

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING
PROFESSION AMONG FLORIDA STATE LEGISLATORS FROM 1984 TO 2015

by

Janny Crespo

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of

The College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton, FL

December 2017

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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Roberta Weber, Department of Curriculum, Culture, and Educational Inquiry, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


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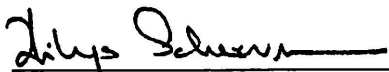
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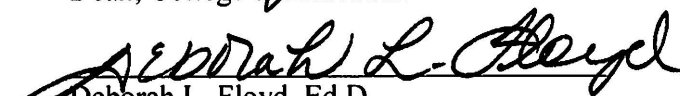
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express her sincere gratitude to the faculty of the Department of Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry and, in particular, to Dr. Roberta Weber for her tireless shepherding in this arduous dissertation journey. The author also wishes to acknowledge the enthusiastic support she received from family, friends, and co-workers without which these years of study would have been much less satisfying. Finally, for all the emotional support and validation, to Barbara E. G. Moore, Esq., many thanks for being a source of encouragement.

ABSTRACT

Author: Janny Crespo

Title: The Social Construction Of Teachers and the Teaching Profession Among Florida State Legislators from 1984 to 2015

Institution: Florida Atlantic University

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Roberta Weber

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Year: 2017

Public officials at the state level currently are called upon to create, evaluate, and implement policies that assess the effectiveness of teacher performance and hold teachers accountable for student achievement. Therefore, understanding the social construction of the teaching profession among those public officials is crucial to understanding the impact of the policy agenda on the work of teachers as well as being essential to exercising influence on the policy process itself. This study was an analysis of legislation regarding teacher accountability in an effort to provide insight into how the Florida State Legislature socially constructs the teaching profession. This study used a qualitative methodology to place teachers, as a group, in Schneider and Ingram's (1993) typology of target populations and made use of historical analysis to trace the changes that have occurred in the social construction of teachers during the period from 1984-2015. In doing so, it found teachers are negatively constructed with a positive power component,

correspondingly labeled contenders, on Schneider and Ingram's typology. Ultimately, the effect of the pressures placed upon teachers has been to create projections of ongoing teacher shortages and to discourage potential candidates from pursuing the profession.

DEDICATION

For my parents, Francisco and Nydia Crespo, who taught me to be curious and brave, and for my children, who are the reason for everything I have done in my life...with all my love.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING
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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

What communities decide about when they make policy is meaning, not matter.

– Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*

Legislative, top-down mandates are increasingly infringing on the professional discretion of teachers. Apple (2006) described this development as a move from a system of licensed autonomy to one of regulated autonomy. Teachers who once universally practiced their profession under conditions of licensed autonomy were granted professional certification and then permitted the freedom to teach using their professional expertise and judgment. However, as is ever more the case in an increasing number of states, teachers working under conditions of regulated autonomy are subject to “greater scrutiny in terms of process and outcomes” (Apple, 2006, pp. 42-43) where the state specifies both content and methods.

While prevailing education reform efforts may seem new, the debate is reminiscent of the period when Bruner’s educational philosophy emerged with the original publication of *The Process of Education* in 1960. Then the perception and the social construction regarding the American educational system was that it needed fixing. It began with the realization that in the space race our adversary, the Soviet Union, had an advantage, and so to regain primacy in the fields of science and engineering and to reestablish military supremacy, it would be necessary to change, improve, and/or modify the manner in which children in this country were educated. The report authored by

Bruner on the Woods Hole Conference of 1959, a gathering of eminent scientists of the day to discuss the educational needs of the nation, had a revolutionizing effect. Much like the landmark *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) report, it created a culture of education reform characterized by the social construction that teaching was at the heart of the problem.

At present, the debate regarding education centers on defining the aims of education. This time it is not the fear of losing military advantage but the fear of losing economic advantage that drives the anxiety over the state of our educational system (Franklin & Johnson, 2008, p. 472). Today there is a concern over the perceived decline of the United States' economic status and, again, educational reform is viewed as a remedy. The American education system is now tasked with the responsibility of producing adults who will take their place in the economy and restore economic hegemony to the United States. Interestingly enough, there is a renewed focus on the disciplines of science and engineering as the vehicles for resurgence. This renewed focus on the disciplines themselves is reminiscent of Bruner's (1960) proposals for reform in his work, *The Process of Education*, which was the product of The Woods Hole Conference of 1959.

The reform efforts that Bruner (1960) proposed in the 1950s and those proposed earlier by the Progressives at the turn of the 20th century differed in their perspective with regards to the student. Progressive efforts towards curriculum reform were centered on the needs and dictates of the student. Dewey (1916), in the 1920s, expressed in his pedagogic creed that "the true center of correlation on the school subjects is not science, nor literature, nor history, nor geography, but the child's own social activities" (p. 37). In

contrast, Bruner's (1977) work proposed a discipline-centered curriculum approach that emerged from academia itself as curriculum development was undertaken by "university scholars and scientists, men distinguished for their work at the frontiers of their respective disciplines" (p. 1).

Like Bruner's (1960) brand of discipline-centered curriculum theory, today's standards-based curriculum also draws heavily on discipline as content. This stands in stark contrast to the emphasis on the place of the student/child in Progressive curriculum theory and design. Presently, an educational policy that is deeply committed to standards-based curriculum development and accountability measures is readily accepted.

The standards-based movement is a direct result of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) report. The report "spurred more commotion, controversy, and change to America's schools than any other public statement issued after the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 declarations regarding de jure racially segregated schools in *Brown v. Board of Education*" (Guthrie & Springer, 2004, p. 8). In fact, in its impact, the effect of the report is comparable to the effect that the launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union had on education reform in the 1950s and early 60s. As Bruner (1960) put it, a "shared sense of imperiled national security" (p. 74) provides awareness. The suggestion that our nation is at risk is a common denominator between these two periods. The common metaphor during both periods suggests vulnerability and promotes the social construction of threat perception.

The question that remains is where is the teacher positioned in the process of education reform? While during both periods there is an acknowledgement of the importance of teachers, there seems to be an underlying perception and social

construction that teachers somehow are unqualified to provide the necessary level of expertise required or, worse, are to blame for the problem. Bruner's (1960) lament of low teacher quality and call for reform efforts to improve the situation (pp. 88-89) are echoed in the education reform debate of today.

Problem

Being uninformed as to the complexities of pedagogic training and skills, legislators at the state level are called upon to create, evaluate, and implement policies that assess the effectiveness of teachers' performance and hold them accountable for student achievement. The social construction of teachers from the point of view of state legislators influences policies which directly affect the work of teachers. Policy may be defined as statements of what government intends to do or not do, take the form of laws, regulations, orders or rulings (Birkland, 2005, p. 139). The resulting political climate has had the effect of diminishing the professional standing of teachers as suggested by Apple (2006), who asserted that "Such a regime of control is based not on trust, but on a deep suspicion of the motives and competence of teachers" (pp. 42-43).

Purpose

According to Birkland (2005), the social construction of an issue is central to setting the policy agenda. There is power in setting the policy agenda. The social construction of any issue is the "process by which issues and problems are defined in society" (Birkland, 2005, p. 125). The policy agenda is described by Birkland as the alternative issues, problems, and solutions that compete to "gain broader attention" (p. 108) and agenda setting is "the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention" (p. 109). Consequently, understanding the social

construction of the teaching profession is crucial to understanding the influence of the policy agenda on the work of teachers. Therefore, an analysis of legislation regarding teacher accountability as measured by student performance provided insight into how the Florida State Legislature socially constructs the teaching profession and is essential to influencing the policy process.

Research Questions

The proposed study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What legislation regarding teacher accountability has been enacted by Florida legislators from 1984 to 2015?
2. How does this legislation reflect the social construction of the teaching profession by the Legislature?
3. Has the social construction of the teaching profession by the Florida Legislature changed during the period 1984 to 2015?

Significance and Potential Contributions

The current study serves to inform policy actors, such as educators and their advocates, who are working to influence the policy making process (Maxwell, 2005). Those who wish to alter policy outcomes as a way to preserve the standing of teachers as professionals will benefit from research such as the current study, which provides insight into perceptions of teachers and teaching. The social construction of teachers and the teaching profession is what drives these perceptions.

A positive social construction is of high value and identity and “is a fundamental precursor for social mobilization” (Ingram & Schneider, 2005, p. 21). Understanding the development of the social construction of the teaching profession is essential for those

who are wishing to support the cause of teachers. According to Ingram and Schneider (2005), the social construction of any group brings about policy consequences for either the allocation or the withdrawal of benefits. Therefore, education reform efforts are influenced by the social construction of the target population and “closer focus on the images of policy makers may offer a different view of specific images and their links with policy design” (Bulkley & Gottlieb, 2017, p. 30).

Delimitations

The current study was delimited to legislation/laws, which are defined as bills passed by both of the Chambers, the House and the Senate, of the State Legislature. The study was delimited further to the period beginning in 1984 with the emergence of the current education reform efforts targeting teacher accountability following *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) report to the Legislative session ending in 2015.

Limitations

The current study was enhanced by a qualitative design, using elements of content analysis and thematic analysis. A qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to examine deeply the perceptions of Florida State Legislators. However, a qualitative methodology is characterized by a lack of generalizability. Therefore, the findings within this study are not generalizable to legislators in other states and have no predictive value.

A further limitation of this study is the limited sample size. The sample of legislative bills is bound by a specific criterion to include time frame and issue addressed. Further, it was selected through the advice and expertise of subject area specialists.

Integrating additional methods of sample selection may have increased the depth of analysis of this study.

Another limitation of the present study is the question of causality. The analysis of the data revealed the social construction of teachers and the teaching profession among Florida State Legislators. However, the underlying cause and the source or sources influencing that construction were not examined in the course of this research.

Finally this study relies on historical documents as data. The legislation that composes the study sample is part of a historic record. The historic record may be subject to human error or bias.

CHAPTER TWO. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social Construction Theory

Stone's (2002) *Policy Paradox* defined policy as the "rational attempt to attain objectives" (p. 37). According to Stone, the process by which policy is made follows a model of political reasoning whereby participants in the policy making process seek to "get others to see a situation as one thing rather than another" (p. 9). This model of political reasoning is characterized by metaphor making and category making.

Stone's (2002) model of political reasoning relies on the concept of problem definition. Problem definition is the strategic representation of ideas, persons, or situations. Problem definition requires the construction of categories, which are "human mental constructs" (Stone, 2002, p. 378), in order to create meaning. Stone's concept of problem definition may be characterized as social construction. In this model, problem definition (or social construction) is a "strategic portrayal for persuasion's sake, and ultimately for policy's sake" (Stone, 2002, p. 9). Stone's theoretical model is part of a growing body of work in the field of policy design theory that employs social constructionism.

Social constructionism is also a part of the study of policy design theory that seeks to understand the content and "architecture" of policy (Schneider & Sidney, 2009, pp. 104-108). Social constructionism refers to how "humans' interpretations of the world produce social reality" (Schneider & Sidney, 2009, p. 103). In reference to target populations, it is the "cultural characterizations or popular images of the persons or

groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy” (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p. 334).

In their landmark publication, Schneider and Ingram (1993) proposed a typology that recognized the importance of political power as well as the importance of social construction. What emerged was a two-dimensional representation where the horizontal axis shows social constructions of a given group registered along a continuum from negative to positive and the vertical axis pertaining to the group’s political power registered along a continuum from high to low (Figure 1). The quadrants at the intersection of the construction axis and the power axis are labeled advantaged, contenders, dependents, and deviants. Schneider and Ingram attempted to place several groups within the matrix.

Both dependents and the advantaged enjoy the status of deserving as they are positively socially constructed groups. Although the advantaged group has the added benefit of greater political resources at their disposal, both of these categories are most likely to be beneficiaries of policy design. Policymakers will be more likely to direct entitlements towards these groups because “the rationales often connect the policy to the broad-based national interest, even though the policy actually favors specific target populations” (Ingram, Schneider, & Deleon, 2007, p. 102).

Although contenders do have access to substantial political resources, their negative social construction makes it difficult for policymakers to openly favor policy designs that benefit them. The fact that they are situated in the undeserving quadrant limits them. Deviants lack both political power and positive social construction; they are more likely to receive a disproportionate portion of burdens and punishments.

<u>CONSTRUCTIONS</u>	
POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
STRONG (power)	
<i>Advantaged</i>	<i>Contenders</i>
The Elderly	The Rich
Business	Big Unions
Veterans	Gun Owners
Scientists	The Radical Right
WEAK (power)	
<i>Dependents</i>	<i>Deviants</i>
Disabled	Criminals
Mothers	Drug Addicts
Children	Communists
Homeless	Sex Offenders
	Terrorists

Figure 1. Schneider and Ingram's (1993) typology of target populations. Adapted from "Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy," by A. Schneider and H. Ingram, 1993, *American Political Science Review*, 87, p. 336.

"Policymakers stand to gain considerable political capital from punishing those who do not have the power resource or wherewithal to fight back and whom the broader public believes are undeserving of anything better" (Ingram et al., 2007, p. 103).

Schneider and Ingram's (1993) typology seeks to explain the age old question, what is politics? Politics is the method by which society determines who gets what, when,

and how (Laswell, 1936). “Central to the theory is the assertion that in order to address these classic questions, we must also understand why some groups get benefits and others get burdens” (Pierce, Siddiki, Schuacher, Pattison, & Peterson, 2014, p. 3). When Schneider and Ingram (1993) introduced their typology, they cautioned that as of yet there had been

no research on the social constructions of target populations from the perspective of elected officials; thus there is no way to speculate on how [the figure] actually should be drawn and how much agreement there would be about the placement of various groups. (p. 336)

The purpose of the current study was to place the teaching profession within Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology of target populations. In so doing, the value of the research study was enhanced. As reported by Pierce et al. (2014) in their review of the literature specifically applying Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology between 1993 and 2013, the number of books and articles utilizing the theory has grown dramatically (p. 8). As a result, the current study contributes to the body of work in both the study of public policy theory and in the area of education policy studies. To date, no study has attempted to place teachers in the Schneider and Ingram (1993) typology and specifically not from the perspective of legislators.

The Social Construction of Teachers and the Teaching Profession in Public

Discourse

While there are a number of studies dedicated to analyzing the effect of social construction of teachers and the teaching profession by the general public, there seems to be a lack of research concerning the social construction of teachers by the specific group

of policy actors - state legislators. The current study sought to examine the social construction of teachers and the teaching profession as perceived by state legislators in an effort to understand its effect upon legislative behavior.

There are implications for policy and policymakers with regard to framing of policy and the social construction of education problems in the United States, since framing and social construction affects the perceptions, views, and beliefs of the public at large, which makes up constituencies. As Hess (2006) explained, “the fate of implementation of all legislation depends to some extent on public support” (p. 589). How state legislatures respond to the problems addressed by education reform will depend, at least in some part, on the level of public support for its provisions.

