rather than returning the questionnaires by mail, the two participants requested a meeting. At the meetings, the informants provided feedback on the questionnaire and responded to my interview questions. The face-to-face meetings proved beneficial to understanding the historical, sociopolitical, and interreactional context in which state officials implement the goals of equity. The pilot enabled me to narrow the scope of the study to focus my attention on equity and multicultural policy mandates being implemented by key, state educational employees rather than conducting a broad review of how all of the state department of education divisions worked toward enforcing policy guidelines (Merriam, 1998). In addition, I acquired techniques to record specifics during observations and developed strategies to reduce the risk of misinterpreting participant feedback. Based on results of the pilot study, the proposed methods of data collection would be sufficient (comprehensible and dependable) in answering the research questions.
Data Collection and Analysis

In order to gain insight on the implementation of state policy mandates designed to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority learners, a qualitative design that could assist in understanding the uniqueness of the contexts and the interactions of individuals, groups, and stakeholders was chosen (Patton, 1985). A variety of techniques were used to collect data and to examine research questions. Qualitative data collected from multiple sources, which include reports, questionnaires, interviews, and field notes, added credibility to the study by providing a database of references necessary in identifying with the complex nature of educational policy infusions and by providing a wide-range of resources for measurement. Specifically, a comparative case study of two states (one mid-Atlantic and the other southeastern) provided the contexts to frame research.

The two states that serve as units in this study situated the researcher in real-life contexts that are congruent to the unveiling of phenomena and processes, which occur within social structures. According to Merriam (1998) qualitative case studies are single units framed by common concepts, contexts, or social situations. The theoretical bases used to formulate this study draw on an understanding of how each state has attempted to infuse students' cultures or equity principles into school environments in order to improve interaction, engagement, and achievement. Descriptions are used to relay prevalent information related to specified units. Themes linked to research questions arose from a concentrated analysis of each data. To this end, findings resulted from intense considerations presented in each unit and from using constant comparative methods to make interpretations and generalize phenomena. Figure 2.0 depicts the

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research methodology used for analysis and to draw conclusions for this study. A description of the components found in the figure follows in the preceding sections.

Figure 2.0 Research Methodology

Case Studies

Comparative units (a southeastern state and a mid-Atlantic state) were constructed into cases for analysis. According to Aldridge and Levine (2001), a cross-sectional design's strength "lies in the way an analyst can chop up a sample into many quite
different sub-groups to explore the separate dimensions of the research topic” (p.31).

Therefore, rich descriptions organized by unit provided a medium to delimit surface level interpretations and point to differences in the way the two states under study have proceeded in attempting to reach similar goals. A replication approach provided a means to examine each case as a whole and draw conclusions leading to the convergence of evidence across multiple units (Yin, 1994). Even more specifically, the replication approach employ the following steps: 1) develop theory, 2) design data collection and protocol and select cases, 3) conduct first case study; then, conduct second case study, 4) write first individual case report; then, write second individual case report, 5) draw cross-case conclusions, 6) modify theory, 7) develop implications, and 8) write a cross-case report (Yin, 1994).

A comparative case study analysis enabled me to go beyond the simple study the policy developments in one state. More complex patterns and themes emerged as content was analyzed across units avoiding mere speculation and leading to interpretations that clearly present conclusions that could be drawn by those situated within each state’s educational milieu (Patton, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Subcategories centering on policies, programs, organizational structures, pedagogical practices, achievement, and evaluation originated during the review of research. More appropriate categories and subcategories that reflect the goals of this study and communicate findings more effectively evolved as data were analyzed (Merriam, 1998). The descriptions of the two states which follow illustrate the unique educational contexts to which policy mandates were implemented.
Description of Atlantic (Mid-Atlantic State): Case Study #1

One state that serves as a focus for this study is located in along the mid-Atlantic portion of the United States. Demographic information is reported regularly by a variety of agencies. The state's population in 1997 was 5,094,289. As of 1996, a state statistical breakdown by race includes 68.9% white, 27.1% black, .3% American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, 3.7% Asian Pacific Islander, and 3.4% Hispanic (Thandiwe & Yau, 1997). The average per capita personal income in 2000 was listed at $33,482 ranking the state one the highest on a national comparison (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2001). The largest industries are classified as services, state and local government, and federal civilian government.

The state department of education in Atlantic oversees the education of all students attending public and private institutions throughout the state. According to the state department's public records, their role is to provide accountability and support through effective leadership. This includes library and rehabilitation services. The department lists student achievement, instructional improvement, accountability and assessment, and state educational leadership as priorities. The State Board of Education monitors school performance, sets educational standards, allocates funding, and certifies teachers. Students must pass proficiency tests in the areas of language arts, mathematics, and citizenship as well as complete seventy-five hours of community services in order to meet graduation requirements.

Presently, over 1,300 K-12 public schools with enrollments totaling 850,000 service the educational needs of students (Atlantic State Archives, 2002). The state department of education reported that during the 1997-1998 school-year, 25.5% of all
students were eligible free lunch. The National Center for Educational Statistics reported that during the same school year, enrollment by race was 55.9% White, 36.1% Black non-Hispanic, 3.7% Hispanic, 4.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .3% American Indian/Alaskan Native. The reported 1999-2000 drop out rate for grades 9-12 was 3.9%. The minority growth rate in public school systems is growing twice the rate of the white student population. Over 92% of limited English proficient students live in the state’s largest cities. The primarily home languages other than English spoken are Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Spanish. The number of students speaking languages other than English has increased significantly during the last ten years.

Educational leaders assert that the gap in achievement between white and minority students is a critical issue in the state. White students consistently outscore African American, Latino, and Native American students on state standardized tests. In addition to disproportional test scores, the state reports, “Although African Americans comprise a little more than a third of all students, more than fifty percent of all dropouts and suspensions are African Americans, and the number of African American students classified as ‘educably mentally retarded’ (3.4%) is more than double that of all students”. This has prompted state lawmakers to scrutinize under-performing schools and to assemble a multicultural advisory council.

Through increased accountability and higher standards, the state department of education intends to raise achievement and to build more inclusive school climates. The state has also increased the amount of information available to the public by producing a number of publications containing educational facts and evaluative reports. The following statistical information is a sampling of data compiled by state educational
representatives. Currently, students in third, fifth, and eighth grade are required to participate in a state performance assessment in the areas of math, science, reading, writing, language usage, and social studies. The total instructional staff during the year 2000-2001 was near 68,500. During the 1999-2000 school-year, the average teaching salary reached approximately $48,000. According to data collecting during the fall of 2000, 76.7% of the teaching staff was classified as white, 20.8% as black, and the remaining 2.4% was classified as other.

Description of Southland (Southeastern State): Case Study #2

The other state that serves as a focus of this study is located in the southeastern region of the United States. According to the United States Census Bureau, the state had a population of just over four million in 2000. The ethnic breakdown of the state consists of 90.1% white, 7.3% African American, .2% American Indian and Alaska Native, and .7% Asian. In addition, .6% of the population reported being some other race and 1.1% of the population reported being two or more races. The largest concentration of minorities is located in the more populated counties in the state. The state’s per capita personal income is one of the lowest in the country. In the year 2000, the annual personal income was listed approximately $24,000 (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2001). Main industries include services, durable goods manufacturing, and the state and local governments. In 1999, 26% of children lived with parents who did not work full-time throughout the year, 21% lived in poverty, and single parents headed 27% of all households.

Educational reform is a major concern among state officials and policy-makers. The high numbers of school graduates increased significantly during the last decade of
the twentieth century from 64.6% to 74.1% (Southland Department of Education).

Additionally, the number of persons earning bachelor degrees rose from 13.6% to 17.1%.

According to the 2001 Kids Count Data Book, in 1999 the percentage of teens between the ages of sixteen and nineteen who dropped out of high school was 11% and those who were not working or attending school averaged 10%. During the 2000-2001 school year, student enrollment throughout the state reached 614,818. The average per pupil revenue totaled $7,239 and average teacher salaries were just over $35,000. In October of 2001, the state department of education reported that 48.7% of all students participated in the free and reduced lunch programs.

The state’s chief executive officer of education is responsible for implementing the state board of education policies and for directing the staff of the department of education as they oversee the management of schools. The primary goal of the state educational officials is to ensure that all student reach proficiency as defined by student performance, educator and administrator quality, and supportive environments by the year 2014. The state board of education develops regulations that serve as guidelines in all elementary, middle, and high schools. Board members have adopted a mission statement that holds the department of education, districts, schools, and community partners responsible for ensuring that all students become proficient and are given opportunities to achieve at high levels. In addition, the board approves performance standards and takes corrective action when districts and schools do not function at specified levels. The state board of education identified the following goals and initiatives for the 2001-2002 school-year:
1. ensure that pre-service education programs reach accreditation standards established by the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB)

2. increase the number of minority teachers and administrators

3. fill staff positions with properly credentialed persons

4. provide guided transition programs for novice teachers and administrators

5. maintain a standard of professionalism in teaching and administrative positions

6. further research and development activities as specified by the EPSB when appropriate, and

7. oversee the efficacy of board operations through adequate staff, technical support, facilities, and financing.

According to state documents, equitable programs were designed in collaboration with national, state, and local policy officials, educators, and community partners to ensure that all students receive high quality educational experiences.

Criteria for State Selection

The two states under investigation were selected for a number of specific reasons. Each state regulate comprehensive multicultural education and equity policies and oversee plans designed close gaps in achievement between white and minority students. Figure 3.0 summarizes the criteria used for state selection. At the time of the study, the two states selected best met the criteria for answering research questions.

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<tr>
<th>Figure 3.0</th>
<th>Criteria for State Selection</th>
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<tr>
<td>♦ State-Level Policy Mandate on Multicultural Education or Equity</td>
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<td>♦ State Educational Agency Action on Closing the Achievement Gap</td>
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<td>♦ State Personnel Offering Technical Assistance on Multicultural/Equity Initiatives</td>
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<td>♦ Comprehensive Plan on Implementing Policy Guidelines</td>
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<td>♦ Evaluative Measures Supervised by State Personnel</td>
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The mid-Atlantic’s state board of education adopted a regulation on multicultural education in 1994 and since that time has amended the policy guidelines beyond demonstration of appreciation and respect for cultural diversity in curricula and school environments. A 1999 revision of the regulation requires state and local educational officials to seek assistance from parent, community, and business stakeholders in eliminating persistent gaps in achievement. Legislative action in the southeastern state set into motion in the early 1990s has lead to aggressive reforms aimed at improving educational equity, specifically for minority, low-income, special education, and students with limited English proficiency.

Responding to community activism regarding low performance of students of color and minority projections, each state’s educational agencies, under the direction of legislative officials, have taken steps to adequately prepare students to live and work in a multicultural society and to prepare teachers to service the needs of culturally diverse learners. Extensive policies, plans, and processes have been implemented. Additionally, state staff members provide technical assistance to policy makers, educators, and community members on to policy mandates under review. As a final criterion for state selection, the mid-Atlantic and southeastern states’ superintendents of education have authorized the use of evaluative measures to determine the level of implementation of policy mandates in local school systems.

Comparing Cases

Comparing the impact of multicultural education and equity policies in two states
as opposed to analyzing the developments in only one state or conducting a study on occurrences in all fifty states serves as a way to maximize the opportunity for policy-makers and educators to learn more about how different entities interpret and generalize imposed educational reforms (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Stake (1998) asserts, “Comparison is a powerful conceptual mechanism, fixing attention upon the few attributes being compared and obscuring other knowledge about the case” (p. 97). In addition to increasing opportunity to learn, the level of interest in the topics under study is raised as descriptions of the two cases present unique circumstances that may assist in interpreting data and drawing conclusions. A cross analysis of the evolution and the impact of state multicultural initiatives in the mid-Atlantic state was compared with the progress of newly implemented equity reforms in the southeastern state. For the purpose of discussion from this point on, the mid-Atlantic state is referred to as Atlantic and the southeastern state is referred to as Southland.

The two states presented in each case contain considerably different racial/ethnic populations and are at different stages of implementing multicultural and equity issues into schooling, thereby, offering unique comparative insights into the complexities embedded in the research questions. Complex provisions made in each state to provide equitable services to under-performing students and to eradicate organizations and pedagogical constraints on students and teachers provided a means for holistic evaluation. A comparison of 1) how states implement multicultural and equity policy mandates, 2) use mandates to enhance achievement for ethnic and linguistic minority students, 3) monitor and evaluative plans and initiatives, and 4) align organizational structures and pedagogy assisted in extracting crucial data and making generalizations.
At one end of the continuum, the Atlantic Department of Education implemented and modified extensive initiatives on multicultural education that include curriculum reform, staff development, and authentic assessments without the benefit of substantive accountability factors. On the other end, Southland began the process of implementing policy directives and modifying educational contexts by using the goals of multicultural education and equity as a strategy for eliminating gaps in achievement among student populations. To this end, several sources of information were used to investigate underlying issues for the purpose of cross-case analysis.

Sources of Information

The following methods were used to collect data for case studies:

**Document Notes**

Data collected from state department of education reports, local school system educational publications, legislative policy mandates, state agency regulations, minutes from advisory council and committee meetings were analyzed. Further, state and local educational websites were reviewed. Additionally, books and articles used by state representatives to conduct presentations and professional development activities were reviewed to gain an understanding of espoused theories and stances taken to implement policy mandates.

**Questionnaires**

The theoretical conceptualizations and a review of literature were used to formulate a questionnaire. The wide body of knowledge, including educational equity, multicultural education, and policy making were scrutinized to create domains needed to
extract information related to research questions. The questionnaire entitled, *20 Questions on Multicultural Education*, included the domains of policies and programs, organizational structures and pedagogical practices, achievement, and evaluation (see Appendix A). Fact-based questions were interspersed with more challenging questions to increase participant motivation (Patton, 2002). Space was provided on the right side of the questionnaire to allow participants to respond. After the Office of the Protection of Research Subjects at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas granted approval for the proposed research and a pilot study was completed, a questionnaire was electronically mailed to the state department of education employees in the two states under investigation. Within thirty days, participants had responded to and returned the questionnaires electronically. Whereas the participant in the mid-Atlantic state responded to all twenty questions, the informant in the southeastern state responded to all but one of the questions.

**Informal Interviews**

I traveled to the two states under study to conduct interviews. A list of questions (see Appendix A) was used to guide the discussion; however, respondents were free to answer open-ended questions and to define situations from their own perspectives (Merriam, 1998). During the interviews, participants were encouraged to “tell their stories” in the hopes of creating a relaxed and non-threatening atmosphere (Morse, 1998). Rather than conducting a single interview with each participant, daily interviews lasting approximately one hour occurred over a period of a week in each state. Participant interviews took on the form of friendly conversations leading to the development of more pertinent questions as time progressed. Informants explored topics and shared their
perspective of the ways in which policies have been implemented and reshaped as needed by educational leaders. Whereas the questionnaire was designed to uncover the essentials of the research questions, the interviews served as a means to clarify responses, interpret the intent of multicultural policy developments, and ascertain a deeper understanding of each participant’s perception of the influence of state action on organizational structures, pedagogical practices, and achievement (Patton, 2002). When conducting a final interview with each of the participants, I read each research question separately and asked for a free flowing response. This information was recorded and proved essential to defining each case.

Field Notes

During a one-week visit to each of the states under investigation, field notes were extracted from a variety of sources. I spent most of my time observing the occurrences of pre-selected state educational offices in charge of implementing either a multicultural education regulation or an equity policy mandate. The services provided by department staff, requests for assistance on multicultural and equity initiatives, and the process of policy infusion as it occurred on a daily bases were recorded. To this end, pertinent information as it related to the research questions was extracted. In addition, brochures, presentation handouts, status reports, videos, and other resources from each state were collected and reviewed. As a process of triangulation, additional field notes extracted from 1) informal meetings with a variety of key educational employees in the two states, 2) participation in a student forum and a local school system membership meeting held in the mid-Atlantic state, and 3) observing a presentation of equity initiatives held for foreign educators visiting the southeastern state.
Participants

The two subjects (state employees) invited to participate in this study were asked to 1) complete a questionnaire as it relates to multicultural educational developments and program implementations that have resulted from state mandates, 2) participate in a follow-up interview, and 3) allow the researcher to observe the occurrences in their departmental offices. Prior to the issuing questionnaires and conducting interviews, participants received a letter briefing them on the study and a summative proposal outlining the purpose of the study along with a rationale and statement of the problem, research design, significance of their participation, benefits of the study to them and their prospective states, and a time-line of my dissertation. In addition, a letter containing an overview of the study was sent to the state superintendents of education.

The participants who served as the focus of the case studies were state employees in a mid-Atlantic and a southeastern state. An Internet search, followed by phone calls to state departments of education, were used to identify the employees who were working in a capacity which equipped them with the knowledge and experiences necessary to appropriately add insight to the research questions. The two individuals selected held positions, which required them to provide leadership and technical assistance on the policy mandates under investigation. The educational administrator from the mid-Atlantic state guides the implementation of the regulation on multicultural education adopted by the state board of education and has several years of experience advocating for the fair and equitable treatment of minority, low-income, disabled students enrolled in public schools. The southeastern state’s case was built largely upon responses from a key
official who has experience in coordinating and evaluating equity initiatives at the state level and within school systems throughout the state.

The informants were informed that the comparative case studies were to be framed around each state; however, their participation would serve as a lens for understanding, interpreting, drawing conclusions on the complexities of each research question. Moreover, participants were informed that research findings were intended to provide them, as well as other state educational officials, with clarification on the relationship between the intent of multicultural and equity policy mandates and realities that occur during infusion process. Even more importantly, participants were informed that the results of the study were intended to improve the quality of educational services provided to high-risk ethnic and linguistic minority by clarifying the qualifications and dispositions that state educational leaders must possess in order to be successful at implementing reforms. This notion is best expressed by Carrasquillo's (1998) assertion:

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, educators are critically analyzing the changes or reforms that need to be undertaken in order to prepare themselves to educate all children, including the culturally and linguistically diverse, to meet the challenges imposed by society. These new challenges require programmatic and curricular reforms as well as new leadership roles for educators (p. 177).

A review of cases allows educational leaders to understand a multitude of complexities involving state action on multicultural education and equity, which can serve as a foundation systemic organizational reform. To this end, triangulation was used to ensure that this study produced credible results.
Triangulation

Triangulation was used to endorse the examination of multiple sources of information and to substantiate research findings. Three methods were used for this study including theory (cultural ecology and social systems), investigator, and data triangulation (Janesick, 1998). The triangulation of theories supplied a comprehensive lens for interpreting challenges to implementing multicultural and equity policy guidelines across cases. Independent investigators offered perspective on single units and provided a means for clarifying and for unveiling inconsistencies (Janesick, 1998, Stake, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Viewing phenomenon from multiple perspectives reduces the possibility of misinterpretation and adds credibility to evaluative judgments. Three meetings were held with investigators (two doctoral students) to discuss 1) the research design, 2) the use of theories to explain state contexts, and 3) the interpretation of data that evolved within each case. Moreover, data triangulation was used to increase internal validity. The use of coding techniques assisted in guiding data collection, identifying themes, and interpreting relevant bits of information. Merriam (1998) asserts that coding should not be an unmanageable or complicated process because it is “nothing more than assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of data” (p. 164). Emerson et al. (1995) articulate the phases used during the coding of data for this study by stating:

Qualitative coding is a way of opening up avenues of inquiry: the researcher identifies and develops concepts and analytic insights through close examination of and reflection on fieldnote data (p.151).
More specifically, data collected for the case studies were stored in files on the word processor. One file was allocated to each case (state) and contained coded interview responses, field notes, questionnaire responses, and document notations (Yin, 1994). Coded data were situated under research questions, which guided the development of themes and led to the deeper interpretation of sources across units (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Conclusion

Qualitative techniques were used to analyze data collected on a state multicultural education regulation in a mid-Atlantic and an equity law in southeastern state. Comparing state cases allowed for a cross analysis of data and for gaining deeper understandings of phenomena. Using a variety of methods to collect data assisted in interpreting contextual meanings and statements. Triangulation of theories helped to explain findings and independent investigators assisted in uncovering inconsistencies. Even though a number of other states have implemented multicultural and equity policy mandates, the two states that formed the bases of this study proved complimentary in evaluating the implications of the policy-making infusing process.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative case study was to examine the ways in which two state educational agencies have addressed the issue of providing quality education for diverse students enrolled in public schools by instituting equity legislation and regulations on multicultural education. Recent attention to organizational structures and pedagogical practices that contribute to disproportionate gaps in achievement has led state leaders to institute responsive guidelines, strategies, and evaluative measures. The two states, Atlantic and Southland, under study publicly acknowledged that they have failed to adequately serve the needs of ethnic and linguistic minority students and aggressive reform initiatives have been put in place to close present gaps in achievement.

Two theories were used to focus this research. The cultural ecology theory challenges educational officials and teachers to gain an understanding of the ways in which culture is related to school performance when considering and instituting reforms (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Social systems theory concentrates on behaviors and processes within institutions that are used to lead inside and outside agents toward a common goal (Gibson et al., 1984). Collectively, the theories assist in explaining the
methods used by each state education agency to directly address issues of low achievement among ethnic and linguistic minorities and to create organizational systems that eliminate structural barriers and improve equity. Educational authorities in the states under study have worked to heighten sensitivity toward cultural groups in effort to improve access and opportunity for members of minority groups. Policy makers, state and local educational employees, task forces, and community groups have examined issues in and out of school that explain differences in achievement among culturally diverse groups. This community of stakeholders determined that policies, processes, and practices must be modified to enhance knowledge of culture and to improve educational opportunities.

This study serves as a critical review of the manner in which two state departments of education have interpreted policy mandates, reached out to stakeholders, and evaluated their progress in infusing the principles of multicultural education and equity into educational contexts. Although other legislation and regulations that either directly or indirectly speak to improving minority achievement exist in the states, this study concentrates on policy mandates managed by a pre-selected office within each state department of education, thereby, limiting the focus of this research.

**Research Questions**

1. How have state educational officials implemented legislation or regulations that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity?

2. To what extent have state education agencies used policy mandates to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students?
3. To what extent do state educational officials monitor and evaluate policy mandates specifically targeted toward improving academic performance among culturally diverse students?

4. How have state education agencies attempted to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity policy mandates?

Chapter four presents a complete unit analysis of each case which is framed around the four questions that guided this research. Data in the cases are presented under major domains which include: 1) an overview of the educational context and policy mandate under investigation in each state along with descriptions, processes, and key actors involved in implementing policy mandates, 2) findings on the use of the policy mandates to enhance achievement for culturally diverse students, 3) attempts to monitor and to evaluate the policies under review, and systemic organizational alignment strategies. Sub-domains assist in clarifying distinctive attempts made by each state to ensure that local school systems comply with the policy mandates. The chapter ends with a cross-case analysis of Atlantic and Southland. Findings are framed around research questions and include matrices, which demonstrate concise comparisons of: 1) the states implementation of the policy mandates, 2) use of the policy mandate to enhance achievement, 3) monitoring and evaluative processes, 4) organizational and pedagogical alignment factors, and 5) strategies for overcoming resistance.
Case Study #1: Atlantic

Educational Context

The primary goal of education policy making in Atlantic is to set parameters and direction for free and appropriate education for all students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through post-secondary educational institutions. When it was determined that discrimination was taking place on multiple levels in Atlantic, multicultural education was used as an awareness enhancement process to help teachers to appreciate the differences that they had in their classrooms. Throughout the last decade, much of the behavior in the state has been modified because of information and enhanced knowledge on culture. Intense professional development has assisted majority cultures in understanding their ethnic identities as well as the diverse identities of other cultural groups. In the late 1990s, new research on teacher quality gave state leaders new leverage to institute changes. A summit with business owners, politicians, superintendents, and board members was held in the state and research was presented on minority education showing that segments of the school population were not being taught. Leaders were persuaded that drastic changes needed to be made. Lacking comparative federal standards on multicultural education, the state used multiple measures including research, focus groups, and community outreach to develop more aggressive multicultural policy guidelines.

