The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

PENN, PLAY, PANDEMIC, AND PATHWAY POLICY

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE STUDY EXAMINING:

COMPULSORY EDUCATION EQUITY AND ACCESS

A Dissertation in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

Mary Margaret Mahoney-Ferster

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2021
The dissertation of Mary Margaret Mahoney-Ferster was reviewed and approved by the following:

James E. Johnson  
Professor of Education, Early Childhood Education  
Dissertation Adviser  
Chair of Committee

Dana Stuchul  
Professor of Education, Curriculum, and Instruction

Edgar Yoder  
Professor Emeritus, Agricultural and Extension Education

Jamie Meyers  
Professor Emeritus of Education, Language & Literacy Education

Michael M. Patte  
Professor of Teaching and Learning, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania  
Special Member

Kimberly Powell  
Director of Graduate Studies  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education
ABSTRACT

Whether rich in culture, steep in history, governed by policy, or based on research and technology, around the globe there are pathways from home into the formal education system. In Pennsylvania children ages 6-21 have the right to a free public education. Along the way some families have access to equity-based programs, which by design help establish a pathway to equal educational opportunity. But what does that mean? Understanding the programming begins with understanding the policy. In an effort to clarify the ways representations of policy and practice impact meaning, this study explored the policy pathway systems of Pennsylvania. Employing Fairclough’s Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA) methodology, a corpus of policy expressions of equity and access were identified and categorized. A three-dimensional analysis process evaluated the policy discourse text, discursive practices, and social practices to establish: What is “it”? – The description. What did or does “it” do? – The explanation. And why does “what it does” matter to me? – The interpretation. What I found was a pathway containing hierarchical, decentralized, stratified, parallel policy which included equity-based programs. When provided and where available, the equity-based policy was designed to offer criteria eligible populations equal educational opportunity programming and resources which required attendance to maintain eligibility. Inevitably, all roads of this pathway led to the required mandatory participation for free, or for a fee, in an educational system at the optional, or non-optional, age of five or the compulsory age of six, through age eighteen, under legal penalty for noncompliance. Again, I ask, what does this mean? Hundreds of laws, thousands of rules and regulations, combined with a myriad of contextual factors, resulting in infinite interpretive possibilities, leading to…one wicked problem.
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Child Care Information Services (CCIS)
Child Care Works (CCW)
Early Intervention (EI)
Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)
Head Start (HS)
Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP)
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA)
Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)
Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)
Kindergarten (K)
Local Educational Agency (LEA)
National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER)
Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (PA)
Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PDHS)
Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (PA PKC)
Standards Training, Assistance, Resources and Support Level Four (STAR 4)
Standards Training, Assistance, Resources and Support (STARS)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families of 1997 (TANF)
Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA)
United States (US)
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to:

The resolute members of my dissertation committee for their unequivocal support through the everyday challenges of life and death, including but not limited to a global pandemic. Your kindness knows no bounds, your thoughtfulness knows no limits. Your knowledge is unrivaled. Your generosity is unparalleled. Your patience is unsurpassed. May your life be filled with every good thing - family, friends, faith, peace, health, happiness, and love.

The Members of The Pennsylvania House of Representatives and The Members of The Pennsylvania Senate and their staff 2015-2021, who provided ongoing assistance with access to the original policy documents in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Legislative Reference Bureau Library at the Pennsylvania Capital Building, Harrisburg Pennsylvania.

To my Friends, for being true.
To my Colleagues, for reassuring me.
To Toni, William, Dan, Bob, and Frank, for believing in me.
To The Graduate Department, for dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s.
To my Parents and Mahoney and Ferster extended families, for encouraging me.
To Wonder-twin, the Black lagoon, Live long n’ prosper, Sista-sista, Woodsy, & #1 - GYL
To Whip, the girl, the boy, and the other one, for inspiring me.
To God Almighty, for answering my prayers.
DEDICATION

This journey I dedicate to you Bailey Carolan, Brady Scott, Bronson Paul, & Bruce Scott,
~ my princess ~ my pumpkin ~ my bunny ~ and ~ my beloved ~ the blessings of my life~
No words express my gratitude for your unconditional inspiration, sacrifice, and love.
You are my greatest gift, you are my world, you are my sunshine, you are my joy.

Since a thousand yesterdays, until all my tomorrows, and in every sweet dream in-between
I love you, in all ways and always…. 
more than all the sand on the shore,
more than all the salt in the sea,
and more than all the stars in the sky.
Preamble

Throughout the context of my life, I constructed meaning in the pathways to compulsory education from multiple perspectives. As an early care and education provider, I educated and facilitated 30-45 families per year through the pathway decision making and participation process. As a program administrator, I engaged with local education agencies on matters of policy and implementation. As an advocate representative of underserved populations who were eligible, but had no access to criteria-based programs, I am familiar with the gatekeepers, decision makers, politicians, and policy makers.

As an educator, I work with current and future educators providing professional development related to family, school and community partnerships and transitions to school. As a community engagement coordinator, I worked with local, state, and federal leaders to advise, educate, and council them regarding budgets, programs, and advocacy initiatives. In each case I created a unique meaning. As a parent, the bias I developed over the course of my career played a significant role in our pathway decisions. As an informed advocate, I shared my knowledge.

Knowledge has power. Through all my experiences I never knew that which I learned during this study as a student. It was my belief that equitably designed and consistently implemented policy would provide families with access to equitable pathway choices which could meet their personal values, beliefs, and goals. Acknowledging this, the analysis, findings, and recommendations of this study are bias towards my interpretation of equity and access in policy language and implementation. As a researcher, I will confirm the authenticity of the data expressed and validate the findings of the analysis based on the multiple contextual perspectives identified over the course of the study.
CHAPTER 1

Statement of the Problem

“As equity applies to educational systems, it has not been achieved.” So states the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2021). The Commonwealth policy entitled children, between the ages of six and twenty-one, to a free public education. Furthermore, a beginner student successfully transitioned into the educational system by the compulsory attendance age of six in Pennsylvania (PA) (Pennsylvania General Assembly [PA GA], 2021). To meet that end the state, like many other states, offered eligible children equity-based preparatory programs. The system of programs formed a pathway. This pathway facilitated the success of the PA Educational Continuum (PDE, 2021).

If the policy guaranteed program access and the equitable distribution of resources, then equal opportunity to the pathways would have existed (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). However, there were not enough resources to support all pathways. In addition, policy messaging impacted pathway program implementation. Moreover, the lack of programming capacity and availability created barriers. Inevitably, eligible families were unable to access programs designed to promote equity or to participate in the programs of their choice (Office of Child Development and Early Learning [OCDEL], 2021). Accordingly, stakeholders perceived the pathway system as inequitable.

This was important for two reasons. First, equity in policy design and access through policy implementation were goals of the federal and state governments. The Commonwealth of PA required lawmakers who wrote and implemented policy to do so to the best of their ability without prejudice or bias using common sense language. Second,
recognizing the need for equity in policy and practice the PDE launched a call to action. This encouraged citizens to help identify equity and access concerns through a Pillars of Equity Framework (PDE, 2021). These two initiatives demonstrated the Commonwealth’s commitment to ensure policy provided educational equity and access to eligible families.

**Background, Context and Theoretical Framework**

The history of education is rich in progressive, inclusive, and equity-based policies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which began with William Penn’s Frame of 1683 (Penn, 1681, 1682, 1683, 1701). Over time, public education evolved and extended beyond the original goals. The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the PA Education Empowerment Act of 2000 exemplified reform enacted to establish equal educational opportunity (PA GA, 2021; United States Department of Education [US DOE], 2021). Advancements in legislation and educational research, theory, normative behaviors, and practice led to the establishment of an educational continuum. The state achieved this goal through the implementation of parallel federal and state policy and programmatic reforms. These policies impacted programming which began before birth and extended to include lifelong learning (PDE, 2021; Smith & Terry, 2013).

Recent Commonwealth programs included the network of early care and early education policy and programming into the framework. The PA GA, PDE, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PDHS) and OCDEL created, regulated, and managed parallel polices related to the pathway programming. As early as 1828 PA adopted reforms designed to provide equity and access into the formal education system. More recent educational and social welfare policy reforms provided all families with pathway options (PDE, 2021; Pennsylvania Department of Human Services [PDHS], 2021; PA GA, 2021).
These policies provided qualified families subsidized, nonsubsidized, conditional, and choice based pathways into the educational system (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021).

Pathway reforms provided the means for a portion of the families to transition smoothly between early childhood and formal education. However, not every family was eligible for or had access to each of the pathways (Arnaud, 2001). Programming implementation, local policies, availability, access, criteria, and funding varied by program and location (Morrill, 2001). In addition, the subsidized programming system infrastructure lacked the capacity to support every eligible family who qualified for subsidized transitional programs (PDHS, 2021). These issues demonstrated how families’ formed perceptions of equity.

These pathway policies and reforms were also the subject of legal action and legislative events. The legal action demonstrated ways perceptions and interpretations of the common-sense language in policy resulted in adverse ramifications (Gee, 1999). These events triggered political, judicial, social, economic, and academic consequences for individual stakeholders (PA GA, 2019). The ensuing impact upset the balance of equity within the pathways. The ripple effect had the potential to further disrupt existing programming (Cropanzano & Folger, 1989; Folger 2013). These events further highlighted how the underlying issues of the pathway system reached beyond eligibility and access.

Similarly, families created meaning of policy equity, based on the context of program implementation. Comparably, families measured meaning in context to physical and geographical equity and access to the pathways. The context of meaning involved questioning the intent and goals of the pathway programming system (Gee, 1999). For example, as a normative behavior families sent children to kindergarten (K) at age five. K
program implementation fell within the authority of the Local Education Authority (LEA). The LEA programs offered varied in time of day, length of service, start date, eligibility criteria and curriculum. However, although universally practiced statewide, the PA GA had yet to endorse K as a required program (PDE, 2021; PA GA, 2021). The overall combination of contextual factors influenced how individuals derived the meaning of equity and access to the pathway into education options (PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021; PA GA, 2021). This pathway conundrum created a uniquely complex Wicked Problem (Cooper et al., 2020; Daviter, 2019; Ordine et al., 2018; Smith & Terry, 2013).

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of Study

In 1998 the Pennsylvania Commission on Human Rights (PCHR) issued a statement supporting equal educational opportunities through policy equity. Assessment scores, grades, and graduation rates highlighted the disparities in educational attainment. The state decided to examine practices and policies for unintended and inherent bias and inequalities. Consequently, the lawmakers recognized equity as the process through which the distribution of necessary resources reached those most in need of the supports (Adams, 1961, 1963; Adams & Hoffman, 1960; Folger, 2013). The PCHR statement required that going forward, policy makers used every available strategy to provide equity in policy (Pennsylvania Government [PA GOV], 2021).

This initiative also required that reforms implemented prior to the statement be subject to the same rigor and expectations as those implemented after. Equitable policy design involved horizontal and vertical alignment of policies within and against the interrelated policies. Equitable practice implementation required preserving the policy intent during the policy execution. This process provided balance in programming and
outcomes (Folger, 2013). This initiative encouraged policymakers and the public to speak-up when they believed the policy making process failed to accomplish this goal. Later, in 2016 PA established a transparency in government initiative which included an open data policy and establishment of the OpenDataPA database. This policy provides open access to data collected through various agencies and organizations and encourages the use of data in responsible research (Open Data Pennsylvania [OpenDataPA], 2011; PA GOV, 2021).

Most recently, in 2021 the newly established PDE Equity and Inclusion Equitable Practices Hub encouraged using the Pillars of Equity criteria framework to examine and address equity within the implementation of educational policy. The website (https://www.education.pa.gov/) stated “It is in the active and intentional viewing of the systems in which we operate with a lens focused on equity that we connect the ideal to practice and establish lasting systemic change” (PDE, 2021).

Furthermore, in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2021) the PDE website (https://www.education.pa.gov/) defined equity as "every student having access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background, and/or family income (http://www.ccsso.)" (PDE, 2021).

Recognizing the need for equity in policy and practice PDE also launched a call to action on another website (https://www.education.pa.gov), “The job of any equitable educational system is not to demand the rising of a community to the standards of the system, but rather to self-examine, to identify what gaps exist in the provisions of that
institution that inhibit a community's rise” (PDE, 2021). Again, the Commonwealth encouraged constituents to help identify equity and access issues within the system.

Legislative events in conjunction with equity and access reforms between 2012 and 2021 directly impacted the pathway system. Stakeholders recognized that the common sense meaning of equity and access was not universal. Perceived inconsistencies in the policy messaging impacted the context of equity and access meaning. These events also affected the meaning of equity and access relating to social capital and social justice. This framework of meaning influenced how stakeholders interpreted the way policy created or limited equity and access to pathway programs (Gee, 1999; Stipek et al., 2017).

**Purpose and Research Questions**

Understanding *that* the pathway framework impacted participating families was important. Understanding *how* the interpretations of pathway equity and access impacted stakeholders was more important. It was essential to identify the foundations of the real and perceived equity and access inconsistencies associated with the systems implementation strategies and program policies. The impact of “equity and access meaning” was an issue worthy of the Commonwealth’s *equity call to action*.

The significance of stakeholder meaning relating to the policy messages demonstrated the need to 1) review the historical significance changes in society, law, technology, and governance had on equity and access within the policy; 2) explore the pathway system for policy evidence related to equity and access; and 3) examine the pathway system for evidence of equity and access impacts in program implementation which resulted from reform; (Suchman, 1967). As such, to ensure policy met the goal of equal educational opportunity, a systems evaluation was necessary. To begin the evaluation
process, I conducted a critical discourse analysis of the pathway system policy and policy implementation equity and access.

From a pragmatic view experience, values and power influence the construction of meaning. In addition, meaning is context specific and derived from wording, expressions, images, and messaging (Dewey, 1938b; Fairclough 1992). Mixed messages result in the misinterpretation and the miscommunications of meaning (Gee, 1999). Moreover, program implementors and programs participants are equally susceptible to misinterpret context specific meaning.

To better understand the strands, substrands, and context of the discourse I performed a review of research and literature. An in-depth assessment of the discourse strands provided an overview of the content and methodological trends. The assessment revealed that research studies of early care and early education continued to increase in number and theme. Moreover, the literature reviewed signified the study design shifted from qualitative to quantitative methodologies. The research also exposed emerging trends which focused on measuring the outcomes of policy targeted populations in support of programming positions (Bassok & Latham, 2017; Bassok et al., 2019; David et al., 2015; Eisenhower et al., 2016; Loewenberg, 2018; McDermott, Pears et al., 2017).

A review of the 2018 SAGE Early Childhood Policy Handbook provided 40 policy focused articles covering global issues. The new policy research reviewed revealed emerging trends in international research. These studies represented the standpoint of program implementation, perception of continuum policy, and program impact on participants. Additionally, a focus on implementation of resources and access emerged (David et al., 2015; Kaga, 2018; Lloyd, 2018; Moss, 2018; Nakajima et al., 2019). These
researchers identified the areas most needed in early childhood policy research as systems studies, evaluations, and reviews (Dalli et al., 2018; Kagan et al., 2018; Milotay, 2018).

As an aspect of the study, I examined AERA, SAGE and Rutledge handbooks, historical archives, legal documents, Science Direct, ERIC, PSU World CAT, peer reviewed journal articles, and recently published dissertations to identify text related to the meaning of policy regarding equity, access, and the pathways into formal education (Penn State University Libraries, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021). Although research of specific strands provided context into the phenomena, over the course of the review I could not identify research which specifically examined the impact. Accordingly, I concluded that published research that examined policy for the impact of meaning and interpretation was sparse.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the phenomena I defined as equity and access to the pathways into compulsory education by examining the system program policy “text” and to discover ways the “text” impacted the stakeholders’ ability to interpret and understand the meaning of the policy. To accomplish this, I posed the following questions.

RQ 1: In what ways are equity and access expressed in the text discourse of the pathway policy system?

RQ 2: In what ways do the visual expressions of the pathway system policy and practice discourse influence the meaning of equity and access?

RQ 3: In what ways do the expressions of policy implementation of the pathways system influence the meaning of equity and access?

Conceptual and Methodological Frame

This dissertation highlights the phenomenon I defined as equity and access to the pathways into compulsory education. The phenomenon is concept and context specific.
Experience influenced by barriers and limitations and leveraged as forms of control, power, and empowerment, shaped the meaning of the phase (Fairclough, 2015; Foucault, 2010).

Consequently, for this study I defined equity and access as the process applied to establish equal opportunities to individualized supports and services designed to address identified barriers. Furthermore, equity and access serve to mitigate knowledge barriers, miscommunications, and inconsistencies within the discourse text. The defined concepts and context provided a framework for this qualitative study (Gee, 1999).

The study sought to identify evidence of meaning within the policy implementation and reforms and to discover ensuing gaps in equity and access within the continuum. The pragmatic worldview provided the vehicle to explore distinct styles of data collection, analysis and the context of equity and access as a phenomenon (Biesta et al., 2003). A Critical Discourse Study (CDS) offered an opportunity to explore meaning using the naturally occurring data of policy text. These discourse data sets represented an often-overlooked actor in the research process (Gee, 1999; Van Dijk, 2009).

CDS researchers agreed that there was no one way to do a CDS analysis. Instead, they encouraged identifying the theory and process which most closely represented the goals including mixing elements from CDS frameworks (Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 2010; Gee, 1999; Van Dijk, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2010). This study implemented Critical Discourse systems study design with a convergence of analysis and findings. The study encompassed naturally occurring data from primary and secondary sources of text - policy: statutes, laws, codes, rules, regulations, bulletins, reports for analysis. I explored the research questions by applying the Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA) methodology of Norman Fairclough (1992).
This discourse analysis employed written and visual text including images, website, advertisements, reports, data bases, legal text, involving program pathway equity, access and meaning (PDE, 2021) to describe and interpret the social reality of the established corpus of data. This study next implemented magnitude and descriptive coding to categorize and narrow the corpus data by theme. The final data sets corresponded to each research question (Saldaña, 2016). Next, the study employed a three-dimensional data analysis process which may validate the study through the triangulated findings (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak & Meyer, 2010).

The identified expressions of equity and access were convergently examined for theoretical, practical, and future implications (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth 2018). The development of a pathway system Decision Tree designed for practical application addressed the Wicked Problem of pathway access. This Logic Model identified both the possible pathways as well as potential pathway barriers created by policy text (Daviter, 2019). Finally, I conceptualized ideas for future research designs using the expressions of data (Cooper et al., 2020).

The study also served to address the PA equity call to action. The examination of the pathway system revealed real and perceived issues of equity and access. The results identified policy implementation practices for further review. And the study generated data and new lines of inquiry designed to maintain and enhance the educational continuum (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021; PA GA 2021).

This discourse analysis was part of a larger ongoing qualitative policy system evaluation and analysis. The policy system study also incorporates the Theory of Equity, (Adams, 1961, 1963; Folger, 2013) Nudge Theory, (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) the PDE
Pillars of Equity (PDE, 2021) framework and CDS of the contextual aspects of meaning (Gee, 1999, pp. 41, 58, 92-94; Suchman, 1967). Inevitably, the pragmatic transdisciplinary worldview suggested the unique interpretations of the discourse studies produced the member standpoint and perspective of the population. Applying the system studies approach to the Critical Discourse framework resulted in new knowledge and inquiry aimed to impact future policy (Biesta et al., 2003; Dewey & Hinchey, 2018).

**Key Terms**

- **Access** – To acquire or gain – relating to equity - the removal of barriers to desired or criteria eligible programs and services so that someone can elect to participate.
- **Child Care** – The system of public, private, family, and faith-based programs.
- **Child Care Information Services (CCIS)** – PA Childcare Subsidy program funded jointly through the federal Child Care Works (CCW) initiative.
- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBC) (1990)** – Federal program regulating and allocating finding for subsidized childcare Under the Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Public Law 93-383, as amended; 42 U.S.C.-530.1 et seq.
- **Common sense**: “the ability to think and behave in a reasonable way and to make good decisions” (Merriam-Webster (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2021.
- **Common sense**: “A. n. I. Uses corresponding to sense n. I. 2. That which is reasonable or sensible; that which appeals to or is in accord with instinctive understanding or sound judgement; esp. (in earliest use) written or spoken discourse that is reasonable or sensible. Now usually as an extended use of sense A. 4b.”
“II. Uses corresponding to sense n. II. 4. †a. Natural intelligence possessed by a typical person; innate understanding; simple wisdom. Obsolete. In later use passing into sense A. 4b. b. Intelligence or sagacity in relation to practical matters arising in everyday life; the ability to make sound judgements and sensible decisions regarding such matters; pragmatism. Now the predominant sense. See also sense A. 2.”

“B. adj. (attributive). Reasonable, sensible; appealing to or in accordance with instinctive understanding or sound judgement. Usually hyphenated” (Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online, 2021) Retrieved July 15, 2021

- Compulsory Education – Pennsylvania policy governing children aged six through age eighteen (or completion of graduation requirements) regarding compulsory attendance and participation in authorized educational programming. First added to PA Statute in 1895. Attendance required from ages 8 – 17, amended to ages 6 – 18 in 2019.
- Early Care and Early Education (ECEE) – System of programs designed to care for and educate children prior to formal admission into school.
- Early Childhood (EC) – Developmentally defined as birth through eight years of age.
- Early Intervention (EI) – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 Part B provides a free appropriate public education for children in the natural or LRE from the third birthday until school entry.
- Early Learning Council (ELC) – Pennsylvania Governors’ advisory council. Volunteer representative, invested in ECE policy and practice, who serves by appointment.
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) – Part of the Great Society program “War on Poverty”, this Act allocated federal funding for primary and secondary education and the establishment of a national curriculum and provided a

- **Eligible/Eligibility** – Term used to designate period when a child or family meets criteria for participation in program, such as kindergarten. Eligibility in one program can result in ineligibility of another, such as Head Start.


- **Equity** – n. I. In general. 1. The quality of being equal or fair; fairness, impartiality; even-handed dealing. 2. concrete. What is fair and right; something that is fair and right. rarely in plural. II. In Jurisprudence. 3. The recourse to general principles of justice (the naturalis æquitas of Roman jurists) to correct or supplement the provisions of the law. equity of a statute: the construction of a statute according to its reason and spirit, to make it apply to cases for which it does not expressly provide. (Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online, 2021) Retrieved July 15, 2021.

- **Equity** – A process employed to help achieve equal educational opportunity goals.

• Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP) – Pennsylvania expansion of Head Start programming for criteria eligible families and children where available.

• The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA) Part B – requires public schools to provide a free appropriate public education for people with disabilities from third birthday until age 21 in the least restrictive environment (LRE) IDEA was previously known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

• Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) – International and national tools used to assess combinations of the social, emotional, and academic behaviors, skills, and knowledge of children prior to or during the first months of kindergarten.

• Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) – PA tool used to inventory combinations of the social, emotional, and academic behaviors, skills, and knowledge of children during first months of kindergarten where available.

• Kindergarten (K) – In PA, a social reform initially implemented through collaborations with charitable and faith-based organizations as preschool for 3–6-year-old children. Currently a full day (or a half day) statewide (where available) transitional program open to all residents of PA aged 5 (or 6) (but no older than 6 as required by the compulsory attendance laws) non-mandatory (unless enrolled prior to age 6, when attendance is then required, punishable crime for non-compliance) essential program.

• LEA K4 – Is a Local Educational Agency operated criteria-based pre-school program for children residing in the district who meet a district established criteria and who have been identified through a district established means of child find.

• Local Educational Agency (LEA) – In PA this includes (500) decentralized public school districts responsible for providing the free adequate public education guaranteed
every resident of the Commonwealth between the ages of 6 and 21. LEA are responsible to follow all US DOE, PA GA and PDE applicable policy.

  “In regular classrooms…with appropriate aids and supports…to the maximum extent with not disabled children…special, separate, or removal…may only occur when,” (2015, https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea; 2017 https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/)

- **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)** – Reauthorization of EASA increased measures of accountability and reporting of required standardized assessments.

- **National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER)** – Database of national and state specific statistics of early learning programs.

- **Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)** – Commonwealth of PA office managing and administering the available PDE and PDHS federal policies related to early care and education programs and services. Website includes state specific databases of available services for families of children birth through age 13.

- **The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (PA)** – established 1681 The Province of PA was a proprietary/feudal agreement between King Charles II and William Penn. The Holy Experiment of Pennsylvania was not a royal colony directly administered by the King. In 1787, Pennsylvania established statehood (Penn, 1681).

- **Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (PA PKC)** – A statutory statewide universal preschool for criteria eligible families, where available. Implementation of service delivery varies.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)** – Commonwealth of PA department governing PA policies related to education. Website includes state specific databases
of programs and policies for children birth through age 21 including PDE administered programs, yearly reports of population, enrollment, and attendance statistics

- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PDHS) – Commonwealth of PA department governing PA policies related to human services. Website includes state specific databases of programs from pre-birth through age 21.

- Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards – Infant, PreK, K, 1st, and 2nd grade Standards. Developed in alignment with and cross-walked to, the PDE educational standards. Part of the Standards Aligned System (SAS). The standards are an aspect of the framework and serve as the foundation of the early care and early education which also includes resources and materials, instruction, assessments, safe environments, and curriculum.


- Standards Training, Assistance, Resources and Support Level Four (STAR 4) – designated highest level of quality early care and early education programming.

- Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) – measurement system used in PA to determine the STARS level of Quality as related to early care and early education.


- Wicked Problem- A problem so complex in nature, as to not having a single solution. The contextual factors, objectives and goals of the early care and education pathway create a wicked problem as suggested by theorist Rittel and Webber in Dilemma’s in a General Theory of Planning (1973) and further explored in the work of Daviter (2019)
Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter one provided an overview of the study. This included the statement of the problem, background, context and theoretical framework, purpose of the study, research questions, rationale, relevance, significance, the methodology, key terms, and an overview of the dissertation.

Chapter two, Setting the Stage, covered three aspects of the study. First, the review covered the literature supporting the framework, and methodology. Next, the review covered relevant literature examining the discourse strands of equity, and access, including policy, and reform, program reporting, and program implementation. The chapter ends by framing the literature reviewed as an aspect of the discourse corpus data set.

Chapter three included a description of the research method and study design of the Critical Discourse Study and analysis procedure of the TODA methodology. The chapter also included the insider perspective and trustworthiness. Chapters four, five and six addressed the methodology steps to explore the research questions. This included the process of data identification, data collection, and the application of a three-dimensional data analysis of each data set.

Chapter seven included the synthesized study analysis, descriptive findings, as well as a section on the theoretical, practical, and future implications. Here, the wicked problem was addressed in the form of decision trees. The study ends with chapter eight, which offered a summation of each research question and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with the study strengths, limitations, and final thoughts.
CHAPTER 2

Setting the Stage

This chapter provides background literature relevant to my study of equity and access with respect to pathways of entry to formal education in Pennsylvania. Selected topics and subtopics cover aspects of issues and problems connected with the above. According to Gee (1999), literature reviews vary in format and purpose, reporting upon and reflecting the needs of the study. The purpose of this study was to determine how systems create, share, and communicate their meaning of equity and access through their policy text. In addition, the study examined the visual messaging and implementation texts for factors that influence meaning. The purpose of this literature review was to provide the reader context of the study through a review of the methodology selected. In addition, this review provides an overview of peer reviewed literature and research relevant to the research questions examined in this study.

The chapter contains four sections: 1) Worldview and Theoretical Framework 2) Pathway Policy and Reform, 3) Pathway Program Implementation Strategies and 4) Pathway Program Reporting Outcomes. The Worldview and Theoretical Framework section has content that examined the framework and methodology in context to the phenomena. The process included reviewing historical theory and methodology literature. In addition, the review examined the barriers and concerns impacting the study. The chapter provided readers with insight as to how the methodology supported the research questions. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary and ways in which literature sets the stage for review and analysis throughout the course of the study.
These next three sections focused on literature related to the research questions. In section two, Pathway Policy and Reform, the review explored the ways the federal and state goals of equity and access have positively and negatively impacted pathway programming. To that end, the review examined the system policy literature for direct and indirect messages of equity access. The section ended with educational equity research and new policy initiatives.

Next, Pathway Program Implementation captured the ways in which the phenomenon represented direct services and resources. The identified themes, standpoints, and trends within the field represented new ways of understanding how diverse stakeholder groups interpreted meaning. This process also established links between the study and the phenomenon. Strands covered in this section included transitions, readiness and entry age research related to programming. The literature reviewed focused on the various pathway programming related to the federal initiatives beginning with the parallel educational and social reforms initiated by the War on Poverty. It also includes the resulting federal Goals for 2000 “Ready for School” pathway policy initiatives and programming strands.

Finally, Pathway Program Reporting explored the ways programming researched and reported success and failure in the form of outcomes, measured policy success, as well as the ways research demonstrated how policy programming achieved equity and access. Strands included age of entry, curriculum and instruction, Kindergarten Entry Inventories (KEI), and Assessments (KEA), and transitions to school programming. Here, the review reflected upon stakeholder perspectives of the societal, social, emotional, academic, and long-term impacts on the age children transition into school. The chapter ends with a brief summary focusing on the future.
**Worldview and Theoretical Framework**

This study was part of a larger systems program evaluation and review. The evaluation was comprised of a variety of interrelated studies using diverse methodologies to review and evaluate the pathway system (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987; Suchman, 1967; Sutton & Levinson, 2001). The pragmatic worldview provided a way of seeing, experiencing, and understanding the system. It also reflected my quest to solve problems by doing what works (Biesta et al., 2003; Dewey, 1938a). Approaching learning through play I learned by doing. John Dewey's *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938b) provided the means to play with logic when solving problems. This framework also provided an opportunity to play with thoughts, ideas, and concepts and to continuously wonder... Why?