The function of influence in its broad political sense is the projection of power to promote social values and goals. Political actors seek to influence policy making and so view policy as the objective of that power. According to Edmondson (2005),

there needs to be a critical understanding of the field in relation to societal influences and conditions, including the values and goals of those involved in policy making processes....As educators critically understand the issues and ideologies, particularly the broader sociopolitical contexts related to education, there should be a better anticipation of where particular trends will lead....understanding where the power lies, who the key players are, and what their agenda might be.... (p. 12)

The current study provides further understanding of the perceptions regarding teachers and the teaching profession among policymakers in order to inform educators and education policy actors.

System and non-system actors compete with elites and other interest groups to set the education policy agenda. When problems are defined and set on the policy agenda, the group “that can create and promote the most effective depiction of an issue has an advantage in the battle over what, if anything, will be done about a problem” (Birkland, 2005, p. 125). The process by which problems are defined in the public discourse is referred to as the social construction of the issue. Social construction theory concerns itself with the “ways in which we as a society and the various contending interests within it structure and tell the stories about how problems come to be the way they are” (Birkland, 2005, p. 125).

The social construction of an issue serves to organize the public’s understanding of that issue in what Goldstein (2011) referred to as “frames” (p. 545). In the case of education reform as it pertains to teachers and the teaching profession, the framing of teachers can only be described as schizophrenic. In some instances, the social construction of teachers brings to mind pictures of lovely soft spoken kindergarten teachers or mature wise matrons, while the social construction of teachers’ unions bring to mind the images, all too often seen in the papers, of angry pickets (Goldstein & Beutel, 2009, p. 285). As Ravitch (2010) observed,

One would think, by reading the critics that the nations’ schools are overrun by incompetent teachers who hold their jobs only because of union protections, that unions are directly responsible for poor student performance, and that academic achievement would soar if the unions were to disappear. (p. 175)

A study conducted by Goldstein and Beutel (2009) evaluated the contradictory messages regarding teachers and the teaching profession that were delivered by the Bush

administration during the course of its promotion of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) legislation. The qualitative study applied critical discourse analysis to review a data set of public statements in support of the NCLB legislation emerging from the Department of Education website. The authors concluded that the public statements made by the Bush administration through the Department of Education had a demoralizing effect on the teaching profession while simultaneously exploiting the misconceptions of the public.

But more importantly, Goldstein and Beutel (2009) pointed to the fact that “those who control the public discourse surrounding NCLB have a great deal of power to rhetorically shape the people’s perceptions regarding its efficacy” (p. 276). Goldstein and Beutel (2009) concluded that in an attempt to promote NCLB as the solution to the problem of education, the Bush administration narrowly defined the problem to fit their desired narrative. Specifically, “to improve education one must improve teaching” (p. 291). The problem is therefore framed in a simple syllogism: public education is failing and the blame lies with teachers. The Bush Administration, through its official statements and those of the Secretary of Education “trivialized the larger structural, institutional and social contexts shaping public opinion” (Goldstein & Beutel, 2009, p. 278).

In addition, they concluded that the Bush administration was only successful in promoting NCLB and its solution to the education problems because it was more successful than its predecessors in framing the debate and exploiting the public’s negative perception regarding public education and teachers. There is a paradox found within the communications emanating from the Bush administration’s Department of Education, which was examined by Goldstein and Beutel (2009). They suggested that, along with a

disdain for the teachers' unions, teachers also may, by extension, be negatively constructed by the public. Yet for all the negative construction, teachers as individuals often are perceived as saviors.

According to Goldstein and Beutel (2009), since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), teachers have borne the brunt of the blame for low student achievement. The result of focusing attention so narrowly on teachers is that the Bush administration neglected to consider alternative and contributing critical assessments of other factors at work. The authors warned of the dangers of an Obama administration continuing in the same direction (Goldstein & Beutel, 2009, p. 294). Goldstein and Beutel's (2009) work served to underscore the importance of studies, such as the current one, which examine the perceptions of policymakers and the policymaking process.

The effect of the efforts expended by system, non-system actors, elites, and other interest groups to socially construct the problem in education can be, and often is, assessed through public polling. Based on the analysis of public opinion generated by polling data from three separate polls, including the Phi Delta Kappan poll (Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll Highlights, 2012), which are conducted annually, Hess (2006) determined that the public believes that although schools may not be solely responsible for the problems of education, it is the responsibility of the schools to address those problems. Hess suggested that while "there was some variation across polls, the emerging picture was of a modestly informed public with mixed feelings" (p. 592). Granting that the public recognizes the need to address certain problems and issues, there is no desire

for drastic reforms that would “come at the expense of traditional district schools” (Hess, 2006, p. 603).

In considering the results of the study’s analysis, Hess (2006) suggested that there may be other forces at work in the polling process than merely the effect of public sentiment that is “relatively firm” (p. 605) and questioned whether some of what is interpreted as stability may be attributable to the composition of the surveys and how the questions are worded. Hess further postulated that differently worded survey designs might provide further insight into the public’s opinion.

Nonetheless, the seeming stability of the reported findings regarding the public’s support of teachers is undeniable. In 2012, the Phi Delta Kappan poll reported once again that Americans have confidence in public school teachers. “For the third year in a row, three of four Americans say they have trust and confidence in the men and women who teach children in the public schools” (Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll Highlights, 2012, p. 11).

And yet, students of the policy process continue to seek explanatory evidence for the seeming schizophrenia surrounding the treatment of teachers and the teaching profession in the policy arena. In their application of Stone’s (1989) causal stories framework, Harrison and Cohen-Vogel (2012) analyzed the arguments made in favor and against major education policy reforms proposed in the state of Florida. Their qualitative analysis utilized the transcripts of legislative debates, news coverage, and policy reports by varied policy actors. These policy actors included legislators, teachers, and union leaders, and members of the business community and of the public at large.

The authors of the study relied upon the use of causal stories by policy actors. Stone (2002) explained causal stories as “origin stories, stories of how a problem came into being” and inevitably a causal story “implies a resolution” (p. 134). How policy actors construct and apply these stories has relevance on the policy debate. By their nature, “political texts are the concrete by-products of strategic political activity and have a widely recognized potential to reveal important information about the policy positions of their authors” (Laver & Barry, 2000, p. 311). The level of effective persuasion carried by these narratives will, in turn, influence the course of policy outcomes.

In the case of Harrison and Cohen-Vogel’s (2012) study, the policy debate concerns Senate Bill 6 and Senate Bill 736 (The Florida Senate, 2010, 2011). Both bills were considered and passed by the Florida Legislature and are included in the data sample of the present study. Harrison and Cohen-Vogel found that where supporters of the bills, that is those who supported ending teacher tenure, instituting performance pay and teacher evaluations tied to student achievement, constructed causal stories where poor student achievement was the result of “negligent, or potentially ignorant, teachers...Under this narrative, efforts like performance evaluation and performance pay were valued as appropriately targeted policy instruments” (Harrison & Cohen-Vogel, 2012, p. 531).

On the other hand, opponents of Senate Bill 6 and Senate Bill 736 (The Florida Senate, 2010, 2011) constructed very different narratives. They tended to conceive of education as a multifaceted process, dependent upon the actions and choices of a number of actors not just teachers...opponents distributed blame for student achievement among a diverse set of actors. Without a clear ‘target’ then,

performance pay and the elimination of tenure were framed as ‘punishing’ well intentioned teachers who were victims of the same broad system that was failing their students. (Harrison & Cohen-Vogel, 2012, p. 531)

In 2017, Harrison conducted a study that once again focused on the passage of Senate Bill 6 and Senate Bill 736 (The Florida Senate, 2010, 2011). This study specifically examined how representatives of advocacy groups frame the discourse surrounding teachers and the teaching profession. Notably, Harrison (2017) also applied the conceptual framework of Schneider and Ingram (1993) as did the present study (Harrison, 2017, p. 44).

Data were collected through the use of audio records of floor debates and committee meetings, as well as witness testimony and print media (specifically the *Tallahassee Democrat*, the *Orlando Sentinel*, the *Tampa Bay Times*, and the *Palm Beach Post*) (Harrison, 2017, p. 44). An analysis of the data revealed that besides educators and members of the legislature, advocacy groups also registered their opposition and support. The author found that the majority of the groups identified by the study were largely in support of policies that would eliminate tenure, establish performance-based pay, and provide for tighter coupling (Harrison, 2017, p. 46).

Those actors in support of the bills tended to fall into two groups, “organizations representing business and industry and several private, education-focused, nonprofit organizations” (Harrison, 2017, p. 46). The business organizations included the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as well as the Florida Chamber of Commerce. Those opposed included research driven policy groups and labor unions.

Considering the actors identified as the subject of this study, it was not surprising that, overwhelmingly, the narrative that emerged is based upon the language of economics.

The mechanics of learning within Florida's classroom were analogous to the industrial processes with which they were familiar, with teachers framed as the primary producers of student achievement...any deficiencies in the production of achievement were a result of substandard performance. (Harrison, 2017, p. 47)

According to one respondent, a representative from the Foundation for Florida's Future,

teachers have control over what their students learn in the year they are there...Every student should be making gains regardless of their income level, regardless of where they live, regardless of their home life. Students should be making gains in the schools. (Harrison, 2017, p. 86)

Not surprisingly, the representatives of the union organizations as well as from research organizations created "stories" which point to the complexity of classroom education. Union representatives constructed narratives of teachers as one of several variables accounting for student achievement. They asserted that the proposed reforms were going to alienate teachers rather than include them in education reform efforts. And of course, research based advocacy groups concentrated their efforts on debunking any claims made by the other side (Harrison, 2017, p. 49).

Bulkley and Gottlieb (2017) identified influential policy actors and through a qualitative methodology they examined the actors' social construction of teachers and the

teaching profession. The purpose of the study was to shed light on how images of teachers are constructed. Ultimately, those views have implications for policy design.

The analysis of interviews with the influential policy actors identified by the study produced three “archetypal policy images” (Bulkley & Gottlieb, 2017, p. 16). They are “Profession of Teaching Struggling Against Difficult Circumstances (*Teachers as Professionals*); Individual Great Teachers Can Overcome All Obstacles (*Great Teachers*); and Dysfunctional Structures of Teaching Trump Teacher Quality (*Systemic Dysfunction*)” (Bulkley & Gottlieb, 2017, p. 16). Each of these categories describes the perception held by a group of subject influentials.

Those who identified “Teachers as Professionals” believed that teachers labored amid a variety of social, economic, and political challenges. Despite these challenges, dedicated teachers managed to educate children. Among those who subscribed to this view are leaders of the both the AFT and NEA (teachers’ unions), Linda Darling-Hammond, and Diane Ravitch (Bulkley & Gottlieb, 2017, p. 17).

Believing that “excellent teachers can overcome all challenges” (Bulkley & Gottlieb, 2017, p. 19) meant that the respondents understood teachers to be the most important variable in determining student achievement. These influentials placed primary responsibility upon teachers and their success and failure were evident in student achievement. Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, and Joel Klein are most identified with this image.

Lastly, the image of teachers who labor under a troubled public education system is the archetype of “Systemic Dysfunction.” In other words, the image is one of teachers laboring within the ongoing dysfunction as victims themselves. Those who identify with

this image of teachers are the Broad Foundation, The American Enterprise Institute, and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (Bulkley & Gottlieb, 2017, p. 22).

It was Bulkley and Gottlieb's (2017) conclusion that these archetypes aid in understanding important facets of current policy debates, as well as the ways that policy images tied to teachers and teaching are influencing those debates. They recommended that future studies focus more specifically on policymakers' images of teachers and the teaching profession. The current study sought to produce such an understanding regarding Florida state legislators.

The Social Construction of Teachers in the Media

A subsequent study by Goldstein (2011) examined mass media campaigns in the *New York Times* and *Time Magazine* to demonstrate how the media framed market-based reforms such as NCLB as the only solution to the problems of education and placed responsibility for education's failures on teachers unions and teachers as individuals. Applying a multidisciplinary approach, Goldstein used frame and discourse analysis, communication theory, visual analysis, and critical media studies to examine media messages. The media has long been recognized as exercising a great deal of power in the public discourse as it engages in the framing of issues (Anderson, 2007; Goldstein 2011). Goldstein's (2011) analysis revealed that teachers' unions were presented in a negative light in over half of the instances examined, and further explained that

Mass media may not tell people what to explicitly think about teachers' unions. However, by negatively portraying teachers unions, and by extension teachers, and framing them as anti-NCLB, antischool reforms, and antichild, the media might shape *how* the public thinks about them. (p. 566)

Goldstein recommended that those who engage in education policy debates “need to pay serious attention to how the mainstream media frames the debates...and to hold the media *accountable* for how it frames the debate in support of one view or another” (p. 569).

Anderson (2007) used Edelman’s (1988) model for analysis of what is termed the “political spectacle” (Anderson, 2007, p. 103) to analyze media coverage of specific events involving education policy issues. The study focused on the media’s impact on policy, cautioning that it is not just policymakers who should be aware. Anderson (2007) suggested that educators and the public should “understand not only the extent to which the ‘reality’ of educational reform and policy decisions is constructed with the help of the media but also the sophisticated and subtle mechanisms that make it possible” (p. 105).

Since the media’s influence is not exclusive to journalistic sources, popular culture’s imagery as drawn from the media of film, books ,and television in all its forms also has become the focus of attention for academics. Kantor, Kantor, Kantor, Eaton, and Kantor (2001) reviewed the image of teachers in the popular animated television series, *The Simpsons*. The authors drew from the episodes that aired from December 1989 through July 1998 featuring Springfield Elementary School, the elementary school attended by the series’s primary characters. The episodes are filled with satire and stereotypes of both teachers and administrators, creating an impression that “can be read as a critique of the profession: that virtually anyone (including a cyborg) can teach” (Kantor et al., 2001, p. 190).

In what Kantor et al. (2001) considered as a case in point, an episode is dedicated to the angst suffered by the faculty when one of the student characters steals all the

teachers' editions in the school and the teachers are stymied by the loss of their intellectual anchor. When the teachers' texts are returned and the culprit identified, the punishment is detention and the requirement that he "write repeatedly on the blackboard, 'I will not expose the ignorance of the faculty'" (p. 197). The message again, anyone can teach and teachers are not very smart.

Books and films with the hero teacher protagonist were the focus of Ayers' (2001) critical review. Although the images studied were of self-sacrificing teachers, there were some disturbing messages embedded in the narrative. First, the job of a teacher is simply to save children. Secondly, teachers are woefully unprepared to do so and those who are supernaturally empowered must overcome tremendous odds. As Ayers explained, the character designated as the hero teacher

must separate the salvageable students from those who are beyond redemption and he must win them over to a better life, all the while doing battle with his idiot colleagues, the dull-witted administration, and the dangerously backward parents.

He is a solitary hero. (pp. 201-202)

Ayers proposed that while the images of the hero teacher as exemplars are perceived as positive, the prescriptive solutions they present are oversimplifications of complex problems and so they do not advance the conversation. However, popular images of teachers and the teaching profession do influence the social construction of teachers in society.

Political cartoons are a powerful visual medium of political discourse. Through the application of a constructionist framework, Feuerstein (2015) examined the charter school reform movement in the media as displayed in political cartoons. "Just as written

news reports ‘frame’ issues in particular ways in order to influence the interpretation of issues by readers, so too do political cartoons” (p. 3).

