A Critical Analysis of the Modern Standards Movement:

A Historical Portrayal Through Archival Review, Written Documents and Oral Testimony from 1983 to 1995

Prologue

This historical study was done to tell the story behind educational reform efforts to write the revised Standards of Learning (1995) in Virginia. The history was collected in two distinct ways. First a thorough and extensive review of written documents was conducted including archival records and personal papers of key informers. Second a thorough collection of oral testimony was done which yielded three hundred pages of testimony from eleven key informers. The history could have been written from either source, but the decision was made to use both. In that way, it was hoped that oral testimony would enliven the documentary history and give insights so often missing from mere chronicles of events.

Chapter One

Rationale and Methodology for the Study

In June of 1995 the Commonwealth of Virginia published *Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* (Commonwealth of Virginia), and in September of 1997 published *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (Commonwealth of Virginia). The publication of these two documents and the implementation of state-mandated tests in Virginia in the spring of 1997 were the culmination in that state of a standards-based reform movement that began in 1983 with A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (known henceforth as A Nation at Risk) (National Commission on Excellence in Education). Indeed, the implementation of standards tied to accountability in Virginia was part of a much larger national movement that was often fraught with controversy.

An understanding of the modern standards movement and the controversy surrounding it lies in retracing the history and objectively analyzing the reports of key advocates and protagonists. To fully comprehend how the Virginia standards were developed and implemented, and the current and past political and educational controversy they engendered, it is necessary to place the standards movement in a larger historical context and to analyze reports of key decision-makers and key events.

Controversy Surrounding the Virginia Standards

The *Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* and the *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* have received national attention from certain sources that have recognized them as being outstanding and noteworthy. In a recent measurement of education reform in fifty states, Virginia was at the top of the list of states for standards and assessment (Jerald, Curran, & Olson, 1998, p. 80). The reason given for this was that "Virginia topped the

list on standards and assessments. Its standards got high marks for rigor and specificity" (Portner, 1998a, p. 258). The American Federation of Teachers' special report, Making Standards Matter, 1997, read as follows, "Virginia's standards are extraordinarily clear, focused, and well grounded in content. Their grade-by-grade and course-by-course structure ensures that they will be useful to teachers and other school staff regardless of the grade or subject they are involved in" (p. 1). Virginia was the only state which the AFT report rated as having "Exemplary Standards" in all four-core academic subjects—English, math, science and social studies.

Ravitch (1997), a former assistant secretary in the United States Department of Education in the Bush administration, commented on the *Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools*, along with its accompanying *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, in this way:

> There's a battle going on in Virginia whose outcome will reveal whether it is possible to have real reform in public education. The Virginia State Board of Education has a clear strategy. In 1995 it established high academic standards in English, history, science and mathematics. The next year it developed tests based on those standards. This year it established "standards of accreditation" for schools tied to student performance on the test . . . The Virginia Board intends to make standards count and to end automatic promotion . . . Virginia's academic standards are widely regarded as among the best in the nation. These standards clearly specify what children should learn in each grade . . . Many other states refer to them as a model. (p. 106)

Despite numerous compliments, the *Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* and the *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* have critics at home. Virginia teachers criticize the "one-size-fits-all approach to schooling" and worry about the implications

for accreditation (Welsh, 1998, p. C3). Principals comment that the standards ask students to memorize rote facts and are too narrow (Manzo, 1997). Barth (1998) addresses the dichotomy of being wonderful and terrible at the same time and gives reasons why, despite the good attention they have received, she believes they won't work.

> Everybody, it seems, loves the Virginia Standards of Learning. They earn high marks from many quarters, from politicians and conservative pundits to the American Federation of Teachers. As a result, they have become widely used resources for states engaged in their own standards-setting. Indeed, policy makers in states as different as California and Massachusetts have held up the Virginia standards as an ideal of what state standards should be . . . There are two major reasons the Virginia standards won't work. First, the so-called big ideas of the disciplines get lost in the specificity . . . The second major problem with the Virginia standards is their rigidity in requiring students to meet standards at each grade level. (p. 41)

The standards, as they are written in Virginia, will affect students' graduation requirements and school accreditation (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1997). In addition, Virginia will join other states such as Florida, Oklahoma, Maryland, Texas, and Wisconsin by issuing report cards for individual schools (Portner, 1998b). These two factors, accreditation and the publication of school-by-school report cards, are possibly the most controversial issues that the standards movement faces.

General Controversy Surrounding the Standards Movement

Accountability is an outgrowth of the standards movement and many states are trying to implement some sort of accountability system. According to Olson (1998):

> Accountability is the third side of an education triangle that also includes standards and assessments. Now that many states have adopted high standards and tests to measure students' progress toward those benchmarks, they have turned their attention to making sure that performance matters. (p. 3)

This accountability piece is the third side of the triangle which brings with it implications for school accreditation, as well as for graduation confirmation. Policy makers, such as those in Virginia who have put a great deal of time into educational reform, now want results - outcomes - to show that the taxpayers are getting their money's worth. Finn (1997), a former assistant secretary of education in the Reagan administration and an advisor to Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander, assails the education system for what he sees as a failure to produce information on outcomes.

> Nearly all reports on the performance of the education system are issued by the same people who run the system. There is no counterpart to what the corporate world knows as the independent audit. This structural reality, combined with the strong desire of the establishment to persuade its constituencies that the system is succeeding now, plus the aversion of most educators to tests, comparisons, competition, and "high stakes" accountability, means that nobody has good, clear, timely, reliable, actionable information about how anyone is doing in relation to how they ought to be doing. (p. 241)

Berliner and Biddle (1995) take another perspective on accountability that differs from Finn.

> A major Neoconservative buzzword for our times is *accountability.* As funds for public education have become more threatened, many Neoconservatives have proposed programs that would tie funding for schools or salaries for educators to "objective"

> performance indicators such as average-gain scores on standardized tests, ratings of teaching performance, or numbers of students going on to higher education or landing suitable jobs. And this means that the efforts of local *schools* are to be controlled through state or federal mandates. (p. 195)

Berliner and Biddle (1995) see accountability programs as unfair because they involve competition among schools that are not on the same level playing field due to extremes of wealth and poverty.

> Above all, income maldistribution creates problems because it is *very* difficult to provide good schooling for impoverished students who may come to school hungry or in cast-off and torn clothing, who suffer from untreated medical problems, who live in neighborhoods that are rife with crime and violence, or who come from homes that lack even basic amenities – let alone books and other supports for education. (p. 219)

Lewis (1995) cites Sizer, founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools, as disagreeing with the standards movement ". . . because of the likelihood that it will lead, once again, to test-driven instruction. Furthermore, government-sponsored standards ignore the realities of resource-poor schools and teachers who lack support for changing their instruction" (p. 749).

Newmann, King and Rigdon (1997), writing in the Harvard Educational Review, ask the question, "Will increased accountability of schools to external agents improve school performance throughout the United States?" (p. 42). The authors acknowledge that, "There is widespread agreement in the United States that schools should be held more accountable to standards for student performance" (p. 45) but controversy exists on how to implement standards and what those standards should be. "In short, arriving at clear standards for school performance

involves a thicket of professional and political issues that pose continuing dilemmas for districts, states, and professional organizations" (p. 45).

A review of the literature reveals that there are opposing views and strong feelings on both sides of the standards issue. However, much of what is written represents opinions or reporting of events. There are very few pure research studies available yet. Porter (1994) speaks to this lack of empirical research.

> Will schools really become better, and will students really learn more, as a result of national standards and accompanying assessments of student performance? On this point, there is surprisingly little written. Virtually all of the arguments, both for and against standards, are based on beliefs and hypotheses rather than on direct empirical evidence. (p. 425)

Porter's comments reinforce the need for a study of this nature. To address the issues of whether or not schools will become better or students will learn more as a result of standards and accountability, it is important first to understand the reasons behind the implementation of standards. Is the rationale based on sound educational theory, or were there political and economic overtones that impacted the movement and what were they? Is there an empirical basis for the implementation of standards or are the arguments based on hypotheses and beliefs, as Porter stated? An analysis of the history could tell us the answers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze critically the modern standards movement as a context to the development and implementation of the revised *Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* in 1995 in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Objectives of the study were to identify key events and key characters that impacted the standards movement and examine

opinions as expressed by recognized education and political experts in the field. A main focus of the study was to develop a documentary history that identified themes that linked events and showed connections between past and current events.

Limitations

A study of this nature had to be bound with certain limitations because the researcher could have pursued many different paths to explore this topic. The researcher made the following decisions to limit the study.

The study was limited in time, from 1983-1995, to the scope of history as defined by the researcher under, Scope of the History. The study was limited in method since this was a historical study and only qualitative data was collected. The collection of written qualitative data was limited to the archival records available to the researcher and to written documents as listed in the reference list. Details are given in Data Collection through Written Documents. The collection of oral qualitative data was limited to eleven key characters that that spoke to the purpose of the study as defined by the researcher. There were many other key characters that played significant roles throughout the history and many of them are mentioned in this study. It would have been impossible to include oral testimony from all of them. The researcher made a research decision to limit the collection of oral testimony to those eleven individuals selected. The rationale for that decision is given under Collection of Oral Testimony.

The study was limited to identify broad themes that connected key events and key characters that led to the development of the Standards of Learning in Virginia and to develop a documentary history that connected events. It is not an in-depth historical analysis of any of these events. Each of the main events in this study could have been in-depth studies in themselves.

Research Goals

The goals of this research paper are to:

1. Trace the development of the modern standards movement by identifying key events and key characters.
2. Clarify the issues, present historical evidence objectively, and identify the political, economic and social issues that have had an impact on the movement.
3. Place in that context the development of the revised Standards of Learning in the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995.

Method

Scope of the History

The research decision to begin the history in 1983 was based on numerous sources that stated that the modern standards movement began with the publication of A Nation at Risk (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Bracey, 1994; Finn Jr., 1991; Pulliam & Van Patten, 1995; Ravitch, 1995). The main focus of the documentary history ended with the publication of the revised Standards of Learning in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1995, although references are made to accountability and testing issues that followed through 1998.

An examination of the evolution of the standards movement since 1983 reveals multi-dimensional involvement on three fronts: national, curricula content and state, in that order. The history reveals that at times these three fronts evolved independently and at other times were moving in unison either by design or the circumstances of events. Three landmark events within the three fronts had a major impact on the history and development of the standards movement. These were: A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983a) on the national level; Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics (National Council

of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989) on the curricula content level; and the first Education Summit in 1989, on the state level. The history of the standards movement was developed chronologically through an analysis of these national, curricula content and state movements, with particular emphasis on the landmark events that impacted the movement. The history of the evolution of the standards movement in Virginia showed a natural outgrowth and development from these three fronts.

Phases of Development

Phase one of the process involved data collection from appropriate literary sources. After an overall search of significant written sources, the author wrote the history as portrayed in written documents. Phase two of the process was done through the collection of oral testimony from key informers, especially in the Virginia movement. After the oral testimony was collected, it was woven logically and chronologically into the appropriate documentary history. Phase three of the process concluded with the identification of main themes that linked events and showed implications for future studies.

Data Collection through Written Documents

Because of the political nature of the modern standards movement, much of the history was recorded in popular documents. Its evolution was highly controversial at times. The issues were played out and reported by the press, as well as in books and reports written by individuals or groups exhibiting a particular point of view.

The author reviewed the history as objectively as possible from a variety of sources by first conducting an extensive literature review. Sources included the following: research journals, popular journals, national and state government documents, commentaries, the Internet,

databases, audiotapes and videotapes. Substantial evidence was collected from the personal papers and archival records of three key informers, Lampe, Roesch and Weber.

The most extensive source of archival records was provided by the Margaret S. Marston Lampe Papers that were donated to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Special Collections Department of the University Libraries, Blacksburg, Virginia, May 24, 1991 (Lampe, 1981-1983). Margaret S. Marston Lampe was a member of the Reagan-appointed National Commission on Excellence in Education, a member of the Baliles-appointed Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education, a member of the Virginia Board of Education, a member of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's Board of Visitors, and a mother of an alumna of Virginia Tech. In 1991, she donated her personal papers that resulted from her experiences on a variety of national, state and local education forums from 1978-1987. For the purposes of this study, the Margaret S. Marston Lampe papers from 1981-1983 were examined. The researcher chose selected pieces of them to highlight historical facts relating to the development of the document, A Nation at Risk.

The second and third sources of personal papers and archival records provided extensive information on the development of the Standards of Learning in the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1994-1995. They were provided by the program managers for the development of the mathematics and social studies standards of learning. Maryanne Roesch represented the mathematics lead school division, Fairfax County Public Schools, and led the process for developing the mathematics standards of learning. Richard Weber represented the social studies lead school division, Newport News City Public Schools, and was chosen to lead the process for developing the social studies standards of learning.

The overall method used for a review of written documents was to cast as wide a net as possible and the author followed the advice of respected researchers.

> When beginning a research review, an investigator should decide, and make clear to readers, whether the effort is designed to *test* a specific hypothesis or rather to *explore* available information.
>
> If there are guiding hypotheses, they should be specified early on. . . .
>
> Suppose a reviewer does not begin with a specific hypothesis. The goal may be to tackle an area of research "to see what is known." Then a productive reviewing strategy is to cast as wide a net as possible when searching for studies to include. (Light & Pillemer, 1984, pp. 26-27)

According to Fink (1998), "A **literature review** is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting the existing body of recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners" (p. 3). Following guidelines outlined by Fink (1998), the researcher first selected the research topics. Second, the researcher did an electronic database review through ERIC and the Internet. Third, the researcher did a manual search for references of selected studies and identified experts in the field. Fourth, the researcher identified high quality studies.

> The first screen is primarily practical. It identifies studies that are potentially usable in that they cover the topic of concern, are in a language you read, and appear in a publication you respect. The second screen is for quality, and it produces the best available studies in terms of their adherence to methods that scientists and scholars rely on to gather sound evidence. (pp. 50-51)

Fifth, the researcher analyzed the data and decided on the content to be abstracted.

Data Collection through Oral Testimony

After the extensive literature review was complete, the researcher gathered oral history from key informers involved in the national, curricula content and state movements, with a particular emphasis on gathering oral history from key informers associated with the standards movement in Virginia. Key steps were followed in the collection of oral testimony.

First, the researcher applied for permission from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for approval of research involving human subjects. An *Informed Consent Form* was drafted based on the University model giving a description of the study and outlining conditions for participation.

Second, the researcher generated a list of key informers based on information gathered from the literature review, from referrals from educators at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and from referrals from educators in the field. The list of informers was extensive, but was narrowed for in-depth interviews to eleven individuals for a total of twelve interviews. One informer was interviewed twice after new information was discovered about his participation.

The following is a list of the eleven informers, dates they were interviewed, their capacity during the development of the Standards of Learning and their current positions. The interviews were conducted over a five-week period, except for the first one, and were all face-to-face interviews.

Informer	Interview dates, 1999	Capacity	Business Title, 1999
Shortt, Thomas L.	Jan 20	Virginia Department of Education	Assistant Superintendent for Accountability, Virginia Department of Education
Goldberg, Milton	Feb. 11	National Commission on Excellence in Education, Executive Director	Executive Vice President, National Alliance of Business
Lampe Marston, Margaret S.	Feb. 26	National Commission on Excellence in Education, Member	Consultant
Bracey, Gerald	March 3	Virginia Department of Education	Writer, Researcher
Leslie, Jan	March 5	VASSP President	Principal, Herndon High School
Bosher, Jr., William C.	March 8	State Superintendent for Public Instruction	Superintendent, Chesterfield County
Shortt, Thomas L.	March 8	Virginia Department of Education	Assistant Superintendent For Accountability, Virginia Department of Education
Weber, Richard N.	March 9	Social Studies Standards, Newport News	Supervisor, Social Studies 6-12, Newport News Public Schools
Brown, K. Edwin	March 10	English Standards, Virginia Beach	Assistant Superintendent for Accountability, Virginia Beach Schools
Wurtzel, Alan	March 11	State Board of Education and Business	President of the Wurtzel Foundation
Roesch, Maryanne	March 15	Math Standards, Fairfax	Director for Planning and Testing, Fairfax County Public Schools
Pedersen, Kris	March 18	Science Standards, Prince William	Associate Superintendent, Area III, Prince William County Schools

The list of informers was bound to include those who had significant involvement in the identified purpose of this study. Two individuals, Margaret S. Marston Lampe and Milton Goldberg, were directly associated with and were members of the National Commission on Excellence in Education that wrote A Nation at Risk. Eight individuals were associated directly with the development of the Standards of Learning in the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1994

and 1995. William C. Bosher, Jr. was the State Superintendent for Public Instruction and led the effort. Thomas L. Shortt was the Director of Secondary Education for the Virginia Department of Education. Alan Wurtzel was a member of the State Board of Education. Jan Leslie was the president of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals and represented the principals during the process. The four individuals who led the development of the four core Standards of Learning for the four lead school divisions were: Maryanne Roesch, Fairfax County Public Schools, mathematics; K. Edwin Brown, Virginia Beach Public Schools, English; Richard N. Weber, Newport News City Schools, social studies; and Kris Pedersen, Prince William County Schools, science. Lastly, Gerald Bracey, noted author, researcher and critic, was interviewed because of his experiences with the Virginia Department of Education from 1979-1986 and to provide the protagonist view.

Third, the researcher designed general questions specific to the individuals. Although the researcher wanted an open-ended interview, research was done about each individual and their involvement in the process and this information assisted in the development of questions.

Goldberg and Lampe were asked questions specific to their experiences on the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The eight individuals associated with the Virginia Standards of Learning were all asked generally the same questions and those questions were sent to them ahead of time. Bracey was asked questions specific to his experiences in Virginia and in general about his views on the development of national standards.

Fourth, all individuals were initially contacted by phone or e-mail. Follow-up letters confirmed the date, time and place of the interview, included a copy of the Informed Consent Form, and in most cases a list of questions.

Fifth, the interviews were conducted in the offices or homes of the informers and were recorded on audiotapes.

Sixth, the interviews were transcribed. As a double check and for editing, the tapes were re-played while reading the electronic transcripts. After that, transcripts were sent to the informers. A letter of appreciation was included with an invitation to edit the oral testimony, as the informer would like the record to show. In several cases, the informers made revisions. A second edited copy was sent with a second thank you note.

Finally, the data was analyzed and woven into the chronological history as appropriate.

The researcher followed the advice of respected oral historians. The type of interview conducted was an in-depth interview and Yow (1994) discusses the benefits of in-depth interviews.

> The in-depth interview enables the researcher to give the subject leeway to answer as he or she chooses, to attribute meanings to the experiences under discussion, and to interject topics. In this way, new hypotheses can be generated . . . One advantage in using qualitative methodology is that, because the researcher does not use an unchangeable testing instrument, he or she is open to observing the informants' choice of behaviors. In this way, the researcher learns new things not in an original hypothesis – in fact, many qualitative researchers do not form hypotheses at the beginning of the research. (pp. 5-6)

Data Analysis

The study was primarily historical and the methodology of historical writing and analysis was used. The author analyzed and interpreted the data in a historical framework and related it to other writers of the period.

> Historiography refers to the production of written history. No historian works in a vacuum. Invariably, others have written on the same or closely related subject matter. The historian can set forth what other writers have said about the subject and specify where his own work is located in this ongoing historical tradition. (Lichtman & French, 1978, p. 216)

Putting the history in the correct context, and piecing together the pieces of the puzzle of the standards movement, was a major task of writing the history. Methodologists have used the analogy of a puzzle to describe the task of the researcher.

> The pursuit of knowledge with the tools of science is a cooperative, interdependent process. The dozens of hundreds of hours spent conducting a scientific study ultimately contribute just one piece to an enormous puzzle. The value of any single study is derived as much from how it fits with and expands on previous work as from the study's intrinsic properties. Although it is true that some studies receive more attention than others do, this is typically because the pieces of the puzzle they solve (or puzzles they introduce) are extremely important, not because the studies are solutions in and of themselves. (Cooper, 1989, p. ii)

Choosing events to be placed in the study was a key task of the researcher. Studies should be chosen not only because they contribute to complete the puzzle, but also because they answer the question,"Why?"

> Perhaps one of the reasons why history is so fascinating is that historians have to solve puzzles in putting together a picture of the past. But in history, making a picture of the pieces is only half the job. A historian who shrinks from offering explanations of what happened risks being dismissed as a mere chronicler or antiquarian. We want to know

> *why* the pieces fit together the way they do. And the "why?" of history is often the hardest puzzle of all to solve. (Lichtman & French, 1978, p. 44)

The work of a historian is similar to the work of a detective. "Sherlock Holmes and the historian have much in common . . . Just as the detective examines evidence to reconstruct a crime, so also the historian investigates evidence to reconstruct the past . . ." (Lichtman & French, 1978, p. 14). Carefully analyzing and categorizing evidence was an important data management process followed by the researcher. Historical sources can be classified into three categories as follows:

> Primary sources consist only of evidence that was actually part of or produced by the event the historian is studying; secondary sources consist of other evidence pertaining to and produced soon after the event; and tertiary sources are "historical" accounts written afterward to reconstruct the event. (Lichtman & French, 1978, p. 18)

In this study, all three types of sources were cited. For example, the document A Nation at Risk was cited as a primary source. Newspaper accounts and reports written shortly after its publication were cited as secondary sources. Books and articles that scholars have written years after the event were cited as tertiary sources.

The use and analysis of oral history was a key component of the study because very little is written about the actual events in Virginia that resulted in the development and implementation of the standards. Most of the history available is secondary, chronicled in newspapers and popular journals. Therefore oral interviews of key actors was a vital piece of the data collection and analysis.

Thompson (1988) says, ". . . oral history is as old as history itself. It was the *first* kind of history" (p. 22). Vansina (1985) defines oral history to include ". . . reminiscences, hearsay, or

eyewitness accounts, . . .” (p. 12) which deal with events. In collecting historical evidence, questions will need to be framed to gather historical information. “For example, historians cannot stop with asking questions about how things are but must also ask the question, ‘How did things get to be the way they are?’” (Yow, 1994, p. 9).

Thompson (1988) gives three basic steps in interpreting oral history.

> First, each interview needs to be assessed for internal consistency. It must be read as a whole . . . by first looking at the interview as a whole, you can arrive at a good measure of the general reliability of the informant as a witness. (Second) On many points a cross-check can be made with other sources . . . Details can similarly be compared with manuscript and printed sources . . . The third method by which such a judgment can be reached is by placing the evidence in a wider context. (pp. 239-241)

Moss (1977) provides his view of an oral interview and uses the word “testimony” to describe the evidence gathered. He writes that in an oral interview “. . . historical information, insight, and opinion are sought deliberately and are deliberately preserved as a historical source . . . ” but he warns, “The historian is at the mercy of the witness who is testifying . . . (pp. 435-436). The researcher, therefore, must examine evidence provided more carefully than other sources.

In phase three of the study, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data gathered from written and oral testimony. In this stage, the researcher kept in mind the purpose of historical research.

> Out of all the varied types of records and remains preserved from the past, men have been able to piece together the outlines of their ancestral experience, fitting them into patterns

> of chronological sequence, location, and topical organization which offer us a better chance to understand ourselves and the world we live in. (Gray, 1964, p. 3)

Out of this analysis the researcher attempted to explain the present "world we live in" in standards-based education from an analysis of its history. The researcher tried to do this as objectively as possible keeping in mind that this has always been a major challenge for historical researchers. In the past, Herodotus and Thucydides faced this challenge.

> At about the halfway point between the beginning of written records and the present time, Herodotus and Thucydides brought to history a spirit of truth and a deepened conception of the relationship between causes and results that raised the subject so far above earlier chronicles written merely to glorify some monarch or city that one might justifiably capitalize it as History. Both men wrote as exiles – which in a sense every historian must do in order to achieve the objectivity and breadth of vision that are demanded by the obligations of his calling. (Gray, 1964, p. 3)

Historical researchers follow a strict methodology that requires critical analysis of all pieces of evidence. The researcher followed the outlines described by historical researchers.

> No matter how it is described, *no piece of evidence can be used in the state in which it is found.* It must undergo the action of the researcher's mind known as the critical method.
>
> When, therefore, a searcher for truth is faced with a piece of evidence in any form, the critical mind goes to work with the aid of a systematic interrogatory:
>
> Is this object or piece of writing genuine?
>
> Is its message trustworthy?
>
> How do I know? (Barzun & Graff, 1992, pp. 156-157)

To assist the researcher in determining that the articles of information are in fact genuine and trustworthy, historians practice triangulation. The example given refers to a piece of history written by the English historian Macaulay.

> The reader proceeds by a sort of triangulation: here I stand; there, to left or right, stands Macaulay; and beyond are the events that he reports. Knowing his position in relation to mine, I can work out a perspective upon events as I could not if I saw them exclusively through his eyes – or mine. (Barzun & Graff, 1992, p. 189)

Researchers in the past outlined the elements of the historical method which are still sound today. The elements have been called *external criticism, internal criticism and synthetic operations.* "External criticism determines the authenticity of evidence . . . Internal criticism determines the meaning and value, or credibility, of evidence . . . Synthesis means the blending of evidence into an account that accurately describes the historical events or solves historical problems" (Shafer, 1980, pp. 41-42).

In this historical study, the problems of external criticism were minimal since most of the evidence can be referenced. The researcher, however, kept in mind that with internal criticism there is the challenge of determining the credibility of evidence. In this particular study, the researcher had to consider the informers' intentions, biases and ability to report the evidence. And finally, "Analysis and synthesis involve such mental processes as comparison, combination, and selection . . . Now the researcher engages in the always perilous process of inference . . . the most difficult part of historical inquiry" (Shafer, 1980, p. 171). The researcher considered this responsibility carefully and attempted to compare, combine and select the most valuable and authentic evidence.