The Regulation on Multicultural Education (MCE.REG) is an installment in the state's direction to promote an understanding of cultural differences within educational environments. The state department of education has made a strong commitment to implementing this regulation by demonstrating leadership and by developing systemic
processes to hold local schools accountable for building capacity to enhance achievement for the state’s growing minority populations. The state superintendent asserts:

The spirit of cooperation and innovation exhibited by many local school systems to address the issue [the academic success of all students] has been admirable. Some systems are employing measures that become models for others. The fact that there is so much left to do should not detract from the progress that has been made (State Superintendent, 2001).

Continuing with its commitment to make progress, the Atlantic Department of Education concentrated on implementing MCE.REG as a tool for obtaining educational equity for all students.

Implementing MCE.REG as a Tool for Obtaining Equity

Description of State Policy on Multicultural Education

The state’s Regulation on Multicultural Education (MCE.REG) is the most active policy on multicultural education in the state. Many school districts are in the process of planning multicultural initiatives and writing policies as an effort to meet the goals of the regulation. Despite these efforts, most academic programs and learning environments throughout the state do not reflect the experiences of ethnically and linguistically diverse students. Some local school systems have done and are doing better than others in infusing the regulation. The state board of education, superintendent of education, department of education, and multiple stakeholders are working to address this fact through the use of policies, comprehensive planning, and evaluative processes. In recent years, MCE.REG has been amended to reflect a more comprehensive plan for the integration of processes and resources necessary for the development of school climates...
and classroom practices that mirror the cultural identities and learning styles of diverse groups of students.

MCE.REG challenges state and local educators to set priorities for serving the needs of diverse groups of students. Figure 4.0 summarizes the definition, goals, approaches, and expected outcomes of MCE.REG.

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<tr>
<th>Figure 4.0</th>
<th>Atlantic Multicultural Regulation – MCE.REG</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>A continuous, integrated, multiethnic and multidisciplinary educational process that fosters appreciation and respect for diverse racial, ethnic, gender, religious, linguistic, socioeconomic, disability, and age groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Set minimum requirements which assist local school systems with the development and implementation of five-year plans which demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the culturally diverse groups in curriculum, instruction, instructional resources, planning, assessment, and staff development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Approaches** | Challenge traditional practices by dealing directly with issues of bias, prejudice, discrimination, and educational inequity  
Correct omissions and misrepresentations of diverse groups in the curricula and instructional resources  
Create school climates that promote and reflect the cultural identities, learning styles, and communication patterns of diverse groups of students  
Train educators to identify effective strategies for teaching students from diverse backgrounds  
Implement a five-year plan, based on a needs assessment, to implement the guidelines in the regulation  
Review annual progress reports submitted by local school system  
Identify strategies for acceleration and progress in implementation |
| **Expected Outcomes** | Quality and equity in education  
Improved academic achievement through the elimination of gaps |

The goals of the regulation stretch beyond preparing students to live and to work productively in society and promoting student achievement, educators are expected to utilize classroom interactions, curriculum, instructional techniques, and resources that show respect for the diversity and commonalities of cultural groups living in local communities, the state, and the nation. The regulation was initially instituted in the early
1970s and has continued to evolve throughout the last thirty years. In 1999, the state board of education added a section on school safety and amended the planning portion of the regulation requiring school systems to develop strategies for acceleration. For the purposes of this study, analysis of school safety was not included since it does not directly relate to research questions.

**Policy Evolution and Revisions**

Atlantic has an administrative history of planning and developing strategies for the inclusion of the history and experiences of ethnic and cultural minorities in curricula and school environments dating back to the early 1970s. A timeline on the implementation of MCE.REG along with major initiatives, which focus on equity and multicultural educational principles appear Table 4.0.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Ethnic and Minority Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>MCE.REG (amended, name change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>MCE.REG (amended to include reporting requirement and add staff development; monitoring component rejected by state board education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Diversity Advisory Council established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Diversity Advisory Alliance (established to continue the work of the Diversity Advisory Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Decision to Disaggregate Data Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>MCE.REG amended to include language on acceleration for all students, elimination of the achievement gap and school safety (sexual orientation proposed but denied by legislative oversight committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority Achievement Steering Committee &amp; Advisory Council established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Role of the Diversity Advisory Alliance expanded to focus on achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the timeline demonstrates, the regulation has been amended several times as a result of input from various councils and advisory groups. Major changes did not occur in the restructuring of the law until the late 1990s after academic and non-academic student data
was disaggregated for the first time by subgroup populations. The first ethnic and minority educational regulation was written in 1972, and throughout the 1970s, extensive guidelines on educating diverse groups of students were made available to educators. During this time, attempts to deepen understandings of cultural groups were fragmented. Strengthening diversity efforts or implementing the regulation fully and consistently throughout the state was not a priority of the state superintendent. During the 1980s, only passive attention was given to the regulation.

The regulation was not revitalized until the appointment of the new superintendent in 1992. In 1993, the State Board of Education adopted a comprehensive regulation on multicultural education and the policy became known as the Regulation on Multicultural Education (MCE.REG). The policy mandate set minimum requirements for local systems on the implementation of the multicultural education regulation. The amended policy requires local systems to develop and to submit *Five-Year Multicultural Plans* that outline intended goals, objectives, and strategies for evaluation in the implementation of MCE.REG.

In 1994, the new superintendent called in the staff administrator of the Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity to discuss the vision for the department. The regulation was discussed and a recommendation was made to focus on the areas of curriculum, instruction, and professional development. The intent was to expand the vision of equity and multicultural education throughout the department of education. Throughout the next few years, the equity office worked to strengthen the use of the regulation and to use it to improve minority achievement. The decision to disaggregate data by subgroup populations fueled revisions to the regulation in 1999, which expanded...
its vision and direction to include guidelines on acceleration, the elimination of the achievement gap, and school safety. MCE.REG is now the primary tool used to address planning, curricular, instructional, staff development, and climate issues as they relate to improving minority achievement in the state. Key actors rely on the regulation to improve the quality of educational services provided to culturally diverse students and to implement strategies to eliminate gaps in achievement.

**Key Agents of MCE.REG**

The Atlantic Department of Education works with multiple stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of the MCE.REG becomes a reality. Figure 5.0 depicts the flow of stakeholders involved in implementing MCE.REG.

Figure 5.0  MCE.REG Stakeholder Implementation Flowchart
The figure shows an interdependent relationship among the: Atlantic Board of Education, the State Superintendent, the Minority Achievement Advisory Council, the Minority Achievement Steering Committee, the Department of Education, the Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity, the Diversity Advisory Alliance, and the Scholastic Institute on Minority Achievement. Each stakeholder takes on specific roles in ensuring that the policy mandate is fully implemented throughout the state.

Implementation of MCE.REG begins at the state level through the use of leadership and technical assistance provided by the equity office, websites, actions of the steering committee and councils, a resource center, and directories. The Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity (equity office) was instituted shortly after the regulation on ethnic and cultural diversity was adopted. The primary objective of the equity office is to ensure equal opportunities for all students and to eliminate achievement gaps by “protecting, advocating, implementing, creating, informing, monitoring, researching, and interpreting”. When students or parents experience discriminatory situations in schools, the equity staff councils, advises, or mediates to protect civil rights and to ensure that students receive equitable education experiences.

The Minority Achievement Steering Committee (MASC) extends vision and expert opinion regarding the goals of MCE.REG. MASC meets twice a year to provide oversight responsibility to other groups and task forces. The Diversity Advisory Council studied minority achievement issues throughout the state and ways in which the state education agency could hold local school systems more accountable for improving the quality of instruction provided to underperforming minority students and for fulfilling the goals of the regulation. The council convened prior to the passing of the amended 1999
Regulation on Multicultural Education and made several recommendations to the state superintendent of education and the state board of education that were eventually availed in polices and procedures.

The Minority Achievement Advisory Council (MAAC) advises and assists the state education agency with the goal of enhancing achievement among minority students by eliminating gaps. The work of the Diversity Advisory Council was reaffirmed in 1999 with the formation of the MAAC which expanded the work of the Diversity Advisory Council by sponsoring conferences and workshops, presenting executive summaries to the public, and publishing reports on the status of minority achievement and a framework for planning local school system initiatives. The Diversity Advisory Alliance assumed the work of the Diversity Advisory Council in the late 1990s. The alliance, along with the Scholastic Institute on Minority Achievement, attends to critical priorities set forth by MASC. This systemic approach to implementation holds multiple stakeholders accountable and presents opportunities for a variety of entities to share in the decision-making and reform processes geared toward enhanced achievement.

**Use of Policy Mandate to Enhance Achievement**

Currently, three out of four public education priorities in the state directly relate to academic performance and achievement. All children are expected to achieve at standard or above standard performance levels on state assessments. Schools in the state have raised student performance on state-wide standardized assessment tests, but achievement gaps between minority and white students still remain. In addition to socioeconomic status, the state education agency, steering committees, and task forces are closely examining the relationship between race/culture and low student achievement. To this
end, addressing the issue of differences in performance is the primary goal of the state department of education for the next five years, and MCE.REG has become the major vehicle for planning to eliminate achievement gaps. Supporting state efforts, one of the largest districts with high percentages of African American, Hispanic, and Native American students is piloting a new gap coordinator position to assist in identifying and monitoring achievement issues, sharing data to inform instruction, working with staff in developing strategies and supporting programs to promote equity and cultural responsiveness, and communicating academic performance opportunities and concerns with parents and families. This action compliments state efforts to accelerate learning among underachieving students.

**Strategies for Accelerating Learning among Underachieving Students**

A section requiring local school systems to identify and to implement strategies for acceleration was added to the regulation in 1999 as method of resolving the issue of low achievement among minority and non-minority student populations. Accelerated learning centers on the notion that all students can learn at high levels. Teachers in the state are expected to adopt strategies to capitalize on student experiences and strengths when assisting them in the construction of knowledge. The state department of education and local school systems work collaboratively to enhance achievement for low performing minority students though the use of a variety of strategies and compelling processes.

State officials support strategies for acceleration and gap strategies used by school districts to enhance achievement among ethnic and linguistically diverse students.

Strategies for acceleration result from needs assessments that have been conducted at
schools and are tailored to meet specific objectives within a particular educational context. Gap strategies direct practitioner behavior toward holding the same expectations for all students and are meant to address general structural barriers to academic potential. In a 2001-2002 report of accomplishments made by the Diversity Advisory Alliance submitted to the state superintendent, members indicated that the alliance had taken steps to provide leadership on accelerations. Table 5.0 illustrates states recommended gap strategies and 2001-2002 Diversity Advisory Alliance leadership initiatives.

The table is significant because it reveals that gap strategies, which are general actions that commit the school community to the solution process, focus on eliminating the achievement gap by holding high expectations of all students by raising cultural awareness and by concentrating on needs. Leadership Acceleration Initiatives reflect the institution of programs, tutoring, and pedagogical practices designed specifically to reach targeted educational goals of a district or school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.0</th>
<th>General Gap and Tailored Accelerated Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gap Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>hold high expectations for all children in learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>expand the focus of eliminating gaps to leadership, teamwork, evaluative processes, and the selection of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>staff training on cultural awareness, effective teaching strategies, and diverse teaching and learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>note areas in need of attention and progress by collecting and analyzing disaggregated data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>involve parents, families, and communities in finding solutions to eliminating gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>established an early reading program for at-risk pre-schoolers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The state has instituted summer centers to accelerate learning for low performing students. The summer academies focus on accelerating learning in the areas of math and reading for elementary and middle school students. During the first summer, few minority students were enrolled in summer programs. Ironically, the academies were intended to accelerate learning among high percentages of low minority performing students. To address this issue, discussions were held with the program’s facilitator concerning a change in the composition of the students. As a result, efforts were made to recruit more minorities. Moreover, after the first summer, teachers received training on learning styles in order to more responsively meet the needs of diverse student learners. In addition to summer academies, the Diversity Advisory Alliance has sponsored extended day programs, tutoring, and vertical teaming as methods of acceleration.

In another effort, Atlantic senior department of education leaders sponsored a forum on academic acceleration to gain student perspective on priorities set by the state. Students from all counties were informed that the forum was an installment in the direction of eliminating achievement gaps. State leaders made it clear that restructuring was a result of an awakening brought on by data and not a because of lawsuits. A controlling question was posed to students attending the focus group on acceleration. Students were asked: “How does history fit into current achievement gaps?” Holding students responsible for becoming critical of inequities and institutional norms is a means by which senior educational officials increase awareness of important educational issues and challenges all stakeholders to participate in the change process.

**MCE.REG and Accelerating Minority Achievement Core Competencies**

During the 2001-2002 school-year, the Diversity Advocacy Alliance was directed...
to revise the process used to assess and to report the progress of the implementation of MCE.REG at the school level. Equity staff members had pointed out shortcomings to implementation to the state superintendent and the state board of education in the past. However, the state educational officials had not authorized on-site reviews to be conducted by an independent group or by the Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity. In addition, the new emphasis on accelerating learning for students caught in the gap has increased demands on identifying more refined methods of accountability. With these factors in mind, the Diversity Advisory Alliance has developed core competencies to assist districts and schools in identifying and providing concentrated professional development on knowledge, skills, and processes needed to fully implement the regulation. In this instance, the state superintendent issued charges without relinquishing authority to the alliance to assess the implementation of the regulation. Hence, this process becomes problematic when refined reporting is incongruent to actual implementation.

Table 6.0 contains a sample of core competencies and acceleration methods developed by the alliance.
Table 6.0 MCE.REG and Accelerating Minority Achievement Core Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCE.REG</th>
<th>Acceleration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intercultural Communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prejudice Reduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Articulate and implement principles of multicultural education in the written, taught, and assessed curriculum</td>
<td>- Develop instructional strategies that use language, communication style and culture of home as vehicle to accelerate student achievement in academic subject areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing Supportive Learning Environments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prejudice Reduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Self-assess and claim ownership of their own prejudices and biases, and identify strategies to overcome when teaching</td>
<td>- Demonstrate an understanding of prejudice and discrimination and the negative effects of both on the academic achievement of minority students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create physical environments in which all students see themselves and others in traditional, non-traditional, and non-stereotypical ways</td>
<td>- Teachers examine beliefs and expectations for students of various social, ethnic and economic groups in order to ensure behaviors that hold high expectations for all students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table highlights deliberate attention given to expanding all competency areas to ensure accelerated learning experiences for low performing cultural groups. MCE.REG standard protocols are presented on the left side of the table under various categories and acceleration strategies appear on the right side. In total, the MCE.REG and Accelerating Minority Achievement Core Competencies consist of five major categories including:

1. intercultural communication;
2. prejudice reduction;
3. establishing culturally responsive learning environments;
4. designing curriculum and instruction using the criteria specified in the regulation, and;
5. tests, measurements, and assessments for achieving equity.

Each core competency includes key objectives for MCE.REG and minority acceleration and informs educators of specific skills and competencies they need to effectively fulfill the specifications of the regulation. The core competencies have been distributed to all...
local school systems as a guide, but a process to monitor and to evaluate knowledge and
skills set forth in the document has not been identified. Therefore, the state continues to
rely on annual progress reports submitted by local school systems as the primary method
of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of MCE.REG.

State Attempts to Monitor and to Evaluate MCE.REG

The Diversity Advisory Alliance has created protocols, which are reflective of
and exceed the goals of MCE.REG. The protocols were developed prior to the
MCE.REG and Accelerating Minority Achievement Core Competencies and are
considered a primary assessment tool. The state has outlined a format and identified
components that must be included in each local school system's MCE.REG Protocols
(Annual Progress Report). MCE.REG requires local school systems to submit reports to
the state department of education by June of each year. In addition to a protocol
checklist, reports are comprised of a cover sheet, superintendent's certification form,
implementation status report, progress narrative summarizing identifying goals,
objectives, activities, student achievement measures, method of local evaluation, five-
year plan revisions, major initiatives or programs, and supplementary materials. Local
school systems also have the option of submitting a summary of on-site visits.

Protocols ensure that organizational structures align with guidelines developed by
the state department of education. Table 7.0 identifies a sample of key protocols areas
and correlating indicators.
## Table 7.0 Sample of MCE.REG Protocols Areas and Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protocol Area</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission/Vision</td>
<td>The school has a written mission or vision statement that includes a stated commitment to diversity, multicultural education, enhancing student achievement, and eliminating student achievement gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>The school has written policies and practices that prohibit discrimination against students and staff based on diversity factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>The school provides curriculum that includes opportunities for students to demonstrate valuing one's own heritage and the richness of cultural diversity and commonality, being aware of and sensitive to individual differences within cultural groups, and addressing stereotypes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>The school involves all staff in exploring attitudes and beliefs about their own cultural identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is significant because it demonstrates that protocols 1) are expansive and pervasive in situating the infusion of multicultural issues within educational contexts, 2) cover all of the auspices of the equity office, and 3) take into account key areas of MCE.REG. Deliberate distinctions are made in the descriptions of protocols. For example, the “instruction” protocols lay criteria for 1) climate and 2) access and grouping. The “instructional activities” protocols challenge educators to “provide opportunities for students to analyze and evaluate social issues and propose solutions to contemporary social problems”. The protocols provide criteria for implementation of MCE.REG, which prompt local school systems to rate themselves on several items as implemented (Yes), not implemented (No), or in progress (IP) on annual progress reports.

Annual Progress Reports, submitted between the years of 1999 and 2002 of five public school systems were critically reviewed for this study. Protocols, grouped under eleven main categories, include indicators that have grown from seventy-seven items to over ninety items in recent years. Table 8.0 summarizes the results of a review of five district annual progress reports.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Entity</th>
<th>Responses and Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahoo</strong></td>
<td>Marked majority of items yes, no on two responses, and three items IP. No items included: no 1) policy on MCE.REG and 2) policy including the specific goals for enhancing student achievement and eliminating gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Self-Reporting</strong></td>
<td>Issued all standard ratings for the district’s mission statement, sample curriculum guide, strategies of acceleration and professional development. Commented: “Lacked data to support progress on strategies for acceleration. There’s a need to develop cultural specific achievement goals…What will you do to eliminate the gap in achievement between your cultural groups in your schools?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Mission statement does not have diversity, multicultural education, or gap factors included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timberville</strong></td>
<td>Marked majority yes responses, one no response and no IP responses. Identified modifying and writing the curriculum as objectives. Respondent stated that the school system had met this objective by including units on a study of Africa and Mexico, sponsoring school celebrations and introducing students to music of cultures around the world, offering middle school foreign language exploratory classes, and instituting a program on cultural awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitt</strong></td>
<td>Marked IP for over half of the items, yes for almost half of the responses, and no for only six responses. Commented, “Our activities [implementation of MCE.REG] have been limited due to an unusually difficult budge year. It is unlikely that this will change in FY 03”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blanche</strong></td>
<td>Marked yes for all indicators under each protocol. Respondent noted the accomplishments of a new coordinator of diversity training position and three in-service offerings on gender, ethnic groups, and the regulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foothill</strong></td>
<td>Marked yes for the majority of items, three IP, and no no responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Self-Reporting</strong></td>
<td>1) Provide staff development related to inequities in discipline, review procedures for identifying students for gifted and talented and special education programs, 2) Maintain disaggregated data to track disparities and modify identification methods to address student achievement disparities based on diversity factors, 3) Expand collection of disaggregated data, and 4) Expand MCE.REG training to include more staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents placed check marks next to indicators stating whether the district has complied, has not complied, or is in the process of complying with each protocol area.

Local school district responses note challenges and efforts made to comply with MCE.REG and state equity employees’ responses are presented to illustrate the
evaluation process. Of the five, the majority of local school systems overwhelmingly marked yes indicating that they were in compliance with the protocols. The table is significant because it shows that regardless of 1) the quality of the evidence provided to the state or 2) the tendency of local school systems to mark yes for the majority of protocols with attached comments or critical feedback that may contradict the self-evaluative rating, state officials overwhelmingly assign standard ratings to annual progress reports.

The protocols can potentially add credibility to the monitoring process; however, only one school district is on record stating that it “would build in a monitoring system for the implementation of minority achievement initiatives. This aggressive monitoring system is set to review objectives, strategies, recommended action(s), descriptions, rationales, implementation plans, evaluations, and approximate budgets”. Local school systems are not required to explain the process of gathering data needed to complete annual progress reports. Although this information must be included in *Five-Year Multicultural Plans*, the state department of education does not investigate to ensure that districts are following similar procedures or methodologies for data collection each year. On the other hand, local school superintendents must sign Annual Progress Reports attesting to the credibility of the document. To strengthen efforts, the state relies on critical measures to ensure that organizational structures systemically align with the regulation.

**Systemic Organizational Alignment Strategies**

The most common strategies used to align organizational structures with MCE.REG include: 1) the use of disaggregated data to reaffirm the goals of the regulation, 2)
extensive training on the regulation, 3) using guidelines provided by the state to select multicultural and unbiased instructional materials, 4) developing a comprehensive plan for professional development, and 5) a focus on placing minority students in more challenging courses. Challenges to organizational alignment rest largely in getting key supervisory and central office staff to “buy into” the need to infuse multicultural content into all curriculum areas. To a lesser degree, local districts have instituted creative strategies which include infusing multicultural components into administrative, teacher, and support staff evaluations, strong enforcement of bias/hate policies, and inviting a wide array of consultants with expertise on minority achievement into districts and at the state level to assist in developing and implementing strategies.

The actions and strategies applied by the Diversity Advisory Alliance are critical to organizational alignment processes and are used to further multicultural and equity initiatives. During monthly meetings, alliance representatives from each district report on the implementation of the regulation. Professional development feedback, policy changes, threats to implementation, effective strategies in raising minority student achievement, and the possibility of sharing human and material resources are just a few of the topics that participants dialogue on regularly. Members of the alliance have taken on leadership responsibilities in their districts in implementing the regulation. In other words, the alliance representatives are the “eyes and ears” of what is going on in local schools.

During a Diversity Advisory Alliance meeting held during October 2002, representatives from local school districts reported on current efforts to implement MCE.REG. In addition to general reporting, the day’s charge included revising the
Regulation on Multicultural Education Course used by one of the largest school districts to be a possible model for other school systems and elaborating and clarifying core competencies. Box 2 depicts each Diversity Advisory Alliance member’s report on recent local initiatives or planning taking place in his or her local school district aimed toward complying with the regulation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2 Alliance Organizational Alignment Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District E</td>
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<tr>
<td>District F</td>
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<tr>
<td>District G</td>
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<tr>
<td>District H</td>
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<tr>
<td>District I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Box 2 captures the significance of organizational alignment reporting provided by local school system representatives in the presence of state personnel. The energizing conversations and reporting of alliance members reaffirmed the belief among state personnel and members of local school systems that implementing the regulation is crucial to transforming educational environments to sustain equity and to raise minority student achievement. As the meeting progressed, one member cautioned the alliance to keep in mind the diversity of districts so that the new course model allows flexibility. In addition, members discussed issues related to developing a model professional development course, future professional development opportunities, and ways in which

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new state-level educational developments could potentially impact the implementation of the regulation.