Feuerstein (2015) concentrated on two major frames in the debate regarding charter schools. One is public accountability as regarding resource allocation and equity in access to education. The other is choice as a benefit with the underlying emphasis on competition as a benefit to students. These are common themes in the discourse concerning charter schools and school choice reform. The data set was gathered from three major national newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (p. 7).

Feuerstein (2015) concluded that political cartoons have enormous power not just to reflect the popular narrative, but to persuade and create a narrative.

The power to frame political issues in a compelling manner makes editorial cartoons a particularly effective form of political communication. However, rather than simply reflecting reality – like a mirror – these images are actively involved in constructing reality...political cartoons have the power to alter the way people view particular issues. (p. 25)

Recently, major newspapers across the United States, and specifically in the state of Florida, *The Florida Times Union in Jacksonville* (The Florida Times-Union, n.d.) have demanded and been successful in publishing individual teacher evaluation data through searchable data bases. Their publication and the debate surrounding it “have influenced public perceptions of teachers and teaching...these media-based actions have created and perpetuated a discourse of professional inadequacy” (Ulmer, 2016, p. 43).

Using a discourse analysis, Ulmer examined the debate and used it to encourage practitioners to create counter-narratives.

Ulmer (2016) identified what she refers to as a widespread “discourse of inadequacy” (p. 46). It is a narrative that carries through to teacher accountability and evaluation systems. The problem this perception creates is that the work of teachers can be oversimplified and the complex skills that are brought to bear in the classroom environment are undervalued and misunderstood. A very interesting observation made by Ulmer is that most adults feel very comfortable discussing teaching as a profession with a level of confidence. “Because adults experienced schools as students, adults believe that teaching is a simple, commonsensical endeavor” (Ulmer, 2016, p. 48).

The Influence of Federal Mandates and Legislative Initiatives on Social Construction

The proverbial “big bang” of the education reform movement may be identified as the *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) report published in 1983. President Ronald Reagan hoped to dismantle the cabinet level Department of Education and return to the states the oversight of public education. According to Guthrie and Springer (2004), Secretary of Education Terrell Bell, who was a supporter of public education, assembled the National Committee on Excellence in Education (NCEE) as an advisory body to produce a report assessing the nation’s education system (p. 11). In what could only be considered the greatest of political ironies, the report, which originally was commissioned by the Reagan administration to move the federal government out of the business of education, actually resulted in

achieving the opposite result by setting into motion a policy reform climate that has increased the role of the federal government in education policy (p. 9).

Consequently, beginning with the administration of President Reagan, and continuing until the present administration, educational goals have proceeded in three waves. The first wave was from 1983 to 1990 in which states increased graduation requirements, increased instructional time, enacted testing systems, and instituted more rigorous teacher preparation standards. From 1990 to 2000 saw the second wave, with the beginning of standards-based education reforms and a move towards market-based reforms calling for increased competition. The third wave dates from 2001 to present, with the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) legislation during President George W. Bush's administration (Guthrie & Springer, 2004, pp. 27-31) and continuing with the Obama administration and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, 1965) in its new iteration named the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA, 2015). In the course of this third wave, the emphasis on teacher accountability as the primary aim of education reform is clear, as seen in this passage from the 2001 inaugural address of President George W. Bush:

Consider what some parents face under the current system in some states. A child may pass the third-grade reading test. He or she gets in the eighth grade and lo and behold, fails the eighth-grade test. And the parent says, '*Who do I hold accountable?* What happened? My child was successful in the third and there he or she is in the eighth. What went wrong? How come? Where did the system let me down?' (as cited in Behn, 2003, p. 43)

In the search for accountability, education reforms that are primarily implemented from the top down have resulted in negative consequences for schools and teachers who fail to achieve an increase in student aptitude as defined by legislation. This perspective was explained by education historian Diane Ravitch in reference to federal legislation:

NCLB contained one goal: All children would be ‘proficient’ in reading and mathematics by 2014. This time, however, the goals were not merely a devoutly desired wish, but a federal mandate, with real consequences for schools whose students did not meet it. (Ravitch, 2010, p. 150)

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2006) authored a critique that focused on the images of teachers and the teaching profession that were proffered by the No Child Left Behind Act (2002). They identified three common conceptions, categorized as images of knowledge, images of teachers and teaching, and images of teacher learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006, p. 668). What they predicted in 2006 and is apparent in the current literature is that NCLB with its “mandates and definitions, coupled with its explicit accountability procedures and penalties, are overtaking practice and policy related to virtually every aspect of teaching” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006, p. 669), all of which have damaging consequences to the teaching profession. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2006) placed the responsibility for the damaging image of teachers and the profession on what they call NCLB’s flawed conceptions. The language of NCLB reveals images of teaching that are “linear, remarkably narrow, and based on a technical transmission model of teaching, learning, and teacher training that was rejected more than two decades ago and that is decidedly out of keeping with contemporary understandings of learning” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006, p. 669)

Instead, NCLB elevates a teacher's content area learning above all else to the exclusion of professional learning, specifically to a proper understanding of pedagogy. It is as if successful teaching was a simple matter of the adequacy of imparting information to students. By defining "highly qualified" teachers as a measure of content area expertise and ignoring completely the component of professional practice, the Act has promoted an image of teachers and teaching that is inconsistent with what cognitive science reveals about learning.

Decades of research have shown that learning is a process of developing usable knowledge, not just isolated facts, by building on previous knowledge, experience, and understanding, and by organizing information in a conceptual framework, and monitoring progress toward learning goals. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006, p. 674)

Since the inception of NCLB, it has become increasingly more common for policymakers to intervene directly in education policy and more actively than ever before at both the state and federal levels, thus creating a political culture that places policymakers in an adversarial relationship to educators. "For several decades now, the federal government has used its powers to try to exert a greater influence on what historically would be thought of as local matters of instruction-what is taught and how it is taught" (Bulkley & Burch, 2011, p. 243). A 2010 study of state legislative decision making by Canfield-Davis and Jain (2010) found the effects of these conditions are felt at the state level in that the influence of educators is diminishing in matters of education policy making.

The Effects of Unionization on the Social Construction of Teachers

Teachers' unions function in the policy domain as interest groups. Interest groups are defined as a "collection of people or organizations that unite to advance their desired political and policy outcomes in politics and society" (Birkland, 2005, p. 235). These policy actors seek to advance their policy agenda in a number of ways. Campaign contributions, union political support, and lobbying efforts are some of the most common behaviors in which interest groups participate for the purpose of achieving policy objectives. Moe (2011) made the argument that teachers' unions function as all unions do, i.e., in the interest of their membership: "In the grander scheme of things, it should hardly come as a surprise that union leaders are special interest advocates and that the teachers unions are special interest organizations" (p. 21).

Union lobbies and specifically teachers' unions are largely recognized as one of the most powerful lobbies in state politics (Coulson, 2010). Coulson's (2010) study sponsored by the conservative Cato Institute focused on the effectiveness of teachers' unions by identifying five key objectives and then analyzing the success enjoyed by the unions in achieving those objectives. According to Coulson, the five

key objectives were: (1) raising their members' wages, (2) growing their membership, (3) increasing the share of the public school labor force that they represent, (4) precluding pay based on performance or aptitude, and (5) minimizing competition from nonunion shops. (p. 155)

According to Coulson's analysis, while the unions are indeed very effectively providing benefits to their membership, their value to the public at large is debatable (p. 166).

It appears, however, that placing the label of interest group on the teachers' unions, and thereby implying that they pursue an agenda of self-interest, does not negatively impact public perception of teachers. According to Moe (2011), observers of American public education are typically very careful to distinguish teachers from their unions – and to treat teachers with kid gloves. Although everyone is aware that some teachers are failing in the classroom, teachers in general are portrayed very positively: as caring, devoted, other-oriented, public-spirited, and doing their best against great odds to get the nation's children educated.

Americans speak highly of teachers, and public officials go out of their way to extol their virtues and hail their contributions. Such accolades are rarely bestowed on teacher unions. Their conservative critics never have a nice word, of course. But even their liberal allies are muted (if that) in their praise, for they are well aware that the unions often get in the way of reform and quality education. Whether from the right or the left, then, teachers tend to come off as blessed souls, while the unions loom as powerful special interests whose souls are decidedly in question (Moe, 2011, pp. 110-111).

An analysis comparing the public and political response to nurses' unions and teachers' unions done by Givan (2013) revealed that although there are some similarities between the two union organizations, education is in a unique position to be on the receiving end of public and political scrutiny. While both unions are female dominated and require similar levels of education and roughly similar wages, the nurses' unions are with few exceptions seldom regarded as negatively as teachers' unions (p. 69). "The combination of materially, institutionally, and structurally driven factors – including

historically determined union strategies – means that education is still mostly sheltered from private profit” and therefore primed for attack by reform efforts seeking to privatize public education (p. 74).

Gavin (2013) suggested that the nature of the education system itself as a public institution sets it apart from the healthcare environment nurses labor in. Efforts to interject privatization in the system places the teachers’ unions at odds with those who wish to access the public school systems. The way that teachers interact with parents, and students in the public school system is much different, and longer term in nature, than the manner in which nurses interact with patients in the healthcare system. “Teachers are wrongly perceived as fully empowered to make all educational decisions” (p. 72) and the function of principals, administrators and others involved in providing services to the students is not considered by most critics who are holding teachers solely responsible for the achievement of their students. Going forward, Gavin recommended that teachers unions consider framing their message in terms of the public interest. Notably, when the Chicago Teachers Union took just this approach in their 2012 strike, the union was successful in gaining its demands along with public support (Gavin, 2013, p. 74).

Smith (2013) used Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology to identify the social construction of teachers’ unions from the perspective of the anti-union movement and its impact on a specific piece of anti-union legislation considered by the Pennsylvania legislature. It was the author’s finding that the political framing of the teachers union in Pennsylvania furthers a narrative that places teachers and their students in contention, with children being framed as “victimized” and teachers as “greedy” (Smith, 2013, p. 17).

Accordingly, the study placed children in the dependent category, therefore having limited power but a positive social construction. In contrast, teachers unions were placed in the contenders quadrant, which denotes high power politically but negative social construction. Smith (2013) relied upon Moore (1988) as the basis for the placements. According to Moore (1988), the existence of tension between competing factions for limited resources sets up “assumptions, justification, purposes and means of public action” (p. 75). The ensuing contest results in “strengthening one emerging force at the expense of another” (Moore, 1988, p. 77). In this case it is teachers, through the proxy of teachers unions, who emerge on the losing side of the equation.

Finally, within the context of the shift of state legislatures and governorships to Republican control, and at the same time a move to teacher accountability reforms through NCLB, along with the popularity of the anti-teachers union film, *Waiting for Superman* (Chilcott & Guggenheim, 2011), the narrative of placing responsibility for educational deficiencies on teachers is complete. It was in this period that Pennsylvania’s HB 1369 was presented to the legislature. The goal of this bill was to curtail union activity by the teachers unions, discourage strikes and turn teachers’ attention back to where they should be, on their students (Smith, 2013, p. 22). The study concluded, much like Gavin’s (2013) did, that teachers unions should adopt language that emphasizes the positive work of teachers with and for their students.

CHAPTER THREE. METHODOLOGY

The current study employed qualitative methodology to answer the three research questions. The study proceeded in three phases. Phase 1 involved addressing and answering research question 1, the identification of teacher accountability legislation. Phase 2, corresponding to research question 2, utilized content and thematic analysis methods in an examination of the data to identify the social construction of teachers by Florida state legislators. - Phase 2 ended with the placement of the target population designated “teachers” within Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology of target populations from the perspective of Florida state legislators. Finally, Phase 3, which corresponds to research question 3, made use of the historical analysis to trace the changes that have occurred in the social construction of teachers during the period from 1984-2015.

Sample

The Florida State Legislature is called into session in the spring of each year. Bills, which are potential pieces of legislation, are introduced through both the House and the Senate chambers during each session. The 2013 session alone saw 982 bills submitted through the Senate. In the House, that number was 1,898. Only a percentage of those bills are referred to the respective Education Committees for review since not all bills dealing with education topics are taken up in the Education Committees. Some may be referred to Appropriations, Budget, Government Affairs, or other committees. Given the

cumbersome size of the potential data set, an analysis of legislation such as was undertaken by this study had to apply a precise criterion in order to establish the sample to be examined since it would not be feasible to examine the totality of all bills pertaining to education topics. For the purposes of this study that criterion consisted of enrolled, engrossed bills that address teacher accountability as measured by student performance from 1984 to 2015.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the term legislation was used to refer to bills that have been submitted to and passed by both legislative Chambers (the House and Senate) of the Florida Legislature. These bills are referred to as enrolled bills. During the legislative process, when bills are amended, they are rewritten to include changes in language. The rewritten draft is what is labeled an engrossed bill. There even may be multiple engrossed versions of a bill. Once agreed upon and signed by the constitutional officers of the House and Senate, they are sent to the Governor for the Governor's action (The Florida House of Representatives, 2012) The data sample of the current study included bills that, although they were passed by both houses, were not necessarily signed by the Governor of Florida.

The term teacher accountability was applied within the current study to mean teacher accountability for student performance. Student performance is generally measured by state mandated high-stakes tests such as the Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) or the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). An important consideration in the review of this type of legislation is that it often ties teacher accountability for student performance to teacher pay.

The current study was bounded by the period beginning in 1984 and progressing through the 2015 session. The period is significant because it follows the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and includes the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002). NCLB is a demarcation point for legislation designed to accomplish education reform. The period ends in 2015 which is the year of the passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA, 2015).

Three experts in the field of education policy in the State of Florida were asked to identify the legislation that constituted the sample for the current study. They are regarded as experts in the field owing to their positions within their organizations and their experience. One is a 30-year, veteran lobbyist for several large school districts in the state. The other is on staff at a Florida-based advocacy think tank. The third is a teacher advocate. Appendix A is the script for the recruitment email or telephone contact that was used when communicating with each of the experts described previously.

The researcher requested that expert #1 submit a preliminary list of legislation that met the sampling criteria outlined above. This list then was submitted to expert #2 and expert #3 for initial review. Then each expert was asked to review the list and either confirm the list or add to the list and then submit their reviews to the researcher. These then were collected by the researcher and compiled into a revised list. The revised list then was redirected all three experts for final approval. The final list contained 17 pieces of legislation. The compilation of this list concluded Phase 1 of the current study and answered research question 1.

Data Collection

The current study relied on the use of archival data. Once the sample was

identified through the process outlined previously, a systematic search using key words and in some cases Senate or House bill numbers was conducted through the Florida State Legislature's public databases. Both the House and the Senate maintain databases containing a legislative history of past sessions.

In addition, *The Laws of Florida* is a volume that is published yearly as the result of each legislative session and is a compilation of all the laws, resolutions, and memorials passed during that legislative session. They are available online, dating back to 1997. For the sessions previous to 1997, *The Laws of Florida* in published book form dating back to the 1890 Legislative Session is available to the public at the Palm Beach County Courthouse's Law Library.