Organization of the Study

The research study is organized into six chapters. Chapter One contains the general background of the topic, purpose of the study, research goals, and method.

Chapter Two provides a discussion on the background of the modern standards movement. Part one reviews the implications of the Wirtz panel report written prior to A Nation at Risk; part two, the main part of the chapter, reviews the development of A Nation at Risk; and part three reviews significant documents written in 1983 that were similar, contributed to the thinking of the time, but did not have the impact that A Nation at Risk had.

Chapter Three presents an overview of the development of the modern standards. Part one examines developments on the national scene; part two examines developments on the curricular scene in the four core subjects: mathematics, science, English and social studies; and part three provides an overview of the shift in focus in state movements.

Chapter Four provides a background of the Virginia standards movement. Part one provides background and a link to A Nation at Risk; part two reviews the Virginia experience with outcomes-based education.

Chapter Five provides the development of the standards movement in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Part one discusses the process put in place; part two identifies key players and part three examines the development of the curricula content standards.

Chapter Six provides reflection on the study. It comments on the rationale and methodology, identifies seven themes and offers suggestions for future studies.

Chapter Two

The Background of the Modern Standards Movement: Setting the Stage

The modern standards movement started in 1983, when A Nation at Risk was published calling for reform of the United States education system. The first part of this chapter is focused on a prior report to A Nation at Risk that set the stage and was written in response to the College Board's claim in 1975 that SAT scores had fallen sharply and steadily since 1963. It became known popularly as the Wirtz Panel Report and was titled On Further Examination: Report of the Advisory Panel on the Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977).

In the second part of the chapter, A Nation at Risk is examined by reviewing circumstances surrounding the formation of the Commission, the process used by the Commission in gathering information, the conclusions they drew and the dynamics involved in producing the final product. The archival records of the Margaret S. Marston Lampe Papers (Lampe, 1981-1983) provide detailed information and personal interviews with Lampe and Goldberg provide interesting insights.

In the final part of the chapter, significant similar reports that were published within months of A Nation at Risk are briefly noted. Although they did not achieve as much notoriety, they had long-range implications for the standards movement.

Wirtz Panel Report

Reasons for Establishing the Panel

The event that was a precursor of a perceived decline in American education was the Soviet space triumph, Sputnik, in 1957. Bracey (1994) links Sputnik to A Nation at Risk and

refers to the 1983 document as a “paper Sputnik” (p. 1). He stated however that the term did not originate with him.

> I should say, too, I didn’t first use the phrase ‘paper Sputnik’. That was fixed by other people.
>
> I borrowed that. It was fairly common to refer to it that way. Ted Bell, the Secretary of Education who established the Commission, in his memoirs, says that he was looking for a Sputnik-like event to stimulate people’s thinking about the education crisis. Not being able to find that Sputnik-like event, he fell back on establishing a Commission, which he felt was a far inferior way to go. But it had a pretty lasting impact. (Bracey, 1999, p. 2)

Because Sputnik was accomplished ahead of American space programs, there was a national outcry for more attention to education in general and science and math education in particular. One of the outspoken critics of American education was then Vice Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, who served as head of the Navy’s nuclear power program. Rickover (1959) attacked the complacency of the American people. “The powerful thrust of Sputnik’s launching device did more than penetrate outer space. It also pierced the thick armor encasing our complacent faith in America’s present and future technological supremacy” (p. 157). He blamed education: “It did greatest damage to our trust in the American educational system – up to now almost as sacrosanct as motherhood” (p. 157). Rickover’s words set the tone for a national interest in improving math and science education and his influence was far reaching as he was cited years later by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in one of its commissioned papers studying comparative educational systems (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 1, Folder 13, A Cross National Perspective on Assessing the Quality of Learning).

In 1975 S. P. Marland, president of the College Board, and William W. Turnbull, then president of Educational Testing Service (ETS), formed a coalition to investigate the unexplained fourteen-year decline in scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). They appointed " . . . a blue-ribbon panel to assist in making sense out of the complex and interrelated issues involved"(College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. iii). Much was written at the time about the reasons for the SAT decline, but an editorial summed up the lack of any conclusive evidence and the confusion that prevailed at the time.

> The decline in college entrance test scores throughout the country offers an irresistible opportunity to all the philosophers of American culture. Since nobody really knows why the scores are dropping, you can pick up whichever explanation you like best with the assurance that it's defensible as any other. You won't often get a chance like this one. (The Washington Post, 1975)

In 1975, after a steady decline in SAT scores was noticed, the College Board itself began a serious study of the problem. To address this issue, twenty-one prominent citizens were appointed to an Advisory Panel on the *Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline* by the presidents of the College Board and Educational Testing Service to study the fourteen-year decline in SAT scores and to develop an understanding of it. Willard Wirtz served as chairman and Howard Howe II was vice chairman. The panel was comprised "of some of the nation's top measurement experts, social scientists and other scholars and citizens" (Harris, 1977, p. 29).

There was no doubt that the test scores had declined since 1963 and the decline was substantial. The Wirtz Panel stated, "We have accordingly concentrated on the 1963-1977 decline: the 49-point drop during this 14-year period in the score average on the Verbal part, . . .

and the 32-point drop . . . on the Mathematical part" (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. 5).

> The obvious sequel to these factual statements is the question: "Why are SAT score averages declining?" The most straightforward answer we can give is: "We do not know at this time." However, as Dr. Sidney P. Marland, Jr., President of the College Entrance Examination Board, stated at the Annual Business Meeting of the Board in October, 1975, " . . . we take seriously our responsibility to try to explain the phenomenon as dependable evidence is assembled." (Harris, 1977, pp. 28-29)

Bracey (1995) pointed out the complexity of the issue in that "Most NAEP tests did not show the kinds of declines seen on the SAT and achievement tests. The scores on the ITBS and the ITED, for instance, peaked around 1967 . . ."(p. 65). The Commission, however, set about gathering evidence to explain the phenomenon.

Commissioned Studies

The panel commissioned twenty-seven studies and " . . . asked for a variety of studies and papers to assist in understanding the score decline" (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. 55). The studies, some of which are noted here, varied in their focus and addressed a variety of hypotheses. For example, Could There Be A Medical Basis for the Declining SAT Scores examined possible medical and environmental reasons and concluded, "Thus, the decline in SAT scores is not likely to result from physical environmental factors" (Arnold, 1977, p. 2).

Television and Test Scores concluded, "There is no persuasive evidence that children's and young people's use of television has caused the decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores" (Schramm, 1976, p. 1). This overall report asserted that the decline was the result of a complex causal system and could not be explained by a single factor. It should be noted here that

the panel did not agree with the conclusions of all of the studies it had commissioned, and when the panel wrote their final report, they did state that TV was a factor. “Is television a cause of the SAT score decline? Yes, we think it is. This cannot be proved, and we don’t know *how much* a factor it is” (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. 35).

Family Configuration Effects and the Decline in College Admissions Test Scores: A Review of the Zajonc Hypothesis examined the birth order in families. Bracey (1995) explained the Zajonc report in this way, “Thus there was a consequent decrease in the amount of time any given child spent interacting with adults” (Bracey, 1995, p. 65). Although children born first and second in families and those from small families did better on tests, this could only explain a small percent of the population. The Zajonc report concluded, “ . . . it seems reasonable to conclude that the Zajonc hypothesis could account for only a small portion of the total SAT score decline” (Breland, 1977, pp. 7-8).

The SAT Score Decline: A Summary of Related Research summarized the explanations in this way.

> All the explanations relate to some kind of change that has occurred concurrently with the score declines, and these explanations fall into four general areas of classification: the test, the population taking the test, the schools, and societal factors.
>
> The most popular set of explanations shifts the burden from the colleges to the schools. In particular, there is speculation about the quality of secondary education in America. In their attempts to be progressive, it is said, schools have become too permissive, and the result has been that traditional academic skills are no longer learned. (Breland, 1976, p. 3)

The author of The SAT Score Decline: A Summary of Related Research could not conclude that there was enough evidence to blame the schools.

> Although much of the available evidence on the performance of high school students during the period of the SAT and ACT score declines would indicate a national decline in traditional academic skills, the lack of consistency in results suggests caution in placing the burden on the schools. (Breland, 1976, p. 27)

Conclusions

When the Wirtz panel report concluded its study and published its results, On Further Examination: Report To The Advisory Panel On The Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline, it did not point to one single cause. The panel analyzed the test first and the methods used to score it. “The SAT score decline does not result from changes in the test or in the methods of scoring it” (p. 8). The panel also considered the validity of the test to predict college success. “We have looked into the question of whether the decline in the SAT scores has affected their ‘validity’ as predictors of individuals’ college performance. It has not” (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. 9).

A major conclusion of the Wirtz panel was that a change in the population taking the test was a considerable factor.

> Fourteen years of uninterrupted decline in the SAT scores create the illusion that there is some single force or closely related set of forces at work here. This isn’t the case. The decline has developed in two distinct stages, characterized by significantly different balances of materially different causal factors.
>
> During the first six or seven years of the decline the composition of the SAT-taking population was changing markedly. Each year it included larger proportions of

characteristically lower-scoring groups of students. This pulled the overall average down. There were only slight falloffs during that period in the score means *within* any particular ability groups.

The pattern changed after about 1970. The "compositional" shifts slowed down materially. What showed up increasingly was an across-the-board score decline, the apparent consequence of more "pervasive" changes or influences affecting higher- and lower-scoring groups alike. (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. 13)

Another major conclusion of the panel was that there was no single explanation for the decline in scores.

Searching for the causes of the SAT score decline over the past six or seven years is essentially an exercise in conjecture. So much has happened that may have affected this record that there is no way of telling what did; the only evidence is circumstantial, leaving it hard to distinguish cause from coincidence. Most of the 50 or so theories brought to the panel's attention have in common only three assumptions; first, that since the problem has been reduced to a single statistic – the drop in these averages – there must be a single answer; second, that what has happened is in every respect bad; and third, that whatever caused it is somebody else's fault.

Although the panel's only certain conclusion is that we are dealing here with a virtually seamless web of causal connections . . . (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. 25)

The panel repeatedly asserted that the change in the test-taking population was a major contributing factor to the decline in scores. The panel also pointed out that the lack of emphasis on educational opportunity for certain populations could not be ignored.

> Most – probably two-thirds to three-fourths – of the SAT score decline between 1963 and about 1970 was related to the "compositional" changes in the group of students taking this college entrance examination . . .
>
> What the decline reflects is the incompleteness so far of the national undertaking to afford meaningful equality of educational opportunity. (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, p. 45)

The panel concluded that more than half of the explanation could be attributed to changing populations, but six themes emerged as possible contributing factors.

> The remainder seems to us identifiable in large part with six other sets of developments: *One* . . . dispersal of learning activities . . . adding of many elective courses . . . We attach central importance to restoring the traditions of critical reading and careful writing. *Two* . . . grade inflation . . . absenteeism . . . automatic grade-to-grade promotions . . . reduction of homework . . . "remedial" courses in post secondary education . . . *Three* . . . impact of television . . . *Four* . . . role of the family . . . *Five* . . . disruption in the life of the country . . . *Six* . . . diminution in young people's learning motivation . . . So there is no *one* cause of the SAT score decline . . . (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977, pp. 46-48)

The Wirtz Panel report elicited a reaction from the National Education Association (NEA). They reacted with their own publication, On Further Examination of "On Further Examination". The report praised the Wirtz panel report. "The panel is to be commended for its lack of indictment" (National Education Association, 1977). The NEA report made an important distinction. "The panel clearly recognizes that the primary intent of the SAT is to predict success

in the first year of college . . . (it) is not intended to reflect the adequacy of the student's training" (National Education Association, 1977).

A Nation at Risk

Formation of the National Commission on Excellence in Education

The document that was written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and the single most memorable government document on education, A Nation at Risk, was launched by Terrel H. Bell, Secretary of Education during the Reagan administration. Goldberg recalls how it all began.

> I was the Executive Director of the Commission. At the time of the creation of the Commission, I was the Director of the National Institute of Education, which was the research arm of the US Department of Education. And Terrel Bell, who was then the Secretary of Education, had conversations with me about why the research that had already been done about how to improve schools wasn't influencing the quality of education.
>
> That led to a conversation regarding the possibility of creating a Commission that would look at the quality of education in this country, particularly the high school. The secretary had a sense that there was a lot of disquiet around the country regarding secondary school quality in America, the achievement of American high schools students, and the standards that they were being held to for graduation and the curriculum they were taking. That led to his creating the National Commission.
>
> There was some evidence that had accumulated, for example, some data regarding a decline in SAT scores. There were some data that existed regarding literacy rates in this country as compared to other countries. But there had not been any effort to take a look at

a whole range of data and compare it to past history in America or compare it to other countries. (Goldberg, 1999, pp. 2-4)

Lampe recalls a conversation she had with Bell when he asked her to serve on the Commission in which he stated the reasons for forming the panel.

He said, “We are going to look at high school standards across the country and see if what we hear is correct, that there is a dumbing down, that parents are dissatisfied, that teacher training needs to be improved, and I think it will be a challenging time”. (Lampe, 1999, p. 2)

The formation of the National Commission on Excellence in Education was officially announced at a news conference on August 26, 1981. In his prepared statement, Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell said:

Since I took office last January, concern has been given to me from every quarter regarding what many consider to be a long and continuing decline in the quality of American education. You are no doubt aware of several series of articles that have outlined this alleged decline. These have appeared in news magazines, critiques by nationally syndicated columnists, and professional journals in the field of education.

In response to these concerns and in keeping with our responsibilities to provide leadership, constructive criticism, and effective assistance to schools and colleges, the U.S. Department of Education is initiating a major campaign to encourage all of America’s schools, colleges, and universities, and every individual in the nation’s very large education community, to enhance excellence in learning.

I am establishing, today, a National Commission on Excellence in Education, and I am appointing David Pierpont Gardner, President of the University of Utah, to serve as

> Chairman. I am also appointing seventeen members to this Commission. They come from our most distinguished scholars and teachers, and from business and industry. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, Statement of Terrel H. Bell, Secretary of Education, Announcing the Establishment of a National Commission on Excellence in Education)

Connection between Bell and Gardner

There was a close connection between Secretary Bell and David Gardner. "Prior to his cabinet appointment, Bell had been Utah's Commissioner of Higher Education and Chief Executive Officer of the Board of Regents . . ." (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, Biographical Sketch, T. H. Bell). "Dr. David Pierpont Gardner . . . became the 10th president of the University of Utah, August 1, 1973" (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, Biography, David Pierpont Gardner). Lampe recalls that in a conversation with Bell, he considered Gardner a good friend. "David Gardner, the president of the University of Utah, and a fine friend of mine, has agreed to chair this Commission" (Lampe, 1999, p. 2).

Members of the National Commission on Excellence in Education

The eighteen members came from a broad background. Goldberg recalls that he, along with his staff, was charged with identifying members.

> Gardner and I, along with a small staff that I put together, helped to identify the members of the Commission. The general guidelines we used were that the members of the Commission should represent a wide variety of constituencies, that we were not to pay any attention to political affiliation. The important thing was that the larger segment of the Commission should be made up of people who were working in education. Some of the current criticisms about the way the standards movement has evolved, which did not involve educators in some cases, was something that we dealt with at the very beginning

of the Commission's work, so that we had on the Commission two high school principals, one public high school and one private high school principal. We also had the national teacher of the year. (Goldberg, 1999, pp. 2-3)

The issue of the Commission being bipartisan came up several weeks after the Commission got going. According to Lampe, Gardner recounted an exchange he had with Bell.

About two or three weeks into the process, Bell called Gardner and said, "I know we agreed that there would be no political litmus test. But the White House is insisting. And I have to start with you. I need to know what political party you are."

Gardner answered, "Ted, we had a deal. Education is a nonpartisan issue, and the only way we can make credible that assertion is to eliminate partisanship. We cannot represent that education is nonpartisan at the White House in the appointment if this Commission directs you with respect to the political leanings of those you invite to serve. So I'm not going to tell you."

And Bell responded, "Well, I'm not sure I can get the White House to accept that."

"Well, that's up to you and up to them," said Gardner. "That's my deal. Moreover, you asked me to call Glenn Seaborg. He's accepted. Do you want me to ask what his political party is? I'm not going to do it! He served under ten presidents, both Republican and Democrat, and never was such a test applied to him. It shouldn't be applied now. So you can tell them that if they really insist upon it, they'll have to get another chairman, because I'm not going to be willing to serve."

And that is how it began. And Bell called back within a week and said, "Well, they don't like it, but they're going to go along with you." (Lampe, 1999, pp. 7-8)

The Charter

At the first meeting of the Commission members were sworn in and accepted the Charter.

"The first meeting of the National Commission on Excellence in Education convened on October 9, 1981 at 9:15 a.m. in the Penthouse of the Hubert H. Humphrey Building in Washington, D.C." (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, First Meeting of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, Staff Summary). The following are notes from the above summary:

> Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell opened the meeting . . . The Chairman and Vice Chairman were sworn in individually, followed by the swearing in of the rest of the Commission as a group. Chairman Gardner accepted the Charter for the group and emphasized that the Commission can make a contribution and have an impact.
>
> The Charter given to the Commission members had broad categories of responsibilities. In his opening remarks, Terrel Bell said,
>
> This Commission is charged with the following responsibilities:
>
> 1. To review and synthesize the data and scholarly literature on the quality of learning and teaching in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities, both public and private, with special concern for the educational experience of teenage youth;
> 2. To examine and to compare and contrast the curricula, standards, and expectations of the educational systems of several advanced countries with those of the United States,
> 3. To study a representative sampling of university and college admission standards and lower division course requirements with particular reference to the impact upon the enhancement of quality and the promotion of excellence such standards may have on high school curricula and on expected levels of high school academic achievement;

4. To review and describe educational programs that are recognized as preparing students who consistently attain higher than average scores in college entrance examinations and who meet with uncommon success the demands placed on them by the nation's colleges and universities;
5. To review the major changes that have occurred in American education as well as events in society during the past quarter century that have significantly affected educational achievement;
6. To hold hearings and to receive testimony and expert advice on efforts that could and should be taken to foster higher levels of quality and academic excellence in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities;
7. To do other things needed to define the problems of and barriers to attaining greater levels of excellence in American education; and
8. To report and to make practical recommendations for action to be taken by educators, public officials, governing boards, parents, and others having a vital interest in American education and a capacity to influence it for the better.

   (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, Statement of Terrel H. Bell, Secretary of Education, Announcing the Establishment of a National Commission on Excellence in Education)

Lampe reflected on her understanding of the main mission given to Commission members and how it was articulated.

> They articulated it in very broad terms: that we were to leave no stone unturned. We were to gather the experts around the country or around the world, to look at the newest publications on education, to visit schools, to look at different types of schooling, to try to

> come up with some sort of a scope of where we are today, 1981, in this country, and where we think we should be in the next 20 years. (Lampe, 1999 p. 4)

The first meeting of the Commission had a full agenda with kick-off speeches by Bell, Gardner and President Reagan (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, National Commission on Excellence in Education, Agenda, Friday, October 9, 1981).

In his opening remarks, President Reagan set out an agenda for the Commission and made an immediate correlation between the education system and the economy. He said: " I think we can see a parallel between the recent decline in our Nation's economy and its educational system" (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, President Reagan's Remarks to the Commission). He cited a lack of success in education, despite spending.

> In each case, we spent more only to wind up with less. Judging from the performance of high school students in recent years on college entrance exams, it seems pretty clear that our students are not as well prepared as they could or should be.

Beside the economy, the President used this opportunity to tie the work of the Commission to a back-to-basics movement, competition among schools, and religion in the classroom.

> I urge you to help America get back to stressing fundamentals in our schools . . .
>
> A second principle, true in education just as in our economy, is that excellence demands competition. Competition among students and among schools. . . .
>
> And if we want to strengthen our children's sense of honesty, discipline and direction, can we not begin--just as we do on our coinage or in the halls of Congress – by allowing God back in the classroom . . . (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, President Reagan's Remarks to the Commission)

Lampe recalls her reaction and the reaction among the Commission members to Reagan's speech.

> There were those who sat around the Cabinet Room table and nodded, and others who rather withdrew from leaning forward to leaning back. Personally I felt the President didn't get it. He didn't really know what was going on. Somebody had written the speech. He was reading it. He really didn't care a great deal about education. He was very charming indeed in greeting us, and we were very honored to be brought into the White House. But I didn't feel that education was of particular interest to him and that he was just reading this. (Lampe, 1999, p. 9)

Three well-known education experts addressed Commission members on the first day and placed key educational issues in perspective.

> Following lunch three speakers addressed the Commission and responded to questions from individual members. John Goodlad, Dean of the School of Education, UCLA, discussed his observations of the goals, curricula, and teaching practices in American schools based on a study he has conducted during the past eight years. Stephen Bailey, Francis Keppel Professor of Educational Policy and Administration, Harvard Graduate School of Education, described the essential elements for an education of value with particular emphasis on grades 7-12. The final presentation by Lawrence Cremin, President of Teachers College, Columbia University, reviewed educational quality in the history of American education. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 33, National Commission on Excellence in Education, Agenda, Friday, October 9, 1981)

Lampe recalls that David Gardner selected three individuals from among the Commission members to react after these scholars spoke.

David Gardner never asked at that first meeting what our views were on education. Never. He had in his mind that that would be too fragmented, so what he did was bring in three top-notch scholars who spoke that day, and then had reactions to it from three of our members. One was William Baker, who was the president of Bell Laboratories and a scientist who had served for many, many years on many education Commissions. The second one was Glenn Seaborg, the Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, who had served eight presidents in looking at test ban treaties and looking at nuclear proliferation. He was working at Stanford and had a great vision about science and technology. The third was Dr. Gerald Holton, who was a professor at Harvard University and also had been extremely concerned about our education system. (Lampe, 1999, pp. 4-5)

Lampe recalls Gardner as being key in facilitating the process of having members reach consensus. She particularly remembers how David Gardner dealt with and sensed that Dr. Holton, a Commission member, was not prepared to reach an agreement with the others and made it known that first day.

When Dr. Holton accepted the invitation that Dr. Bell sent out to him, Dr. Holton already had in his mind that he would file a minority report. He had a very strong view that he didn't think anyone else would get or feel. He thought he would be the only Democrat and everyone else would be a Republican. He didn't know what the make-up of it was, but he didn't know why he'd been chosen. But he was going to file a minority report.

[And his minority report would focus on what?]

On a larger role for the U.S. government to play in education. Because he knew that Reagan wanted to dismantle the Department of Education. He was not going to be a part of any of that. He was sure this was why we had been brought in, to dismantle the

department and to look for choice in schools and to open up Reagan's agenda. And Gerry Holton didn't want to have one thing to do with it. So he was loaded and ready when he came in 1981 to file a minority report. And Gardner knew that, or sensed it, and gave him the stage that day. (Lampe, 1999, pp. 5-6)

Goldberg also recalls that Gardner was key in getting group consensus and that he spent an enormous amount of time and energy to accomplish that goal.

> There was some thought that it might not be possible to get a consensus report out of such a diverse group. But I must say that from the outset, the chairman and I thought it would be very important to seek consensus at the end of the Commission's work. Although we were prepared to deal with something other than that, we wanted consensus very much. (Goldberg, 1999, p. 4)

Gathering Information

Armed with a charter and a mission, the Commission began an intense study by gathering a broad array of information. In the coming months the panelists were to attend seventeen meetings from October 9, 1981 to April 26, 1983, review numerous special reports supplied to them by Commission staff and review forty-one commissioned studies (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, Appendix C: Commissioned Papers).

Goldberg recalls the extensive meeting schedule, "We got around the country. We estimate that during the 18-month life of the Commission, there was a Commission event that involved at least two or three members of the Commission, every two to three weeks over those 18 months somewhere in this country" (Goldberg, 1999, p. 8). Lampe recalls the enormous reading load, "I don't know how I did it! It filled up three file drawers. Stacks of it! And it

wasn't easy, light reading. You really had to weigh into it. It was intellectually extremely challenging" (Lampe, 1999, p. 10).

Goldberg related the types of data collected by the Commission and believed it was both qualitative and quantitative.

> It was both qualitative and quantitative. One of the papers, for example, was a paper by two researchers who worked on consultation with the Defense Department. They presented us with data regarding what was then the status of science and math education in the Soviet Union. Up until the time of our Commission, that data had been classified. It was declassified, and we had access to it.
>
> A lot of the written papers that were presented to us were rooted in data, not opinion. But in addition to that, the report itself, as you recall, listed a lot of data: literacy rates, achievement rates, and so forth. We felt it was crucial to produce a report that would be easily accessible to the American public. So we did not identify all the sources of data in the report. However, we set up a shelf in the library of the National Institute of Education with every source of every piece of data that's in the report, so that anybody, including reporters, would have access to those sources, if they so desired. Within a day after the report was issued, the *Washington Post* called me and said, "Where'd you get the data?"
>
> And we said, "It's on the shelf of the library at the National Institute." And they went and they looked at it, and were satisfied that we had identified the data and used it the way we thought was fit. We believed the data told the story of decline in American education. (Goldberg, 1999, pp. 5-6)

Lampe also stated that although statistical reports were not in the document, they were available as backup documents.