This sense of wonder helped identify a methodology and method that best fit the research goals for this study. Establishing the format required exploring both qualitative and quantitative designs which facilitated exploring interpretation, understanding, and meaning of expressions and messages. Qualitative case studies and narrative design naturally lent itself to perspective taking and interpretation. And so, I examined the theory, methodology, and practice of the approaches as well as examples of anthologies of exemplary work from the field (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Foucault, 2010; McEwan & Egan, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1988; Slavin, 2008). Perhaps not, previous research indicated people commonly interchanged the definition of equity and equality. Moreover, contextual factors instilled personalized meaning of program policy for individual stakeholders (Dewey & Hinchey, 2018; Gee, 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2010). Finally, the amount of fairness related to both equality and equity required values. While context defined the absolute value of - equal as “the same,”
context defines the other as “the means to achieve the value of equal” or “fair” (Fairclough, 1992, 2015; Gee, 1999). The measuring and defining equity and access of pathway policy in a non-bias fashion, however required another methodology.

Quantitatively, the causal and statistical models explained by Blalock (1985) and Urdan (2010) provided a variety of ways to represent equity and access values through proportions of distribution. But distribution alone did not capture the essence of meaning. This led to examining the works of John Stacy Adams and an exploration of Equity Theory (Adams, 1961, 1963; Cropanzano & Folger, 1989; Folger, 2013; Morrill, 2001). To my surprise, this led me back to logic. Adams’ theory provided an opportunity to see the concept of equity in a simple equation. Equity occurred when the input and output of “a” was equal to the input and output of “b,” \( \frac{I_a}{O_a} = \frac{I_b}{O_b} \). A perceived imbalance in the scales resulted in inequity. This equation demonstrated that to define the phenomena required more than words. Faced with this conundrum, I sought to find a method that would provide a means to examine a social phenomenon through words and images.

In A Practical Interactive Framework for Qualitative Data Analysis Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) examined and reflected upon the importance of the reflective process. This process involved the give and take of the inquiring mind to establish and create meaning. With that in mind, the methods focus shifted towards Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), also known as a Critical Discourse Study (CDS) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Methods in Pragmatics edited by Zucker et al., from ProQuest eBook Central (2018) provided a source to explore discourse analysis studies extensively. From the mezzo to the macro to the micro researchers currently focused on this framework provided expertise as to the paths to consider. The one thing CDS researchers had in common was the belief that
there is no one way to do a CDS (Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 2010; Gee, 1999; Mac Naughton, 2004; Van Dijk, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2010).

Qualitatively a CDS provided a means to examine and explore the expressed message text for meaning. The frameworks of Fairclough, Foucault, Gee, Van Dijk, and Wodak & Meyer most closely resembled the mindset and goals for the overall study (Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 2010; Gee, 1999; Van Dijk, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2010). However, the work of Fairclough, (1992) embodied the desire to not just “say” what meaning means, but “show” what meaning looked like. In this methodology the analysis included the text of the language expressed, as well as the contextual images.

TODA combined the interaction and the context to define, interpret and explain meaning. The process involved 1) selecting and coding the data, 2) analyzing the discourse practice data for factors of interdiscursivity, manifest intertextuality and intertextual chains, 3) analyzing the text data for factors of coherence, conditions of discourse practice, word meaning, the wording and metaphors, 4) cross referencing the analysis against the social practice context and explaining the results through - the social matrix of discourse, - the order of the discourse, and - the ideological and political effects of the discourse (Fairclough pp. 225-240, 1992). This approach captured the essence of the study. And in essence, the method provided the means to create a type of autoethnography, a personal narrative which critically examines the phenomena using the insight and understanding of life experience through action research (Polkinghorne, 1998).

Nevertheless, researchers also provided areas of caution and concern in educational research, (Merriam, 1998; Stronach & MacLure, 1997) and specifically implementing analysis as a methodology (Christians, 2014; Saldaña, 2014, 2018). In rigor, transparency,
evidence, and representation of discourse analysis: challenges and recommendations, authors Greckhamer and Cilesiz (2014) examined the highly interpretive nature of discourse analysis and pondered if CDA successfully covered the five key qualities defining qualitative research. Later, in Qualitative comparative analysis in education research: Its current status and future potential Cilesiz and Greckhamer (2020) further examined challenges to the research methodology and provided practical applications for ethical research. In addition, Educational Research Undone, an inspired tattered book, with photos and stories, examples, and catchy subtitles titles provided supportive examples of breaking barriers in qualitative validation (Stronach & MacLure, 1997). These works provided supportive practices for analytical frameworks.

Still, the twelve cases examined in Ethical Issues in Practitioner Research, edited by Jane Zeni provided cautionary tales of bias for field experienced researchers. The volume covered potential ethical concerns of voice, role, sharing of data, living with consequences, abuse of authority, ownership of thought, gatekeeper violations, relationships, points of view, marginalization, collaborations, responsibility, and accountability (2001). Each matter discussed represented equally legitimate concerns.

Ethics and politics in qualitative research, by Clifford Christians also cautioned qualitative researchers that

"When rooted in a positivist worldview, explanations of social life are considered incompatible with the renderings offered by the participants themselves. In problematics, lingual form and content, research production presumes greater mastery and clearer illumination than the non-experts who are the targeted beneficiaries" (Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. Chapter 6, p. 157, 2005).
In other words, qualitative results projected as fact or truth reflected the researcher bias and imposed influence on population sets. Still, Christians stated that his “historical overview of theory and practice points to the need for an entirely new model of research ethics in which human action and conceptions of the good are interactive.” (p. 158, 2005).

However, it is the researcher reflected interpretations, possibility of meaning and understanding which constitutes the critical discourse analysis triangulation of data (Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 2010; Gee, 1999). The data collected and findings reported, consciously reflected an ongoing evaluation of stakeholder perspectives and context from a variety of viewpoints. To that end, this CDA reflected the goals regarding ethical practice, as defined by the methodology and recommended for practice.

**Pathway Policy and Reform**

The history of the pathway into education in Pennsylvania extends from before the time of William Penn. Religious organizations instructed the reading and teaching of scripture. Family and cultural traditions were handed down generationally through community practice. And the wealthy secured private education for their children home and abroad. The inclusion of erecting schools in Penn's Frame formally introduced a pathway into school with physical structures (Penn, 1681, 1683). Had his vision materialized within each community would exist a visible expectation of public education. While statute included these measures the unembraced philosophies remained unrealized.

A century later, the pathway to school strengthened within the community with the implementation of infant schools. In 1828, a social welfare reform provided children with care while families worked (PA GA, 1828; PA GA, 2021). Fifty years later, the inclusion of Froebel’s kindergarten represents another initiative intended to provide social justice. In
1895 the program as adopted into law, officially became an aspect of education (PA GA, 1895). Since then, the program has evolved to become an important element of the educational continuum (Allen, 1988; Johnson & Patte, 2018; Mooney, 2013; Wolfe, 2013).

Between 1895 and 1960, little changed along the pathway. However, the social rights and justice movements of the 1950’s and 1960’s initiated phenomena reform. These included programs which required criteria determination. In addition to K expansion, Head Start (HS), Child Care Works subsidies and Early Intervention (EI) were among the earliest and longest lasting (PDHS, 2021). The contradiction of moving from social welfare to education was best demonstrated in the ways policy has impacted the kindergarten curriculum. These polices prompted the shift of Kindergarten from a welfare pathway to an academic pathway (Booth & Crouter, 2008; Fuller et al., 2007; Halpern, 2013; Hemelt & Rosen, 2016; Johnson & Patte, 2018; Kirp, 2007; Le et al., 2019).

The Coleman Report and A Nation at Risk, (1983) defined categories of context impacting academic outcomes. From this, the context-based label “at risk” emerged. These contexts served as the catalyst for both political equity reform for pathway policy and programming. Since then, global researchers identified the subtle differences of context used to create equity-based programming.

Researchers in India explored contextual, ideological, and social changes in pathway policies (Kaul & Sharma, 2018). Research detected similar shifts in attitude in the United States (Jones, 2018). However, determining who has access to equity and where are aspects of the hidden curriculum in education which includes a range of context (Agran, 2014; Gottfried & Le, 2016; Ivie, 2019; Jones, 2018).
As a consequence of policy reform, the current standard policy practice addresses risk context through equity-based initiatives. Under these constructs, within the social, educational, and political systems, equity, and access to the equity-based programming, has become a discourse within the implementation of the pathways (Loewenberg, 2018; Miller et al., 2019). Initiating a program however did not mean it reached the targeted population. When populations migrate, access to resources migrates as well. Moreover, social capital determines the geographic allocation of funds. and access to the available resources (Pijanowski, 2019; Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Stipek et al., 2017).

Over time Researchers delved into a shared concern of politicizing educational reform. The Curriculum (Beyer & Apple, 1998) explored the deeper discussions on the discourse. Ohanian What happened to Recess and Why are our children Struggling in Kindergarten? (2002), examined the practical implementations of curriculum. And Stefkovich The Best Interests of the Student (2010) and Hustedt et al., While kindergarten has changed, some beliefs stay the same: Kindergarten teachers' beliefs about readiness (2018) reviewed the cost of legal actions. Researchers also captured the perspectives of families, teachers, administrators throughout the pathway transition process (Hotz & Wiswall, 2019; McIntyre et al., 2007).

The 2013 introduction to the Peabody Journal of Education, Contesting Equity in the 25th Century concisely expressed shifts in the political system regarding the ideology and social movement which directly impact the pathway programming (McDermott, Frankenberg, et al., 2013). The authors examined the shifting meaning of equity in education over time. Some factors which undermined policy included race, demographics, funding, the migration to suburbia, lack of choice, assessments, and social constructs. To
this end, policy implemented with restrictions of demographics or location limited family participation. Transversely, this also helped to explain how participation qualifying criteria may have deterred participants from participating (McDermott, Frankenberg, et al., 2013)

And to that end, policy makers and stakeholders also continue to contest the parallel policy pathway reforms related to children’s rights. On one hand, laws which define a person by age provide protection and support. On the other, laws which define a person by age limit or restrict their rights and privileges. Moreover, some further argue that children have no individual rights, but are protected and under the direct care and supervision of a family or guardian. These protections and privileges are vastly different from rights.

Višnjić-Jevtić et al. (2021) echoed this concept in *Young children in the world and their rights: Thirty years with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child* a recent UN article exploring the rights of children in the United States. The author further suggests these ideas have been argued since the late nineteenth century. A concept explored, examined, and questioned by early learning researchers and field experts in terms of equity from various contextual points of view (Beatty, 1995; Fuller et al., 2007; Halpern, 2013; Hemelt & Rosen, 2016; Johnson & Patte, 2018; Kirp, 2007; Paciorek, 2007; Roopnarine et al., 2018; Rose, 2010; Woodrow & Press, 2018)

Smith (2018) further explored children's right to play. The idea of play as a right was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 as part of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). The concept was equally important to pathway policy in PA. It was further accepted in child development supported by the work of Vygotsky, (Connery et al., 2018), the methods of Reggio Emilia, and the developmentally appropriate practices
recommended by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (Cohen & Waite-Stupiansky, 2011; Johnson & Patte, 2018; Mooney, 2013; Wood & Attfield 2005).

Social context plays a distinct role in how each country explores these issues and in how they assign meaning to these policies. Angst for some Americans falls under the context that the United States has not ratified the United Nations Rights of The Child (Smith, 2018; Wagner, 2021). However, the complicated, decentralized political systems of both the United States and PA, provide resources, programs, and guardianship to protect children. Moreover, PA includes “Approaches to Learning Through Play” as the cornerstone framework of the Early Learning Standards (ELS) (PA GA, 2021; PDE, 2021).

**Pathway Program Implementation: Strategies and Issues Impacting Equity**

Regarding equity implementation, the future holds challenges for policy makers and consumers. The pathway policy no longer consists of schools for the poor “gratis,” infant schools, and kindergartens run by the church and charitable organizations (PA GA, 1802, 1828, 1895, 2021). Policy from design to implementation requires contexts. Milotay (2018) stressed the importance of evidence-based decision making while Chapman and Ainscow (2019) used research to promote equity within the system.

Still funding continues to retain the most key role within the policy making process. More importantly most early care and education funding programs are market based continuous monitoring of the market rates ensures fairness. This reflected the United Kingdom system as well as the US (Moss, 2018). Likewise, a comparable situation exists in implementation where the programs serve as “Band-Aids” versus “a means to an end” a topic of continued debate here and abroad (Doran et al., 2019; Lloyd, 2018).
Policy practice implementation represents equity in the pathway into school in a variety of ways. First, in policy we see the pathway address the needs of the educational system. Policy is tied to the schooling of early childhood. The success of early childhood is tied to the success of the public school system as reflected by past and current researchers (Bassok et al., 2019; Fuller et al., 2007; Halpern, 2013; Kirp, 2007; Maniates, 2016).

Next, the ongoing readiness initiatives instituted in the goals of 2000 implemented transitions to school and readiness policies as means to address failing test scores (Brown, 2018). Transition practices cover a vast array of programming polies and initiatives. Internationally, research and literature provide multiple perspectives of transitional practices to examine (Cook & Coley, 2017; Eisenhower et al., 2016; Nakajima, et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Tough offered practical strategies in *How children Succeed* (2012) while Kostelnik and Grady proposed *Getting it Right from the start* (2009) to Principals as guidelines for successful pathway transitioning.

Language represented another avenue of implementation dominated by assimilation the pathway into education. Stakeholders on the pathway and policy makers do not always communicate clearly. The “language of early care and early education and early childhood were vastly different from the language of school, formal education, if not in words in philosophy. The idea that all stakeholders understood the words to have the same meaning, resulted in policy miscommunication. This impacted the intent of early childhood and the pathway programming language (Peeters & Peleman, 2018).

Consequently, currently early childhood policy research represents the numeric outcomes requested by policy makers, which might not reflect the language of program goals (Cooper et al., 2020; Milotay, 2018). Reflected in both research and implementation,
this assimilation of terminology manifested into barriers of interpretation which result in wicked problems. Wicked problems are so complex, there is no one answer or solution. These obstacles redefining the pathway into the academic educational system represent a wicked systems problem (Daviter, 2019).


On the other hand, researchers found EduCare to be the model of early childhood pathway services. This example demonstrates the power of family, school and community partnerships relating to program pathways. In this case, the model combines early learning pathway, school age and policy making partnerships in a way that preserves the integrity and philosophy of the pathway while collaborating with the community. Furthermore, this model provides families with pathway programs and services they needed and promotes equity and access to the pathway programs throughout the process. Others echoed these foundational strategies (Galinsky, 2010; Horm et al., 2018; Roopnarine et al., 2018).
Next, social collateral impacted the equity of the implementation of pathway programming. When consumers decided the implementation strategies of an educational policy, then underrepresented groups receive less equity. Implementing positive strategies which leverage policy towards equity takes skill. First, it requires knowledge of the policy. Next it requires understanding the impact of the policy reach. Finally, consumers need accurate geographic information, distribution of resources, funding, and demographics, for all policy and legislative initiatives to influence the vote (Farley, 2019).

Another successful pathway implementation strategy involved community information services. This required communities’ and organizations to generate integrated information systems. A 211 is an example on a large scale. When implemented, these systems provided access to the network of the equity-based services and practices to the potentially eligible families. The existing systems illustrated that when provided access, families generated new knowledge, shared information, generated questions, and accessed additional assistance to make informed decisions (Fischer et al., 2019).

When systems provided two-way communication, both stakeholders learned from each other. Families with access to community information services further shared information, communicated with other families, and learned about the pathway system and services. Moreover, they provided the system with information regarding what worked well. Although not everyone understood the common-sense language of the system when in place, community information systems provided a means of interpreting the common-sense language and thereby achieving a deeper level of understanding (Fischer et al., 2019).

Accepting constituent assistance with policy alignment is another implementation strategy securing equity and access in education. While the intent includes a foundation of
equity, policy makers recognize they cannot always achieve their goals. PDE reflected this strategy in the equity call to action (PDE, 2021). Recognizing, acknowledging, and addressing misalignment between policy design, instruction and support is an important aspect of equity in policy implementation. Identifying the misalignments of the pathway policies entrenched within parallel policies of human services and education is even more important to mitigate misinterpretations (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2020; Little, 2017).

Finally, pathway implementation strategies included a paradigm shift towards the meaning of “equity” in education which directly speaks to the meaning of the pathway leading into the K12 system. Researchers from South Africa addressed the origins of meaning of equity as an initiative of universal importance. In defining the meaning of equity, the researchers included a variety of contextual factors. Their research included 1) the AIM of equity, 2) a measurement of the meaning of equity, 3) recognition of equity enjoyment 4) proposal of a definitive meaning of equity for policy. This approach served to provide a model for policy development. The model did not rely upon “common-sense,” rather it considered the context of meaning in policy language design (Beckman, 2017).

**Pathway Program Reporting Outcomes**

To meet the identified needs of society the pathway has evolved to include targeted or equity transitional programming. Program assessments determine effectiveness, justify funding, determine eligibility and continuation of services. Stakeholder groups measure, report, and research these target transitional pathway programs in a variety of ways around the globe. Based on the results of the research and assessments, program participation resulted in increased educational opportunity (Lloyd, 2018).
The Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) are pathway assessment programs policy which resulted from an initiative implemented during the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era of accountability. By design, the assessment determines the level of the skills of children who have participated in pathway programming. However, nationally, LEAs implemented the program in a decentralized fashion. Through the lens of the CDA theorists, this practice commodifies the pathway and the children. Thereby placing a value on the pathway and pressure on practitioners and families to produce results. A concept echoed by early childhood experts (Booth & Crouter, 2008; Fairclough, 2015; Fuller et al., 2007; Hemelt & Rosen, 2016; Kirp, 2007)

In Pennsylvania, the decentralized public school system and inconsistent funding resulted in mixed results of the KEI initiative. Individual programs indicated a portion of the information was useful for targeted instruction. However, the state did not support funding for the program in each of the 500 public schools, nor did it provide training or ongoing support for the sending pathway programs. Without full statewide support, the inventory did not meet its intended goal. Moreover, researchers duplicated these findings in studies across the nation (Burchinal et al., 2020; Cook & Coley, 2017; Little et al., 2020; OCDEL, 2021; Ohle & Harvey, 2019; PDE, 2021; Weisenfeld et al., 2020).

TANF provides another targeted program along the pathway. This program initiated during the War on Poverty continued to provide a valuable service in the form of a financial subsidy. Like the infant school of 1828, the pathway program provided the means to secure care for children while family members worked or learned a trade. Currently, TANF and CCIS are implemented jointly in PA. The pathway, however, failed
to meet the context of current working families. In PA, recent reform addressed context. One reform provided flexibility for sick children. Another context addressed family choice in K sending age (PDHS, 2021). However, many aspects clash with other contextual factors, and so updates to the policy could expand equity (Haskins & Weidinger, 2019).

In 1965, Head Start (HS) replaced K as the preeminent social reform preschool pathway program. This reform intended to provide pathway families with an equity initiative. Research produced mixed program results over the years, enough to impact the funding allocations from the federal government. HS never reached 100% of the eligible population in PA. Consequently, tools cannot measure the overall success of the program. Tools only measure the context of individual participants. Sixty percent or more of all eligible children in PA have no access to HS (OCDEL, 2021; PDHS, 2021). Without offering 100% access, the reported outcomes lack the ability to demonstrate the programs full potential (HS.US, 2021). Whereas the PA universal pre-k program initiated in 2008 received increased policy implementation, programming, and funding support directly attributed to research provided to the PA GA (PA GA, 2021; PDE, 2021; OCDEL, 2021).

Moreover, researchers demonstrated that children do benefit when programs implement transitional equity-based pathways for Head Start students and families as an aspect ESSA (Cook & Coley, 2017; 2019; Moss, 2018; Rose 2010). Whereas other researchers found the universal Pre-K schoolified approach to preschool did not result in the anticipated levels of academic attainment for the targeted SES group of students (Sierens et al., 2020). However, without context, individual participant needs, and levels remain unclear.
Other pathway programs emerging from the Goals of 2000 federal policy continued to reform in implementation and in perception (Briggs, 2018). The latest reiteration, ESSA included more robust family engagement legislation for school districts. Researchers indicated mixed results regarding family participation. Families with the highest levels of social collateral consistently used it to their advantage. Others worked to identify strategies to reach the same level of equity in the system (Little, 2017). Perspectives of this policy become instrumental to pathway reform.

Policymakers recognize the importance of the family empowerment practices regarding entry age policy. Around the globe family practices reflect an understanding and interpretation of policy. Families decide entry age based on child development, social and emotional development, and behavior characteristics (Dhuey et al., 2019). Families also make decisions based on school curricular choice and daily schedules (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). In unique cases, families decided birth dates based on school policy (Ordine et al., 2018). Finally, families made career, housing, and life choice based on entry age policies (Doran et al., 2019; Mallinson et al., 2019; Page, et al., 2019; Zhu & Bradbury, 2015).

Research indicated when “cohort age inconsistency” adversely impacted classroom instruction, family participation impacted policy. Cohorts in Australia consist of children which span three years children of eligibility by policy. Children as young as four and as old as six could attend. Families with knowledge and means planned entry dates. Whereas families without could not make informed decisions. According to administrators, this resulted in instructional issues for teachers and administrators. It also caused policy makers to consider reform, as PA recently did (Hanley et al., 2017; Kuhfeld et al., 2020).
The implementation of policy continued to impact how researchers share outcomes. For example, research established the notion of a preschool to prison pipeline. This research indicated the implementation programs and policies along the pathway into school linked to future prison participation outcomes. Fittingly, researchers continued finding new ways to report outcomes related to the concept. A recent *Journal of Urban Economics* reported a direct link between the juvenile crime rate and school entry age (Depew & Eren, 2016) and an article published by the University of Maryland suggest a link between early school entry, high teen pregnancy rates and dropouts (Caudillo, 2019). Reports also focused on positive impacts. Researchers reported on academic achievement, social emotional skills, behavior, and literacy related to age of entry policy (Bassok & Latham, 2017; Bassok et al., 2019; Datar & Gottfried, 2015; Fletcher & Kim, 2016). Ultimately, when research reflected policy in a positive light, support increased and vice versa.

Access to equitably based instructional strategies on the pathway best exemplified policy equity in implementation. When children had access to equity-based programming, it directly impacted their learning, skills, and development. However, in decentralized systems like PA, pathway access to the resources and best practices can becomes cost prohibitive (Egalite et al., 2020; Gottfried & Le, 2016; Guba et al., 2016).

Embedding play into policy is no easy task here in PA. Educators and policy makers have tried. Early learning standards provide the means to implement a form of equity-based instructional policy. However parallel policy reform retains its stronghold over the system (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS 2021). In intentional teaching as a pathway to equity in early childhood education: Participation, quality, and equity suggest combining the philosophies of play-based instruction and assessment in New Zealand (McLaughlin et al., 2021).
researchers provided both outcomes and strategies implementing play and creating access to equity in the pathway policy (Baron et al., 2016; Cohen & Waite-Stupiansky, 2011; Connery et al., 2018; DeLuca et al., 2020; Roskos & Christie 2007).

In summary, current implementation of policy research focused on reforms with a strong emphasis on measurable outcomes. The call for evidence-based and outcome driven criteria included in grant funding opportunities such as NCLB, Race to the Top, and the Early Learning Challenge attributed to the shift towards quantitative methodologies. The research and literature centered on qualitative pathway implementation programming and policies were primarily found in handbooks, books, and textbooks. The research available provided policy makers and implementors with information used to inform decisions such as distribution of funds and the benefits of the policy and perspectives of those who have experienced the programming (Barnett et al., 2018).

**Moving Forward**

Exploring the history of equity and access within pathway policy played a vital role while reviewing the literature. The review reflected upon the research reporting perspectives involving the social, emotional, academic, and long-term impacts transition into school policy implementation. Examining systemwide readiness activity levels and lenses, for goals, intent, and impact of practice, generated another way of knowing. The age of entry strand further examined social, normative, and outlier practices related to attendance. Throughout this review, these sections also explored emerging international research related to the long-term impacts of the pathway policies (Smith & Terry, 2013).

The pathway into school highlighted the implementation and reporting of parallel reform policies in education. K represented the pathway program most significantly
impacted throughout the pathway reform process. Kindergarten is no longer a collaboration of community programming, no longer a practice of social welfare, and no longer social transitioning. K pathway policy reform represented a complete transformation in purpose and philosophy (Booth & Crouter, 2008; Fuller et al., 2007; Kirp, 2007; Le et al., 2019; Roopnarine et al., 2018).

The pathway policy program implementation and outcome reporting examined part of a larger system. The review included a myriad of vertically and horizontally aligned polices connected to the system. Each program represented a form of equity or a means of access. For the study, the programs selected represented direct contact programming with coverage to the greatest number of families. All information was made available to the public on the OpenDataPA portal, as well as associated dashboards and databases related to equity focused programming (Milotay, 2018; OCDEL, 2012; OpenDataPA, 2021; PDE, 2012; PDHS 2021; PA GA, 2021).

Finally, what the research did not examine was how the interpretation of policy impacted program implementations, or the impact of policy implementation on individual families. As indicated in previously reviewed research, the terms equity and equality are commonly misinterpreted. To determine if reforms and policies were addressing equity, it was imperative to examine the discourse for meaning, unintended bias, contextual, cultural, and social disparities (Cooper et al., 2020; Kagan et al., 2018; Peeters & Peleman, 2018).

To set the stage for the study I further explored the strands and substrands using “key term” searches for trends in peer reviewed research. The sorted and categorized collective body of literature proved important not only in identifying relevant research but also to create the corpus of the study and analysis of the research questions. These resources
are reflected in Appendix A of the Corpus Data. Identified strands associated with the topic were used to gain context and to determine relevant selections for the review.

The review of literature, research, and the discourse text provided the context and a foundation for the corpus of the study. The meaning of policy, perceptions of the meaning of policy, and the impact of interpreting policy could not be found among the literature review researched. However, the identified lack of literature confirmed my belief in the need to examine the phenomena. With new reform impacting the meaning of the pathway, the findings and outcomes could provide stakeholders new insight into how interpretations and perceptions of the meaning of the pathway system are formed.
CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

Research Design

This study employed a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) qualitative research approach to explore the ways in which assigned and interpreted meaning influenced opportunities, access, knowledge, and equity within policy/policies determining school entry. The study utilized naturally occurring data/information following the TODA methodology (Fairclough, 1992). This study of systems policy examined meaning in equity and access to the pathways into compulsory education as a phenomenon.

In the spirit of Dewey’s *Experience and Education* (1938a), this study reflected a pragmatic worldview of intertwined and interdependent experience and meaning of society in the context of the historical moment in time and a point of view where knowledge and meaning had power within the context of experience. The study also reflected Dewey’s concept of *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*; over the course of the study emerging questions guided and shaped the methodology and analysis (1938b) and helped tackle existing questions or suggest new lines of inquiry.

This theoretical framework provided the vehicle to explore distinct styles of data collection and analysis as well as the context of equity, access, and pathways into compulsory education as a phenomenon. Applying the Theory of Inquiry premise of "what works" (Dewey, 1938b) was not a license to mix theories and methods without cause. Rather, this worldview required justification for the selection and implementation of theory and methodology both used and not used (Gee, 1999; Biesta et al., 2003; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). A systematic evaluation of qualitative and quantitative research
designs resulted in the identification of CDA. Within the CDA family the TODA methodology proved the best fit for this study (Fairclough, 1992; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In this CDA study, I examined the written, numeric, and representative policy text discourse for meanings of equity and access in the program pathways into compulsory education. The primary targets of inquiry included the policy makers, the program implementors, and the families of the student population attending public school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Other targets of inquiry included each policy representing a criteria eligible population identified through the course of the historical policy review. Finally, the main targets of inquiry of the study included the future families of children required to participate in Pennsylvania’s compulsory education system. My study used policy discourse of text, photos, reports, websites, legal documents, and visually expressed population data to examine the phenomena and answer the research questions.

**Targets of Inquiry and Source Selection**

The study utilized official program population reports from the PDE, PDHS, and OCDEL to determine the distributive equity of program implementation. These reports represented public documents available on the OpenDataPA unrestricted access dashboard. In addition, the study applied an examination of the OCDEL Reach and Risk Report and the NIEER Annual National and State Program Reports to compare meaning of representative populations in reporting. The Department of Education confirmed that PDE, PDHS and OCDEL data accessed via the state portal required no additional permission when used for educational purposes (C. Miller, Research and Evaluation Manage, Office of Data Quality, Office of Administration, PDE, personal communication, email, June 23,
K. Garver, one of the coauthors of the *State of Preschool 2020: State Preschool Yearbook* confirmed in a phone communication that National Institute for Early Education Research data used for educational purposes required no additional permission (K. Garver, NIEER, personal communication, phone call, June 9, 2021) (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021).

The study also included examined and photographed original Pennsylvania Statute, Code, and Bulletin documents from the Pennsylvania Capital Senate Library, Legislative Reference Library. Elected members of the PA General Assembly (2017-2021) from the Senate and the House of Representatives and their staffs facilitated the process. Members provided access to explore, read, photocopy, and photograph the official archival documents for use in this dissertation. The data collected from the corresponding PA GA and PDE official state websites and historical archives established the foundation of the corpus. Samples of statute notes, public comment responses, program documents, official letters, and policy information from the official federal and state departments supplied additional corpus context. Finally, the District Attorney of Snyder County directed access to relevant legal documents used in the triangulation of data which provided personal perspectives of policy interpretation (M. Piecuch, Snyder County, D.A. personal communication email, March 31, 2014, February 4, 2016; text July 26, 2021).