Archival data that may be available for some pieces of legislation may include staff analysis documents evaluating the merits of the proposed legislation. In some, if not all instances, it was possible to collect a complete history of the legislation beginning with its sponsorship and introduction, to its referral to one or more committees, to its subsequent committee amendments and committee votes, and finally ending with the results of the floor votes. A documents summary form (Appendix B) was used to document these entries for each piece of legislation.

Data Analysis

Content analysis and thematic analysis of the data addressed research questions 2 and 3. This constituted Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the study as outlined previously. The analysis of the data followed procedures for reviewing and evaluating documents as defined by Bowen (2009, p. 27). Bowen (2009) suggested a document analysis involving a three step, iterative process that combines elements of both content analysis and

thematic analysis. According to Bowen, with content analysis, the process involves “organizing information into categories related to the central questions of the research” (p. 32) and in thematic analysis, the process involves “a form of pattern recognition within the data with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis” (p. 32).

Braun and Clarke (2008) defined thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). These themes “capture something important about the data in relation to the research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2008, p. 82). How these themes are identified is a design choice. Braun and Clarke described two models of thematic analysis that identify themes either inductively or deductively. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) employed a hybrid model that follows elements of both inductive and deductive coding. For the purposes of the current study, thematic analysis followed an exclusively inductive approach where the themes identified are “strongly linked to the data themselves” (Braun & Clark, 2008, p. 83).

Bowen’s (2009) three step process of analysis begins with an initial reading, followed by a thorough, purposeful reading, and finally an interpretive exploration. Like Bowen (2009), Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) conceptualized a methodology in which the process of analysis follows prescribed steps that are designed to be driven by close interaction with the data to “ensure that the developing themes are grounded in the original data” (p. 83). Figure 2 describes the process of analysis for the current study.

During the initial reading, the document summary form (Appendix B), identifying the piece of legislation, its course through the committee process, and amendments made as well as votes and recommendations in committee, served as a guide. A coding process was employed in the course of the second step. In addition to thematic coding, coding

included the use of in vivo codes, which refer to the use of “a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 74) as well as axial coding, which relates categories to subcategories in an effort to develop and reorganize the data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 159).

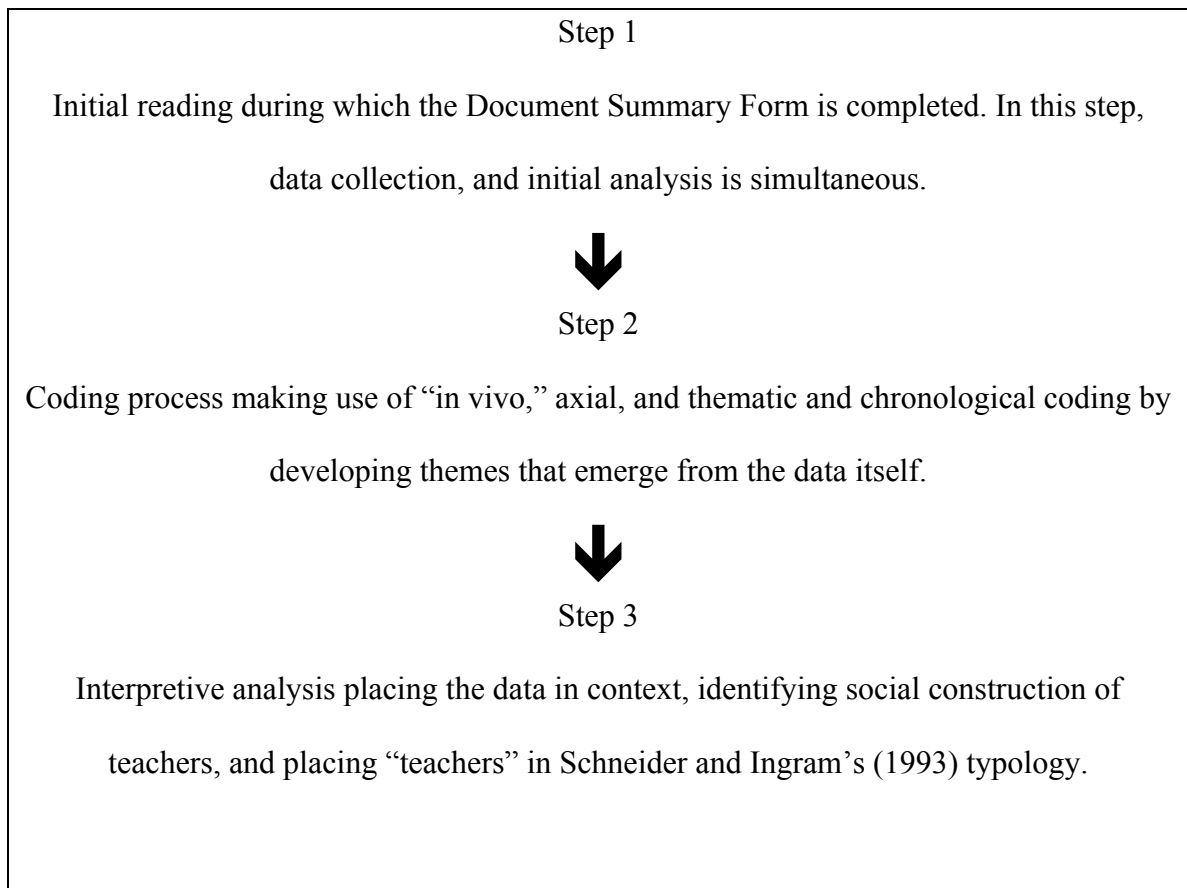


Figure 2. Steps in the analysis and coding process.

Theoretical coding and chronological coding were used as secondary coding methods during the later stages of data analysis. The focus of these methods was to compare and reorganize the data into categories that allowed for the clarification of the relationships of the coded data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 43). This method was especially important when examining the data for evidence of chronological patterns.

The third step of the process presented the opportunity for historical analysis, which traced the development of the social construction of teachers from 1984-2015 and so answered research question 3. For the purposes of this study, the term historical analysis is defined as the explanation of the change over time of the social construction of teachers among Florida state legislators over the period of time targeted by the study. Finally, as anticipated, it would be possible to place the teaching profession within Schneider and Ingram's (1993) typology of target populations.

Codes Identified

Throughout the coding process, in vivo coding was applied to the data. This refers to the practice of examining the data and drawing from it short phrases appearing and often repeated in the "qualitative record" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 74). It is this close interaction with the data that results in the development of codes.

Following an initial reading of the data and the completion of each document summary form, a second thorough and more focused reading began the interpretive exploration of the data. This inductive process produced the development of thematic codes that were grounded in the original data as per Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006, p. 83).

A subsequent process was applied to the data as described by Boyatzis (1998). This data driven analysis began with the selection of two subsamples. Given that the criterion for this study was governed by time, two subsamples were created drawing bills from the earlier and later samples of the data. Subsample A included bills from 1984 and 1997 and subsample B included bills from 2010 and 2011.

Reading and re-reading the data from both groupings allowed for the refining of code development. Ultimately, nine codes emerged from the data. They were defined and identified and applied to all the data samples. The codes were identified as they emerged from the data. Each code itself carried no evaluative component as to whether it indicated a negative or positive construction. The codes identified were:

1. Rewards – “Incentivizing good performance.” This code was used when the bill seeks to financially reward quality performance. (It is important to distinguish between code Reward and code Pay 4 Tests. Pay 4 Tests was specifically designed to account for the legislative desire to link test scores to the evaluative methods that each school district was charged with developing. Reward was specific mention of monetary rewards for those teachers who were designated as high performing.)
2. Pay 4 Tests – “Salary structure tied to student achievement data.” This code was used for references to requirements of school districts to establish a salary structure pursuant to student achievement data.
3. Eval – “Appraisal” → “Assessment” → “Evaluation.” This code was used for all references to teacher or instructional personnel appraisals, assessments, or evaluations.
4. ⇒Qual – “Student Performance ⇒Teacher Quality.” This code was used when it was implied that the performance of students was indicative of teacher quality.

5. FCAT – “Test Scores = Students Performance.” This code was used when the reference calls for student performance to be defined by FCAT/standardized test scores.
6. Deg +/- – “Advanced Degrees.” This code was used when advanced degrees were considered as either a disadvantage or advantage in evaluation of teacher performance.
7. Prof Pract – “Professional Practices.” This code was used when there was a determination by the Legislature of other factors besides student achievement that may be considered in the course of teacher evaluations/assessments. These correspond to considerations such as professionalism, classroom management, handling of parents, etc. These do not include any consideration of advance education or experience.
8. Econ – “Use of market based language.” This code is to be used when economic language/production model is used specifically in discussion of benefits to the system.
9. Exp +/- – “Teaching experience as a positive or negative value.” This code was used when years of teaching was considered as either a disadvantage or advantage in evaluation of teacher performance.

Appendix C is a list of all codes identified and defined. Along with the operational definition of each code appears bill numbers and the pertinent language giving rise to the code.

Throughout the research process, memoing was used to develop codes and categories and to engage in interpretive analysis (Saldaña, 2009). Memoing allowed the

researcher to engage with the data. As a means of enhancing the validity of the current study, the researcher relied on a peer reviewer/debriefer. The role of the peer reviewer, which was undertaken by a recent graduate of the doctoral program in the Department of Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry, was one of “devil’s advocate,” as explained by Creswell (2013, p. 251). The peer reviewer was tasked with questioning methods, interpretations, and meanings as well as reviewing and coding all the data.

CHAPTER FOUR. FINDINGS

The present study focused on legislation concerning teacher accountability from 1984 to 2013. The term legislation, for the purposes of this study, was used to refer to bills that were submitted to and passed by both legislative Chambers (the House and Senate) of the Florida Legislature. These bills are commonly referred to as enrolled bills. Enrolled bills, by definition, have been signed by the constitutional officers of the House and Senate and subsequently sent to the governor for action (The Florida House of Representatives, 2012).

The data that were the basis of this study consisted of teacher accountability legislation. The term teacher accountability refers to accountability for student performance as measured by state mandated high-stakes testing such as the Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and the newly implemented Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). An important consideration in the review of this type of legislation is that the legislation often ties teacher accountability for student performance to teacher pay and is often referred to as merit pay. In addition, some samples included in this study are legislation that has as its aim what may be termed as measures intended to incentivize performance by providing funding for programs that rewarded teachers for what the Legislature defined as achievement and excellence.

Legislation Regarding Teacher Accountability Passed by Florida Legislators from 1984 to 2015

As presented in Chapter 3, the data set was identified with the assistance of two

experts in the field of Florida education policy who reviewed a list of legislation concerning teacher accountability. The review identified 17 pieces of legislation, thus answering the first research question: What legislation regarding teacher accountability has been passed by Florida Legislators from 1984 to 2015? Table 1 presents a summary of these pieces of legislation along with a short synopsis of the issues presented by each bill regarding teacher accountability. See Appendix D for reference details.

Table 1

Summary of Teacher Accountability Legislation

Year	Bill Designation	Title/Topic
1984	SB 923, 836, 1881, 884	Florida Master Teacher Program
1985	HB 1380/SB 1300	Appropriations for Teacher Merit Pay. Although funding was included in the general appropriations bill of the legislative session, the bill itself was not passed and therefore this bill's text was not textually examined. It has been included in order to ensure historical accuracy of the record.
1997	HB 703	Florida School Recognition Program: Requiring the adoption of salary schedules based on performance assessments of instructional personnel.
1998	HB 3389	Excellent Teaching Program authorizing monetary incentives and bonuses for teaching excellence; providing eligibility criteria.
1999	HBs 751,753,755	A+ Plan: Requiring certain personnel-performance assessments to be primarily based on student performance; revising the assessment procedure for certain school district personnel; requiring certain review and testing of employees of schools in performance grade categories "D" and "F;" amending s. 231.29 F.S.
2000	HB 63, 77 and 891, 995, 2009, and 2135	Educators Developing Unequaled Competence Act: "Teaching Excellence 2000" or EDUCATE 2000, which provides for revising the date by which the salary schedule adopted by the district school board must include performance-based pay; clarifying requirements for performance-based pay policies.
2001	HB 1193	Requiring a school board to recognize and accept equivalence of years of satisfactory performance outside the district for purposes of pay.

Table 1 (cont.)

Year	Bill Designation	Title/Topic
2002	HB 807	Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program s. 1010.72; incentives for National Boards.
2005	SB 388 (S 40-0/ H 112-0)	Repealed sections of statute related to the BEST career ladder and its relationship to performance pay.
2006	HB 7087 (S 39-1/H 90-24)	A++ Plan requires school districts beginning 2007-8 school year to adopt a salary schedule that includes a negotiated differentiated pay policy consistent with s. 1012.22 (The Florida House of Representatives, 2016a).
	HB 5003	STAR (Special Teachers Are Rewarded) – Required differentiated pay as successor to DOE’s E-Comp performance pay plan (The Florida House of Representatives, 2016a).
2007	SB 1226 (S 39-0/H 110-4)	Establishes Merit Award Program (MAP) and amends STAR program.
2007	SB 2092 (S 39-0/H 118-4)	Amending s. 1012.225, relating to Merit Award Program - MAP plans; revising eligibility requirements for receipt of a merit-based pay supplement; providing for retroactive application; providing an effective date.
2010	SB 6 (S 21-17/H 64-55)	Providing legislative findings and intent; creating Performance Fund for Instructional Personnel; requiring each school district to submit its district adopted salary schedule and assessment plan.
2011	SB 736 (S 26-12/116-2)	Student Success Act First comprehensive restructuring of the entire salary schedule requirements. All previous efforts had been aimed at incentivizing improved performance. This bill begins the process of establishing the so called VAM (Value Added Model) score for teachers. (This bill passed with overwhelming support in both houses suggesting strong bipartisan backing.)
2015	HB 587	Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program provides a bonus for teachers who can demonstrate that they achieved among the top 20% of students taking the ACT or SAT college entrance exams.
	HB 7069	Amending evaluation procedures under s.1012.34.

A Review of Teacher Accountability Legislation

Table 1 highlights teacher accountability legislation, along with a brief description of each bill’s content. The review begins with The Florida Master Teacher Program of 1984 (Florida Department of State, 1984), which focused on recognizing superior ability and retaining good teachers through economic incentives. The Master

Teacher Program was an effort to focus on teaching experience as a valuable component of teacher quality. Participation in the program required that a teacher have earned an advanced degree (Master's degree) and a superior score on the State's certification subject area exam. Under the program, performance evaluations were to be conducted by an individual school's principal who was to be especially trained and who was given discretion in the conduct of the evaluation. Participation in The Master Teacher Program was contingent upon continued performance and was renewable every three years.

In what can be characterized as an all-out political brawl, the Legislature in 1985 all but defunded the efforts of then Governor Bob Graham to implement Florida's Teacher Merit Pay Program. The budget bill, Senate Bill 1300, was the final issue to be addressed by the 1985 session. In the course of the debate on the Senate floor, Senator Curtis Peterson, Democrat Senator from Lakeland, Florida and recognized education reformer, called the merit pay program "fatally flawed" (Hirth & Kleindienst, 1985).