> Absolutely! Statistical reports . . . are there in the appendices, and all the back-up documentation and all the papers we had. A lot of that was there. We felt that we had provided it. Now maybe the statistical data wasn't there, but as far as all of us were concerned, we felt we had done a very credible job. (Lampe, 1999, p. 11)

Hearings

The Commission's schedule included eight full Commission meetings, all but one in Washington, DC; six regional hearings held in Stanford, Houston, Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Cambridge; a symposium held in San Diego; and two panel discussions, at the University of Pennsylvania and at the University of Rhode Island.

Hearing	Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education	March 11, 1982	Stanford
Hearing	Language and Literacy: Skills for Academic Learning	April 16, 1982	Houston
Panel Discussion	Performance Expectations in American Education	April 30, 1982	Philadelphia
Hearing	Teaching and Teacher Education	May 12, 1982	Atlanta
Hearing	College Admissions and the Transition to Post-Secondary Education	June 23, 1982	Chicago
Symposium	The Student's Role in Learning	July 30, 1982	San Diego

Panel Discussion	College Curriculum: Shape, Influence, and Assessment	August 27, 1982	Kingston, Rhode Island
Hearing	Education for a Productive Role in a Productive Society	September 16, 1982	Denver
Hearing	Education for the Gifted and Talented	October 15, 1982	Cambridge

Adapted from (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, Appendix B: Schedule of the Commission's Public Events).

In preparation for the numerous regional meetings, staff members provided background reading materials to members of the Commission. For example, in preparation for the April 30, meeting, a memorandum dated April 22, 1982, was sent by Clifford Adelman of the Commission Staff to Commissioners W. Baker, A. Campbell, M. Marston, J. Sommer, and R. Wallace the subject being: Background Materials for the Philadelphia Panel Meeting on April 30. The Philadelphia meeting was one of many held around the country. It paints a picture of the extent to which the Commission studied the issues and reviewed documents. Adelman wrote, "This meeting seems to have attracted a good deal of interest, so much so that the Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement has decided to come and convene the meeting" (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 37, Background Materials for Philadelphia Panel Meeting on April 30).

Adelman was a staff person responsible for setting up meetings, getting readings to Commission members and highlighting information for them. He wrote, "There are three (3) background pieces for this panel, of which one was specifically commissioned for the occasion." Adelman was like a coach to the Commissioners. "If you don't have time to read the whole thing, I recommend the first section . . ." (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 37, Background

Materials for Philadelphia Panel Meeting on April 30). Two studies that were a focus of the Philadelphia meeting were: University Entrance Examinations and Performance Expectations: A Comparison of the Situation in the United States, Great Britain, France and West Germany and Project EQuality.

> In University Entrance Examinations and Performance Expectations: A Comparison of the Situation in the United States, Great Britain, France and West Germany, the authors compared the language requirements from 1966 to 1975.
>
> A survey of requirements in B.A – granting institutions, undertaken by the Modern Language Association in 1966, revealed that 33.6% of them had fixed entrance requirements for language study (normally two high school "units"), and 88.9% had language requirements for the B.A. degree . . ."
>
> By 1975, another survey undertaken by MLA showed that entrance requirements in foreign languages were now extant in only 18.6% of the colleges and universities, and B.A. – degree requirements in only 53.2%. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 1, Folder 37, University Entrance Examinations and Performance Expectations)

In Project EQuality, George Hanford, President of the College Board, wrote that Project EQuality had a twin emphasis with Q for quality and E for equality and tied his study back to the Wirtz Panel report.

> The impetus for the Project came from the 1977 Wirtz Panel on the SAT Score Decline. It suggested that one probable cause among many for the decline was a lowering of standards . . . a decline in quality . . . in the nation's schools . . . and challenged the College Board to play a part in doing something about the condition. Project EQuality is our response . . .

> We start with a focus on the standards of preparation for college because that is the College Board's business . . . this transition from school to college.
>
> The competencies and the curriculum are described in the document titled "Preparation for College in the 1980s" . . . The Basic Academic Competencies . . . cover reading, writing, listening and speaking, mathematics, reasoning, and studying . . . The Basic Academic Curriculum consists of English, mathematics, foreign or second language, history/social studies, natural science, and the visual and performing arts. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 3, Folder 67, Remarks of George Hanford, President, The College Board)

Goldberg reflected that when Commission members went to regional meetings that, "In all of these hearings, we didn't come with any predisposition regarding conditions. We came to learn about what people had on their minds." He also remembers the representation of business and industry at those meeting.

> I want to . . . say that at all of these hearings and meetings, there were always business people in the room. I should say that what is not listed in the calendar in the report, but wherever we had a hearing, the night before we almost invariably had a closed-door dinner with the leaders of the business and education communities in that particular part of the country. The purpose was essentially to have an open conversation about what their views were about the nature and quality of American education. (Goldberg, 1999, pp. 8-9)

Lampe also recalls the regional meetings in which she met a variety of people including business people.

> Usually when they were in a city, there was a business dinner that was set up for us by either the Chamber of Commerce or the Better Business Bureau. We met legislators, generally the governor, the state superintendent, business leaders in their communities who felt very strongly about education. We met religious leaders. We met disadvantaged. We took tours. I would say we met the cross-section of a city. (Lampe, 1999, p. 15)

Lampe also recalls the strong opinions of business leaders on the inadequacy of training for children and the opinions of college professors and university presidents.

> The business leaders primarily said the children were not being trained adequately, and that they were spending a great deal of time training new hires. The schools are not interested in listening to what we need now. They're locked in what they've done before and want to continue in that. The schools ask us to be partners, but when we do make suggestions, the schools don't listen to us. And we find ourselves now spending a great deal of money on training that we think our tax money should pay before the kids get out of school
>
> College professors in universities and the presidents of universities and the boards of universities were saying, "Our remedial programs have escalated enormously. The children are not adequately prepared for college." The question the Commission asked was raise your standards so you don't accept them. But in doing this the colleges replied they would push themselves out of business, because they need the students in order be in business. But they didn't want to do remedial work any more than anyone else. The high schools didn't want to do remedial work; they said it was up to the middle schools and the elementary schools. So it was trickle down blame all the way around. (Lampe, 1999, p. 16)

Both Goldberg and Lampe believed that the meetings held around the country were valuable because they provided information to other Commission members that changed their opinions. “In those early meetings, one of the things I learned was that a number of our Commission members felt that everything was fine with American education. They didn’t think we had any problem at all” (Goldberg, 1999, p. 9). Goldberg referred to Robert Haderlein in particular. “Bob Haderlein, who was then the president of the National School Boards Association, I remember him debating business leaders who complained about the quality of education and their inability to get young people to hire” (Goldberg, 1999, p. 9). Goldberg said that eventually he changed his mind.

Lampe also had the same recollection. “Bob Haderlein represented all the local school boards across the country. He had been president of the National School Boards Association. He came from Girard, Kansas, a small town in the Midwest, and he came absolutely convinced that our education system was superb. And he argued vehemently for it” (Lampe, 1999, p. 19). Lampe also stated that Haderlein eventually changed his mind. “He finally admitted, about 7 or 8 months into the process that things were not good. I respect and admire him immensely, because he said, “I have made a grave mistake. My eyes are open. I didn’t know” (Lampe, 1999, p. 19).

Commissioned Papers

The commissioned papers covered a broad range of topics. One paper that is of particular interest to this study was a focus for the full Commission meeting on September 28, 1982, in New York. The agenda read:

> Presentation by/Discussion with Professor Lauren Resnick, Research Development Center, University of Pittsburgh and Professor Daniel Resnick, Department of History and Psychology, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh – Standards, Curriculum, and

Performance: An Historical and Comparative Perspective. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 39, Tentative Agenda, Commission Meeting, New York City, Tuesday – Wednesday, September 28 –29, 1982)

In setting the theme for the meeting, Tommy Tomlinson, moderator and Commission staff presented an introductory abstract, "Perspectives On The Standards Of Achievement And The Social Context Of Schooling".

> Standards appear in many places and in many forms during the schooling experience, and are invariably accompanied by a degree of uncertainty as to meaning and validity. States and localities, for instance, have standards that administratively specify the amount of time that shall be given to schooling, the nature of the content, and standards of competence for both emerging students and entering teachers. These standards vary by time and place, both in kind and quantity, and in some instances, for example the fulfillment of Carnegie Unit requirements, may be met regardless of the actual level of achievement or competence that is observed following their satisfaction.
>
> Further uncertainty is added by the tendency to redefine the standard when actual or observed performance exceeds or falls short of expected or ideal performance. Such is presumed to be the case over the past 25 years in which the events of society and the associated shortfall in student achievement are believed to have led to a change in standards themselves. Other standards, for example standardized tests, provide a more constant benchmark, and although their validity is hotly debated, their widespread acceptance is underscored by their use throughout the world. Indeed, much of our recent concern about standards has taken on an international character. Here the question is not

only how we are doing compared to our own expectations and traditions, but compared to those of other countries as well.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education will treat these and related issues during its meeting of the 28th of September, 1982, at the Exxon Education Foundation in New York City. Papers will be delivered which will provide an historical and comparative perspective on the development and current status of academic standards, and on the events of society over the past 25 years which have influenced standards of achievement, the conduct of schooling, and the attitudes of America's youth. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 39, Perspectives on the standards of achievement and the social context of schooling)

The Resnicks presented a draft form of the commissioned paper, *Standards, Curriculum, and Performance: An Historical and Comparative Perspective*, to the full Commission and their statements foreshadow the standards movement and the implementation of external assessments.

In our view, two elements have the largest role in shaping what is demanded in schools, and therefore what students can be expected to learn. The first is curriculum - what is taught. The second is assessment – the way we judge what is learned. Neither of these has received appropriate attention in the current debate.(Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 39, Standards, Curriculum and Performance: A Historical and Comparative Perspective)

The Resnicks discussed problems with the United States curriculum in testing and exams. In the minutes of the meeting it was reported:

That is, we see tests -- standardized, and not geared to a particular curriculum. And we see exams – non-standardized assessments of how well students have mastered their course of study. The Resnicks conclude that children in the U.S. are over-tested and

> under-examined in comparison to those in other countries. Standardized tests in the U.S. tend to be used to monitor administrative functions but not to work with individual children in improving their education . . . (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 39, Minutes of the Meeting, September 28-29, 1982)

The Resnicks' paper became a respected study and was subsequently published and cited elsewhere. They were among the first to call for external standards and testing, especially at the state level. They referred to the New York system.

> The only other external course examinations serving a large number of academically oriented students in the United States are the New York Regents examinations . . . instituted in 1865, with the express intent of maintaining a common high standard in the varied high schools of the state. (Resnick & Resnick, 1985, p. 14)
>
> There is good reason to continue to promote external examinations in American schools as a way of raising and maintaining standards . . . Examinations coupled with publicized syllabi should guide the preparation of students in various subjects.
>
> Examinations might be prepared and administered at the state level (as in New York) – a procedure that would appropriately exercise the states' responsibilities for establishing and monitoring education. (Resnick & Resnick, 1985, p. 17)

Lampe recalls the Resnick study and when asked whether the paper was a major influence, stated, "Absolutely. I think that was the first time that I began to look at the issue of perhaps a national standard in this country. I think every one of the Commission members was shocked to see the diversity of academic requirements, state by state" (Lampe, 1999, p. 13).

That same day, Professor Joseph Adelson of the Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan, presented a paper, "Good Intentions: Mixed Outcomes." In it he addressed low SAT scores and lack of demanding subject matter.

> When we look at the varied strata of American education, we note immediately the astonishing discrepancies in quality among them. At the very top, in graduate and professional education, the system is superb, in most disciplines without serious rivals on the international scene. Undergraduate education in this country is too heterogeneous to sum up comfortably, yet on the whole it has shown serious erosions in academic standards, and in student achievement . . . As suggested earlier, secondary education has seen the sharpest losses in quality. Though there have been a number of studies to document this, the most widely - known finding is the steady decline of SAT scores in recent years. Those who follow high schools closely can point to other indices, such as the substitution of soft elective courses for demanding subject matter. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 39, Good Intentions: Mixed Outcomes)

Goldberg addressed the issue of a lack of demanding subject matter in high schools and says it was students more than any other group that changed Commission members' minds.

> The remarkable thing about the Commission was, it was the experiences they had talking with people all over the country and visiting schools-- In every school we went into, we talked to parents, we talked to children, and we talked to teachers. It was, to a considerable degree, the conversations with students that helped convince many of the members of the Commission that not nearly enough was being expected of them. And we got that kind of message from kids in the inner city. We got it from kids in affluent

> suburbs. And we got it from private schools. In all cases, we had kids who said to us, "I don't know why they don't ask us to do more. We could do more. (Goldberg, 1999, p. 9)

Lampe recalls visiting middle schools in Houston that showed her how different schools accommodate the needs of children in different ways.

> That was a very powerful one for me, because it was the first time that I saw middle schools where each of the 15 middle schools in the city had a [different] core of a gifted program . . . It was a most complicated set-up, but it was the first time I saw schools recognizing that they couldn't be all things to all children, and that they were making different curriculums work in different ways to serve all of the children. (Lampe, 1999, p. 14)

Minority Reports

Despite the numerous testimonies given concerning the fall in the quality of education in America, there were those who pointed out the opposite. For example at the Public Hearing in Atlanta on May 12, 1982, the following testimony was given.

> Gary Fenstermacher, a professor in the School of Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia, provided a perspective on the relationship between teaching and learning as a philosopher of education. A summary of his remarks follows: Once again commentary on the schools suggests that a crisis is at hand, but this can be misleading. Since the days of Thomas Jefferson, Americans have held high expectations for education and have been critical of the performance of schools. Today, however, three developments have magnified this concern perhaps out of proportion to the real extent of the problem: the debate today occurs at the Federal and State rather than local levels; the print and broadcast media draw critical, sometimes sensational attention to the schools;

> and the widespread use of tests intensify the sense that the schools are falling short. Yet schooling is probably much as it has always been, neither better nor worse. Furthermore, a great deal of learning lies outside the control of schools, under the influences of home, community, peer group, and workplace, so that to hold schools responsible for all deficiencies in socialization and acculturation is misguided. Finally, the mission of the schools has expanded considerably over the last century to cover such matters as career education, driver training, multi-cultural awareness, etc., for which schools in the past were not held accountable.
>
> These common sense observations suggest two conclusions. The "crisis" is not so profound as some critics would have us believe. And, we all partake of the schools' deficiencies insofar as we require schools to "fix" all the nation's ills. Schools are the lightning rods for our social condition; and the possibilities for learning inherent in the schools are circumscribed by the bewildering, often contradictory, complex of hopes and demands we have for them. If the match between what is possible and what is desired in our schools is imperfect, then we must improve upon the possibilities rather than assigning blame for what has not been accomplished. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 49, Public Hearing on Teaching and Teacher Education)

Lampe expressed her opinion about the Fenstermacher report and was not in agreement. "It was a minority report. I know Gary. I think he truly believed it, but I think he was off the mark. Yet his report did have an impact" (Lampe, 1999. p. 18).

Another study that questioned the fall of education was placed in the background information packet for the Commissioners in preparation for the April 16, 1982 meeting on

Language and Literacy: It was taken from the Fifth Report of The National Council on Educational Research, Fiscal Years 1978-1979, Chapter 5.

A Second Look. In 1978, NIE Commissioned the study "Functional Literacy and the Schools," by Donald Fisher, to locate sources of error in functional literacy surveys. Fisher concentrated on estimates of literacy among high school graduates. After accounting for obvious errors or exaggerations in the estimates, he concluded that less than 1 percent of these graduates are functional illiterates. Further, he concluded that illiteracy among 12- to 17-year-olds has remained relatively constant at 5 percent over the years, consisting largely of students who repeat one or more grades and who often drop out of high school before they finish. For Fisher, this implied that although the schools have been able to identify students who are failing to learn to read and write, they have been unable to develop these students' basic literacy skills. Meanwhile, for the vast majority of students, literacy rates are high and seem to be improving; among younger students there is sound evidence in the National Assessment (1978) that reading and writing abilities have been increasing in recent years, especially for disadvantaged students whose achievement has been low in the past.

Reviews of standardized test scores reinforce these conclusions. The Wirtz Advisory Panel reviewed the steady 14-year decline in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores and found that, although there was a general slippage across the range of scores, much of the decline was due to changes in the test-taking population – those students wishing to enter college ("On Further Examination," 1977). More students with low reading and writing abilities began taking the test during the 1960's and 1970's than in the past. Only a small percentage of the decline was attributed to a decrease in the

effectiveness of the schools in serving traditional students. In addition to changes in the test-taking population, factors cited as responsible for most of the decline in the SAT scores were changes in family structure, the prevalence of television, and general social unrest.

These conclusions are substantiated by the analysis of the National Academy of Education and by a study published by Farr, Fay, and Negley (1978). In that study, reading tests used statewide in Indiana in the 1940's were administered to a contemporary population consisting of a younger and more diverse group of students than those tested in the 1940's. The contemporary students were found to read about as well as their predecessors, and seemed to be doing somewhat better, if one accounted for the difference in their ages. (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 51, Briefing Package on Language and Literacy)

Lampe recalled the presentation of this report and did not agree with its validity. She stated,

> When questioned about his report, I never felt that the answer was clear to me. We asked, "Are you mixing apples and oranges? Are you still taking a sampling of students across this country from a particular locality that hasn't changed, has no new immigration, has no transients? And where are you getting your data? Do you have samplings from a variety of places, so that we feel more comfortable in this? And I never got a clear answer on it. So look carefully at that again, because I think his sampling came maybe from Amherst. I don't remember. That the illiteracy rate remained the same was not true. Other studies that we had certainly showed that Miami, Los Angeles, New York were struggling with enormous illiteracy rates. (Lampe, 1999, pp. 18-19)

The Final draft of A Nation at Risk

Gaining Consensus

Bell and Gardner wanted consensus among members and Lampe recalls how she believed it was accomplished.

> Glenn Seaborg almost filed a minority report on this issue. He wanted four years of science in the curriculum, and he stood tough on it. Yet, he didn't get it. David Gardner wanted it a completely unanimous sign-off on this document, and he finally got it. After our last meeting in Chicago, when David knew that Seaborg was about to resign, Gardner said, "Oops, I'm sorry. I've got a plane! He got up and he left," leaving all of us sitting there in the room. We never had another meeting. All the rest of the discussions were done by phone through David Gardner. And he was brilliant. He was brilliant at getting the report agreed upon by phone. (Lampe, 1999, p. 26)

Goldberg recalls that a main issue among members was the language that they were using and he relates how he facilitated gaining consensus among members.

> Holton and Seaborg wanted language that was fiery, highly rhetorical, and that would fire up the public. Some of the folks who were closer to the education establishment agreed wholeheartedly with the quality of education issue, but weren't so sure that the fiery rhetoric was so important. So we had to compromise. We had to work through it.
>
> . . . the report was finally issued on a Tuesday, April 26. The Secretary of Education, to his everlasting credit, never wanted to see the report until it was ready. The reason he didn't was, he needed to be prepared to disavow it if they didn't like it, because it was an independent Commission. So I brought him a draft copy of the report six days

before its issuance. He gave it to me, and he said, “Well, I’ll take it home with me tonight.”

And I said, “I don’t think you’re going to have to. I think you can read it right here.” And I think he was shocked, because we had worked 18 months, we had commissioned 40 papers. We had hearings all over the country, and I think what he expected was typical of such reports, some 200-page document with footnotes and appendices and all that stuff: a dissertation. Instead, I gave him this draft thing that was quite short.

He went into his office, and I waited. And he came out after about an hour or so. His first response was, “It is rather short.” That was his first response. But his second response was, “It’s very, very dramatic.” He said, “It’s wonderful.”

But we still weren’t finished. That was the Wednesday, six days before the report. It was in draft form. For the rest of that week, we continued to debate adjectives and adverbs via telephone. I was on one line and our chairman was on the other line, and the two of us had other members of the Commission on the phone, and we talked: “Will you accept this word?”

“Well, yes I will.”

And then we had to call another Commission member up and say, “They’ll accept this. How about you?” Little by little . . . And by Sunday, we had consensus.

So the A National at Risk report that was issued on Tuesday--many people don’t know this--was not printed until 48 hours before it was issued.

(Goldberg, 1999, pp. 16-17)

Conclusions of the Commission

A Nation at Risk was published on April 26, 1983. When the report was published it came out as an open letter to the American people. The report listed four major findings.

> We conclude that declines in educational performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself is often conducted. The findings that follow, culled from a much more extensive list, reflect four important aspects of the educational process: content, expectations, time, and teaching.

The report made five major recommendations that had far-reaching effects on the current standards movement.

> Recommendation A: Content
> We recommend that State and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened and that, at a minimum, all students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundations in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their 4 years of high school: (a) 4 years of English; (b) 3 years of mathematics; (c) 3 years of science; (d) 3 years of social studies; and (e) one-half year of computer science. For the college-bound, 2 years of foreign language in high school are strongly recommended in addition to those taken earlier.
>
> Recommendation B: Standards and Expectations
> We recommend that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their requirements for admission. This will help students do their best educationally with challenging materials in an environment that supports learning and authentic accomplishment.
>
> Recommendation C: Time
> We recommend that significantly more time be devoted to learning the New Basics. This will require more effective use of the existing school day, a longer school day, or a lengthened school year.
>
> Recommendation D: Teaching
> This recommendation consists of seven parts. Each is intended to improve the preparation of teachers or to make teaching a more rewarding and respected profession. Each of the seven stands on its own and should not be considered solely as an implementing recommendation.
>
> Recommendation E: Leadership and Fiscal Support

> We recommend that citizens across the Nation hold educators and elected officials responsible for providing the leadership necessary to achieve these reforms, and that citizens provide the fiscal support and stability required to bring about the reforms we propose.
>
> (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983b)

Commentary after Publication

David Pierpont Gardner testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources on November 9, 1983.

> The Commission staff has sent you copies of "A Nation at Risk." I know you have read it, and it is not my purpose to summarize it this morning. But I do want to underscore three essential messages it conveys.
>
> The first message is reflected in the title we chose for the report, "A Nation at Risk." The report acknowledges that this risk has many dimensions and many causes and that education is only one aspect of the problem; yet it is a fundamentally aspect.
>
> The second message is that while a number of economic, social and other trends have contributed to the deterioration of American education in recent years, one factor has been of overriding importance in bringing us to our current malaise: We are expecting less from our students and our schools, and we have been getting it.
>
> The Commission's third essential message grows inevitably out of the first two: We can and must do better. (Gardner, 1993, pp. 241-242)

Gardner comments on "Risk" included, "We did not try to blame any particular group or constituency because it was also obvious that we all share responsibility for the troubled state of American education". The risk as identified by the Commission had many causes and education

was only one of them. Gardner presented the evidence gathered by the Commission such as the increase in remedial math courses in colleges and decline in science achievement scores.

Mediocrity in our schools was identified as a factor in which we demanded less of our students such as the "smorgasbord curriculum" and low "high school graduation requirements" and the "limited amount of time that American students spend in school compared to students in other lands."

Gardner's final message was that "we can and must do better." He shared five recommendations of the report: high school curricula be strengthened; standards and expectation to be higher and more rigorous; more time be devoted to learning; improve the attractiveness and standing of the teaching profession; hold the educators and elected officials responsible for reform. (Gardner, 1993)

Margaret Marston (Lampe) testified before Congress on Thursday, May 12, 1983 before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, Committee on Education and Labor. The subcommittee chairman, the Hon. Carl D. Perkins, presided. (Marston, 1983) Marston summarized the report that had been released two weeks prior. After her testimony, Perkins questioned her.

> MR. PERKINS. Now, Miss Marston, you have cited some statistics on American education. Do you agree with the President, that Federal involvement in education has contributed to these statistics? Is this a valid conclusion to be drawn from your report?
>
> MS. MARSTON. Our Commission did not address what the cause was. We addressed what the indicators were, Mr. Chairman, and what our county had to do to get

out of them. It meant a great deal more effort on the part of all of the American people. Our Commission addressed the American people in an open letter.

MR. PERKINS. Then you do not agree with the President that the conclusion to be drawn from your report is that we need less Federal aid to education, a tuition tax credit and vouchers?

MS. MARSTON. We felt that the Federal role was very clearly defined in our Commission report, that all segments of society must look very carefully at the care of youngsters, the Congress, the President, the states and the local school boards. We felt the Federal role in education would be one of targeting special populations that needed a great deal of help, of providing grants and incentives for people to continue their education, and not to burden localities with a lot of administrative paperwork . . ." (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 56, OVERSIGHT ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES, Committee Hearings of the U.S. House of Representatives)

When asked to reflect on this incident, Lampe stated pointed out that, despite Mr. Perkins attempts to lead her statements, she stayed firm to her convictions.

I represented the Commission, and I wasn't going to be put into a partisan slot. And I felt that that was what he was trying to do, and I wanted to stay as nonpartisan as the Commission had, in saying that this was for both sides of the aisle to adopt, both sides of the aisle to look at. And he was trying to put a negative spin on it. (Lampe, 1999, p. 24)

President Reagan's made numerous speeches on behalf of A Nation at Risk, but one occasion is noteworthy. At a White House reception honoring winners of the Secondary School

Recognition Program, in the Grand Ballroom of the J. W. Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC, August 27, 1984, he said:

> This erosion in academic achievement took place during the very period overall spending on education was leaping up by over 600 percent. The crisis in our schools was symptomatic of a much larger crisis in our country. We were living under a tired philosophy of Government Knows Best; it was out of touch with the reality of a changing world, and while spending was going up, that tired philosophy was dragging America down." (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 57, President Reagan's Speech at the Secondary Recognition Program)

Finally three years after the event, Commission members gathered with 200 educators and political leaders to mark the third anniversary of publication of the report. A New York Times article, April 27, 1986, "Effort to Improve U.S. Schools Enter a New Phase" by Edward B. Fiske, reported comments by several key people.