Organizational features that have proven to be most challenging to provide equity services to diverse groups of students include:

1. communicating multicultural goals and initiatives throughout the entire state agency
2. ensuring that regulations are followed through by local school superintendents
3. changing attitudes and belief systems of those in authority
4. funding/staffing
5. not being directly involved in issues related to student placement in school, and
6. inexperienced teachers placed in schools that are low performing and more experienced teachers placed in high performing schools.

The mini-case that appears in Box 3 shows the steps that Crestwood Public Schools, one of the largest school districts in Atlantic, is taking to overcome challenges to implementing MCE.REG.
Box 3 Infusing a Multicultural Policy Mandate into Crestwood County

The efforts of Crestwood County in infusing MCE.REG criteria into the total scope of schooling have been extensive. Funds have been provided for training activities, staff has been added to specifically implement regulation guidelines, and central staff has been continually updated on multicultural issues and concerns. State educational staff considers Crestwood a model school district with visionary commitment and unwavering leadership in implementing the regulation. Staff received MCE.REG training in the areas of bidialectalism, cross-cultural understanding, gap reduction, learning styles, and multiple intelligences. A policy statement on selecting instructional materials, which includes recognition of all groups and individuals, assists students in demonstrating an understanding and appreciation for all cultural groups. The policy is designed to meet the education needs of students with diverse learning styles and present experiences which avoid stereotyping, discrimination, and bias. Guidelines were also developed. The district has adopted an Affirmative Action Plan, uses the state recommended multicultural education survey in developing school improvement plans, and sponsored a conference to address school climate. Curriculum writers have infused the tenets of the multicultural regulation into content, activities, and the selection of materials. Crestwood Public Schools admits that achievement gaps have not been reduced as a result of a review of disaggregated data or the institution of new policies; however, the district reports changing attitudes, increased support from senior educational leaders, more focused attention on accelerated training and program changes, sensitivity to cultural differences, and identification of appropriate instructional strategies based on learning styles. In addition to typical strategies aimed at eliminating gaps in achievement, the district works to ensure that school improvement plans reflect interventions, insist that culturally responsive curriculum is aligned with state and national standards, and challenges teachers to know their subject area content well.

Crestwood Public Schools is a model of excellence in the state. The mini-case illustrates three critical points: 1) the regulation can successfully be implemented locally into the total scope of schooling, 2) local policies and guidelines must be added or rewritten to
accommodate the regulation, and 3) challenging individual beliefs and attitudes is a prerequisite to the implementation of initiatives. Crestwood showed unwavering leadership in implementing MCE.REG, which resulted in the development of policies, processes, and practices necessary for changing environments into inclusive educational contents. Hence, the mini-case presents a holistic view of a local school district’s attempt to systemically comply with a state educational policy on multicultural education (Merriam, 1998). To further local efforts, the state has developed planning matrices to assist in the process of organizational alignment.

**Planning Matrices**

The state maintains that different actors must take on different roles in order to improve minority student achievement and has developed planning matrices to address this fact. The figure 6.0 illustrates the basic features, approaches and processes, and organizational designs presented in matrices recommended by the state education agency as a means of assisting educational institutions in organizing structures and mobilizing personnel in order to realize the goal of improving minority student achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>different actors/roles, strengths/weaknesses, opportunities, internal/external threats/obstacles, resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approaches/ Processes</td>
<td>micro/macro, internal/external data monitoring and analysis, interventions, needs assessments, actions/activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Design</td>
<td>domains, educational levels, objectives, strategies, benchmarks, reform criteria, critical priorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The planning matrices are distributed widely to local school systems, are available on the state department of education website, and clearly establish “a strategy for reform, including critical benchmarks for changing the status quo”. The Framework for Achievement Matrix uses a macro and micro approach. Students, teachers and teachers unions, parents and parent teacher associations, states and local boards of education, state administrators, teacher preparation institutions, research institutions, courts, legislators, and faith-based and business organizations share responsibility through a concerted effort. The framework is organized around domains such as quality personnel and equitable high level opportunity. In addition, the framework calls attention to how each level of education (classroom, school, district, and state) fairs in contributing to the goals of high quality instruction and equal educational opportunity. The Organizational Planning Matrix examines strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and internal/external circumstance as areas of intervention and areas of threats. The comprehensive devise focuses attention on objectives, strategies, benchmarks, data monitoring and analysis, resources, obstacles, and reform criteria and interventions. The strategic planning process can lead administrators and educators through the needs assessment process, which can add accountability, highlight systemic limitations, and assist in reducing the risk of dealing with non-specific data.

**Case Synthesis**

This case describes the ways in which a state policy mandate on multicultural education sets requirements for local school systems on the integrated and continuous infusion of knowledge and appreciation of cultural groups into educational environments. The state maintains that schools benefit from diversity and that *all* students have the right...
to quality education. With this in mind, the state education agencies require local school systems to set priorities for implementing MCE.REG and to submit plans to the Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity. Since the late 1990s, MCE.REG has received focused attention as a result of Atlantic's sustained commitment to improving minority achievement and closing gaps among subgroups. When data were disaggregated by subgroup populations and specifications for acceleration were added to the regulation in 1999, MCE.REG became the primary tool used by educational authorities to ensure that all students achieve at standard or above standard levels. Gap strategies and core competencies have been developed by state and local educators to assist in meeting the acceleration goal identified in the regulation.

The use of multicultural protocols and annual progress reports reinforce commitments made by state educational officials to align organizational and pedagogical practices with the MCE.REG. Even though protocol documents and core competencies provide extensive guidelines on cultural infusion in the areas including curriculum, instruction, planning, and school climate, both are used by local schools for self-evaluation purposes only. The regulation authorizes the state superintendent of education to conduct on-site reviews when necessary to ensure that MCE.REG is implemented to an acceptable degree; however, the state superintendent has approved on-site reviews in past years. This has left the regulation vulnerable to interpretation and issues of non-compliance have gone unaddressed. On the other hand, the mini-case presented in this case study shows that the regulation does assist local school systems in building capacity for taking appropriate steps to ensure that all students are included in the educational process and held to high standards. The case study of Southland that follows provides for
critical comparison of the steps in which a state with considerably different demographics and educational contexts have taken to guarantee educational equity for culturally diverse groups of students enrolled in public schools.

Case Study #2: Southland

Educational Context

The primary goal of educational policy making in Southland is getting all children to academic proficiency by the year 2014. The accountability system requires students to reach academic proficiency on all tested areas on state assessments. Rating students from one-hundred to one-hundred and forty in assessed areas assists in scoring schools from novice to distinguished. The number of schools classified as novice (low performing) has slowly decreased in the last decade. However, provisions are made for parents of children attending low performing schools (rated level three on the state’s accountability system) to choose a higher performing school that a local school system selects in the child’s same attendance/zone area.

From 1993 to 1998, students showed significant academic progress in core subjects as indicated by the state’s assessment system. Students demonstrated progress in meeting the state goals in mathematics at all school levels, reading scores increased at the elementary level, and high school students showed academic growth in reading and social studies. Closer analysis of student performance highlights issues in need of special attention. Despite positive results, middle school students did not show substantial development in science, limited progress was made on the writing portfolio, and a
considerable gap lingered between African American and white students. African American male and students with disabilities have the largest gaps in the state.

Southland is aggressively working to comply with goals of the newly revised federal Elementary and Secondary Reform Act (No Child Left Behind-H.R.1). The state has accelerated its efforts in order to be in complete compliance by 2014. For example, students were previously tested in all grades, but not necessarily in reading and mathematics. Starting the 2003-2004 school year, all students will be tested in reading and mathematics in all grades. As a method of obtaining 100% proficiency for all students, the state department of education has concentrated its efforts in the areas of literacy, equity, and quality. Senate Bill x100 promotes equity by addressing achievement gaps. State educational authorities have infused the guidelines of the policy mandate into their practices and have set departmental goals to ensure that the law is implemented at the state and local levels.

Implementing Senate Bill x100 as a Tool for Obtaining Equity

Description of State Policy on Equity

A Southland Supreme Court decision in 1989 led to expansive equity legislation in public schooling. Over one-third of the state’s economically disadvantaged districts formed a council to improve the quality of education provided to all students and filed suit against the Southland’s General Assembly. The council maintained that each and every child deserved an opportunity to learn in adequate educational environments. Serious funding disparities existed between affluent and economically disadvantaged counties stifling the possibility of equal educational opportunity for all students. In addition, extensive illiteracy and low achievement were cited as evidence of failure on
the state's part to educate children. The court's decision affirmed education as a fundamental right and directed the state to make constitutional provisions to ensure that schools were reconfigured within one year.

Over the next several years, debates were held on theories of reform. Debaters argued that a reform plan must examine school culture, consider social conditions in and outside of school, and reflect drastic changes in policy making. Special interest and advocacy groups pressured legislators to make educational funding and policy a priority. As part of this massive process, a task force drafted a version of Senate Bill x100 (SB x100) in the early 1990s that was passed by state legislators. Figure 7.0 summarizes the current definition, goal, approaches, and expected outcomes of SB x100.
Figure 7.0  
**Southland Equity Legislation – SB x100**

| Definition | - An educational act relating to reducing achievement gaps in public schools  
|           | - Defines achievement gaps as a difference in academic performance between subpopulations of students in areas tested on grade-level state standardized tests |

| Goal      | - Reduce gaps in achievement between male and female students, students with and without disabilities, students with and without English proficiency, students who receive and do not receive free and reduced lunch, and minority and non-minority students |

| Approaches | - Provides disaggregated data (race, gender, disability, English proficiency, and free and reduced lunch) to school councils or principals with an equity analysis that identifies substantive differences between groups on statewide tests  
|           | - Requires local boards to adopt policies for reviewing the academic performance of all groups and establish a target in odd numbered years for reducing gaps  
|           | - Expects school councils/principals to work cooperatively with parents, faculty, and staff to set targets for eliminating gaps and for submitting identified targets (agreed upon by the school council and the local school superintendent) to board members for adoption  
|           | - Directs school councils/principals to review data and revise plans to address professional development and extended school services to include targets, strategies, activities, and a time schedule calculated to eliminate the achievement gaps  
|           | - Calls for the principal to conduct a public meeting with stakeholders to discuss the consolidated plan at the school prior to submitting it to the local school board  
|           | - Requires the local superintendent to report schools that do not meet their targets for four consecutive years to the state superintendent of education  
|           | - Releases funds to be spent to reduce achievement gaps in schools not meeting their goals  
|           | - Requires local school boards to conduct public reviews in odd numbered years of schools consolidated plans which set forth activities and schedules to reduce gaps |

| Expected Outcomes | - Quality and equity in education  
|                   | - Improved academic achievement through the reduction of gaps |

As the figure suggests, SB x100 was crafted to ensure equal access to quality education by requiring local school systems to set objectives necessary to realize specified outcomes and to monitor achievement levels among diverse populations of students. At the onset of the millennium, the policy had evolved into a comprehensive measurement used to eliminate achievement gaps throughout the state.

**Policy Evolution and Revisions**

SB x100 was drafted in effort to address gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students. The largest academic gaps as measured by state assessments in subgroup categories exist between white females and black males, non-English
proficient and English proficient students, and disabled and non-disabled students. The state education agency attention to implementing the policy has shifted throughout the years; however, the goal of the mandate has not wavered and only minor revisions were made to the bill throughout the 1990s. A timeline of the implementation of SB x100 along with major initiatives which focus on equity and multicultural educational principles appears in Table 9.0.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Efficient System of Common Schools (court order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Southland Education Reform Act (SERA) (focused on finance, governance and curriculum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Task Force on Educational Reform (commissioned by the governor to focus on curriculum and funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>SB x100 Passed by the General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>SERA (focused on low performing schools using aggregated data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Conference on Developing District and Local Multicultural Education Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>SERA (focused on assessment and accountability, primary program, and professional development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task Force on Multicultural Education (focused on pre-service teacher education, professional development, and community awareness and support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Equity Task Force (focused on issues of equity and multicultural education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Disaggregated Student Data by Subgroup Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>SB x100 (amended to add specifications for closing the achievement gap)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between 1990 and 1998, the primary focus was on setting targets to raise achievement using aggregated school data among low performing students. The state board of education adopted a policy during the 1997-1998 school-year to disaggregate data and to focus resources on closing achievement gaps. As a result, the assessment system drastically changed in 1998. Data were disaggregated by subgroup population and language on closing gaps in achievement became pervasive throughout the state. Moreover, a senator in the state termed the phrase "all means all" to assist local school
systems in focusing attention and resources on the needs of individual students. A new superintendent of education was appointed to Southland in 2000. Since the superintendent's arrival, the department of education has conveyed the same message to all schools and the superintendent has been consistent in getting information to local school systems. Furthermore, SB x100 policy guidelines have been promoted throughout all state department of education divisions.

The new addition was added to the senate bill in 2002 moved all stakeholders toward concerted efforts to close achievement gaps. Knowledge, understanding, and respect for diversity are central to fulfilling the goals of state educational law. Since the passing of the revised bill, state employees have been more open to discussions on diversity issues and more willing to consider concerns related to the race and achievement. A significant amount of state employees work diligently to model these actions for local school districts. District policies have been written or revised and practices changed to varying degrees as a result of the senate bill. According to one source, “Things are starting to happen. Legislation is forcing people to take action.” Still, district conventions are difficult to challenge. Training is used extensively at state and local levels to gain support and key agents for equity strategies that have resulted from the more aggressive implementation on the newly amended SB x100.

Key Agents of Senate Bill x100

The key agents in the implementation of Senate Bill x100 take on roles that define their responsibilities in ensuring equitable educational experiences for all students in Southland. Decisions to include multiple viewpoints and extensive enforcement of the legislation have been made by policy makers, the state board of education, and the state
superintendent. In addition, state educational officials make attempts to work collaboratively with local superintendents on a number of fronts. Figure 8.0 depicts the systemic implementation on SB x100 among primary stakeholders.

Figure 8.0  SB x100 Stakeholder Implementation Flowchart

The figure indicates that a substantial number of individuals and groups take on leadership roles and different responsibilities related to implementing and evaluating the components in the senate bill. An interdependency exists among the: Southland State Board of Education, Superintendent of Education, Southland Department of Education Divisions, Equity and Compliance Office, Equity Advisory Council, Equity Institute, Local School Systems/ Superintendents, Minority Student Partnership, and Schools/School-Based Decision Making Councils. The Equity Task Force was involved
In the development of the revised policy mandate and reports indicate that members can bereassembled as needed to provide technical assistance to local school systems.

In the early 1990s, the Intergroup Opportunities Branch was the leading entity that addressed diversity issues in the state. During this time, the branch hosted conference and workshop activities centering on topics such as, prejudice reduction, African American academic proficiency, multicultural and gender equity resources, and racial discrimination. The branch developed a *Multicultural Education Plan* to serve as guide for designing and implementing programs. The plan identified goals and objectives, timelines, curricular and school environment provisions, descriptions of in-service activities, evidence of systemic input from women and minorities, and descriptions of on-going evaluations. Evidence indicates that the plan was not used to a significant degree by state and local educators within the state.

Members of the staff of the Equity and Compliance Office (equity office) travel throughout the state to train school staff and central administrators on the specifications of SB x100 and on cultural responsiveness. In addition, equity employees facilitate district and community efforts to discuss minority student achievement, assist in planning diversity programs, and work with other departments on embedding equity into the consolidated planning process. In addition to daily tasks, equity employees provide guidance on using the *Equity Analysis Instrument* and guide districts or schools on how to proceed on issues of concern regarding race, gender, income, and discrimination.

In the late 1990s, the Equity Task Force examined the key question "What is educational equity?" This began an open dialogue where participants from all counties expressed their beliefs, assumptions, and experiences in working toward providing equal
educational opportunity for all students. Members of the group noted that the experiences and realities of students of color were not factored into the process of schooling in Southland leading to cultural misunderstandings and low achievement among minority learners. After several months of discourse, the following definition of educational equity emerged:

Educational equity consists of practices, policies, facilities, academic support, curriculum, instruction, school resources, school climate, and culture that ensure equitable opportunity, fairness, and access to academic excellence, regardless of race, socio-economic, gender, disability, language, national origin, religion and other characteristics.

In addition to the work done by the Equity Task Force, the Educational Equity Advisory Council provides input to the state superintendent on major equity issues. Council members set priorities, developed strategies, and made recommendations on best practices which were reported to the board of education and state superintendent.

Most schools in Southland have school based decision-making councils that are comprised of three teachers, two parents, and the principal. State legislation requires that school-based councils be comprised of representative members that mirror the school's population. School-based decision making councils write comprehensive school improvement plans and identify priority areas related to closing achievement gaps. State educational officials have taken extensive action to ensure that school councils are aware of and trained on the provisions in SB x100. Hence, the strategy of using multiple stakeholders to ensure the realization of education goals is not new in Southland. However, Southland remains a novice at mobilizing key human resources to ensure that
local organizations are transformed to support and to sustain practices, which ensure
enhance achievement for significant groups of underrepresented school children remains.

Use of Policy Mandate to Enhance Achievement

Minority student achievement is a major issue that state legislation on equity is
intended to address. SB x100 is the most effective policy in the state aimed at reducing
gaps in achievement among minorities and non-minorities. All students throughout the
state are expected to obtain academic proficiency by 2014. Southland defines academic
proficiency as “the standard in which students must meet through specified skills and
competencies that make students life long learners and contribute positively to their
social and emotional development”. Special efforts have been made at the state-level to
address gaps and to build capacity to sustain academic proficiency for diverse groups of
students.

The state department of education assembled the Minority Student Task Force in
2000 to address academic disparities. The task force “confronted issues of race, poverty,
and stereotypes that build walls rather than bridges, thereby limiting our horizons,
expectations, and assistance to ALL students”. Moreover, the task force identified goals
and barriers to academic success. Table 10.0 illustrates a sample of the work done by the
task force to assist the state in developing strategies and overcoming barriers to
improving minority student achievement.
Table 10.0  Southland Minority Student Achievement: Barriers & Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minority students are stereotyped as low achievers sometimes using subjectively interpreted data</td>
<td>Minority students are recognized as high achieving learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect of cultural differences in ALL ways</td>
<td>ALL districts and schools will develop environments that result in respect of cultural and socio-economic differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of high expectations for all students</td>
<td>Students, teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents must have a belief in high expectations for ALL students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators do not take ownership of the problem</td>
<td>Believing that all students can learn and that there are “NO EXCUSES” educators will take ownership to assure that all students are challenged and motivated to achieve at high levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southland schools have a lack of teachers and administrators of color</td>
<td>Because it is important that all students benefit from diverse experiences and that our schools represent the richness of America’s cultural diversity, all districts will show annually an increase in the diversity of staff, and by 2004, staff in all schools will be in portion with the number of minorities within the school population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table highlights serious efforts taken by stakeholders to discuss underlying issues related to the dissonance that exist between school and culture. The barriers alert responsible persons to conditions in schools that remain despite the development of programs and intervention aimed toward reducing gaps. The goals commit members of the education community to realizing that a concerted effort must be made to produce equity for all students. After barriers and goals were identified, state officials were charged with assisting local school systems with instituting changes. The state encourages local school systems to implement strategies specifically directed at closing achievement gaps.

Infusing Gap Strategies into Southland Schools

The Minority Student Achievement Taskforce published and disseminated an extensive list of Strategies to Improve Minority Student Achievement. The document

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called a wide variety of stakeholders to action in implementing strategies. Southland teachers, school and district administrators, school-based decision making councils, local school boards, and the Southland State Board of Association developed strategies that were eventually piloted in seven school districts. Gap Strategies for teachers include:

1. develop or select assessment instruments that reveal the student’s learning characteristics in an unbiased fashion;

2. devise a system of outreach to all parents concerning advanced courses;

3. identify and promote the successes of minorities in science, social justice, educational attainment, business successes, elective office and other pursuits to help students and teachers sustain the “effort” required to achieve excellence; and

4. incorporate instructional practices that support an inclusive environment for all students.

This pilot project became known as the Minority Student Achievement Partnership. The mini-case in Box 4 summarizes the findings of implementing gap strategies in a piloted school district.
**Box 4**

**Park Avenue Public Schools**

The minority achievement committee included representatives from each school, the superintendent, director of minority affairs, and the district behavior specialist. The Park Avenue Center (grades 5 and 6) was the source of the pilot. Data from assessments, office referrals, and inclusion in special programs were used. The center analyzed its own data with the help of the behavior specialist and minority affairs director. The highest needs were: students and staff needed more information on cultural differences, cultural diversity and sensitivity, the staff needed teaching strategies in the classroom in order to meet the needs of diverse learners, and minority students needed to be identified for advanced coursework. As a result of the analysis, three goals were chosen: to decrease the number of minorities referred for disciplinary action, to increase the number of minorities participating in advanced placement classes, and to increase cultural awareness among staff. Strategies selected by the committee included providing feedback to teachers on referrals, training on understanding poverty and differentiated instruction, and workshops on cultural awareness. Several changes occurred at the school as a result of the project. Data collection and analysis provided a more reliable and comprehensive means of addressing concerns. Additionally, staff became more involved in the change process and more aware of cultural diversity factors.

This mini-case is significant because it illustrates areas of highest need that occur when working to improve minority achievement (Merriam, 1998). The Park Avenue committee determined that: 1) the staff needed more knowledge of culture, 2) teachers needed to learn techniques/strategies for working with diverse learners, and 3) minority students were underrepresented in advanced coursework. The district participated in this pilot by forming committees, implementing gap strategies, and evaluating its own performance resulting from changes in practices. Park Avenue Public Schools instituted...
strategies at a fifth and sixth grade center. A committee determined immediate needs by collecting cognitive and non-cognitive evidence and made recommendations to resolve issues, which centered on cultural awareness and differences. The local school system involved the school community in assessing problems and finding solutions. When the state education agency attempts to monitor and to evaluate SB x100, these process, strategies, and success stories are noted and shared with other local school systems throughout the state.

State Attempts to Monitor and to Evaluate SB x100

The Scholastic Review as a State Evaluative Tool for Measuring Equity

Southland Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (Scholastic Review) assess a school’s capacity to provide quality educational experiences for all students. All departments within the state educational agency participated in the development of the Scholastic Review. The scholastic instrument can be used by local districts or schools prior to developing improvement plans. Indicators on the Scholastic Review are organized around the themes of 1) curriculum, 2) classroom evaluation/assessment, 3) instruction, 4) school culture, 5) student, family and community support, 6) professional development and evaluation, 7) leadership, 8) organizational structure and resources, and 9) comprehensive and effective planning standards.

Southland uses Scholastic Review indicators to score schools. Level four schools (the highest category) demonstrate exemplary progress in development and implementation of the state’s school improvement standards. Level three four schools are functional and operational and can option to conduct a scholastic review through self-assessment. Level two schools are limited in development and must participate in
scholastic reviews. District or school officials conduct reviews of level two schools, but may option to invite state educational officials to participate. Level one schools (the lowest category) show little or no development toward reaching targets and contain significant numbers of low performing students or show significant gaps.

Representatives from diverse backgrounds undergo aggressive, state sponsored training and conduct Scholastic Reviews of level one schools. Audited schools receive assistance from regional professional development trainers known as highly skilled educators. Rewards are given to schools that meet their goals.