Instead of fully funding the State's merit pay program, the Senate chose instead to provide all public school teachers with a 6.5% raise. The Senate proposed that \$15 million of the previously allotted \$20 million for the merit pay program be otherwise redirected for this purpose. During the debate, Senator Peterson called attention to the fact that even Florida's teacher of the year was not qualifying for the merit pay program (Hirth & Kleindienst, 1985).

In 1997 was the first mention of student performance data as a component of teacher evaluations in HB 703, The Florida School Recognition Program. This bill emphasized financially incentivizing improvement. The Legislature sought to accomplish "compensation based on performance" (The Florida House of Representatives, 1997, p.

2) as defined under s. 231.29 F.S., which included performance of duties as well as years of teaching experience in the evaluation of teachers. The legislative intent was expressed as the use of performance incentives such as those used in the private sector to reward productivity. The bill provided financial rewards for what it called high performance (including student achievement data), “effort and innovation in teaching and learning” (The Florida House of Representatives, 1997, p. 4), and other objective criteria. Other indicators of good performance were classroom management, instructional ability and innovation, and communication with parents.

As the education reform movement gained speed in Florida, the Legislature, shortly before the implementation of the FCAT program begins in 1998, passed House Bill 389 as the Excellent Teaching Program, which required the adoption of salary schedules based upon the performance of instructional personnel. As a continued legislative effort to incentivize excellence in teaching, the bill provided teachers with inducements to achieve National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification. This was recognition of NBPTS certification as a measure of excellence in teaching. The program also provided financial rewards for mentors who shared their expertise with new teachers.

An effort to amend s. 231.29 F.S., the aptly named A+ Plan, required personnel performance assessments. These assessments were based primarily upon student performance and revised the assessment procedure for certain school district personnel. At this time, while professional practices may be included in teacher assessments, they are only secondary to student FCAT performance.

The analysis of the data at this point revealed a symbiotic relationship between three particular codes. Specifically, when the code *Reward* (which was used to identify when a bill seeks to reward quality teacher performance) is present in a bill along with the code *Qual* (which was used to indicate where student performance was used to define the highest standard of teacher quality), then inevitably a third code also was found. That was the code designated as *Pay 4 Test*, which was the code that was used for any references within a bill that required school districts to establish a salary structure pursuant to student achievement data. When both *Qual + Reward* are present, *Pay 4 Test* consistently appears.

EDUCATE 2000 (The Florida House of Representatives, 2000) is a stroke of creative packaging. An acronym for Educators Developing Unequaled Competence Act, it provides for revising the date by which the salary schedule, which must include performance-based pay and clarifying requirements for performance-based pay policies, is to be adopted by the district school board. What are most compelling about this bill are the legislative findings included within the bill. Section 7 amends s. 231.002 F.S. and includes the following language that defines from A through P what the Legislature believes educators are or should be able to do:

The Legislature intends to implement a comprehensive approach to increase students' academic achievement and improve teaching quality...The Legislature further finds that effective educators are able to do the following:

- a. Write and speak in a logical and understandable style using appropriate grammar and sentence structure and demonstrate a command of standard English, enunciation, clarity of oral directions, and pace and precision in speaking.

- b. Read, comprehend, and interpret professional and other written material.
- c. Compute, think logically, and solve problems.
- d. Recognize signs of students' difficulty with the reading and computational process and apply appropriate measures to improve performance.
- e. Recognize patterns of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development in students.
- f. Recognize and demonstrate awareness of the education needs of limited English proficient students and employ appropriate strategies.
- g. Use and integrate technology in the classroom.
- h. Use assessment and other diagnostic strategies to assist in the continuous development and acquisition of knowledge of the learner.
- i. Use teaching and learning strategies that include consideration of each student's learning styles, needs, and background.
- j. Demonstrate the ability to maintain a positive collaborative relationship with the student's families.
- k. Recognize the signs of a tendency to violence and apply techniques of intervention.
- l. Recognize the signs of alcohol and drug abuse in students and know how to assist and work with such students.
- m. Recognize the signs of child abuse and know rights and responsibilities of reporting.
- n. Demonstrate the ability to maintain a positive environment in the classroom.
- o. Demonstrate the ability to use grades effectively.

p. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the value of and strategies for promoting parental involvement. (The Florida House of Representatives, 2000)

One can conclude from the list of items which the legislature enumerated as the within the purview of teaching, that traditional tasks of teaching have expanded far beyond the traditional scope of classroom teaching. The legislation does not provide for additional training for these tasks. Furthermore, while expanding the responsibilities included in the job description for teachers, there is no additional remuneration.

In 2001, HB 1193 required a school board to recognize and accept years of teaching experience and satisfactory performance outside of the district as equal to years of experience within the district for purposes of pay (The Florida House of Representatives, 2001). This bill also provided rewards to IB teachers when students perform at the 4+ out of 5 point assessment level. This is a case in which the value of teachers is reflected in the value placed on years of practice and experience. Moving forward however, years of teaching will cease to be considered and teacher experience becomes a secondary consideration in creating pay schedules.

The Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program created under s. 1010.72 F.S. provided incentives for teachers to pursue NBPTS certification (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002). The bill continued subsidies to teachers for participation in NBPTS certification and allowed for a 10% bonus each year for teachers who are NBPTS certified. This bill also provided for the piloting of a teacher mentoring program. In the portion of the bill explaining intent, the Legislature specified that

The Legislature recognizes that teachers play a critical role in preparing students to achieve the high levels of academic performance expected by the Sunshine State Standards. The Legislature further recognizes the importance of identifying and rewarding teaching excellence and of encouraging good teachers to become excellent teachers. The Legislature finds that the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has established high and rigorous standards for accomplished teaching and has developed a national voluntary system for assessing and certifying teachers who demonstrate teaching excellence by meeting those standards. It is therefore the Legislature's intent to provide incentives for teachers to seek NBPTS certification and to reward teachers who demonstrate teaching excellence by attaining NBPTS certification and sharing their expertise with other teachers. (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002)

In 2005, the Legislature passed SB 388 (The Florida Senate, 2005). This bill had the effect of repealing sections of Florida State statutes related to the BEST career ladder and its relationship to performance pay for teachers. The Legislature was unwilling to appropriate funding for teacher performance pay as had been enacted in the BEST program. The Department of Education performance pay plan, known as "E-Comp," was instituted by administrative rule and effective from March 2006 until April 2006.

The year 2006 also saw the passing of the Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR) program as a successor to the Department of Education's E-Comp performance pay plan. This performance pay plan was open to all instructional personnel and awards were afforded to the top 25% of teachers as determined by student performance on standardized tests. Each school district was to develop its own performance evaluation

standards in accordance with Florida Department of Education guidelines. However, 50% of teacher evaluations were to be based upon student learning gains and up to 50% based upon principal evaluations.

Senate Bill 1226 in 2007 established yet another program, the Merit Award Program (MAP) and amended the STAR program. The net effect was to “provide for the annual disbursement of merit-based pay supplements to high-performing employees at least 5 percent of the average teacher’s salary for that school district not to exceed 10 percent of the average teacher’s salary for that school district” (The Florida House of Representatives, 2007, p. 3).

As much as 60% the school district’s assessment of instructional personnel must consider the performance of students assigned to his or her classroom. SB 2092, also passed in the 2007 legislative session, provided for teachers to apply retroactively for the MAP program. The percentage of a teachers’ evaluation relying upon student learning gains reaches its peak in this bill. Moving forward the reliance on student achievement begins to decrease.

The Performance Fund for Instructional Personnel was proposed in SB 6 in 2010 (The Florida Senate, 2010). Aside from the Performance Fund for Instructional Personnel, the bill required each school district to submit its district adopted salary schedule and assessment plan. This highly controversial legislation was vehemently opposed by teachers unions and eventually vetoed by the governor.

The Legislature placed the performance of students as the highest standard of teacher quality. The bill expressly excluded experience, expressed as years of work, and expertise in subject area, expressed as degrees held. The bill provided for the removal of

poor performing teachers. It required each school district to adopt salary schedules and assessments (appraisals).

The bill's legislative intent as expressed by the legislature was a desire "to reward school districts that demonstrate ability to maintain or improve their high-performance status" (The Florida Senate, 2010, p. 13). Salary adjustments for instructional personnel are based upon student performance and student performance data accounts for 50% of appraisal. Although evaluations may consider factors such as advanced degrees, classroom management skills, instructional design ability, collaborative relationships, and parent-teacher relationships, a mandatory 50% of appraisal must rely on student learning gains. Although appraisals may consider other factors such as advanced degrees, classroom management skills, instructional design ability, collaborative relationships, and parent-teacher relationships, a mandatory 50% of appraisal must rely on learning gains.

The Student Success Act of 2011 (SB 736) was the first comprehensive restructuring of the entire salary schedule requirements attempted by the Florida Legislature (The Florida Senate, 2011). While previous efforts had been directed towards incentivizing improved performance, this effort was designed to mandate salary structures that replaced the intuitive components of instructional practice with quantitative measures of student performance. This bill passed with overwhelming support in both houses, thus suggesting there was a strong bipartisan backing.

This bill, signed into law, currently governs teacher evaluation practices in the State of Florida. Perhaps the most significant outcome of this legislation is the so called "Value Added Model" for teacher efficacy. The Legislature directed the Commissioner of Education to "approve a formula to measure individual student learning growth on the

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)” (The Florida Senate, 2011, p. 8). The legislative intent includes language stating that the Legislature believes that these requirements will lead to “increasing student learning growth and effective instruction” (The Florida Senate, 2011, p. 2).

Although technically not teacher accountability legislation, Florida’s Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program is an effort to provide financial rewards to teachers who demonstrate personal academic excellence. The bill is an example of the legislature’s acknowledgement of the problem of teacher retention. Florida’s Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program has the effect of providing bonuses to those entering the profession who are at the top of academic standings in secondary school. Although technically it is available to all teachers regardless of years of service, those who will most benefit affected are entry level teachers who may be persuaded to continue in the teaching profession as a result. The Legislature in its findings recognizes that

second only to parents, teachers play the most critical role within schools in preparing students to achieving a high level of academic performance. The Legislature further recognizes that research has linked student outcomes to a teacher’s own academic achievement. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to designate teachers who have achieved high academic standards during their own education as Florida’s best and brightest teacher scholars. (The Florida House of Representatives, 2015a)

As a curious choice of measures for academic excellence, the Legislature chose college entrance exams; that is, Florida teachers who had scored in the 80th percentile on either the SAT or ACT college entrance exams, based upon the percentile rankings

effective the year in which they were taken and the teacher's evaluation designation of highly qualified. It is notable that no incentives were included for teachers who had sought out advanced degrees in education. If a teacher's academic achievement is prized as an indicator of successful student outcomes, the question to ask is why doesn't the legislature reward teachers with advanced degrees in education?

The scholarship award amounts to \$10,000 for those who can document their performance. However, if the number of qualified applicants exceeds the funding established, then the amount of the award may be prorated. As of the 2016 Legislative session, the funding had been extended to an additional year to FY 2017.

Finally, also in 2015, HB 7069 repeals 1012.3401 F.S., which was the mandate that required that student achievement comprise 50% of teacher evaluation instruments (The Florida House of Representatives, 2015b). It decreases the reliance on the student achievement component of teacher evaluations to its lowest percentage to date. According to the Legislature, "at least one-third of a performance evaluation must be based upon data and indicators of student performance" (The Florida House of Representatives, 2015b, p. 53). Current assessment models of teacher evaluations incorporate student performance at this level.

Teacher Accountability Legislation Emerging Themes

In an effort to observe and identify emerging themes, the data were analyzed using both content analysis and thematic analysis as suggested by Bowen (2009), who described a methodology that combined elements of both. The process consisted of "organizing information into categories related to the central questions of the research" (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). The process involved "a form of pattern recognition within the data

with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis” (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). The procedure then continued inductively as themes and patterns emerged from the data itself.

Using the data to create a matrix that sorts the data case by case and code by code, it then became possible to view the data from a comparative perspective. This was in accordance with Miles and Huberman (1994), who suggested the creation of a “case by case” matrix in order to proceed with the process of clustering. “Listing cases as rows and attributes as columns allow one to see the big picture. By inspecting the columns, it is possible to identify attributes which are critical in differentiating cases. Then ‘families’ of cases can be formed by rearranging the rows of the matrix” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 250).

The matrix created for the purposes of this study used the bills as cases and the codes as attributes. It was important to maintain the sequence of the cases, since time was a criterion for this study. So in this instance, rather than rearranging rows, columns were shifted around. By doing so a clearer picture began to emerge between the codes as they began to “relate” to one another. It also became easier to see the direction of policy over the course of the time covered by this study. Table 2 is the case-by-case matrix created from the data set for this study.

Table 2

Case-by-Case Code Matrix

BILL#	REWARD	⇒ QUAL	PAY 4 TESTS	EVAL	EXP +	DEG +	EXP -	DEG -	ECON	FCAT
84-336	x			x	x	x				
97-703	x									
98-3389	x				x	x			x	
99-751	x	x	x							x
2000-63										
2001-1193	x	x	x	x						
2002-387	x			x		x			x	
2005-388	x									
2006-7087	x			x					x	
2006-5003	x		x		x					
2007-1226	x	x	x	x			x			x
2010-6	x	x		x			x	x	x	x
2011-736	x	x	x	x				x		x
2015-587						x				
2015-7069	x	x	x	x						

Rewards

In the late 1980s and through the 1990s, legislative language promoted financial rewards for those teachers who pursued further education as a means to professional development. 1997-HB 703 cited a “need for a performance incentive program for outstanding faculty,” and for encouraging good teachers to become excellent teachers (The Florida House of Representatives, 1997, p. 4). It is apparent that excellence in

teaching was equated with continued education and training. This is especially true where NBPTS is mentioned.

1998 - HB 3389 provides for “incentives for teachers to seek NBPTS certification” and “identifying and rewarding teaching excellence” (The Florida House of Representatives, 1998, p. 2). The close connection made between teaching excellence and the pursuit of what, at the time, was considered the gold standard of instructional certification, the NBPTS, leads to the inevitable conclusion by the Legislature that professional development is the key to student achievement. 2002 – HB 807 goes even further by awarding teachers who apply for and attain NBPTS certification a fee subsidy as a one-time bonus award bonus of 10% (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002, p. 778). The tone taken by the Legislature in the legislative language during this time is one that inspires confidence in the professional skills developed by teachers who endeavor to hone their skills.

However, a change occurs in the nature of the how rewards are to be meted out in 1999 – HB 751, 753, 755: outstanding performance would earn a teacher 5% additional salary (The Florida House of Representatives, 1999). While professional practices may be included in teacher assessments, such assessments would primarily rely on student performance. The recurring theme was that rewards were forthcoming for excellence in teaching. Excellence in teaching was to be determined by student performance.

Programs such as the STAR Teacher program in 2006 and the Merit Award Program (MAP) in 2007 provided for financial rewards for teacher merit. The “annual disbursement of merit-based pay supplements to high performing employees” (The

Florida House of Representatives, 2007, p. 3). These programs were designed to provide incentives to educators as rewards for the performance of their students.