> The three-day session, which ended here today, was convened by T. H. Bell, Secretary of Education in the first term of the Reagan Administration, who created the Commission. The conference is sponsored by the University of Utah and six national educational organizations.
>
> Participants were conscious that "A Nation At Risk," which sold 12 million copies, was an unusual document. "It was meant to be political," said William Baker, the retired chairman of Bell Laboratories and one of the 15 Commission members. "We kept it short and used language that would stir the American people."
>
> In an interview this week, Mr. Bell disclosed that he had been surprised at the findings of the Commission he created. "At the time I was shocked by the harsh criticism

that the far right was directing toward American public schools," he recalled. "I thought that if a representative Commission of leading citizens would take a look at public schools and issue a report saying that they were in pretty good shape, then that might put an end to the sniping."

"It may be a terrible thing to admit, but the report that they came back with was entirely different in tone and content than what I had expected."

The people gathered here this week agreed that the changes in recent years have been far-reaching. But most have addressed only the most obvious problems, said such participants as Frank Newman president of the Education Commission of the States, which monitors educational changes.

"We're discovering that improving schools is a lot more complicated than we first thought," he said. "We have to figure out how to get students to go beyond rote learning and be more creative. We have to address questions like student and teacher motivation, which are a lot more subtle."

One problem that has not been confronted, he said, is that of students who are failing to meet the higher academic standards. "It's easy to raise standards," he said. "It's a lot tougher to figure out how to help make these kids who can't meet them to make the grade." (Lampe, 1981-1983, Box 2, Folder 58, Efforts to Improve U.S. Schools Enter a New Phase)

Similar Reports

Several other reports came out in 1983 but none had the impact of A Nation at Risk. It could be said that 1983 was a banner year for major education reports. There were so many that the National Education Association (NEA) published a special report, A Guide From Teachers

To A Nation at Risk And Other Studies, discussing and explaining them. President Mary Hatwood Futrell, in an introductory letter wrote, "A Nation at Risk and other reports can be taken as a guide for our profession and our nation. They recommend an agenda for excellence. And they warn that doing nothing invites national disaster" (National Education Association, 1983).

After a discussion and endorsement of A Nation at Risk, they reviewed nine other studies considered important. "This section reviews nine of the major studies published during the past twelve months" (National Education Association, 1983, p. 9).

The reports reviewed by the NEA speak to the educational philosophy of the times. The first three are major Commission studies. Educating Americans For The 21st Century: A Plan Of Action For Improving Mathematics, Science, And Technology For All American Elementary And Secondary Students So That Their Achievement Is The Best In The World 1995 (Coleman & Selby, 1983). It was a seventeen-month study done by the National Science Board Commission and recommended increased time on math, science and technology education and differential pay for those teachers.

Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983) was done by the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth and chaired by James B. Hunt, Governor of North Carolina, Pierre S. du Pont IV, Governor of Delaware, and Frank T. Cary, Chairman of IBM. The forty-one members of this Commission included governors and corporate leaders and linked education and economic growth and recommended more involvement of business leaders in education. This report was presented to Congress during the same time Margaret Marston presented A Nation at Risk. John Casteen, then Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Virginia spoke on behalf of

Governor Hunt, Chairman. Mr. Casteen stated, “These leaders came together to study education in the belief that education matters vitally to our states and to American business” (Casteen, 1983).

Making the Grade, Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy (Twentieth Century Fund, Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983) was chaired by Robert Wood and among its members were Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Diane Ravitch. The report’s recommendations were broad and included competency-based education, parental choice, clearer goals and increased federal responsibility.

Individual studies spoke to broad themes, but all saw the need to fix education. A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future by John Goodlad (1984) wrote of numerous problems in public education and recommended systemic changes and educational opportunity. The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto by Mortimer J. Adler (1982) recommended a universal one track K-12 classic education. The Current Status of Schools of Choice in Public Secondary Education by Mary Anne Raywid (1983) was an extensive study of alternative secondary schools and pointed out the need for alternative programs within secondary schools. High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America by Ernest L. Boyer (1983) recommended clear goals for every high school and a common core of learning with required courses. Horace’s Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School by Theodore R. Sizer (1984) spoke of compromises faced by teachers and recommended more individual and local control. Finally The College Board did Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do (1984). The title of this report would be repeated over and over in the standards-based reform movement in addressing basic knowledge and skills needed by college entrants.

The one ingredient that all of these studies had in common was a call for action. They were written in challenging language, stated that there was a problem to be fixed and demanded reform.

One might ask how A Nation at Risk had such an incredible impact above all these. One explanation follows.

> In 1983, when (Michael) Deaver wanted to tackle Reagan's do-nothing public image on education, (Craig) Fuller brought him information about a largely ignored presidential Commission on excellence in education. "Nobody had paid any attention to it," Deaver recalls, "but I was looking for a way to reverse the president's negatives on education, and we took it around the country for six weeks." In speech after speech, Reagan cited the Commission as evidence of his commitment to educational issues. At the end of that period, 59 percent of the public gave him a favorable rating on education issues, whereas before 65 percent had viewed him negatively on the issue.
>
> "It was a great lesson in presidential communication," Deaver says, - though the exercise did nothing to change the quality of American Schools. (Source: Steve Mufson, "The Privatization of Craig Fuller," Washington Post Magazine, August 2, 1992, p. 19 as cited in Alexander & Salmon, 1995, p. 273)

Chapter Three

The Evolution of the Modern Standards Movement: Moving From Talk to Action

The response to A Nation at Risk was unprecedented and marked the beginning of an era. It set off a multi-dimensional and often interrelated barrage of reactions on three fronts: national, curricula content and state. Chapter Three examines how the modern standards movement evolved by looking at its development through national initiatives, subject-matter content organizations and state level systematic reform movements. Two events in 1989 were major outcomes of A Nation at Risk and set the stage for the following years of debate and implementation of standards. They were the First Education Summit and the publication of Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

National Movement

First Education Summit, 1989

During the presidential campaign of 1988, George Bush promised to be the "education president" and enlisted the aid of the nation's governors and corporate America to accomplish this goal. The President and the nation's Governors met at an historic Education Summit in Charlottesville in 1989 and developed the National Education Goals (National Education Goals Panel, 1993). This was only the third time in history a president had gathered the governors for a substantive meeting (Jennings, 1998).

Goldberg commented on the Summit, "George Bush convened the governors in 1989, only six years after A Nation at Risk. That was unheard of. It was only the third time--if you want to know a piece of trivia!--in American history that an American president had convened

all the governors . . . And it was the first time in American history that they were convened to talk about education. First time in American history" (Goldberg, 1999, p. 20).

The nation's governors and representatives from corporate America participated in and influenced the outcome of the First Education Summit. Their influence was felt in a shift of educational policy and decision making in two ways. Decisions made at the local levels shifted to the national and state levels and educational reform changed from a system based on "inputs" to a system based on "outputs".

Influence of the Governors

The governors were eager to participate in a summit with Bush. Following A Nation at Risk and prior to the summit, the southern states had made educational reform a priority.

> Above all, the state governors, particularly the southern governors, picked up the *Nation at Risk* agenda. They saw the connection between improved schooling and improving a state's economy. Schooling, for the first time, became a hot and profitable political issue, one linked to the creation of jobs. (Boyd, 1990, p. 45)

The states' approach was through "inputs" through increased per pupil spending, teacher salaries, teacher entry standards, high school graduation requirements and college admission standards. Ravitch (1992) gives a perspective on the motives for holding the Education Summit and to the emphasis on quickly developing standards.

> The momentum for change was picked up by those governors, educators, and business leaders who became involved in school reform after publication of *A Nation At Risk* in 1983. For a decade, the states sought to reform their schools. They began by raising graduation requirements, initiating merit pay and career ladders, and trying a host of other reforms . . .

Many reformers came to believe that such changes were too piecemeal, too uncoordinated, too incremental. (Ravitch, 1992, pp. 3-4)

Gradually, however, the shift moved from “inputs” to “outputs” and this was reflected in a measurement of student achievement.

> The country is engaged in a national debate on what students should know and be able to do and on how to measure student achievement toward those ends. This debate is part of a fundamental shift of perspective among educators, policymakers, and the public from examining inputs and elements of the educational process to examining outcomes and results. (National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992, pp. 7-8)

The National Governors’ Association (NGA), especially the southern governors, made educational reform a priority. Three of the most active governors were Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Richard Riley of South Carolina, and Bill Clinton of Arkansas. The NGA led the effort to set clear standards and to identify and create assessments. The governors knew what they were spending, but did not know how their students were performing. The traditional concepts of how to measure student achievement changed around this time.

> The state-level activity by policymakers and elected officials reflected a somewhat commonsense understanding that the effort to improve education must begin with an agreement about what children are expected to learn, that is, content standards. Traditionally, this agreement had been expressed by Carnegie units. But the education reformers of the 1980’s moved beyond Carnegie units to ascertain what children were expected to know and be able to do. And wherever there was standard setting, there was also new interest in finding some reliable means of measuring student progress toward meeting the content standards, thus increasing the search for a test or an assessment that

would permit comparisons across states, districts, and even schools. (Ravitch, 1995, p. 56)

When asked how the Virginia movement fit into the larger national picture, Bracey commented on the role the governors played in the two education summits and continue to play in the politics of education.

> . . . a large connection among the states runs through governors' offices. When Lou Gerstner commandeered the 1996 education summit, he brought in all the governors. The governors had been in on the first education summit in 1989, and they were brought back in 1996.
>
> The message coming out of there was loud and clear. They were telling Clinton to back off any national tests, any national standards, and that they were going to develop them on their own. . . . One of the few concrete things that came out of the 1996 summit was an entity called "ACHIEVE" to be set up in the National Governors office to provide communications and technical assistance to the various states to develop standards. (Bracey, 1999) pp. 16-17)

Influence of Business

When President Bush called the First Education Summit he invited corporate leaders, as well as the governors, for the purpose of advancing the idea of raising standards. It was quite a contrast to the early 80's when President Reagan advocated sharply cutting back on education spending in favor of local control of government. Bush who had been Reagan's vice president was strongly in favor of national goals, national standards and national tests (Jennings, 1998, p. 9). This was a change in perspective because Bush, along with the nation's governors and corporate leaders, felt that the changes made in the 1980's were coming slowly.

One of the major changes of this time was the influence of the corporate world on educational policy making decisions. Business formed partnerships with education and had "adopted" schools and contributed time and money, but was impatient with the pace of school improvement. Fueled by impatience, the president and the governors agreed to adopt goals and in so doing marked a major departure from a traditional localized view of education (Jennings, 1998, p. 13).

> Consequently, the U.S. Chamber of Congress, the National Alliance of Business, the Business Roundtable, and other national groups pressed more and more for a results-oriented system and not one based on specifying all the requirements for a good education. In short, they advocated an "output" system and not one based on "inputs". (Jennings, 1998, p. 11)

Goldberg commented on the increased participation of politicians and business people after A Nation at Risk.

> I would say that politically the most important trend that emerged after the issuance of A Nation at Risk was the extraordinarily increased participation of politicians and business people in the education reform movement. We did a very, very preliminary analysis of the state of the state speeches of the 50 governors before A Nation at Risk was issued, and education hardly appeared. The year after A Nation at Risk came out, a lot of them suddenly became education governors.
>
> Some of the governors at that time were Bill Clinton, Lamar Alexander, Richard Riley. They were all governors at the time of issuance of A Nation at Risk. It was in those Southern states that the problem was as great as it was anywhere in the country. So you

had Arkansas and Tennessee and South Carolina coming to the fore and saying, “We’ve got to do something about it.”

The interesting thing is, it was both Republican and Democratic governors. Party affiliation meant nothing. If you looked at the steps they took, it’s hard to tell one from the other during that period. They all were for improved teacher quality. They all wanted to move standards into the state. A lot of this stuff looked the same, because they used the report as a way [to determine] what are the things we need to focus on. It was curriculum. It was teaching. And to this day, business and politicians are at the heart of it. (Goldberg, 1999, pp. 21-22)

America 2000: An Education Strategy

“The six original National Education Goals were created at the first Education summit held in Charlottesville, Virginia, in September 1989” (Jennings, 1998, p. 14). For the purposes of this paper, Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship, is important since it had far reaching implications for the standards-reform movement.

By the year 2000:

American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy. (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, p. 3)

President Bush announced the goals in his State of the Union speech in 1990. After the goals were announced the president and governors agreed to create the National Education Goals Panel to monitor yearly progress (Ravitch, 1995).

> The National Education Goals Panel was then created and charged with measuring progress toward the goals developed at the Education Summit. The Goals Panel took on the challenge of determining how progress toward meeting national goals might be measured in the various subject-matter fields. The creation of national education goals led to the question, unprecedented in the nation's history, of whether there should also be national education standards. (Shepard, 1993, p. xvii)

To meet the challenge President Bush recruited new leadership for the Department of Education with Lamar Alexander, the former governor of Tennessee as Secretary of Education, and David Kearns, former chairman of Xerox Corporation, as deputy secretary. The overall plan of the administration was called *America 2000,* and was announced in 1991 as a national strategy with several complementary parts. The subsequent publication, <u>America 2000: An Educational Strategy</u>, gave the overall philosophy and strategy of the plan.

> Eight years after the National Commission on Excellence in Education declared us a "Nation at Risk," we haven't turned things around in education. (p. 9)
>
> At the historic education summit in Charlottesville five months ago, the President and the Governors declared that "the time has come, for the first time in United States history, to establish clear national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive." The six National Education Goals contained here are the first step in carrying out that commitment. (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, p. 35)

Every state and community was encouraged to organize its own citizens' groups to work toward the goals. "We will unleash America's creative genius to invent and establish a New Generation of American Schools, one by one, community by community" (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, p. 19). The overall strategy of *AMERICA 2000* was to advance the national goals through a joint effort and the President and the governors pledged to support and recommend steps that the federal government, business and community groups should take to achieve the goals (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, p. 41).

America 2000: An Educational Strategy defined key concepts that are reflected today in the current standards implementation movements. These include, Better and More Accountable Schools – including World Class Standards, American Achievement Tests, Report Cards and school choice; Report Cards – a public reporting system on the performance of education institutions and World Class Standards – definitions of what American students should be expected to know and be able to do (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, pp. 59-62).

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills

America 2000 was announced on April 18, 1991 by President George Bush when he announced a new education strategy that would transform America's schools. One response to the President came on June 28, 1991 with the report of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), What Work Requires of Schools. In referring to that report it stated:

> This report concerns one part of the transformation the President has described, the part that involves how our schools prepare young people for work.

> This document describes fundamental changes in the nature of work, and the implications those changes hold for the kinds of workers and workplaces the nation must create. (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991, p. 1)

The SCANS report discussed how the world had changed and how work had changed. But it clearly stated that schools had not kept up with a changing world and economy.

> But despite their best efforts, most schools have not changed fast enough or moved far enough.
>
> Yet despite some promising exceptions, we are unable to demonstrate that things are, on the whole, much better. In terms of achieving results, not much has changed despite great effort and significant increases in funding.
>
> It is time to ask: Why is that so? How is it that all this time, energy, and effort have been expended to so little avail? (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991, p. 4)

The SCANS report stated that the major problem was miscommunication in which schools and business were like two ships passing in the night in which “one speaks in Morse code, the other signals with flags” (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991, p. 4). The report stated that three things needed to happen: establishing a better means of communicating needs between business and schools; setting clear-cut standards for students; assessing students’ workplace readiness (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991, p. 6).

The SCANS report was a precursor of many of the standards documents we see today. It had the elements of setting standards, assessing students and measuring their performance with levels of proficiency.

National Council on Education Standards and Testing

To explore the feasibility of national tests and standards, the Bush administration established the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) in June 1991. Secretary Alexander had drafted a plan to appoint a council without any input from Congress, but Congressman Kildee, the Democratic chair of the Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education in the U.S. House of Representatives, suggested that the council be authorized by statute, thus having more legitimacy. A bill was created and introduced by Kildee (H.R. 2435, 1991) and quickly passed. It became known as the National Council on Education Standards and Testing Act, 1991 (Jennings, 1998, p. 21). "The National Council on Education Standards and Testing was created by Public Law 102-62 on June 27, 1991. The purpose of the Council is to provide advice on the desirability and feasibility of national standards and testing in education" (National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992, p. B-1). To maintain the bipartisan integrity of the council, NCEST was cochaired by Roy Romer, the Democratic Governor of Colorado and Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., Republican Governor of South Carolina.

The National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) report, Raising Standards for American Education, was produced in eighteen months and endorsed national standards and testing (Shepard, 1993, p. xvii).

> The Council finds that setting national standards and developing a system of assessments measuring progress toward the standards are desirable . . . First, they can help us extend the opportunity for a high quality education to all Americans. Second, they can strengthen democratic institutions and values while enabling all citizens to participate more effectively in the political process. Third, they can enhance economic competitiveness by improving the Nation's human capital – the abilities and skills of the

country's workers and entrepreneurs. (National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992, p. 9)

The National Education Goals Panel's role became more clearly defined. The report recommended the reconfiguration of the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) to be politically balanced with representatives from the administration, National Governors' Association and members of Congress. It also recommended that the NEGP appoint members to a newly created National Education Standards and Assessments Council (NESAC), ". . . and it will certify standards and criteria for assessments" (National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992, p. 35).

One important outcome of the council's work was the clarification and identification of different types of standards. The terminology they used was reflected later in numerous content and state documents on standards.

> *Content standards* should set out the knowledge, skills, and other necessary understandings that schools should teach in order for all American students to attain high levels of competency in the subject matter . . . *Student performance standards* should establish the degree or quality of student performance in the challenging subject matter set out in the *content standards* . . . *School delivery standards* should set out criteria to enable local and state educators and policymakers, parents, and the public to assess the quality of a school's capacity and performance in educating their students in the challenging subject matter set out by the *content standards* . . . *System delivery standards* should set out criteria for establishing the quality of a school system's (local, state, or national) capacity and performance in educating all students in subject matter set out in

the *content standards*. (National Council on Education Standards and Testing, 1992, p. E-5)

Goals 2000: Educate America Act

After the election of President Clinton, the Department of Education under Secretary Riley, former governor of South Carolina, submitted Goals 2000: Educate America Act as legislation. It formally authorized the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP), codified the goals, recommended the establishment of the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) and established a grant program for participating states (Ravitch, 1995, pp. 148-149).

> The Goals 2000: Educate America Act is a blueprint for revitalizing education in America as we approach the twenty-first century. It aims to change America's approach to education reform. Rather than supporting piecemeal improvements, Goals 2000 would stimulate the development and implementation of systemic reform plans.
>
> The legislation sets into law the six National Education Goals and establishes a bipartisan National Education Goals Panel to report on progress toward achieving the goals. It encourages the development of State content and performance standards in eight subjects . . . and provides a process for certification of model voluntary national and State standards by a National Education Standards and Improvement Council.
>
> The legislation funds the development of model voluntary national Opportunity to Learn Standards, (OTL) . . .
>
> Goals 2000 encourages the development of plans at all levels so that reform is bottom-up and state-wide . . . (United States Congress, 1993, p. 2)

It should be noted here that with encouragement from Goals 2000 to "State reform plans" came $400 million for the implementation of reforms that would ". . . involve public officials, teachers, parents, students and business leaders in designing their plans to help all students reach the challenging standards and the National Education Goals" (United States Congress, 1993, pp. 2-3).

The reaction in Virginia was unlike most states. When asked how he would respond to the federal Goals 2000 program, Governor George Allen responded:

> I believe that Virginia must chart its own course in education reform and I am highly suspect of the benefits of greater federal involvement in public education. The Attorney General has determined that participation in the Goals 2000 program is a decision for the Board of Education and the governor. I am determined that we Virginians will exercise our best judgment – the judgment of the people of Virginia – about what is the most effective way to improve the academic skills of our children and will accept federal funding when it is consistent with that judgment. (Virginia Journal of Education Staff, 1994, p. 10)

The National Education Goals Panel Commissioned the Goals 3 and 4 Standards Review Technical Planning Group. They produced an important study in November 1993, Promises to Keep: Creating High Standards for American Students. It became known popularly as the Malcom report for Shirley M. Malcom, chair of the committee, and was a significant attempt to outline criteria for drafting standards and clarify content standards "'Content' and 'performance' standards are integral parts of standards-based reform. Yet . . . there is not clear agreement on definitions of these types of standards" (Malcom & Wurtz, 1993, p. 9).

> Our charge was to prepare a report offering recommendations for "criteria and processes the National Education Goals Panel and a National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) should use to review and certify voluntary national content standards as 'world-class,' 'high-quality,' and 'internationally competitive' as envisioned by the Goals Panel, the report *Raising Standards for American Education*, and legislation considered by the Congress." (Malcom & Wurtz, 1993, Introductory Letter)

Promises to Keep: Creating High Standards for American Students offered a common point of reference to review and certify standards by specifying content standards, "what students should know and be able to do", in terms of subject-specific content standards and state content. It also specified performance standards, "how good is good enough" (Malcom & Wurtz, 1993, pp. ii-iii).

In addition to defining standards, the important questions of how to monitor progress and who should be responsible for that role was studied. Setting Performance Standards For Student Achievement was prepared for the purpose of evaluating the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) trial assessment of 1992 and to evaluate the efforts to use NAEP to establish national performance standards. The report gave a concise history of the efforts to measure standards up to that point.

> The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), first administered in 1969, is conducted under the auspices of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NAEP, which is administered every 2 years, provides the best available trend information on the educational achievement of American students.

A year before the Education Summit, Congress reauthorized the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The law also created a National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to develop and oversee policy for the National Assessment.

Given the emerging consensus for establishing national education standards, the fact that the Education Summit was silent on who should set standards, and the fact that NAEP was the only national assessment of achievement based on defensible samples, NAEP interpreted the authorizing legislation as a mandate to set performance standards, which it named "achievement levels," for NAEP. (Shepard, 1993, pp. xviii – xviv)

After a detailed investigation, the Shepard report concluded that the NAEP should not be used to set performance standards. One reason offered is that ". . . achievement levels make NAEP far more useful for parents and policymakers by providing performance standards against which to measure educational progress and the attainment of the national education goals" (Shepard, 1993, p. xiii).

The drive for national assessments was not one sided, but articulated by various bipartisan national groups. Kirst (1994) discusses the political momentum of the time.

Political support for national standards is not only from the Clinton administration; it includes a significant number of Republican governors and legislators as well as former president Bush. Both teachers unions (National Education Association [NEA] and American Federation of Teachers [AFT]), National School Boards Association, Council of Chief State Officers, and the National Governors Association (NGA) supported the recommendation in January 1992 for national standards and examinations. (National Council on Education Standards and Testing 1992). (p. 386)

Governor Roy Romer wrote about his experiences on NCEST, the legislation and what he believed it could accomplish for the standards movement. He also suggested a model for states and content areas to follow in the development of standards.

> The people of America need to arrive at a conclusion about what a youngster should know and be able to do. Certain devices can be created to help them. One is the National Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC). Neither the Goals 2000 legislation nor the NESIC structural organization should suggest that the process used to determine what students should know be administered from the top down. The math standards prepared by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), for example, were arrived at correctly, from the bottom up. They represent the best thinking in the country collectively. (Romer, 1995, p. 66)

Curricula Content Movements

As Developed through Subject-Matter Organizations

"One tacit purpose of the Education Summit was to motivate educators to set challenging standards within all major subject areas. This purpose was quickly realized. In a relatively short period of time, standards documents were generated for all major academic areas" (Marzano & Kendall, 1997, p. 27). A discussion of the politics of subject-matter reform and the difficulty these groups had in reaching recognized standards follows.

> What the president and the governors did not know was that in only one of the subject fields listed - mathematics - were educators ready to say what children should learn and teachers should teach. In no other field was there general agreement on what should be taught, and in no field, including mathematics, was there any widely accepted test that schools could use to ascertain how well students are performing. (Ravitch, 1995, p. 121)

Mathematics

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) was the first subject-matter group that crafted an early version of a national standard of what students should know and be able to do, and how that might be best demonstrated in the classroom. In 1986, the (NCTM) took the lead and established the Commission on Standards for School Mathematics and appointed members to four working groups to create standards for K-4, 5-8 and 9-12, as well as an evaluative group. The groups included math teachers, college professors and researchers who during the summers of 1987 and 1988, wrote, reviewed and revised the standards (Editorial Projects in Education, 1995, p. 12). They pre-empted the national movement in March, 1989 when they published *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics* (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989), thus becoming the first national subject-matter group of professional educators who addressed the issue and begin to develop and draft curriculum standards. The publication of the math standards ushered in a new era.

> It is certainly no exaggeration to say that the publication of the *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics* in 1989 by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) ushered in a new era relative to the role of national organizations in the practice of schooling. Through the *Standards* document, NCTM helped to form a new perspective on how national subject-area groups can contribute to the improvement of education when it delineated, for three levels (K-4, 5-8 and 9-12), a consensus on what students should know and be able to do and how that might best be demonstrated in the classroom. Other organizations soon followed NCTM's lead. (Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), 1998, chapter 2, p. 1)

> The NCTM document was a major contributor to the national awareness of the benefits of identifying standards in content domains, and it is probably the most successful standards document published to date in terms of the breadth of its acceptance . . . To prepare for the 1994 NAEP mathematics assessment, The National Assessment Governing Board awarded a contract in the fall of 1991 to the College Board to develop item specifications for the 1994 assessments. Explicit in this project was an alignment with the NCTM standards, inasmuch as they were believed to reflect the most current thinking on what students should know and be able to do in mathematics. (Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), 1998, chapter 7, p. 1)

The efforts of the NCTM had a major impact on other national subject-matter organizations, many of which looked to the NCTM for guidance. "The National Academy of Science used the success of the NCTM to urge Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander to underwrite the national standards-setting effort in other content areas" (Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), 1998, chapter 1, p.1).