Table 11.0 identifies standards and indicators that contain specific equity language pertaining to eliminating gaps in achievement between non-minority and minority groups or that reflect deliberate action taken to increase educational opportunities for underrepresented students. Indicators that simply included the term *all* were not included due to the ambiguity in its connotation unless the term was underlined in the document or mentioned twice in a statement.
Table 11.0 Southland's Equity Standards and Indicators for School Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Total # of Indicators</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(1) Instructional strategies/activities are consistently monitored and aligned with the changing needs of a diverse student population to ensure various learning approaches and learning styles are addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Evaluation/Assessment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(1) There is leadership support for a safe, orderly and equitable learning environment (i.e.-cultural audits/school opinion surveys).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) The school intentionally assigns staff to maximize opportunities for all students to have access to the staff’s instructional strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Multiple communication strategies and contexts are used for the dissemination of information to all stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) The school/district provides support for the physical, cultural, socio-economic, and intellectual needs of all students, which reflects a commitment to equity and an appreciation of diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student, Family, and Community Support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development/Evaluation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(1) Staff development priorities are set in alignment with goals for student performance and the individual professional growth plans of staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Professional development planning shows a direct connection to an analysis of student achievement data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(1) Leadership decisions are focused on student academic performance and are data-driven and collaborative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) There is evidence that the school/district leadership team disaggregates data for use in meeting the needs of a diverse population, communicates the information to school staff and incorporates the information to school staff and incorporates the data systematically into the school’s plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure and Resources</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(1) The master schedule reflects all students have access to all the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive and Effective Planning</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table indicates that less than 13% of the items on the Scholastic Review lead educators toward behaviors that ensure equity for culturally diverse and marginalized groups of students. Since the review is the primary tool used in the state to hold schools accountable for SB x100 and the document contains a limited amount of gap indicators,
the goal of obtaining educational equity for students who remain in the gap depends largely supportive measures taken by the state.

The Equity Analysis Instrument as a Self-Evaluative Tool for Measuring Equity

The Equity Analysis Instrument is a comprehensive document that expands beyond the Scholastic Review and serves as a self-analysis tool for districts and schools. The instrument was specifically tailored by the Intergroup Opportunities Branch to meet the goals of SB x100 and illustrates focused attention to equity and multicultural education principles. The instrument was piloted in three schools in a northwestern school district in the state. The equity staff refined the document in 2001 to make it more usable for district and school staff members. The document is available upon district or school request or it can be downloaded from the state’s website for immediate use.

Equity Reviews, which require the use of the Equity Analysis Instrument, are not mandatory or required by SB x100; however, a local superintendent may require a level one school (low performing) to conduct an Equity Review or to invite state equity staff in to conduct a review. The Equity Analysis Instrument mirrors the Scholastic Review in the categorization of standards; however, the indicators and performance examples on the Equity Review emphasize diversity and multicultural education issues. Members of the state’s Equity Task Force have visited districts to conduct Equity Reviews of low performing schools upon request in order to specifically uncover inconsistencies in equity and to offer assistance where necessary. As a result of visits, recommendations and commendations have been presented to school councils and principals. Evidence suggests that less than a fourth of all local school systems use the equity instrument.
Table 12.0 presents a sample of the major standards indicators, and performance examples/descriptors on the Equity Analysis Instrument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Area</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Performance Level (Distinguished)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>The district initiates and facilitates discussion among all schools to eliminate unnecessary overlaps and close gaps.</td>
<td>Strengths and differences in cultures are embedded in instruction with attention to subgroups, political and social depth and context; linkages and extensions are used throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Evaluation/Assessment</td>
<td>Test scores are used to identify curriculum gaps.</td>
<td>Educators and community members follow school based council policy, monitor and address inequity in referrals, suspensions, expulsions, dropout rates, etc. across gender, socioeconomic, religious and cultural groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Instructional strategies and learning activities are aligned with district, school and state learning goals and assessment expectations or student learning.</td>
<td>Classroom instructional methods address differentiated cognitive and cultural learning styles, evaluation and adjustments of teaching methodologies are regularly conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment (Leadership)</td>
<td>Leadership decisions are focused on student academic performance and are data driven and collaborative.</td>
<td>Diverse groups are enlisted in decision-making activities and the planning/development of program policies through leadership team that is representative of the population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptors under each performance level (rated distinguished, proficient, apprentice, and novice) on the equity instrument differ from those found on the Scholastic Review, because they include cultural markers. For example, under the curriculum standard, descriptors in the distinguished category include:

1) strengths and differences in cultures are embedded in instruction with attention to subgroups, political and social depth and context

2) multiple materials and resources address the complexity of diversity and provide a variety of cultural perspectives
3) textbooks and supplementary materials including the contributions of diverse groups are incorporated into instruction, and
4) resource materials, technical assistance and contracted support are provided to create curriculum that provides multiple opportunities for all students to master content and meet academic expectations.

Further, the indicators under each standard note samples of evidence.

An electronic scoring guide has been developed and placed on the state department of education's website to assist local schools to conduct self-assessments using the equity instrument. Since rating the on-line equity instrument is a qualitative process and results can be skewed if individuals are not properly trained, the equity office conducts training on the scoring instrument. Scores can be tabulated at the end of completing the document and immediate feedback is provided to educators. Advantages to this self-assessment process include ease of accessibility, no costs or expenses, and opportunity for local school councils, administrators, and teachers to assess themselves internally on issues related to curriculum, planning, and instruction without dividing attention on outside factors that may serve as barriers to academic performance. Further, the results of the self-assessment alert faculty and staff to organizational features in need of alignment in order to fully comply with SB x100.

**Systemic Organizational Alignment Strategies**

Evidence suggests that the Southland state education agency relies heavily on local school systems to develop their own systemic organizational alignment strategies necessary to comply with SB x100. The senate bill contains language which challenges school-based decision councils to restructure schools to ensure that the academic needs of
all students are met. Local superintendents and central office staff primarily provide oversight and technical assistance to areas schools. However, the state requires local school superintendents to report schools that do not sufficiently meet the goals of the legislation within four consecutive years to the state superintendent of education.

The Southland Department of Education relies on disaggregated data reports that point out the disparities in achievement among subpopulations of students to solicit support for initiatives that are aimed to reduce organizational barriers to achievement. Training is used extensively in the state to acclimate state and local employees toward thinking and behaviors which lead to the development of new policies and practices and the elimination of processes that sustain inequity. The state education agency has recommended that local school systems find ways to restructure master schedules in order to provide minority students with additional access to higher level coursework. With these suggestions in mind, it is evident that schools vary in the degree to which pre-existing organizational structures have been renegotiated to comply with SB x100. The two largest school districts have made the most strides in attempting to comply, but smaller and more rural districts have not been as aggressive in their attempts.

The mini-case study of Homeplace Public Schools, one of Southland's largest school districts, that appears in Box 5 illustrates local systemic efforts to align organizational structures with the criteria identified in SB x100.
Box 5  A Vision for Infusing an Equity Policy Mandate in HomePlace County

Homeplace Public Schools has been instituting aggressive strategies and activities in order to comply with the goals of SB x100. Homeplace assembled a committee of researchers, educators, and central office supervisors to evaluate the district’s progress in meeting its 2000-2001 priority need. The priority need centered on decreasing existing gaps in achievement between African American and white students. A needs analysis identified several causes and contributing factors that led to persistent gaps. Among them, a statewide summary revealed that few elementary schools participated in diversity training, a scholastic review indicated that instructional materials seldom reflected diverse cultures, and African American students reported that they were not held to the same expectations as their white counterparts. Positive results of the needs analysis revealed that efforts were being made to intervene and to monitor the referral process for ethnic minority students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Moreover, the district was participating in a pilot project to implement strategies to close the achievement gap in selected schools. The district set three goals to address the priority need which included: increasing the number of students in different groups scoring at proficient/distinguished levels on the state performance test, creating climates that welcomed parents and families of diverse learners, and supporting community and organizational efforts to engage in strategies to close the achievement gap.

The mini-case is significant because it shows that systemic organizational alignment is dependent on three critical factors: 1) it takes teamwork to dialogue on and to assess causes of persistent gaps, 2) training in multicultural infusion is necessary to fulfill the goals of the legislation as it relates to minority learners, and 3) support from parents and community members is needed to close the achievement gap. The mini-case presents a holistic view of local school district’s attempt to systemically comply with a state educational equity policy mandate (Merriam, 1998). Homeplace Public Schools is a model of excellence in the Southland. The district identified priority needs and took
aggressive steps to comply with SB x100. As a result, the entire district is working together to implement the legislation.

**Case Synthesis**

SB x100 is an act specifically designed to assist all students in Southland in reaching academic proficiency by 2014. The state's assessment test is used to measure student progress and to rate schools on four levels. Since equity, literacy, and quality are primary targets that the state education agency has identified in assisting students to reach proficiency, SB x100 is promoted heavily throughout the state and has become the primary means in which state officials must rely to implement systemic change. Gaps in performance among subgroup populations persist despite efforts made by state officials to introduce new policies, disseminate disaggregated data, and provide school systems with comprehensive scholastic review instruments to use in evaluating their own progress. One of the highest gaps in the state exist between African American and white students. With the exception of the state education divisions, equity task forces and councils, and a small amount of educational advocates at local levels, discussions related to the relationship between race/culture and academic achievement remain virtually non-existent throughout the state. Hence, the state relies on extensive professional development to assist administrators and teachers in gaining the skills necessary to meet student academic needs without suggesting targeted competencies.

The Minority Achievement Partnership, which commits local school districts to raising cultural awareness and instituting culturally responsive techniques in educational environments, is being piloted in area schools throughout the state. Preliminary results indicate that there is a severe lack of cultural understanding in schools and that teachers
do not possess the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students. Previous training activities have centered mainly on pedagogical practices that do not specifically address the underlying issues related to student disengagement. The primary instrument designed to measure a school’s progress in meeting the goal of educational equity for all students is only used for self-evaluation and on-site reviews are not authorized by the state superintendent. Therefore, holding high expectations for all students is a lofty goal in Southland. A cross-case analysis presents comparative evidence of each state’s attempts to implement the policy mandates under review, enhance achievement for minority students, monitor and evaluate progress, and align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with policy guidelines.

Cross Case Analysis

This section presents a cross case analysis of the implementation of MCE.REG in Atlantic and SB x100 in Southland. The goal of providing equal access and opportunity to all students, especially significant amounts of ethnic and linguistic minority students remains a challenge in the states. The policy mandates under review have been primary tools used enhance achievement for culturally diverse students. This section illustrates how Atlantic and Southland have developed processes, strategies, timelines, and evaluative measures to 1) implement policy mandates, 2) enhance achievement, 3) monitor and evaluate progress, and 4) align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the specifications identified in each of the policy mandates. Further, the cross case analysis highlights the similarities and differences in the ways in which the
two state departments of education work collaborative with key stakeholders to hold local schools accountable for working toward eliminating student achievement gaps.

The four questions that guide this research appear as headings in this section. Matrices are used to provide concise analysis of findings directly related to answering each research question (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The information presented in each section contains subcategories for the clear identification of similarities in the ways in which the states have worked to improve the quality of education and to ensure equity for students of color performing at unacceptable academic levels. Differences in techniques and processes used by the states stem from specifications in the policy mandates, individual and group interpretations and reactions, and supportive structures within each educational context. Descriptions presented immediately following matrices provide support and clarification. Table 13.0 provides a synthesis of research findings and collapses the similarities and differences between the two states.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13.0</th>
<th>Synthesis of Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R1</strong> Implementation of Policy Mandates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rely on Key Agents</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Training &amp; Technical Assistance</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold Districts Accountable</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R2</strong> Use of Policy Mandate to Enhance Achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up Committees/Councils/Taskforces</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze Achievement Differences &amp; Determine Needs</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate Strategies for Acceleration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disseminate Gap Strategies</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Core Competencies</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Plans for Eliminating Gaps</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage Staff Allocations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain Input from Parents/Community, Faculty, &amp; Staff</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R3</strong> State Attempts to Monitor and to Evaluate Policy Mandates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze &amp; Disseminate Performance Data</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require Districts to Submit Plans for Implementation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Districts to Submit Annual Progress Reports</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Feedback to Districts</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Local Superintendents to Report Schools that Consistently Fail to Meet the Goals of the Policy to State</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require On-Site Reviews</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanction Districts/Schools for Noncompliance</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R4</strong> Aligning Organization Structures and Pedagogy Practices with Policy Mandates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Organizational Structures</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instill the Vision of the Policy to Districts/Schools</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer Training on Policy Mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Resources &amp; Support Services</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate &amp; Fund Multicultural Programs</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate &amp; Fund Pilot Projects on Minority Achievement</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in Cross Agency Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Pedagogical Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrate Efforts on Multicultural Curriculum Enhancements</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define Instructional Equity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer Professional Development on Cultural Responsive Pedagogy</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Overcoming Resistance to Implementing Policy Mandate</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize Forms</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Sources</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Strategies</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: R1=Research Question 1; R2=Research Question 2; R3=Research Question 3; R4=Research Question 4

The table shows that state education agencies have taken similar steps to implement MCE.REG and SB x100. A closer review of research question one in the first section of this cross-case analysis reveals that although the steps are virtually identical,
variations exist in the processes used to implement the policy mandates in each state. Atlantic is further along in its efforts to develop strategies and processes to assist local educators in enhancing achievement for minority learners. With the exception of analyzing and disseminating performance data, the states have developed unique processes to monitor and to evaluate policy mandates. The specifications in MCE.REG provide more support to the department of education for aligning organizational structures when compared to SB x100 and guide practitioners more toward the identification of knowledge and skills needed to close the gap between minorities and non-minorities. Finally, the table shows that the states consistently experience resistance to implementing the of policy mandates. To this end, state educational officials' processes of implementation are expansive and succinct.

R1: How have state educational officials implemented legislation or regulations that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity?

The primary charge of state educational employees in Atlantic and Southland is to provide leadership on implementing educational laws. State educational officials have implemented legislation or regulations that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity in a variety of ways. Table 14.0 illustrates the efforts made by Atlantic and Southland to implement the policy mandates under review.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Set clear vision/commitment for putting policy into practice</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rely on key agents to take on specific roles to ensure that the policy is fully implemented</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expanded definition of equity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use disaggregated data to expand the vision of the policy and to support initiatives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Open discussions on diversity and deepening understanding of cultural groups throughout the state</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability &amp; Requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Set minimum requirements to hold districts accountable for building capacity to enhance minority achievement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expect and rely on concerted efforts of multiple stakeholders to meet the goals of the policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establish evaluative measures to access compliance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Require districts to submit a plans to the state on how the policy will be implemented</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Direct districts to submit annual progress reports on implementing the policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Require local districts to set priorities and to develop strategies for closing achievement gaps</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Require local schools to set priorities and to develop strategies for closing achievement gaps</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Direct individual schools to submit plans to local superintendent</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Technical Assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop comprehensive planning processes/frameworks for local school systems to use for alignment purposes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create and disseminate a guide on infusing policy guidelines into local schools</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide resources for curriculum and instructional planning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide technical assistance on implementing the policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Offer training to state and local educational employees</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Train local educators on cultural responsiveness/culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Facilitate district/community efforts to implement multicultural programs/initiatives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Provide guidance on using self-evaluative tools</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table presents a summarized comparison of the significant steps that the two states have used to demonstrate leadership, hold districts accountable through setting specific requirements, and provide training and technical assistance to ensure the full implementation of MCE.REG and SB x100.
Leadership

The two state superintendents of education set clear vision for implementing the policy mandates and remain committed to setting parameters, which assist in ensuring educational equity. The state education agencies have expanded the definition of educational equity to include all of the auspices of education to make sure that administrators and educators understand that the inclusion of all students in the education process stems from a wide variety of sources including policies, practices, facilities, and curriculum and instruction. The results of disaggregated data analysis have been used by state officials to convince local superintendents, administrators, and teachers that implementing the guidelines set forth in MCE.REG and SB x100 to the fullest extent is in the best academic interests of students and supports their individual efforts to contribute to decision-making and solution processes.

The goal of obtaining educational equity for all students is a priority across the states, but the methods used to reach this goal vary. The equity task force, council members, and the equity office staff in Southland have spent a significant amount of time confronting issues related race/ethnicity, poverty, class, language, and disability; however, this effort is not shared to the same degree by other divisions at the state level. In Atlantic, most divisions of the state department of education have made considerable efforts to address these issues and concerns. Whereas the Atlantic Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity has consistently focused on the infusion of multicultural education into schooling, a shift from multicultural education to equity occurred during the mid-1990s when the Southland Intergroup Opportunity Branch was converted to the Equity and Compliance Office. With the exception of documents

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produced and distributed by the Equity and Compliance Office, other Southland educational departments communiqués rarely include language that reflect the tenets of multicultural education or cultural responsiveness as a means of obtaining equity for ethnic and linguistic minority students. Instead, the state consistently relies on traditional educational practices to meet the needs of unresponsive minority students who have remained in the gap.

**Training and Technical Assistance**

Training and technical assistance have been used to put the policy mandates into action. State and local employees are offered training on the policy mandates. Each division within the Southland Department of Education can train on some aspect of SB x100 and all state employees are familiar with the specifications and implications of the law. State equity staff in Atlantic has taken the lead in informing state and local educators of MCE.REG. However, their efforts have not been as far-reaching when compared to Southland attempts to inform local constituents of SB x100. In addition to training state and local officials on the policies, equity employees in the two states provide training on culturally responsiveness and culturally relevant pedagogy. Staff presenters inform administrators and teachers that the infusion of knowledge of culture into their daily practices is essential in raising achievement among low performing minority students.

Atlantic has developed comprehensive frameworks for districts to use when making decisions concerning the allocation of human and material resources and setting up timeframes for realizing expected outcomes. The equity staff in Atlantic provides technical assistances on using protocols, which serve as a guide for policy infusion and
the equity staff in Southland provides assistance on the Equity Analysis Instrument, which assists local schools with complying with SB x100. By comparison, the protocols have been used extensively by individual schools and by all local school districts. The equity instrument has remained a distant marker for compliance. Consistent efforts to include members of diverse communities in the solution process rest primarily in Atlantic’s and Southland’s requirements to include parents/community members, faculty and staff in assessing the needs of students. With this in mind, state officials recommend that local schools in the states make efforts to bridge the cultural gap between schools and communities. Further, state officials offer technical assistance to facilitate districts’ multicultural initiatives.

Accountability and Requirements

The two states have set minimum requirements for schools to identify priority needs, set targets, and institute strategies to comply with the conditions set forth in policy mandates. Concerted efforts are expected to result in a change in school climates and teaching practices that provide each and every child with an equal opportunity to learn at high levels. Moreover, the states have established evaluative measures to ensure that local districts/schools comply with the laws. Evaluative measures include requiring schools to engage in and to submit extensive plans to authorities and reporting of progress. MCE.REG requires local school districts to submit Five-Year Multicultural Plans to the Atlantic Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity. In turn, state equity employees provide immediate feedback on local attempts to comply with the regulation. In addition, local school systems are to submit annual progress reports to the state attesting to accomplishments and challenges that arise during the process of
implementation. In contrast, schools in Southland set priorities and write their own individual comprehensive school improvement plans which include targets, strategies/actions, and timelines to adhere to guidelines set forth in SB x100. Schools submit plans to local superintendents. The state does not offer feedback to an individual school unless the school is in non-compliance for several years.

The Atlantic Department of Education has established a council and a steering committee which 1) assist in establishing priorities related to the implementation of MCE.REG, 2) focus specifically on the needs of ethnic and linguistic minority learners, and 3) provide resources to institute further initiatives. These outside stakeholders offer on-going expert advice, fund projects, and disseminate publications that deal specifically with prejudice reduction, increasing cultural competency among educators, and recognizing the accomplishments of minority students and staff that have shown excellence in furthering the goal of enhanced achievement. As an inside agent, the Equity Task Force in Southland has addressed many of the issues related to improving student learning among cultural groups, but attempts are not on-going. The Educational Equity Council makes recommendations to the Southland state superintendent on how to improve services to low performing students. The majority of the recommendations made by steering committees, councils, task forces, and advisory groups regarding the implementation equity principles and multicultural education have been adopted by state boards of education in Atlantic and Southland. Despite similarities and difference used to implement the policy mandates in the states, differences in academic performance persist as indicated on a number of state and national assessment measures.
R2: To what extent have state education agencies used policy mandates to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students?

Differences in Academic Performance between Minorities and Non-Minorities

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students in Atlantic and Southland (Barton, 2002). Atlantic cites a moral imperative, economic necessity, and individual opportunity as reasons for addressing differences in academic performance. Although composite scores for African American and Hispanic students showed improvement from 1993-1999 in Atlantic, the performance of white students increased at a faster pace than that of minority learners leading to wider gaps in achievement. Southland, like Atlantic, has not been able to close gaps in achievement between minorities and non-minorities. Throughout the last decade, the minority/non-minority achievement gap remained relatively unchanged. The largest gaps in achievement in regards to race/ethnicity are found between white females (highest) and African American males (lowest).

Racial/ethnic group differences on the each state’s academic assessments have been attributed to instructional practices and school environments.

Table 15.0 shows the differences in academic performance between minorities and non-minorities on statewide and national assessments, college entry tests, NAEP subject test, and dropout rates in Atlantic and Southland.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT (A)/ACT (S) Scores (1999/2000)</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEP (4th Science/2000)</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEP (8th Reading/1998)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout Rate 2000/2001</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>7.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Basic Skills Tests (6th/Math/2002)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. (--)=Not Recorded / A=Atlantic / S=Southland
Southland State Test=TerraNova (national percentile)
Atlantic State Test=State Designed Functional Test (index=100)

The table illustrates the importance of investigating various causes of low achievement among African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic students attending public schools in the states. Gaps between white and minority (excluding Asian/Pacific Islanders) students are evident in two states as indicated by the composite ACT and SAT verbal and mathematics means scores, NAEP reading and mathematics, and states basic skills (mathematic) tests. African American students scored considerably lower in all tested categories while white students performed higher on the ACT/SAT. Asian/Pacific Islander students outperformed other subgroups on NAEP reading and science assessments. Moreover, Asian/Pacific Islanders have the lowest dropout rates. Native American and African American students had the highest dropout rates in Southland and Atlantic in 2000.

Significant differences in performance related to diversity factors such as race/ethnicity, income, and language, has prompted state education agencies to use MCE.REG and SB x100 extensively to enhance the low performing culturally diverse
students. To this end, Atlantic and Southland education employees have used the MCE.REG and SB x100 in a variety of ways to improve the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students. Table 16.0 represents a cross state analysis of the use of policy mandates to enhance achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 16.0 Cross State Analysis of Use of Policy Mandates to Enhance Achievement</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Use law to set up committees, councils, and task forces to study minority achievement and make recommendations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use law as a planning vehicle to eliminate achievement gaps</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use law to identify and implement strategies for acceleration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use law to develop gap strategies to guide practitioner behavior</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use law to require schools to conduct a needs assessment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Use the law to require resources be focused where needs occur</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use law to identify core competencies for professional behavior</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Use law to encourage districts to allocate staff to specifically oversee initiatives regarding student achievement disparities</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Use law to set up pilot projects to address achievement disparities</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Use law to require districts/schools to analyze differences in academic achievement among subgroups through the use of disaggregated data</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Use law to require districts to develop a plan by determining needs, setting priorities, instituting strategies, and presenting findings to authorities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Use law to require schools to obtain input from parents/community, faculty, and staff prior to setting targets and allocating resources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is important because it illustrates that the two states use the laws in many of the same ways to enhance ethnic and linguistic minority students. The Atlantic Diversity Advisory Alliance developed strategies for acceleration and core competencies to assist educators in raising achievement among minority students performing below standard levels on state assessment tests. In addition, state officials encourage local school systems to allocate staff to oversee the implementation of MCE.REG. In contrast, Southland has instituted pilot projects in local school systems to specifically address academic disparities among students of color. All of the items in the table require state or

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local educational staff to use the results of disaggregated data analyses when planning and making decisions related to the elimination of achievement gaps.