**Establishing Trustworthiness Validity**

The TODA qualitative methodology may validate through triangulation of the results. The critical discourse study covered a range of topics and had a variety of applications (Fairclough, 1992; Foucault, 2010; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Wodak & Meyer, 2010). Although firsthand experiences positively contributed to the corpus of information, it also potentially impacted the bias of the study. To address this, the study
utilized naturally derived data to establish neutrality. The pragmatic framework of this CDA methodology provided a meaningful way to naturally observe and gather data (Dewey, 1938a, 1938b).

As a means to demonstrate validity, the triangulation of data through the methodology provided an opportunity to analyze the naturally derived data for evidence of the phenomena. In this study, the TODA first helped to create the data sets examined. Data identification included multiple sources of the same visual and written data expressions. The analysis process examined the visual and written data sets individually and then cross referenced the findings. This included examining data expressions for text practices, text distribution and production practices, and text consumption through social practices.

These three-dimensional analyses provided the means to triangulate the findings, as well as avenues to address the research questions. The coded data created categories by level of policy influence, participation, or implementation, represented targets of inquiry interpretations, perceptions and meaning. The visually derived population data identified clusters and geographic regions of disparities. These visual representations created useful tools for future makers and implementers of policy.

The resulting contextualized stakeholder perspectives of equity, access, power, control, and decision making identified through the process established ways the data impacted interpretation. The triangulation process also represented the difficulties in establishing validity. These included the number of examples required to verify results, the time involved to identify expressions of data and the impact of data change throughout the process of the study. Moreover, the process also identified ways the results could be interpreted as invalid.
Reliability

In 2016, the Commonwealth of PA instituted an Open Data Policy which mirrored federal policies and websites providing open unrestricted access on (https://data.pa.gov/) to all state records (OpenDataPA, 2021). According to the PA Office of Open Records website a record can include but is not limited to information in the form of a book, letter, map, report, chart graph, table, document, film, image, electronic communication*, sound, recorded via electronic, photographs, photocopies, audio, computer, and or video, recording. Section Act 703* of the Right to Know Act, January 8, 2021, includes records not covered by Right to Know (PA Gov Open Records, 2021).

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania data used in the study came from three primary sources. The first included data records on file accessed at the Legislative Library at the PA State Capital in Harrisburg. Research occurred through several in person visits. Visits were scheduled with the assistance of legislative offices and under the supervision of the attending legislative librarian Aug 2017, Sept 2018, July 2019, June 2021.

The second source included open data record on file electronically accessed through the PA General Assembly website January 2015 – September 2021. The third source included data records on file accessed through the interactive OpenDataPA websites which also included PA GOV websites of PDE, PDHS, and OCDEL between December 2016 – September 2021. The final corpus data were re-accessed and verified May 2021 – September 2021 The OpenDataPA initiative 2016 press release goals stated:

“Open data refers to data in a format that can be understood by a computer and used freely by anyone, free of any constraints. Here are some key principles incorporated into the development of OpenDataPA. Availability and Access: the data must be available as a whole in a convenient and modifiable form. Reuse and
Redistribution: the data must be provided under terms that permit reuse and redistribution including the intermixing with other datasets. Universal Participation: everyone must be able to use, reuse and redistribute the data — free of restrictions” (OpenDataPA, 2021).

The targets of inquiry population data used in the study came from the Commonwealth unrestricted access public dashboard accessed through the PDE official website. An administrator from PDE Office of Data Quality also confirmed data used in research did not require additional permissions (C. Miller, Office of Data Quality, Office of Administration, PDE, personal communication email, June 23, 2021). PDE also provided a thorough synopsis of the rigor, reliability, validity and integrity of the data and the data collection system used to generate the annual population.

Other collected reports available on the public access dashboard include the PDHS monthly program population reports and the OCDEL Reach and Risk population Reports. In addition, NIEER confirmed through personal communication that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania supplied the population data sets used annually in the NIEER The State of Preschool 2020: State Preschool Yearbook. The annual early care and education program national reports were retrieved from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) website (https://nieer.org) and from the PA Key at (https://www.pakeys.org/) (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021; OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

The population data sets selected examined the funding and capacity implementation of existing policy for evidence of meaning of the phenomena. The results illustrated equity meaning from various standpoints including program implementation, capacity, distribution, geographic representation as well as the ratios of possibility and probability of access to pathway programs. Additionally, an examination of expansion
trends associated with changes in capacity and allocations helped assess the needs of the eligible program populations. Next, an examination and analysis of the “Report” text identified themes of equality, equity, access, power, and control. Finally, findings from the synthesized visual and written representation analysis suggested theoretical, social, and practical implications and themes for future research.

At the onset, this policy study focused on the misalignment of rhetoric between program policies which impacted the interpretation of equity and access. During the study, the rhetoric of population reports and databases led to new lines of inquiry. The study incorporated additional data to address the ways representations of text impacted and formed interpretations. The additional representational and visual text addressed questions related to geographic distribution as well as the influence of graphic representations interpreting meaning. This examination revealed ways a visual or statistical representation of policy implementation shaped the interpretation of distributive equity.

Data Collection and Management

This TODA Study followed the principles of data collection established by Yin (2009). For this study all corpus documents, artifacts, images, and expression represented data. The corpus data generated throughout the study included examples from each program or policy referenced. Data collecting included examples of text from multiple sources including local, state, and federal offices and official websites. The study included original documents, photographed with permission. Documentation included screen shots of information electronically accessed from official websites and public access dashboards including URL access and retrieval dates. The collection and maintenance of electronic PDF of corpus research and journals used in the study followed the established guidelines.
of JStore, AERA, SAGA, and Science Direct. Verification of document content included cross referencing each to two or more official sources. Finally, I maintained a hard copy of the collected data artifacts, in case of electronic failure.

Part of the data collection process also included examining, cross referencing, and collecting policy enacted between 1681 and 2021 for equity and access expressed throughout history. Not all policy information enacted between 1681 and 2021 was available in electronic format. I examined the laws, codes, and regulations. An in-person examination of archived documents provided historical evidence of the intent of the phenomena. Official federal and state pathway program websites provided additional support. Collection and maintenance of these data included creating a digital and hard copy backup of photographs, photocopies, screenshots, downloads, and scans.

Finally, public data access was generated by the Commonwealth of PA 2016 Open Data policy found at (https://data.pa.gov/). The public reports on the PDE dashboard found at (https://www.education.pa.gov/) combined with the data and reports found at (https://www.pa.gov/guides/open-government/#DataandReports) contained expressions of policy equity and access in multiple formats. This included maps, letters, images, reports and supporting information on the geographic distribution of resources, population served, underserved, eligible, and ineligible. In addition, the documents contained information regarding the policy intent, enactment, amendments, initiatives, reform, implementation.

Microsoft Excel and Word offered the means to collect, analyze and create visual representations of the population data from the data sources. This included creating basic descriptive statistics of the visual texts regarding percent served, not served, capacity, and
allocations. The images painted pictures of distributive equity. Patterns and trends found in the data established areas and context of potential impacts and consequences.

The collected and maintained corpus presented in chapters four, five, six, seven, and eight explored the phenomena. Reports obtained through PDE, PDHS, OCDEL and NIEER supplied an avenue to analyze the population as related to eligibility, access, and capacity of interrelated program regulations, practices, and policies. The coded data informed the generation of a timeline of relevant federal, and Commonwealth policy reforms. The historical policy review provided examples of context of equity and access, levels of power, and inclusiveness. The process utilized the corpus of policies and reforms collected in the review in the three-dimensional analyses. The collected corpus offered a means to understand the goals, purpose, and design of the themes of equity and access in pathway program policy. In summary, the collected and maintained corpus provided the data used to triangulate the study results (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021; PA GA, 2021).

Personal verification of the data at the PA Capital complex presented challenges between March 2020 and June 2021. COVID-19 interrupted the collection process by limiting access to state building. Once reopened, the document verification was competed.

Data Analysis Procedure

The TODA Study analysis process included inductive and emic methods of In Vivo Descriptive and Magnitude coding designs. Open coding used during the initial organizational states helped narrow the corpus. Next, the axial coding conducted helped to identify interconnecting and linking themes and categories. Finally, selective coding employed throughout the process created the story of the discourse (Saldaña, 2016). In addition to the analysis of the corpus data in chapters five and six the synthesized analysis
findings in chapter 7: 1) responded to and surmised research questions; 2) examined new inquiry regarding policies and implementation practices which impeded equity and access to pathways; and 3) provided examples of equity in opportunity of policies and programming used to create decision trees of possible and probable pathways.

The TODA applied a four-step process of data collection, study, and analysis. In chapter four the first step involved designing the research question. Question design contained an in-depth exploration of cues, context, and factors that influenced the phenomena meaning. The second step involved the process of data collected and selected for analysis. Data collected included a discourse corpus in the form of federal and state legal policies, codes, bulletins, program standards, grant applications, and associated outcome reports. Supplementary artifacts collected included text which supported both the research questions and the phenomenon. Throughout this process coding and categorizing the corpus helped expand and narrow the data needed to respond to the questions (Saldaña, 2014, 2016). Next, steps three and four utilized the corpus data selected as most relevant to analyze the research questions (OpenDataPA, 2021).

The third step involved a comprehensive three-dimensional content analysis. In this study, both chapters five and six contained Step 3 of the method, incorporating unique analysis to the research questions. The numeric representation of the visual expressions guided the analysis of research question two throughout chapter five. Likewise, chapter six explored research question three through an analysis of the written corpus. This step of the analysis included examining corpus related documents collected in person and through official websites. The corpus included parallel policy of stands related to attendance age, kindergarten, and pathway programs, as well as research questions related court transcripts.
The analysis process of TODA included describing, interpreting, and explaining 1) the social conditions of the text, 2) the process of producing the text, 3) the processing of interpreting the text and 4) the social consumption or conditions of interpreting the text. For part one, a discursive practice analysis, Fairclough (1992) suggested the examination of the conditions of discourse, intertextuality, manifest intertextuality, and interdiscursivity. For part two, an analysis of the text, he recommended reviewing the text for coherence, interactional control, politeness, grammar, word meaning, wording, metaphors, theme, and ethos. Fairclough (1992) also identified three tendencies in text which influence meaning, democratization, commodification and technologization, as noted throughout the analysis. The third part of the analysis consisted of cross referencing identified themes to the social practice. This step examined implications of the analyzed data against the social matrix, order, and ideological and political effects of the discourse.

The last step of the TODA analysis began by reporting the descriptive findings of the synthesized results from chapters five and six. These descriptive findings and results provide the means to further discuss the research questions and study theoretical, practical, and future implications in chapters seven. Themes of context identified throughout the process of the study further facilitated this process. Similarly, the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted equity of and access to the pathways into education. Policy reform of system execution and resource distribution throughout the crisis included supporting remote delivery, inclusive technology and methods, and hybrid instructional models (PDE, 2021; OCDEL, 2021). While implemented as short term responses to emergency situations, the short-term access impacted stakeholder’s interpretation of equity. As a result, this study examined ways the pandemic served as a catalyst to address access and equity.
The study concludes in chapter eight with limitations, considerations for future studies, and final thoughts. The Discourse Analysis Study did not seek to prove answers to the research questions. Instead, this study addressed the research questions by providing interpretations and perspectives based on the social context of the stakeholders. These findings neither solved problems nor represented interpretations as facts. Rather, the findings created new phenomena insights and lines of inquiry related to equity and access.

**Position of The Researcher**

The ontological beliefs regarding the realities of social constructivism, the transformative mindset, the position of the researcher, and the struggle for control and power formed for me the critical frameworks and pragmatic view of “being” within this study. The epistemological pragmatic belief regarding knowledge and meaning, provided tools reflected in the deductive and inductive evidence. This also reflected the transformative view in two ways. First this view reflected the co-created findings with multiple ways of knowing. Next, the view reflected the critical framework where reality was “known” through the study of social structures, freedom, oppression, power, and control. Moreover, this view acknowledged the value of all collected and analyzed research. This study recognized the limitations of research regarding how it can impact, influence, and change meaning.

The axiological role of values in this pragmatic study focused on the respect and the knowledge of both the identified populations and the role of the researcher as an insider. Here, the post-positivism belief to control biases expressed in the study was counterproductive. The concept of equity is value based; bias was inevitable. Furthermore, the social constructivist concept of honoring and negotiating, and the critical theory
emphasizing the standpoint of various participants and populations was of equal value to the study. By using a pragmatic lens, the study reflected the viewing and valuing of truth as knowledge.

Finally, my bias as an insider played a role in the theme, questions selected, content of the analysis, and recommendations. Early care and education and working with underserved populations was the foundation of my 35-year career. It was an honor to advocate for the underserved populations who were eligible for the criteria-based programs discussed in this study. During my time in the field aspects of my position included providing continuing education for early care and education providers, creating transitions to school initiatives, and nudging families, programs, and providers towards the pre-planned initiatives. It was through the efforts of career and advocacy which initially highlighted potential horizontal and vertical policy misalignments within the programs servicing children and families prior to the onset of a compulsory education.

On the other hand, our interpretation of equity and access as parents guided the decision-making process. We developed an understanding about the possible pathway available and the context of our geographic location. We examined school district policies to determine which provided the services in line with the family values. The knowledge acquired led to pathway decisions designed to meet the family goals. These decisions included moving, switching careers, and selecting a faith based vs. public school education.

These decisions involved a myriad of contexts and options all taken into consideration to avoid conflicts with policy. We agreed the rigor of the current kindergarten curriculum and environment was not a good fit for our children at age five. Instead, we chose to send our children to school at the compulsory age versus the age of eligibility. We
also opted to participate in faith based vs. public school education. These efforts extended their early learning experience and promoted an education that was based on our principles. Inevitably, engaging in risk-taking activities resulted in access to the desired value-based outcomes. While the risk of this venture offered no guarantees they paid off for our family.

However, knowledge of my past career, advocacy, and family experiences could have influenced participants in this study. This story could have manipulated their meaning of equity and access adversely. It could have also impacted a participants’ ratio of equity to inequity (Adams, 1961, 1963). Hence, I decided that using naturally occurring discourse data in this research limited my own bias and mitigated potentially unintended bias towards the participants. The objective was to do no harm as a researcher. Thus, my research decisions as an insider reflected the desire to be a non-biased, participant observer, of the information presented.
CHAPTER 4
Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis

“As equity applies to educational systems, it has not been achieved.” So stated the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE, 2021). Members of the criteria eligible population who wanted to participate in pathway programming faced barriers. These obstacles included a resource shortfall and limited availability. Program capacity created a participation challenge for families to partake in the programs of their choice. In Addition, children did not have access to the curriculum and technology which promoted equity. Moreover, the messaging of rules and policy impacted system implementation (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021). And so, stakeholders perceived the equity and access of the pathway system as inequitable.

Step One: Research Question Introduction

The first step of the TODA identified the research problem and questions to explore. Chapters one, two, and three of this study provided the framework and context of the research goal. The statement of problem indicated the guiding principles of federal and state government, required equity, in policy design and implementation. The policy design guidance warranted an equal educational opportunity for all eligible children. This design process guaranteed reaching the goal of equal educational opportunity.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the phenomena through policy “text” and to discover ways in which “text” impacted the stakeholders’ interpretation and understanding of the meaning of the policy. To accomplish this, the study posed these questions.
RQ 1: In what ways is the equity and access phenomenon expressed throughout the historical text discourse of the pathway policy system?

RQ 2: In what ways do the visual expressions of the pathway system policy and practice discourse influence the meaning of equity and access?

RQ 3: In what ways do the expressions of policy implementation of the pathways system influence the meaning of equity and access?

The methodology process selected for this study, also employed the identification of messaging tendencies which impacted the interpretation. Here, Fairclough (1992) described democratization as influencing the control of the message through personal bias of idealism, power, privilege, ideology, genderism, and sexism. Commodification he described as turning something, someone, or a process into a good or service of monetary, social, or political value such as expounding “Success in school, equals success in life.” And technologization, is described as turning a word into a technology. Words turned into a skill included examples like turning council into counseling, teach into teaching, and practice into practitioner (1992).

When applied within the discourse text these devices influenced the meaning, perception, and beliefs of the intended recipient. He further defined intended recipients by three levels, personal, institutional, and societal. Based on context, an individual falls into multiple levels of intended recipient. Therefore, the meaning shifts. In other words, as a member of the country, as an employee or member of a church, or as a family member, the perception or interpretation of context impacted the meaning of policy. These tendencies and recipients’ levels informed the data collection and analysis process of the study.
Step Two: Descriptive Findings

Implementing step two of the TODA methodology included the data collection, corpus creation, corpus support, coding, corpus reduction, and selection of examples used in the subsequent steps. This process provided a means to identify expressions of equity and access in the pathway policy system. Education and rights included in PA policy began with the Frame of 1683. To understand the scope of the text, 338 years of PA policy documents were reviewed for evidence of equity, access, a pathway, and compulsory education. This included examining the interrelated parallel educational and social welfare policy and reform. The identified historical policy became the foundation of the corpus.

Cross-walked for amendments, repeals, and reiterations, the history of the identified state pathway policy established timelines of policy reform related to equity and access to pathway programs. According to implementation protocol, federal rights and policy funding criteria superseded state policy. To that, an examination of federal policy beginning with the Declaration of Independence illustrated corresponding programs, laws, and regulations associated with the state policy. Next, the related pathway programs and initiatives required further exploration.

The assessment of associated policy and history resulted in the identification of established links which denoted inclusion in the corpus. Finally, the process necessitated exploring the identified reporting system databases of research, outcomes, and statistics used in creating, assessing, monitoring, and funding the pathway system. This corpus represented only the cross-walked and verified expression of equity and access identified in the study. Appendix A, B, C, D.
The corpus data of identified interrelated policies formed two policy reform timelines. The first timeline included reforms enacted between 1681-1949. The second included policy instituted between 1949-2021. To my chagrin, the identified policy continuously changed throughout the course of the study. This resulted in ongoing document confirmation, accomplished by periodically crosschecking the official electronic versions of the US Gov, PA GA, PDE, and PDHS websites, with the Unofficial Purdon's PA Statutes from Westlaw, and the original policy documents at the PA capital building.

The corpus verification process also included photographing the original documents, taken with permission. As exemplified in Figure 1, the original enactment year law books contained handwritten memos reflecting the history of ensuing statutes reform.

**Figure 1.**

*Image of Original Compulsory Attendance Law 1895*

*Note Image source OpenDataPa Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Statutes 1895. Note Hand stamped and hand written memos indicate each reform from the time of the original enactment.*

Whereas collecting screenshots of the electronically accessed resources, as illustrated in Figure 2, demonstrated the currentness of the policy as well as ongoing documents changes.
Figure 2.

*Image Example Screenshot Data Collected*

Note Source OpenDataPA PA General Assembly weblink to Westlaw database.  
Note Title 24 P.S. Education. Enforcing Attendance. Definitions.  
Note Effective December 30, 2019. Compulsory attendance expanded age range. Change from eight (8) to six (6) and from seventeen (17) to eighteen (18) years of age.

Coding the corpus in a variety of ways provided a source of focus as well as new lines of inquiry. The corpus coping reflected associated trends in tendencies and practices related to interpretation and meaning. The coding process occurred throughout the corpus collection process. This facilitated the identification of discourse strands and important aspects of the system for future study. As shown in Figure 3, hand written coded expressions were generated, as new themes and new inquiry emerged. Whereas Table 1 illustrates the refined coding process identified through the analysis. This table includes both positive and negative elements of the expressions impacting the perceptions of meaning of equity and access.
Figure 3.

*Image Example Descriptive Coding Process Theme and Category*

### Table 1.

**Positive and Negative Expressions of Equity and Access**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inequality</th>
<th>Segregation</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Equal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Choice</td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of</td>
<td>Excluded by</td>
<td>Limited by</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Not Considered</td>
<td>In Eligible</td>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Desirability</td>
<td>Desirability</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Label</td>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Unlabeled</td>
</tr>
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<td>Goal</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Reachable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>SES</td>
<td>SES</td>
<td>SES</td>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Policy</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misaligned</td>
<td>Alignment &amp;</td>
<td>Alignment &amp;</td>
<td>Alignment &amp;</td>
<td>Alignment &amp;</td>
<td>Aligned &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Funds</td>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plus, all</td>
<td>Plus, list of</td>
<td>Plus, list of</td>
<td>Plus, List of</td>
<td>Plus, list of</td>
<td>All Barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>previous lists</td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Equal Op.</td>
<td>Removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inequity</td>
<td>Less Equitable</td>
<td>Less Equitable</td>
<td>Force</td>
<td>More Equity</td>
<td>Equity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes - Based on Scale of Equity – Access is a barrier to balance the scale
Access is determined by both (Availability & Capacity) and (Desire & Motivation)
After coding, classifying, and sorting the corpus, the reduced timeline included only policy related to the pathway phenomenon. This streamlined corpus represented policy reform type, enactment, amendment, and repeal.

Next, the methodology recommended expanding the corpus to include related strands in the process. The study accomplished this through a review of associated federal, state, organizational, programmatic, and reporting data. The expanded corpus represented expressions of equity and access in words, illustrations, numbers, statistics, transcribed transcripts, qualitative and qualitative research, and personal accounts. Categorizing, organizing, and coding the expression identified in the strands using descriptive and magnitude methods reflected themes and trends of equity and access to pathway programs such as the factors impacting access as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2.

Magnitude Coding for Contextual Factors Impacting Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segregation Choice Excluded by</th>
<th>Discrimination Choice Limited by</th>
<th>Pathway Equity Initiative</th>
<th>Access Choice Conditional</th>
<th>Inclusion Choice Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EI Program Location</td>
<td>EI Program Location</td>
<td>EI</td>
<td>EI Program Location</td>
<td>EI Location available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCIS Above Criteria</td>
<td>CCIS on Waitlist</td>
<td>CCIS</td>
<td>CCIS Limited Service available</td>
<td>CCIS Service available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR none offered</td>
<td>Only portion reserved for SES no spaces</td>
<td>STARS</td>
<td>STARS Limited level available</td>
<td>STARS Level available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR 4 none offered</td>
<td>Only portion reserved for SES no spaces</td>
<td>STAR 4</td>
<td>STAR 4 Limited spaces available</td>
<td>STAR 4 Level available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS/HSSA above criteria</td>
<td>HS/HSSA not offered</td>
<td>HS/HSSA</td>
<td>HS/HSSA not selected</td>
<td>HS/HSSA limited space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA PKC above criteria</td>
<td>PA PKC not offered</td>
<td>PA PKC</td>
<td>PA PKC not selected</td>
<td>PA PKC limited space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA 4 above criteria</td>
<td>LEA 4 not offered</td>
<td>LEA K 4</td>
<td>LEA K 4 not selected</td>
<td>LEA 4 limited space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K ½ not offered</td>
<td>K ½ not offered</td>
<td>K ½</td>
<td>K ½ Not or Only Available</td>
<td>K ½ Not or Only Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K FT not offered</td>
<td>K FT not offered</td>
<td>K FT</td>
<td>K FT Not or Only Available</td>
<td>K FT Not or Only Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private no means</td>
<td>Private no access</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Private no space</td>
<td>Private requires means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Equitable</td>
<td>Less Equity</td>
<td>Force</td>
<td>More Equity</td>
<td>More Equitable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note Coding scale of equity, based on perceptions of inclusion to access.
Next, with the refined policy programs selected, the corpus turned to identifying visually expressed examples of equity and access through program reports of statistical and population data. This process involved reviewing spreadsheets, tables, figures, and reports with charts, graphs, and tables for reports of population served, population eligible, funding allocations, demographics, and geographic distribution or availability (Morrill, 2001).

The corpus review also included examining and exploring the PDHS interactive geographic reporting system. This report included current programming, population participation, program capacity, and geographic trends in the program implementation. Each map illustrated a state wide criteria of a population served based on the specific percentage by county. The map could be manipulated to provide data of each population under different context variables.

Gradated color shading was used to represent the available data. In order to determine the distribution values required examining each county by the available context criteria. This data was available on the OpenDataPA, PDE, PDHS, and organizational open-source databases (OpenDataPA, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

Figure 4 represents two of over 600 images representing the available data. Upon first glance, the similarities in color presented information of similar value. However, upon inspection of each county, the numeric range represented a significant difference in population served. In the example, the range of the same color gradation represented approximately 4% served in one county and represented over 24% served in another county. The visual examination of each county by criteria presented a homogeneous distribution. Whereas a comparison of the numeric representation of each county represented a perceived inequitable distribution (OpenDataPA, 2021; PDHS, 2021).
Figure 4.

Images County Star Distribution Example 1 and 2

Note Source OpenDataPA Department of Human Services public access interactive website screenshots – 2 of 670 collected.
Finally, the corpus included a collection of direct quotes in the form of photographs and webpage screenshots. The text of these samples were transcribed as illustrated in Figure 5. The transcribed text were used to cross reference the various sources for accuracy. Afterwards, text relevant to policy equity and access were included in the analysis.

**Figure 5.**

*Transcription of Quoted Comments Gov. Hastings 1895*

| An Act No. 53 Laws of Pennsylvania 1895  |
| Compulsory education attendance ages 8-13  |
| Pages 72 through 75, quote pages 74 and 75  |

Notes on side: 248; 249; 250; 251

Repealing act repealed 1911 – P. L. 457
Repealed by Act 1949 P. L. 30
Amended 1897 P. L. 252
Amended 1897 P. L. 253

“Approved - the 16th day of May, A. D. 1895. By giving my approval to this measure, there will appear upon our statute books for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth a compulsory educational law. The general assembly in the sessions of 1891 and 1893 passed a compulsory education act somewhat similar to the present measure period, each of which met with executive disapproval. There appears to be throughout the Commonwealth a general desire for such a law. I have not received a single protest from any citizen against this bill so far as I recall. The unanimity with which it was passed by the legislature as well as the large number of request made upon me to sign it, clearly indicates the general desire on the part of the people for a compulsory education law. Under these conditions, I am convinced that I should not obtrude any individual judgment which I may have on this question of public policy. This measure provides for compulsory education in perhaps the least objectionable form to those who oppose it on principle, and offends as little against the personal rights of the citizen as possible. I, therefore, approve the bill, but, if by experience the expectations of the people are not realized, future legislation doubtless will meet their demands.”

Daniel H. Hastings

*Note Source of information, OpenDataPA Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Statutes 1895.*

Organizational websites provided detailed descriptions of the data collection and maintenance methodology used in their research. PDE validated the reporting processes used by the state in a similar fashion. Furthermore, PDE provided an avenue to access additional data for future research. Personal communication with C. Miller, June 23, 2021, PDE and K. Garver June 9, 2021, NIEER confirmed permission to use the information for

When possible, the corpus included the electronic link to the quoted documents. This collection contained examples of direct quotes from policy, supporting policy letters, and public comment question and answers. Figure 6 illustrates documentation used to verify wording which included photographed or photocopied original source material. In addition, the corpus contained source material of relevant legal proceeding. The District Attorney who participated in the case provided access and verified the use of the material for research (M. Piecuch, personal communication February 6, 2014; June 23, 2021).

**Figure 6**

*Images of Comments Gov. Hastings 1995*

---

*Note Image Source OpenDataPA Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Statutes 1895. Note Quote Written by Daniel Hastings, the 21st Governor of PA. 1895 pp. 74-75.*
TODA Descriptive Findings of the Pathway Corpus

The pathway system defined for this study included the programs of public school, childcare, kindergarten, HS, HSSA, EI, LEA K4, and PA PKC. In addition, the study included Keystone STARS, CCIS, TANF, the Early Learning Standards, and COVID-19 Pandemic programming polices. The programs addressed three aspects of pathway policy equity. First, the programs provided direct instruction or care. Next the programs provided subsidies to participate in instruction or care. Finally, the programs provided curriculum and instruction promoting equity in instruction and care. The data collection process culminated with the formation of a historical policy synopsis used later in the analysis.

- Public education is the oldest of the systems in the pathway first included in 1683. The Poor Gratis School Act of 1801 laid the foundation for the Common School Act of 1834. The Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, an Act of March 10, 1949, P.L. 30, No. 14 CI 24, established the framework for the current system. This Act consolidated the enacted educational statutes and established a code of rules and regulations to govern the system consistently. The programs administered by the PDE included a system of public, private, charter, cyber, faith-based, organizational, and home-schooling options for education and mandated options for special education. Those administered by PDHS included a system of subsidized and regulated, public, private, faith-based, and organizational options for early care and early education and mandated options for preschool special education. The existing policy includes “the right to” a free public-school education, for children between the ages of six and 21 years, with a compulsory attendance requirement between the ages of 6 and 18 or until graduation requirements have been met, which is punishable for non-compliance.
• Childcare is the second oldest pathway program, first noted in statute in 1828 as “Infant school”. Since then, the pathway has expanded to encompass a network of private, faith-based, and public program. PDHS regulates programs for health and safety. PDE regulates the educational programming.

• Kindergarten (K) – Based on the work of Frederick Froebel, kindergarten consisted of a part time program which focused on skills linked to learning. Initially introduced as a school preparation program, kindergarten provided children with equity upon school entry. Faith-based and charity organizations first implemented PA programs. PA statute first added the program in 1895. Amended, repealed, and reintroduced by 1901, policy included programming for eligible residents ages three through six, where offered by LEA. The Public-School Act of 1949 included kindergarten as an option but not as a graduation requirement. LEA implementation of programming varied across the Commonwealth from full to one half day. PA residents eligible to participate include children who turn five by September 1, or by age and start date based on LEA policy.

• TANF Temporary Assistance for Needy Families of 1997 (TANF) replaced and succeeded the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Act of 1962. This program included subsidized childcare. Eligibility criteria included financial need and required confirmation of training or work verification. Administered through CCBDG.