In National Standards in American Education, A Citizen's Guide, Ravitch (1995), writes about her experiences during the Bush administration:

> There was never any doubt in my mind that I would write a book . . . about standards in education. During my eighteen-month stint in the Department of Education, no issue consumed more of my time and energy than the role of standards in improving education. Government agencies tend to move slowly, but in a matter of months, OERI made awards to major organizations of teachers and scholars to develop national standards in science, history, geography, civics, the arts, English, and foreign languages. (These awards were made in collaboration with other federal agencies, including the National Endowment for

> the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.) In addition, we awarded grants to states to prepare new curricula that embodied high standards for all students. Through conferences, publications, and collaborative activities with the National Science Foundation, we supported the recently developed standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The message that OERI delivered consistently to teachers, supervisors, teacher educators, researchers, city and state officials, textbook publishers, journalists, and others was that education without standards would fail to achieve either equity or excellence. (Ravitch, 1995, pp. ix-x)

Goldberg agreed that the NCTM standards led the curriculum field and commented on their contribution to other disciplines.

> They were the first to lay out standards. They were the first to open the debate. Some people hated them, as you know. And some people loved them . . . I think NCTM made an enormous contribution by biting the bullet and saying, "We can have standards." Of course all the other disciplines followed. (Goldberg, 1999, pp. 20-21)

Lampe remembers discussing the NCTM standards, "A couple of members who served on that Commission told me later that had it not been for A Nation at Risk, they would not have risked this report. But they felt so strongly and this was the time to say something" (Lampe, 1999, p. 32).

The long-range effects of the mathematics standards influenced the development of standards in other disciplines and years later, the Virginia movement.

Science

Science was the second subject-matter content area to take up the standards banner. Unlike mathematics with the NCTM speaking as one voice, several groups in science were

involved in the effort. “The National Research Council, whose members are drawn from the councils of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine, oversaw the science-standards project” (Editorial Projects in Education, 1995, p. 13).

Work began in 1991 and involved the various disciplines within science and included numerous groups within the disciplines. As a background to developing standards, the work and publications of other recognized groups within science were examined. The National Science Teacher’s Association (NSTA) Scope and Sequence documents were examined such as (*The*) *Content Core: A Guide for Curriculum Designers* and an addendum to the *Core, Scope, Sequence and Coordination of National Science Education Content Standards*. NSTA also published *A High School Framework for National Science Education Standards* developed under a grant from the National Science Foundation (Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), 1998).

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Project 2061 and its publication, *Science for All Americans* in 1989, describing what is essential for a scientifically literate society, was examined. This document provided over sixty literacy goals in science as well as mathematics, technology and the social sciences. The goals were articulated across K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grades. Out of this effort came *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* (1993) providing a providing a strong research base on students’ understanding and learning for each level (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1993).

The National Research Council released a draft of their proposed standards in 1994, and published the final version *National Science Education Standards* in 1996. It covered content standards as well as science teaching, professional development, assessment, program and

system standards. The standards are written on three levels, K-4, 5-8 and 9-12, with seven general science topics addressed at each level. These topics become increasingly more comprehensive at each level (National Research Council, 1996).

The following speaks to the impact of these documents and discusses the connection of the mathematics and science documents.

> With Project 2061's publication of *Science for All Americans* (SFAA) in 1989 and *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* in 1993 and the National Research Council's release of the *National Science Education Standards* in 1996, there now exists a strong national consensus among educators and scientists on what all K-12 students need to know and be able to do in natural science. These documents – along with the standards issued by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) . . . provide schools and school districts with a solid conceptual basis for reform in science, mathematics, and technology. (Roseman, 1996, p. 55)

The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), a partnership of researchers from the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University, Stanford University the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studied standards-based systemic reform in nine states. They speak to the impact the mathematics and science content organizations had on the standards movement and attribute the success of the movement to them.

> Originally incubating quietly in the enclaves of professional subject-matter associations like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, efforts to set standards and articulate systemic reforms based on them were soon generated by nearly every state in the union (American Federation of Teachers, 1995) and a large array of urban, suburban and rural districts. Support came from the U.S. Department of Education, the National

> Science Foundation, and associations as diverse as the Business Roundtable, the National Governors' Association, and the American Federation of Teachers. Indeed, standards-based reform enjoyed high bipartisan consensus. (Massell, Kirst, & Hoppe, 1997b, p. 1)
>
> The external stimulus and support provided by national associations and projects was also crucial to the stability and continuation of reform. State and local policymakers reported drawing upon the resources and efforts of the groups that developed national standards. Policymaker association, such as the National Governors' Association, facilitated the exchange of knowledge about reform strategies. Seven of our states (CA, CT, FL, GA, KY, NJ, and TX) developed their mathematics and science standards with the support of their National Science Foundation's Statewide Systemic Initiative projects. Indeed, while subject-matter revisions in most areas had been stalled for years in Georgia, work in science and mathematics forged ahead of such external support. Mathematics and science subject-matter organizations reached consensus much faster and easier than English and social studies content organizations. (Massell et al., 1997b, p. 6)

English

"Initially, two professional organizations, the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, were working on the project with the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois" (Editorial Projects in Education, 1995, p. 5). In March 1994, the United States Department of Education refused to continue funding the English/language arts project because they considered the draft standards too vague and dwelt on opportunity-to-learn standards too much. The Department of Education provided nearly $1 million for the standards project and after they withdrew the funds, the N.C.T.E and the I.R.A committed their own funds to complete the projects.

Standards for the English Language Arts was published in 1996 but not without criticism. The English standards were controversial and an explanation follows. “Arguments about the English curriculum are often arguments about the social order and, as a result, are profoundly moral and political” (Myers, 1997, p. 42).

Myers (1997) describes the differences in the English content area as a contrast of approaches, the structuralist approach and the descriptive approach.

> Structuralist and descriptive approaches to policy in the standards movement have had two distinct forums: the government-press forum involving federal agencies (regional labs and DOE) and the op-ed pages of the national press; and the education forum involving subject matter groups; teachers, and the local schools.
>
> The contrast between the government-press forum and the education forum has been between opposing sets of policies, one structuralist and top-down and the other descriptive and bottom-up. In the government-press forum, one finds an emphasis on curriculum coverage outlining specific grade level mandates . . . In the education forum, one finds policies emphasizing curriculum goals, an overall map of the subject area, . . . the latter presented as touchstones to spark local discussion, not as mandates. (Myers, 1997, p. 43)

Controversy did not escape the English standards and it was noted in 1997, that they were too general, vague and did not include test items. They were also criticized for being too favorable to diversity in the literature curriculum and for some of the methods they suggested for teaching (Myers, 1997, p. 46).

Social Studies

The National Council for the Social Studies (N.C.S.S.) organized the project and formed a national standards task force in January 1992. It released a first draft in November 1992 and a second draft in November 1993. Major controversy surrounded the release of the final document in 1994 and part could be explained by the organization of material.

> The standards are organized into 10 themes: culture; time, continuity, and change; people, places, and environments; individual development and identity; individuals, groups, and institutions; power, authority, and governance; production, distribution, and consumption; science, technology, and society; global connections; and civic ideals and practices. (Editorial Projects in Education, 1995, p. 19)

Lynne V. Cheney, who was Chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, had lobbied for history standards, funded the project and selected many of its 29-member panelists. She pre-empted the official release of the standards by writing a scathing commentary for The Wall Street Journal, vowing to fight the adoption of the standards. She gives some of her reasons.

> Imagine an outline for the teaching of American history in which George Washington makes only a fleeting appearance and is never described as our first president.
>
> The general drift of the document becomes apparent when one realizes that not a single one of the 31 standards mentions the Constitution.
>
> What went wrong? One member of the National Council for History Standards . . . says that the 1992 presidential election unleashed the forces of political correctness. (Cheney, 1994, p. A22)

The standards caused unprecedented controversy and the United States Senate denounced the history standards by a vote of 99 to 1. “Last month, the Senate voted 99 to 1 for a nonbinding amendment opposing certification of the proposed national history ***standards***. Members charged that the ***standards*** failed to respect the contributions of Western civilization” (Olson, 1995).

The spotlight on the demise of the history standards focused national attention on the end of the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC). Established in Goals 2000: Educate America Act, and never seated, the role of NESIC was questioned because of the debate of the role of the federal government .

> No appointments have ever been made to NESIC, and now it is likely that none ever will be. The chairs of the education committees in both the Senate and the House, Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum and Rep. Bill Goodling, have introduced bill that would kill NESIC, excise all references to opportunity-to-learn standards or strategies, and eliminate all federal funding for the development of national standards. (Diegmueller, 1995, p. 8)

This was a bipartisan view and was expressed by many seeking another solution to the development of standards. However, it became apparent that limiting the role of the federal government and turning to the states and other agencies was the way to go. Members of the National Education Goals Panel had decided in their Jan. 28 meeting to seek alternatives.

> “The political reality demands that we do it another way,” said Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, a Democrat and a member of the panel. He proposed the creation of a privately financed and operated group.
>
> “Getting it away from government, especially the federal government, is a good idea,” said Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. of North Carolina, a Democrat and a member of the goals panel. (Olson, 1995, p. 1)

Influence of the Federal Government

Some critics of the development of subject-matter standards say that the federal government became too involved. Along with philanthropic foundations it gave funding to numerous subject-matter groups. “There was no competition for the grants . . . Essentially, groups interested in developing standards in a given discipline simply approached the Education Department for funding” (Diegmueller, 1995, p. 6). The result of a tight timeline and limited funding caused many groups to abandon the development of performance standards, which basically describe what students must do and how well they must do it to meet the standards.

In Setting Performance Standards For Student Achievement, Shepard (1993) made several long-term recommendations for the development of content-standards.

> **5. Recognize the Need for a Multiyear Process for the Development of Performance Standards.** Future efforts to develop national consensus standards should not rely on highly constrained meetings and timetables. Instead, a national consensus process not unlike the 3-year effort to develop the NCTM Standards should be established. (p. xxx)

In addition Shephard made recommendations for stability and an implementation and feedback cycle. “. . . for national content standards to be feasible and useful, they must not change every 2 to 3 years. The Panel recommends a cycle of implementation, feedback, and revision that takes place over, perhaps, an 8- to 10-year period” (Shepard, 1993, p. xxx).

Despite much controversy, the years from 1990-1996 saw the publication of standards in social studies, sports and physical education, the arts, civics, geography, economics, English, and foreign language. According to Marzano, “For example, the documents listed in Figure 1 are the results of efforts by groups that either were funded by the U. S. Department of Education or identify themselves as representing the national consensus in their subject areas. Thus, these

documents could be said to articulate the 'official' version of standards in the respective subject areas." Figure 1 (Marzano & Kendall, 1997, p. 27)

Science	National Research Council. *National Science Education Standards*. Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press, 1996.
Foreign Language	National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century.* Lawrence, Kans.: Allen Press,1996
English/Language Arts	National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. *Standards for the English Language Arts.* Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1996.
History	National Center for History in the Schools. *National Standards for History for Grades K-4: Expanding Children's World in Time and Space.* Los Angeles, Calif.: NCHS, 1994. ---. *National Standards for United States History: Exploring the American Experience.* Los Angeles, Calif.: NCHS, 1994. ---. *National Standards for World History: Exploring Paths to the Present.* Los Angeles, Calif.: NCHS, 1994. ---. *National Standards for History: Basic Edition* Los Angeles, Calif.: NCHS, 1996.
Arts	Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. *National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able To Do in the Arts.* Reston, Va.: Music Educators National Conference, 1994.
Health	Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards. *National Health Education Standards: Achieving Health Literacy.* Reston, Va.: Association for the Advancement of Health Education, 1995.
Civics	Center for Civic Education. *National Standards for Civics and Government.* Calabasas, Calif.: CCS, 1994.
Economics	National Council on Economic Education. *Content Statements for State Standards in Economics, K-12 (Draft).* New York: NCEE, August 1996.
Geography	Geography Education Standards Project. *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards.* Washington, D. C.: National Geographic Research and Exploration, 1994.
Physical Education	National Association for Sport and Physical Education. *Moving into the Future, National Standards for Physical Education: A Guide to Content and Assessment.* St. Louis: Mosby, 1995.
Mathematics	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics.* Reston, Va.: NCTM, 1989.

Social Studies	National Council for the Social Studies. *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.* Washington, DC: NCSS, 1994

Adapted from Marzano & Kendall, 1997, p. 28.

State Movements

A recent report rated the fifty states on "High Standards for All Children and Assessments Aligned With Those Standards" (Jerald, Curran, & Olson, 1998, p. 80). Forty-nine of the fifty states had adopted some form of standards and assessments or were in the process of revising or developing them. "Iowa is now the only state that is not working on statewide academic standards" (Jerald et al., 1998, p. 76). The 1998 report represented a culmination of state level systematic reform movements that began even before 1983 and were interrelated with national initiatives and subject-matter content movements.

Ten years after A Nation at Risk, Terrel Bell reflected that the Commission's findings were much more negative than he anticipated, but it succeeded in rallying the nation around its schools. In particular he noted the impact the report had on the states.

> The States responded to *A Nation At Risk* with a flurry of legislative action establishing mandates, "accountability" directives, and various other changes in education policies. Many states created their own Commissions to study their education systems and recommend reform measures. (Bell, 1993, p. 593)

Bell noted two key groups that impacted state reform movements and identified governors and business. State governors mentioned were Mark White, governor of Texas, who appointed Ross Perot to lead a major study on school reform, as well as Bill Clinton of Arkansas, Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Thomas Kean of New Jersey, Robert Graham of Florida, and Richard Riley of South Carolina.

Bell cited corporate America as influencing state reform movements and tied a strong economy to the schools.

> Corporate America has joined the executive and legislative branches of our national and state governments in recognizing at long last that human intelligence and creativity in the workplace are essential to a strong and productive economy and that these qualities are nurtured in our schools. American corporations' ability to compete in a global marketplace is tied to the quality of talent produced by the schools. (Bell, 1993, p. 595)

State Systemic Reform Movements: A Shift in Focus and Key Players

In many ways A Nation at Risk confirmed policy initiatives already begun in states. In a comprehensive study of state education reform from 1983-1993, Massell et al (1994) cite examples showing that by 1983 numerous states had adopted higher standards for college admission and higher standards for high school graduation. Furthermore, ". . . the pressures of political and business elites at the state level, and the work of national policymaker associations explain state action as much as *A Nation at Risk"* (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1985; Fuhrman, 1988, as cited in Massell & Fuhrman, 1994, p. 1).

A bird's eye view of state reform movements over the fifteen years from 1983 to 1998 reflects the national picture and shows a shift in policy and a shift in the role of key players.

Policy reforms after A Nation at Risk focused on inputs. Later in the decade policies clearly focused on the quality of results. "By 1990, policymakers at the state and federal level have begun to turn their attention to the *results* rather than the *inputs* of education (Finn 1990) as cited in (Massell & Fuhrman, 1994, p. 3). The shift from a top-down system of mandated amounts and type of fiscal, human and other resources changed to an outcome system because the progress made was considered not substantial enough. "Although public education is a

constitutional responsibility of state government, state policymakers historically delegated this authority to local school districts, particularly in matters of curriculum and instruction" (Massell et al., 1997, p. 1). State systemic reform movements during the last two decades have marked a sharp contrast to this historic tradition. The shift was seen from instituting minimum competencies to an emphasis on quality in core academic courses.

The second key change was in the role of key players. "In 1983, state politicians were the primary conduit for reform ideas, . . . State legislators and governors championed the initiatives spelled out in *A Nation at Risk* . . . In addition to state politicians, the business community became a prime mover of new education reform policy (Massell & Fuhrman, 1994, p. 7).

Massell et al (1997) discusses a shift in leadership. "The constellation of power at the state level is changing too. While the 1980s saw the rising prominence of governors and legislators, the early 1990s are seeing the resurgence of chief state school officers and other educators as facilitators, and often drivers, of content-based reform" (Massell & Fuhrman, 1994, p. v). The current trend enlarges the role of educators. "Teachers, state education agency staff, and other educators have become central partners in the standards-setting process, and in many states have been actively involved in the development of new ways to assess student knowledge" (Massell & Fuhrman, 1994, pp. 7-8).

In the opinion of one instructor at Mary Washington College, as noted on her web page, the movement for state standards grew out of the national standards movement.

> After the movement for a set of national set of standards began to fizzle out somewhat – . . . people did not give up on good, solid academic standards. Instead, the public and government shifted to state set objectives.

Since consensus could not be found in national standards, people looked to state standards. In fact, many of the people in favor of national standards, and who were a part of Goals 2000 only a few years before, became the leaders of the state standards movement. (Theresa T., 1998, p. 4)

The formal endorsement of states to develop standards and the abandonment of the federal role was announced at the second Education Summit.

> We believe that setting clear academic standards, benchmarking these standards to the highest levels, and accurately assessing student academic performance is a state, or in some cases a local responsibility, depending on the traditions of the state. We do not call for a set of mandatory, federally prescribed standards, but welcome the savings and other benefits offered by cooperation between states and school districts and the opportunities provided by a national clearinghouse of effective practices to improve achievement. (National Governors Association and IBM, 1996, p. 2)

Others shared this endorsement and it marked a clear delineation and acknowledgment that the fifty states were recognized as carrying the standards banner.

> State efforts to create standards were given an impressive endorsement at the second Education Summit in Palisades, N. Y., in March 1996 when the state governors committed to designing standards and sharing conceptual and technical information regarding their efforts (National Governor's Association, 1996). These actions are consistent with the opinions of those educators who believe that it is at the state level that the standards movement will either succeed or fail. (Marzano & Kendall, 1997, p. 33)

Virginia has been recognized as one state to carry the standards banner well. The development and implementation of its content standards will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

The Virginia Experience, Part One

Background of the Virginia Modern Standards Movement

The development of the standards movement in the Commonwealth of Virginia evolved from the aftermath of A Nation at Risk, grew over time with input from educational as well as political and social forces, and continues to dominate the daily news scene. The research decision to begin the study of the Virginia movement in the 1980's is consistent with a previous decision to begin the overall study with A Nation at Risk.

Chapter Four examines the background of the Virginia modern standards movement by reviewing education reform in the 1980's and the link to the National Commission on Excellence in Education. It also provides an analysis of outcomes-based education (OBE) on the movement and the role it played as a catalyst to current reform.

Setting the Stage for Revision of the Standards

Reform in Virginia in the 1980's

Modern educational reform in Virginia paralleled the national scene in the 1980's. Bean provides a historical context and identifies four reports as significant (Bean, 1990, p. vi). They are: Report of the Governor's Task Force on Science and Technology in Virginia, July 1983; State Superintendent's Statewide Planning Committee's Report, June 1984; Report of the Governor's Commission on Virginia's Future, December 1984; and the Commission on Excellence in Education's report, Excellence in Education: A Plan for Virginia's Future, October 1986. A brief description of the first three reports follows.

Governor Robb appointed a task force on science and technology in July 1982. They were charged with studying the educational system in light of mathematics and science offerings

and the readiness of Virginia's graduates to meet the demands of technology industries. "A primary goal of the task force members was to determine how Virginia could attract future-oriented, high-technology industries into the state" (Bean, 1990, p. 9). Their report, Report of the Governor's Task Force on Science and Technology in Virginia, July 1983, made twenty-five recommendations and one with the highest priority called for high school graduates to complete a minimum of two years of science and two years of mathematics (Bean, 1990, p. 12).

Dr. S. John Davis, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, convened the State Superintendent's Statewide Planning Committee in March 1984 and charged them with providing continuous advice to the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education over a period of time and to review long-range and annual state plans. State Superintendent's Statewide Planning Committee's Report, June 1, 1984, listed two major concerns. First, there should be cooperation among agencies responsible for educating youth K-12; second, there existed a need for more outside involvement from citizen and community groups (Bean, 1990, pp. 15-16).

Governor Robb established the Commission on Virginia's Future in November 1982. Its Education Task Force published, Report of the Governor's Commission on Virginia's Future, December 1984, calling for an educational system among the nation's best. The report recommended increased spending, a reduction in disparities, financial and professional rewards for teachers, an emphasis on technology to upgrade educational systems and assurance that each child was functionally literate before completing elementary grades (Bean, 1990, p. 6).

The fourth report, the major focus of Bean's study, was the work of the Commission on Excellence in Education, Excellence in Education: A Plan for Virginia's Future.

Commission on Excellence in Education, Link to A Nation at Risk

The Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education was established as part of the ripple effect of A Nation at Risk that was felt throughout the country. Virginia was part of the larger national picture in which many states established their own commissions to study and recommend reform measures. "In fact, by October 1983, only six months following A Nation at Risk, the Education Commission of the States reported that some 135 state and local education commissions had been appointed and were working toward their own recommendations for improvement in public education" (ECS Working Paper, 1984, p. 1, as cited in Bean, 1990, p. 3).

Virginia's own Commission on Excellence in Education was established by Governor Gerald L. Baliles on March 26, 1986. He charged them with ". . . the responsibility of bringing him recommendations for specific actions to place Virginia in the top ten states in the quality of education it offers" (Bean, 1990, Abstract). Sixteen people served on the Commission and they included mostly lawyers and business people who had been active in Virginia government. There were few educators represented. The Commission also included Margaret S. Marston Lampe who served on the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Lampe's personal papers from her experiences on the National Commission on Excellence in Education served as a major reference in Chapter 2. Lampe credited her experience on the National Commission with influencing her decisions on five of the recommendations reached by Virginia's Commission on Excellence in Education.

"Dr. S. John Davis, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, appointed ten members to a 'Blue Ribbon Staff' chaired by his Deputy Superintendent, Mr. William J. Burkholder . . ." (Bean, 1990, p. 29). Their mission was to review and provide Commission members with current education reform literature and appropriate studies. With that was information presented by Dr.

Gerald Bracey from the State Department of Education who gave Commission members a packet of indicators on such statistical information as test scores and percentage of students mastering SOL's at grade level (Bean, 1990, p. 54).

The Commission's report, Excellence in Education: A Plan for Virginia's Future made thirty-six recommendations. Recommendations 1-9 focused on student achievement; recommendations 10-21 focused on the teaching force; recommendations 22-26 on technology; recommendations 27-36 were mixed, but identifying good and deficient schools along with rewards and help for those schools was mentioned (Bean, 1990, pp. 17-20).

Many of the thirty-six recommendations made by the Commission concentrated on early intervention and teacher preparation. Recommendation number two, "Virginia establish literacy tests in reading, writing, and arithmetic for all students in grade 6" (Bean, 1990, p. 17) had broad implications for state mandated testing. Many people involved in the Commission when interviewed in the study by Bean identified Mr. John Fishwick as a key actor in this recommendation. Mr. Fishwick retired as chairman and CEO of numerous large railroad corporations and as a lawyer. When interviewed on March 20, 1990 by Bean, he stated,

> You know, we ought to make this like a Literacy Barmitsva. When the kid gets to be about in sixth grade he's about 12 or 13 years old; we give him a test; can you read, write or do arithmetic?; and I said "What you ought to do is say, O.K., if you can't read, write, and do arithmetic then we stop you there. You've got to do that before you can go anywhere else; . . .
>
> Well, the Richmond Press picked that up . . . Well, Mrs. Baliles picked it up too, and she started saying that was a good idea. The Governor picked it up too. Well it put it in a position, you know, they pretty much had to do something. (Bean, 1990, p. 79)

The comments by Mr. Fishwick had far reaching implications for state mandated testing. The Literacy Passport Test became a reality in 1989-1990 with thirty-five percent of Virginia's sixth graders failing the test (Bean, 1990, p. 194).

Background of the Virginia Standards of Learning

Bosher provides the context of the Standards of Learning in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

> The Board of Ed had final responsibility for setting standards. In Virginia, the SOQ, the Standards of Quality, related to funding, have subsets. One subset is the SOA, Standards of Accreditation, which really enumerates what schools are to do. The SOLs, which are then left to the Board of Ed in terms of content, are what students should do. To follow the continuum, SOQ is what school divisions are supposed to do. That's the broad umbrella that establishes the funding mechanism. (Bosher, 1999, p. 7)

In summation, Bosher reiterated that the Standards of Quality relate to divisions, the Standards of Accreditation relate to schools, and the Standards of Learning relate to students. Bosher recalled the role that Davis played in forming the standards.

> We had had in the Code of Virginia the nomenclature starting with Jack Davis, former Superintendent of Public Instruction and former Superintendent of Fairfax County, the Standards of Learning. We had then grown out of Basic Learning Skills, which was really the first movement in Virginia, following an effort to have a minimum competency exam towards standards, and assessment against those standards. (Bosher, 1999, p. 2)

When asked if Virginia's standards movement was an outgrowth of A Nation at Risk, Bracey offered,

No, I don't think so. I think the Virginia movement goes back to 1980 and Chuck Robb's Commission on Virginia's Future. When Gerry Baliles came in, he established the education-specific commission, which I am sure had A Nation at Risk, which came out in April 1983, as part of its background. But really it was more of a follow-on from Robb to Baliles than something that was created because of A Nation at Risk. (Bracey, 1999, pp. 1-2)

Bracey, who was in the Virginia Department of Education at the time, recalls the role that Davis played.