Although it can be said that the code *Rewards* (used to identify when the bill seeks to reward quality performance by teachers) appears consistently in all samples from beginning to end, it seems as though there is a precipitous drop off in the 2010, 2011, and 2015 bills where there is no mention of *Reward* in either of these samples. There are simple process explanations. The bills that were presented in 2010 and 2011 were specifically designed to deal with the design and form of teacher evaluations and neither dealt with incentivizing excellence in teacher performance. There was, therefore, no language within the bill that could be coded for *Reward* as defined previously.

Legislation titled Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program in 2015 is a somewhat unique case. This piece of legislation was a case in which the Legislature sought to provide a financial reward to teachers for demonstrating personal and individual **academic** excellence. Therefore, while there was mention of rewards within the bill, the stated purpose of the rewards did not fit the *Reward* code as defined in this study in that the bill did not intend to incentivize good performance but rather to reward personal academic achievement.

Teacher Evaluation as Accountability

From the earliest samples, 84 – 336 (Florida Department of State, 1984), 1999 – HB 751, 753, 755, 2000 – HB 63, and 2001 – HB 1193 (The Florida House of Representatives, 1999, 2000, 2001), reference to teacher performance evaluations make no mention of student performance as criteria for teacher accountability. However, the Legislature is clear about its rationale for incentivizing performance-based compensation

programs. As early as 1997, in its legislative findings for 1997 – HB 703, the Legislature sets out the following: “that performance-based incentives are commonplace in the private sector and should be infused into the public sector as rewards for productivity” (The Florida House of Representatives, 1997, p. 4). Such use of economic language, which is present in the initial samples, is what is often referred to as the production model of education.

Things began to change and teacher evaluation requirements began to focus on the performance of students on standardized tests. As is specified in 2002 HB 807, teaching performance is to be demonstrated pursuant to F.S. §1012.34 (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002). This section provides that the assessment criteria must include indicators that relate to the following:

1. Performance of students as specified in F.S. §1008.22 (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002).
2. Ability to maintain appropriate discipline.
3. Knowledge of subject matter. The district school board shall make special provisions for evaluating teachers who are assigned to teach out-of-field.
4. Ability to plan and deliver instruction, including the use of technology in the classroom.
5. Ability to evaluate instructional needs.
6. Ability to establish and maintain a positive collaborative relationship with students’ families to increase student achievement.

7. Other professional competencies, responsibilities, and requirements as established by rules of the State Board of Education and policies of the district school board. (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002)

Florida Statutes §1008.22 (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002) specifies that the performance of students on the state's assessment program is the means of determining student learning gains. Thus, student performance is considered in conjunction with other instructional functions. Interestingly enough, "peer reviews in evaluating the employee's performance" also was considered permissible in order to be in compliance with this statute. At this point, a balanced approach that considered multiple aspects of a teachers' professional practice became an integral part of teacher accountability legislation.

Creation of Florida Statutes §1012.255 in 2007, the Merit Award Program (MAP), provided merit-based pay supplements to instructional personnel (The Florida House of Representatives, 2007). Student performance evaluations would form the basis for assessing teacher merit. Student performance as measured by statewide testing instruments, based upon the Sunshine State Standards, would account for at least 60% of a teacher's evaluation. This is the high point for fixing the margin of student performance as a percentage of teacher performance evaluations.

The subsequent samples that had as their central purpose teacher assessment, evaluation, or appraisal continued to target the manner and form for those assessments. In 2010 – SB 6 the mandate was for the assessment procedure for instructional personnel to be based primarily on the performance of students assigned to their classrooms or schools (The Florida Senate, 2010). This bill decreased the reliance on student performance data

to 50% of the teacher evaluation, although subsequent to the 2015 school year, that percentage could then exceed 50%.

This piece of legislation accounts for a provision that led to the Value Added Model scores (VAM), which currently are being used as a measure of attributing student learning growth to teacher inputs. As per this statute, the Commissioner of Education was required by the Legislature to approve a formula to measure individual student growth on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) administered under s.1008.22 (3) (c). The purpose of this formula is to track student progress as an accountability measure for teachers.

It is important to note that the code for *Eval* (which was used to mark references to teacher assessments or evaluations within a piece of legislation) was found consistently when the code for *Reward* also was present. The Legislature was making it very clear. The way to reward and to provide recognition to the profession was inextricably tied to performance evaluations, which relied overwhelmingly on student achievement as measured by standardized tests. Student achievement, as the Legislature sees it, is the responsibility of teachers.

Pay for Tests as an Emerging Trend

As explained previously, three codes seem to combine into a single category beginning in 1999 through 2011. That grouping is the combination of *Qual + Rewards = Pay for Tests*. Additionally, the code for *Qual* is almost always present where the code for *FCAT* (used when there is a reference to student performance being defined by standardized test scores) is also present. The code for *Qual* refers to the coupling of student performance measures with teacher quality. The *Qual* code was used where the

legislature implied that the best measure of teacher quality was student performance. The presence of these codes together suggests an underlying assumption made by the Legislature regarding teacher quality and student achievement.

The Legislature specifies that student performance is to be measured by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and its successor the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). The *FCAT* code was applied to passages in a bill that defined standardized testing as the means by which student performance would be assessed for the purposes of teacher evaluations. Florida Statutes § 1012.34 pertains to evaluating teachers based upon students' scores on high stakes tests, the latest iteration of which is the FSA. As per 2011 – SB 736, the goal of the legislatively mandated teacher evaluation systems is “increasing learning growth by improving the quality of instructional personnel” (The Florida Senate, 2011, pp. 3-4).

In samples from 2001, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2010, and 2015, the codes for *Reward* and *Eval* (as defined previously) were found together in each of the bills. These are the only instances where this occurred. Sometimes, rewards took the form of bonuses for teaching specialized courses. Sometimes they were a means of rewarding teacher excellence as in 2002 HB 807 (The Florida House of Representatives, 2002). In still other occurrences they were meant to incentivize high performing teachers into mentoring new teachers. These incentives were offered hand-in-hand with legislative requirements for performance-based assessments and evaluations

Experience and Education as Indicators of Professionalism

During the period beginning in the 80s and up until the late 90s, years of experience and degrees earned were positively credited to a teacher's skills and

knowledge. The codes designated as *Exp+* and *Deg+*, which are defined to denote that experience is a positively constructed value, are not present after 2002. From 2007 to present, years of teaching experience and degrees earned are not considered as an advantage to teachers and therefore were coded as *Exp-* and *Deg-*.

There is a marked transition from the early samples in which teacher experience and expertise are highly valued as marks of a master teacher, and in the later samples. In later samples, teacher experience and expertise are not to be considered in the course of teacher performance evaluations at all. The more significant measure of teacher expertise and efficacy is considered to be student performance on standardized tests (e.g., FCAT) rather than any other measure or qualification.

In 2011, the Student Success Act expressly excludes advanced degrees as a consideration in setting salary schedules. Although supplements for advanced education may be granted under some circumstances, they may not be a consideration when creating a salary structure *per se*. Instead this Legislation introduced the VAM for assessing teacher efficacy. This marked a turning point in the data as the first restructuring of salary schedule requirements putting emphasis on student performance and devaluing experience and education as measures of teacher quality.

Schneider and Ingram's Typology: How the Subject Legislation Reflects the Social Construction of the Teaching Profession by the Florida Legislature

The definition of social construction of target populations, as applied by Schneider and Ingram (1993) in their seminal work, refers to the cultural characterizations of popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy. These

characterizations are normative and evaluative, portraying groups in positive or negative terms through symbolic language, metaphors and stories (Edelman 1964, 1988). (p. 334)

More to the point, the study of social construction of target populations such as the legislative branch helps to explain legislative behavior and further informs questions of policy design, advocacy, and the place of certain issues on the policy agenda.

When Schneider and Ingram (1993) introduced their typology, they cautioned that as of yet there had been

no research on the social constructions of target populations from the perspective of elected officials; thus there is no way to speculate on how [the figure] actually should be drawn and how much agreement there would be about the placement of various groups. (p. 336)

They posited that there exists

Strong pressures for public officials to provide beneficial policy to powerful, positively constructed target populations and to devise punitive, punishment-oriented policy for negatively constructed groups. Social constructions become embedded in policy as messages that are absorbed by citizens and affect their orientations and participation patterns. (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p. 334)

This study's qualitative analysis of the data concerning legislation regarding teacher accountability from 1984 to 2015 revealed the legislative perspective that was missing by bringing to light the social construction of the target population of teachers among legislators through their own legislative language.

An analysis of the data so as to determine how teachers are positioned in the Schneider and Ingram (1993) typology required a determination of how teachers are oriented on the axis of power and on the axis of social construction. Each of these questions further required that both power and social construction be operationally defined as per Schneider and Ingram's conceptualization. A second look at the data from this perspective brought forth the point of convergence between power and social construction.

Table 3 illustrates a chronological categorization of common phrases from all codes into two groups: those that are generally positive and those that are generally negative, with the year of the legislation annotated in parentheses. Those that were included in the positive column are those that in some way recognized or rewarded the skills, expertise, professional and academic credentials, standing, and the desire to retain within the profession high quality teachers. In contrast, the negative column includes phrases from all code groups that show a disregard for the academic achievement of teachers; their experience in their discipline; expertise as practitioners; and, finally, any efforts to define teacher quality by the single measure of student performance.

Table 3

Categorization of Common Phrases from All Codes in Chronological Order

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (84) recognize superior quality • (84) defining “Master Teacher” by experience • (97) outstanding faculty/ reward productivity • (97) performance defined as teaching experience • (98) encourage good teachers/become excellent teachers/monetary incentives • (99/00) incentives to seek NBPTS • (00) demonstrated mastery • (01) demonstrate excellence • (02) incentives for mentoring/teacher retention • (07) equal distribution of experienced teachers • (15) decreases reliance on student achievement data from 50% to 33% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (00) annual assessment of student learning gains • (00) teacher assessments must consider student performance • (10) assessment procedures for instructional personnel must be “primarily” based on the performance of students • (07/10) merit award “may not be based on length of service” • (10) advanced degrees may not be used in setting salary schedules • (11) degrees held are not to be considered when rewarding teacher quality • (11) formula to be created to measure individual student learning growth (VAM scores) as a teacher evaluation measure • (15) bonus for teachers who can demonstrate scores in the top 20% of ACT/SAT (college entrance exams) in their year

Teachers were conceptually placed in the figure to reflect what the previous analysis indicates is their social construction vis-à-vis Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology. Teachers were placed in a quadrant that reflected that they are negatively constructed and on the strong power axis that identified them as contenders. While contenders enjoy access to substantial political resources, their negative social construction is problematic since it places them in an undeserving quadrant. Their status

limits them and makes it difficult for policymakers to openly favor policy designs that benefit them. This placement relies on an assessment of the results found in the table.

Like the groups designated by Schneider and Ingram's (1993) typology, namely the rich, big unions, gun owners, and the radical right, which are located within the contenders range with regard to power (specifically political power), teachers are seasoned and well-organized self-advocates through their union activities and likewise situated with regard to power (Coulson, 2010). However, they do not seem to be able to successfully marshal their resources to effectively defend their status among Florida State Legislators. Although teachers are actively involved in lobbying efforts thereby wielding political power, they are ineffectual in accomplishing a change regarding how they are perceived by the Legislature, to effectuate a beneficial change regarding their social construction among Florida State Legislators.

By comparison, the profession of scientist, as classified by Schneider and Ingram (1993), is positively constructed with high (political) power. Teachers, on the other hand, according to the Legislature, are those who must be held accountable from outside of their profession. To be specific, the language is, in effect, that of accountability and not of regulation or licensing. By contrast, Chapter 458 of the Florida Statutes **regulates** the practice of the medical profession. Of course, this implies that teachers are neither competent nor reliable. It is therefore an indicator of a negative social construction on Schneider and Ingram's typology.

What is evident is that in the case of teachers, lay persons (i.e., legislators) are defining what skills are needed by educators in order to be considered excellent practitioners. This is borne out, for example, in 1999 – HB 751, 753, 755, which allows

teachers with outstanding performance to earn teachers a bonus (The Florida House of Representatives, 1999). This bonus is awarded for professional practice that demonstrates excellence in teaching. The classroom teacher's excellence in teaching is defined by their students' performance on standardized tests. As discussed previously, this is an illogical application of the data that promulgates a negative construction of teaching.

Legislators communicate in their legislative findings as found in 1997 – HB 703, that “performance-based incentives are commonplace in the private sector and should be infused into the public sector as rewards for productivity” (The Florida House of Representatives, 1997, p. 4). For all practical purposes, this is a means of equating the process of education to the process of manufacturing. Unfortunately, the “workers” (that is, teachers) have limited control over the “product” (that is, student achievement) although they are held accountable for its outcome. This is a perception that, according to Gavin (2013), ignores the fact that educational inputs include those of administrators, principals, and the system at large (p.72). Legislative findings that reveal legislative perceptions such as these ultimately lead to a negative construction of teachers.

Samples after 2007 (refer to Figure 3) suggest a devaluing of experience and education as measures of excellence with regards to teachers' professional practice. It is counterintuitive to what one would expect would be desirable for professionals in the academic arena. But legislators dismiss advanced degrees and certifications as marginal when evaluating teachers, considering them as secondary to student performance measures, which has the effect of deprofessionalizing the profession. Deprofessionalization of the teaching profession is yet another indication of a negative construction of teachers.