• HS - Head Start (HS) initiated federally in 1965 as part of the Great Society War on Poverty included an eight-week program. In 1968 the government launched a year-round program across the Commonwealth. The Head Start Act of 1981 provided comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition and parent involvement services to low-income criteria eligible children and families. Eligibility criteria
included those at 100% of the poverty level. Reauthorized as the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 Public Law 110-134. HS programs in PA implement the PA Early Learning Standards as part of the curriculum.

- **CCIS Child Care Information Services (CCIS)** – In PA, a Childcare Subsidy program funded jointly through the federal Child Care Works (CCW) as part of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) Child Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. The initiative was reauthorized and renamed in 1996, Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) 2014, reauthorized 2019. Eligibility criteria included work confirmation and income level. Eligible families received financial subsidies distributed directly to providers. Families apply the financial award to programs of choice or programs of availability. A sliding scale determined the subsidy amount. Market Surveys determined the program reimbursement. STAR participants received tiered reimbursements.

- **EI Early Intervention (EI)** – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA) Part B replaced the act previously known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, 1975 to 1990. IDEA Part B requires public schools to provide a free appropriate public education for people with disabilities from their third birthday, until school entry and onward through the age of twenty-one in the LRE. LRE, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990) Part B, referred to “participation in regular classrooms, with appropriate aids and supports…to the maximum extent with children not disabled…special, separate, or removal may only occur when” (Dear Colleagues Letter 2015; 2017, issued by the United States Department of Education, definition (https://www2.ed.gov/policy/).
• LEA K4 - Local Educational Agency operated, criteria-based, pre-school programs implemented, at the discretion, of the LEA. Federal Accountability Block Grants provided LEA’s optional criteria-based funding to establish, maintain and expand programming. Funding began in the mid-1990’s and continues to be awarded.

• Keystone STARS - Standards Training, Assistance, Resources, and Support (STARS) early care and early education quality initiative guidelines, for OCDEL programs. Programs receive recognition of STAR level (1-4) based on OCDEL defined scales and criteria assessment. STAR program participation required designating space for and acceptance of CCIS eligible students. STAR level (1-4) received tiered CCIS reimbursements based on STAR designation. The STARS program was piloted in select counties in 2002, then implemented statewide through competitive grants.

• STAR 4 - Standards Training, Assistance, Resources, and Support Level Four (STAR 4). Early care and early education programming, designated by OCDEL, achieving the highest level of quality, as measured by QRIS scale and assessments. Programs receive the highest tier of CCIS financial reimbursement (STARS). Piloted 2002.

• Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards (ELS) of developmental, social, emotional, academic, health, arts, and family engagement practices. Introduced in 2004, revised through 2014. The philosophy of Approaches to Learning through Play, formed the ELS framework as a cross-walked aspect of the Standard Aligned System (SAS) of instruction, curriculum, assessment, resources, and safe schools in programs from birth through second grade. LEA implemented K, First, and Second grade ELS, remained optional. OCDEL and PDHS required specific regulated programs to implement the ELS. PA statutes required PA PKC to follow part of the ELS.
• Approaches to Learning through Play – Philosophical foundation of the PA Early Learning Standards. The curricular resource provided standards of practice for Infant, Toddler, PreK K, First, and Second Grade Standards. Revised 2004-2014

• PA PKC Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (PA PKC) – 2008 Statutory statewide universal preschool, for criteria eligible families, where available. Programs operated by private, public, organizational, and LEA’s provided services. Models of implementation included half and full day programming. Eligibility criteria included factors identified as those impacting equal opportunity. A competitive grant funding process determined program providers, locations, operating allocations, and program capacity since 2008.

• Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) – Measurement of Readiness. Pennsylvania tool used to catalog combinations of the social, emotional, and academic behaviors, skills, and knowledge of children during first months of kindergarten. Implemented in select programs. Not required by statute. Piloted 2014.

• Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP). Where available, the expansion of HS programming, provided criteria eligible families extended hours of HS and childcare service in PA. Supplemental Funds Available to Extend Duration of Services in Head Start and Early Head Start, ACF-PI-HS-16-02, initiated in 2016.

• COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Policy – Initiated March 2020, this set of policies implemented during the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic addressed health and safety protocol, resources, infrastructure of instructional delivery, teacher training, educational equity, and access as related to the right to education in PA.
Commentary

Chapter four completed the first two steps of the TODA process by identifying the research questions and gathering data. The corpus collection process resulted in the identification of the essential pathway data critical to the research questions. The final corpus contained select policy which specifically addressed equity within the pathway system. Although the corpus contained federal expressions, the ensuing analysis focused on expressions of state level policy and practice. These expressions represented enacted federal laws, mandates and initiatives, state laws, codes and regulations, and practices of choice. In PA, the PA GA, PDE, PDHS, OCDEL, and LEA govern the selected policies.

RQ 1: In what ways is the equity and access phenomenon expressed throughout the historical text discourse of the pathway policy system?

Upon completion of the data collection process, I reflected upon research question one as related to the corpus of data generated. These reflections captured themes revealed in the process. First, the corpus contained examples of positively and negatively expressed equity and access throughout the historical reform. Next, the narrowed corpus expressions identified examples of ambiguous terms and inconsistencies in the expressions within and across the system policy. Last, the incorporated visual expressions identified potential equity and access context related to distribution.

In all, the identified examples of expression of equity and access specific to the pathways included written, spoken, reported, visually represented, and measurements of distribution. The resulting “expressions of equity and access” became the foundation to address research questions two and three through the data analysis in chapters five and six. The process provided the means to generate corpus data capable of addressing the issue.
CHAPTER 5

Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis

Chapter four addressed step two of the TODA by identifying expressions of equity and addressing research question one. Here, chapter five applied data gathered in chapter four, in responds to research question two, that asked how visual expressions of equity and access influenced meaning. This step employed Fairclough’s three-dimensional analysis framework to examine the expressions.

RQ 2: In what ways do the visual expressions of the pathway system policy and practice discourse influence the meaning of equity and access?

Step Three: Data Analysis Procedure

For this, I focused on Fairclough’s explanation of the construction of meaning. He indicated the discourse affected “three functions related to constructing meaning…It contributed to the construction of…self and social identity and subject position… social relationships and…system knowledge and beliefs” (p. 64). He further explained “these effects corresponded to …the social identities (power and control), relational (context) and ideational (Idea formation)” (p. 64) of the functions of language and meaning. Finally, he reinforced that meaning depended upon interpretation. When text contained ambivalence, contradictory text, and overlapping meaning, the meaning changed (p. 75).

Fairclough (1992) further suggested, text dimensions of vocabulary (individual words), grammar (combined words), cohesion (words linking), and text structure (function in society) impacted the interpretation. In his framework, the analysis focused on “the force,” (what the text promised, requested, threatened, or made you do), coherence (properties of interpretation, the interpretive principles, and what the text “set up” as
interpreted), and intertextuality (text taken, merged, assimilated, contradicts, echoes ironically, and moves through the system) (page 83). Applying these concepts of meaning construction, the data I collected, selected, and organized in step two of chapter four informed how I addressed the second research question (Fairclough, 1992).

The experience of working within the pathway system provided the context and content knowledge for the analysis. Consequently, the way I interpreted the expressions also impacted the expressions identified for analysis in the study. The dimensions identified as the focus echoed or mirrored my personal experience with the discourse. In this case, the text made sense to someone who made sense of the text - ME (Fairclough, 1992).

**Analysis for Themes and Patterns**

The three-part analysis examined the micro, meso, and macro levels of the text within the context of the phenomena. Part one examined the text at the micro level. It described the text in relation to the structures of language used. Part two of the analysis explored the discursive practice of the text production, distribution, and consumption at a meso level. It interpreted how the text used within, across, and through to interact with, transform, change, or influence the meaning.

Last, part three of the analysis examined the social practice, or the way the meaning of the text is applied at the macro, or universal level. The results of the text and discursive practices analysis explained the impact of the interpretation or perception of the meaning of the text on the social practice. The explanation included the process of creating, seeing, hearing, understanding, and interpreting meaning within context from the collective position of society and reality.
To that end, the text, discursive practice, and social practice analyses examined: What is “it”? – the description. What did or does “it” do? – the interpretation. What does “what it did, does, or do” mean under what conditions or context? – the explanation.

Fairclough (1992) never intended for the analysis to resemble a checklist. Rather, he recommended implementing only the levels relevant to and necessary for understanding the phenomenon. In chapter four I identified, selected, and used the PDE population report, DHS interactive maps, OCDEL Reach and Risk Report, and NIEER The State of Preschool 2020: State Preschool Yearbook as examples of visually expressed text. This process illustrated perceptions of relevant context influencing meaning across data samples (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021; OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

The NIEER Report The State of Preschool 2020: State Preschool Yearbook served as visual examples for discursive practices analysis. Regarding contextualization of information the authors took pieces of information from source programs data provided to them by PDE. NIEER produced their interpretation of meaning in the form of an annual report. This report highlighted proportions of groups receiving services. The report also signified these services came from two distinct corpus discourse strands, the discourse of human services and that of education. Here the report merged two parallel policies and pathways into a single document (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021).

This represented intertextuality, where text taken from somewhere else then compiled together creates a meaning. Implementing this strategy, the report guided the receiver to interpret the information based on report context. Figure 7 provided a visual recontextualization of the context of implementation. Using the illustrated text discourse, the analysis explored “what message did you see?” (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021).
The next example explored expressions from the interactive PDHS website. This PDHS program allowed users to search the pathway for context specific data. Searchable data included population data for the PA Pre K Counts, STARS (by level), CCW (CCIS, TANF), and Head Start Supplemental programs. The website also allowed the user to mix searchable criteria CCW at STAR 4 by county for example (PDHS, 2021).

The maps selected represent two of more than 600 samples collected. These examples represented age groups of the statewide population capturing percentage served vs percentage eligible for combinations of visual distributive equity. Figure 8 and Figure 9 displayed two distinct images of the statewide representation of the Child Care Works funding and programming distribution reach for children under age three (PDHS, 2021).
Figure 8

*Image Example 2 All Child Care Works*

Note Source OpenDataPA PDHS.
Note County distribution All Star Levels for Children Under 3.

Figure 9

*Image Example 1 All Child Care Works*

Note Source OpenDataPA PDHS.
Note Legislative District distribution All Star Levels for Children Under 3.
Figure 8 displayed distribution by county. An analysis of this example demonstrated how the interpretated text and discursive practices of the map graphic can manifest into a meaning of equity. The data message characterized how the homogeneous color, ethos of authority, interdiscursivity between counties, intertextual context, and assimilated information of the text alluded to the presupposition of the meaning of equity. Furthermore, this example demonstrated how the visual representation of a single image can influence meaning in a variety of ways (PDHS, 2021).

Figure 9 displayed distribution by legislative district. This example demonstrated how interpreted meaning of the same information changes when the context is different. Regarding social practice the ideological and political implications effect the force of the text while parallel governing policy ethos and the interdiscursivity stratification impacted the generation of new meaning. Moreover, the discursive practice of graphic placement generated additional interpretations. Comparing the maps side by side produced both contradictory and ambivalence meaning interpretation. Contradictory messages showed two overlapping pieces of information 1) the heterogeneous color and 2) the disparity between the two numeric percentages resulted in receiving mixed messages. The mixed messages led to ambivalence or uncertainty in interpreting the data as representative of the same population (PDHS, 2021).

A third example shown in Figure 10 was found in the Reach and Risk Report and related to properties of coherence. When the Reach and Risk Report spreadsheet opened, the text only made sense to someone who could make sense of the text. Each sheet contains different information. However, the text did not provide extra textual elements such as background and foreground to link the information. On the other hand, this spreadsheet
visually contributed to the formation of meaning by providing information on the social relationship between the subjects in the population and the programs (OCDEL, 2021).

Figure 10

Image of Reach and Risk Report 2015

The last column of the spreadsheet represented the percentages of the population served. Utilizing Excel tools to reformat the information revealed the same data in distinctive styles. All three visual representations of distribution created inferred meaning of equity and access. However, without additional context the visual images in Figure 11 and Figure 12 produced ambiguous interpretations (OCDEL, 2021).

**Figure 11**

*Image of Underserved Criteria Eligible Population Example 1*

![Image of Underserved Criteria Eligible Population Example 1]

*Note Source OpenDataPA Office of Child Development and Early Learning.*

**Figure 12**

*Image of Underserved Criteria Eligible Population Example 2*

![Image of Underserved Criteria Eligible Population Example 2]

*Note Source OpenDataPA Office of Child Development and Early Learning.*
The previously examined examples provided a sample of the analysis process. Next the study transitioned to a full three-dimensional analysis using expressions identified in chapter four. The expressions selected exemplified parallel policy implementation of the pathway into compulsory education. The annual PDE population reports provided stakeholders with an overview of the annual student body enrolled in identified population categories as reported by educational agencies and organizations under the authority of PDE. This data was found on the open access Commonwealth OpenDataPA website (https://www.pa.gov/guides/open-government/#DataandReports). Here, anyone can select data and use the tools provided to generate and reconceptualize the information.

The analysis focused on two images of the PDE 2020-2021 Population Report as recorded in the original format generated by the Commonwealth. At the micro level, the intertextual relationship of the words and the coherence of the image included examining how the image set up the conditions of interpretation. In other words, an analysis of the document tendencies and practices helped determine how different social groups interpreted, perceived, and used the discourse data (PDE, 2021).

At the meso level, the discourse practice identified aspects of interdiscursivity which linked this text to other discourses and described how between text, the word meaning required context. For example, this included the use of symbols for grade levels and acronyms. Specifically, this included PDE logos and titles placement embedded within the report. Next, the production and interpretation for consumption of the image revealed who made it and why. Finally, the manifested intertextuality, or mixing of discourses, disclosed how the pathway images demonstrated in Figure 13 and Figure 14, assimilated into the PDE discourse as if the pathway did not exist independently (PDE, 2021).
This workbook contains 2020-21 enrollments for all publicly funded schools in Pennsylvania as reported by school districts, area vocational-technical schools, charter schools, intermediate units, and state-operated educational facilities. Local education agencies were asked to report those students who were enrolled and attending as of October 1, 2020.

County and Statewide Totals Notes:

Statewide and county totals include counts of students attending education classes on a full-time basis outside their parents’ district of residence. This data was obtained from the Bureau of Special Education (PENNDATA 2020).

Intermediate Unit and CTC Part-day enrollments are excluded from county and state totals.

Statewide and county totals are unique counts of students being educated by public Local Education Agencies. LEA and School level reports may not sum to the County and Statewide totals.

DEFINITIONS:

PRE-KINDERGARTEN (PK) - A program enrolling students who are up to two years younger than the entrance age for the local education agency’s kindergarten program. PKA represents a PreK Half Day morning (AM) program and PKP represents a PreK Half Day afternoon (PM) program. PKF is used to indicate a PreK Full Day program.

K4 - The first year of a 2-year kindergarten program. Students are generally 4 years old at the beginning of the school year. K4A represents a K4 Half Day morning (AM) program and K4P represents a K4 Half Day afternoon (PM) program. K4F is used to indicate a K4 Full Day program.

K5 - The second year of a 2-year kindergarten program or the single year of a traditional 1-year kindergarten program. Students are generally 5 years old at the beginning of the school year. K5A represents a K5 Half Day morning (AM) program and K5P represents a K5 Half Day afternoon (PM) program. K5F is used to indicate a K5 Full Day program.
### Figure 14.

**Image of Population Report 20-21**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>PKA</th>
<th>PKF</th>
<th>PKI</th>
<th>K4A</th>
<th>K4P</th>
<th>K5F</th>
<th>K5S</th>
<th>001</th>
<th>002</th>
<th>003</th>
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**Note** Source OpenDataPA Office Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**Note** Example sort View of Pathway participation low to high by LEA.
The PDE generated 2020-2021 population report contained enrolment information relating to all programs within the Commonwealth under the regulatory control of the state. This report identified all student populations registered by October of 2020. The report, an excel spreadsheet, included information by program, grade, select demographics, LEA, district, organization, Intermediate Unit, and County. Individuals who accessed the spreadsheet were able to use the Excel features to represent specific data. PDE published the report on the open-access dashboard, provided reporting methodology, and granted permission for access and use. The PDE report contained data related to four of the program pathways included in this study. The analysis began with an exploration of the text images for issues that impacted meaning (PDE, 2021).

**Three-Dimensional Analysis Part One: Descriptive Findings of the Text**

Interactional control – PDE controlled the interaction of the expression implicitly and explicitly. The department explicitly introduced the authority of the message on the title page. From the onset, the report represented an official document from a state administrative quality office. Implicit authority of the message also included program specific acronyms and language. The disclosures presented on the title page exempt the office from errors. The page names also established authority with LEA receiving first billing in the subsequent four tabs. The interactional control represented the role of PDE as the legal authority for educational programming in the Commonwealth (PDE, 2021).

Cohesion tells two of the PDE stories told in the message expressed 1) who controlled the programs and 2) the level of program value expressed. Through their authority, the message indicated PDE controlled the programs listed. Mixed messages indicated the potential for a lack of cohesion. Population data of the early learning
programs offered by the state signified there were no participants in more than one LEA. Other than the context of the title page, the report fails to explain the varied level of support. For example, only 20 of 500 programs offered K4. Without context this suggested PDE enacted programming inequitably. The context or lack of information directly impacts meaning and interpretation of the expression (PDE, 2021).

Politeness – The face of the message displayed resulted in multiple interpretations. On face value PDE appeared inclusive by providing specific context of demographic information. PDE also showed concern in the message. By including zero participation levels PDE displayed the need for programming. However, when reimagined and sorted by specific context, the message changed. The spreadsheet then visually displayed a cursory level of politeness. The programs listed participated in the parallel policy system governed by PDHS. The larger context interpretation of the message indicated two separate parallel programming systems, not a continuum as displayed in this report (PDHS, 2021).

Ethos – The information provided comes through the voice of authority. PDE was represented as the authoritative body for the state. PDE is displayed visually as the authority in words and images. The information stands free of bias, and PDE maintains accuracy as reported and reflected in the program populations.

Grammar - This analysis explored the social motivation of the visual expression of equity as a numeric model. In this instance that reflected the social motivation of the region. When sorted, Figure 15 exemplified a visual representation of the spreadsheet which showed distinct areas with zero program participants. To that, the social motivation of zero as a numeric representation could hold interpretations of both positive and negative values as explained by Adams Equity Theory (Adams, 1961, 1963; Adams & Hoffman, 1960).
Figure 15

*Image of Excel Example County Distribution of programs*

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*Note Source OpenDataPA Office Pennsylvania Department of Education.*

*Note Data sorted by geographic region displays distributive equity.*

When reimagined as a chart in Figure 16 and into a graph in Figure 17, the numeric values of information not only transformed as a new visual representation, but also as a new interpretation of meaning. The images expanded the range of interpretation by exaggerating or mitigating the numeric highs and lows of the report. These interpretations suggested levels of LEA equity in distribution and values of program meaning.

Figure 16

*Reimagined Excel Message -AM & PM K4 Distribution Correlation*

*Note Sample of flexibility in data design and reporting using OpenDataPA as source.*
Figure 17

Reimagined Excel Message – AM & PM K5 Distribution Correlation

![Graph showing correlation between two fields in OpenDataPA data, indicating a strong positive correlation.]

*Note Source OpenDataPA Office Pennsylvania Department of Education. Note Sample of flexibility in data design and reporting using OpenDataPA as source.*

The levels ranged from good to better to best for some, while for others the levels ranged from worthy to not worth, included to excluded, and accessible to inaccessible. From a social motivation standpoint, the document reflected a range from a lack of interest in the services, to a lack of resources in providing these services. Transversely, accessing the available historical data provided confirmation of increased service level changes.

Transitivity measured the relationship between the visual text nouns and verbs in this analysis. The document guided readers visually through a path represented by youngest to oldest age, lowest to highest grade, by organization, or geographic location. This document also visually encouraged readers to go through the path, suggesting a continuum in services. Reported representations of the transitional programs indicated PDE recognized the pathway and pulled the pathway through the PDE system.

Theme – The message promoted a theme of acceptance to the common-sense assumptions. To that, the visual theme of the spreadsheet suggested PDE was good, PDE kindergarten (K) K was good and PDE K was a part of system. Visually, K was not
represented as optional programming. Rather, K resembled a required aspect of the PDE system. On closer inspection the PDE report omitted the optional category for six-year-old kindergarten, K6. The exclusion of the information expressed a non-preferred option.

Modality – The analysis measured modality through the encouraged action of the message. In this case, the spreadsheet nudged the reader to expressions of worth, value, and preference. This message inferred the actions of must, should, and can, as the only available participants options. However, the message visually omitted options which were probable or possible. Families researching this document for the pathway, interpreted K participation expectation as an inevitable activity (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Word meaning – On the title page, the defined words conveyed a straightforward authoritative use of the terms. This format left little room for misinterpretation of the words. The omitted words only perceived by an insider held both positive and negative social context. Inadvertent withholding of information interpreted as oversight and beyond. Intentional withholding of information interpretations ranges from on purpose, deceptive, divisive, nudging, overt, ideological, to verging on political and beyond.

Wording – The straightforward usage conveyed authority. The expression refrained from implementing persuasive writing techniques to influence the message. Nevertheless, under definitions the term generally referenced participation age. Yet, the message excluded the definition of generally. To that, a pathway insider might have recognized the meaning of pathway words, terms, and programs omitted from the definitions.

Metaphors – The PDE spreadsheet provided few words and no graphics. Of all the devices explored, interpreting the data for metaphors exemplified Fairclough’s’ (1992) advice regarding the importance of applying analysis discretion. Here, the data
interchanged the terms populations and students, as equals. This might have seemed insignificant as a metaphor. This might have also differentiated the reader. Pathway professionals traditionally excluded children under five from the definition of students.

**Three-Dimensional Analysis Part Two: Descriptive Findings of discursive practice s**

Interdiscursivity – The spreadsheet visual provided the means to interpret the connections of the document to pathway equity. The tabs across the bottom row showed a link to additional data. The message presumed that consumers could read English to interpret the connections. Furthermore, understanding how this data linked to the pathway, required previous knowledge of the terms. With pathway knowledge, PDE visually controlled the role of transitional programming represented on this spreadsheet.

On one hand, this visual reflected a merged system, with parallel policy alignment. The PDE structure visually consumed the early childhood, early care, and early education discourse and programming. On the other hand, the whole child philosophy provided an alternate interpretation. In this approach, the inferred PDE message included supports and services, which extend beyond education. Either way, although presented in the continuum, the message visually excluded the existence of early childhood as a distinct discourse.

Intertextuality - The message inferred presumptions of prior knowledge. First, the message assumed common knowledge of the pathway into public education. Next, the message did not include information or an explanation regarding alternative pathways. Lastly, the message alluded to pre-K – through twelfth grade as a continuous system, implemented solely by PDE. Without prior knowledge, alternative state and commercial programs, providers, and option remained unknown (PDE, 2021).
Manifest - The image recontextualized the transitional pathway. At face value, the spreadsheet implied an academic focus. The message also appeared unconnected to the developmental values or philosophies of early care and early education. This interpretation reimagined through the eyes of the state programs presented alternative perspectives. In addition to academics the PDE system encompassed physical, social, emotional, and safety curriculum, instruction, resources, and programming. The PDHS interpreted message included the social and family welfare aspects of education. And the OCDEL perspective of the message included child development, play based curriculum and instruction, and family engagement. These three perspectives incorporated early care and early education as an accepted and supported component of the pathway.

Coherence – The image standpoint determined the interpretive properties of this text. The representation of the integrated pathway viewed no differently than regular education. This message signaled both program inclusion and acceptance by the authority. The consistency in presentation reflected a level of respect for the early childhood pathway. The message inferred equal treatment of all programs. Conversely, this message also inferred a less positive perspective in which other similar programs did not warrant inclusion. The message did not however, provide the standpoint of PDE. With that, all interpretations reflected, standpoint specific perspectives (PDE, 2021).

Three-Dimensional Analysis Part Three: Descriptive Findings of the social practices

On a cursory level, the social conditions of production, interpretation, and consumption reflected a view of pathway programming within the social situation of PDE. Produced by an official office based on laws, codes, and regulations this document reflected conditions bound by rule. However, within the structure of society, the position
of PDE depended upon personal context. The message reflected the goal and values of PDE. Upon close examination, this document visually reflected multiple areas without programming. The contextual factors of geographic distribution impacted the social practice. Moreover, interpretations and perspectives of visual distribution generated the most significant representation of programming equity and access.

In order to complete the three-dimensional analysis, the text and discursive practice analyses results provided the framework to cross-reference against the social practices. These social practices included examining ways 1) the social matrix of discourse, 2) the order of the discourse, and 3) the ideological and political effects of the discourse influenced and impacted stakeholders. In other words, the examination included the – who, why, where, how, and the what’s - of the message, at an individual or societal level.

Said differently, who consumed the text? Why did they consume the text? Where did they consume the text? How did they consume the text? What did the text turn into? What did or does the text do? What did they see in the text? And, what about the text benefited them? Each pondering produced unique perspectives of this text. And so, the analysis standpoint considered the perspective of families with children five and under.

Social matrix of discourse – Socially, the broader picture of this document moved members towards a system of conformity, as seen through the reconstruction, intertextuality, and manifest textuality. The image combined the philosophies of education and early childhood. The assimilated message adhered to a type of ideology. This ideology manifested itself into a supposition. This supposition expected that all readers should know, understand, and uniformly interpret the PDE message. Unsurprisingly, the message
represented current normative practices of families which includes compliance of 5-year-old participation in kindergarten (Smith & Terry, 2013).

Visually the combined K 5 half day and full day populations closely mirrored the 1-12 population participation levels. No other pathway on the PDE report reflected participation at these levels. The ambiguity of other pathway participation levels generated wonder of ambivalence. A multitude of inquiry flashed through my synapses. Visually representation indicated the educational system fully supported K program participation, despite the term “generally” in the definition section. Whereas the system failed to explain the lack of support for the other pathway programs on the report. Moreover, the report neglected to offer any indication explaining the disparities amongst the distribution of programming in the pathway as reported.

Order of discourse - This interdiscursivity of the stratified message revealed wider implications. PA law requires that families and legal guardians ensured the health, safety, and welfare of children. Inevitably, obligation not just a responsibility, determined the actions of the families and guardians. Acting in the best interest of children compelled families and guardians to understand all aspects of the system including the philosophical, curricular, and social goals (PA GA, 2021).

Visually, this document demonstrated hedg m, hedg ma, hedg enie, head to me, hedgehog, h e g e m o n y (common sense; power). In the expression, one group, PDE controlled the actions of the other groups, families, children, and society. This image did not however, provide enough context to understand the PDE controlled aspect of early childhood. This image also neglected to clarify the PDE philosophy or how PDE
implemented early learning programs. In the end, the best interest of children and the obligation to the state seemed at odds.

The ideology and political effects of the discourse – PDE achieved the goal of visually establishing a continuum of services by including the represented pathway population on the same spreadsheet page as all other programming. The report also contained additional sheets with specific demographics of select groups. When the additional information was provided by PDE, the report meaningfully supported the interpretations of the data (OCDEL, 2021; PA GA, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

**Commentary**

Through the process, I identified organizations that publish annual educational policy implementation reports containing expressions of population equity and access. These organizations include the NIEER research group from New Jersey which publishes an annual report of early childhood education containing information from all 50 states. The PDE, which produces an annual report including population served in each educational entity under the department of education's code. The National Commission of the States, which releases longitudinal data regarding statewide participation in early childhood and K-12 programs. PDHS, which provides information on PA funded programs on an interactive public access dashboard. The HS and EI population served is also available through the OCDEL Reach and Risk Report, as well as the National Commission of the State’s website. These databases focus on number of children served (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021; OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

A perfect representation of equity and implementation would include 100% of eligible children that have access to program services. A way to examine the disparities
between implementation of programming is to identify the number of children eligible versus the number of children served. A second way to examine equity in implementation of programming is to examine the number of children eligible versus the distribution of funding and programming across geographic regions. In other words, equitable access to programming. In both cases, providing an equitable distribution of funding and or a geographic distribution of programming does not account for desire to participate, or means to participate if eligible. A public access dashboard, website, or report, of the current data, of the number of children eligible versus the number of children served could not found. Nor could the data of the number of the children eligible versus number of children served by geographic location. To determine those numbers would require gathering, sorting, categorizing, and analyzing data from multiple sources.

Transportation continues to be a barrier for participation for specific kindergarten (K) programs. Individual LEA websites provided district specific transportation policies; however, I could not identify a public data set containing K transportation policies for the 500 LEA’s. Next, the spreadsheet indicated more than 94% of the identified population eligible for K enrolled at age five. This number does not include children who are in alternative programming or enrolled in childcare at age five. Finally, the PDE report does not currently include the number of children who enrolled in K at age 6 or the number of children who entered school as first grade students at age 6 (PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

These are two data sets which would be useful in suggesting the application of equity. Both data sets are based on the number of families who elected a specific pathway. These pathways are not available to all families. Understanding the population of families who elect these pathways can help to identify barriers other populations face in making
decisions. It can also identify trends in the interpretation of and implementation of equity within policy. However, this was not the limit to what the spreadsheet did not tell.

As presented on the spreadsheet, the numbers of eligible children versus the number of children served were misleading. The only kindergarten (K) equity issue explored was the number of children and families within the Commonwealth who have access to the full day K programs, versus the number of children and families who have access to the half day K programs. Likewise, the data related to K4 programs included only the number of children who have access to the program (PDE, 2021).

This report did not include the number of children who do not. Nor does the report explain the program context or the eligibility criteria. In both cases, access alone does not determine equity. Determining program equity required knowledge of the selection process and the consistent eligibility criterion used by the LEA program. Knowing the number of criteria eligible children versus the number of children served would provide the data necessary to measure program implementation equity (PDE, 2021).