**Disaggregated Data and Equity Analysis**

The most effective way in which state officials are working to raise achievement among high risk ethnic and linguistic minority students is by requiring that test data be disaggregated. Moreover, SB x100 requires schools to focus resources where the needs occur. Reasons for disaggregating data stretch along a continuum from accelerating learning to supporting comprehensive reform processes. The state departments of education websites contain comprehensive databases with cognitive and non-cognitive disaggregated data related to all schools within each state. Table 17.0 contains information regarding subgroup populations, cognitive and non-cognitive data, equity analysis, and reasons for disaggregating data across states.
### Table 17.0 Disaggregating Data Across States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Disaggregating Data</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accelerate student learning</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inform instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assist in setting targets to reduce gaps</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support school administrators in the implementation of reforms</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase minority access to academically rigorous coursework</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Subgroups</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regular education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free &amp; reduced meals</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>504 &amp; non-504</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English proficiency</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Disaggregated Data</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>state assessment tests</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national norm-reference test</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Cognitive Disaggregated Data</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attendance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dropout rates</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retention rates</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graduation rates</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>successful transition to adult life</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students receiving special services</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Analysis</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gap between average minority performance: school &amp; state; school &amp;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>district; student &amp; school; individual &amp; class average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substantive difference on statewide test</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to disaggregating data based on diversity factors, Atlantic separates data by the number of students with written individual student plans (known as 504s) and by and Title I subgroup populations. Cognitive data includes state performance tests and national norm-referenced assessments. Non-cognitive data includes information regarding students the stem for discipline referrals, observations, and survey results. Southland publishes non-cognitive data in aggregate from almost exclusively. However, interested parties can obtain the information from the state’s accountability office by
subgroup population upon request. Whereas Atlantic reports graduation rates and students receiving special services, Southland tracks retention rates and successful transition to adult life.

State departments of education use data to conduct equity analyses as a means of assisting schools in the efficient determination of needs. On-line data systems provide policy makers, districts, and schools with immediate data-driven tables, survey results, and descriptions necessary to make informed decisions. At this point, the majority of local schools systems in Atlantic and Southland have seen no indication of a reduction in achievement gaps among subgroup as a result of data disaggregation. However, several report programs targeted toward accelerating learning for underperforming students, recognition of differences of teaching and learning styles, and support for instructional strategies aimed at increasing achievement for all students. Furthering local efforts, state educational agencies have instituted a variety of methods to ensure that district officials, schools, and teachers align organizational structures with the goals of the policy mandate. Whereas Atlantic consistently seeks out causes of low achievement/gaps, Southland is more focused on eliminating gaps without full consideration of related causes. Both attempt to monitor and to evaluate policy mandates specifically aimed at improving the performance of culturally diverse students.

R3: To what extent do state educational officials monitor and evaluate policy mandates specifically targeted toward improving academic performance among culturally diverse students?

The two states under review have taken unique steps to monitor and to evaluate MCE.REG and SB x100. The ways in which states attempt to hold local districts or
schools accountable stems from the states different perspectives on where central control
should rest when monitoring and evaluating schools. Table 18.0 notes the similarities
and differences in the states monitoring and evaluation processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 18.0</th>
<th>States Monitoring and Evaluation Processes</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>State analyzes and disseminates disaggregated performance data</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>State requires districts submit plans on how the policy will be implemented and assessed to the state</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>State requires districts to submit annual progress reports to the state</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>State provides feedback (recommendations &amp; commendations) to districts on progress made in implementing the policy mandate</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>State requires schools to use a document specifically designed to reflect the specifications in the policy to assess their progress in meeting the goals set forth in the policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>State provides self-assessment tools for districts/schools to use to assess compliance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>State developed an on-line self-assessment tool to help schools rate themselves on compliance with the policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>State conducts on-site reviews to specifically evaluate compliance with the policy mandate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>State pressures to sanction districts/schools for non-compliance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table illustrates that with the exception of 1) analyzing and disseminating
disaggregated performance data, 2) providing self-assessment tools, and 3) hesitating to
authorize on-site reviews, Atlantic and Southland have defined distinctive processes to
monitor and to evaluate policy mandates specifically targeted toward improving
academic performance among culturally diverse students. Atlantic requires local school
systems to report annually to the state on their progress in implementing multicultural
plans. On the other hand, Southland directs local school systems to assess their progress
and to report to the state when schools have not met their targets in four consecutive
years. The last two items in the table are unmarked because the two states have chosen
not to take action to conduct on-site reviews and sanction districts or schools. MCE.REG
and SB x100 specify actions that districts or schools must follow within pre-determined time frames established by the state.

**District Action Plans Specified by State Policy Mandates**

Atlantic and Southland have developed a schedule for holding districts/schools accountable for implementing MCE.REG and SB x100. With the purposes of ensuring educational equity for all students and closing achievement gaps, state authorities insist that local school systems follow explicit requirements. The policy mandates contain plans for action that include timelines for identifying needs, setting targets, instituting strategies and interventions, and presenting findings to authorities. Table 19.0 shows the purposes, timelines, components, authoritative entities, state and local requirements, and district staff allocations associated with implementing MCE.REG and SB x100. Moreover, the table highlights similarities and differences in the way each state has responded to critical concerns regarding conditions in schools that delay or serve as impediments to academic success by including a schedule for implementing activities specified by policy mandates.
Table 19.0  MCE.REG Plan and SB x100 Plan Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>MCE.REG Plan and SB x100 Plan Requirements</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timelines</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Plans must be submitted to the state department of education in predetermined cycles.</td>
<td>Yes (5 Year)</td>
<td>Yes (2 Year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plans must include a timeline for implementing actions/activities.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Plans must be written and submitted by individual schools.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plans must be written and submitted by local school systems.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plans must include input from parents, faculty and staff.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Requisites</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Plans must include specifications related to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curriculum, instruction, professional development, and evaluation and assessment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructional resources</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parental and community involvement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance improvement and drop out prevention</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical assistance.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plans must include a summary of activities and interventions.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plans must include an account of the relationship between identified strategies/activities and the goals/objects of the plan.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Plans must include an explanation of the way in which progress will be evaluated.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Requirements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. State educational office in charge of the policy mandate must provide feedback to district/school on the plan.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. State must provide disaggregated data to districts/schools.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. State must provide technical assistance based on needs assessment findings.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Requirements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Plans must be submitted to the state educational office in charge of providing primary leadership on the policy mandate.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plans must be submitted to a state educational office not in charge of providing primary leadership on the policy mandate.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Disaggregated data must be used as part of the needs assessment.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Local school boards must adopt a policy for reviewing academic performance on state assessment.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School-based councils submit targets for eliminating gaps to local superintendents.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Principal must convene a meeting with to discuss targets/plan with parents/community.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Board determines whether a school met its targets; requires a school not meeting its targets to revise plans describing professional development and continuing educational funds.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Local superintendents report schools that fail to meet targets within four years to state superintendent.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Status of local school system progress in implementing plans is reported annually to the state board of education.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District Staff Allocations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A district employee is in charge of providing leadership on the policy full-time in all local school districts.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A district employee is in charge of providing leadership on the policy full-time in at least 1/3 rd of the local school districts.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MCE.REG requires local districts to submit plans to the Atlantic Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity in five-year cycles. The plans include a summary of programs and activities, a description of the relationship between activities and goals and objectives of five year plan, a description of the relationship between MCE.REG activities and student achievement, a description of the evaluation of progress, and any other optional information. The state is currently in the second five-year cycle of implementation. During this new cycle, schools must conduct a needs assessment to determine professional development and climatic issues. Unlike in Atlantic, plans written to accommodate SB x100 are not submitted to the state’s equity office, but are routed to local school superintendents for approval. Level one schools (lowest performing) in Southland are audited by a team of professionals who have been trained on using the Scholastic Review instrument and on the requirements of SB x100.

When MCE.REG was first promulgated, state educational officials and policy makers did not think the regulation was going to have a direct affect on achievement, but felt that it would have a direct effect on opportunity. The regulation needs assessment requirement was added to build systemic organizational capacity to improve student achievement. However, MCE.REG does not specify a formal process for conducting needs assessments. The equity staff offers technical assistance based on the results of needs assessments. The majority of districts in the two state have employees spending less than half of their time overseeing the implementing the regulation. Discrepancies on who has been or should be put in charge of the implementation of the regulation exist.

The state superintendent of education, policy makers, and agency staff are in the process of refining a new Atlantic Comprehensive Master Plan which will include all of
the plans or policies in which departments are responsible for regulating. The plan is intended to become the premier accountability measure for allocating monetary resources to schools. The expertise of representatives from the equity team was solicited to ensure a multicultural perspective during the development of the master plan. MCE.REG, planning requirements, protocols, and core competencies were submitted to the division in charge of developing the plan. As a result of key policy decisions, all local school systems will continue to submit *Five-Year Multicultural Plans* to the state as directed by regulation. The state department of education equity office will continue to review the multicultural plans and to provide appropriate feedback to local school system superintendents within sixty days. Compilation reports of the results of plans and district attempts to implement the regulation are reported to the state board of education once a year. Depending on results, the state superintendent of education can send staff to conduct on site monitoring, review and assess progress, or determine needs of local school boards in implementing the regulation. This has not occurred throughout the history of the regulation.

SB x100 requires school-based decision making councils or principals to obtain insight from parents, faculty, and staff prior to setting two year targets for eliminating gaps in achievement. Targets are primarily based on the academic performance determined by diversity factors including race, gender, disability, free and reduce eligibility, and limited English proficient student groups. Councils must include targets in consolidated plans that are submitted to the local superintendent for approval. Plans must include activities designed to eliminate achievement gaps among various subgroups of students such as:
1. Within school and feeder school curriculum alignment;
2. Evaluation and assessment strategies tailored to meet the needs and support proficient student work;
3. Professional development addressing the plan;
4. Parental communication and involvement;
5. Attendance and dropout prevention; and

The policy mandate holds vast and crucial implications schools. With these issues in mind, the two states depend on local stakeholders to establish targets based on a review and analyses of disaggregated data. Moreover, the two states education agencies have worked diligently throughout the last decade to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of the policy mandates.

R4: How have state education agencies attempted to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity policy mandates?

When attempting to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity policy mandates, Atlantic and Southland depend on multiple stakeholders to advocate the need for change and to implement strategies. Table 20.0 highlights a breakdown of state organizational and pedagogical alignment strategies used by the two states.
Table 20.0  
State Organizational and Pedagogical Alignment Strategies  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Structures</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Instill and support vision on eliminating minority achievement gaps</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use disaggregate data to support local initiatives and to reaffirm goals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extensive training on policy mandate to identify potential organizational features which impede the realization of policy goals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Publish reports on frameworks to use when organizing educational contexts to more effectively meet the needs of high risk minority students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dissemination of multicultural materials/resources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hold monthly meetings with local school district representatives in charge of diversity initiatives or the policy mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Recommend that schools adjust master schedules to increase minority access to higher level coursework</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Facilitate and fund local multicultural programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Facilitate and fund minority achievement pilot projects</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Collaborate across the agency to inform, share, and support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Pedagogy                                                                                     |          |           |
| 1. Use disaggregate data to identify student groups whose needs are not being met            | X        | X         |
| 2. Require that certain content areas in the curriculum include a multicultural focus by showing respect for diversity | X        | X         |
| 3. Infuse multicultural education in the curriculum to increase student engagement by adding relevancy | X        |           |
| 4. Use extensive training specifically on instructional practices that work best in meeting the needs of culturally diverse students | X        |           |
| 5. Clearly define instructional equity for administrators, faculty, & staff                  | X        | X         |

According to the table, Atlantic uses the MCE.REG to support extensive training and frameworks, which assist local districts or schools to restructure educational environments and to identify impediments to the realization of the goals. Moreover the state holds monthly meetings with representatives from all local school systems to gain immediate feedback on successes and barriers to organizational alignment. Southland facilitates and funds programs and pilot projects to support local districts and schools in organizing educational environments in order to comply with SB x100. Whereas the Atlantic state education agency expects local school districts to creatively restructure local schools to make them more inclusive of minority cultures, the Southland education
agency sends a very different message to local schools. The primary goal in Southland is to close achievement gaps. The state has not sent a message to local stakeholders that significant changes in organizational structure are warranted to reach this goal.

In regards to pedagogy, the states attempt to use the policy mandates to inform professional development. Disaggregated data and the results of school needs assessments open dialogue on the types of training and competencies teachers need to fulfill the goals of the policy mandates. Atlantic is committed to infusing multicultural education into curricular experiences to improve student engagement and ultimately raise achievement. Southland incorporates the principles of equity to achieve this goal. The sections that follow provide more descriptive understandings of the distinctive ways in Atlantic and Southland have attempted to transform organizational structures and pedagogical practices with multicultural and equity policy mandates.

State’s Role in the Process of Equitable/Multicultural Transformation

The state departments of education have taken on specific roles in implementing the equity and multicultural education policies. Across the two states under investigation, instilling the vision for equity/multicultural education, training, and supplying support services, resource, and programs are critical to the successful transformation of educational environments. Each state’s process of transformation is depicted in Table 21.0. The table highlights steps state educational employees take to equip state and local educators with the knowledge and competencies necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners.
**Table 21.0  Atlantic and Southland Process of Equitable/Multicultural Transformation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key State Responsibilities</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instilling the Vision</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightening Local Superintendents &amp; Staff</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Relationships &amp; Networking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation on Panels/Conferences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Interest Group Membership</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations Specifically on Policy Mandate at Workshops/Conferences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations of Cultural Issues Beyond Policy Mandate at Workshops/Conferences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Credit-Bearing Course Reflecting Policy Mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Line Course Reflecting Policy Mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment Tools</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updates on Breaking Civil Rights Issues</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings/Informational Briefings</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Produced Publications</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Materials/Guides</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Studies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Materials/Videos</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradebooks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Facilitated Multicultural Program for Students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Facilitated Minority Achievement Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instilling the Vision**

The Atlantic state educational agency’s organizational principle clearly states, “We believe cultural diversity, mutual trust, respect, open communication, and celebration of achievement are essential to a productive organization”. According to a state educational official, “For a long time principals and teachers were not aware that the regulation [MCE.REG] existed. The state superintendent began an enlightenment campaign with local school superintendents”. As a result, numerous educational staff statewide began to inquire about the particulars of the regulation. In terms of leadership styles, the state superintendents prefer to use political discretion rather than to pressure local districts and superintendents. For example, the Atlantic state superintendent of
education has given school district superintendents the option of adopting the new voluntary state curriculum or the choice of opting to ensure that their local curriculum falls in line with state standards. The newly created curriculum is already aligned with the state standards and state performance tests. It is easier and more beneficial to comply with the adoption of the newly created curriculum to avoid the risk of having schools out of compliance or having to explain a lack of achievement (failing schools) in various areas.

Chief educational officials in Atlantic stimulate groups by participating in panels such as the NAACP and present at a variety of conferences outside of the educational milieu on what is being done to close achievement gaps. In addition, all equity staff members belong to special interest groups. Further, state educational officials and members of school intervention teams meet with parents to reaffirm and to assist them in realizing that they are apart of the solution process.

Southland Administrator Standards infuse the tenets of equity and cultural diversity. In an effort to promote learning for all students, administrators must demonstrate vision and leadership necessary to implement state educational legislation. Standards include indicators in the areas of knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Among other qualifications and criteria, administrative standards require that individuals be willing and able to “continuously examine one’s own assumptions, beliefs, and practices, believe in the benefits that diversity brings to the school community, and treat individuals with fairness, dignity, and respect”.

Diversity, cultural inclusion, and cultural responsiveness are major themes covered during Southland state led activities. Activities assist participants in
acknowledging the contributions of diverse groups and developing good questioning, data-gathering, and inquiry skills necessary to learn about others and to manage diversity efforts. In addition, participants become aware of subtle stereotyping and the impact of value systems on behaviors and expectations. Additionally, state education divisions periodically conduct book studies. Books read by state employees include: *Using Data to Close Achievement Gaps, Why Are All of the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria,* and *Other People's Children.* Book discussions serve as sources of information for state educational officials on the differences between school and home cultures and oppressive experiences incurred by minority students in public institutions.

Training

In addition to making presentations on the specifications of SB x100, Southland’s equity staff travels throughout the state seeking to inform and to assist educators in acquiring knowledge of practices that can be used to meet the needs of culturally diverse and low performing students. The following brief list of 2001-2002 presentations highlight concepts, strategies, and processes embedded in multicultural and equity suggested by state educational staff to meet the goals of SB x100:

1. Seven Critical Areas for Educational Equity;
2. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy;
3. Culturally Responsive Curriculum;
4. Defining Cultural Competency;
5. Cultural Concepts and Student Achievement.

In addition, local school system superintendents in Southland have been trained in cultural responsiveness during annual state conferences; however, participation in
workshops/presentations was voluntary. Despite state level efforts, collective bodies such as local board of education members, central office administrators, principals, and teachers who have been trained by state-level equity staff in cultural responsiveness at local levels approximate less than three percent of local school systems within the state. A major goal of the Atlantic’s Office Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity is to equip state and local staff with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to implement and to manage the regulation. Workshops, conferences, and consultations, which focus on aspects of MCE.REG, are held periodically each year.

**Resources and Support Services**

Atlantic equity staff works to guarantee a multicultural focus in all state activities and publications. State employees disseminate information and breaking news on civil rights and equity-related information on a regular basis. Moreover, meetings and informational briefings are held periodically with local school faculties and administrative staff. Resource centers contain guides and materials, such as a cultural proficiency check list (see sample in Appendix B) and criteria for evaluating and selecting appropriate instructional materials (see sample in Appendix B), which are shared with schools as a means of assisting educators to become productive at serving the needs of diverse students. Print videos on the civil rights movement, diversity and educational equity, and prejudice reduction and hate/violence are also available. Resources are used by equity staff for training purposes, by state division employees attempting to make decisions and to develop resources for their own departments, by local school systems attempting to comply with MCE.REG, and by community organizations.
Assessment tools that challenging educators to question the equitability of teacher-student interactions, student support services, grouping strategies, and administrative oversight are shared widely throughout the two states and discussed by the state departments of education. For example, Atlantic equity office disseminates a classroom equitability profile (see sample in Appendix B) that rates a school’s physical environment, curriculum, language, teaching methodology, behavior management, academic evaluation, and classroom integration criteria as ideal, acceptable, or unacceptable on file in the multicultural resource center. Both state-generated and generic self-evaluative tools have the potential to identify processes and skills in need of attention when aligning school climates and cultures, classroom practices, and pedagogy with the guidelines identified in the policy mandate; however, these tools presently serve only as resources.

State Sponsored Programs

The Southland Department of Education has issued leadership responsibilities to its equity office to sponsor two primary programs. The Equity Institute, which offers a two-year mini-grant to districts or schools, is designed to promote equity, multicultural education, and diversity building capacity at local levels. Schools participating in the institute focus on school culture, classroom practices, design and implementation of curricula, selection of resources, and access to courses and programs. Plans were being made during this study to discontinue funding to Equity Institute. Leadership determined that the goals of the institute could be carried out using different and more far-reaching means.
At the local school level, Southland cultural relations club members promote inclusive environments. Twenty-five clubs are active throughout the state in middle and high schools. Students participate in conferences, multicultural fairs, organized monthly activities, and a statewide annual banquet. The state department of education provides mini-grants to fund initiatives. Although a state equity employee oversees cultural relations clubs throughout the state, data is not obtained on subgroup student membership or on the number of minorities participating in specific club activities. Most events and discussions are framed around respect for cultural differences and "hot topics" such as interracial dating and sexual harassment. No evidence was found on a consistent effort to focus student attention on discussing or resolving achievement issues. In addition to providing resources and sponsoring programs, divisions within the department collaborate on issues relating to the implementation of MCE.REG and SB x100.

Cross Agency Collaboration

Leading state educational officials in Atlantic and Southland maintain that agencies meet their equity goals more efficiently when departments work together by combining resources and talent. This coordinated effort maintains cross-agency integrity and assists all state educational agency staff in staying informed on projects and initiatives. Table 22.0 depicts each state’s process of mediating goals and human and material resources through multiple channels. The table is broken down into four categories which include form, purpose, processes, and priority areas. A cross case analysis of the states clarifies different priority areas and processes used to meet achievement goals.
Table 22.0 Process of Cross Agency Mediation in Atlantic and Southland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Priority Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Cross Agency Task Force on MCE.REG</td>
<td>Supervisor of equity department meets regularly with department heads and staff to ensure that a multicultural perspective is involved in decision making and practices of other departments</td>
<td>Reading programs, special education, extended day &amp; school year programs, student placement in honors courses, career readiness, core curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Cross Training on SB x100</td>
<td>Clearinghouse-Department leaders present consolidated applications (proposals) to state superintendents and associate superintendents for approval (informs the entire agency of SB x100 specifications/initiatives)</td>
<td>Special education, student placement in advanced coursework, professional development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A=Atlantic; S=Southland

Cross training has occurred in all divisions of the state education agency in Southland to ensure that all personnel can train on some aspect of equity. Department leaders with new ideas on how to further their goals are required to submit a consolidated application or proposal to the state superintendent and all associate superintendents who form a Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse reviews plans, facilitates discussion, and motions to approve, deny, or require additional research on the proposed plan. Proposals must be tied to state standards and indicators and include input from other departments. This process has led other departments within the state education agency to become knowledgeable of the specifications of SB x100 and efforts being made by the equity team to implement the policy at state and local levels. As a comprehensive approach, divisions within the state education agency in charge of extended day and school programs, student placement, career readiness, and the core curriculum have been directed by the state superintendent to address equity issues through the review of policies and the implementation of responsive initiatives.
A cross-agency task force on MCE.REG was developed in Atlantic to increase awareness and competency throughout the entire department of education. In the beginning, the basic interpretation of the regulation was limited. Atlantic now uses a systemic focus to interpret the regulation. The supervisor of the equity team meets regularly with department's heads and staff to advocate and to ensure that multicultural perspective is involved in the decision-making and practices of other departments. The by-laws set forth in MCE.REG are priorities across state education divisions. More specifically, input is also given on instructional issues in the two states which can potentially more closely align pedagogical practices with the goals set forth in MCE.REG and SB x100.

Compelling State Pedagogical Alignment Processes

The states use several compelling processes to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students. Table 23.0 illustrates processes that have occurred at the state level to build capacity to implement the policy mandates using a variety of frameworks and platforms.
### Table 23.0 Compelling State Pedagogical Alignment Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compelling Processes</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multicultural Curriculum Enhancements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State legislation requires that multicultural education be present in specified curriculum areas</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity staff provide information and assistance on how to infuse diversity/culture into curriculum and assessments at the state level</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity staff provide information and assistance on how to infuse diversity/culture into curriculum and assessments at the local level</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core competencies have been identified by the state</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit bearing course reflecting the guidelines of the policy mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development standards reflect the tenets of the policy mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Service Centers provide training on knowledge and skills specifically needed to meet the needs of low performing minority students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff developer in at least half of local school districts provide training on knowledge and skills specifically needed to meet the needs of low performing minority students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Equity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration on the “The Expectation Effect”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural responsiveness/multicultural education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify threats &amp; challenges</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on promising practices</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The states have taken deliberate action related to curriculum, professional development and instructional equity.