The word "standards" started being used as soon as Jack Davis became superintendent, but it didn't have exactly a benchmark kind of implication to it.

Jack had come down to Richmond from being superintendent of Fairfax County. At his maiden speech, which I think was in the summer 1979, which was at our annual testing conference, he announced that he wanted something like a standards of learning program, which everybody thought was Fairfax County's program of standards [studies]. (Bracey, 1999, pp. 3- 4)

Bracey states that in his opinion standards in Virginia began in 1979 when he worked with teams of teachers in writing objectives.

That first summer, we gathered hundreds of teachers and supervisors and some university professors at dormitories at Radford University, and had them go through this exercise. In the course of the year, we sent the objectives out to other teachers for review. Does this make sense? Is this at the right grade level? How would you teach it? How would you assess it? To me the use of the word standards started happening then. (Bracey, 1999, pp. 5-6)

Roesch, who led the development of the mathematics standards in 1994, re-connected Davis to the revised standards movement when she invited him to be at opening meetings.

> Actually, we rented a hotel space in the Fairfax area early on. We even had the president from NCTM, the National Council of Teachers of Math, to do a kick-off, along with S. John Davis, the former state superintendent who started the Standards of Learning umpteen years ago. I had Dr. Jack Davis talk about what are Standards of Learning, where did they come from, and so forth, and then the president of NCTM to do a little kick-off. (Roesch, 1999, p. 3)

Roesch said that Davis was invited again when she convened mathematics teachers at Graves Mountain Lodge. "Again, I had the president of NCTM there for a kick-off and Dr. Davis" (Roesch, 1999, p. 4).

Shortt points out that the efforts to write standards 1994 was a revision of previously existing standards.

> First you have to remember that it was a revision of standards that were already in place. It was not the rewriting of the standards, it was a revision. So you already had a format. It was a matter of rethinking those standards that were current at that time, and where did we want to go with them. It was a matter of taking the framework that we had and revising that. It wasn't like we were writing standards from the beginning. (Shortt, 1999, pp. 3-4)

The Standards of Learning for Virginia date back to 1981 and were updated in 1988. *Virginia Standards of Learning Criteria for Revision and Refinement, 1994-1995*, dated June 1, 1994, states:

The Virginia Standards of Learning are academic content standards that are incorporated into the Standards of Quality – the Board of Education's policy document for public education. These standards were developed in 1981 and revised during 1986-1988.

The Standards of Learning – academic content standards – will be refined and revised during 1994-1995 in four core disciplines; mathematics; science; English, reading and language arts; and social studies. The product will be rigorous academic standards which are measurable through the assessment of student achievement. (Roesch, 1994-1995)

William C. Bosher Jr., currently the Superintendent for Chesterfield County Schools, was the State Superintendent for Public Instruction from January 1994 to July 1996. During his tenure, the Standards of Learning were updated to their present format. The process lasted fourteen months, from April 1994 to June 1995.

An important influence and catalyst for initiating change calling for the revision of the Standards of Learning must be considered. It was outcomes-based education (OBE).

Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)

The development of our present day standards-based system in Virginia included a detour through outcomes-based education (OBE). In the early 1990's, one of the major controversies of some state movements and one that was in some cases responsible for slowing down the development of standards was Outcomes-Based Education (OBE).

OBE had its origins in Pennsylvania where as early as 1989, soon after the First Education Summit, Pennsylvania became the setting for intense controversy. A group of Pennsylvania legislators heard Chester Finn, a former assistant secretary of education, at a conference in 1990, speak of outcomes rather than inputs. Finn believed student achievement

was the most important measure of a school system's progress (Ravitch, 1995, p. 161). The legislators went back to Pennsylvania intent on their state adopting strong student outcomes. ". . . pledged to phase out the traditional Carnegie unit, saying that within several years the state's high school graduates would have to demonstrate attainment of outcomes, not merely accrue the necessary clock hours in required courses" (O'Neil, 1994a, p. 6). The idea seemed like a sound one. "To proponents, outcomes-based education (OBE) is eminently sensible. Define the outcomes students should be able to demonstrate as a result of instruction . . . Organize curriculum and instruction to help students attain those outcomes" (O'Neil, 1994b, p. 1). But few expected the backlash against OBE and few concepts were as misunderstood. In Pennsylvania, "Typically, the criticisms have been emotionally charged, well organized, and well publicized. Among the more inflammatory anti-OBE materials is *The New World Order*, a videotape widely circulated by Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE), a national Fundamentalist Christian coalition" (Pliska & McQuaide, 1994, p. 66).

Olson asked, "How did an idea with such wide currency in education and so much momentum get such a bad name?" (1993, p. 1). She offers the following explanations. "But somewhere between the idea and its implementation, critics say, O.B.E. has stumbled. It has become associated with dumbing down the curriculum, stressing values over content, and holding students accountable for goals that are so vague and fuzzy they can't be assessed at all" (1993, p. 1).

Virginia's Experience with Outcomes-Based Education

This was certainly the case in Virginia where Governor Wilder backed away from plans for a common core of learning. "Virginia abandoned plans to adopt a 'common core of learning' after Governor Douglas Wilder said that he would not support 'value-based education'"

(Ravitch, 1995, p. 166). The architects of the Virginia plan called it a 'World Class Initiative' and included a 'common core of learning' for what students should know by age sixteen. "It suggested seven 'dimensions of living': personal well-being and accomplishment, interpersonal relationships, lifelong learning, cultural and creative endeavors, work and economic well-being, local and global civic participation, and environmental stewardship" (O'Neil, 1994b, p. 4).

In a special report, the Virginia Board of Education defined what it meant by the Common Core of Learning.

> It defines what *all* students should know and be able to do when they graduate. It shifts the emphasis from what teachers teach (curriculum) to what students learn (achievement). . . . While not prescribing curriculum, the Common Core is the foundation upon which curricula, textbooks, and other curriculum strategies and teaching materials are based. (Board of Education, 1993, p. 5)

Proponents of this plan tried to convince the public that they were teaching academics, however, "'The message came across that what we were doing was teaching values and not academics, which was not the case,' says Joe Spagnolo, former superintendent of public instruction in Virginia. Yet, he concedes, 'The opposition just ate us alive in terms of public opinion'" (O'Neil, 1994b, p. 4.).

One of the major problems was communication and an important lesson was learned in Virginia.

> "There has to be a lot of attention to communicating in simple terms," says James Cooper, dean of education at the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. In Virginia, state officials, "…try as they might, could not say simply enough and clearly

enough what this common core (program) was" he says. "Then the opposition defined it" in their terms as "mushy-headed." (O'Neil, 1994b, p. 5)

Cooper commented ". . . people couldn't show where math was going to be learned directly, where science concepts were going to be learned. They were all interwoven in there, but it was hard to explain it and hard to make the general public understand it" (Ravitch, 1995, p. 165).

Although OBE slowed down the standards movement, it also pointed the way toward content standards and forced educators to think seriously about the differences between OBE and content standards. Matthew Grandal, a spokesperson for educational issues for the American Federation of Teachers, points out that the differences in outcome-based standards and academic standards caused the defeat of OBE.

> Across the country, we've watched debates and legislative battles unfold around proposed education standards or 'outcomes' that stray from or avoid academics. These efforts, frequently referred to as 'outcome-based education' or 'OBE,' are being challenged and defeated, not only by religious fundamentalists but also by other concerned citizens.
>
> In several states, the intense negative reaction to nonacademic standards resulted in the substantial revision or defeat of the entire reform package. For example, in 1992, Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder abandoned the complete draft set of 'Common Core of Learning' standards:
>
> > [A] student who is becoming a fulfilled individual uses the fundamental skills of thinking, problem solving, communicating, quantifying, and collaborating . . . to analyze personal strengths and limitations to improve behaviors, capabilities, and

> plans. (*Virginia's Common Core of Learning, Draft, 1992*, as cited in Grandal, 1995, p. 16)

The above example illustrates that outcomes-based standards in Virginia were defeated because many people, especially parents and teachers, could not accept the non-academic tone. ". . . OBE's treatment of academic knowledge as a low priority doesn't sit well with many teachers and parents" (Grandal, 1995, p. 16).

An opposition leader emerged in Virginia as in Pennsylvania. Cheri Pierson Yecke, a former teacher of the year in Stafford, Virginia gave numerous speeches against OBE. Her philosophy was, "that student's motivation suffers under OBE because pupils know that they have multiple opportunities to pass a test to exhibit mastery of an outcome" (O'Neil, 1994b, p. 5).

Aversion to outcomes-based education galvanized special interest groups in Virginia. Tuttle warned parents against outcomes-based education and gave them ways to recognize it. "OBE will be recognized by parents no matter what name it's called if they find whole language in their schools where grammar isn't taught, where spelling isn't taught and where phonics certainly isn't taught exclusively" (Tuttle, as cited in Eagle Forum, 1996).

Bracey commented on the influence of special interest groups and the role they played in its demise. He also expressed his opinion on the difficulty of developing assessments for them.

> They would have deflected the attention away from outcomes-based education, which, as you probably know, was hot for a while, and then it became a dirty phrase. The outcomes that had been written in Virginia . . . I didn't think they were very good from a tester's perspective. I thought I might want to get involved as an external consultant in the development of tests for these outcomes, but an awful lot of them, as I recall, were warm

> and fuzzy. But from an assessment standpoint, they were pure mush. There was no way you could get a handle around it. (Bracey, 1999, p. 9)

In Virginia the opposition to the Common Core was based on the schools moving away from the curriculum and focusing on vague student outcomes. So intense was the feeling in Virginia against Outcomes-based Education that the condemnation of it spilled over to the next administration. In 1994, Governor George Allen formed a Commission on Government Reform which "suggested major changes limiting the role of government in the lives of our citizens. Many of our proposals suggest radical transformation in the culture of Virginia government and a reinvigorated approach to serving the public by focusing on customer service" (Otis L. Brown, personal communication, November 15, 1994).

The Commission's final report stressed the involvement of local constituencies, including business. "One of the primary goals for public schools is to involve teachers, parents, and the business community in setting priorities and seeing that these priorities are carried out" (Brown & Towberman, 1994, p. 175). The verbiage in the report against Outcomes-based Education was strong.

> The strong resistance to Outcome Based Education, Goals 2000, and Family Life Education is largely derived from parents and local officials objecting strongly to mandates imposed by agencies outside their local school systems. . . . Because Outcome Based Education is still a national issue, however, a number of parents believe that it is still driving the curriculum in many localities. (Brown & Towberman, 1994, p. 175)

The very first education recommendation of the report clearly and succinctly stated that Outcomes-based education was "dead".

> Recommendation ED 1: The Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction should issue additional statements to the public and to those responsible for the curricula that Outcome Based Education, its concept, directions, and objectives, is dead and will not be resurrected. (Brown & Towberman, 1994, p. 175)

Two messages in this report are significant. First, it officially condemned "Outcome Based Education", distinguished it from a more academic and content-driven approach and cleared the way for the development of the current standards. Second, it reinforced the importance of involvement of the business community.

Bosher reflected on his experience with outcomes-based education in Virginia and the role he played.

> From 1981 until January 1994, I served as Superintendent of Schools in Henrico County. In that role, I had spoken to a three-year movement from about 1991 to 1994. We called it the development of a Common Core of Learning. Around it was a great debate around outcome-based education and what it meant and what the implications of developing such a program might be for K-12 in Virginia.
>
> Late in 1993, Governor Wilder instructed the Virginia Department of Education to cease and desist the development of a Common Core of Learning. In that same time period, Governor Allen asked me to take on the role of Superintendent of Public Instruction. I spent a part of November, most of December working with the department and others, looking not only at the team that we put together in the department, but also the needs. One of the greatest needs, there was a void in terms of standards. (Bosher, 1999, pp. 1-2)

Bosher commented that one of the biggest impetuses for dropping the Common Core came from the business community.

> I think that probably the people who felt most disenfranchised by the Common Core of Learning effort was the business community, because the business community had always sought measurable, performance-oriented standards, and that didn't come out of the Common Core. (Bosher, 1999, p. 15)

Although Bosher refers to the business community being disenfranchised, Wurtzel provides an insight into how the business community was deeply involved in the development of outcomes-based education.

> The governor and Jim Dyke together had hired Joe Spagnolo, who was the former Superintendent of Education in Lynchburg. . . . He started an ambitious program of creating standards that were known as the Common Core of Learning. I got deeply involved with that, along with other Board members.
>
> He believed in a philosophy called OBE, outcomes-based education. The outcomes were designed around what was called a Common Core of Learning
>
> With the support of the business community, I arranged for what was called a gap analysis. We hired some educational consultants led by David Hornbeck.
>
> Hornbeck was responsible for developing the first set of state standards for Kentucky and is now the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the city of Philadelphia. A wonderful man! He did this original work on behalf of the Business Roundtable.
>
> I think the origins of a standards-driven movement--not exclusive origins, but a very important source--of the energy and money behind the standards movement after A Nation at Risk was the Business Roundtable. They recruited CEOs in every state with the

idea of developing in those states common standards, assessments, and consequences for kids.

At that time, the head of it was a fellow named John Acker, who was the CEO of IBM. He led this movement within the business community. They set a ten-year agenda. They hired David Hornbeck to develop a set of nine principles for outcomes-based education.

Spagnolo was following a lot of those principles in Virginia…When I joined the board and brought the business perspective, we focused more on those nine principles. (Wurtzel, 1999, pp. 1-3)

Wurtzel related how the shift moved from support of outcomes-based education to a non support as it became apparent that the standards were not academically focused.

As we worked through the development of the Common Core of Learning within this overall framework of outcomes-based education, heavily influenced by the work that the Business Roundtable and others had done, it became apparent to many of us that the drift of it was entirely too touchy-feely. We were getting criticism from the right that the standards were not objective standards, they were too politically correct.

The standards were not designed to be even handed. They had a political point of view. There was concern that some of the other standards in history and in social studies had a point of view that may have been less than neutral with respect to parental authority, with respect to homosexuality, alternate life styles, an emphasis on acceptance and working together and embracing other life styles. I think it was over-read, but it was susceptible to the reading that it expressed an agenda that was not politically centered. So there were value issues here that outraged the religious right.

> Many of us, including Jim Jones and myself and others, started telling Spagnolo, "We've got to cut this back. We've got to make it more academic, more rigorous, and more neutral from a values standpoint."
>
> It was not rigorous enough. It was written by teachers whose basic philosophy is that kids shouldn't fail, that the goal of the schools is to make every kid succeed, and that failure is counter-productive to learning, etc. (Wurtzel, 1999, pp. 3-5)

Roesch reflected on the shift from the Common Core of Learning to a more content driven approach as significant factors that stood out in her mind when reflecting back on the process.

> The change in thinking between the Common Core of Learning, which was the previous document that the state put on the table and then was removed, or outcomes-based education, where content really wasn't a focus. In fact, I think the words were something about math - thinking creatively about math and being an environmental steward might have been the closest thing to science.
>
> The thing that impressed me was a direct move from more socialization skills … with very little content there . . . to . . . Now we know what we're going to teach. That sticks with me. (Roesch, 1999, p. 15)

Brown reflected that the Common Core of Learning was also a significant factor in his opinion. He shared an interesting political insight.

> We were just recovering from the Common Core of Learning. At that time we were going to a very broad-based approach that included lots of performance assessment. By we, I mean the state, not in our particular school division. We had had that reform effort, which had been aborted for political reasons. I suppose I was a bit surprised that we would

embark upon *another* reform effort so quickly in the state. That was a surprise to everyone.

I think one of the reasons we were so keenly interested in being involved was because we had not been involved in the process to develop the Common Core of Learning, which is, in retrospect, a shame, because there are probably elements of that that we could have endorsed as a school division, but we were pretty much cut out of the process, and we were not given an opportunity to participate, to critique, to help formulate the new direction. In fact, at the time, I remember, there were lots of comments among assistant superintendents of instruction in our geographic area of the state that communication between us and the state had shut down. There was no communication, because everyone was cloistered in Richmond developing the Common Core of Learning, and I think that kind of approach caused some suspicion and anxiety because it wasn't that we disagreed with what was being developed; we didn't know what was being developed. I think you have to remember all of that as background information when we consider the SOLs. The state ended up going in a markedly different direction, but it's interesting politically that the more open process, performance based, a liberal approach to education was one that was closeted, and as it turned out, the development of the Standards of Learning, which is certainly a more conservative, foundational approach to education, was much more open in the developmental process. (Brown, 1999, pp. 3-4)

Brown's comments lead us to the next section. Although the development of the standards was primarily an academic exercise, it had political overtones.

Chapter Five

The Virginia Experience, Part Two

Development of the Revised Standards of Learning in Virginia

Chapter Five provides a review of key documents and testimony of key actors who were intimately involved in the development of the revised Standards of Learning from 1994 to 1995.

Part one briefly reviews the four-part process for educational reform; part two identifies key players and groups; and part three provides information on the development of the curricula content standards.

A Four Part Process

In the Interim Report of the Governor's Commission on Champion Schools, the vision for public education in Virginia was stated.

> The Commission recommends that the Governor promote a comprehensive plan to effect greater accountability and long-term reform for public education in Virginia. The plan consists of: (1) high, rigorous, measurable, specific, and understandable academic standards; (2) testing which measures students' ability to master the standards; (3) a report card which will indicate how well each school is performing; and (4) accreditation for schools based on student performance in meeting these standards. (Sgro & Beales, 1994, p. 1)

In the Executive Summary of *Virginia's K-12 Education Reform,* four major elements are outlined.

1. Raising academic standards

    *The new 'Standards of Learning' or 'SOLs'

2. Measuring student achievement and progress in the new, higher standards

*Through the SOL tests

3. Ensuring the accountability of schools for student achievement

*Through the new Standards of Accreditation

4. Communicating with parents, taxpayers, and the community at large

*The new School Performance Report Card

(Staff, 1998, Executive Summary, p. 1)

The rationale given in the Executive Summary for this tremendous effort to raise student achievement was given as follows:

The Need to Raise Student Achievement

Virginia's comprehensive educational reform is being undertaken to address a serious problem that affects all of us, our schoolchildren and the future of the Commonwealth: the achievement levels of too many of Virginia's students in grades kindergarten through 12 are simply not adequate to compete successfully for the good, high-paying jobs in the international economy of the 21st century and fulfill their responsibilities as citizens of Virginia and the United States. [Their task: propose standards which were rigorous, academic, measurable, and written in plain and understandable language that is free of 'ed school' jargon.] (Staff, 1998, Executive Summary, p. 2)

The Executive Summary used the analogy of a before and after triangle to show the how the new reform movement made connections. Before Virginia's new reforms, there was no link among the three main components: what is taught, curriculum; how progress is measured, testing; and what is awarded, diplomas and accreditation. With the new reforms, all three sides of

the triangle are linked for accountability: what is taught, Standards of Learning; how progress is measured, SOL tests; what is awarded, new Standards of Accreditation (Staff, 1998, p. 5).

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the first major element as identified by the Executive Summary, the revised Standards of Learning. The remaining three major elements—testing, accreditation and the report card—are still evolving and can be subjects of future studies. It was necessary to "bound" the study in this way to allow for a historical perspective. Four years after publication of the Standards of Learning (1995) allowed key actors time for reflection.

Identifying Key Players

The first official announcement for the development of the current Standards of Learning came in a memorandum from William C. Bosher, Jr. Superintendent of Public Instruction, and was addressed to Division Superintendents.

> As you are aware, the Standards of Learning are academic standards that are incorporated into the Standards of Quality – the Board of Education's policy document for public education. These standards were developed in 1981 and revised during 1986-1988. This memorandum is a preliminary notice of the Department of Education's intent to sub-contract with local school divisions to take the lead in refining and revising the Standards of Learning in core disciplines for grades K-12. (Bosher, 1994b)

Dr. Bosher outlined a plan for the revision process that would build on existing state standards and efforts of local school divisions. He also acknowledged the importance of recognized national standards. "Consideration also will be given to national standards such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards and the emerging science standards under development by the National Research Council" (Bosher, 1994b). Attached to Dr. Bosher's memorandum was an application form to be filled out by local school divisions

expressing their interest to be returned by April 15, 1994. The sum of money attached to the grant for completing the process was $50,000 for each discipline.

On May 6, 1994, Dr. Bosher communicated to the Superintendents of the four lead school divisions. In a letter to Dr. Robert R. Spillane, Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, he wrote:

> It is a pleasure to inform you that your school division has been chosen as the lead division for revision and refinement of the mathematics Standards of Learning. The county of Fairfax will serve as lead division for mathematics. Prince William will serve as the lead division for science. Virginia Beach will serve as lead division for English/language arts, and the lead division for social studies is Newport News. (William C. Bosher, Jr. personal communication, May 6, 1994, as cited in Roesch, 1994-1995)

All four key actors who led the development of the four core standards expressed opinions on how their divisions were selected.

Roesch remembers that mathematics was the only subject area for which Fairfax County Public Schools applied.

> Each school division was given an opportunity to apply to manage the process for the state of Virginia. Our superintendent wanted to be involved in the mathematics role. My particular role was to work with the content specialist and manage the process for the state of Virginia in the area of mathematics.
>
> [Are you saying that Dr. Spillane, who was then the superintendent in Fairfax County, specifically wanted mathematics, or he had special interest in mathematics?]
>
> Yes, because we felt that we were further along through the Fairfax Framework, and we also knew that NCTM was out of the box, and we felt that we had our own

Program of Studies mathematics program that we were pretty proud of. So mathematics was the content area that we put our names in for. (Roesch, 1999, p. 1)

Pedersen recalls that he played a special role in the application for Prince William County and that science was of special interest to him.

When the RFP came out from the State Department of Education, I had worked quite a bit with the Department of Ed. I was working as the treasurer of the Virginia Science Leadership Association for a number of years and had worked very closely with Jim Firebaugh on a number of issues, science being very near and dear to me. And I, having been involved as science supervisor, and having done quite a bit of work on curriculum development and curriculum writing for our school division, I am very proud of where we had been and what we have done. Dr. Joe Exline was the science coordinator from the state department.

With my background in writing curriculum and doing that type of thing, and having, I thought, outstanding curriculum guides from our own school division, I thought I would rather be part of change than a victim of change. [Laughter] So I thought, in seeing the RFP, "That's something that I can do." I knew that I could do that, because I had been doing that for a good portion of my career. (Pedersen, 1999, p. 2)

Brown recalls that Virginia Beach applied for more than one subject area, but they were definitely interested in being chosen for at least one.

At that time in our school system, I was the assistant superintendent for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Our school division was the lead school division in developing the English Standards of Learning, and I was the contact person and the person in charge of our committee, which consisted of the Director of Instruction and our

language arts coordinators. We were the team that led the process of developing the standards of English, at least during the opening months of that process.

When it was first advertised that the state was going to award contracts to school divisions, we were asked to apply if interested. We in Virginia Beach discussed it and did apply. We applied, if my memory serves me correctly, in more than one area. We were interested in English. We were interested in mathematics. And we were interested in science. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, science was our first choice, because we felt that that was a particularly strong curricular area and one where we had high achievement scores.

We were chosen to do English and accepted the offer from the Department of Education. However, I think it is certainly no accident that the four largest school divisions in the state were chosen to be the lead school divisions. So I think that probably was the deciding factor rather than any other. (Brown, 1999, pp. 1-2).

Weber recalls his part in the application process when Newport News was chosen to lead the social studies standards.

At that time I was supervisor of social studies, K-12, for Newport News Schools. I did the application for our school division to be considered as lead school division for the revision project for social studies. Newport News was selected as the lead school division for that work, and the job of coordinating that project was assigned to me. (Weber, 1999, p. 1).

When the four key actors in the four lead divisions, Fairfax, Prince William, Newport News and Virginia Beach, were asked if they could compare how the other school systems went about the process in developing the standards, their answers indicated that they were very focused on their own disciplines. Roesch replied, "I'm not very aware of the process that they

used" (Roesch, 1999, p. 6). Pedersen stated, "There really wasn't direction given by the Department of Ed as to how to do this. I tend to think that might have been a little bit of the strength of the process. I wasn't bound by what Fairfax was doing. In my opinion, we were independent, although we collaborated" (Pedersen, 1999, p. 11). Brown recalled, "Beyond those guiding principles, each of the lead school divisions designed its own process. So the process we designed in language arts was different from processes that were used by the other three school divisions, at least initially, in the way we got our input" (Brown, 1999, p. 5). Weber stated,

> I really have no idea what the other school divisions did. I was so absorbed in making the plans and arrangements for our process. I knew that we had some issues and difficulties that they did not. I really couldn't say. I suspect that the processes were different in some respects and similar in others. I really couldn't speak to the others; I was so absorbed in what we were trying to do. (Weber, 1999, p. 4)

Wide Spectrum of Participation

In the May 6, 1994 memo in which Dr. Bosher communicated to the Superintendents of the four lead school divisions that they were selected, he also wrote of his hope that the lead school divisions would be able to involve the many other school divisions that had expressed an interest in participating in the process. Again Bosher made his expectations for participation from a wide spectrum of constituents clear when he wrote on June 17, 1994.

> Each of the four Lead Divisions will identify a consortium of school divisions to assist with the SOL project this Summer. Representation from the following groups will be solicited: teachers, curriculum specialists, college faculty, parents, business and industry, professional organizations, non-parent patrons, and special interest groups. (Bosher, 1994a)

When asked how they complied that Dr. Bosher's expectations for wide representation, the four key actors all replied that they initiated the process with as much wide participation as possible. Roesch's comments reflect wide participation from not only educators but from community leaders as well.