The data collection process illustrates that Keystone STAR childcare programs do implement consistent eligibility criterion methods. Program providers enrollment and curriculum policies do not seem to discriminate against families. Nevertheless, their program policies may impact access. For example, a STAR 4 program can have a policy related to operational hours which are incompatible with the needs of a family. This can impact a family's access to the program. Additionally, the number of STAR 4 programs available and the number of children served varies in each municipality (OCDEL, 2021).

It is important to note that a family enrolled in a STAR 1, 2, or 3 program may face other contextual factors which interfere with their participation in a STAR 4 program. Even
though STAR 4 programs meet the Commonwealth definition of high quality, they may not meet the family’s definition. Equally as important, the relationships between families and program providers creates a strong factor in the continuation of services. Furthermore, knowledge of available programming, distance from home or work, commute time, location of facility, the organization of the facility, and the program philosophy can influence a family’s decision to enroll in a program. Program context impacts the equity and access for families at all STAR levels (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

The reports provided a fraction of the vast network of pathway possibilities, leaving families unaware of options. For example, PA laws and PDE codes governed the PA PKC initiative which were implemented across PDE, PDHS, and OCDEL. Yet, the report did not include a separate sheet of the information encompassing all available programming initiatives. The report also did not disclose the PDE decision to report part, but not all, of the interrelated pathway populations. As such, the merged PA PKC information reflected mixed interpretations of identity creation, the relational context, and idea formation regarding the subgroups place within the larger social practice social matrix. In essence, as reported, the PA PKC pathway appeared completely integrated into PDE. Had the report included the complete spectrum of PA PKC program pathways, the data would reflect a more complete picture (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

The report only reported independent information of one transitional pathway, early intervention. This included the PDE, PDHS, and OCDEL pathway options. However, without additional context, the interpretations of these efforts reflected intertextuality segregation, or the pulling out of information, versus a presentation of a separate subgroup (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).
Interdiscursivity of the PDE document showed that the report related to the pathway, but the report does not contain all the pathway information. The PDHS map expressions of the pathway provided real time information of programming but again, not a complete picture. Whereas the OCDEL report example provided a detailed array of pathway system program, however the information was from a historical perspective. Finally, the examination of the corpus for visual expressions of equity and access failed to identify a consolidated visual representation of the entire pathway system. For families to establish informed perspectives they needed access to a consolidated, timely, report (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

This chapter of the study specifically examined visual representations of the discourse text for interpretations of meaning regarding equity and access. Throughout the analysis, the visual perceptions formed based on the production and distribution of the report revealed an ambiguity in the PDE pathway efforts. Utilizing only the visual expression of the report to interpret transitional pathway information reflected a disservice to PDE and to the stakeholder’s seeking knowledge. This further demonstrated the importance of validating interpretations through multiple sources and the social practice (OCDEL, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

Next, chapter six utilizes the historical and current expressions of equity and access identified in chapter four to continue the investigation. Once again, the study employed the three-dimensional analysis process to address research question three. Expressions of policy implementation highlighting equity and access along the pathway into compulsory education provided the data for the for another look at the phenomena.
Chapter 6

Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis

Chapter four addressed research question one through the process by identifying expressions of equity and access. Chapter five used data from chapter four to examine the ways the identified visual expressions impacted meaning. Here chapter six applied the data gathered in chapter four in response to research question three.

Using Fairclough’s (1992) three-dimensional analysis framework, the study examined the expressions of policy implementation for equity and access. To that, this phenomena analysis examined the interactional control, cohesion, politeness, ethos, grammar, transitivity, theme, modality, word meaning, wording, and metaphors of the expression text. Next the study investigated the expression for the interdiscursivity, textuality, and coherence manifest of discourse practice conditions. Finally, the analysis crossed referenced the findings to the social matrix of discourse, order of discourse, ideology, and political effects of the social practice to respond to research question three.

RQ 3: In what ways do the expressions of policy implementation of the pathways system influence the meaning of equity and access?

Step Three Data Analysis Procedure…Again

The method recommended only applying the analysis tools relevant to and necessary for understanding the phenomenon. In chapter five, I implemented all analysis tools and examined all analysis levels and devices. As a result, the findings from chapter five could also be used in the analysis of the subsequent research question. Whereas chapter six focused on an examination of distinct levels. This produced a rich thick description of the implementation expressions. However, the findings were specific to the tools selected.
So why do step three of the data analysis procedure again? First, it provided another opportunity to help validate the study findings. Next, this process also produced relevant context necessary to understand the overall phenomena. Finally, implementing both an inclusive and selective analysis illustrated how researcher perceptions of relevant context influenced meaning across data samples.

**Three-Dimensional Analysis Then: Descriptive Findings in History**

The coding process provided the tools used to identify the selection of specific text related to the main themes of the phenomena. To maintain the integrity of the policy language and ensuing reforms, the data collection process included photographing original documents for verification of the online transcripts. The phenomena specific historical expressions of implementation served to create timelines of relevant repeals. These timelines signified shifts in political context. In specific cases, the historical expressions of implementation also contained themes which explained and demonstrate the intent of policy. These themes included aspects of ideology, religion, and philosophy. These themes clarified the social reform as well as the power, control, and limit of government. Finally, these themes foreshadowed the importance of common-sense language in future policy.

The documents expressed implementation of the right to an education the institution of pre-educational preparatory programs and the enforcement of education attendance through compulsory education. This part of the study examined the group of documents as a collective expression of equity and access throughout the legislative period up to the enactment of the current educational code. This collection represented a sample of the reforms enacted during that time. The sample selected in Table 3 illustrated reform which directly impacted the equity or access of the policy (PA GA, 2021; Wickersham, 1886).
As illustrated in Table 3, beginning with the William Penn’s Frame in 1683 and ending in 1933 the timeline reflected evidence of policy expressions of pathway equity.

**TABLE 3**

*Timeline of Pennsylvania Equity Reform 1683-1949*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>REFORM</th>
<th>TYPE OF REFORM</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>TARGET POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE - 1681</td>
<td>Decentralized Education</td>
<td>Faith-Based</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>Example Frame</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>All Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1688</td>
<td>Example Letter</td>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Orphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>Example 3rd Frame</td>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>Orphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>Public Schools</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>As Statute</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Poor Gratis</td>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Poor Gratis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809-1828</td>
<td>Poor Gratis</td>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>5 to 12 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1828</td>
<td>Care of Establishment of School</td>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Current Terminology</td>
<td>Orphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1828</td>
<td>Establishment of School</td>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>Physically and Intellectually Disabled</td>
<td>Deafness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Infant Schools</td>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>From Birth to 5 Years Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828 - 1833</td>
<td>Poor Gratis</td>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>Intent of Law Shift</td>
<td>From Poor to All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828 - 1895</td>
<td>Establishment of School</td>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Terminology Physically and Intellectually Disabled</td>
<td>Feeble-Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Common School Act</td>
<td>Public Education</td>
<td>Free Inclusive</td>
<td>All Race, Gender, Social Economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Statute</td>
<td>Free Public Education</td>
<td>Population attendance required</td>
<td>Language not changed until 1895 Fines &quot;What If&quot; Did Not Attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834 - 1855</td>
<td>Reform</td>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>Exempt Populations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Department of Ed Established</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Responsible for Implementation and Reforms Minutia</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>PA Constitution</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Free Adequate /Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Kindergarten 1895 Reform</td>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Photo with Handwritten Changes</td>
<td>Includes Paying for Services Rendered, Inc. Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895 - 1900</td>
<td>Compulsory Age Statutes</td>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>Includes the Language Intent</td>
<td>6-14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901 - 1911</td>
<td>Consolidation Statutes</td>
<td>No New Programming</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 - 1949</td>
<td>Change in Language</td>
<td>No New Programming</td>
<td>Consolidated</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Public School Code of 1949</td>
<td>Legislative Act</td>
<td>Mirrored statutes</td>
<td>Rules, Regulations and Bulletins, and Guidelines for implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note Source OpenDataPA Pennsylvania General Assembly.*

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Table 4 reflects a timeline of pathway reforms beginning with the Public-School Code Act of 1949 through 2021. In 1949, educational policy was organized and codified. At that time, the ensuing educational Code mirrored the collection of existing laws (PA GA, 2021).

**Table 4**

**Timeline of Pennsylvania Equity Reform 1949-2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Act / Code / Reform</th>
<th>Level / Type</th>
<th>Goal Of Reform</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Legislative Act Public School Code Of 1949</td>
<td>Statute Enacted Educational code</td>
<td>Mirrored statutes</td>
<td>Regulations &amp; bulletins for implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Brown vs Board of Education</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-2018</td>
<td>Kindergarten Statute Educational Code</td>
<td>Entitled</td>
<td>Added Free Milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-2019</td>
<td>Compulsory Age Statute Educational Code</td>
<td>No Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>ESSA</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>CCW TANF</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Rights - Equity</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Early Interventions</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Reauthorized</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Head Start Act</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>CCIS TANF</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Reauthorized Expansion</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>“Goal 2000”</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>At Risk Transitions Family Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>CCBDG</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Reauthorized Expansion</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Reauthorized Replaced ESSE Act</td>
<td>At Risk Assessment Driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Keystone Stars</td>
<td>PDHS</td>
<td>Expansion Quality Control</td>
<td>All Children B-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>OCDEL</td>
<td>PDE PDHS</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Merge private ECE with PDHS and PDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>PA Pre-K Counts</td>
<td>Statute Code Commonwealth</td>
<td>Universal PreK</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Early Learning Standards</td>
<td>Statute Code Commonwealth</td>
<td>All Quality Control</td>
<td>Approaches to Learning through Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Race to the Top ELC</td>
<td>FEDERAL</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Common Core Standards</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Limiting</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Early Learning Standards</td>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>Align and Cross walk to State standards</td>
<td>Approaches to Learning through Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>ESSA</td>
<td>ESSE Act</td>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>Transitions Family Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>LEA Restricted</td>
<td>Age Five by Sept 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Compulsory Age</td>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>Restricted family control and choice 8-17</td>
<td>6-18 mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Pandemic</td>
<td>Education/SW</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>All – At Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>CCIS</td>
<td>Social Welfare</td>
<td>Access Equity</td>
<td>Age 5 eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Pandemic</td>
<td>Statute Code</td>
<td>Access Equity</td>
<td>All; Compulsory Attendance; At Risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note** Source OpenDataPA Pennsylvania General Assembly, PA Department of Education.

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These pathway reforms reflected implementation aimed at providing equity and access to education. Additional details of timeline reforms are found in Appendix B and C.

- Reform of 1683 from Wm. Penn’s Great Experiment education through age 12 with penalty for noncompliance
- Reform of 1693 enacted in 1694 strengthen the original laws
- Reform of 1802 PA as a US State laws included the erection of schools and provisions (free) gratis school or to attend school of choice at the public expense
- Reform of 1824 included expected attendance for age 6-14 and penalty for neglect as well as reimbursement to religious schools
- Reform 1828 provided the erection of Infant School for children birth – age 5
- Reforms of 1834 provided a free education for all children residing in the Commonwealth ages 5-21
- Reform of 1895 enacted compulsory attendance age 8 - 14, penalties for neglect
- Reform of 1895 authorized payment to religious and charity groups to provide K
- Reform of 1897 provided free kindergarten for children ages 3-6 of
- Reform of 1901 and 1897 amended Kindergarten reform of 1895
- Reform of 1901 K for ages 3-6 –Readdresses cooperation with organizations
- Reform of 1911 revised compulsory attendance and penalties to include ages 8-16
- Reform of 1949 – kindergarten for children ages 4-6 Included language as optional programming for school boards to establish
- Reform of 1949 mirrored language of 1911 of Beginner for children six years of age and term defined Beginner as child in lowest grade or lowest primary level.
- Reform of 1949 revised compulsory attendance and penalties to include ages 8-17
When examined as a collection the corpus of the historical documents displayed an eb and flow of the ideology of the times. The interdiscursivity – or stratification of the intent of the policy implementation revealed the condition impacting the social practice most profoundly. Both words and wording of terminology and references demonstrated the interdiscursivity towards religion. These references linked the kindergarten (K) policies not only to religious practice as in the reforms of 1895 and 1897, but also to collaborations with religious entities as in the reforms of 1897 and 1901.

In these documents, intentional K social reform of equity reintroduces the ideological theme of education through religious corporation. The negotiating of politeness indicated the use of identical wording from the previous reform. This hegemony (power) shifted the same reform by the 1949 Act to create an educational code, as noted in the subtle changes in the wording allowing school boards to offer K optionally. By 1949, the policies no longer displayed the tendencies towards religious ideologies of implementation. This also demonstrated how policy adapted the intertextuality of the policy to meet the needs of social context.

The collection also revealed that the common-sense language used for implementation as late as 1895, became the adopted theme of common-sense assumptions carried into 1949. This was reflected in compulsory education attendance and K policy and practice. This revealed a discursive practice where the conditions of the language of the policy maintained its role in the social structure. Furthermore, the ensuing reforms addressed how the policy language continued to address the needs within the social context.

However, over history, the policy makers recontextualized the policy meaning and continued to interpret it as relevant in current practice. In other words, the practice changed,
but the words did not. The notes in the margins of the law book from the 1949 kindergarten and 1949 compulsory attendance reforms documented every change in the original policy. Whereas the inclusion of infant schools in 1828 remains the only unaltered policy in the historical documents. These instances also illustrated the nominal change to the language of the original policy over time. The analysis of the historical expressions of policy directly contributed to the meaning of current policy pathway implementation.

This manifestation of the historical documents text becomes more significant when cross-referenced to the current policy code. For example, the ironic choice of using the term schools, in regard to the infant school policy, also demonstrated the intent of policy implementation. This policy demonstrated a parody of instruction of youth and indicated the modality that early childhood belonged within the realm of the educational academic philosophy of the time. The schooling of early care and education continues to be an issue.

The wording surrounding education throughout the collection also displayed deliberate devices in grammar and transitivity of verbs. The text provided rights “to” education and warned of legal action and punishment for non-compliance. Functionally, through this discursive action, the text of the policy language demonstrated the legal authority of the policy and the level of control of the policy over the society.

In contrast, the 1802 reform and the 1934 reform demonstrated the ideological shift from providing for the Poor Gratis (free) to inclusive free education. At face value, the policy wording implied an intent to provide for entire population, which manifested as a worldview of benevolence. However, the recontextualized interpretation reflected a possible underlying political motive. The implementation of the public system included
more children and families. This resulted in additional policy control, compliance, and accountability to the policy by greater portion of population by the government.

The one continual adjustment reflected in the attendance and kindergarten (K) policies was the ongoing changes to the age ranges. This practice also demonstrated the policy control over the population. In 1683 Penn’s envisioned education through the age of twelve. This evolved by 1824 to include ages 6-14 and later included ages 5-22 in 1934. These changes reflected the social awareness of young children in the workforce. The gradual expansion of older age ranges also reflected the expansion of the programs offered which included high school grades and technical schools.

The policy expressions never readdressed infant schools from 1828, which included ages birth through five. Technically this indicated either an active or dead policy. This is yet to be determined. However, kindergarten which in 1895 initially included ages 3-6, demonstrated a reduction in service to children ages 4-6 by 1949. This is an age range reflected in current policy, but not in current practice.

Which leads to the final theme, the implementation expressions of intent within the policy. Based on the dates of the documents, 1683 and 1693, at the onset of William Penn’s Great Experiment the intent included the education of youth. From the policies, the wording and modality suggest self-sufficiency as the intent of education.

The documents also demonstrated the authority and control of the policy over society through cohesion into compliance by financial sanctions. In this instance, if a family or guardian interfered with attendance by withholding the educational opportunity, financial sanctions in the form of five-dollar fines, were imposed. This mirrored the protections of rights guaranteed by the constitution.
The historical relevance of the policy regarding equity and access through the inclusion of education protected by compulsory participation, reflected the philosophy of the author. The updated version of 1701 reflected the philosophy of the people by modifying the language regarding education. This differed from the intent of Penn. The revision resulted in the first reduction of educational equity and access in PA policy implementation (Penn, 1701; Wickersham, 1886).

The language of the 1701 Frame of Governance carried over to 1802. Between 1701 and 1802 legislative actions continued to implement revised government educational policy. Religious and private organizations continued to offer privately funded and faith-based options. In 1802, education first appeared as a “State” statute (Wickersham, 1886).

Reforms in 1824 which included explanations for age expansion to include ages 6-14, as well as increased cooperation with religious organizations further demonstrated these themes. The text nudged constituents towards equity through educational practice while the language limited access to a “labeled” portion of society. After multiple reiterations the policy eventually led to the free public-school reform of 1834. Throughout this time period, the interpretation of implementation included social justice and societal preservation in wording and modality (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008; Wickersham, 1886).

A primary sourced companion corpus of the 1834 public school reform, included the April 1835 speech by Thaddeus Stevens, which provided a perspective of modality. These personal corpus documents contained persuasive discursive practice towards the bias of the policy authors. These examples lack the politeness expressed in the policy. But they also represented the social practice of the period. The 1835 speech suggested a social practice which embodied equality with equity and access as the means to reach the goal.
The 1834/1835 document reflected education implementation as the social practice of a progressive transformation of society (Wickersham, 1886).

The analysis of the secondary sources, speeches, books, and historical documents suggested and reflected alternate versions of intent. These ideological perspectives served to demonstrated two important considerations to the analysis process. First, the data from alternate sources remind stakeholders that by only using one source, the policy text, the analysis lacks the context to sufficiently reflect and interpret intent. And second, the conclusion observed in chapter five remains relevant. Interpretations generated from only one source can prove a disservice to the text and to those engaged with the text. The companion corpus interpretations reflected policy makers as initiative-taking. Furthermore, the sources suggest a positive intent towards education policy implementation.

Finally, the analysis focused on Governor Hastings personal notes, included in the law books at the signing of the compulsory attendance reform of 1895. These notes provided powerful insight regarding the intention of the policy. The governor noted the intentional limit of the policy power. The grammar suggested policy makers considered family choice and self-determination as factors in the design of the policy.

Although penalties for non-compliance existed throughout the history of the timeline of reform, the word choice and wording of the notes impressed the gravity of the policy. Moreover, the statement demonstrated reservations by including the past failed requests. This interdiscursive device exemplified the impact of the policy across other political spheres. Like Penn in 1701, the will of the people prevailed in the ultimate decision of 1895. The concluding statement, which indicated inevitable reform, reconceptualized the policy as a self-control for society (PA GA, 2021).
Three-Dimensional Analysis Now: Descriptive Findings of the TODA Today

The historical examination of pathway policy revealed a timeline of equity and access reform. To understand current perceptions of the phenomena, the next step of the analysis included an examination of present-day policy implementation expression. This aspect of policy provided avenues to explore multiple programs and levels of policy. Regarding the phenomena, implementation impacts the criteria eligible, subsidized, and private pathway of programming. The data in chapters four and five, established that the pathway system underserved the access to subsidized, criteria-based, program eligible population due to limitations of capacity and resources.

However, Adams’ Equity Theory (1961, 1963) illustrates ways context positively and negatively impacted meaning. Similarly, the context of implementation influenced the individual interpretations and perceptions of equity. Hence, the final data analysis examined context specific implementation expressions found within the policy text. The selected expressions incorporated examples of parallel policy implementation. The analysis included the levels and devices of the process essential to address research question three of the study. Appendix C contains the corpus of parallel pathway policies categorized by expression strand (PA GA, 2021).

The US Department of Education Dear Colleagues Letters of 2015 and 2017, found at (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea); (https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid) (US Dept of Education, 2015; 2017) identified in chapter four addressed the implementation of early intervention (EI) transition to school policy. This expression represented one of three parallel policy documents which address the same concept. The others included policy from a 2008 PA Bulletin, found at (https://www.education.pa.gov/) (PDE, 2008) and the
Evidence identified in the collection process indicate these policies remain active. All three documents used similar wording which produced potentially conflicting statements.

The first statement in all three expressions used words which reflected a definition of program access through the age of six (US Department of Education [DOE], 2021; PDE Code, 2021). This age coincided with the PA compulsory age reform of 2019 (PA GA, 2021). The second statement in all three expressions used words which reflected program access contingent upon K eligibility at the age of five (PDE, 2021). In these examples the eligibility terms used in the policy lead to reconceptualized meanings of program access.

First, from the standpoint of families as consumers the inferred message of the policymakers reflects a presupposition of prior knowledge. The wording used suggests a common-sense universal understanding of the differences between the policies of the federally mandated program and the optional state program (US DOE, 2021; PA GA, 2021). Next, each document reflected the voice of authority from stratified governmental positions. Moreover, the cohesion throughout the documents implied control over the pathway. Through these interdisciplinary contexts consumers deduced implicit authority.

These devices of text and conditions of discourse lead to conflicting applications of policy implementation. Specific programs referenced compulsory age to determine EI program access. In this instance, implementation involved the consideration of services through age six. Other programs regarded K eligibility as the determining factor for EI program participation. In this case K eligibility manifests as a required transitional practice. To further complicate the implementation of social practice, a third parallel statement
existed within the text of the three documents. This statement denotes that a team decision, not family choice, determined age six program access (Agran, 2014; Gottfried & Le, 2016).

From the ensuing position of social practice, the conflicts identified within the statements influenced participation practices. On one hand, the context of an official mandate prevents questioning the authority. On the other hand, the context of authority provides justification for implementation practices. Consequently, without the context of the hierarchy across the discourse and a clarification of the intent, the text alludes to service discontinuation at age five.

Finally, the production and distribution of the letter and bulletin provide additional context regarding intent of the message (US DOE, 2015; 2017; PDHS 2008). Although accessible by all consumers the referenced intended recipients included policy and program implementers. Federal and state law governs E.I. as a protected service. The supplementary codes, rules, and regulations detail approved program practices. It can be inferred that the necessity of the authorities to produce and distribute the document, indicated a misalignment in communication of the implementation of services.

The politeness of the wording however, avoided asserting responsibility for the miscommunication or misaligned practices and does not identify who or where. Ironically, these discursive practices of ambiguity further muddled the intent of the message, no one is at fault. While not specifically identified, PA took steps to address the identified issues. The PA Training and Technical Assistance Network (PATTAN) rolled out the Equity is PA Integrated Multi-tiered Systems of Support (PA-MTSS) project fall 2021 (PDE, 2021).

Federal and state HS expressions of transitions to school policy process generated another set of parallel policy context conflicts. Here documents consistently declared
children eligible for K and ineligible for HS/HSSA. The social practice conflicts manifested in the implementation policies of the authority structure between state and local governance. The decentralized educational system provided contextual conflicts. The result of the parallel policy implementation required families participating in HS/HSSA to forfeit the option to wait until state policy of compulsory age.

In the decentralized system, PA GA and PDE awarded local control over programming and implementation policy through compliance to hierarchical rule. With that, individual LEA policy determined the start date of a given school year. These dates fluctuated from year to year based on community context and needs. Specific start dates occurred prior to September 1st and others after. In addition, LEA established policy based on the age range determined by the PA GA, which determined the age of K eligibility in that LEA. And so, the loss or gain of HS eligibility depended on the policy of each LEA.

The second context involved the compulsory age statutes. These laws provided families with their only means of statutory control regarding school compliance. First, by statute families control included the option to participate in early care and early education programming through age six. After which families conformed to the compulsory attendance age by enrolling their child in K or first grade (PA GA, 2019). Once enrolled, LEA policy required compulsory attendance of children. However, this LEA policy also covered eligible five-year-old children enrolled in K. In turn, this policy also included the HS population at age five (Dhuey et al., 2019).

The context of the parallel policy implementation resulted in social practices which limited family options. Policies used the term eligible to control the order of the discourse. The meaning of the word choice limited the power and control the families. The text of the
policy guided or pushed families towards the participation at age five. Transversely, the
policy required families to identify and secure alternative means, to control the entry age
of their children. As this theme transcended through the discourses of education and the
PDHS, the context denoted the interrelated program fell under the authority of Education
and diminished the power of the parallel social reform (Ordine et al., 2018)

Primary authority of PA PKC on the other hand, always belonged to PDE. Statutorily established in 2008, the criteria-based program served as the foundation for statewide implementation of a public universal pre-kindergarten system. The policy included similar policy implementation examples to those identified in EI and HS regarding kindergarten eligibility and team determination language.

In addition, OCDEL documents contained other examples of parallel program implementation designed at providing equity. The OCDEL Reach and Risk report, Program Summary report, and PA PKC program application provided guidance related to stacked participation in multiple criteria-based programs by eligible populations (OCDEL, 2021).

The NIEER report duplicated the reporting of this practice The implementation intent as expressed by OCDEL, supported participation as a means of creating equity for individual children verses promoting equity options to include all eligible children. The context of the message shared across multiple discourses signified the acceptance of the practice (Agran, 2014; (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021; Gottfried & Le, 2016).

With PDE and PDHS governing the OCDEL, the political implications of this recontextualized practice implied justification for offering one child service before another. The wording of the annual program report suggested the practice provided eligible children with programming necessary for success. The nudging of the message influenced social
practice towards participation. Conversely, all three documents reported the need exceeds the current supply of programming in all subsidized and financial criteria-base programming. This inconsistency implies if sufficient resources existed the practice of stacking program participation would become commonplace (PA GA, 2021).

While one policy implementation practice endeavored to expand individual equity, another aspect of the pathway reflected a disproportionate distribution of the resource. The Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards by design aligned with the PDE standards for third through eleventh grade and reflected the Standard Aligned System framework supported by PDE. However, beyond the PA PKC required Common Core aspects of the resource in practice the implementation remained inconsistent. Instead PDE, PDHS, and OCDEL each regulated the resource implementation at various levels (PA GA, 2021).

LEA, PA PKC, HS, and EI programs each used aspects of the standards as a curricular resource. LEA programs under PDE optionally elected to implement the K, first and second grade standards. Similarly, the LEA K4 programs also optionally elected to implement the Early Learning Preschool standards. Conversely, OCDEL required these same LEA programs to use the Early Learning Preschool standards when the LEA operated a PA PKC classroom. With that, PA PKC programs as a matter of policy adhered to the math and literature standards regardless of program implementer. And within the early care and early education system of programs resource, implementation varied as well. Under the authority of the PDHS and OCDEL, Keystone STARS required participating programs to use the ELS. Other programs optionally elected to use the resource (Baron et al., 2016).

The standards as a text, reflected consistency and linkage to the state education standards. The companion standards continuum echoed the alignment between the
discourse of early childhood through high school education. The social practice of implementation across the interrelated programs reflected how PDE valued the resource. Likewise, by recontextualizing only the ELS strands related to common core signified a diminished value of the balance of information. This recontextualization also reflected social practice of assimilating the philosophy of early childhood into the ideology of public-school education. The social practice reflected a reality where PDHS and OCDEL programs of early care required to be controlled in curricular programming. Whereas LEAs elected programming based on their authority within the PDE system (Maniates, 2016).

One new policy practice included assessing and evaluating children upon entry into public school. KEI/KEA practice measured readiness categories. The results aimed at predicting needs and potentially identify targeted future outcomes. The limited assessment implementation depended on grants, program compliance, or optional programming. Without consistent support for program implementation, verifying the full potential of the tool remained unknow. However, to implementers the lack of support defined the dominant discourse of the policy. As reflected in the literature review, the inconsistent practice implementation, signified a lack of support from the educational authority, PDE. Conversely, additional research reflected the intent of the program implementers to provide support for continued policy implementation (Agran, 2014; Weisenfeld et al., 2020).

A lack of support for the KEI/KEA suggests an irony in the implementation practice. On paper, a targeted program reflects school most in need of equity programming. Here implementation is optional. Identifying areas with the greatest needs could generate an alternate perspective and could lead to resource distribution designed to meet the
assessed need. The current distribution maps reflect a different story (Burchinal et al., 2020; Little et al., 2020; OCDEL, 2021; Ohle & Harvey, 2019; PDE, 2021).

Finally, in 2020-2021 a global pandemic left an indelible mark on every aspect of life, including education. Compulsory education attendance law reform enacted months prior to the outbreak took on a new meaning. The state required compulsory attendance of children ages 8-17 from 1895 – 2019. For one-hundred and twenty-five years the Commonwealth controlled attendance through a parallel set of policies enacted by the judicial system and PDHS. Noncompliance resulted in legal action of fines, court, and potentially, the removal of the children from the home. The consequence for declining the right to the free public-school education, results in truancy, a legal violation. June 2019, this policy changed to include ages 6-18* effective 2021* further limiting family choice (GA, 2021; PDE 2021).

During the COVID 19 crisis the PDE and PDHS faced a crisis. School buildings closed due to the pandemic. Families lost their access to the public school; however, policy require attendance compliance. To meet the statute and provide access equitably, the state enacted policy which provided access of technology infrastructure, resources, curriculum, and instruction to every child required to attend. Prior to the pandemic, families who expressed similar context did not receive the same support (PA GA, 2021).

According to the media, the pandemic caused a financial strain to the system, and a physical and emotional strain on educators. However, the swift enactment of pandemic policies demonstrated the governments’ ability to address adverse context. The execution of the COVID 19 reforms and the enforcement of truancy laws represent diverse perspectives to the response of the responsibility to the compulsory attendance laws.
Commentary

In this chapter the TODA analysis focused on the levels and devices of the text, discursive practices, and social discourse of the selected expressions of implementation of policy beginning in 1683. It concludes with the Monday, January 25, 2021, White House Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government signed J. R. Biden Jr., President of the United States which defined equity by stating (Exec. Order No. 13985, 2021)

“Section 1. Policy. Equal opportunity is the bedrock of American democracy, and our diversity is one of our country’s greatest strengths. …Entrenched disparities in our laws and public policies and in our public and private institutions, have often denied that equal opportunity to individuals and communities.