**Multicultural Curriculum Enhancements**

Atlantic state equity employees and Diversity Advocacy Alliance members offer local school systems assistance with the development of multicultural curriculum frameworks. A memo sent to a local assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in Atlantic called “attention to the continuing requirement that MCE.REG be
infused into instruction to the point that it is observable”. In another example, alignment with curriculum protocols is evident in Crestwood Public School’s sixth grade science academic framework. According to the guide, “The basic goal of multicultural education orientation to science teaching is to make what goes on in the science classroom more relevant to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, so that more students will be scientifically literate. Teachers who are aware of the multicultural approach to teaching science stand a better chance of stimulating curiosity and sparking a desire to learn in all students”. In 2002, the state education agency began developing a voluntary state curriculum. The equity staff is not directly involved in the planning of the voluntary state curriculum; however, the administrator of the equity office has met with the curriculum writers of the state curriculum and state content area specialists and has submitted critical information that should be included in the final product. The extent to which MCE.REG protocols and core intercultural competencies will be added to the voluntary curriculum is unclear. However, mounting pressure to adopt the new voluntary curriculum, which is aligned with state content standards and assessment, is evident among local school systems.

Legislation in Southland requires that districts and schools have access to funds through the Equity and Compliance Office to infuse equity and multicultural education into the curriculum. Multicultural education must be represented in the curriculum in the areas of literature, social studies, and arts and humanities. In creating, performing, and responding to dance, music, theater, the visual arts, and literature, students are to engage in learning experiences that assist them in exploring diverse beliefs, thoughts, and traditions. Content standards and expectations that reflect cultural inclusion in other
subject areas are inconsistent at the state level. To this end, academic programs in Southland reflect the experiences of ethnic and linguistic minority students mainly through arts and humanities. Subsequently, local curriculum guides show evidence of limited or no attention to the contributions, experiences, or perspectives of culturally diverse groups.

**Professional Development**

Substantive professional development provided by Atlantic state educational staff that enhances cultural competence is the most valuable support service available to assist educators with implementing multicultural plans, programs, and policies. Gaining knowledge of instructional techniques that can be used to teach minority students has been reported by teachers in Atlantic as the most useful trainings. These include differentiated instruction, culturally relevant teaching, and learning styles. A seventeen-hour *MCE.REG Course* offered for professional development credit to certified staff by the state, contains topics, criteria, and recommended standards aligned with each section of the regulation. The course guidelines are used extensively by state, local, and community agencies in training and outreach programs. A status booklet accompanies the course guidelines leading participants through the process of becoming knowledgeable consumers of multicultural issues, skilled in the selection of instructional resources and materials which demonstrate an appreciation of cultural groups, and competent at recognizing biases and invisibly. In addition, a two-week trainer of trainers *MCE.REG course* has been offered to teachers and administrators statewide and college level professional development courses are on-going.
A version of the *MCE.REG Course* is offered in local school systems throughout Atlantic. During the 2002-2003 school-year, courses were: mandatory in 25% of all local school systems, voluntary in 21% of all local school systems, being developed in 21% of all local school systems, and not offered in 33% of all local school systems in the state. Consistently, courses require participants to read articles and to provide summative feedback, participate in activities, assess student learning styles, conduct interviews, analyze student and school achievement data, and keep a journal. In addition to assisting participants to examine their own attitudes and beliefs, participants are encouraged to reflect on the relationships between their beliefs and their professional practices. The state has not mandated that teacher preparation courses in the areas of multicultural education or equity the university level.

Two of six Southland professional development standards reflect the tenets of SB x100. The standards require: a) evidence of application of a needs assessment and b) professional development objectives focused on the school or district mission and derive from a needs assessment. In addition, legislation related to professional development and teaching diverse learners requires, "...effective awareness and sensitivity training, so teachers can motivate and nurture students of diverse cultures." State legislation also requires that criteria for selecting textbooks "include the significance of the diverse contributors of society" and stipulates that student capacities "enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage." Therefore, the guides set forth by SB x100 are supported by other legislation and state standards. This is a crucial because state employees often cite multiple laws and sources of support when setting actions into motion or attempting to get others to "buy into" initiatives.
SB x100 directs school councils and principals to provide professional development and builds capacity for either the state’s professional development division or equity division to monitor, evaluate, and adjust trainings and workshops which focus on the goals of equity. The state offers one and one-half equity professional development credits for educators. The course is not directly aligned with the specifications of SB x100, but evidence suggests that course content overlaps with the conditions set-forth in policy mandate. In addition, eight regional service centers previously provided professional development training. However, state funding cuts have discontinued regional service center trainings. The assessed areas of Southland’s testing system dictated many of the professional development activities offered by service centers. The state recommends building-based training, flexible scheduling, and extended contracts as means of increasing time for professional growth and collaborative planning activities. Additionally, school consolidated plans, which include gap analyses and highlight pedagogical needs, are used by state personnel to tailor presentations and to make professional experiences more meaningful for participants. Local school districts use gap analysis tools to assist educators in focusing on their classroom environments and teaching practices.

**Instructional Equity**

Providing an equal and quality education for each and every child permeates both state education agencies, but enforcement of this fundamental educational right becomes complicated during the process of implementing MCE.REG and SB x100. To this end, the Atlantic State Department of Education operates on three tenets: 1) all children can learn, 2) all children have the right to attend schools in which they can progress and learn,
3) all children shall have a real opportunity to learn equally rigorous content. The equity offices and states are addressing the first tenet because practices that espouse a belief in this idea are not readily present in classrooms. An Atlantic state educational official asserts:

When the discrepancy between the *talk* and the *walk* is noted, the conversation turns quickly to excuses, rationales, and other evasions as defenses for explaining why it is that these children can’t be taught (Kenu, 2002).

Instructional equity can be defined as incorporating processes, desires, and pedagogical techniques and creating classroom environments that maximize individual student learning by demonstrating competencies which show an awareness of learning styles and cultural characteristics and leads to the redistribution of power within educational environments.

The largest two school districts, with high concentrations of culturally diverse learners, have instituted trainings and brought in prominent guest speakers to speak on pedagogical issues as they relate to engaging low performing students. Limited evidence was found indicating that educators who participate in workshops and trainings on culturally competent teaching and cultural responsiveness (which focus attention on gaining an understanding the values, experiences, and behavioral and communication styles of diverse groups and translating this knowledge into practice and educational environments) put new knowledge and skills into practice. The most telling report on teachers’ ability and commitment to grow professional in obtaining the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to be effective in the engaging all students in the
construction of meaning in school environments is expressed by in a report on SERA where researchers assert:

Many of the teachers do not find the recommended practices compatible to their beliefs about children and learning. These teachers often ally themselves with parents and members of the broader public who cling to the view of schools that more nearly resembles schools that they attended as children.

Low expectations have led to several implications in Atlantic and Southland. African American, Hispanic, second language, low socio-economic status, and disabled students have not been held to the same expectation as their white counterparts; and despite the institution of aggressive reforms, their academic needs have not being met. Data indicates that there is a lack of minority access to higher level instruction and coursework in core areas in the states. Furthermore, student placement is an issue because special education students, disproportionately minority, are placed in classes that do not challenge their cognitive abilities. To address these issues, the states have passed new legislation and/or instituted procedures which build capacity for local schools to identify and to resolve these pressing concerns. Additionally, state authorities are pointing out these disparities.

Atlantic and Southland have brought in prominent guest speakers to build a knowledge base among multiple stakeholders on issues related to prejudice reduction, cultural responsiveness, understanding poverty, and educational equity. Evidence suggests that Southland officials expect that teachers to infuse a variety of strategies and techniques into their practices to ensure instructional equity. Therefore, pedagogical training models designed by state equity personnel are “based on the expectation effect”
and direct attention on strategies which address learning styles and cultural competency.

To this end, the states celebrate their successes and consistently work to overcome challenges and threats to guaranteeing instructional equity. Table 24.0 depicts challenges/threats and promising practices to ensuring instructional equity in school environments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 24.0 Instructional Equity: Challenges/Threats and Promising Practices</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Southland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges/Threats</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. There is little evidence that practices and content engage ethnic and linguistic minority students in ways that will enhance achievement.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Local teacher evaluation documents contain limited evidence of direct mention of achievement gaps, cultural diversity, or equity.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To a large extent local school curricula do not reflect alignment with state specifications for policy mandates and standards.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There is a lack of highly skilled educators instructing low performing students in the state, especially in urban areas.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The voluntary teacher transfer rate is high in low performing schools.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A significant number of teachers do not take at least partial ownership of the minority achievement gap problem.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There is no state equity personnel responsible for overseeing specific issues related to appropriately instructing non-English proficient students.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promising Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher quality and instructional equity are priorities.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The state has made a commitment to identifying a variety of language acquisition and literacy pedagogy to assist English proficient students in gaining academic proficiency through pilot studies or special funding.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Members of the educational community review non-academic data as an effort to determine causes and find solutions to issues of low achievement among minority learners.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The state offers rewards to districts/schools that find ways to improve achievement among low performing students as indicated on state assessments.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The state suggests instructional strategies and disseminates resources to use in improving minority performance.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The state provides professional development based on priority needs as indicated by needs assessments.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interactive state school improvement website is available to guide teachers through practice activities and provides expert opinion and advice on the implementation of strategies.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident that teachers have altered their practices in varying degrees to comply with MCE.REG and SB x100. Since, state equity offices commonly recommend...
instructional strategies that best work in engaging minority learners which include: differentiated instruction, cultural relevant pedagogy, and thematic/interdisciplinary teaching, learning styles, multiple intelligences, and understanding poverty. Additionally, state leaders have directed local educational officials to examine ways in which minority discipline referrals can be reduced and to develop strategies for improving student-teacher interactions in order to raise achievement. The states are concentrating on training staff on cultural and individual differences because of continued misinterpretations and misunderstandings in classroom environments, high minority discipline and referral rates, and significantly low minority student achievement. To assist with implementation, the states have developed strategies for overcoming resistance to aligning organizational structures and pedagogical practices with legislation.

State Strategies for Overcoming Resistance to Implementing Policy Mandates

Resistance to implementing the MCE.REG and SB x100 tends to manifest in various forms and comes from multiple internal and external sources. In order to effectively deal with issues of resistance and noncompliance, Atlantic and Southland have instituted creative measures to ensure the timely and appropriate implementation of policy mandates. Table 25.0 shows the forms of resistance, sources of resistance, and strategies for overcoming resistance that are reported by state-level employees in Atlantic and Southland.
Table 25.0  Strategies for Overcoming Resistance to Implementing Policy Mandates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Resistance</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claims of lack of resources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-compliance to policy mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum dialogue on the policy mandate throughout local school districts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming factors beyond the school control</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No attempt to collect data</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficial reporting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that all children cannot learn at high levels</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political backlash to pressure to comply with policy mandate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of problems</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sources of Resistance                                                                | X | X |
| Teachers                                                                            | X |
| Principals/School Councils                                                           | X |
| Superintendents                                                                     | X |
| Policy Makers (Overt)                                                                | X |
| Local School Board Members                                                           | X |
| Parents                                                                             | X | X |
| State Educational Personnel (Overt)                                                  | X |
| Central Office Staff                                                                | X | X |
| Community Members                                                                   | X | X |

| Strategies for Overcoming Resistance                                                 | X |
| Media updates and reports                                                            | X |
| Issuing documents/strategies on overcoming resistance                                 | X |
| Citing the law                                                                       | X | X |
| Training school-based decision making councils                                       | X |
| State superintendent directly confronts issues                                       | X | X |
| Informing all stakeholders of policy mandate                                         | X | X |
| Presentations on policy mandate                                                      | X | X |
| Films and lectures beyond presentations                                              | X |
| Race politics                                                                        | X |

Notes: A=Atlantic; S=Southland

In Atlantic, districts are not implementing the regulation comprehensively or consistently. Trainers have reported resistance in discussing information in the regulation with such responses as “why not emphasize Columbus Day.” Extreme cases of district non-compliance have been reported in the past. Moreover, educators and administrators do not always associate their behaviors as non-compliance. This was made evident by no multicultural plan and minimum dialogue on the regulation, no attempt to collect data on student performance, and superficial reporting. The state superintendents of education...
confront issues at varying times without appearing insensitive or judgmental. Moreover, race politics is used by Atlantic state and local educational leaders and policy makers to position initiatives and goals. Members of the equity staff have formed networks with non-minority business leaders, who in turn advocate for multicultural change. There is often willingness to further dialogue and to bring about change when the source of influence is from other members of the same community. The key is trying to get everyone to understand that the regulation is beneficial to them.

In addition to state-level actions used in combating passiveness and non-compliance, Atlantic has developed Strategies for Overcoming Resistance to MCE.REG (see sample in Appendix B). A combination of political and educational devises has been used statewide to ensure the infusing of the regulation. State and local diversity staffs inform and educate teachers, parent teacher organizations, clergy, and civic organizations on the policy mandate. Media are made aware of updates and reports. Films, lectures, and presentations are conducted at the national, state, and local levels to present facts to a multitude of constituents on the state’s commitment to infusing a multicultural philosophy into all educational contexts. Members of the Atlantic Diversity Advisory Councils have teamed with school administrators, central office staff, and teachers to explain the benefits of embracing multiculturalism and to clarify the regulation. Whenever necessary, the law itself is cited in intense circumstances; however, equity staff and council members make it a point to present information in non-threatening and non-defensive ways. Currently, equity principles being used to combat resistance and to implement multicultural strategies at the state level are being presented with the implication that “it’s the right thing to do.”
When asked to respond to a Southland survey statement, “All children can learn, and most at high levels,” 54.9% of teachers indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, 39.8% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, and 5.3% were undecided as opposed to 73.8% of parents on school councils who indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Feedback resulting from surveys and other measures has led Southland state educational officials to demonstrate commitment to reviewing the more serious and underlying issues related to race, oppression, and poverty. Some district employees are extremely receptive and have expressed that they were unaware of concepts and issues which result from the development of strategies to successfully implement SB x100. A number of districts have expressed an understanding of the need to address cultural issues, but have not implemented policies or strategies which reflect focused attention on the inclusion of diverse perspectives into school environments. Further, a significant amount of resistance to SB x100 does not come from counties primarily composed of the larger white populations located in the eastern part of the state, but comes from western counties where larger numbers of African Americans live.

In Southland, training is provided for school-based decision making councils to understand and to address issues related to the senate bill. Since all schools must hold open forums with parents and the public to identify gap areas and to discuss plans to improve achievement, the state advises schools to expect press attendance at open meetings when discussing comprehensive school improvement plans. When handling politically sensitive topics that arise from implementing the legislation, district equity office employees in the second largest school district in the state lend assistance to
school-based decision making councils and the staff has developed a guide for conducting open meetings and placed the guide the district's website. It is evident that the states have the majority of tools necessary to bring about effective change. Hence, the problem lies in convincing those who are resistant to change that change is necessary and beneficial to them as well.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative case study was to examine the ways in which two state educational agencies have attempted to build capacity to provide quality education and to improve the academic achievement of diverse students enrolled in public schools by instituting equity legislation and a regulation on multicultural education. Recent attention on organizational structures and pedagogical practices that contribute to disproportionate gaps in achievement has led state leaders to institute responsive guidelines, strategies, and evaluative measures. The states publicly acknowledge that they have failed to adequately serve the needs of ethnic and linguistic minority students and aggressive reform initiatives have been put in place to close present gaps in achievement. States departments of education have interpreted policy mandates, reached out stakeholders, and evaluated their progress in infusing the principles of multicultural education and equity into educational contexts. Although other legislation and regulations that either directly or indirectly attempted to improving minority achievement exist in the states, this study concentrates on policy mandates managed by a
pre-selected office within each state department of education, thereby, limiting the focus of this research.

Two theories were used to focus this research. The cultural ecology theory challenges educational officials and teachers 1) to gain an understanding of cultural experiences and 2) to consider how the relationship between culture and school affects performance when instituting reforms (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Social systems theory concentrates on behaviors and processes within institutions that are used to lead inside and outside agents toward a common goal (Owens, 2001). Collectively, the theories assist in explaining the methods used by each state education agency to directly address issues of low achievement among ethnic and linguistic minorities and to create organizational systems that eliminate structural barriers and improve equity. Educational authorities in the states under study have worked to heighten sensitivity toward cultural groups as an effort to improve access and opportunity for members of minority groups. Policy makers, state and local educational employees, task forces, and community groups have examined issues in and out of school that explain differences in achievement among culturally diverse groups. This community of stakeholders has determined that policies, processes, and practices needed to be modified to enhance knowledge of culture and to improve educational opportunities. This chapter ends with protocols which states can use as a model for equitable reform.

**Research Questions**

1. How have state educational officials implemented legislation or regulations that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of educational equity?
2. To what extent have state education agencies used policy mandates to enhance the achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students?

3. To what extent do state educational officials monitor and evaluate policy mandates specifically targeted toward improving academic performance among culturally diverse students?

4. How have state education agencies attempted to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity policy mandates?

Chapter five synthesizes research findings, details critical conclusions related to research, and specifies implications for various groups of stakeholders. Discourse in this chapter is framed around research questions. The juxtaposition of my personal encounters as I situated myself within the context of state departments of education and a synthesis of the realities of infusing policy mandates aimed at improving the education of low-performing minority students frames discussion and clarifies the significance of research in this area.

An Evaluation of the Original Hypothesis

At the onset of this study, I made two basic assumptions related to the research questions. I first assumed that policies, practices, and processes were developed as a direct result of state laws posed by legislatures and regulations adopted by state boards of education aimed at enhancing minority student performance. I found this hypothesis true in Atlantic and Southland. Efforts have been made to improve performance among minority and low-income students by instituting policy changes at all levels.

Nevertheless, reforms did not occur at the state or local levels to avoid the risk of losing
funding, potential audits, and low ratings as I originally assumed. Reform initiatives took place due to court order in Southland and strong commitments made by leading state officials, policy makers, and advocacy groups to ensure equal education for all students attending public schools in Atlantic. Moreover, local school systems generally complied with state policy guidelines in varying degrees. Larger school systems and those with supportive local superintendents serve as models of excellence when illustrating ways to comply with equity and multicultural policy mandates. By contrast, extreme cases of non-compliance have led state officials to develop more creative strategies for overcoming resistance in the process of reform.

I next presumed that organizational structures and pedagogical practices were considerably transformed as a result of the implementation of policy initiatives and the increased attention on accountability within the states. Although policy changes create an illusion of at least minimal automatic compliance, MCE.REG and SB x100 did not solicit behavioral and attitudinal shifts necessary for systemic transformation at the local school levels (Jackson & Solis, 1995). The policy mandates, however, did lead state officials and employees and various community/business stakeholders toward consistent behaviors that could build capacity for educational environments to become more inclusive for diverse groups. To a larger extent, local school systems are allowed to supervise themselves even when considering all of the variables that weigh heavily on reform initiatives. Evaluative measures attached to MCE.REG and SB x100 do not require state-level officials to visit schools to collect evidence of sufficient compliance.

In addition to primary assumptions, three limitations were identified at the onset of this study. I originally speculated that the policy mandates under investigation did not
exactly run parallel in regards to their authority. State departments of education investigation hold senate bills passed by legislatures and regulations adopted by boards of education to the same standard. Therefore, this was not a limitation. Secondly, the cases in this study were structured around the duties of specific divisions responsible for the interpretation, implementation, and evaluation of the policy mandates under investigation. Other divisions were responsible for implementing legislation and for improving minority achievement. The process of focusing on the primary functions of one office at the state-level rather than expanding the investigative lens serves as a limitation. Thirdly, the responses of state officials who served as participants in this study were critical to answering research questions. Participant views were based on their own knowledge and experiences of state educational contexts. Therefore, limitation stems from participant responses that may not align with other educational leaders and policy-makers throughout their respective states.

This study concludes that state education agencies have taken extensive measures to ensure that policy mandates on multicultural education and equity are systemically implemented. In spite of this, the two states still rely on local education agencies to evaluate their own progress in aligning organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the specifications set forth in policy mandates. Differences in the academic performance between minorities and non-minorities have not persuaded states to conduct on-site district/school reviews using instruments that specifically measure equity and multicultural factors. To a large extent, Atlantic remains hesitant in infusing the tenets of multicultural education as a means of obtaining equity for culturally diverse students despite pressure to close achievement gaps while Southland has not systemically
explored the tenets of the reform movement. The synthesis of research findings in Chapter 4 leads to critical discussions of implications for multiple stakeholders involved in the process of reform and a brief expression of my own professional growth experiences that are presented in this chapter.

Professional Growth Experience: Lessons from the Field

As an educator, I am aware of the challenges in which ethnic and linguistic minority students experience in schools. It is fair to state that not all students from minority backgrounds experience cultural dissonance in school to the point that academic performance is compromised (Ogbu, 1995; Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). However, disproportionate academic performance as measured by grades, tests, testimonies, and attitudes should alert politicians, state and local educators, and parents and communities members to issues in and out of school that serve as barriers to achievement. Throughout my years of teaching, I have spent most of my time in urban areas where the Hispanic, African Americans, and Asian/Pacific Islander public school enrollment either equaled or exceeded that of white student enrollment. To this end, I often wondered why educational leaders and teachers were not bittered enough by obvious academic disengagement among students of color and differences in academic performance between minorities and non-minorities to explore root causes and to involve students and their parents in the solution process (Ogbu, 2003).

This study is an installment in the critical review of states’ attempts to get involved in the solution process when local superintendents, administrators, and teachers, were unwilling or unable to direct themselves toward actions that would ensure
educational opportunity for all students, including ethnic and linguistic minority students. For example, unwillingness to comply with state directives regarding the regulation was revealed through claims made by educators that they were unaware of the policy mandate or that they did not fully understand the policy’s specifications and therefore, could not begin the implementation process. It has been my experience that districts/schools spend too much of their time trying to “fix the student” and not enough energy developing policies, strategies, and evaluative measures that work toward examining the system.

Further, a study of the treatment or mistreatment of students groups caught in the gap in Atlantic and Southland provides additional insight for those responsible for reforms. Ogbu asserts, “Understanding how the system affects minority school performance calls for an examination of the overall white treatment of minorities” (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998, p. 158). The theorist associates the mistreatment of minorities with organizational barriers that contribute to differences in performance.

Although I realize that state governments and departments of education can potentially overburden local school districts with prescribed mandates and compliance issues, this study reveals that it is critical that deliberate and comprehensive state educational policies that hold administrators and educators accountable leading all students to full proficiency (and beyond) be implemented and evaluated. To this end, I argue that Ogbu’s explanation that community forces hold answers to underachievement among certain groups of minorities is one area that state education agencies in this study have not adequately explored (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). It is true that state governments alone do not possess all of the resources necessary to explore issues related to low educational attainment and that out of school conditions may present serious challenges
for educators. All the same, the states under investigation have taken serious and expansive steps to transform school environments without systemic critical examination of underlying issues related to racial attitudes, deficit thinking, and the covert manifestations of discrimination (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). Without considerable efforts made on the part of state education agencies, it is unreasonable and even irresponsible to believe that most local school systems would adequately police themselves and institute comprehensive reforms based on needs assessments because “it’s the right thing” to do for those left in the gap. Operational pressures to build or to refurbish schools, hire staff, and secure funds typically overshadow serious issues regarding learning and culture.