> We had the math community, almost all those people, business and industry. Everyone was invited to this. We sent out many, many invitations. All those who came to the table heard what we had to say, and we asked for their input.
>
> As I recall, the state gave us a list of people we should consider, people in associations we should consider. As I recall, the Chamber of Commerce was on there, the Business Roundtable was on there. We went down our list and did a crosscheck of who we could invite. We kept it a very open process, saying, "If you want to have somebody else come with you. . . ." It wasn't exclusionary. We didn't exclude anyone. (Roesch, 1999, p. 3)

Pedersen's remembers that he drew on his contacts in the science field around the state and collaborated with them in the process.

> It wasn't just Kris Pedersen's plan on how to do this. I came up with a format of a suggestion, and I bounced that off a number of people, a number of groups, one being the Virginia Science Leadership Association.
>
> The initial step was to write letters to all the school divisions in the state and ask for them to identify an individual or individuals to participate in part of the process. (Pedersen, 1999, p. 4)

Brown recalls holding meetings in various areas of the state and encouraging participation.

> We began by showering the state with ads, notices, of the fact that we would be conducting a series of five hearings, and that they would be in geographic areas of the state, and that we would welcome input. Anyone who wished to attend was encouraged to telephone us.
>
> We sent these to all school divisions' central offices; we sent them to schools; we sent them to every professional organization in our directory. And given the size of our system and the involvement of our staff, I think we covered all of the English language arts reading associations as well as others, the VEA. We went to the PTA; we went to gifted groups, to special ed groups, all advocacy groups and community groups that we were aware of, to invite people to attend the meetings. (Brown, 1999, p. 6)

Weber recalls sending out hundreds of invitations to a wide variety of people and setting a direction to be followed.

> The first step was to bring together all of those interested parties, knowledgeable parties in the field of social studies--as many as were available during the summer of 1994. In July 1994, we had a three-day conference at the Ramada Inn. We sent out a couple of hundred invitations. I believe we finally ended up with 60 representatives, who met for those three days and who discussed, debated, and finally made a series of recommendations about the direction which the new standards should take. (Weber, 1999, p. 2)

Leslie, then president-elect and then president of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals as the Standards of Learning were being reviewed and rewritten, believed that during the Allen administration, the input of principals was sought and valued.

> They were particularly interested in getting feedback from principals, and they wanted to know how their various and different ideas were going to impact on schools. From time to time, we would meet with representatives of the governor, with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and sometimes with various senators or congressman from both sides--both those who were positive and those who were not so positive--depending on who wanted to know. They wanted our opinion. I feel that they genuinely did want the opinion of principals of how this was going to impact on schools and what suggestions we had for making it be a real educational effort, as opposed to a political effort. (Leslie, 1999, pp. 1-2)

Representation from Conservative Special Interest Groups

The Department of Education stated that the Standards of Learning were developed with participation from diverse groups. According to staff papers written on 'Virginia's Standards of Learning', more than 5000 Virginians participated in a process that was led by school divisions, parents, teachers, professional organizations, the business community, and other special conservative interest groups and individuals (Staff, 1998, p. 2).

Several special interest groups submitted names to Dr. Bosher for inclusion on the committees. Helen Blackwell of the *Virginia Eagle Forum* was one of them. "I also appreciate being invited to submit names of Virginians who would be interested in serving on the four committees to revise the Standards of Learning for Virginia schools. I am enclosing a list of names . . ." (Helen Blackwell, personal communication, June 17, 1994). Walt Barbee of *The Family Foundation* also sent a memo to Dr. Bosher with a list of names of people to serve on the committees (Walt Barbee, personal communication, June 15, 1994). Mrs. Lil Tuttle of *Academics First* also submitted a list of names and wrote to Dr. Bosher, "We are hopeful that

these teams will produce challenging, sequenced, and specific standards for the academic disciplines that clearly define the expectations for students and our schools" (Lil Tuttle, personal communication, June 16, 1994). (All as cited in Roesch, 1994-1994 and Weber, 1994-1995)

Bosher recalls his efforts to bring consensus among all groups including special interest groups. When asked about the involvement of these special interest groups, Bosher replied,

> There was a request, and I can't honestly remember where that came from. But what we also had engaged though from the beginning, was the VEA and the AFT and VSBA and VASCD and VAESP, VASSP, PTA.
>
> Somewhere during this process, we invited all organizations that were interested in education to meet with me on a periodic basis. The first time I met with them, we had morning and afternoon. One half of the day, we had professional organizations--those that I just mentioned. The other half of the day, I brought together community organizations. And the community organizations--the Chamber of Commerce, VML (Virginia Municipal League), VACO (the Virginia Association of Counties), Chambers of Commerce, PTA was in that one, (as was) the Family Foundation and Academics First. On the first day, both groups said, "We'd like to meet together."
>
> And I laughed with them and said, "We'll have to sell tickets to this thing, because it should be an interesting melee." From that point on, I met in a joint session of about 40 organizational representatives. We talked about a range-- It was a great forum. It really was a great forum. I can remember, for instance, Robin DeJarnette was there from the Family Foundation. Dave Johnson and the president of the VEA, the president of the VSBA, the president of VML, president of VACO, AFT.

> Politics can often take two people who are very close philosophically and make them seem quite far apart. Most of us have attempted exactly the opposite. We attempt to take people of a wide range and variety of ideologies and bring them together to get focused in a direction. My role was to bring as many different people to the table as possible to draw some consensus on the standards. (Bosher, 1999, pp. 13-14)

The four key actors in standards writing, Roesch, Pedersen, Brown and Weber, recalled that special interest groups were included in their process. Roesch recalls, "We did everything we could to make sure that everyone's voice was heard. I did not find them intrusive. We were just told to make sure that we were very inclusive with our invitations" (Roesch, 1999, p. 9). Pedersen remembers, "But we had many representatives from these groups involved, including sitting down at the table with people at Graves Mountain Lodge,… I thought that we had had them represented well in our effort" (Pedersen, 1999, p. 15).

Brown recalls that conservative interest groups made their wishes known in English and placed special emphasis on basics.

> The input was a more specific and pointed input than what we just talked about from the business community. It was in the terms of phonics and the emphasis on phonics in kindergarten and first grade. It was emphasis on grade-level reading. It was emphasis on capitalization, punctuation, and those kinds of things, rather than the more general comments about communication skills in general. (Brown, 1999, pp. 16-17)

Weber commented on how these special interest groups impacted the process and the kinds of ideas they brought to the table.

> I would have to say that their most significant issue that they brought to the table was that they brought a great dissatisfaction with early childhood education as it was practiced in

> the schools, and a strong belief that students could learn more rigorous content at younger grades, and that students would be interested in more abstract kinds of learning. They brought a conviction to the table that students were, in fact, interested in long ago and far away places, which was at odds with the thinking of some of the public school educators working on the project. (Weber, 1999, p. 10)

The minutes of the July 25, Standards of Learning Coordinating Council indicate that the concept of core knowledge was discussed. Ida Hill distributed a document prepared by the Core Knowledge Foundation, *A Report of Virginia's Standards of Learning Objectives.* She also recommended that the lead divisions obtain copies of the *Core Knowledge Sequence* (Hirsch Foundation) to see how their drafts of the revised standards compared to it. Brown reflected on that meeting:

> I remember strong suggestion--I don't remember any coercion--that we look at these kinds of things. I think the unofficial position of the Board of Education, or at least the feeling that I got from the staff members, which was the part of the process that I resented the most, was that we should try to balance, be a balancing act. I'll put it bluntly: keep the professional associations--in our case, the Virginia Reading Association and the Virginia Association of Teachers of English--happy and keep the special interest groups happy at the same time. Since they had very different philosophies on how to teach, that was difficult. (Brown, 1999, p. 17)

Governor's Commission on Champion Schools

The Governor's Commission on Champion Schools was created by Executive Order by Governor Allen, "By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and 2.1-51.36 of the Code of Virginia . . . The Commission is classified

as a gubernatorial advisory commission in accordance with 2.1-51.35 and 9-6.25 of the Code of Virginia" This was signed by Governor Allen on May 24, 1995. (Weber, 1994-1995).

The directives given to the Commission by Allen were to advise the Governor on education reform and to develop recommendations for achieving the following:

1. Establish higher standards of academic excellence.
2. Instituting achievement testing for accountability.
3. Involving parents in the educational experience of their children.
4. Creating excellence through the encouragement of competition and cooperation.

In a July 14, 1994 listing of committee assignments, several individuals noted in this study are listed. Among them, Lil Tuttle, David Wheat, curriculum committee; James Cooper, professional standards committee; Cheri Yecke, educational alternatives committee.

The Governor's Commission on Champion Schools became a contentious issue in the approval of the final standards. An initial flow chart indicating how the process was to be followed was changed to include the "Champion Schools Commission Review" inserted between "Lead School Divisions Selected" and "Superintendent of Public Instruction" and "State Board of Education Review" (Roesch, 1994-1995; Weber, 1994-1995).

Bosher provided the context for the Governor's Commission on Champion Schools and stated it was primarily advisory. "It was an advisory board appointed by the governor and reporting to the governor, but the results of the Champion Schools Commission would then need to go to the Board of Ed as advice when the Board of Ed established its final standards" (Bosher, 1999, p. 8).

When asked about how the four lead school divisions and the Commission interfaced, Bosher offered:

There was no doubt that there was contention between the roles of the two.

> But with respect to the standards, I felt it was very important that the school divisions report what they thought was right and correct, and then if the Champion Schools Commission wanted to propose different semantics, different structure, different approach, then it had the opportunity to do that. Then the Board of Ed, in the final analysis, would have to determine whether they wanted what the school divisions had offered, what the Champion School's Commission had offered, or a combination of the two. (Bosher, 1999, pp. 8-9)

For the most part the Champion School's Commission was not an issue with the math and science standards. They became more involved with English and social studies.

Curricular Content Development

Expectations

A formal agreement was drafted by the Department of Education and sent by Bosher to each of the four superintendents. For example, in a letter to Dr. Sydney L. Faucette, Superintendent of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (William C. Bosher, Jr., personal communication, May 18, 1994), he outlined the background on standards of learning. "The Virginia Standards of Learning are academic content standards that are incorporated into the Standards of Quality – the Board of Education's policy document for public education." Bosher made his expectations clear for an end product. "The product will be rigorous academic standards which are measurable through the assessment of student achievement."

In a letter sent to Dr. Eric J. Smith, Superintendent of Newport News City Schools, (William C. Bosher, Jr., personal communication, May 18, 1994), stated, "Newport News City Public Schools assures that: A review of the social studies standards for grades K-12 will be

conducted during Summer, 1994." In addition, the contract period was noted in reference to DOE staff. "Provide technical consultation to the Lead Division, upon request, during the contract period" (May, 1994 – March, 1995).

Chronology of the Process

Once the first part of the process began, that of developing the Standards of Learning, it was completed in a relatively short amount of time. A chronology developed by the Staff of the Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia follows.

May 1994	Lead School Divisions selected to spearhead process of Standards of Learning (SOLs) development
June 1994	Agreements finalized between Lead School Divisions and the Department of Education specifying criteria: academic; rigorous; measurable; and jargon free
July 1994	Consortia of school divisions established by Lead School Divisions
July-August 1994	Writing teams convened by Lead School Divisions develop working drafts and distribute them for field review
September-January 1995	Lead School Divisions and Department of Education worked together with interested groups and individuals to refine and approve draft standards. Draft standards sent to Governor and distributed to state Board of Education members.
February-March 1995	Virginia Board of Education released draft SOLs for public comment. Public hearings held throughout the state.
June 1995	Virginia Board of Education approved new SOLs

July 1995	SOLs distributed to local school divisions and interested groups and individuals throughout the Commonwealth. *Local school divisions began incorporating the new SOLs into their K-12 curricula.*

Adapted from (Staff, 1998 Chronology, p. 1)

Mathematics

The two coordinators for the mathematics standards were Maryanne Roesch, Director of Educational Planning Services, and Thomas Nuttall, Mathematics Coordinator, Fairfax County Public Schools. They were assisted in the Virginia Department of Education by liaisons, Ida J. Hill, Chief for Technology, and Patricia I Wright, Associate Director for Mathematics.

A document review of the Roesch papers (Roesch, 1994-1995) reveals a very comprehensive effort in the development of the mathematics standards and broad-based participation. Standards Revision Teams were divided into K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12. The procedure used as cited in an outline paper was: “Result of broad-based participation and consensus building; Result of study including what other states and professional organizations have done; Involvement school divisions that have standards; Open to revision” (Roesch, 1994-1995). There was an effort from the outset to make the process as collaborative as possible. Six school divisions who had expressed an interest from the beginning were invited to be part of the planning team. They were: Clarke, Henrico, Henry, Mecklenburg, Prince William and Stafford.

The committee outlined a three-stage process: soliciting input and reviewing materials prior to revision; production of the revised draft; review of draft and fine-tuning. The process allowed for input, review, feedback and final review.

In the first stage, input was provided for the review of the Math Task Force for Literacy Passport Test from 15 Virginia math teachers, specialists, and a professor of mathematics. Recommendations of V-QUEST lead math teachers represented approximately 300 Virginia teachers; and input from stakeholder groups representing views, suggestions and concerns came from 25 individuals representing 9 school divisions, 3 colleges and universities, 3 PTA's, and 7 professional and civic organizations. References studied included: the NCTM standards; state standards and curricula from California, Kentucky, New Jersey, and New York; standards, benchmarks and curricula from Virginia school divisions such as Fairfax, Henrico, Prince William, and Virginia Beach; and other materials from other states as well as textbooks and international comparisons.

In stage two the drafting team numbered 60 participants with 41 school divisions represented. They included 45 teachers, 9 math specialists, 5 administrators, and 1 consultant. In stage three, after production of the draft document, input came from 84 individuals to include the Virginia math community, school divisions, professional organizations, colleges and universities, and parents.

When the committee did a final breakdown of input on all three stages, listing some participants twice, it listed 435 teachers and math specialists, 15 college and university professors, 18 representatives from professional organizations, 4 representatives from PTAs, and 9 interested citizens. Minutes of the Standards of Learning Coordinating Council, July 25, 1994 indicated that over 220 stakeholders had provided input to the mathematics Standards of Learning revision and the results had been overwhelmingly positive.

When the mathematics standards were presented to the Board of Education on May 24, 1995, some of the changes to mathematics standards that were highlighted were the K-8

curriculum placed more emphasis on preparing all students for Algebra and the high school curriculum deleted General Math, Consumer Math, Applied Math. More emphasis was placed on mathematical reasoning skills and the use of new technologies (Roesch, 1994-1995).

Roesch remembers the experience as being one of the most pleasant in her career and reflected on her purpose, "To be honest, we tried to stay out of all the politics. We just wanted a good product. We wanted something good for kids in the state of Virginia, versus getting all mucked up into the politics out there" (Roesch, 1999, p. 8).

Science

The coordinators for Prince William County Schools were Cecelia Krill and Edward K. (Kris) Pedersen. The Executive Summary for Revision of the Science Standards of Learning provides a detailed review of meetings held throughout the state from May 19-20 at James Madison University to October 27, at the presentation to the State Board of Education. Like the mathematics committee, the science committee included a broad spectrum of teachers and citizens representing various jurisdictions and interest groups. They were divided by levels K-6, as well as by content, i.e., Biology, Chemistry, etc.

Minutes of the Standards of Learning Coordinating Council from July 25, 1994 indicated that the draft was complete and that it would be presented on August 15 in Charlottesville to the Virginia Education Business Council. The minutes also outlined input used by the science group, namely Project 2061, the AAAS Benchmarks, and the draft of the National Science Standards.

Pedersen commented on some challenges in Science and in limiting the scope of the curriculum.

> You probably are aware that the very nature of science is that knowledge in science is in layers. The degree of specificity or the depth of knowledge that you get into any area of

> science, whatever the concept is, you can't go to the depth where you cover everything. Nobody knows everything about anything. So the question was, how deep do we go in teaching about various concepts of science? The amount of knowledge in science is literally limitless. You can't teach everything about everything. So the challenge is to what depth of knowledge do we want children to learn about these various things, as we go through public education and teaching them science. (Pedersen, 1999, pp. 5-6)

Pedersen stated that his committee did consult the national standards that were being developed at the time and he also remembers consulting some state documents, such as Delaware and Arizona. "The national standards were being developed at the time. We had draft copies…We sent out a number of solicitations to get whatever the current state-of-the-art was for standards around the country at that time"(Pedersen, 1999, pp. 18-19).

Pedersen reflected that the strength of his project was the collaborative process used and the input from around the state.

> The involvement of the Virginia Science Leadership Association, the Virginia Science Teachers Association, and the way we went around gathering information from all the school divisions--there is nobody who can say, "I didn't have an opportunity to provide my input into these standards that we're dealing with right now". In fact, I think that that's probably the strength of the Virginia Science Standards of Learning, that people did feel that they had had involvement. (Pedersen, 1999, p.17)

Pedersen had a very positive memory of the process and called it the highlight of his career. (Pedersen, 1999, p. 21)

English

The coordinator for Language Arts was Ed Brown of Virginia Beach City Schools. As per the minutes of the August 11, 1994, Standards of Learning Coordinating Council, a total of 221 participants from 59 divisions attended workshops and gave input. A concern mentioned in the minutes was that some participants representing primary grades wanted to organize the standards by clusters of grades rather than grade-by-grade. High school participants accepted a grade-by-grade structure.

Brown, Wurtzel and Shortt provided detailed information about the development of the English standards. Brown recalled,

> We began those meetings shortly after the close of the school year . . . The range of attendees was anywhere from 80 up to 200, depending on the particular site. (Brown, 1999, pp. 6-7)
>
> We had a very high repeat, because people were starting to buy in. So many of the people who came to the August 11-12 meeting came back in late September to help us again revise the standards… By that time, then we in Virginia Beach took their suggestions and did another draft. That's where the process began to change and began to be difficult to define.
>
> We're talking about roughly November. That's when the groups that we had initially gotten the input from and the writing/edit groups that we had worked with fell by the wayside, and the direction of the project shifted from the locality to Richmond.
>
> I recall specifically attending a meeting with the Governor's Commission on Champion Schools.

I went for English/language arts. I believe Dick Weber was there for social studies. There were one or two staff members from the Department of Education. Other than that, I don't think it was the entire Governor's Commission on Champion Schools; it was a subcommittee. Basically it was a critique and a questioning of the standards development process to that time, not really the process, but the product and the direction we were going. (Brown, 1999, pp. 10-12)

When asked why he thought the Champion School's Commission was put into process, Brown responded,

Politics. I think it was politics. I think it was a fear on the part of some politicians that perhaps the standards were going to be developed by professional educators and, therefore, they might not reflect the kinds of content standards they wanted.

I think the reaction was surprise. This was not what was anticipated. We anticipated a clean, quick process. But, having been in education for 35 years, I have two quotes, "Things are never what they seem," and "Everything is politics." This was a good example of everything being politics. I think this was very definitely political interference with the process. As someone who's seasoned, you learn to accept that. It happens at every level. (Brown, 1999, p. 13)

Shortt provided information on the one of the contentious issues in English, the book list of required readings.

My goal was to try to get those people to come to consensus on what needed to be on there. For example, one of the biggest controversies that we had was over a book list. They wanted to put in the standards an actual book list, an addendum that would have a book list on it. That book list would have specific books that must be read K through 12.

That was initially. Then it went to, here are a group of books. After lots of discussion, you select certain ones from here. Then, eventually, we came the whole cycle back to where we didn't have any books on there, because of the controversy it would have created throughout the state because it is such a diverse state. We have certain values in parts of the state that we don't have in others, and vice versa. So a lot of those folks would not want their children reading certain books and other people wouldn't mind them reading. What we decided was it was a local school issue, what kind of books they would read.

That textbook issue became very controversial. As a matter of fact, some of the people on the committee jumped the gun and took that list out, and school divisions got a hold of it, and there was lots and lots of uproar about it. A lot of people were very angry. We got lots of calls. Eventually the Board came to a decision--not us--that there would be no book list. (Shortt, 1999, pp. 6-7)

Another controversial issue in English was the length of the "speech" and the length of the "paper". Shortt elaborates,

A big controversy was the number of minutes that a speech should be in English. One standard is on public speaking. You had to give a speech. It went from 30 minutes. Some people said, "It's got to be at least 30 minutes." We were so specific that we were totally controlling what teachers could or could not do. If you've got 30 kids in a high school English class, and you've got to give a 30-minute speech, it's going to take almost a semester to do nothing but give speeches. How could that standard be met? So we went back and rethought that, and I think we came up with 5 minutes or something. But at the

same time, we said, “Well, if they did it in science or in history, it would also count.” There was a lot of compromising there.

Another issue was they wanted a paper with so many words, like 10,000 words for the senior project. We went through that whole issue, instead of just saying “a senior paper” or “research paper.” We had lots of issues to deal with that science didn’t have to deal with and math didn’t have to deal with. Those folks in math and science could really focus on the work at hand, where people like Ed Brown and the folks in Newport News who were handling the social studies, they had to focus on some political issues. (Shortt, 1999, pp. 11-12)

Wurtzel had strong feelings about the book list and the paper and believed that both standards should have been more strenuous. “That was nonsense. We let them off too easy. I forget the number now, but I think by twelfth grade, somebody ought to be able to do a research paper of 15 or 20 pages. People got scared, so we cut it down” (Wurtzel, 1999, p. 15).

Leslie remembered the controversy over the book list and shared the principals’ perspective with review committees.

When we got into English, we quickly got into this Great Books kind of thing. There were some ideas along the E.D. Hirsch: “Let’s take Hirsch.” “No, let’s take somebody else’s views.” From the beginning, as we went in with principals, we kept saying, “I don’t think you’re going to be able to do this, because for every book that you recommend by one person, somebody else is going to want another one.” Sure enough, as they got into the hearings, they realized that a book list of required reading wasn’t going to fly. (Leslie, 1999, pp. 3-4)

Wurtzel referred to the book list, but his expectation was more complex than a mere list of books.

> And I lost what I thought was a key battle. To say that fifth grade kids should be able to read at fifth grade level is a self-referring definition. It's not a measurable objective. I wanted to say that at sixth grade, kids should be able to read, master, understand, and answer questions with regard to books of similar complexity to *The Red Badge of Courage* or *Charlotte's Web* or whatever was the appropriate. I didn't want to pick the book, necessarily, but I wanted some consensus that that's a benchmark for sixth grade. (Wurtzel, 1999, p. 14)

Social Studies

Built-in Problems

Weber provided detailed information about the development of the social studies standards through his personal papers and interview. Wurtzel was also a key informer through the interview and writing. As with the development of the national standards, the development of the social studies standards were by far the most contentious. Weber provides some reasons why.

> The essential difficulty was the lack of consensus around what social studies is and what the goals of it should be. The whole profession of social studies is, continues to be, and has been for some time, very contentious, many divergent opinions. There are different terrains or turfs within social studies. You have your geographers and your historians and your economists. There are also differences in outlook between classroom teachers in the public schools and professors on college campuses. There were many different ways of looking at the business of social studies, very little consensus around the field and how it should be organized.

To give you a quick idea of how complicated it was, if you were to take a look at the national standards, which had preceded our state standards movement. In the national standards, we had written national history standards that were extremely controversial and ended up being voted down in the Senate, and were hundreds and hundreds of pages long. The National Council for the Social Studies had written a full set of social studies standards, which were a couple of hundred pages long. There were geography standards that were quite lengthy. There are civics standards. So if one were to look to those standards and say, "Let's find some consensus or some guidance," what you'd end up with is a stack of documents about a foot tall that were fundamentally different from one another and expressed very different views of what social studies was. The difficulties were built into the situation. They were part of the problem. By virtue of it being social studies, we had some issues that were difficult to work out. (Weber, 1999, pp. 4-5)

Darling-Hammond confirms Weber's observations and speaks to the volumes of data in the social studies standards.

One example of the latter problem – by about four years ago, there were seven sets of standards in the social studies for students. I sat up one day and counted across the world history standards, the US history standards, the geography standards, the civics standards, the economic standards and so forth… There were more than 3000 things for 4th grader that were specified in those sets of standards. (Darling-Hammond, 1998)

Wurtzel also speaks to the difficulty of writing the social studies standards. In an article written by him six months after the standards were published, he states, "Developing history and social science Standards of Learning is equivalent to walking on hot coals while juggling 6 balls and dodging oncoming traffic. You do it very carefully" Wurtzel elaborated,

> Unlike math, where there are only a limited numbers of "right" answers, . . . history and social sciences open up an almost infinite array of intellectual, pedagogical, ideological and political issues about which well-educated and responsible people can, and do, disagree.
>
> History and the social science – economics, civics and geography – are the principal battlegrounds on which our political and ideological differences are fought. (Wurtzel, 1996, p. 19)

Controversial Issues

The title of the paper, "Revision of the Virginia Social Studies Standards of Learning: Participation, Conflict, and Compromise" by Weber of Newport News Public Schools, gives a hint of the struggle this discipline faced. Weber wrote:

> This long and complex process has evolved in five stages, each stage driven by the key issue to be addressed . . . Stage 1 – Broad Participation, Stage 2 – Logical Organization, Stage 3 – Clarity and Measurability, Stage 4 – Primary Participants, and Stage 5 – Reconciliation with Professional Organizations.