Sec. 2. Definitions. For purposes of this order: (a) The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. (b) The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, which have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.” The White House Briefing Room, 2021 (https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential).

This signaled an exciting opportunity in education if enforced. Ending optional compliance with equity and access-based initiatives and requiring common-sense language observance of the law. Next, chapter 7 considers how to synthesize the findings unearthed in my dissertation and gestures towards implications of my systems review.
Chapter 7
Discussion

To understand the context of equity and access in pathways to public school in Pennsylvania, it is important to determine when school begins. By law, a child's formal education begins when the family elects to enter their child no later than 6 years old. Currently by definition this is not determined by a grade level but rather, the term beginner. In PA, a beginner can be a child participating in kindergarten or a child who enters school as a first grader. With that, it is necessary to examine policy enacted and programs available to children on the pathway to become a beginner. The pathway programs serves both targeted populations and general population. The identified expressions of equity in K, EI, PA PKC, CCIS, TANF, STARS, LEA, K4, HS, HSSA, childcare, private, faith-based and family care programs (Agran, 2014; Gottfried & Le, 2016; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

Synthesized Findings

I learned that religious and charity organizations initially implemented Kindergarten as a readiness program. But since 1911 PDE considers K an integral aspect of Education in PA. When available K is open to every age eligible resident in the LEA. K eligibility is based on LEA criteria, offered in half day and full day formats. And there is no universal implementation strategy across the 500 school districts regarding curriculum instruction, start dates, entry dates, or transportation (Ordine et al., 2018; PA GA, 2021).

Also, select districts offer targeted K4 preschool programs. LEA funds these programs with federal, state, and local dollars; but the funding bodies establish the criteria and space available. HS initiated in 1965 is a targeted program based on poverty level. HS and HSSA qualifying families receive both early learning and family benefits. Initially
restricted to 100% of the poverty level, according to the PDHS website, programs now include children up to 130% of the poverty level. Research over the last five years examining HS focuses on long-term impact versus transitional impact. Head Start, HSSA ongoing policy discussions include the need for increased funding, readiness, and transitioning to school (Maniates, 2016; OCDEL, 2015; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

PA PKC, a reform added to PA law in March of 2008, is a statewide universal Pre-K initiative currently implemented for a targeted population. By design PA PKC targeted population policy as focused on providing or creating equity in opportunity. The identified criteria-based population from the Nation at Risk Report identified populations most at risk for school failure. PA PKC programming and funding has increased exponentially in its 13 years. Programs receive funding through competitive grants. The program funds cycles through years of expansion and maintenance. Programs range from public and private childcare and early learning programs to Intermediate Unit, HS, and LEA grantees.

CCIS and TANF childcare subsidies are the most widely used targeted pathway initiative. These funds cover programs that offer a variety of services to working families. The state distributes the benefits directly to program providers. The state requires families to pay a portion in the form of a copay. Initial reimbursement rates are based on a countywide market survey. The distribution of funds is consistent throughout a county and each county has its own unique baseline. These funds are a combination of federal and state dollars (Haskins & Weidinger, 2019).

Programs are market driven and reflect the economic position of the area. For example, although adjacent to one another, Union County rates are significantly higher than Northumberland County rates, but lower than Center County rates. Additionally,
programs are eligible to receive additional funding, in the form of a tiered reimbursement scale, based on the program participation in the Keystone Stars quality initiative, with STAR 4 programs receiving the highest reimbursements (Haskins & Weidinger, 2019).

As a result, costs do not drive market rates, the consumers ability to pay drives the rate. This suggest that the context of need has shifted. Consequently, the funds are no longer equitably distributed. With that, I suggest policy consider available research on changing demographics, employment, specific school trends, and program availability, to determine the funding distribution formula (Barnett & Nores, 2018; Woodrow & Press, 2018).

- These programs highlight policy driven and funded pathways.
- Based on policy, children do not have “rights,” they have “the right to” a free education.
- The intent of education comes under question when the state threatens children, parents, families, and guardians for non-compliance of attendance and participation policy for a period of 13 chronological years.
- In Kerstetter, the judicial system distinctly defined the meaning of the “common-sense” policy, demonstrating there is nothing common, about common-sense language. (Commonwealth v. Kerstetter, 62 A.3d 1065 (Comm. Ct. 2013).
- There are multiple ways to interpret visual representations of language.
- Considering the intent of equity and access, for equity to exist in the eligibility and criteria process and to ensure access, to the necessary supports and services, for the individual child, both objective and subjective concepts, constructs, and context require consideration, in the decision making, evaluation, and support processes.
- There is a trend of expanding existing programs with new funding versus expanding into underserved areas and populations.
• The term eligible or eligibility can influence the pathway.

• In common-sense language, the term eligible is inclusive. So, policy based on eligibility is equitable when it provides the means for every eligible child to participate.

• Kindergarten policy language indicates the program is not a guarantee. Thus, the pathways to enter school at the compulsory age, do not guarantee kindergarten.

• Geographic disparities exist across PA regarding the percent eligible and percent served

• When a child becomes eligible for kindergarten, they are ineligible for Head Start.

• PA PKC contains ambiguous language regarding eligibility and additional year of services. LEA determined not specific criteria based.

• EI eligibility has a similar language to PA PKC. EI is a guarantee for qualified children. Additional language the code and bulletin to providers supports an additional year. Team determined language infers family do not have the control to make the decision.

• The recently amended CCIS eligibility language now includes support for an additional year. The document contains ambiguous language referencing kindergarten eligibility. Sometimes language intended to be inclusive, is offensive.

• The LEA pathway is district specific. Services and benefits vary.

• “At the discretion of,” “with the support of,” “as determined by,” and “may,” - are all concepts included within policy language regarding possibilities.

• Teams of EI and LEA decision makers included Families in the kindergarten determination process; however, family choice is not the ultimate factor.

• Select geographic regions have less access to programming as represented by percent eligible and percent served.
Descriptive Findings - Perspectives of Meaning

Meaning – knowledge – or – understanding. Regardless of how you express it, what it is, what it does, and what it means to us is how we make sense of the text, discursive practices, and social practices. Common-sense language is the theme that runs through policy from 1681 through 2021. It assumes we all know the same, believe the same, and interpret the same. Even more, it assumes we all have access to the same resources of common-sense to form our common-sense. Through this synthesized analysis of the common-sense expressions of equity and access, I developed interpretations of the corpus.

Throughout the history of reform, PA policymakers introduced, addressed, and limited equity and access in policy implementation. William Penn’s Frame of 1683 includes the right to an education. The intent provides equity and access to excluded individuals. In concept, education, as a social reform, ensures a means of self-sufficiency. This, in theory, mitigates the need for government assistance by empowering self-reliance. By 1700, the cost benefit analysis concept fails to persuade the delegates. Penn goes against his personal values, yields to their wishes, and excludes the right of education in 1701.

As this study interprets meaning, based on Penn’s language, the delegates compelled the reform. Just as the General Assembly compelled Governor Hastings into signing the compulsory attendance education law nearly two-hundred years later in 1895. These expressions serve as the only two examples of policy which limit access and equity, and which include a written explanation for the action (PA GA, 2021; Wickersham, 1886).

Overall, the statutes enacted throughout the seventeen-hundred’s and into 1885 include language which addresses the development and needs of the student population. The inclusion of orphans and children with disabilities in parallel social and educational
reforms throughout the period reflects equity and access for an underrepresented population. The 1828 introduction of infant schools in the Commonwealth reveals another example of equity in programming. These systems provide a safe environment for children and create equity for constituents in their effort to obtain work and support their families.

With the turn of the century, policymakers implement curriculum and instruction in a way that address needs by policy design. Throughout the process, the standards of curriculum included an array of academic and aesthetic subjects, based on levels of individualized instruction. It also included stratified career choice of agricultural, business, trade, technology, education, and professional fields. The Public-School Code Act of 1949 continues to evolve, ever mindful of the diverse, unique, individual population served.

*How I interpret the phenomena common-sense expressions of the corpus.*

- Humans are unique.
- Equal education is a goal.
- The Commonwealth encourages discourse on reform and policy.
- People measure equal in amounts. People measure equity in meaning.
- Implementing the concept of equity helps to reach and preserve the goal.
- If the discourse of policy consistently manages and controls, the funding distribution and service implementation, of pathway programs, policy will achieve access equity.
- There are geographic regions where the population eligible for programming and the population served by the programming vary, by significant percentage.
- Only one of the pathways explored, can serve all eligible children.
- Policy meaning is context specific. Policy wording is meaning specific. People interpret the wording and meaning of policy based on context.
• Targeted programs have eligibility criteria which includes either physical and intellectual needs, or financial needs, or financial and risk needs, or LEA defined needs.
• There are temporal (time) words in policy which could limit or define power and control of equity and access. Example – when eligible for K.
• The pathway policies do not mandate possibilities.
• Eligibility does not always equal participation, when and where choice is an option.
• The right “to an education” is a guarantee within the PA Constitution.
• The manifestation of LEA education is not a guarantee in the PA Constitution.
• LEA policy can vary. LEA opportunity can vary. This is legal in decentralized systems.
• A community drives LEA policies, differences in policies and implementation are legal (OCDEL, 2021; PA GA, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

Interpretations of possible compulsory education age pathway specific access derived from the common-sense implementation expression findings of the corpus and analysis.
1) PA Pre K Counts A) possible by statute. B) LEA decision both objective and subjective in nature, not solely choice of parent.
2) CCIS STAR 4 A) possible based on statute. B) availability limited to access C) multiple instances in statute where language can be a barrier.
3) EI A) possible by statute. B) requires objective and subjective decision, not choice. C) terminology is subjective to meaning in multiple instances in statute, code, and bulletin.
4) Head Start currently not possible due to policy use of term "eligible".
5) LEA K4 A) possible if LEA team offers program. B) LEA team requires a subjective objective decision to support continued services. C) if access is available.
6) Family empowerment / choice A) possible with the tools necessary to meet their choice.
The ways I interpret the term “eligible” as used, in the common-sense language of policy, to be a barrier, for pathway program participation.

✓ The term eligible for kindergarten indicates children are ineligible for Head Start.
✓ Families are compelled to attend kindergarten when they would like to consider extending early childhood for an additional year.
✓ The term eligible results in additional out of pocket costs for a family if they want to have the same choice to participate in an equity targeted program, as someone who does not participate, in the targeted program.
✓ I consider How families might feel when they are part of a “required” (labeled) population (STAR 4 programs must accept a specific number of CCIS families).
✓ I think of ineligibility for all the families who do not have an advocate to explain the meaning of eligible regarding EI, CCIS and PKC policy.
✓ Ditto for families who do not have a copy of the agreement, recommendation, or decision used in EI, PA PKC and LEA policy to determine K6 participation.
✓ I help families who do not know they have the social capital to navigate the system.
✓ Compulsory inequity is real, and it is a problem.

Theoretical Implications

Government policy aims to address the myriad of contextual factors impacting the execution of the constitution. Understanding the meaning and intent of the policy and practice requires communication between policy consumers and policy makers. To facilitate the process, policy makers develop policy using common-sense language. By design, policy consumers universally understand language deemed common-sense. In concept, the common-sense language policymakers use explains the policy, the intent of
the policy, and ensuing intent of policy practice. Through common-sense language, the implementation and enforcement of the policy requires no additional justification.

Context impacts the meaning of policy. The policy creation process results in the implementation of programs, services, and initiatives specifically designed to address the identified factors. The context and factors contribute to policy established criteria of participation eligibility. Criteria assessments confirmed the eligibility of the potential recipients who desired to participate. And lastly, for the policy process of equity to work, the intended eligible populations required the prerequisite access to participate in the implemented program, service, or initiative (Morrill, 2001; Stipek et al., 2017).

The Commonwealth of PA educational system is comprised of a network of policies governed by federal, state, and local agents. The policy governing pathways into compulsory education includes a network of educational and human service programs and programming. An important attribute of the policy making process ensures the system provides equal educational opportunity. The policies lay the foundation for how the system operates, implements, and regulates programs and programming.

The Commonwealth shares these policies and practices through a variety of formats. Families use the policy to understand 1) the availability of, 2) the purpose of, and 3) how to participate in systems programs and programming. Equally important, families need consistent policy messaging to interpret the role of equity, in context to program eligibility, access, and compulsory requirements. As such, these policies, and practices, also warrant equity by design (Beckman, 2017; Johnson & Patte, 2018).

Equity, as a policy process, confronts the context and factors impacting equality. This policy process results in the implementation of programs, services, and initiatives that
are specifically designed to address the identified factors. The context and factors contribute to the policy established criteria of participation eligibility. Criteria assessments confirm the eligibility of the potential program policy recipients who desire to participate. And lastly, for the policy process of equity to work, the intended eligible populations require the prerequisite access to participate in the implemented program or initiative.

Though policy regulates the eligibility criteria of equity programming legal rights, mandates, regulations, requests for assistance, and choice further impact participation. When policy ensures program access, families have pathway into school possibilities. When policy ensures the equitable distribution of resources and availability, families have pathway into school options. When policy ensures access and availability, families have equity in the pathway process (Egalite et al., 2020; Mathers & Ereky-Stevens, 2018).

These examples of expressions of text demonstrated ways in which consumers formed alternate interpretations of the policy common-sense language. When potentially conflicting expressions exist within the documents of an officially recognized authority, there is an assumption of validity. When the pattern vertically and horizontally repeats itself across the other policy documents of the discourse there is an assumption of reliability. Interpretation depends upon the focus or contextual factors of the consumer.

In PA, the use of the term eligibility impacts implementation strategies and restricts participation. HS eligibility from the social practice stance provides a definitive context for families without means to defer kindergarten. In this case the term eligibility equals a lack of choice or options. Conversely, the limitation of the policy provides consistency in the pathway. The foundations of HS provide services to the family and children who may benefit most from an equity-based program. Alternative social practice suggests the
additional year of eligibility would benefit the families. As the program historically serves less than one-third of the eligible families in PA, providing additional time to specific children creates an addition context of equity balance (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2021).

One perspective of the OCDEL PA PKC initiative reflects the opposite impact of the desired results. All HS children are eligible for PA PKC. Not all PA PKC children are eligible for HS. Currently less than a third of all HS eligible children have access to programs. In geographic regions of PA, the PA PKC population served exceeds the HS population served. Moreover, there are HS eligible children without access to HS, who are also without access to PA PKC. While there are other eligible children with access to both.

Regarding equity, this begs the question. If there are not enough spaces for the children who are eligible to participate in the most restrictive criteria eligible program, HS, how is equity served by granting individual children access to two programs? Philosophically, a family confronting the social practice of resource distribution, reflects a less equitable interpretation of policy implementation (Egalite et al., 2020; Morrill, 2001).

The curricular philosophy of approaching learning through play represents the cornerstone of the ELS framework. Beginning at birth and extending through second grade, the standards include instruction, practice, materials, and resources found on the PDE SAS and OCDEL SAS databases. This philosophy also represents an aspect of contention between the discourse of early childhood and education. The assessment driven years of Adequate Yearly Progress has produced a cadre of consumers reliant upon testing outcomes to measure student growth. Early learning educators, on the other hand, continue to use tools and conduct action and applied research supporting the value of a play-based curriculum (Baron et al., 2016; DeLuca et al., 2020; Johnson & Patte, 2018).
Lack of support remains a common theme regarding significant equity initiatives for our youngest constituents. Statutes, laws, policies, rules, regulations, initiatives, incentives, programs, mandates, entitlements, subsidies, and curriculum designed in the best interest of the child are all enacted upon children. But by whom, at what cost? And for what purpose? And while the PA ELS include DAP in the content, the document remains unenforced. This message transcends through all levels and discourses relating to education and care of children in PA (Baron et al., 2016; Beckman, 2017; Dalli et al., 2018; Johnson & Patte, 2018; Mathers & Ereky-Stevens, 2018).

Throughout my dissertation work the social practices and tendencies exemplified most often were the recontextualization and commodification of early care and early education programs. I interpreted these to indicate, that policy controls the discourse text. Policy controls the discourse practice of distribution. Policy controls the discourse practice of consumption. And policy controls the social practice of the discourse of the early care and early education pathway (Ivie, 2019).

These assumptions impose pressure on early care and education to produce a commodity. The value of the commodity is not in the future potential of the individual children. The value represents fulfilling the preamble of the constitution. With so much resting on the shoulders of our youngest consumers of policy and so much resting on the lowest paid workers in the educational continuum, consistency in policy test, production, distribution, consumption, practice, and implementation is imperative (Moss, 2018).

However, as reflected in the implementation of social practice, the current common-sense language used in the myriad of policies governing the practice, is insufficient. A previous legal case confirmed kindergarten as an optional LEA department.
The case also confirmed kindergarten participation as an optional family decision. Finally, this legal case confirmed LEA authority to establish policies, practices, and implementation strategies which are inconsistently applied across the Commonwealth. From one case to the next, for thirty-nine years, the system remained unchallenged, until 2013.

A family challenged the system. This family dared to impose their power of control of choice. This family dared to suggest the transitions into school programs were flawed. This family dared to imply the information available to the common person was inaccurate. This family dared to fight for rights they thought they had. This family lost.

Through three levels of court, this family maintained their perspective and based their understanding on their interpretation of the words of the policy. Common-sense, was repeated over and again throughout the legal proceedings. The five members representing the stratified hierarchy of the judicial legal system, did not agree on the common sense meaning of a policy. In the end, two members of the system interpreted the policy akin to the family. Three members did not. Common-sense indicated the identified common-sense inconsistencies within the policy, warranted a review (Stefkovich, 2010).

Throughout my career it has been my experience that when policy inconsistencies were brought to policy makers, they began the process to address 1) the text devices which impact the meaning of the policy, 2) the discursive practice inconsistencies which impacted the production and distribution of the interpretation of the policy, and 3) the contextual factors that impact the perception of the implementation of the policy.

As a result of this process, policy makers implemented reforms perceived as 1) limiting the control of families, and 2) further restricting the freedom within the right to a free, compulsory education, and 3) enforces compliance through intimidation.
Or…

As a result, policy makers implemented reforms interpreted as 1) attempting to clarify the common-sense text of the existing policy, 2) enforcing consistency in access, implementation, and opportunity across programs, and 3) protecting families from future litigation, which results in adverse, personal, and social ramifications (Stefkovich, 2010).

You say potatoes, I say potatoes.

It is context which provides the means to interpret the meaning.

*Implications Addressing BIG 3 Questions as interpreted through the meaning of equity and access in the discourse of current research policy and reform.*

There is more than one meaning (aka knowledge, understanding, perception and interpretation) of the term “equity” as it applies to equity and access in education. Equal, Equality and Equity are discourse terms commonly interchanged. The terms are dissimilar in meaning, but similar in spelling. If a policy is designed and implemented based on equality; “=” everyone receives the same or equal amounts of the supports, services, and resources. If a policy is designed and implemented based on equity not everyone will receive the same amount of supports services and resources. The experience of equity and the experience of equal are not the same (Adams, 1961, 1963; Folger, 2013).

We have learned is that if a policy is implemented based on the discourse of equity, then measures are put in place to provide supports and services specific to the needs of the individual to reach a state of being equal or equality. The phrase Equity of Opportunity is used in the discourse on United States government website in relationship to equal education. The same phrase is not found in the discourse of PA statute, code, or bulletins relating to pathways to school programming. And the phrase is only found in the discourse
of EI pathway in the corresponding federal discourse letters which are designed to ensure LRE, a form of the phenomena (Agran, 2014; Gottfried & Le, 2016; Dalli et al., 2018).

The discourse of compulsory age policy historically has provided a pathway to equity and access for families who have means to choose this pathway. The discourse of recent policy bulletins, letters, and reforms related to CCIS include implementation strategies to provide equity and access for families who qualify for, and who use this pathway, and who have access to high quality programs. Again, these implementation strategies of the policy do not mean equity = equality (Egalite et al., 2020).


There are social, economic, and geographic barriers to pathways. While policy makers designed the process of the cooperative grants system to provide applicant equity, stakeholder groups perceive the geographic distribution of the system as inherently biased. It takes a catalyst to initiate policy reform (Adams & Hoffman, 1960; Morrill, 2001).

Families interpreted pathway policy meaning multiple ways. There are consequences for not understanding the common-sense meaning and for interpreting the common sense meaning incorrectly. Sometimes words added to code can change meaning. There are multiple ways to define pathways to school through meaning (PA GA, 2021).

In addition, there is a difference between the eligible population and the population served. Not all humans have access to the same resources supports and services. Multiple barriers to aspects of pathways participation exist. Eligibility criteria can present a social barrier for participation. Lastly, there is more than one area, where the interdependent
policies of PDE and PDHS, impact access (Barnett & Nores, 2018; Briggs, 2018; Johnson & Patte, 2018).

Mandated programs, designed to create equity and access, which provide targeted supports and services, exist. Within each pathway there are differences in implementation which can influence participation. PA statute, code, and bulletin policy regarding pathway programs do not include the term equity of opportunity (Hotz & Wiswall, 2019; McIntyre et al., 2007; OCDEL, 2021; PA GA, 2021; PDE, 2021; PDHS, 2021).

My interpretations of the common-sense language supporting equity and access and facilitating compulsory age transitions.

Statute is flexible in age range and entry level regarding compulsory age. Head Start families can opt to use alternative methods between Head Start and compulsory age as facilitated by statute. There is new CCIS subsidy language supporting families through compulsory age. STAR 4, the Commonwealth designated highest level of quality early care and early education, is not accessible to all eligible families.

Next, EI policy requires services rendered through compulsory age. Policy directs programs to consider this viable option when appropriate. PA PKC transitions by statute are under conditions agreed upon by the transitioning team. However, LEA PK 4 is an alternative with policies specific to the LEA. District program are only accessible to eligible children, where available. The lack of consistency can be intimidating.

The policies promote choice by families. However, this is dependent upon their knowledge and understanding of existing policy, and their interpretation of common-sense terms. To be successful, families require support from the sending program or the LEA, access to eligible programs, and a shared meaning between the families and the programs.
Specifically, families need help with policies that include potential conflicts, for example, the term eligible (Briggs, 2018; Dalli et al., 2018; Hotz & Wiswall, 2019; Maniates, 2016).

**Practical Implications**

Pathways to compulsory age entry reflect a perspective of possibility and probability. The possible pathways include - HS, HSSA, PA PKC, EI, CCIS, STAR 4, LEA K4, K5, K6 programs and family choice. Within each realm of possibility, there are also conditions of probability. Criteria interpretations create a barrier to equity. Probability is based on both the access to the program as well as how the team interprets the meaning.

Pathway eligibility criteria is both subjective and objective. Individuals still interpret and perceive objective decisions made without influence or bias and subjective decisions founded on personal values, feelings, opinions, biases, and intuition based on context. Decision Trees and Event Trees provide another way to exemplify equity and access in the pathways available to families.

A decision tree can exemplify the possible options if equity and access are implemented. Whereas an event tree can show a narrowed aspect of the system. If all options are offered, a family could choose pathways that included changing programs to find goodness of fit, ensuring the least restrictive environment (LRE) in programming, participating in the highest level of quality, applying subsidized funding to faith-based and private programs, and electing to extend early care and education through compulsory age.

The decision tree model in Figure 18 uses the data collected from this critical discourse study to illustrate the pathways identified and options. This illustration represents only the programs highlighted in the study. The tree also visually represents how the decisions a family has to make can seem overwhelming.
Figure 18
Figure 18. Decision Tree Possible Pathways – The Wicked Problem
As indicated in the introduction, a “Wicked Problem” contains context issues which render the problem impossible to solve. The following event tree illustrations each contain a specific context impacting decisions on the pathway causing wicked problems (Cooper et al., 2020; Daviter, 2019; Dewey 1938b; Zhu & Bradbury, 2015). Figure 19 illustrates an event tree with barriers imposed by lack of access to a program for which families are eligible. This representation can be caused by issues including hours of operation, no

**Figure 19**

*Pathway Event Tree - Program Eligible ~ No Access*
available spaces, or a lack of public transportation. In this example, eligible families are required to choose alternative pathways that may not offer equity-based programming.

Eligibility criteria can also result in a wicked problem for families who do not meet the requirements. The cutoff point, participation requirements, or required documentation can prove challenging for families. Figure 20. illustrates an event tree with barriers imposed by lack of eligibility to programs which are otherwise available for participation.

**Figure 20**

*Pathway Event Tree - Program Available ~ Ineligible*
And while eligibility to criteria-based programming is a challenge for some, financial means represents its own wicked problem along the pathway. The event tree of Figure 21 illustrates barriers imposed by lack of mean. Families who do not meet the eligibility criteria for equity-based programs may also lack the financial support systems to access equal or adequate programming. Choices are further limited in this illustration.

**Figure 21**

*Pathway Event Tree - Program Available ~ No Means*
Finally, Figure 22 illustrates an event tree with barriers imposed by lack of availability to pathways programs for which families are eligible. Unlike Figure 19, equity in geographic distribution of program resources becomes part of the interpretation of policy equity. When specific geographic regions appear to be continuously passed over for grants and expansion, the stakeholders can view the context of their situation as inequitable.

**Figure 22**

*Pathway Event Tree - Program Unavailable ~ Eligible*
These illustrations represent just 4 of the possibilities of the greater Wicked problem. In each option a family can narrow their probability and possibility by defining the criteria of the decision tree. These trees are fluid, as the context in many instances such as program access, spaces, and funding availability is in a continuous state of flux. Criteria eligible programming is further impacted by meeting program eligibility. An in-depth discussion of the implications of the wicked problem as related to RQ2 and RQ3 follows.

Implications of RQ2 in an effort to respond to the Wicked problem of access. While Equity programs exist, access remains the Wicked Problem. The expressions illustrated the measurable geographic distribution differences between the number of children eligible and the number of children served in pathway programming. These expressions represent one meaning of equity and access and access. On close examination, other meanings of equity and access represented in expressions indicate that not all children in the Commonwealth qualify or a program. There are over 70% of qualified children without access to any of the programs for which they are qualified, except kindergarten. However, select children simultaneously have access to multiple programs including CCIS, Head Start, PA Pre K Counts, and Head Start supplemental (OCDEL, 2021).

Likewise, while all children eligible for STARS are eligible for STAR 4 programs, there is not enough capacity to serve the population. In other words, there is not enough for all children to have equal access to the highest level of care. This becomes even more precocious when you consider that a program is required to hold spaces for children in CCIS, but the number is only a % of the capacity. Lack of access to the highest level of care includes families participating in the TANF, Head Start, and Head Start Supplemental programs as well (DeLuca et al., 2020; Haskins & Weidinger, 2019; Moss 2018).
On the other hand, criteria are in place which impedes the ability of programs to meet the requirements of the highest level of care. Programs which traditionally met or exceeded the expectations of the community and sending schools, now find they no longer meet the newly established goals and initiatives of state and schooling expectations (Halpern, 2013; Hemelt & Rosen, 2016; Johnson & Patte, 2018; Zhu & Bradbury, 2015)

Finally, the images also indicated not all children had access to the same K experience. K in public schools is LEA policy controlled. Each district implements policy within PDE regulation (PA GA, 2021). As recently as 2015-2016, a strike in central PA changed the start date for school. The LEA K eligibility date was attached to the first day of school. Eligibility was LEA specific. CCIS policy at the time did not support payments for children in childcare who were K eligible. When school started, every K class had at least one student who would have been in an alternative program for an additional year had the policy not been in place at the time (Dhuey et al., 2019; Ordine et al., 2018).

This is one practice which was addressed in an OCDEL bulletin in circa 2010 asking districts to adopt a code whereas children would be eligible on or before September 1st of a school year. Had I known I would be writing this a decade later, I would have framed it. But that was 4 jobs and 7 laptops ago. It is nowhere to be found on the internet or the Legislative Bureau Library Bulletin resources. It was however signed by Edward G. Rendell, Governor, Gerald L. Zahorchak, D.Ed. Secretary of Education, and Harriet Deitcher Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning. It was issued prior to the beginning of the school year, just in time for Dr. DiRocco of LASD, Dr. Johnson of SASD, and Dr. Tomesetti of MASD to change the planned start dates. September 1st has since hit the tipping point of normative LEA practice (PDE 2021).
Other LEA kindergarten policies continue to cause angst for families. These included transportation and length and time of programming day. Some schools still do not have the capacity to provide both way transportation. In addition, some families have no choices regarding the assignment of program times. Finally, some families do not have access to full day K. These issues can be a challenge for working families.

Transportation, full time, and ½ day kindergarten option are another LEA policy based on the LEA context. The Commonwealth has introduced legislation to address some of these contexts. As of the completion of this study, the current practices are supported by policy. However, reform has been reintroduced over the last two sessions of legislative activity to address the inconsistencies between LEA programming (PA GA, 2021; PDE, 2021; Smith & Terry, 2013).

**Future Implications**

The Wicked Problem in chapter one suggests that 1) there is not a direct path to kindergarten, 2) pathway options require family decision making, 3) often the decisions require sacrifices. Although the illustrations provide the levels of the decision-making process, the pathways are not accessible to all families. A pathway is only accessible by implementing the family context and standpoint.

Even still, due to a lack of program availability, not every family who has access, is able to participate in the process. That being said, even when families have all the information, share the same meaning, understand the program implementation criteria, and can make informed decisions, the final decision is up to a family. Equity and access to the pathways will always be context specific.
Interpretations of Guarantees versus possibilities and probabilities, the scale of equity from Possible to Probable.