I traveled to Atlantic and Southland to measure the scope for which state education agencies dealt with issues of low academic attainment among ethnic and linguistic minority students. My Atlantic and Southland field experiences proved enlightening and necessary for my complete understanding of the ways in which various stakeholders use policy mandates to institute reforms. To my surprise, the goal of ensuring that all students learn at high levels, especially ethnic and linguistic minority students those who have not experienced academic success in schools, did not result only from directives brought on policies or state superintendents of education directives, but evolved from the personal convictions of employees to which I observed on a daily basis. A considerable number of state employees demonstrated a conviction beyond the scope of their assigned duties and departmental objectives for undoing injustice taking place in schools. Lee’s (1994) notion that it takes courage to position oneself in an advocacy role within educational institutions in order to confront hard questions related to multicultural transformation proved true in this study.
Evidence showed that state equity staff and other state personnel with whom I interacted, carried special burdens and dispositions. Participants, who provided a lens for interpreting state actions, possessed acute understandings of cultural knowledge, the effects of prejudice and discrimination, and reforms that must take place in districts and schools to ensure equal access and opportunity for diverse groups of students. To this end, I realize that in order to make a lasting commitment to implementing and sustaining equitable reforms, responsible persons involved in the change process must possess attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions congruent to the elements set forth in the policies themselves. Otherwise, institutional norms and conventions will outweigh efforts. The ideology involved in the process of equitable and cultural inclusionary reform is best represented by the collection of statements that follows made by state employees:

“It doesn’t matter who is holding the whip, when the lashes end up on my back [putting himself in the place of marginalized students].” [Winston, Southland]

“Students [minority/special education] are not being placed in classes that challenge their cognitive abilities. It is my obligation to point out disparities, and I make sure that I do!” [Southland State Associate Superintendent of Education]

“Organizational structures and pedagogical practices are aligned with state regulations on multicultural education to the extent to which people are willing to change their own attitudes about differences. Some school districts have taken
this regulation and “run with it”. In other districts, people have given the equity offices ‘false positive’ impressions”. [Kenu, Atlantic]

“Poor children and children of color were being discriminated against at all levels. We were hoping that when we showed people what culture was all about, things would change. This was like knocking a hole through granite.” [Kenu, Atlantic]

The honesty and implications of their words alert public educational systems to changes that must occur. State educational staff willingness to share their documents, perspectives, and time and energy with me in my personal installment of research in this area demonstrates their commitment to the change process, not only in their respective states, but for all students attending public schools.

R1: Political Implications of Implementing Policies as Tools for Obtaining Equity

On the surface, Atlantic and Southland bear more similarities than differences in the way the policy mandates under review have been implemented. Through modeled leadership, setting requirements, providing training and technical assistance, and holding school districts accountable, the two states have implemented policy mandates that infuse the tenets of multicultural education and the principles of equity. In terms of processes and actions, the state superintendents of education have shown clear leadership in implementing MCE.REG and SB x100. The meaning and goals of educational equity permeate the state education agencies and issues related to diversity and culture that were
not specifically discussed in the past have taken on new importance when working to find solutions to low educational attainment.

The most intense differences in the ways the laws have been implemented relate to accountability and requirements. Atlantic requires local school systems to submit plans that stipulate how MCE.REG will be implemented and directs districts to submit annual progress reports. Southland requires each school to submit comprehensive school improvement plans, which integrate the guidelines set forth in SB x100, to school superintendents. The implications in the manner in which each state directs local school systems to ensure implementation are equally extensive and problematic. Atlantic’s requirements that plans for implementation and annual reports be submitted to the states equity office increases the possibility of an objective review process from an agent unattached to the political ramifications of a local school district. Moreover, the state reviewer faces little repercussions for critical reviews of MCE.REG plans and the staff member can opt to report plans with formats that do not meet a standard level of acceptance to the state superintendent of education. On the other hand, plans and annual progress reports tend to receive subjective ratings despite the quality or credibility of the information sent to the state by local respondents. State equity staff in charge of reviewing annual progress reports has not been trained on valid and reliable research methodologies necessary to conduct credible assessments. Therefore, the state has to refine its process for measuring 1) the quality of implementation plans based on the specifications in the regulation and 2) how well each local school system has meet its annual goals and objectives. Evidence suggests that faculty and staff at many of the local schools throughout the state are unaware that policy exists. Therefore, individual schools
are subject to not participate in the implementation process or to provide superficial information to central offices to comply with local directives.

The Southland Department of Education’s commitment to holding individual schools accountable for ensuring that each and every child meets standard or above standard levels of academic proficiency is commendable. However, this commitment does not align with professional school practices. With the exception of training a number of school-based decision-making councils on developing comprehensive school improvement plans and on educational laws, it is questionable whether school councils will devote a significant amount of focused attention on implementing SB x100. Research suggests that a significant amount of state officials are not convinced that school-based decision making councils espouse the belief that “all means all.” The law directs authority to school-based decisions making councils (who may lack the expertise or resent investing their time) to fully implement the policy. The senate bill does possess vital characteristics that MCE.REG does not. These characteristics may assist state officials in determining whether a local superintendent or school is attentive to implementing the policy. Since schools develop their own targets, strategies/actions, timelines, the efficacy associated with timely and progressive implementation procedures can be measured and critiqued by local officials. The final step in this progress would be to have the state education agency collect sample plans from local school districts to determine the quality and efficacy of the SB x100 implementation process and to uncover weaknesses in their own efforts to successfully assist with implementing the laws.

The training that Southland and Atlantic provide on the policy mandates is critical to implementation. The state and local equity staffs inform stakeholders of the law in
Southland and other state educational staff has been made fully aware of SB x100 specifications. A breakdown occurs at the local level when equity offices do not exist or when state staff is not invited to go into the schools to train faculty and school-based decision making councils. In Atlantic, state officials and members of the Diversity Advisory Alliance provide training and technical assistance on the policy. Collectively, websites, publications, and presentations are designed to support and to expedite the implementation of policy mandates. Short of state staff entering individual schools to conduct trainings, it is reasonable to conclude that state education agencies have progressed moderately throughout the last several years to implement MCE.REG and SB x100.

Research literature confirms that the implementation of educational policies is contingent on conditional elements that operate in contextual and historical realms (Hall, 1997a, 1997b; Placier et al., 2000; Miron, 1997; Grant & Millar, 1992). State educational authorities in Atlantic and Southland realized that they would have to confront racism and bias when implementing new policies and shifting resources to address achievement gaps (Gottlieb, 1999; Nieto, 2000). State modeling of behaviors and dissemination of strategies that local entities can use to overcome resistance to the implementation of policies on multicultural education and the principles of equity has not been mirrored to a large extent by local school systems. This warrants a closer examination of why people within institutions choose not to perform certain tasks (Gibson et al., 1984).

Noguera’s (2001) study of events that took place in a California school district when attempting to infuse equity principles typifies what has taken place at local levels in Atlantic and Southland. Racial inequities in student outcomes seem to be co covertly
tolerated (Noguera, 2001; Weissglass, 1997). It is not feasible to imagine that state representatives could deal entirely alone with these complex issues. However, policies such as MCE.REG and SB x100 and state superintendent vision and commitment send and support a message to those working closest to the students that inequitable and discriminatory practices will not be tolerated.

State-level officials’ insistence that goals of SB x100 become a reality in Southland has led local school superintendents, central office, and site-based staff to reflect on their own practices to resolve issues of inequity. Tireless and comprehensive efforts to inform all stakeholders of the ramifications of the law are evident. Dialogue and discussion permeates board meetings, schools, teacher workshops, conferences, and community-based educational forums. On the other hand, unlike Southland, state officials in Atlantic are still working to inform all local educators of MCE.REG. Whereas the states use policy mandates to obtain equity for culturally diverse and low performing students, Southland uses its policy as an anchor to hold persons accountable for instituting effective policies, practices, and strategies. Atlantic, on the other hand, uses its policy mandate as a conduit to teach multicultural strategies to state and local educators and to assist local constituents in building capacity to enhance minority student achievement.

R2: Mounting Pressure to Enhance Minority Student Achievement

Research findings indicate that Atlantic and Southland use the policy mandates under review in many of the same ways to enhance student achievement. The state education agencies have used the law as 1) leverage to establish committees, councils,
and task forces, which in turn make recommendations to the state superintendents, 2) planning vehicles to guide gap and achievement initiatives, 3) instruments to require local school educators to set priorities and to determine needs, and 4) tools for obtaining input from parents and community members, faculty, and staff. SB x100 requirement that resources be focused where needs occur is a powerful indicator of the state’s support for closing achievement gaps. Moreover, the state has set up a pilot project, which incorporate gap strategies in area schools and require staff to assess needs and find solutions. This pilot project provides the state a means to document and to analyze the process of change. The use of disaggregated data put an array of actions into motion and challenged attitudes in the two states. Educational authorities responsible for educating diverse groups of children could no longer deny that they had either been unsuccessful or unwilling to take the necessary steps to ensure that large numbers of ethnic minority and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were learning at rates consistent with the academic progress of white students.

As pressure mounts to analyze gaps among subgroup populations, 1) dialogue and discussion on issues related to the relationship between culture and schools and 2) influence to institute more responsive instructional methods will continue to gain momentum in Atlantic and Southland. Although state equity leaders engage in discussions and implement strategies that directly speak to issues of race, ethnicity, and language, it is clear that local school employees, especially in Southland, are not as comfortable discussing cultural issues that may lead to differences in school performance. When low performing schools or schools with large gaps are pressured to identify goals and strategies, districts and schools in Southland tend to compensate by concentrating
heavily on equity principles and professional development. This is true to a lesser extent in Atlantic, where local school communities have been more willing to engage in discourse on the relationship between diversity factors (beyond socioeconomic status or poverty) and the administration of schools. Jackson and Solis (1995) assertion discussed in chapter two that reforms do not move beyond traditional discourses held true in this study. The newness of the development and implementation of gap strategies in the states has began to focus attention on the need to construct knowledge, skills, and attitudes that stretch beyond the institution of programs and traditional instructional practices.

Ogbu's (1995, 2003) studies, which concentrate on the reasons minority students perform less well than non-minority students in school highlight several factors that have not been consistently and systemically examined in Atlantic and Southland (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Symbolic discrimination occurs when school staff belittles a student’s cultural and language. A lack of trust exists between educational staff and members of minority communities. In these cases, student-teacher relationships are severely compromised by cultural misunderstandings. Students may see school success as compromising their own identities. According to Ogbu’s cultural ecology theory, involuntary minorities (African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans) are often unwilling to assimilate into mainstream cultures or conform to traditional practices that exclude their need for free expression. With the exception of state equity staff, councils and advisory groups, and equity task forces, conversations related to Ogbu’s cultural ecology theory are virtually non-existent. To this end, it is not difficult to determine what is missing from the policy implementation process.
Since Atlantic is the process of developing a voluntary curriculum and previously did not have a state mandated curriculum, it will be much easier for state officials to ensure that the new curriculum contains a multicultural focus, rather than waiting for each school system to solicit support from the equity office or take the initiative to infuse multiculturalism into academic frameworks themselves. It is also unreasonable to conceive that equity staff could have met with a significant amount of curriculum writers and content specialist in each district. Critical advocates of cultural inclusion argue that when students see themselves and their experiences in content and activities, student engagement increases, which can have a direct impact on achievement (Banks, 2001).

The displacement of cultural identity possesses risks because, “Involuntary minorities see curriculum as an attempt to impose white culture on them. This leads them to question the curriculum for not including information about their minority history and experiences” (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998, p. 178).

State educational leaders in Atlantic and Southland and advocacy groups have made it clear that schools need to increase the number of culturally diverse students taking and successfully completing academically rigorous courses. In 2000, 881 Hispanic, 2,194 African American, and 3,949 Asian students in Atlantic were reported as taking Advanced Placement courses as compared to 18,345 white (non-Hispanic origin) students. The states total white and non-white student population is almost equal. Although state officials have called attention to this disparity, no systemic or formal process has been put in place to address this fact. On the other hand, recent legislation has been passed by policy makers in Southland committing state and local officials to developing policies, frameworks, and guidelines for ensuring that more students of color
are identified for and gain access to gifted and talented programs and higher-level coursework. This is essential in the change process.

**State Analysis of Data to Uncover Inconsistencies and Barriers to Learning**

Realizing the test scores are not the only measure of student learning, Atlantic and Southland collect and disseminate non-cognitive (non-academic) data to school systems to assist in 1) informing decision making and 2) re-organizing educational environments. The analysis of a variety non-cognitive data that result from surveys, observations, interviews, disciplinary referrals and/or other means is crucial to uncovering inconsistencies in policies and procedures and barriers to the fulfillment of academic potential. Test scores and grades present summative information but do not reveal conditions at a school site that go unevaluated and unchallenged. The implication in this instance centers on the ability of school staff to become competent at conducting and analyzing data and utilizing a variety of research methodologies. Prior attempts to analyze data sources were reserved for university researchers, central office research and accountability offices, and school administrators. In the new century, the entire school community will be required to use data to determine the efficacy of their own practices.

Atlantic’s equity analysis uses multiple methods for comparing student progress. Review of average performance of students in the same school can potentially alert staff to inequitable student placement practices or uncover climate issues. Further, comparing minority performance at the school and state level and at the individual and class level provides additional insight, which helps to inform decision making related to setting policies and modifying procedures. The on-line data systems in the two states are crucial to the immediate recognition of gaps across subgroup populations. Atlantic and
Southland are as models of excellence in regards to providing all stakeholders with disaggregated academic data and additional information needed to transform educational environments and to improve achievement. This is especially important since states use disaggregated performance data to monitor and to evaluate the impact of policy infusion.

R3: Synthesis of Attempts to Monitor and to Evaluate Policy Mandates

Although the two states under review have taken serious steps to implement the policy mandates, the state superintendents of education have not authorized on site reviews to determine the impact of implementation. This phenomenon is a salient issue in regards to answering research question number three. Atlantic’s attempts to monitor and to evaluate MCE.REG are comprehensive to some extent. Requiring local school districts to submit Five-Year Multicultural Plans and annual progress reports provide state officials with more concrete information on the ways local sectors proceed in monitoring and evaluating reforms. The feedback on MCE.REG provided to local school districts in Atlantic can be rated along a continuum from meaningless to essential. Formal evidence has not been collected by the state to determine whether feedback and recommendations offered by state officials are used to strengthen local efforts to improve minority achievement. This alludes to a breakdown in the monitoring process.

This study concludes that there has not been adequate influence from state officials in Atlantic to motivate local schools and districts to fully comply with the policy mandates. Southland’s new requirement that targets be met yearly may motivate some local practitioners toward behaviors which can potentially secure desired student achievement results. Since the revised senate bill was implemented only recently, it is
too early to determine whether the goals in the policy will be met. This is a critical point because the majority of educational priorities in the two states are directed toward enhanced academic performance. It is fair to note that the state education agencies do not have the staff or capacity to visit each school to determine compliance. Nonetheless, collective bodies comprised of parents, business and community members, university staff, state personnel, and retired educators can be trained on the guidelines set forth in the policy mandates under review and conduct on-site reviews of schools with large gaps or questionable compliance. Since superficial reporting and insufficient evidence of compliance in Atlantic serve as barriers to implementing MCE.REG, it is feasible to believe that on-site reviews in these instances are warranted. It would be irresponsible on each state's part not to investigate questionable reporting or compliance.

Priority is given to areas that are assessed. As disaggregated data becomes more of an issue in Southland, the Equity Analysis Instrument may be used more frequently as a method of collecting information for analysis unless another department within the agency develops a more useful instrument. Undoubtedly, not all educators throughout the states understand the concept of equity. This is evident through claims of treating everyone the same. The definition of educational equity used in Southland is comprehensive and pervasive. The ideology captures the auspices of policies, practices, facilities, academic support, curriculum, instruction, school resource, school climate, and culture. State and local educational authorities and teachers are to hold all students enrolled in public schools to high expectations regardless of diversity factors. Responsive policies and practices lead policy makers and educators toward decisions that
may compromise well-established relationships and institutional norms (Anderson, 2001; Koschoreck, 2001; Gay, 1988).

Many educators and administrators fail to realize that diverse groups of students learn differently and adjustments need to be made to address gaps (Gay, 2000; Johnson, 2002). Although level one rated schools in Southland are audited by individuals who have had training on equity issues, schools that conduct self-assessments using the standards and indicators document may not contain any staff who has completed equity training or who is familiar with cultural diversity issues. To a wide extent, schools throughout the state have not used the self-evaluation equity instrument to a significant degree nor have schools analyzed issues related to equity and student learning to the extent that authorities had hoped. In spite of this, disaggregated data helps local educational authorities and teachers in Southland and Atlantic “buy into” equity principles and to explore multicultural concepts to a greater degree than when data was reported in an aggregate fashion.

Although local school superintendents sign off on the annual progress reports submitted to the Atlantic Department of Education, district representatives would have to take a number of actions to measure the extent to which each criteria has been addressed by each school. The comments made by state representatives as feedback on the reports suggests that standard and above standard ratings are awarded most often regardless of evidence of support. For example, a state employee commented that Yahoo Public Schools lacked data to support progress on strategies for acceleration, found that the district did not have adequate cultural specific achievement goals, and was unclear on efforts to close gaps among cultural groups. Despite this, all standard ratings were
issued. Moreover, a review of a series of 1999-2002 reports show that school systems typically mark yes to the majority of protocol items.

Extensive data collection from interviews, observations, teacher/administrator surveys, and student forums would need to be conducted before individuals in charge of completing the MCE.REG annual progress report could adequately and appropriately complete the assessment. Other considerations, such as the protection of one’s professional position or the integrity of the school system, insufficient understanding of multicultural criteria, and an unwillingness to carefully weigh resistance factors may potentially diminish the credibility of submitted reports. On the other hand, criteria on the annual reports alert educational leaders to areas in need of improvement and threats to the MCE.REG implementation process. Moreover, belief systems are challenged directly when those familiar with the protocol instrument begin to realize the extent to which state educational leaders and stakeholders have gone to ensure educational equity. As a result, some local school systems have sought support, feedback and technical assistance from the Office of Dignity, Equity, and Educational Diversity.

Multicultural education and equity plans include expansive specifications related to curriculum, instruction and instructional materials, professional development, evaluation and assessment, parental involvement, attendance improvement and dropout prevention, and technical assistance, which provide the most conscious means on each state’s part to consider multiple areas to ensure equity for all students. State and local requirements for developing school improvement plans and for implementing the policy mandates reflect attention to all or most of these areas when matching human and material resources to the needs of high risk culturally diverse students. Attempts to
monitor and to evaluate a wide variety of equity domains simultaneously are commendable and assist the two education agencies in sustaining open systems for organizational change.

R4: State Education Agencies as Open Systems of Organizational Change

This research shows that Atlantic and Southland state education agencies interact with variety of stakeholders when instituting change related to the policy mandates under investigation. Mixed agents are comprised of state and local educational staff, parents, community members, university faculty, and policy makers. As an open system, state personnel interact with inside and outside agents to influence behaviors and actions that move the organization toward meeting the goals set forth in MCE.REG and SB x100 (Owens, 2001). Outside agents include parents and families, community members, and university staff while inside agents include state educational staff, the state superintendent of education, local superintendents, regional educational staff, central office workers, school-based employees, and students. As social systems theory suggests, interdependency and influence among agents of change build support and capacity to meet specified organizational objectives (Gibson et al., 1984).

State officials in Atlantic and Southland purposely 1) instill vision and support on eliminating achievement gaps, 2) use disaggregated data to support local initiatives and to affirm goals, 3) disseminate multicultural resources and materials, 4) recommend that schools increase minority access to higher level coursework, and 5) collaborate across the state agencies to inform, share, and support attempts to align organizational structures with the goals of equity policy mandates under review. Atlantic has taken further steps to
assist local school districts in focusing on existing policies and procedures by 1) providing training on organizational features which may impede the realization of policy goals, 2) publishing reports on frameworks to use when organizing educational contexts to more efficiency meet the needs of high risk minority students, and 3) holding monthly meetings with district representatives in charge of implementing MCE.REG. The work of the Diversity Advisory Alliance is crucial in aligning organizational structures with the goals of the policy. The members of the alliance openly share information regarding professional development, local accountability plans, equity analysis processes, and strategies used to eliminate achievement gaps. Moreover, members assist each other in securing human and material resources and funding sources.

Because 1) the Atlantic local superintendents must sign off on annual progress reports and five year plans, 2) members of the Diversity Advisory Alliance include district personnel who are in charge of implementing the regulation, and 3) these same individuals are staff developers who share information on MCE.REG in a variety of formats with district staff reiterating its importance, the regulation has influenced decision making and contributed to a change in organizational structures at the local level in a number of ways (awareness of diversity issues, minority representation and parental support on boards and committees, and professional development that focus on the needs of minority students who have not obtain academic success in schools). The degree to which organizational structures have been affected by the policy mandates varies. It is clear that the larger districts and schools in Atlantic and Southland and those with administrative leadership that support the policy mandates have experienced the most significant changes.
MCE.REG protocols consist of criteria for reporting the status of implementing the policy into local school systems. For example, the community outreach protocol requires schools to solicit parents, community, and organizational support in the development of policies and strategies to address MCE.REG issues. From the state's perspective, parents and community members are central to building trust and schools must find ways to build positive relationships with individuals and groups have not been involved in resolving pertinent problems (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). Protocols and core competencies attempt to provide a platform to integrate student realities into school and to create a safe place for students to discuss oppressive conditions in their communities, state, nation, and the world (Shor, 1992; Jackson & Solis, 1995). In addition, the protocols call attention to personnel issues such as equitable hiring and promotion practices. Publications on structuring organizational frameworks distributed by the state are issued to help a variety stakeholders become involved and successful in implementing minority student initiatives (Gibson et al, 1984).

Southland has developed guidelines for school-based decision making councils; however, council members may or may not possess the knowledge and skills to fully engage in the planning process or implement reforms. In addition to guidelines, school based decision making councils receive training from the state. The practices used by the states to align organizational structures with policy goals are equally effective; however, Atlantic may need to consider amending its multicultural regulation to hold school-based decision councils more accountable for implementing educational regulations. Moreover, the state may need to consider training school councils on the specifications set forth in MCE.REG. To ensure organizational alignment, Southland has made a conscious effort
to supply funds to support pilot projects and multicultural programs. The state has taken the lead to facilitate initiatives such as the Minority Achievement Partnership which show a high degree of potential to assist in meeting the goals of SB x100. Atlantic does not allocate specific funds to support MCE.REG initiatives. This fuels claims by local officials that MCE.REG is an unfunded mandate. On the other hand, SB x100 allows the state’s equity office to release monetary resources as needed, limiting claims of a lack of resources. However, the two states have made it clear that a change in attitudes regarding who can and cannot learn and who is or is not entitled to equal educational opportunity requires no additional funding.

No Child Left Behind Implications on MCE.REG and SB x100

New federal educational guidelines focus on student proficiency by subgroup population. No Child Left Behind encourages state and local education agencies to institute reforms to ensure quality education for all students. Further, the legislation directs specific attention toward economically disadvantaged, racial/ethnic, disabled, and limited English students groups. MCE.REG and SB x100 were constructed to ensure appropriate attention to closing achievement gaps among subgroups of students. Atlantic and Southland policy mandates correlate with federal guidelines by focusing on issues related to low expectations, encouraging local educators to become data-driven, and insisting on improving the teacher quality. Statewide accountability measures are being put into place and policies are being written in the states to comply with the law.