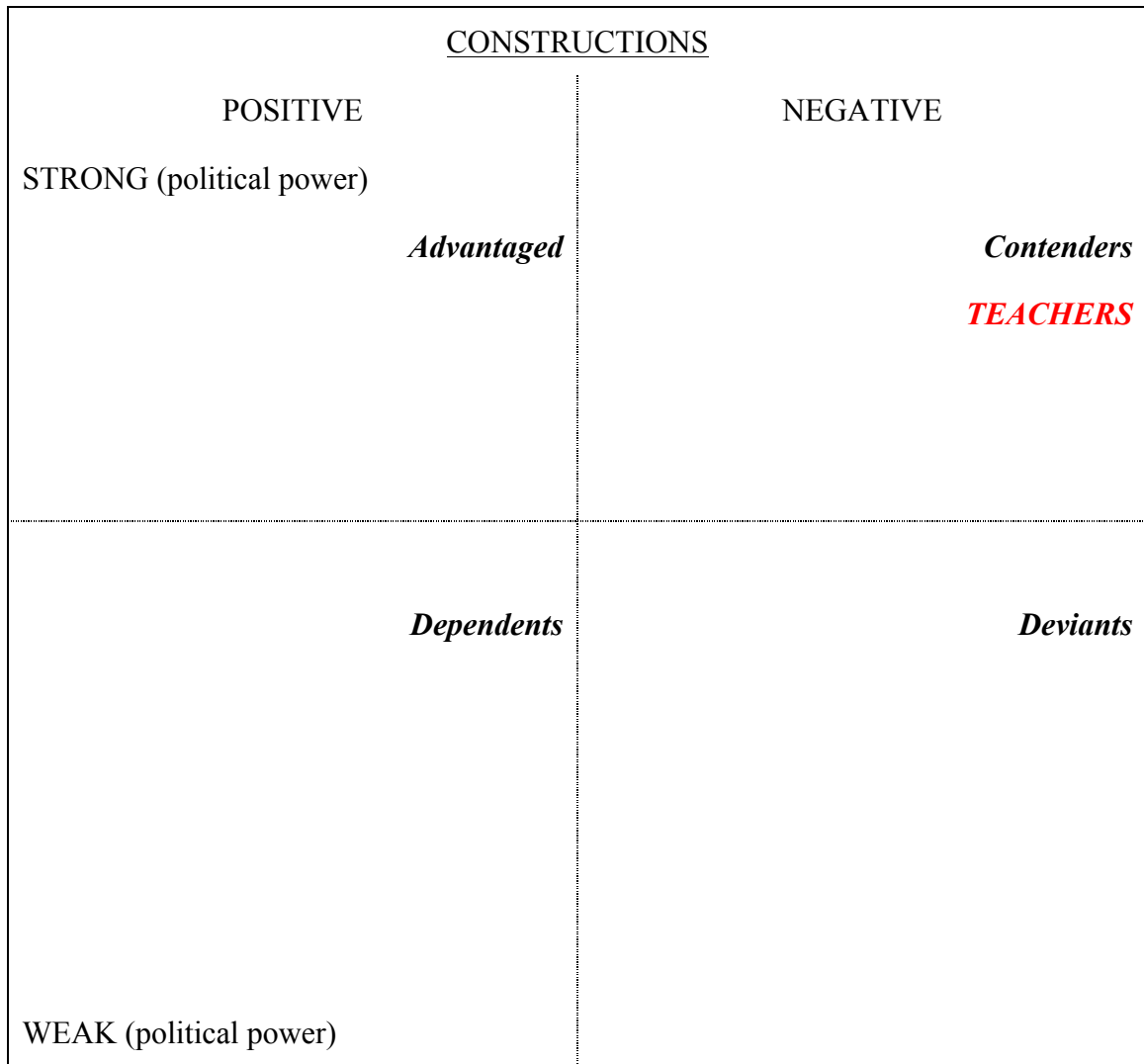


Figure 3. Placement of teachers within Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology of social construction. Adapted from “Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy,” by A. Schneider and H. Ingram, 1993, *American Political Science Review*, 87, p. 336.

Indicators such as these provide support for the finding that teachers as a group appear to be negatively constructed, all the while standing on the higher range of the power axis. Figure 3 depicts Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology of social construction with the added positioning of the group TEACHERS as determined by this study. Teachers are presented in the quadrant labeled contenders. Contenders are

characterized as possessing high power (specifically political power) but experiencing a negative social construction.

Changes in the Social Construction of the Teaching Profession by the Florida Legislature during the Period 1984 to 2015

One of the tools of historical analysis is that of the consideration of “change over time” (Andrews & Burke, 2007). Very simply, it is the comparison of both the short-term and long-term consequences of change in a particular phenomenon. In this case, it was the examination of the relevant legislation and how the concept of social construction has changed over the period designated. Since the study has concluded via Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) typology of social construction that the social construction of the teaching profession by the Florida Legislature is one that is negative but politically powerful, then the question that remained is whether this has been constant during the period studied, or whether there has been any change during the period studied. A review of both legislative findings and of a categorization of the codes generated during this study revealed the answer.

Legislative findings are embedded within a bill and are announced by the words “the Legislature finds...” while legislative intent is likewise heralded as “it is the intent of the Legislature....” Although all bills do not contain these features, where they are found, they provide some very significant insights into objectives and legislative purposes. An examination of some of these legislative pronouncements sheds some light on the framing of the social construction of teachers among Florida legislators and its movement in the course of the past 21 years.

The earliest sample providing legislative intent is 1997 – HB 703 (The Florida House of Representatives, 1997). In this instance the bill is infused with high levels of economic language. References to productivity, private vs. public sector, and rewards for productivity are prominent. The emphasis is noticeably expressed as economic success. Teaching and learning is viewed as a series of inputs and outputs whose productivity can be affected by a system of economic rewards for “high performance and innovation” (The Florida House of Representatives, 1997, p. 4)

In 1998, HB 3389 begins with “the Legislature finds that teachers play a critical role in preparing students to achieve high levels of academic performance...recognizes the importance of identifying and rewarding teaching excellence” (The Florida House of Representatives, 1998, p. 2). Findings continue as the Legislature specifies as its intent the need to “provide incentives for teachers who seek National Board for Professional Teaching Standards” (The Florida House of Representatives, 1998, p. 3). It is clearly understood from this language that the Legislature considered teacher excellence as an extension of advanced professional education and that it was disposed to assist teachers in attaining high levels of professional achievement.

Further on in 2000, however, legislative findings reveal some glaring misconceptions regarding the Legislators’ understanding of what qualifies as teaching/instructional competencies. A particularly glaring example of this is found in 2000 – HB 63, where the Legislative findings included a list of what the Legislature considered that “effective educators are able to do” (The Florida House of Representatives, 2000, p. 2).

In what one can only assume is a list that is not ordered by significance of tasks and abilities or by their relationship to instructional activity, the Legislature names everything from oral and verbal ability, reading ability, ability to comprehend, ability to compute and logically problem solve, and the ability to recognize student deficiencies in any of the above to the ability to recognize all types of abuse in a child as well as the rights and responsibilities for reporting same; the ability to competently use technology; and the ability to observe signs or tendencies towards violence, drug, and alcohol abuse. The list read more like a list of duties required rather than the qualifications that are desirable in an effective educator. Finally, the only two items on the list that actually refer to any solid instructional functions are:

1. The use of assessments and diagnostic strategies in developing the understanding of the learner and
2. Incorporating and considering student learning styles, needs, and background in teaching and learning. (The Florida House of Representatives, 2000, p. 30)

Coming full circle, in 2015 – HB 587, the Legislature recognized that “research has linked student outcomes to a teachers’ own academic achievement” (The Florida House of Representatives, 2015a, p. 3). In an effort to maximize the effect and to encourage the retention of high achieving teachers, the Legislature stated that “it is the intent of the Legislature to designate teachers who have achieved high academic standards during their own education” (The Florida House of Representatives, 2015a, p. 4). This bill established the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program, which provides a one-time cash award to teachers whose high school SAT and ACT scores fell within the top 80% of all students during the year it was administered. It

would seem that teacher excellence is once again considered at its best when teachers themselves are the high performing scholars, although the threshold selected is high school performance.

This piece of legislation is highly significant. The language of the legislative findings is telling. The Legislature is now once again willing to recognize that the scholarship and high academic achievement of teachers is to be prized and rewarded. This is a marked change from the position that it took in 2010 – SB 6 when it declared that degrees held were not to be used as a factor in setting salary schedules, thus devaluing teacher scholarship and high academic achievement (The Florida Senate, 2010). This program has been renewed by the Legislature for the 2016-2017 academic year.

A second look at Figure 3, the categorization of common phrases drawn from all codes, is still another way to understand the changes in the social construction of the teaching profession by the Florida Legislature during this period. As discussed previously, included in the positive column are those items that in some way recognized or rewarded the skills, expertise, professional and academic credentials, standing, and the desire to retain within the profession high quality teachers. Those items placed in the negative column include phrases from all code groups that show a disregard for the academic achievement of teachers, their experience in their discipline, expertise as practitioners, and, finally, any efforts to define teacher quality by the single measure of student performance.

Since the items are accompanied by a parenthetical reference to the year in which they appear in legislation, each column is chronological and therefore provides an

historical perspective. A simple visual assessment of the information reveals an obvious change over the period considered by this study. Under the column identified as positive, references appear from 1984 to 2007 at which point they nearly disappear until the single mention of 2015. Conversely, the negative side has few items until 2010. This observation suggests that a change over time was definitely in the direction of a negative construction as defined in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the social construction of teachers among Florida State Legislators and to bring to light the perceptions of teachers and the teaching profession, which, when observed qualitatively, may reveal certain viewpoints that might not otherwise be discernable. As a data sample was compiled and examined, evidence of legislators' biases slowly came into focus. This study exposed the tension that exists between what is anecdotally presented in the public discourse regarding teachers and the teaching profession and what the record of legislation reflects as the reality of the perception of teachers and the teaching profession.

Legislators from both sides of the aisle profess to support teachers. The more activist of them do so by means of providing support to teachers' unions. One would think, therefore, that such backing would translate into legislative behavior. However, when it comes to legislation that affects teachers' professionally, that of accountability, it is interesting to note that such legislation enjoys bi-partisan support and that legislators of diverse political perspectives behave similarly in regards to this particular policy domain.

Conclusions and Implications

The data sample that was developed for the purposes of this study consisted of 17 pieces of legislation passed by both houses of the Florida Legislature, replete with both carrots and sticks as they pertain to teachers. There are bills subsidizing continuing teacher education. There are bills that compensate teachers for years of service and

experience. But most of all, there is a large portion of this sample that demands what is commonly referred to as teacher accountability measures. Teacher accountability measures are policies that legislators believe will serve to quantify the results of teachers' instructional practices.

A chronological review of the bills shows that the earlier bills in the data set are examples of policies that were enacted to encourage teacher excellence by incentivizing expertise. The Legislature enacted programs that subsidized teacher education, promoted advanced certification, and altogether recognized teacher experience and professional education as competency and proficiency. These programs with names such as the Florida Master Teacher Program of 1984 and the Excellent Teaching Program of 1998 focused on the retention of good teachers. In 1997, the Florida School Recognition Program defined performance as teaching experience, innovation, and practice under s. 231.29 F.S.

The bulk of the legislation enacted after the implementation of the FCAT in 1998 was different however. Suddenly, the Legislature's concern was for teacher accountability as measured by student performance on the FCAT. In addition, teacher evaluations in all districts were to be standardized and normed to statewide requirements. Coincidentally, the change occurred at the time that the debate surrounding the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. The subsequent Federal legislation titled No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) put in place the accountability piece to the ESEA and placed demands on states to comply within a given timeframe.

While it is reasonable to expect performance evaluations in most professions, the circumstances regarding the evaluation of professional teachers is marked by their reliance upon evaluative components that are external to the individual being evaluated. Student performance on “high stakes tests” is external to teachers and out of their control. Almost exclusively, the bills that set out the criteria for teacher accountability relied upon the performance of students on so called “high stakes” testing.

Many of the legislative measures relying on high stakes testing as the most important component of teacher evaluations deny teachers the most basic control over their professional practice. The Legislature’s growing reliance upon student performance data increased incrementally. At one point, the reliance on student performance data was as high as 60% of the entirety of a teacher’s evaluation.

During most of the period since 1998, the Legislature continued to vacillate between respectful efforts to retain good teachers and draconian measures to produce accountability. There are, however, signs that these measures are taking a toll on teachers, administrators, and school districts as evidenced by recent legislative actions. During the 2015 session, the Legislature managed to repeal the requirement that student performance in high stakes testing account for 50% of a teacher’s yearly evaluation. At present, there has been a reduction so that 1/3 of teacher performance evaluations are based upon student performance as measured by the FSA.

The effect of the pressures placed upon teachers as a result has been to discourage teachers from remaining in the profession as well as to discourage others from entering the profession altogether. As early as February of 2005, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) published a report requested by the

Florida Legislature. The Legislature sought strategies to address persistent pressures concerning projected future chronic teacher shortages. Along with consideration given to loan forgiveness programs and scholarships, there was a recommendation for addressing questions of teacher retention. “For example, the Department of Education could survey a sample of teachers leaving their positions to obtain more detailed data as to the reason for their departure” (The Florida Legislature, Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability, 2015, p. 8).

It is unclear whether the Legislature carried through with the recommended exit interview surveys proposed. However, the specter of de-professionalizing measures may have an effect on such things as enrollments in state colleges of education and in the recruitment of high achieving students to the profession. Certainly, there seems to be a pipeline that is currently drawing good teachers away from the classroom and into professions in the private sector.

A report by the Learning Policy Institute that examined U.S. Department of Education data regarding projected teacher shortages examined some of the factors that prompted teacher attrition (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). The Learning Policy Institute stated that Florida teachers reported second in the nation in the percentage of teachers who say they worry about job security because of the performance of their students and their schools on local tests. Florida teachers also were ranked at the top in the category of teachers who believed that they had the least amount of autonomy in the classroom.

Florida teachers perceive that they have been rendered powerless over their professional practice. Their professional autonomy has been co-opted by the new

evaluative systems that the Legislature, and by extension the Federal government, has required be put in place to ensure accountability. It is difficult to imagine a positive outcome for the children of the State of Florida when the best, the most experienced, and the brightest are discouraged from pursuing a teaching profession by the acts of the Legislature.

Unfortunately, it is evident that the Legislature has controverted the research linking student achievement with teacher quality to the point that it is now seeking to define teacher quality by the measure of student achievement. While good teaching does in fact have a considerable effect on student learning gains, the converse is not true. It simply does not follow that lack of student learning gains is the result of ineffectual instruction. Instead, what the research actually suggests is that teacher quality is correlated to student achievement. “Many variables go into the making of a school or classroom within a school, and it is hard to imagine that teachers are solely responsible for students’ test scores after controlling for students’ prior achievement” (Goe, 2007, pg. 15).

Recommendations for Further Study

Social construction is, by definition, a highly reactive concept. Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) theory of social construction and policy design relies on a number of assumptions regarding the policy process. These assumptions may be characterized as belonging to three categories. The first set of assumptions relate to the place of the individual in the policy process. The second category refers to the role of power in the process, and the third category and the one pertinent to this study is that of the political environment (Pierce et al., 2014, p. 4).

According to Pierce et al. (2014), in Schneider and Ingram's (1993) theory "policy creates future politics that *feed forward* [emphasis added] to create new policy and politics...policies send messages to citizens that affect their orientations and participation patterns" (Pierce et al., 2014, p. 4). The suggestion is one of a

cyclical dynamic among policy design, target populations, and feed-forward effects. Either policy design is a function of social construction and power creating a proposition of target populations, or social construction and power is a function of policy design creating a proposition of feed-forward impacts. (Pierce et al., 2014, p. 6)

The present study established that the social construction of teachers among Florida Legislators is characterized as negative with a positive power component that designates it as a contender population. Additionally, the chronological categorization of phrases from all codes shows that there has been a change over time that is increasingly negative. Consequently, there is a question regarding what is driving the social construction of teacher.

As a result, the critical questions for further study regards whether the Legislature is reacting directly to the pressure of the Federal government and its mandates or whether it is reacting to the demands of its constituency, the feed-forward proposition. Another examination might question whether the Legislature and Florida state voters are both in effect responding to the national alarm that began with the launch of Sputnik in 1959 and that continues with the collective hand wringing that has most Americans convinced that the United States is on the decline despite abundant evidence to the contrary (Kagan, 2012).

Other considerations concern the issues of the influence of the media on state legislatures and the public. In other words, are state legislators responding to the media frames or are they setting media frames as they are received by the public. It is the age old question of chicken and egg. Which actor is most influential in driving the social construction of teachers.