Weber wrote of the frustration of some members participating in the process, "By this fourth stage, the challenge to create standards that were clear and useful to students, parents, and teachers, as well as to curriculum planners (while involving all of these groups in the process!) had frustrated many of the participants." He discussed the challenge of writing real standards. ". . . many participants in the process balked at stating precisely what would be expected of students" (Weber, 1994-1995).

Weber also elaborated on conflicts within social studies. “The most divisive conflict centered on social studies education for grades K-3.” A more detailed commentary on his views on this is significant.

> In Stage 1, the discussion groups recommended moving away from the ‘expanding horizons’ (study of self, family, and neighborhood) approach to primary grade social studies. Influenced by E. D. Hirsch’s writings on ‘cultural literacy’ (1987, 1988) and supported by the Governor’s Commission on Champion Schools – the writing team departed from ‘expanding horizons’ by writing rigorous history, civics, geography, and economics standards for grades K-3. This step provoked intense reaction and resulted in the labeling of the K-3 standards as developmentally inappropriate.

Minutes of the Standards of Learning Coordinating Council, July 25, 1994 also hint at some of the discord within the social studies ranks.

> Over 200 stakeholder representatives were invited to give some written input into the revision prior to the July 11-14 workshop. A smaller group consisting representatives from collaborating school divisions and stakeholder groups met July 11 and 12 to discuss issues and make recommendations for the social studies revision. The discussion included ‘heated’ debate at times. (Weber, 1994-1995)

Wurtzel confirms that the most contentious issue was higher expectations for lower grades and an abandonment of the 1989 standards.

> Those standards for grades K-3 are based on a concept known as “expanding horizons,” namely that young people learn about the world by focusing on their family, their neighborhood, their community, etc. The Board and its advisory committee consulted

eminent national educators, including Diane Ravitch, a former Assistant Secretary of Education, who led us to a more balanced focus.

> The new Standards . . . lead children to explore, through story and legend, the exciting worlds of early Egypt, China, Greece and Rome. (Wurtzel, 1996, p. 19)

Weber in reflecting back on this issue comments on how his views changed by observing the enthusiasm of young children learning beyond their own known world.

> The conflict is between the expanding horizons view, which emphasizes keeping close to the neighborhood with young children and moving only gradually out to the larger world in social studies, versus the view that is tied to the Core Knowledge perspective. But I think it's also held by a lot of people who may not be Core Knowledge people. That, in fact, young children are quite fascinated by mummies and outer space, by things not in the neighborhood. That in fact sometimes they get pretty bored with things that are in the neighborhood.
>
> One of the insights that I had in the process of developing the standards was, I was visiting classrooms in second grade and was looking around. I saw a whole series of these planetarium displays, planets that the children had made. Some young children were coming and explaining to me, "This is Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto." They were telling me the whole story. They were especially interested in Mars.
>
> At the same as we were having this ideological battle about whether children could make any sense whatsoever about Egypt, whether that meant anything to them, these children were telling me all about Mars, with great interest and great enthusiasm and what seemed to me a good deal of understanding. I was so struck that it couldn't be

quite as simple as what some people had said, that the children only understand what is close up to them and what is very familiar to them. That was one of those moments of seeing the picture from maybe another angle that I had, maybe a little bit more sympathetic with the notion that children would be interested in ancient civilizations. (Weber, 1999, pp. 11-12)

Controversial Issues Change the Process

The social studies standards went through several drafts and were reviewed by the Governor's Commission on Champion Schools. Weber recalls how the process changed.

> The progress that we had made with social studies was considerable in improvement in our drafts, but it was clear that in early 1995, the standards drafts that existed at that time, none of them were satisfactory to the Commission on Champion Schools Subcommittee on Standards. At the same time, neither were those drafts acceptable to the Department of Education assessment staff, who was then going to have to create an assessment program around these standards.
>
> We knew even earlier than that, that the work we were doing was not going to meet the criteria of specific and measurable and clear, as they were understood by the Champion Schools people or by the Department of Education, or by me, just coincidentally. I also saw some real problems in the work that we were doing. (Weber, 1999, pp. 6-7)

In a memorandum from David Wheat, a member of the Governor's Commission on Champion Schools, to Beverly Sgro and William Bosher, Wheat offered his opinion on the origin of some of the confusion and controversy. He believed that although both the Commission

and the division teams were to review the standards that the division teams were starting at different points.

> However, the June 1994 DOE contracts also directed the division teams to *use the current Standards of Learning as a starting point*, while the Commission was given no such instruction. This is not a trivial distinction. The division teams started with a weak document that needed replacement and treated it as if it were a sound document that needed amendment . . . Our directive, on the other hand, was to provide him with the best standards possible, and we have always treated the old SOLs as good examples of poor standards – not a solid foundation on which to build. (Weber, 1994-1995)

Weber commented on the role Wheat played in the process and remembers him contributing a positive influence.

> Eventually a leader arose in the Champion School's group, and that was David Wheat. Once David Wheat became, in my view, the unofficial spokesperson of Champion Schools, it became much easier to make progress. David's suggestions were clear, they were understandable. He was willing to negotiate points. He was willing to talk about what was good in our standards and what suggestions he had and the other Champion Schools people had for making initial improvements, particularly in the areas of increasing the measurability and increasing the specificity of the standards. (Weber, 1999, p. 8)

Fleming, a critic of the revision process, gave a synopsis of the end game of the social studies standards development.

> Heated controversy surrounded the revision of the social studies SOLs as a result of the changes promulgated in a proposal by the Champion Schools Commission in January 1995.
>
> After the hearings, other efforts of revision failed and in May, an Advisory Committee in Social Studies was formed . . . By late June, a very rough draft of the new SOLs was agreed to by the committee . . .
>
> In July, a very small subgroup from the Advisory Committee and four State Board members made substantial changes in the June revision and in late August the final version was released. (Fleming, 1996, p. 21)

Fleming was referring to a committee formed by Senator Jones to complete the social studies standards. Minutes of the June 29, 1995 Board of Education Meeting indicate that those four individuals were Wurtzel, Easton, Tuttle and Jones. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995a, pp. 56-57)

Weber reflected on the background leading up to that event and provides information on the membership of the larger committee.

> It was the end of April. The decision was made not to vote on the standards that we had. It was suggested at that meeting in April that the resolution might come through a statewide committee. The framework or the contacts, making contacts with various people as to how that committee would be constructed took place throughout May, and by June, they had the advisory committee together.
>
> The Board decided strategy to use was to create a statewide advisory committee of social studies experts to come together and to use all of what our writing teams had

produced, and to simply pick and choose the best and put together the final product from that.

My recollection is that there were only perhaps two or three from Champion Schools. I know David Wheat served on the committee. But it generally represented social studies educators. It was, in fact, probably as prestigious a group of social studies educators as one could get together. (Weber, 1999, pp. 19-21)

Reaction of the Business Community to Curricula Content Standards

The reaction of the business community was articulated to the Board of Education through Alan L. Wurtzel, member of the Board of Education, from a report written by the Council for Basic Education, May 11, 1995. What Business Needs From Schools was written for the Virginia Business Council and was a review of the proposed Standards of Learning. Wurtzel delivered this report with an attached memo to the Board of Education on June 5, 1995. In his memo, he asked the Board to consider math expectations, technology, "asking questions" in math and English, evaluating information in English and reading good literature.

What Business Needs From Schools referred to the SCANS report, What Work Requires of School, the National Education Goals Report, Promises to Keep, the NCTM standards and the New Standards Project. It mentioned several other states that emphasized critical thinking. The Council recommended:

The proposed Virginia standards, particularly in mathematics and science, reflect some of the current thinking.

Yet overall, the proposed standards fall short of defining the kind of education needed to produce knowledgeable and competent workers able to meet the demands of a changing workplace. (Cross, 1995, p. 3)

One major recommendation that foreshadowed the next steps in the process was to link standards to assessment to accountability.

> The Virginia standards need to be accompanied with a clearly stated purpose that links standards to assessments, and thereby to accountability. The standards also need to be addressed to the educational needs of all Virginia students. (Cross, 1995, p. 12)

Wurtzel stated that there were several key people on the Board representing the interests of business.

> [Mac McDonald, the former CEO of Signet Bank] was on the Board. So he and I and Jim Jones were the voices of reason and of the business community to say that these standards needed to have real-world application. They needed to focus on what people could do--not just know, but were able to do. They had to be grounded in things that kids could relate to and understand and become excited about. In learning statistics, if kids would rather learn baseball statistics than history statistics, that was fine! You could package information for kids in ways that they find interesting and appealing. The core is that they understand some statistics. (Wurtzel, 1999, p. 23-24)

Chapter Six

Reflections

Chapter six provides reflections on the development of the study. The researcher reviews the rationale for the study, discusses the methodology used, identifies themes that emerged, and suggests topics for future study.

Rationale

The purpose of this study was to analyze the modern standards movement as a context to the development and implementation of the revised *Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* (1995) by developing a documentary history that identified themes that linked events and showed connections between past and current events.

The rationale for conducting a research study of this nature was to investigate reasons behind the controversy surrounding the implementation of state-mandated tests in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the spring of 1998. In order to gain a better understanding of the whole standards movement, and find out how Virginia fit into the larger picture, an investigation was conducted into the origins of the modern standards movement looking for themes that would connect Virginia to that larger picture. It was hoped that the identification of some of the themes would explain the controversy and answer the question, “How did we get to where we are today?’

The rationale for conducting this study is probably best explained in the words of the researcher in the following interview.

> And I went at this study almost as a detective, trying to solve a mystery. It was like a puzzle to me. And I have a love of history so I thought I should go back and look at where this movement began. I wanted to put the Virginia movement into the context of

> the larger national picture. I was looking for trends. What is it that got us to the point where we are today? (Goldberg, 1999, p. 1).

Although the original plan of the investigation was to include reasons behind the controversy engendered by state-mandated tests in the spring of 1998, it became apparent that sufficient time had not elapsed to do a good historical study to include 1995 through 1998. Therefore, the decision to end the documentary history in 1995 with the adoption of the revised Standards of Learning was made by the researcher for three reasons. First it was a natural break in the history, second it represented the culmination of a major historical effort in the development of content standards, and third it allowed time for historical reflection. Although raising academic standards in Virginia was only the first step in a four-step standards reform movement, the remaining three steps, tests, accreditation and the report cards, could not be adequately addressed in this study. At the conclusion of this study in the spring of 1999, all three were still being discussed and had unresolved issues. More importantly, there was no time for historical reflection. The standards, on the other hand, could be studied after a four-year lapse. Key informers were ready to reflect, not react.

Methodology

After deciding to do a historical study, the researcher investigated historical methodology. Many recognized historical researchers are cited in chapter one, however, Lichtman & French (1978) should be noted because they speak to the basic intent of the researcher and refer to historians as detectives and use the analogy of the puzzle. “Sherlock Holmes and the historian have much in common . . . Just as the detective examines evidence to reconstruct a crime, so also the historian investigates evidence to reconstruct the past . . .” (p. 14). They remind researchers that no historian works in a vacuum (p. 216), and that one of the

reasons why history is so fascinating is that historians have to solve puzzles in putting together a picture of the past . . . "We want to know *why* the pieces fit together the way they do. And the "why?" of history is often the hardest puzzle of all to solve" (p. 44).

Cooper should also be noted because he speaks to the task that researcher set out to accomplish. "Although it is true that some studies receive more attention than others do, this is typically because the pieces of the puzzle they solve (or puzzles they introduce) are extremely important, not because the studies are solutions in and of themselves" (p. ii). Putting the history in the correct context, and piecing together the pieces of the puzzle of the standards movement, was a major task of writing this history.

Within the context of historical methodology, the researcher established a plan to develop the documentary history. The following research methodology accomplished the goals.

Phase one involved a wide search of the literature through multiple sources and examination of historical documents, written commentaries and archival records critical to the study. Through this search the researcher was able to identify key events and key characters that impacted the standards movement and to develop a historical plan for the study. In phase one the history was written from the report that preceded A Nation at Risk, the Wirtz Panel report, to the adoption of the revised Standards of Learning in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1995. This method proved very beneficial to the researcher. A better understanding and framework of the history and familiarity with documents and events assisted the researcher in identifying key informers and in framing questions for oral interviews.

Phase two of the study involved collection of oral testimony from eleven key informers. Although the original intent was to do in-depth interviews with approximately five individuals, the study was expanded to include eleven individuals for a total of twelve interviews. After the

review of written documents and records, it became apparent that these individuals were key and interviewing one, and not the others, would give an incomplete history.

Informers were chosen to reflect the purposes of the study and gave a well-balanced picture. Two individuals, Lampe and Goldberg, were intimately involved with the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Eight individuals were directly involved in the development of the Standards of Learning. Four of them, Roesch, Pedersen, Brown, and Weber were key in the development of the written standards. The remaining four, Bosher, Wurtzel, Shortt, and Leslie were key in the implementation of the standards from a policy point of view. The eleventh individual, Bracey, a nationally recognized researcher and writer, was chosen because of his involvement in the Virginia Department of Education from 1979-1986, and to give the protagonist view. All of the informers contributed a very important piece to complete the puzzle. They clarified issues and filled in gaps. Their testimony enriched and enhanced the history and they definitely explained how we got to where we are today in the Virginia. They wrote the Virginia story!

Themes

It was never the intent of the researcher to draw conclusions. Rather it was to identify themes that connected events over time and to provide historical evidence to support those themes. The identification of themes allows us to understand how this movement fits into current practices in Virginia.

The researcher identified seven general themes that emerged from the study, some more notable than others. Evidence to support these themes is in the body of the previous five chapters. This is not meant to be a retelling of the history. Instead this serves as a simple highlighting of issues found.

Theme One

The modern standards movement can be likened to a train coming down the track for fifteen years gathering momentum each year. There was education reform in the states prior to A Nation at Risk as cited by Massell et al (1994) and Bracey (1999). A Nation at Risk, however, was the landmark event that officially began the movement, formalized it and gave it national notoriety. The chronology of the modern standards reform movement is narrated in the previous chapters and is outlined in Appendix II. When one reviews the data of events and lists them in order, one can easily see that this was a train that was not going to stop.

Theme Two

A strong partnership was formed between business and the governors at the First Education Summit in 1989, the second landmark event. This partnership has been a strong and steady influence on education reform. It remains a powerful and focused force in which national coalitions between such groups as the National Governor's Association, the Business Roundtable, and the National Alliance of Business remain a strong and vital factor influencing state education policy.

Some underlying issues emerge with this partnership. How does education fit into it? Are educators the third partner? Or are they agents to be directed by the other two partners, state and business? It is clearly articulated that business and the governors can both agree that they want a sound economy and that they want an educated work force. But are the basic philosophies of business and educators different? The SCANS report speaks to the disconnect.

The SCANS report stated that the major problem was miscommunication in which schools and business were like two ships passing in the night in which "one speaks in Morse code, the other signals with flags" (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills,

1991, p. 4). The report stated that three things needed to happen: establishing a better means of communicating needs between business and schools; setting clear-cut standards for students; assessing students' workplace readiness (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991, p. 6).

Wurtzel, in referring to the Common Core of Learning, articulates a business philosophy toward educators. "It was not rigorous enough. It was written by teachers whose basic philosophy is that kids shouldn't fail, that the goal of the schools is to make every kid succeed, and that failure is counter-productive to learning, etc." (Wurtzel, 1999, p. 5).

Goldberg, in responding to the role business might play in assisting non-accredited schools, spoke to the leadership role that he anticipates business will take.

> My sense is, from the business people who are active in the National Alliance of Business, . . . They're going to ask hard questions, and they're going to want to be at the table in helping to solve the problem. They're not going to say, "We want to stay and help. Call us when you need us." They're going to want to say, "We want to sit with you and help develop the solutions, not have the solutions be developed independent of us, and then you'll call us and say, 'Now here's what we need you to do.' We want to participate in the development of the solutions. (Goldberg, 1999, p. 23)

And so with the overriding influence of business in driving the standards reform movement, issues arise as to how educators and business will work together in the future.

Theme Three

The issues in curricula content standards development on the national level were reflected in curricula content on the state level in the development of the Virginia standards. The

personalities of the four core curricula content areas reappeared in the development of the standards in Virginia and are parallel and are almost a mirror image of the national picture.

The publication of the NCTM standards in 1989 as a significant leadership document, and the third landmark event as labeled by the author, was confirmed by many citations and by several informers, such as Goldberg and Marston, Roesch.

As on the national scene, the math standards were developed in Virginia with few problems. They were the first to be approved. The science standards had relatively few problems and were approved with few revisions. The developers of the English standards in Virginia, having no model on the national level after the Department of Education withdrew funding of the project in March, 1994, had to develop a local document and had several issues as reviewed in previous chapters. The developers of the social studies standards had the most difficulty of all. Weber's and Wurtzel's testimony on the inherent difficulty of reaching any consensus in this discipline explain most of the problem.

Theme Four

Outcomes-based education was the strongest emerging factor that drove the movement to reform standards in Virginia. Opposition to outcomes-based education was the catalyst that galvanized all sides of the political spectrum in Virginia. So intense were feelings against OBE, that a coalition was formed between the religious right and business interests on the Board of Education against OBE. This coalition was the key in developing the final product of the standards, especially the social studies standards. It was probably the most powerful force behind the Virginia movement.

Although there is some written testimony in previous chapters (O'Neil, Olson, Grandal), and audio testimony (Tuttle), the most telling evidence comes from the key informers (Wurtzel,

Bosher, Leslie, Shortt, Roesch, Brown, Bracey). The author collected almost three hundred pages of written testimony and it would be impossible to relate all of it in this study. However, most of the key informers cited opposition to the Common Core of Learning or outcomes-based education as a key factor driving the standards reform movement in Virginia. This led the developers to work incredibly hard in a relatively short amount of time. It led them to form coalitions with people holding opposing views. But the one thing that came out in the testimony was that they all wanted a finished product reflecting Bosher's initial directive, "clear, measurable and rigorous".

Theme Five

As opposed to some popularly held views, the development of the Standards of Leaning in the Commonwealth of Virginia was an extremely inclusive process, however some of those included may have felt that they were not influential in the outcomes. Although documentation and oral testimony indicate that the process was inclusive of many groups, a more in-depth study might find the extent to which the final outcomes, especially with the English and social studies standards, were influenced by educators and others who were included in the process.

Written documentation from the Roesch and Weber papers along with testimony from Bosher, Roesch, Pedersen, Brown, Weber, Wurtzel and Leslie, all confirm that the voices of educators and others were sought and included. There is written documentation in the previous chapters about the extent of planning that went into orchestrating meetings, however; the most telling story is in the testimony of the four key actors in the development of the curricular standards. In addition, it is evident that a great deal of effort went into the inclusion of a variety of populations to include special interest groups. It appeared that they all worked into process and came together in the effort.

The Governor's Commission on Champion Schools was a factor thrown into the equation that many were not prepared for, however, it appears that despite that, they also made their contribution. Brown gives his views on the role the Champion Schools Commission played and has an interesting insight on the agreement between the Virginia Department of Education and the school divisions.

> I think the positive part is that it did inject a different point of view that needed to be considered, a point of view that probably would not have been voiced by many professional educators. I think the fact that it was a surprise to people who had agreed to a contract was unfortunate. Had that been the case in the business world, the contract would have been null and void. (Brown, 1999, p. 14)

Weber, the key actor who was perhaps affected the most by the intrusion of the Commission, gives a philosophical opinion.

> My own view is that absolutely everything that happened had to happen. All contributed. School division people, the assessment people, the Champion Schools people--I think everybody played a necessary part in making the standards good, and that I really disagree when people say a handful of people created the standards. A handful of people had to organize it into the final product, but I really believe it represents the hard work and the ideas of many people. (Weber, 1999, p. 26)

Bosher offered that in his view there was discussion about the shape of the standards, but there was always bipartisan support for them.

> The amazing thing is that there was bipartisan support for expectations. The shape was a debate, but there was bipartisan support. We'd never have made it if people on both sides

> of the aisle had not been willing to stand up and say, "Yes, we believe that our young people can do more than they do," and "yes, we agree to develop the standards." Individuals pushed their own social or political agenda, but the environment that permitted the standards to become reality was a bipartisan effort, clearly a bipartisan effort. (Bosher, 1999, p. 22)

Theme Six

The drive for state interest was a strong factor in Virginia. The developers of the standards were convinced that they were developing Virginia standards for Virginians. Although the math and science developers looked at other models, the English and social studies developers either had no models or had poor models. More importantly, they believed they were developing a document reflective of the needs of their state.

Weber gave his view on state interest and how it was important to develop standards in Virginia for Virginians.

> We'd seen people going off the road and having accidents all over the place. We knew, and I think most of us felt, the best thing was to try to do this our way. There didn't seem to be anybody else who was having any great success . . . We really hoped that we could create a product that people would say, "Yes, that's Virginia, and Virginians are happy with it, and that's good." I felt that anything that was imported from someplace else would raise some concerns with Virginians somewhere. I felt a homegrown product had the best chances of being popular and being successful and being accepted. (Weber, 1999, p. 25)

Roesch speaks of an experience she had with business people in discussing local control of schools.

I remember there was one meeting… Some of the questions that came out! It was quite incredible. One person said, "Dr. Roesch, if you're managing the standards for the state of Virginia, and I heard you say science is being done by Prince William. If they're really good at what they do, and you're really good at what you do, what's the big fuss with American education? Why wouldn't you just go to Prince William, get their standards, and call it finished?" And vice versa. Just switch it. You have this national curriculum, and be done with it".

I said that that's because we're Americans and we believe in local control of schools, and we just would not accept somebody else's standards as ours. Part of it is managing a process that people feel a part of. It was really enlightening to hear that business perspective. (Roesch, 1999, pp. 9-10)

Goldberg gives the business view on local control and how he believes business views it as a problem.

American education, as far as the business community is concerned, is far too idiosyncratic.

Let me give you one example of a conundrum for the business community. The business community knows that American education is a landscape of scattered success. There is a lot of good stuff going on, as you know from your own experience. There are good schools, there are good programs in communities where one might be surprised to find them. The business community wants to know if it can be done in one place, why can't it spread? What does it take? (Goldberg, 1999, pp. 23-24)

Bosher sums up educators' views and calls local autonomy a hollowed concept and warns a fellow educator in another state not to take Virginia's standards wholesale.

> Though we used a number of national experts, who are in these minutes, too, who told us what was going on in other states, the Virginia standards were not modeled after any particular state's. As I've said to the states that have called since this, because I had one governor's office aide say, "Our governor would just like to take the word 'Virginia' off your standards and put our state's on it." I said, "While there's no copyright, that would be the worst thing you could do, because the key to this is developing ownership…Local autonomy is a hallowed concept. (Bosher, 1999, pp. 18-19))

Theme Seven

Leaders emerged and the human factor cannot be minimized. In a review of written documents and oral testimony, the role played by David Gardner, Chairman of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, was key. He is attributed to the success of bringing consensus among a divergent group of individuals who worked for eighteen months toward the final product, A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.

In a review of written documents and more so in a review of oral testimony, the role played by William C. Bosher, Jr. as the Superintendent of Public Instruction, was vital to the effort. He is attributed by many to bringing consensus among a variety of political, social and educational factions who worked for fourteen months toward the final product, *Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools*. He drove the project home and his vision of clear, measurable and rigorous standards led the movement. He never wavered. Although the train got off the track several times, it always got back on headed in the same direction. Bosher earned the respect of many, as indicated by the testimony of key informers, and it was said that the standards document could not have happened without him. Leslie was one who applauded his effort.

I think this would not have happened were it not for Dr. Bosher, because I think he believed in it from the point of view of raising standards for students in schools. The way he went about it, and the way he was able to speak about it, was very genuine from the standpoint of wanting to improve the education for all students.

I don't think this would have happened if we hadn't had him there. He was able to speak to all kinds of people in a very genuine way, not pompous, but felt a deep conviction for students in the Commonwealth. (Leslie, 1999, pp. 12-13)

Future Studies

Historical writings often lead us to more questions and suggest topics for future studies of a similar nature. This study certainly does.

Each of the seven themes suggests separate studies. There are multiple dimensions within each that have suggested questions.

Each of the curricula areas suggests separate studies. Curricular standards development was very different among the disciplines. An interesting study could be done comparing national and state development within one discipline, or comparing across disciplines. Questions could be asked why the disciplines were so different. Social Studies would be most interesting.

Educators in the future need to be cognizant of the overall influence of business on education, the positives, the negatives, and the trade-offs. Along the lines of a study on the business-education connection, a look at outcomes-based education, its history and how it was originally tied to business would be interesting.

As the standards movement unfolds in Virginia, and accountability becomes a real issue, a study of the benefits of the implementation of the standards should be asked. After all this, has the implementation of the revised Standards of Learning in Virginia raised student achievement?

Epilogue

I started this study as a detective trying to solve a mystery. I went about it looking for very small pieces of a giant puzzle, and my challenge was to find the correct pieces for this particular puzzle.

I never wavered from writing a documentary history starting with A Nation at Risk because I believed that it was a landmark event. My studies certainly confirmed that. And as a former high school math teacher, I knew the significance of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards document of 1989 and multiple sources and testimonies confirmed my belief that this was indeed the second landmark event. I also identified the Education Summit of 1989 as the third landmark event. When Dr. Bosher addressed the education faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University on July 23, 1998 in Blacksburg and confirmed my beliefs about the importance of this event, I knew I was on the right track. As I moved through the history to the Virginia movement, I found that the ramifications of all of these landmark events influenced the development of the Standards of Learning in Virginia.