Attempting to align state achievement goals with new federal guidelines, Atlantic will award 90% of over two and a half million (monies previously designated for schools making substantial gains in meeting state standards) to schools that raise achievement
levels in subgroup areas, such as between non-minority and non-minorities students and English proficient and limited English proficient students. Schools receiving monetary rewards must raise performance levels by at least five points over the previous year's scores in the areas of reading and mathematics on the state's standardized test. State actions compliment the multicultural education regulation. Significant amounts of schools throughout the state may seriously consider using the tenets of multicultural education as presented in MCE.REG as a means of obtaining rewards.

Despite monetary rewards, the states have concentrated heavily on complying with the No Child Left Behind Act. Each state expects student achievement to improve across subgroup populations. Gap strategies and methods of acceleration are designed to address persistent gaps in achievement. Even though accountability is evident in the policy mandates, the language and goals of SB x100 more closely aligns with the federal mandate. Ironically, at the time of this study Atlantic educational initiatives and policies in general were more aligned with federal guidelines in the areas of annual assessments, determination of annual yearly progress, and requiring a specific definition of a highly qualified teacher (Education Commission of the States, 2003).

Like the No Child Left Behind Act, SB x100 does not contain specific language requiring state and local authorities to address cultural issues beyond class and language that may contribute to low academic attainment. Baseline data were used in the two states to identify targets and strategies for school improvement prior to the passing of the new federal legislation. Parents and communities must be involved in the reform process as indicated by federal and state policies. In regards to the federal requirement of high quality professional development, Atlantic protocols and core competencies contain
identifiable objectives for increasing the percentage of teachers receiving the types of training that will ensure that all children learn. Southland professional development standards and SB x100 fall short of this goal and the state must work toward addressing this issue.

R4: Pedagogical Implications of State Policy Mandates

The weakest point of transferability of the policy mandates into professional practice centers on aligning pedagogical practices with the goals set forth in MCE.REG and SB x100. The two state education agencies do not release staff for the purpose of ensuring that pedagogical practices demonstrate that teachers believe that all students can learn. Short of sitting in classrooms, Atlantic and Southland have 1) used disaggregated data to assist school-based personnel in identifying student groups whose needs are not being met, 2) required that certain curricula areas include a multicultural focus, and 3) broadly defined instructional equity as a method to raise expectations for ethnic and linguistic minority learners, build responsiveness, and deal with threats and challenges. Despite state efforts, attitudes and beliefs are not being significantly challenged as evident by the tendency to ignore the lived realities of diverse groups of students and to continue with traditional practices. This holds equally true for the two states under review.

Strongly held beliefs stemming from perceptions and limited experiences with ethnic and linguistic minorities make holding high expectations for all students a challenge. Realizing this, state leaders have placed professional development into policy mandates and linked it to student needs through comprehensive accountability systems.
If there will ever be hope of infusing cultural knowledge into classroom experiences, Southland and Atlantic state officials must offer separate conferences and trainings on issues specifically related to minority achievement. Teachers need extensive professional development in order to obtain the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to move toward instructional equity. It is questionable whether those in practice currently possess the dispositions to take necessary steps to grow professionally. Although Atlantic has developed professional development protocols and core competencies for educators, local school systems do not sanction teachers directly for non-compliance. Southland has professional development standards, but only a third directly addresses equity issues or direct teachers/administrators toward behaviors that alert them to conditions of oppression or subordination in schools. Evidence reveals that teachers are astutely aware of professional development provisions set forth by SB x100; however, teacher evaluations do not directly assess equity or multicultural issues. In more specific terms, pedagogical practices do not reflect the language specified in policy guidelines because these areas are not assessed at the local school level.

Training on culturally responsive teaching strategies could lead highly skilled educators or staff developers in Southland toward a more direct infusion of multicultural and equity principles. This would primarily be done by workshops and technical assistance initiatives offered to schools. Equity staff in Atlantic and Southland has been formally trained on the tenets of culturally responsive teaching, which integrates knowledge of culture, language and students lived experiences classroom instruction (Gay, 1994; Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). By training staff developers in each state on culturally responsive pedagogy, these professionals can assist administrators and teachers...
in gaining skills necessary to show consideration for individual and group differences and reducing risks of engaging in misunderstandings and conflict that result from a lack of knowledge of student experiences. In addition to state staffs, who provide leadership on the policy mandates, highly skilled educators or regional trainers would be viable candidates to conduct transferability assessments related to the infusion of culturally responsive techniques that are stem from professional growth experiences.

Evidence revealed that MCE.REG courses offered in Atlantic incorporate the tenets of culturally responsive teaching and differentiated instruction into professional learning experiences. Participants are challenged to appropriate new knowledge into classroom teaching, reflect on experiences, and dialogue with others in the course on successes and areas in need of attention. Additionally, Diversity Advisory Alliance members in Atlantic work as staff developers within their local districts. Members have been trained on a variety of cultural teaching models and work with site-based teachers. The equity course offered for university credit in Southland does not focus on cultural teaching models and websites that show the types of trainings offered by regional service centers do not indicate topic, which focus attention specifically on the experiences of ethnic and linguistic minority students.

In addition to practitioners, this study holds implications for pre-service teacher education programs. State education agencies must develop and sustain productive relationships with institutions of higher learning. Atlantic and Southland do not require educational courses in multicultural education, valuing diversity, or cultural responsive pedagogy. Nor is there a requirement that university educational courses include objectives specifically geared toward addressing some of the highly publicized problems
in the states related educating ethnically and linguistically diverse learners. Still, states develop teacher education program requirements and set guidelines for teacher licensure (Gollnick, 2001). Atlantic and Southland fall short in their responsibility of assisting to preparing future educators to become competent and effective at meeting the needs of culturally diverse individuals and groups. This issue is further complicated by unwillingness to evaluate and offer assistance to practitioners once cultural incompetence has been identified as a problem. This point became clear in December of the 2002 when two-hundred teachers were reported leaving the largest, urban school district in Atlantic with the highest concentration of minorities. State officials attributed the exodus to a lack of teacher preparedness and cultural incompetence.

Synthesis of Research and Areas of Further Study

This comparative case study was formulated on the premise that significant amounts of ethnic and linguistic minority students are 1) unmotivated and detached from learning engagements, 2) experience low levels of academic attainment when compared to dominant cultures, 3) report feelings of self-doubt, and 4) resist school authority figures. A review of literature in chapter two on minority achievement issues and state attempts to resolve these concerns through increased accountability, emphasis on professional development, and focusing attention on the infusion of knowledge of culture and equity into environments was brought to fruition by a review of the implementation of policy mandates in this study. A substantive amount of state educational employees in Atlantic and Southland displayed commitment, conviction, knowledge, and dispositions consistent the policy mandates and necessary to assist districts and schools in building
capacity to raise minority achievement. Although the two states made firm commitments to implement policy mandates on equity and multicultural education into educational systems, racial inequities appear to be covertly tolerated at local levels. To this end, organizational structures and pedagogical practices aligned with the goals MCE.REG and SB x100 to the extent to which educators and administrators were willing to challenge their own attitudes and behaviors about differences related to culture.

This research identifies two primary areas for further study. First, research pertaining to state authorities' attempts to conduct on-site reviews of the infusion of policy specifications into local schools would be beneficial to the educational communities in each state. At present, the two state superintendents have not authorized on-site reviews, however, a critical study of the implementation of policies at the local level whereby authorized entities are allowed to visit a number of pre-selected schools and make assessments of the commitment and extent to which policies have been implemented could provide additional insight to this area of research. Secondly, research on the pedagogical implications of infusing policy initiatives into classrooms where teachers in each state are known to embrace equity and multicultural education policy mandates could lead to an acute understanding of the impact of the legislation on professional practices. At present, it is not known whether the policies directly impact ethnic and linguistic student achievement. Research specifically focused on the pedagogical implications of policy mandates would clarify the usefulness of the policies in enhancing minority student achievement.

The significance of this study to state policy officials and educators lies in identifying the characteristics of equitable reform. The purpose of this comparative study
was to examine the ways in which two states have implemented policy mandates as methods of improving educational opportunity and performance among diverse groups of students experiencing disproportionate gaps in achievement. Atlantic and Southland educational officials realize that significant amounts of ethnic and linguistic minority students have not been successfully educated within school environments and the states have taken extensive steps to address this issue. A synthesis of the findings in this comparative study contributes to scholarly research related to 1) a state’s role in the process of equitable reform, 2) strategies used by state education agencies to improve achievement for minority students, and 3) state attempts to address systemic barriers to the implementation of educational multicultural education and equity laws. To this end, this study concludes with ten recommendations or protocols for states 1) in the process of implementing policy mandates on multicultural education or equity, 2) working to close achievement gaps, 3) establishing guidelines to monitor and to evaluate policy mandates directed at enhancing minority achievement, and/or 4) attempting to align organizational structures and pedagogical practices to ensure equity for all students enrolled in public schools.

Protocols for a Systemic Model of Equitable Reform

1. States must rely on multiple stakeholders in and out of schools to successfully implement policy mandates related to building culturally inclusive structures and closing the minority achievement gap.

   Policy makers, all state department of education divisions and employees, committees/councils on minority achievement, equity task forces, state-wide
alliances, superintendents/administrators, central office staff, school site-based employees, students, parents/guardians, and business/community members all play central and unique roles in the process of transformation.

2. State and local educators and community members must engage in discourse and dialogue on the root causes of academic disengagement when attempting to conduct needs assessments and to plan reform processes (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998).

   Professional development and instructional equity are priorities in the states under investigation. Although state educational policies mandate that needs assessments determine professional development priorities, evidence shows that African American, Hispanic, and Native American students do not engage completely in the process of schooling and do not perform at standards comparable to their white counterparts. Too many state and local educators fear engaging in conversations on the relationship among race/culture and community factors that might lead to low attainment. Critical dialogue is essential to understanding sources of and finding solutions to academic disengagement.

3. State educational officials must assist local school systems in finding consistent ways to bridge the cultural gap that exists between schools and the communities of students who are not performing well in school environments.

   Public education has not significantly changed in organization or administration in the last fifty years. Past attempts to assimilate into mainstream school culture is no longer a priority among ethnic groups. Culturally diverse students remain committed to espousing their identities in educational environments. Therefore, it
is essential for schools to transform into environments that show visible signs of respect for the commonalities and differences among cultural groups.

4. Plans and reports pertaining to implementing laws on educational equity must be submitted to the state.

   This study reveals that requiring local school systems to assess their own progress in implementing the policies under review has assisted in sustaining large gaps in academic achievement among minorities and non-minorities. Either states should require local school systems submit plans on the ways that policies will be implemented to state officials or states should sample schools within local districts on an annual basis to determine if serious efforts are being made to comply with educational laws.

5. States educational staff must provide timely and credible feedback to local school systems and a sampling of schools from each district using reliable methodologies.

   The two states that form cases in this study require districts or schools to submit plans on the ways the policy mandates will be implemented into school environments. It is crucial that plans are not only submitted to authorities, but that adequate feedback with recommendations, commodations, and offers of technical assistance be provided by those responsible for ensuring that schools reach the goals specified in policy mandates.

6. States must authorize on-site visits to local schools.

   This study reveals that states educational officials have resisted sending in state personnel to assess whether policy mandates are being adequately implemented. To this end, large variations exist at local levels in complying with the
specifications set forth in the laws. Although state education agencies may not possess the necessary staff to authorize site visits to all local schools, officials must investigate attempts to implement equity mandates in schools rated as low performing or in schools with large achievement gaps.

7. States should consider establishing an alliance of local school representatives who are advocates of raising minority achievement and closing gaps.

This study reveals that the work of Diversity Advisory Alliance is critical to organizational change in Atlantic. The alliance provides staff development to local central office administrators and school-based staff on issues related to enhancing minority achievement. At monthly state-sponsored meetings, alliance members share ideas, support one another's initiatives, inform state officials of local goals and activities, and develop skills to return to their local school systems and become essential resources.

8. State education agencies must set aside funds to promote and to support equity and multicultural initiatives.

The two states that form cases in this study have taken expansive steps to ensure equity for all students, but without allocating funds to support pilots or initiatives, districts may not obtain crucial information or concrete examples of how to infuse policy mandates into schools. Southland requires schools to distribute funds where needs occur and the state's equity office funds multicultural and equity initiatives. The findings of pilot projects in Southland can serve as support for institutional changes. Therefore, states must provide monetary support to special projects specifically aimed at eliminating barriers and closing achievement gaps.
9. Site-based trainings that deal specifically with addressing attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching ethnic and linguistic minority students and that build knowledge of cultures must be instituted in local school districts.

   Profound testimonies made by state officials in Atlantic and Southland reveal that some state and significant amounts of local educators do not believe that all students can learn at standards or above standard levels. Bias assumptions and low expectations permeate educational contexts and serve as barriers to instructional equity and complete fulfillment of academic potential. States must be willing to address this fact at a source closest to the students and community.

10. Training dealing with resistance to the implementation of policy mandates must be conducted.

   Requiring that administrators and teachers become culturally competent at serving the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, funding initiatives targeted toward meeting the needs of students who are not performing well on state assessments, and constant dialogue on closing achievement gaps fuels resentment and resistance at local levels. States must assist local administrators and teachers with addressing these issues as schools attempt to comply with equity legislation or multicultural regulations.
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. For what reasons did the state decide to implement multicultural education into schools?

2. Does the state collect data on the primary instructional challenges that teachers experience when attempting to improve academic performance among ethnic and linguistic students?

3. How does the state determine the causes of low achievement among high-risk ethnic and linguistic minority students?

4. What criteria have been set by the state to assist educators with infusing cultural knowledge into content areas and academic programs?

5. To what extent is academic content comprised of diverse perspectives?

6. What steps were taken by the department to infuse pluralism into school environments?

7. How do academic programs reflect the experiences of ethnic and linguistic minority students?

8. How does the state foster building of positive relations between schools and diverse communities?

9. To what extent do educational officials consult members of ethnic and linguistic minority communities when setting policies and designing programming?

10. Describe the process of decision-making that state educational authorities engage in when setting policies relating to educating ethnic and linguistic minority students?

11. What are the main influences on state educational policy making within the state?
12. How do educational officials determine if state goals on multicultural education have been transferred into schools?

13. What organizational features would you identify as challenges to providing equitable educational services to ethnic and linguistic minority students?

14. Would you describe any controversies (either at the state or local level) that have resulted from state directives on infusing multicultural education into educational environments?

15. How do officials address challenges with infusing multiculturalism in school environments?

16. How does your state deal with resistance to criticism to newly implemented multicultural policies and programs?
BASIC FIELD QUESTIONS

1. What equity plans are used by districts and educational leaders to boost minority achievement?

2. Are qualified teachers instructing minority students?

3. What instructional techniques do teachers used to improve achievement among low achievers during regular instructional time?

4. How does the state spend money already budgeted for professional development on activities that will assist in improving teacher practice and in raising student achievement?

5. Are minority students equally represented in gifted and talented programs?

6. To what extent have schools and districts been reconstituted/reconfigured (closing schools, replacing staff, reopening under new management) as a means of closing gaps in achievement and dealing with failing schools?

7. Identify program offerings for the development of knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of cultural groups.

8. How does the state a) provide staff development/technical assistance, b) set criteria, and c) cross-reference goals?

9. How successful have planning and assessment cycles been in a) developing and conducting needs assessments, b) implementing strategies related to student achievement, and c) preparing evaluative reports?

10. To what extent do state performance tests apply strategies and content that is multicultural/pluralistic in each subject area?

11. How do state staff members ensure that policies are followed?

12. Identify policies that have resulted from legislation/regulation under investigation.

13. How influential have councils been in coordinating efforts at the state and local levels to implement multicultural education programs and policies related to curriculum, instruction, student achievement, and staff development?

14. How does the state collect and analyze disaggregated data and link policies with student achievement and school improvement initiatives?

15. What types of information are compiled and distributed on exemplary student achievement programs?
20 QUESTIONS ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Directions: Answer each question below based on your knowledge and experience of state multicultural education initiatives.

Part 1: Policies & Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Which policies on multicultural education do you think are most effective within the state?</td>
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<td>2. What multicultural education programs have been recognized by your office as exceptional in meeting the goals of the state regulation?</td>
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<td>3. What would you identify is the primary goal of educational policy-making at the state department of education level?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What support services do you believe are most valuable in assisting educators with implementing multicultural policies and programs?</td>
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<td>5. How is funding (that is provided by the state) being used by local educators to infuse multicultural initiatives into schools?</td>
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Part 2: Organizational Structures & Pedagogical Practices

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<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>6. What steps do you take to ensure that guidelines developed by the state department of education on multicultural education are aligned with organizational structures (i.e.-placement of students, human and material relationships, operational functions, and financial allocations)?</td>
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<td>7. What steps do you take to measure the extent to which instructional practices (i.e.-student-teacher relationships, teaching</td>
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</table>
strategies and techniques) align with multicultural education?

8. In what major ways do you believe academic programs reflect the experiences of ethnic and linguistic minority students?

9. What are the most common ways in which you provide leadership and guidance to school districts that are in the process of developing multicultural education programs?

10. What assistance does the state offer to school staff and students in regards to appropriately responding to discrimination?

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### Part 3: Achievement

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<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>11. What do you believe are the most effective ways that state officials are working to raise achievement among high-risk ethnic and linguistic minority students?</td>
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<td>12. What would you identify as major educational issues that state regulations on multicultural education are intended to address?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. What policies (that have been written by state-level officials) do you believe are most effective at reducing gaps in achievement between minorities and non-minorities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. What programs (that have been developed by state-level officials) do you believe are most effective at reducing gaps in achievement between minorities and non-minorities?</td>
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<td>15. What types of training offered by the state do educators and administrators report to you as most effective at improving performance among underachieving groups of students?</td>
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<td>QUESTIONS</td>
<td>RESPONSES</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. What is your role in the evaluation of multicultural education programs throughout the state?</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. To what extent are you involved in the supervision of programs on multicultural education throughout the state?</td>
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<td>18. What common types of inquiries does your office receive most often from school district employees on the implementation of multicultural education regulations?</td>
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<td>19. What are the most effective ways that you believe the state goes about monitoring multicultural education programs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. What actions are taken to address deficiencies in the implementation of multicultural policies?</td>
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Summer, 2002

State Superintendent of Education
Atlantic/Southland Department of Education
1000 State Education Drive
Atlantic/Southland, USA 20003

Dear State Superintendent:

I am a doctoral candidate within the Department of Instructional and Curricular Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Under the professional leadership of my doctoral committee, I am in the process of collecting data relevant for my dissertation entitled, *A Comparative Study of State Educational Policies: Systemic Models of Equitable Reform*. This study examines the ways in which state regulations on multicultural education or educational equity legislation 1) lead to the development of policies and the implementation of programs and 2) influence organizational structures, pedagogical practices, and the achievement of high-risk ethnic and linguistic minority students. As you know, critical educational research serves as a means to benefit marginalized and underachieving groups by improving equity in public institutions. Atlantic/Southland is one of two states chosen due to progressive action taken by policy officials and state educational leaders to set goals that are specifically intended to close the achievement gap.

I have invited [participant] to assist with my research by allowing me to visit the [pre-selected] state educational office during the week of October 14/November 18, 2002 in order to learn more about the types of services provided to state and district educators. The results the study are intended to benefit the Atlantic/Southland Department of Education and policy-makers by providing insight on the ways in which state policies on equity/multicultural education 1) assist in raising performance among low performing students, 2) lead to the development of strategies and instruments that more effectively align organizational structures and pedagogical practices with the goals of equity and multicultural education, and 3) assist in improving the quality of services provided by high-risk ethnic and linguistic minority students. More specifically, the findings of my doctoral dissertation are intended to provide the divisions within the department with an outside perspective and additional insight on the efficacy of multicultural/equity policies and programs and can aid in future decision-making.

In accordance with standard research protocol, please be assured that [participant] will be given the opportunity to examine field notes for accuracy prior to the completion of my dissertation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours respectively,

Celeste Jackson
Doctoral Candidate, University of Nevada-Las Vegas
Atlantic Department of Education

Summer, 2002

Ms. Celeste A. Jackson
5686 Bracana Court
Las Vegas, Nevada 89141

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I am forwarding your request for the Atlantic State Department of Education to participate in your research to [participant], for his/her consideration. By copy of this letter, I am asking him/her to respond to your request. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Instruction
Ms. Jackson,

On behalf of the Superintendent, I am responding to your letter dated August 2, regarding the collection of equity data relevant to your dissertation. Your letter indicated that you had invited [participant] to assist in your research. Please consider this email and "official" response to your letter granting approval for you to work with [participant] in gather information.

Mary Southland
Executive Secretary Sr.
Office of the Superintendent
Southland Department of Education
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AND SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (SAMPLE LIST)

1. Reinforce the concept of the United States as a pluralistic society within a globally interdependent world while recognizing our common ground as a nation.

2. Present accurate information reflecting diverse perspectives, particularly when controversial issues are discussed.

3. Present subjective opinions as such.

4. Contribute to the development of a sense of personal worth and dignity.

5. Promote an appreciation of and pride, confidence, and trust in the democratic principles upon which our country is founded.

6. Provide information which will assist students in the making of intelligent judgments and discussions.

7. Accord unbiased treatment to all groups with regard to race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, language, socioeconomic status, age, and disabilities.
PROFILE OF AN EQUITABLE CLASSROOM (SAMPLE)

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Andover, MA

III. Language

Definition: The language and language style used in the classroom by the teacher, and what the teacher allows students to use.

Ideal:
1. The teacher uses inclusionary terms for people in all written and oral communication.
2. The teacher works with students to help them develop inclusionary language forms and styles and encourages all students to use those terms in their own communications.
3. The teacher discusses the negative impact of the use of derogatory terms in reference to race, gender, ethnic groups, or physical disabilities.

V. Behavior Management

Definition: The style, time, and methods used by the teacher to control students’ behavior in the class.

Ideal:
1. The teacher explicitly informs students in advance of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and consequences of their behavior.
2. The teacher reprimands all students equally, for infractions of classroom or school rules.
3. The teacher regularly praises all students equally for good behavior.
4. The teacher does not allow or condone students to harass each other.
1. Understand and accept that resistance is apart of the process of change. Try to identify what need this behavior is meeting for the participant.

2. Becoming familiar with the many forms of resistance and backlash, such as ignoring, minimizing, blaming, rationalizing, intellectualizing, diversion, and hostility. Clear identification of the behavior will help you to select the most appropriate response and intervention.

3. Encourage resistors to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Do not try to silence, judge, or label them, and do not allow other group members to do so. Remember that they have taken the risk to express things that others in the group may be thinking but dared not say.

4. Be aware of your own “hot buttons” and your own emotional responses to certain ideas and beliefs expressed by participants. Try not to “bite the bait” and get “hooked”. Boldly provocative statements may be used by participants as a way of claiming control. Don’t let them monopolize group conversation or derail you.
# CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CHECKLIST

How effective is your school in creating a culturally proficient environment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>We haven't thought about this?</th>
<th>We need to do this better?</th>
<th>We do this well?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Practices that prevent individuals from being treated unfairly because of race, ethnicity or gender are vigorously pursued at this school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The school has a system to monitor how different groups of students get along.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. This school has taken specific steps to ensure that educators of all ethnic/race/gender groups feel welcome to participate in developing procedures and planning events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The school has taken specific action to ensure that students with disabilities are asked to contribute to school activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Practices that prevent individuals from being taunted because of perceived sexual orientation are vigorously pursued at this school</td>
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