1. Guarantees include a) Choice dependent upon means. b) Program defined by law (EI).

2. Possibility includes a) Choice when families are deemed eligible for available programs; (CCIS, EI). Choice when families have access to the programs which they eligible; (CCIS EI). Choice when facilitated by currently participating programs; (PA PKC, EI).

3. Probability is dependent upon a) Availability of programming. b) Access to eligible programming. c) Support of programs in which families participating.

4. Choice by means. a) Means are typically associated with financial assets. In this case means can include other factors such as knowledge, a support system, and context.

There are additional interpretations of equity and access pathways to school found in literature facilitated through non-financial means. For example, interpretations indicated an international trend associated with school entry policies where mother's plan the childbirth date to coincide with policy. The trend indicates that Mother's intentionally planned childbirth to control the school entry date range of their child. For those mothers who plan to have their child be the eldest in the cohort, birth dates are planned for September of January during the first month of school. For mothers who plan to have the youngest in a cohort, the opposite is true and August birth dates are selected. In both cases families are actively making school entry date decisions based on compulsory age. These non-financial means ensure families determine their own pathway (Mallinson et al., 2019).

Perceptions indicate that families who have knowledge of school policies and dates, which align with values, often move to those districts. These moves may cause financial hardship when no access to equitable housing is available. Yet other perceptions suggest
families are willing to change their career or employment due to the alignment with school policies and a child's age. Similarly, interpretations indicate families also move according to the alignment of school policy values with family values (Mallinson et al., 2019).

Across the nation, the perception exists that families who wish to control the entry of their child into the public system, are selecting alternate educational entities supporting family choice, such as Cyber, charter, homeschooling, private academic school, parochial school, and faith-based school options. Policy makers perceive advocates to play an important intentional role in supporting family choice. The grassroots and individual efforts include the services of court appointed personal and professional advocates, and attorney advocacy to meet the family and child's needs (Doran et al., 2019; Paciorek, 2007).

Implications of RQ 3: The expressions of pathway implementation equity and access represent one perspective of meaning derived through discourse analysis. To have access to equity in the pathways to school, families must be a) Informed of pathway options and access. b) Aware of opportunities and navigation systems pathways. And c) Knowledgeable of how to determine access points. Once this is achieved, families also need to be: a) Able to implement a plan. b) Able to acquire the means to reach access points. And c) Able to meet the eligibility standards and requirements. However, even with access and eligibility, a family may choose a different pathway due to social, economic, and personal barriers (Dalli et al., 2018; Doran et al., 2019; Kagan et al., 2018).

Implications of pathway perception suggest that to meet the access and equity needs of a family, pathways must ensure: 1) All options are available. 2) Options meet all needs. 3) Options remove all barriers. 4) And provide the means, to access the pathway of choice, without the stigma of targeted intervention (Dhuey et al., 2019; Johnson & Patte, 2018).
Final Remarks

This chapter synthesized the findings identified through the three-dimensional TODA analysis in chapters four, five, and six. Throughout the analysis, while the subtle difference in “text” tendencies such as the use of words like “may” and “can” impact policy, these words are defined by a value. And while the implementation decision is not always agreed upon, words have defined meanings. Conversely, production, distribution, and consumption played the biggest roles in the interpretation of the policy as a text.

The study demonstrated that when policy is produced simultaneously by the multiple stratified hierarchical levels, there were instances where horizontal and vertical misalignment occurred. Likewise, when policy was produced in parallel departments or offices, these were opportunities for misalignment of both language and implementation. Whereas in regard to distribution, the expansion of data bases, websites, combined with alternate formats for retrieving data such book, letters, as in-person, and LEA policy have generated an expansive, almost limitless, source of potential accurate and inaccurate data.

As a result, the consumption of the discourse text, or the social practice, is dependent upon these distributive and productive practices. The meaning of the pathway policy is impacted most profoundly by what information is accessible by the most credible source. With that, the tendencies the study identified as most destructive to the pathway philosophy included commodification, assimilation, manifestation, and ambiguity. Whereas horizontal and vertical alignment promote and create consistency within and across discourse text, these destructive tendencies have demonstrated the ability to interfere with, impede, and disrupt pathway initiatives as demonstrated with the mixed implementation of the ELS.
This chapter also offered a host of possibilities, perceptions, and approaches to access equity along the pathway. However, the pathway is not only determined by access and eligibility to funded programs. The paradigm shift of family empowerment is an aspect of equity and access, which the research study did not fully explore (Cooper et al., 2020). This implies the shift will occur when 1) families understand that a choice is available, 2) families understand what the choices mean, 3) families are aware of the consequences of the choice and 4) families have the means to implement a choice.

Although policy regulates the eligibility criteria of equity programming; legal right, mandate, regulation, request for assistance, and choice further impacts participation. When policy ensures program access, families have opportunity to the pathway into school. When policy ensures the equitable distribution of resources through availability, families have options on the pathway into school. And, when policy ensures access and availability, families have equity in the pathways into school process (Jones, 2018).
Chapter 8

Conclusion

My study addresses the PA equity call to action. To do so, this study identified, asked, and responded to three research questions

RQ 1: In what ways are equity and access expressed in the text discourse of the pathway policy system?

Aspects of the pathway programs and programming have been an aspect of the Commonwealth government policy from the inception of the formation of the government in 1681. The policy is expressed in parallel forms under the Department of Human Services and The Department of Education. Equity and Access pathway programs and programming are expressed in written policy at the federal, state, and local level.

Within the expressions of equity and access identified in the pathway, there are options which are available by choice, by fixed criteria eligibility, by program or funding availability, and by program or criteria determination. Some of the most recognized pathway programming include TANF, CCIS, Kindergarten (K5), Head Start and Early Intervention. Less well known include Keystone Stars, STAR 4, K4, K6, Pre-K Counts, The PA Early Learning Standards, and the PA COVID 19 emergency statutes (Haskins & Weidinger, 2019; PA GA 2021; PDE, 2021).

RQ 2: In what ways do the visual expressions of the pathway system policy and practice discourse influence the meaning of equity and access?

Expressions of the policy discourse can be found or located in a variety of sources and formats. The visual formats included books, images, static and interactive maps, reports, charts, graphs, letters, policy in the form of - laws, codes, regulations, bulletins,
letters, announcements, public comment, response to public comment, official government federal, state and LEA websites, electronic data bases, other national electronic data bases and websites, such as the Westlaw, Penn State, Yale, and Harvard Library websites. Finally, expressions of pathway policy and practice are found in supporting program data bases such as National Institute for Early Education Research and Head Start.

In many cases, such as the OpenDataPA website, data are not only accessible, but can be manipulated to see a population served or underserved or geographic area funded or underfunded. However, interpretation is based on context. One example provided demonstrated same age, same county, and a different context of distributional equity, based on school district or legislative district (Even my decision as to the word order of underserved and served could have impacted your interpretation of programming). These types of contextual factors can be crafted in rhetoric to subtly infer meaning of a goal, directly imply distribution related to legislative activity, or suggest something in-between.

RQ 3: In what ways do the expressions of policy implementation of the pathways system influence the meaning of equity and access?

See above…and the rhetoric, what, how, and the way we express “it.” The wordsmithing influences how words are interpreted. Fairclough’s tendencies, the practices, the turning something into something else – all the subtle and not so subtle aspects of communication matter in interpretation, perception, and implementation (1992, 2015). The added consequence to analysis process was the recognition of policy intent. When intent was evident, there was also an effort to explain the “common sense” of the policy. This indicated the common sense language might not serve the intended purpose.
This led to considerable reflection of common sense throughout the study; most importantly, where punishment was attached to misunderstanding. I recognized the impacts of misinterpretations can carry social, emotional, and financial penalties. Even so, the actions of the implementation and practice reflected by the general population was normative. In effect, no one questioned the policy, and when they did, the new policy limited or restricted their choices with the noted exceptions of the November 2020 Child Care Information Service (CCIS) funding option and COVID response reform (Dalli et al., 2018; Hotz & Wiswall, 2019; Smith & Terry, 2013; Stefkovich, 2010).

RQ1, RQ2, & RQ3 Synthesized Response:

The examination of the pathway system revealed real and perceived inconsistencies in the available information related to pathway programming of equity and access. When the available information from the voice of authority is inconsistent, interpretations can result in adverse consequences. The identified pathways and pathway option were also used to generate logic models for practical applications in an effort to solve individual context of the Wicked Problem of the Pathway. These models cannot fix inconsistency or provide access. Instead, they provide the means to problem solve, identify solutions, see available options, and potentially demonstrate to policy implementors and makers where barriers for eligible families exist (Hotz & Wiswall, 2019; Korpics et al., 2021).

Throughout this process, I recognize researchers, including myself, primarily focus on the past, gathering past perspectives and outcomes. Still, I deduced that it would be more beneficial to gather perspectives and perceptions prior to participation. This included perceptions of program policy, practice, implementation, and expectation. Implementing strategies such as the decision trees can provided program administrators with valuable
information regarding practice. Adding post participation follow up would provide a means to address the preparticipation misconceptions. Implementing research focused on meaning and interpretations of pathway policy prior to participation could also provide families with additional insight into options.

Ultimately, all identified expressions of the phenomena influence how those policies or expressions were interpreted or perceived. Likewise, the implementation and visual expressions generated meaning through complex networks of legislative, organizational, programming, community, and individual levels and context. The study identifies substantial avenues to acquire accurate policy information, as well as various types of information, data, reports, and other expressions available for stakeholders to become well informed (Cooper et al., 2020; Dalli et al., 2018; Jones 2018).

This system can work effectively to provide current information if 1) stakeholders have access to the data bases and 2) if the most current information (from the hierarchical level) is consistently updated and 3) if the current data is broadcasted by all avenues sharing the information consistently. These strategies mitigate errors while holding the authority accountable for the distribution and sharing of accurate information (Kagan et al., 2018).

**Ideas for Continuing Research**

This study of PA policy produced an unexpectedly vast volume of discourse specific corpus data, related to the phenomena. Maintaining a narrow focus proved challenging and rewarding. The deep dive into the data produced valuable insights. The array of strands and topics provides a wealth of inquiry for future research.

Applying the system studies approach and the three-dimensional analysis framework to the identified expressions of text, resulted in new knowledge and lines of
inquiry. This inquiry explores new way to address the phenomena impact in future studies. Suggestions for ongoing research related to this phenomenon could be examined through these research questions.

1. In what ways does the common sense meaning of the policy impact the population?
2. Why is the common sense meaning of PA policy important to the pathway?
3. What do equity-based transitions to school funding allocation studies tell us?
4. What do equity-based Pre-K grant award funding allocation studies tell us?
5. In what ways can meaning of a policy impact a family?
6. In what ways does criteria eligibility impact equity and access to a pathway?
7. What do we learn about the meaning of the phenomena through a systems case study?
8. In what ways does meaning of the phenomena impact a family's pathway decision?
9. In what ways does the access to the policy impact meaning for the population?
10. What can we learn when we quantitatively examine the meaning of the phenomena?
11. What do we discover by exploring a policy implementation case study?
12. What do we discover about equity and access alternate pathways?
13. What do we discover about the phenomena choice in programming?
14. What do we discover about equity by the geographic resource distribution to LEA’s?
15) What do we discover about equity by the geographic resource distribution to the Intermediate Units?
16) What do we discover about equity by the geographic resource distribution to the legislative districts?
17) What do we discover about equity by the geographic resource distribution to the counties?
Future research can also engage diverse topics related to the phenomena using different research designs. Ideas for both quantitative and qualitative designs include:

**Quantitative Research Topics**

**Market Study – Rates; Geographic Constraints**

**Tiered Reimbursement; Available Star 4 By Legislative District**

**Qualitative Research**

Regarding the questions of equity, for me, the N/1 is the most important number in the results of quantitative research. Future researchers can explore the ideas generated in this study through each of the five major Qualitative Methods described in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, using surveys, interviews, focus group, observations, action research, and discourse analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Narrative Research – Exploring the life of an individual – autoethnography, biological, or oral history – which uses direct quotes. Analyze and retells the story perspective in written format.**

**Grounded Theory – Based on the views of the participants, understanding how individuals experience the process, and theory developed through analysis of data.**

**Phenomenological Research – Describing the essence of the lived phenomenon. A hermeneutical phenomenology study examining the interpreting the text of the lives.**

**Ethnographic Research – Describing and interpreting a shared pattern of a group. Realist and critical exploration of how to interpret and present culture.**

**Case Study Research – Provide in-depth understanding of case or cases including instrumental, intrinsic, collective, multiple studies, or analysis examining interpreted meaning.**
Strengths of the Study

The qualitative data explored in this study provided an opportunity to include an often-overlooked stakeholder-policy. Here the intent of the policy provided an important perspective. Although limited to using inductive and deductive interpretation to represent this perspective, the study viewed policy as an actor in the programs and services it represents. All policy had meaning subject to the context of interpretation. These interpretations impacted the ability of policy to effectively reach the intended audience.

Using a Textually Oriented Critical Discourse Analysis provided the means to address the research questions and the understandings of the phenomena meaning by broadening interpretations and perceptions. The analysis defines perceptions and interpretations of ways to gain access. The analysis defines perceptions and interpretations of ways to identify eligibility and a variety of pathways. Finally, the analysis defines perceptions and interpretations of the limits of pathway policy (Götzelmann et al., 2021).

The numeric data images provided an alternative text. These contributed to the phenomena of equity and access. Further exploration of the ideas and concepts generated could strengthen an argument for geographic equity. For policy reform, a study would require a way to gather context to generate meaning of the numeric representation.

The analysis does not define how one establishes or implements criteria. The analysis does not define perceptions and interpretations of barriers of choice. These are context driven. The eligibility criteria are not subject to interpretation, while the context of participation can be. This is a positive attribute. The “barriers” for participation are always context driven as one individual’s barrier is another challenge, as another’s hurdle, as another’s speedbump - always subject to individual interpretation (Korpics et al., 2021).
The TODA analysis process by design has strengths as a method. It provides a means to triangulate findings through the three-dimensional analysis process. It also allowed for the identification and inclusion of multiple examples from various sources to be analyzed. The method provides a framework explaining how to interpret the meaning of intent and a framework explaining how the language of policy has shaped the meaning of power. It also demonstrates a way to interpret policy meaning throughout the history of reforms related to the balance of power and choice. And finally, the analysis method provides a framework explaining the adverse and positive impacts which result from the multiple perspectives of interpretation of the meaning of policy.

Limitations and Delimitations

Employing methodologies which focused solely on naturally occurring data presented limitations. Hallmarks of traditional qualitative research included individuality, perspective taking, and thick descriptive resources of the individual or group of individuals who experienced the phenomena. This process offered the context to understand the perspective of others. The process also provided the context to learn from and to implement strategies, within the context of our own lives. This study did not intend to create negative equity. Rather, it intended to examine scenarios where existing equity and access to the pathways into compulsory education does exist. And to report findings reflective of current policy discourse that are available (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Götzelmann et al., 2021).

A secondary reason I elected not to use traditional qualitative surveys, interviews, action research, or personal observations was an effort to control for “the intervention of policy knowledge.” By this I mean if the families I questioned, interviewed, surveyed, or observed gained access to the information shared about my pathway decisions it could have
changed their meaning and their trajectory in the study. Their participation in the research would no longer have been valid. More importantly, by introducing them to program pathways options of which they were previously unaware, the intervention of the study could have inadvertently created an experience of inequality.

Many of the same aspects that provide strength to an analysis, also create limitations. The qualitative results of the study are the interpretations of the – N /1. The descriptive findings of the analysis process focused on possibilities – both positive and negative. The policy, policy implementation, geographic distributive interpretations, and perspectives all represented a moment in time. The results generated through the synthesized analysis process and ensuing descriptive findings are not facts or truth. They are common-sense versions of the identified text within the context to identified factors.

Although CDA and TODA provide a means to “play the devil’s advocate,” the perspectives and interpretations are still the result of the work of one individual. Though I verified the identified inconsistencies between the horizional and vertical alignment of the interrelated policies (as demonstrated in the study), there is no way to member check the interpretation of the text or analysis for inconsistencies or misinterpretations. In addition, even though a discourse analysis can include numerical information as a “text;” this numeric data is not a statistical aspect of the results. Finally, although using only “text” in an analysis limits the inherent bias of participants, it also results in the loss of the unique perspective of multiple respondents (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Götzelmann et al., 2021).

CDA and TODA are just two of the valuable qualitative research methodologies. These tools can be a meaningful asset when incorporated as part of a mixed method study or when used in conjunction with other traditional research methods. As a method of
analysis, the various formats of CDA offer researchers options for exploring data using challenging, yet beneficial new techniques. Moreover, CDA tools can be particularly useful as a mixed method component to quantitative research. Incorporating reimagined aspects of the data as text could result in new meaning.

Inevitably the validity of this critical discourse study hinged on the validity of the triangulation of the data. As such,

“Being a qualitative researcher means humble vulnerability - open to empathic understanding, open to other people's fragilities and idiosyncrasies, open to messy collaboration, open to bring wrong. Humbly vulnerable to being utterly confused and so awash in data that you have no idea where to begin or what direction to take. Humbly vulnerable to the possibility that your opinion doesn't matter and that your interpretation is incorrect” (J. Saldaña, 2018).

This study shared interpretations of policy, based on the context of the intended recipients. The study identified misalignments between policy text, as represented by the currentness of the resources. And the illustrations of possibility and probability represented in the study, reflected the context of policy application in reaching the intended recipients.

However, employing theoretical tools to measure the phenomena did not generate definitive answers. On the contrary, the study failed to resolved issues of capacity and access to pathway programs for eligible stakeholders. Moreover, the identification of the wicked problems added to the complexity of interpretation. Finally, the study identified interpretive issues regarding the context of the compulsory education ramifications yet failed to identify an alternative course of action. These results indicated the need for further experimental qualitative or quantitative research of the population data (Ivie, 2019).
Queries and Conundrums Emerging on the Path to Discovery

The examination of the policy identified expressions of the pathway representing positive and negative equity and access. The positive equity and access policy is inclusive in design. As recently as Jan 24, 2021, the White House has tried to strengthen the federal initiative. However, the study demonstrates how interpretations of policy implementation impacts the meaning of equity and access for consumers of policy.

The study also identifies expressions of criteria-based equity policy implementation where there are not enough resources for the eligible population. The expressions of common-sense meaning of the policy do not have the same contextual meaning from every standpoint. Moreover, the expressions of policy reveal the criteria-based pathway programming, services and resources are currently disproportionately distributed.

Penn included the philosophical and physical implementation of the educational system as a right and in law in 1683 “X. That the Governor and provincial Council shall erect and order all public schools and encourage and reward the authors of useful sciences and laudable inventions in the said province and territories thereof” (Wm. Penn, 1683) His philosophy of an educational entitlement provided equity by ensuring access to a pathway to school. The delegates replaced the “X” of 1683 and amended the statutes. By 1834, what children received was the right to a free public-school education, a law still in effect

As indicated in the supplement to the Compulsory Attendance Act of 1895, the Governor and the GA did not equally value the reform which restricted family choice and tightened the control of the government over the pathway. The result was the most contested expression of educational equity reform of the turn of the century. In 2019, this pathway expression was once again the subject of contested reform, further limiting the
access of families. Over the last 338 years, policy makers have struggled to reach the same level of equity and access Penn enacted in the original Frame of 1683.

With that, this is what I learned. First, it occurred to me that the American Youth Soccer Organization forever distorted the definitions of equality and equity for families of young children. The organization embodies a philosophy of equal distribution. Every child plays the game, no one keeps score, every child receives an award. The system addresses individual need, by giving every individual, equal access. The system recognizes the individual skill, effort, and interest, by homogenizing their skill, interest, and talent. This is not common-sense. The distorted point of view also demonstrates how the definition of the words equality and equity are commonly juxtaposed.

Equity and access, on the other hand, represents a system where everyone has the tools, supports, and services they need to participate. Moreover, it reflects a system which acknowledges and rewards the interest, skill, and effort of individuals. While not a perfect execution, the special education system exemplifies equity and access in policy by protecting the safeguarded provisions of the educational rights of children. This example does not however, resolve the ongoing contextual problems associated with attendance within the pathway system or the subsequent formal education system.

Final Thoughts

“Speak properly and in as few words as you can, but always plainly; for the end of speech is not ostentation, but to be understood.” William Penn, (1644 - 1718) English religious leader in Fruits of Solitude: In Reflections and Maxims Relating to the Conduct of Human Life (Jewell, p. 130.1792, Ann Arbor: Text Creation Partnership, 2011).
In conclusion, I propose, through this analysis, a few working theories of common-sense ideas of equity and access in pathway policy implementation (Ivie, 2019):

The policy will provide an equal educational opportunity...When and only when, all children have the right to the safeguarded supports and services necessary to ensure success in school, which includes equity and access to programming (DeLuca et al., 2020).

The system will no longer require families to make decisions which require sacrifice or result in adverse consequences…When policymakers ensure equity by enacting laws offering all members of a population access to criteria eligible programming (so they could participate, if they chose to participate, in criteria eligible programs) (Moss, 2018).

The LRE pathway policy implementation may not make common-sense…When it is necessary for policymakers to issue two letters within two years containing thousands of words to re-explain the intent. (But then again, maybe they didn’t mean that) (Ivie, 2019).

Finally, the common-sense language of policy might not meet the definition of common sense…When nine out of nine constituents, representing various stakeholder groups cannot agree on the “common-sense” definitions of kindergarten, compulsory attendance age, and beginner policy. And why does this matter? This matters because…

For a family, misunderstanding and misinterpreting definitions can result in adverse legal actions. These finding can further result in harrowing short and long term social, emotional, and financial penalties. One potential legal outcome of a “misconception” is a finding of truancy. This could also lead to a further finding of neglect. Neglect can result in removal of a child from a home (PA GA, 2021). For a child, removal can result in trauma, an adverse childhood experience (ACEs). ACEs can manifest into academic, social, and emotional issues. And that slippery slope is another study (Ivie, 2019; Korpics et al., 2021).
Postscript

Through this study I successfully identified expressions within the policy where the “Discourse Text” could be interpreted in multiple ways. I discovered the omission of words could lead to different meaning. And I realized the placement of words and text within the parallel policies impacted the meaning and implementation of the policy.

More importantly I learned that I misspoke. I stated, “It was my belief that equitably designed and consistently implemented, common-sense policy would provide families with access to equitable pathway choices which could meet their personal values, beliefs and goals.” What I meant to say was that I believed others in the early care and early education advocacy world shared my philosophy.

But they did not. And that is ok! Through this process of examination, research, analysis, and reflection I came to acknowledge that my interpretation of the study phenomena was not a shared definition. Moreover, I now know that advocates advocate for their own understanding, interpretation, perception, and context of equity and access.

Equally as important, I concede that organizations use the same techniques I applied in the analysis to nudge advocates. Furthermore, the nudged message does not always match the message intent. As a result, advocates unintentionally and or inadvertently share messages which they may or may not have intended to share (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

One last look, September 18, 2021, Key term, Beginner. 5:54 PM the definition on the PA GA Thomas Reuter Unofficial Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes from Westlaw PA Code link matches the corpus data for beginner (PA GA, 2021). September 18, 2021, 5:26 PM, the PA GA link has the same material (PA GA, 2021). September 18, 2021, 5:28 PM.
“Admission to Kindergarten and Beginners” Basic Education Circular is in the process of being reviewed and revised” Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE, 2021).

And so, the cycle continues. I examined the intent and common-sense language of the policy, confirmed the authenticity of the data expressed, and validated the findings of the analysis based on the multiple contextual perspectives identified over the course of the study. And yet, everything I learned can change in an instant.

With that, I end by returning to the beginning, the final thought in the Preamble. 

*Knowledge has power.* Ultimately I discovered this statement means something different to everyone. I also realized the knowledge acquired as a researcher can be as powerful as the knowledge shared through advocacy. Could it be this simple? I believe it is. In the end I learned that while some knowledge is not as powerful as I once thought, other knowledge is more powerful than I ever imagined.

And my mind wonders to *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills* (Galinsky, 2010). Having invited the author to speak at local stakeholder events, I fondly recall spending two days listening to her share stories about her message for her book. It was a book written with such hope for the future. As least that was the message I heard.

Later, I reheard that same message crafted as a business directive – Success in early learning equals success in school! Which equals success in business! Which equals success in the global economy. Which makes me wonder, how can we derive all that from the brightly colored marshmallows of early childhood, early care, and early education?
References


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https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Pages/Child-Care-Early-Learning.aspx


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https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (2021, August 7) Early Intervention.
https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (2021, August 7) Head Start
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Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (2021, August 7) Head Start Supplmental
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Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (2021, August 7) Keystone Stars
https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Child-Care/Pages/Keystone-STARS-Quality


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Pennsylvania Keys to Early Learning (2021, August 7) Keystone Stars
http://www.pakeys.org


Wickersham, J. P. (1886). *A history of education in Pennsylvania, private and public, elementary and higher. From the time the Swedes settled on the Delaware to the present day.* Inquirer Publishing Company.


Appendix A

Corpus Data Set 1 – Text – Research and Literature

Corpus Data of uncited literature reviewed categorized by strand

APA Books – ECE

APA Resources ERIC 2021 KG Transitions to School


Ilhan, N., & Tosun, C. (2016). Kindergarten students' levels of understanding some science concepts and scientific inquiry processes according to demographic variables (the sampling of Kilis province in turkey). Cogent Education, 3(1), 1-17. doi: http://dx.doi.org.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1144246


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APA References Transition to Kindergarten Reform


APA K-3 Alignment
Carela, B. M. (2020). A critical discourse analysis of "at risk" policies in early childhood education: (re)forming policies and praxis through women of color feminisms


Richardson, B. A. (2017). Three essays on the economics of early education


APA References Transition to Kindergarten Reform


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Appendix B

Corpus Data Set 2--Policies – By Category, Year, Name, Key Term

Corpus PA Statutes Key Term Search Discourse Strands
Statutes at Large Session Laws 1683-2020
Cite Statutes at Large as follows: act of November 18, 1782 (11 St.L.5, Ch.996).
Cite Pamphlet Laws as follows: act of April 28, 1999 (P.L.24, No.3).
Cite Smith's Laws as follows: act of May 28, 1715 (1 Sm.L.94, Ch.208).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Key Term Children 1683-1809</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1770</td>
<td>0609</td>
<td>Incorporating the society formed for the relief of poor, aged, and infirm masters of ships, their widows, and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>0886</td>
<td>Incorporating the society formed for the relief of poor, aged, and infirm masters of ships, their widows, and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>0997</td>
<td>Vest the estate of John Spering, late of Easton in the county of Northampton, cordwainer, in his four children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>1128</td>
<td>Alter and confirm the charter of the corporation for the relief of the widows and children of clergymen in communion of the church of England in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>Relief of such officers late of the state navy as were made prisoners of war previous to the derangement in the year 1778 and were afterwards honorably discharged and of the widows and children of those officers who died during their captivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>1461</td>
<td>Incorporating the society formed for the relief of distressed and decayed pilots, their widows, and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1493</td>
<td>Provide for the more effectual relief of the widows and children of the officers and privates of the militia who have lost their lives in the service of their country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1510</td>
<td>Altering a certain clause in the charter of the Corporation for the relief of the widows and children of clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>1687</td>
<td>Vest in Abraham Rankin and Ann Nebinger, the wife of George Nebinger, two of the children of James Rankin, such parts of his forfeited estates as have not been sold for the benefit of the Commonwealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1794</td>
<td>1768</td>
<td>Making provision for the support of certain orphan children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Reimburse the guardians of certain orphan children the moneys advanced by them for the support of the said children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Vest in Hannah Sower for the use of herself and children certain parts of the forfeited estate of Christopher Sower, the younger, which have not yet come into the possession of the Commonwealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Amend the act entitled &quot;An act for incorporating the society formed for the relief of poor, aged and infirm masters of ships, their widows and children.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Incorporate the citizens of this state members of the aggregate corporation for the relief of the widows and children of clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>1969</td>
<td>Supplement to the act entitled &quot;An act for incorporating the Society formed for the relief of distressed and decayed pilots, their widows and children.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>2247</td>
<td>Provide for the education of poor children gratis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>2332</td>
<td>Vest in Sophia Biddle for the use of herself and children certain parts of the forfeited estate of John Biddle which have not yet come into the possession of this Commonwealth</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>2465</td>
<td>Provide for the more effectual education of the children of the poor gratis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>2546</td>
<td>Relief of the children of John Maxwell, deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>2793</td>
<td>Authorizing certain persons therein named to lease a tract of land situate in Falls Township, Bucks County, and to appropriate the rents thereof for the education of poor children in said township</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Act</th>
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<td>Completing the education of John Konkapot, Jr.</td>
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<td>1807</td>
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<td>Authorizing certain persons therein named to lease a tract of land situate in, Bucks County, and to appropriate the rents thereof for the education of poor children in said township</td>
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<td>1809</td>
<td>3129</td>
<td>Provide for the education of the poor gratis</td>
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<td>0320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1779</td>
<td>0871</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 10   | 1780| 0895| Cure a defect in "An act to confirm the estates and interests of the college, academy and charitable school of the city of Philadelphia ... university" and "A supplement to an act entitled an act for the attainder of divers traitors ...thereupon."
| 11   | 1784| 1109| Establish and incorporate a public school at Germantown in the County of Philadelphia |
| 12   | 1786| 1224| Present relief and future endowment of Dickinson College in the borough of Carlisle and County of Cumberland in this state and for reserving part of the unappropriated lands belonging to the state as a fund for the endowment of public schools |
| 12   | 1786| 1236| Supplement to an act entitled "An act to establish and incorporate a public school at Germantown in the County of Philadelphia."
| 12   | 1787| 1274| Incorporate and endow the German college and charity school in the borough and County of Lancaster in this state |
| 12   | 1787| 1264| Establishment of an academy or public school in the town of Pittsburgh |
| 12   | 1787| 1314| Incorporate and endow an academy or public school in the town of Washington |
| 13   | 1788| 1338| Incorporate and endow an academy or public school in the borough of Reading |
| 13   | 1789| 1390| Granting to the corporation of the ministers, vestrymen, and churchwardens of the German Lutheran congregation in and near the city of Philadelphia certain lands therein mentioned for endowing a free school for the use of the poor of the said congregation |
| 13   | 1789| 1393| Repeal part of "An act to confirm the estates and interests of the College, Academy and Charitable School of the city of Philadelphia and to amend and alter the charters thereof conformably to the revolution and to the constitution ... university."
| 13   | 1789| 1439| Grant to the corporation of the minister, trustees, elders, and deacons of the German Reformed Congregation in the city of Philadelphia certain lands therein mentioned for endowing a free school for the use of the poor of the said congregation |
| 13   | 1790| 1481| Founding and endowing a public school in the town and County of Huntingdon |
| 14   | 1791| 1598| Unite the University of the state of Pennsylvania and the College, Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania |

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vol</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>16</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Raising by way of lottery a sum not exceeding $5,500 for defraying the expenses of erecting a schoolhouse in the township of New Hanover in the County of Montgomery and purchasing a lot and erecting a church in the borough of Harrisburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Grant a sum of money to the trustees of the academy and free school of Bucks County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Incorporate and endow an academy or public school in the town of York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>2363</td>
<td>Raising by way of lottery a sum not exceeding $10,000 for the purpose of discharging the debts owing by the trustees of the German religious society of Roman Catholics of the Holy Trinity church in the city of Philadelphia and to support a school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td>Incorporate an academy or public school in the town of Norris and the County of Montgomery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>2535</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery a sum of money not exceeding $15,000 to assist in defraying the expenses of erecting Zion Church and two schoolhouses in the town of Womelsdorf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>2565</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery a sum of money for the benefit of Pennepack School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>2687</td>
<td>Directing the sale of certain lands granted for the use of an academy or public school in Beavertown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>2731</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery the sum of $7,000 to enable the company for the purpose of promoting the cultivation of vines to pay their debts and accomplish the object of their association and $2,000 for erecting a schoolhouse near Summerton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>2626</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery a sum not exceeding $6,000 to defray the expenses of erecting a suitable building for English worship and for an English schoolhouse in the borough of Reading in the County of Berks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>2918</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery a sum not exceeding $4,000 for purchasing a lot or lots of ground and building a schoolhouse and house for religious worship thereon in the borough of Bedford</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>2916</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery a sum of money for the purpose of erecting a schoolhouse for the use of the joint Lutheran and Reformed Congregations at the Union church in Whitehall township in the County of Northampton and to defray the expenses of the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>2926</td>
<td>Enable the elders, wardens, and members of the Lutheran and Presbyterian congregations in Robinson township, Berks County, to raise by way of lottery a sum of money for the purpose of building a meeting house and schoolhouse in the said township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>2929</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery a sum of money for the purpose of erecting a schoolhouse in Shippensburg in the County of Cumberland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>2949</td>
<td>Raise by way of lottery a sum of money for the purpose of erecting a schoolhouse in Mayerstown in the County of Dauphin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1809</td>
<td>3015</td>
<td>Supplementary to “An act to raise by way of lottery the sum of $7,000 to enable the company for the purpose of promoting the cultivation of vines to pay their debts … and $2,000 for erecting a schoolhouse near Summerton, in Montgomery County,”</td>
</tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>1809</td>
<td>3023</td>
<td>Vesting a title to a small piece of land in Hempfield township, Westmoreland County, in certain trustees and their successors for the use of a school</td>
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**Number**  
**Law Key Term Search Kindergarten 1949-2021**

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<td>24 P.S. § 590</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education Chapter 2. Miscellaneous Laws Relating to Schools School Finances School Districts of First Class and First-Class a Milk for School Children § 590. Free milk for pupils of kindergarten and first grade</td>
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<td>24 P.S. § 15-1523</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education Chapter 1. Public School Code of 1949 Article XV. Terms and Courses of Study Subarticle (b). Prescribed Courses and Instruction § 15-1523. Pupil's right of refusal; animal dissection</td>
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<td>24 P.S. § 17-1703-C</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education Chapter 1. Public School Code of 1949 Article XVII-C. Dyslexia and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program § 17-1703-C. Establishment</td>
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<td>3 Pa.C.S.A. § 10904</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 3 Pa.C.S.A. Agriculture Part IX. Grant Programs Chapter 109. Farm-To-School Program § 10904. Grant program</td>
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<td>24 P.S. § 7302</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education Chapter 49. Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children Act § 7302. Authority to execute compact</td>
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<td>24 P.S. § 20-2010-B</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education Chapter 1. Public School Code of 1949 Article XX-B. Educational Tax Credits § 20-2010-B. Low-achieving schools</td>
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<td>24 P.S. § 17-1704-C</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education Chapter 1. Public School Code of 1949 Article XVII-C. Dyslexia and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program § 17-1704-C. Department responsibilities</td>
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<td>24 P.S. § 12-1207</td>
<td>Purdon's Pennsylvania Statutes and Consolidated Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education Chapter 1. Public School Code of 1949 Article XII. Certification of Teachers § 12-1207. Special temporary or permanent certificates</td>
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Appendix B

Corpus Data Set Two

Appendix B Key Term Search Discourse Strands PA Statutes

Statutes at Large Session Laws 1683-2020

Cite Statutes at Large as follows: act of November 18, 1782 (11 St.L.5, Ch.996).
Cite Pamphlet Laws as follows: act of April 28, 1999 (P.L.24, No.3).
Cite Smith's Laws as follows: act of May 28, 1715 (1 Sm.L.94, Ch.208).

May 21-June 6 – Research Hyperlinks
An Introduction to Equality of Opportunity | Equality of Opportunity and Education
The Equality of Opportunity Project
Equity of Opportunity | U.S. Department of Education
ED537169.pdf
Equity vs. Equality: Eliminating Opportunity Gaps in Education | The Inclusion Solution

Critical discourse analysis - Wikipedia
Practice theory - Wikipedia
Historical Analysis - SAGE Research Methods
Methods Map: Naturally occurring data: SAGE Research Methods
Methods Map: Ideologies: SAGE Research Methods
Methods Map: Discourse analysis: SAGE Research Methods

A Problem with Truancy in Kindergarten | The Public Interest Law Center
Compulsory School Attendance, Unlawful Absences, and School Attendance Improvement Conferences
The School District of Philadelphia must improve transition services for students with disabilities | The Public Interest Law Center
Our expert report calculates that PA schools are underfunded by $4.6 billion, according to state law | The Public Interest Law Center
Appendix C

Corpus Data Set Images of Policy – Screenshots and Text

School age – From Kindergarten - 21

Compulsory Attendance 6-18********
*Unless enrolled in K at age 5
*See O’Leary case for more info

LEA Approaches to Learning No PLAY

Students Right “to” a free education

Federal Laws Impacting PA Pathway 178

PA GA 1895 Compulsory Attendance Act

PA GA 1895 – Compulsory Attendance

PA GA History of Reform of 1895 Laws
Admission of “Beginners”

Transition to School

Compulsory did not pertain to Beginners

Kindergarten “when” provided

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

No TANF substituted for K

Definition Adult

No CCIS for Care Substituted for K

Kindergarten If Offered

Pre K Exception
Commonwealth General Assembly Law books used to verify data from websites

Acts of the General Assembly (1801) Passed at the Session 1801


Laws of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1898) Passed at the Session 1898 in the One Hundred and Twenty-Second Year of Independence. Harrisburg Published by Authority. Edwin K. Meyers, Printer.

“COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

No statutes or acts will be found at this website. The Pennsylvania Code website reflects the Pennsylvania Code changes effective through 51 Pa.B. 3080 (May 29, 2021).”

“Beginner”

“§ 11.13. Compulsory school age.

Except as otherwise provided by law, compulsory school age refers to the period of a child’s life from the time the child enters school (which may be no later than at the age of 8 years), until the age of 17 or graduation from a high school, whichever occurs first.

Authority The provisions of this § 11.13 amended under section 1317(a) of The Administrative Code of 1929 (71 P. S. § 367(a)) (Repealed); and sections 1326, 1327, 1330, 1372, 1511, 2103(8) and 2603-B of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § § 13-1326, 13-1327, 13-1330, 13-1372, 15-1511, 21-2103(8) and 26-2603-B).


Notes of Decisions When a child was denied admittance to kindergarten on the basis of age after transferring to a different school district, he was not denied equal protection since compulsory attendance for “beginners” did not pertain to kindergarten students. O’Leary v. Wisecup, 364 A.2d 770 (Pa. Cmwlth. 1976).”


When kindergarten is provided, the board of school directors shall establish the district’s minimum entry age to kindergarten. The minimum entry age to kindergarten may not be less than 4 years, no months, before the first day of the school term. The district’s maximum entry age to kindergarten must be less than the district’s entry age for beginners.
Authority The provisions of this § 11.14 amended under section 1317(a) of The Administrative Code of 1929 (71 P. S. § 367(a)) (Repealed); and sections 1327, 1330, 1372, 1511 and 2603-B of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § § 13-1327, 13-1330, 13-1372, 15-1511 and 26-2603-B).


Age classification established by a district is valid if grounded on some reasonable basis, and the fact that the classification made by the state is not perfect or results in inequality in practice does not offend the Constitution. O‘Leary v. Wisecup, 364 A. 2d 770 (Pa. Cmwlth. 1976).

“Section 11.14

Provides that the board of school directors shall establish the minimum entry age for kindergarten in the district. The term “board of school directors” in § 11.14 may not be construed to include the board of trustees at a cyber charter school. Therefore, a district is not obligated to fund a kindergarten program offered by a cyber charter school for a student who does not meet the minimum entry age requirement as set forth by the board of school directors. Slippery Rock Area School Dist. v. Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School, 31 A. 3 d 657, 665-67 (Pa. 2011).”

“§ 11.15. Admission of beginners.

The board of school directors shall establish the district’s minimum entry age for beginners, which may not be less than a chronological age of 5 years and 7 months before September 1, nor more than 6 years, no months, before the first day of the school term of the district. The board of school directors shall permit a child of beginners’ age to attend the district’s first grade and may not require the child to attend kindergarten, prefirst grade, transitional class or other grade or class that is not regular first grade without parental consent.


Cross References This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 14.101 (relating to definitions).”

Corpus “Play” in Pennsylvania Department of Education Code
PA Code Play http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/home/Pacode Retrieved 8/7/2021
22 Pa. Code § 4.83. [Reserved]. absent in each treatment. L.F.2.2.1 L.F.2.2.3 L.F.2.2.4 CC.1.3.11-12.G Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded, or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version
interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one by) *(NOT the same Play – but funny!)*

22 Pa. Code § 405.42. Program day and developmentally appropriate instructional practices and activities. and snack-time, as long as they are integral parts of the curriculum, facilitated by the lead teacher and used for student learning experiences. (iv) Play-time, including outdoor and indoor play or child directed activities as long as they are an integral part of the instructional day

22 Pa. Code § 53.33. Program of instruction. and daily plans shall be kept on file and shall be available upon request. (b) Learning experiences, both informal and planned, shall include: (1) Free play outdoors, weather permitting. (2) Gross motor skill development. (3) Fine motor skill development. (4) Perceptual activities. (5) Language arts activities. (6) Mathematical activities.

22 Pa. Code § 11.8. Definitions. and a certified school employee accompanies the students. (ix) Civil defense, fire, bus evacuation and similar drills. (x) Prekindergarten or kindergarten orientation, snack-time and play-time if they are an integral part of the kindergarten curriculum.

22 Pa. Code § 405.44. Staffing and professional development. of the other requirements of paragraphs (1) (3). (c) A lead teacher in the Program, including those in community-based settings, including outdoor and indoor play or child directed activities with an Instructional Level I certificate shall convert the certificate to an Instructional Level II certificate within 6 years from

22 Pa. Code § 53.11. Floor space. shall be a minimum of 60 square feet of accessible space per child in the outdoor activity area, which shall be free of hazards. Outdoor play areas which are adjacent to traffic, steep banks, water, or other unsafe areas shall be fenced. Authority The provisions of this § 53.11 amended under

This material has been drawn directly from the official Pennsylvania Code full text database. Due to the limitations of HTML or differences in display capabilities of different browsers, this version may differ slightly from the official printed version.

Corpus Special Education Early Intervention Code http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/ Retrieved 8/7/2021

“GENERAL PROVISIONS Special Education Early Intervention

In addition to the definitions in § § 14.102 and 14.103 (relating to purposes; and terminology related to Federal regulations), the following words and terms, when used in this chapter, have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Act-The Early Intervention Services System Act (11 P. S. § § 875- 101-875- 503).
Agency-A school entity, approved private school, State- operated program or facility or other public (excluding charter schools and cyber charter schools under Article XVII- A of the School Code (24 P. S. § § 17- 1701- A-17- 1751- A)) or private organization providing educational services to children with disabilities or providing early intervention services.
Age of beginners-The minimum age established by the school district board of directors for admission to the district’s first grade under § 11.15 (relating to admission of beginners).
Developmental areas—Cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional, and self-help.

Developmental delay—A child who is less than the age of beginners and at least 3 years of age is considered to have a developmental delay when one of the following exists:
(i) The child’s score, on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of the child’s chronological age in one or more developmental areas.
(ii) The child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized tests.

ESY—Extended school year.

Early intervention agency—A school entity or licensed provider that has entered into a mutually agreed upon written arrangement (MAWA) with the Department to provide early intervention services to eligible young children in accordance with the act.

Early intervention services—As defined in section 103 of the act (11 P. S. § 875-103).

Eligible young child—A child who is less than the age of beginners and at least 3 years of age and who meets the criteria in 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to child with a disability).

IEP—Individualized education program.

IST—Instructional support team.

MDT—Multidisciplinary team.

Mutually agreed upon written arrangement—As defined in section 103 of the act.

Parent—The term as defined in 34 CFR 300.30 (relating to parent) and also includes individuals appointed as foster parents under 55 Pa. Code § 3700.4 (relating to definitions).


School entity—A local public education provider such as a school district, area vocational-technical school or intermediate unit but excluding charter schools and cyber charter schools under Article XVII-A of the School Code.

Student with a disability—A child of school age who meets the criteria in 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to child with a disability).


Source The provisions of this § 14.101 adopted June 8, 2001, effective June 9, 2001, 31 Pa.B. 3021; amended June 27, 2008, effective July 1, 2008, 38 Pa.B. 3575. Immediately preceding text appears at serial pages (334873) to (334874). Cross References This section cited in 22 Pa.B. § 10.2 (relating to definitions); 22 Pa.B. § 49.1 (relating to definitions); 55 Pa.B. § 3270.4 (relating to definitions); 55 Pa.B. § 3280.4 (relating to definitions); and 55 Pa.B. § 3290.4 (relating to definitions).”

“§ 14.157. Exit criteria. (a) Under section 301(14) of the act (11 P. S. § 875-301(14)), children shall be exited subject to § § 14.161 and 141.162 (relating to procedural safeguards) from early intervention based on one or more of the following criteria:
(1) The child has reached the age of beginners and is therefore no longer eligible for early intervention services authorized under the act.
(2) The child has functioned within the range of normal development for 4 months, with an IEP, and as verified by the IEP team.
(3) The parent or guardian withdrew the child from early intervention for other reasons.
(b) If the child does not meet exit criteria and the child’s IEP demonstrates that the child will benefit from services which can be provided only through special education, nothing in the law or this chapter prevents that placement.


Cross References This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 14.151 (relating to purpose).”

2. 22 Pa. Code § 11.15. Admission of beginners. 11.15. Admission of beginners. The board of school directors shall establish the districts minimum entry age for beginners.
3. 22 Pa. Code § 51.62. Admission of students. chronological age of 4 years 7 months before the first day of the school term. (c) A school shall establish the minimum entry age for beginners’ grade 1 which may not be less than a chronological age of 5 years 7 months nor more than 6 years no months before.
4. 22 Pa. Code § 14.101. Definitions. P. S. § §17-1701-A 17-1751-A)) or private organization providing educational services to children with disabilities or providing early intervention services. Age of beginners. The minimum age established by the school district board of directors for admission to the district’s first grade under § 11.15.
6. 22 Pa. Code § 11.14. Admission to kindergarten when provided. the first day of the school term. The districts maximum entry age to kindergarten must be less than the districts entry age for beginners. Authority The provisions of this § 11.14 amended under section 1317(a) of The Administrative Code of 1929 (71 P. S. §367(a)) (Repealed); and
7. 22 Pa. Code § 14.157. Exit criteria. 141.162 (relating to procedural safeguards) from early intervention based on one or more of the following criteria: (1) The child has reached the age of beginners and is therefore no longer eligible for early intervention services authorized under the act”.

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SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE ELIGIBILITY
CHAPTER 3042. SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE ELIGIBILITY [50 Pa.B. 6361] [Saturday, November 14, 2020]
Annex A TITLE 55. HUMAN SERVICES PART V. Children, Youth and Families Manual Subpart B. Eligibility for Services GENERAL PROVISIONS Sec. 3042.1. Purpose GENERAL BENEFITS
§ 3042.12. Parent choice. A family that is eligible for subsidized child care shall have the right to choose care from a provider that agrees to comply with the Department's standards for provider participation. Providers eligible to participate include:
§ 3042.15. Subsidy limitations.
(b) Subsidized child care may not be used as a substitute for a publicly-funded educational program, such as kindergarten or a specialized treatment program. At the parent's or caretaker's request, a subsidy-eligible, kindergarten-age child is permitted 1 additional school year to be enrolled in kindergarten.

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§ 3041.16. Subsidy limitations.

(b) Subsidized child care may not be used as a substitute for a publicly funded educational program, such as kindergarten or a specialized treatment program.


§ 168.18. Need for child care.

(e) Subsidized child care may not be used as a substitute for a publicly funded educational program, such as kindergarten or a specialized treatment program.

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STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES


§ 12.1. Free education and attendance.

(a) All persons residing in this Commonwealth between the ages of 6 and 21 years are entitled to a free and full education in the Commonwealth’s public schools.

(b) Parents or guardians of all children between the ages of 8 and 17 are required by the compulsory attendance law to ensure that their children attend an approved educational institution, unless legally excused. Students who have not graduated may not be asked to leave school merely because they have reached 17 years of age if they are fulfilling their responsibilities as students. A student may not be excluded from the public schools or from extracurricular activities because

(3) The student has a disability as identified by Chapter 15 (relating to protected handicapped students).

(4) The student is an eligible student identified under Chapter 14 (relating to special education services and programs).

Authority The provisions of this § 12.1 amended under section 2603-B of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § 26-2603-B).


Cross References This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 12.6 (relating to exclusions from school).

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STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Appendix D

Corpus Data Set 4 – Everything Else

2 Page Dissertation

Title

Penn Play Pandemic and Pathways Policies to the Right to Compulsory Education
A Wicked Oxymoron in 2 Pictures

Front matters… yes they do…and yes it does – Thank you -
List of Figures
1. Image of Data Collected
2. Image of Data Finding

Abstract  here is what I’m going to show – if you can’t get there from here, find a way

Table of Contents

  Chapter 1 - Sum of knowledge, method, data, analysis, findings, and recommendations of 1000000 words – in 2 pictures  pp. 1-2

Statement - everyone is required to get there
Problem - you can't get there from here
Why – even though many speak the same language, no one “thinks the same languages”
Why it matters - if you don't understand the meaning of the rules or how to play their game, your kids won’t succeed, Bonus - they can fine you and take away your kids
Question - how do we fix it?
Framework - “Speak properly, and in as few words as you can, but always plainly; for the end of speech is not ostentation, but to be understood.” William Penn Religious leader and colonist (1644 – 1718)

Lit Review – Read EVERYTHING ever written about it from Penn to Pandemic
Method - examine phenomena discourse – collect, double check, analyze (CDA. TODA) (and don’t forget to say you’re sorry for being bias human-bias)

Data- roadblocks: meaning vs rules Figure 1.
Analysis - ask - do we have control over access and equity in any factors found?
Findings - “Show is not substance; realities govern wise men.” Figure 2.
Yes we can fix it for some through Equity and Access of rules and practice
How do we know when it can work? Equity Theory – Ia/Oa=Ib/Ob Early Intervention, Pandemic practices, Shippensburg, CCIS
How do we know when it does not work? Equity Theory – Ia/Oa< Ib/Ob Kerstetter, Leary, Compulsory Age, HS, STARS, K, LEA K4, ½ day K
Recommendations - Address inconsistencies in the rules. Teach them how to play the game to create. Admit when you are wrong. Bring it down a notch.
Future research – determine the Equity Theory – Ia/Oa=Ib/Ob of those eligible without access or equity – If it does not work - start over – try again.

Trustworthiness - What do I have to gain from lying?

References
William Penn (1792). Fruits of Solitude: In Reflections and Maxims Relating to the Conduct of Human Life, p. 130
Insider Position - don’t forget to say you’re sorry, human, bias, again)
CV – Been there, Done that
## Table

### Equity & Access Main Themes in Reports - Descriptive Coding

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### Notes
- *Graphics in Ex. Summary
- Via Internet subject to Functionality
## Table

*Kerstetter Transcript – Expressions by Actors*

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<td>Positive</td>
<td>Not relevant to the case</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Beginner</td>
<td>Magistrate</td>
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<td>-Kindergarten</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not relevant to the case</td>
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<tr>
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<td>District Attorney</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defense Attorney</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Cited in defense of family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Youth</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Did not provide additional information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>No one explained why it explain was relevant to mention it during each level of the case.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Levels of Support: Magnitude - Positive; Neutral; Mixed; Defensive; Critical; Negative

*Statute amended June 2019. Now reads Age 6-18
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Decisions Controlled by Family Context</th>
<th>Decision Controlled by Policy</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Home Family</td>
<td>Means, Privilege, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice</td>
<td>Compulsory Age</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Community</td>
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<td>Home to Private</td>
<td>Private Pay</td>
<td>Means, Privilege, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice</td>
<td>Compulsory Age</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6</td>
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<td>Home to Care</td>
<td>Public Private</td>
<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Compulsory Age, Academic Social Emotional, Financial Developmental, Location, Allocation, Capacity, Co-Pay Cost, Subsidized, Entitlement</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6**</td>
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<td>CCIS</td>
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<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Compulsory Age, Academic Social Emotional, Financial Developmental, Location, Allocation, Capacity Co-Pay Cost, Subsidized, Entitlement</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6**</td>
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<td>Home to SEA</td>
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<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Criteria, Eligibility Age*, Social Emotional, Academic, Financial Developmental, Location, Allocation, Capacity, Subsidized</td>
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<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Criteria, Eligibility Age*, Social Emotional, Academic, Financial Developmental, Location, Allocation, Capacity, Subsidized</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6**</td>
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<td>Pre K</td>
<td>PKC</td>
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<td>LEA K4</td>
<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Criteria, Eligibility Age*, Social Emotional, Academic, Developmental LEA/Program Discretion Location, Allocation, Capacity, Subsidized</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6**</td>
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<td>LEA Pre K</td>
<td>Trans K5</td>
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<td>Home to “Right”</td>
<td>Early Intervention</td>
<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Criteria, Eligibility Age*, Social Emotional, Academic, Developmental, Location, Allocation, Capacity</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Right”</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Criteria, Eligibility Age 5 Sept 1* Academic, Developmental, Capacity, LEA/Program Discretion, Allocations</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Half day Age 5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Means, Values, Knowledge, Options, Choice***</td>
<td>Criteria, Eligibility Age 5 Sept 1* Academic, Developmental, Capacity, LEA/Program Discretion, Allocation,</td>
<td>Age 5 or Age 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Right”</td>
<td>Full day Age 5</td>
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<td>Home to Compulsory</td>
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<td>Means, Values, Decisions Comply by Age 6</td>
<td>GA PDE Mandatory Age 6 Sept 1*</td>
<td>Via KG or Age 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*Eligibility Age**TEAM Discretion ***Participation contingent upon availability

Source: Critical Discourse Analysis Pathways into Compulsory Education, M. M. Mahoney-Ferster
Dear Colleague,

The purpose of this letter is to reiterate that the least restrictive environment (LRE) requirements in section 612(a)(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) apply to the placement of preschool children with disabilities. The LRE requirements have existed since passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) in 1975 and are a fundamental element of our nation’s policy for educating students with disabilities. These require the IDEA’s strong preference for educating students with disabilities in regular classes with appropriate aids and supports. Under section 612(a)(3) of the IDEA, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated with children who are not disabled. Further, special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment may occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Dear Colleague:

Ensuring that all children, including children with disabilities, are held to rigorous academic standards and high expectations is a shared responsibility for all of us. To help make certain that children with disabilities are held to high expectations and have meaningful access to a State’s academic content standards, we write to clarify that an individualized education program (IEP) for an eligible child with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be aligned with the State’s academic content standards for the grade in which the child is enrolled. Research has demonstrated that children with disabilities who struggle in reading and mathematics can successfully learn grade-level content and make significant academic progress when appropriate instruction, services, and supports are provided. Conversely, low expectations can lead to children with disabilities receiving less challenging instruction that reflects below grade-level content standards, and thereby not learning what they need to succeed at the grade in which they are enrolled.

We are writing to reaffirm the position of the U.S. Department of Education (ED or Department) that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate supports to enable them to meet high expectations. Over the last few years, States and communities have made progress in expanding early learning opportunities for young children, with all but four States investing in free public preschool programs. The Federal government, while aligning with the movement of States, has led several efforts to increase access to and the quality of early childhood programs, such as the Preschool Development Grants and expansion of Head Start. States have focused on improving the quality of early learning programs, including the development of early learning program standards and incorporating these into Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS).
Researcher Biographical Sketch

Mary Margaret Mahoney-Ferster – Family, School, and Community Partnerships and Approaching Learning through Play & Fine Arts are my passions. Play, policy, and practice have been the foundation of my 30 plus year career in Early Care and Education. And I believe every mistake I make is another chance to learn.

Along with a lifetime of boots on the ground experience, my career highlights include working at UPS, managing a bank, and eight memorable years with Penn State Extension in Union County. There I served dual roles as an Early Care and Education Community Engagement Coordinator and Educator in Better Kid Care/Youth Development. The Arc of PA, Include Me program, was a blessing in disguise, reaching those most in need with a focus of community, inclusion, and LRE strategies. With classroom and field experience covering the lifespan, I now serve on the faculty at the University of Maine at Farmington.

As an advocate, I am a member of The Association for the Study of Play (TASP), the National Association for the Education of Young Children, (NAEYC), and the NAEYC Play, Policy, and Practice Interest Forum. I was an appointed member of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) Governor’s Early Learning Council and served on the board for the Pennsylvanina Association for the Education of Young Children (PennAEYC).

My most important role has always been as member of my family. My husband and I have three post PSU graduate children of whom we could not be more proud. Truly, we are blessed.

I earned my Bachelor of Arts and Master of Science at Bloom U. My educational goals are to continue making mistakes and complete my journey toward a PhD in C&I from PSU - WE ARE!

My spiritual goal is to continue exploring the corners of the world finding joy in the beautiful people and wonders of the mind & soul. And my life goal is to spend quality time with family & friends laughing, loving, and creating memories together. =)
VITA

MARY MAHONEY-FERSTER  13 Meadow Lane, Lewisburg, PA 17837 | 570-850-5412 | mmm46@psu.edu

EDUCATION

Pennsylvania State University  2013-2021
  PHD Curriculum & Instruction ~ Early Childhood Education

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania M.S.  2008
  Early Childhood Education with PDE Teaching Certification PreK – 4; K - 6
  B.A. Liberal Arts, Humanities  1990

AWARDS

Graduate Award~ Play Policy and Practice Interest Forum, NAEYC  2014
Distinguished Service~ ECEC & Youth Development, Penn State Extension  2013
VOICE of Children, Finalist~ Early Care and Education Advocacy, PennAEYC  2012
President’s Award~ Central PA Chamber of Commerce  2011
Shining STAR~ Community Engagement in Early Care and Education, OCDEL  2010
Founders Award for Community Service ~ SUN Bank, Omega Bank  2004, 2005
Making a Difference Award ~ Supervisors – United Parcel Service  1992

EXPERIENCE TEACHING & LEARNING EARLY CHILDHOOD & ELEMENTARY

The University of Maine Farmington Faculty Field Services  2020-Present
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania Adjunct Instructor  2020-2021
The Arc of PA – Include Me Project  2015-2019
Penn State Extension Educator/BKC Instructor / ECEC Coordinator  2006-2013
Lock Haven University Adjunct Instructor  2011-2012
HDDN Pre-School Learning Center Director, Teacher  1983-2003

PRESENTATIONS

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)  2007-2015; 2017, 2018
  Accepted – In person conference canceled due to Covid 19  2020
The Association for the Study of Play (TASP) International Conference  2014; 2016; 2018
Office Child Development and Early Learning ECE Summit  2010, 2017

GRANTS ~ CONTRACTS ~ AUTHORED ~ AWARDED

Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL) Community Innovation Zone Grant
  Reauthorization The Arc of PA CI Zones North: Project ELECT – Total $160,000  2016-2017
ECE Community Engagement Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL)
  Professional Development Request for Proposal (RFP) Union Snyder Counties – $417,000  2007-2012
  Professional Development Request for Authorization (RFA) Fourteen Counties – $104,000  2012-2013

APPOINTMENTS  PA Governors Council Early Learning ~ Appointed  2008-2018

LANGUAGES  English – native language ~ Spanish – speak, read, and write proficiently