It would be useful to policy students to establish the social construction of teachers from the perspective of teachers themselves. Are teachers contributing to the negative construction? To what effect is the social construction of teachers, from the perspective of teachers, driving the social construction in the policy arena?

Finally, a better understanding of the theory of social construction from a global perspective would be useful in the comparative study of teachers in the United States and those abroad. Who or what generates that social construction of teachers in other countries is a means of understanding the cultural diversity of the social construction of teacher. The potential understanding would be of use to those who advocate for the profession.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Recruiting Email

Mr. /Ms. _____,

I am a doctoral candidate and researcher at Florida Atlantic University's College of Education. I was referred to you by _____ who suggested that as a result of your experience, you are exceptionally qualified to validate some information which I am using in the course of a research study. I want to reassure you that you will not be quoted or in any manner personally identified in the course of this research project.

I have a list of legislation passed by Florida State Legislators since 1984 regarding teacher performance and accountability. These are measures that tie teacher accountability for student performance to teacher pay. What I am asking of you is that you review this list and give me your assessment regarding its completeness. Should you conclude that there is legislation which has been left out, please feel free to add your comments and suggestions.

Thank you so much for your assistance in this project,

Sincerely,

Janny Crespo
Doctoral Candidate
FAU College of Education
CCEI Department

Appendix B. Document Summary Form

SESSION	STAFF ANALYSIS Y/N	BILL I.D. #	REFERRED TO COMMITTEE(S)	COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTIONS	VOTE HISTORY	BILL HISTORY	STATUTES REFERENCED

Appendix C. Code Texts

reward

“Incentivizing good performance”

This code is to be used to identify when the bill seeks to reward quality performance

84-336 “recognize superior quality;”
“amounts of awards”

1997 – HB 703 “need for a performance incentive program for outstanding faculty;” “reward for productivity;” “financial awards”

1998 – HB 389 “identifying and rewarding teaching excellence;” “encouraging good teachers to become excellent teachers;” “incentives for teachers to seek NBPTS certification;” “program to provide categorical funding for monetary incentives and bonuses”

1999 – HB 751,753,755 “the adopted salary schedule must allow employees who demonstrate outstanding performance to earn 5 percent of their individual salary”

2000 – HB 63... “school board budget must include a reserve to fully fund an additional 5 percent supplement for instructional personnel;” “encourage teachers with demonstrated mastery in improving student performance to remain or transfer to a school designated as performance grade category “D” or “F” or to an alternative school...shall receive a supplement of at least \$1000, not to exceed \$3500;”

reward

“Incentivizing good performance”

This code is to be used to identify when the bill seeks to reward quality performance

2001 – HB 1193 “A bonus in the amount of \$50 for each student taught by the International Baccalaureate teacher...who receives a score of 4 or higher on the international baccalaureate examination”

2002-387/HB 807 “reward teachers who demonstrate teaching excellence by attaining NBPTS certification;” “fee subsidy is a one-time award;” “An annual bonus equal to 10 percent;” “An annual bonus of 10 percent...to provide 12 workdays of mentoring and related services to public school teachers within the state who do not have NBPTS certification;”

2005 – SB 388 authorization for funding for the Excellent Teaching Program Trust Fund

2006 – HB 7087 “school boards are authorized to provide salary incentives to meet the requirements;” “salary schedule for classroom teachers shall be consistent with the district’s differentiated-pay policy”

2006 – HB 5003 “creating the Special Teachers are Rewarded performance pay plan”

2007 – SB 1226 “Merit Award Programs shall provide for the annual disbursement of merit-based pay supplements to high-performing employees;” “a merit-based pay supplement of at least 5 percent of the average teacher’s salary;” “top performing

reward

“Incentivizing good performance”

This code is to be used to identify when the bill seeks to reward quality performance

eligible employees have an opportunity to receive an award”

eval

“Appraisal” → “Assessment” →
“Evaluation”

This code is to be used for all references to teacher or instructional personnel appraisals, assessments, or evaluations.

84 – 336 “document superior performance evaluation;” “may recommend additional evaluation points;” “shall expire if the teacher fails to take or achieve a superior score on the applicable subject area examination;” “document outstanding performance evaluation”

1999 – HB 751,753,755 “faithfully and effectively apply the personnel assessment system approved by the school board pursuant to s. 231.29”

2000 – HB 63... “annual assessment of learning gains” *Legislative Findings define what effective educators are able to do*

2001 – HB 1193 “accept each year of full-time service for which the employee received a satisfactory performance evaluation;”

2002 – 387/HB 807 “demonstrated satisfactory teaching performance pursuant to s. 1012.34” (assessment procedures and criteria);

2006 – HB 7087 *Legislative Findings point to the “disparities between teachers assigned to teach in “A” schools and those assigned to “D” or “F” schools to include disparities in performance in teacher certification tests*

2007 – SB 1226 “The school district’s assessment of an instructional personnel staff member must consider the

eval

“Appraisal” → “Assessment” →
“Evaluation”

This code is to be used for all references to teacher or instructional personnel appraisals, assessments, or evaluations.

performance of students assigned to his or her classroom;” “using assessment criteria adopted by the school district;” “District school boards shall determine appropriate methods to evaluate instructional personnel based on the performance of their students”
2010 – SB 6 “implementation of a performance appraisal system pursuant to s. 1012.34” (which in 2010 required that the assessment procedure for instructional personnel must be primarily based on the performance of students assigned to their classrooms or schools); s. 1012.34 amended to change the word assessment to appraisal;
2011 – SB 736 amends s. 1012.34 as Student Success Act “procedures for approval of evaluation system;” “the district school superintendent shall annually report the evaluation results of instructional personnel;” evaluations to include four levels of performance – highly effective, effective, needs improvement, unsatisfactory;

econ

Use of “market based”
language

This code is to be used
when economic language
is used in discussion of
benefits to the system.

1999 – HB 3389 “legislature’s intent to
provide incentives for teachers to seek
NBPTS certification;” “provides funding for
monetary incentives;” “provide fee
subsidy;”

2002 HB 807 “to provide incentives for
teachers to seek NBPTS certification;” “fee
subsidy to be paid”

2006 – HB 7087 “salary incentives;”
“teacher retention rate;” “differentiated pay
policy;”

exp -/+

Teaching experience

This code is to be used when years of teaching is considered as an advantage in evaluation of teacher performance or discounted in the course of evaluation.

(+) **84-336** “Associate Master Teacher shall document 4 years teaching experience;”

“contingent upon 3 years of successful performance of assigned responsibilities;”

“Master Teacher shall document 7 years of teaching experience;”

(+) **1998 – HB 3389** annual bonus to be awarded to teachers who agree to provide mentoring;

(+) **2006 – HB 7087** “each district school board shall adopt a salary schedule with differentiated pay for instructional personnel;” Legislative findings of the disparity in the average number of years of experience in between teachers assigned to “A” rated schools and “F” rated schools and stating the intent to bring about an equitable assignment of experienced teachers across the districts;

(-) **2007 – SB 1226** “merit award may not be based on length of service;”

(-) **2010 – SB 6** “a district school board may not use length of service as a factor in setting a salary schedule.”

deg -/+

Advanced degree

This code is to be used when advanced degrees are considered as an advantage in evaluation of teacher performance or discounted in the course of evaluation.

(+) **84-336** “Associate Master Teacher shall document completion of a Master’s Degree;”

(+) **1998 – HB 3389** “reward teachers who demonstrate teaching excellence by attaining NBPTS certification;”

(+) **2002 – HB 807** Legislative findings: National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) demonstrates high standards of teacher excellence and the legislature intends to “provide incentives for teachers to seek (NBPTS);”

(-) **2010 – SB 6** Legislative findings: degrees held are not to be considered when rewarding teacher quality; “may not use degrees held as a factor in setting salary schedules;”

(-) **2011 – SB 736** “school board may not use advanced degrees in setting a salary schedule for instructional personnel.”

⇒ **qual**

“Student performance” ⇒ “teacher quality”

This code is to be used where “performance of students” implies the highest standard of teacher quality.

1999 – HB 751,753,755 “salary schedule must base at least 5 % of the salary of instructional personnel on performance measured under 231.29,” “the Commissioner of Education shall withhold disbursements from the trust fund to any school district that fails to adopt the performance-based salary schedule,” “performance *must be measured by state assessments* required under s.229.57,” “assessment procedures for instructional personnel must be primarily based upon the performance of students assigned to their classrooms.”

2000 – HB 63... “beginning with the full implementation of annual assessment of learning gains, district budget must include a 5% supplement for instructional personnel who demonstrate outstanding performance as measured under s. 231.29,” supplement of \$1000 for teachers selected based on performance appraisal and student achievement to teach at “D” or “F” schools, *page 29 231.002 Teacher quality; legislative findings list of what and “effective educator” should be able to do.*

2001 – HB 1193 teacher bonus of \$50/student receiving score of 4 or higher on AP or IB test.

⇒ **qual**

“Student performance” ⇒ “teacher quality”

This code is to be used where “performance of students” implies the highest standard of teacher quality.

2007 – SB 1226 Merit Award Program Plan “provides for an assessment and a merit award based on the performance of students assigned to the employee’s classroom,” “pay performance for high-performing employees,” “evaluate instructional personnel based on the performance of their students. The methods must measure improved student achievement during the course of the school year.”

2010 – SB 6 “A school district that fails to reward quality classroom teachers on the performance of their students and instead rewards these individuals based on the number of years worked or degrees held has violated 1012.22(1) (c),” teachers “may not be rated as effective or highly effective if their students fail to demonstrate learning gains,” *Student learning gains are measured by state assessments required under s. 1008.22.*

2011 – SB 736 Establishes a teacher evaluation system for the purpose of “increasing learning growth by improving the quality of instructional personnel.”

2007 – SB 1226 Merit Award Program “based on performance of students;” “merit-based pay supplements to high-performing employees; defines “top-performing” employees

pay 4 tests

Salary structure tied to
“student achievement data”

This code is to be used for references to requirements for school districts to establish a salary structure pursuant to student achievement data.

* s. 1012.34 pertains to Evaluating teachers based upon students’ FCAT, i.e. student performance assessment

84-336 – provide “economic incentive” for instructional personnel with superior ability.

1999 – HB 751,753,755 “salary schedule adopted by the school board must base at least 5% of the salary of instructional personnel on performance measured under s. 231.29;” “Commissioner of Education shall withhold disbursements from the trust fund to any school district that fails to adopt the performance-based salary schedule required by s. 230.23(5).”

2000 – HB 63... with annual assessment of learning gains, school districts must set aside funds for a 5% supplement; “instructional personnel who demonstrate outstanding performance, as measured under s. 231.29, to earn a 5% supplement in addition to their salary;” teachers selected for their performance appraisals and their students’ achievements to teach at “D” or “F” schools to receive a supplement.

2001 – HB 1193 teacher bonus of \$50/student receiving score of 4 or higher on AP or IB test.

2006 – HB 5003 STAR teacher program a performance pay plan created for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

2007 – SB 1226 MAP (Merit Award Program) provides for merit based awards to teachers based on the performance of their students; “merit based pay supplement to

pay 4 tests

Salary structure tied to
“student achievement data”

This code is to be used for references to requirements for school districts to establish a salary structure pursuant to student achievement data.

* s. 1012.34 pertains to Evaluating teachers based upon students’ FCAT, i.e. student performance assessment.

high-performing employees;” top-performing employees identified in terms of academic proficiency and gains in learning.

STAR pays for student achievement.

2010 – SB 6 “school district shall adopt a salary schedule that compensates employees based on the performance;” “must base each employee’s adjustment only on performance demonstrated under s. 1012.34;” “appraisal procedure for instructional personnel and school administrators must be primarily based on the performance of students;”

2011 – SB 736 “the district school board shall adopt a performance salary schedule that provides annual salary adjustments for instructional personnel based upon performance determined under s. 1012.34.”

FCAT

“test scores” = “student performance”

This code is to be used when the reference calls for student performance to be defined by FCAT/standardized test scores.

* s. 1012.34 pertains to Evaluating teachers based upon students’ FCAT, i.e. student performance assessment.

*s. 229.57 begins FCAT in 1998.

1999 – HB 751,753,755 Employee assessments to be conducted yearly.

“Beginning with the full implementation of an annual assessment of learning gains, the assessment must primarily use data and indicators of improvement in student performance assessed annually as specified in s. 229.57;” “student performance must be measured by state assessments required under s. 229.57.”

2000 – HB 63... “Each district school board shall develop a plan to encourage teachers with demonstrated mastery in improving student performance to remain at or transfer to” low performing schools; in the absence of an FCAT assessment, measurement of learning gains shall be as provided in s. 229.57(12);” “positive learning gains of his or her students as measured by annual FCAT assessments pursuant to s. 229.57.”

2007 – SB 1226 “student academic proficiency or gains in learning as measured by statewide standardized tests;” “evaluation of improved student achievement;” “determined by standardized tests.”

2010 – SB 6 requires implementation of end of course assessments pursuant to s. 1008.222; “student learning gains are measured by state assessments;”

FCAT

“test scores” = “student performance”

This code is to be used when the reference calls for student performance to be defined by FCAT/standardized test scores.

* s. 1012.34 pertains to Evaluating teachers based upon students’ FCAT, i.e. student performance assessment.

*s. 229.57 begins FCAT in 1998.

2011 – SB 736 Evaluation system for instructional personnel to include a mechanism to “examine performance data from multiple sources;” “student learning growth assessed annually by statewide assessments;” classroom teachers evaluation based on “student learning growth data “for students assigned to the teacher over the course of at least 3 years;”

Appendix D. Legislation Reference Details

Bills Examined	Reference Details
1984 SB 923, 836, 884, 1881	Ch. 84-336, 1984, Fla. Laws 1817 (Florida Department of State, 1984)
1985 HB 1380/1300	Ch. 85-119, 1985, Fla. Laws 805 (Florida Department of State, 1985)
1997 HB 703	http://laws.flrules.org/1997/212
1998 HB 3389	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/1998/House/bills/billtext/pdf/h3389er.pdf
1999 HB 751	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/1999/House/bills/billtext/pdf/h0751er.pdf
2000 HB 63, 77 and 891, 995, 2009, and 2135	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2000/House/bills/billtext/pdf/h0063er.pdf
2001 HB 1193	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2001/House/bills/billtext/pdf/h1193er.pdf
2002 HB 807	http://laws.flrules.org/files/Ch_2002-387.pdf
2005 SB 388	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2005/Senate/bills/billtext/pdf/s0388er.pdf
2006 HB 7087	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2006/House/bills/billtext/pdf/h708705er.pdf
2006 HB 5003	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2006/House/bills/billtext/pdf/h500303er.pdf
2007 SB 1226	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2007/Senate/bills/billtext/pdf/s1226er.pdf
2007 SB 2092	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2007/Senate/bills/billtext/pdf/s2092er.pdf

2010 SB 6	http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/session/2010/Senate/bills/billtext/pdf/s0006er.pdf
2011 SB 736	https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2011/736/BillText/er/PDF
2015 HB 587	https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/587/BillText/e1/PDF
2015 HB 7069	https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/7069/BillText/er/PDF

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