

Running head: THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Kristine 20/20 Super job. This is well written and I think you appear "ready" to start data collection. I am impressed with the high quality of your work. I think if you became more familiar w/ NVIVO, you might consider using that to assist w/ your analyses. Otherwise excel might be beneficial

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Influences that Effect Change in
Special Education Policy

Kristine S. Neuber

George Mason University

for analyzing your data matrices
Great work 😊

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the evolution of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 since its adoption, specifically in relation to provisions of services for students receiving special education. The research will aim to determine who and what factors influenced changes to the legislation and will act as a precursor to examining the reauthorization of the act in 2007. The goal of the research is to better understand how special education law is formed and influenced in the current political climate.

well written!

Previous Research

In a previous case study of policy formation conducted by West (1998), the influences that enabled the passage of the Handicapped Children's Protection Act of 1986 was studied. Through an extensive qualitative analysis of numerous government documents, meeting notes and personal interviews, the author detailed the journey to the passage of an unlikely piece of disability law. The author concluded that disability policy formation was influenced by a combination of factors. These factors include the political climate at the time, the significance of leadership through subcommittees in the legislative branch of government, and the role lobbyist and special interest groups in blocking or pushing policy agendas.

Excellent synthesis

Objectives

The proposed research will use the conceptual framework found in the West (1988) study to explore factors that have yielded the most weight in influencing the evolution of existing mainstream education policy. Since its adoption in 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is steadily morphing to incorporate special education policy provisions. The proposed investigation will aim to determine how this morphing

process is influenced for the purpose of providing strategies for implementing policy changes effectively and efficiently.

Research Questions:

1. What provisions related to special education have been proposed or incorporated into the implementation plan of No Child Left Behind Act since its passage in 2001.
 - a. What was the timeline of bills presented to congress related to special education considerations?
 - b. What bills have survived debate, which were discarded or abandoned?
 - c. What was the timeline for “flexibility” provisions brought forward by the Department of Education?
2. What factors influenced the addition of provisions concerning services for students with disabilities?
 - a. Did one factor yield more weight than others?
 - b. What role did media coverage play in influencing the policy agenda?

Method

Research Design

This study will employ an intrinsic case study design. This design was chosen due to the unique aspects of NCLB and the researcher’s interest in NCLB. It is unique in that it is a mainstream education legislation that is slowly morphing to include special education policy provisions through the influences that are yet to be defined. The researcher will use multiple sources of data to explore the answers to the research

Research Questions

questions proposed including, government documents and archival records, press releases, media reports and personal interviews.

Researcher perspective or background. The researcher comes to this project with a background as special educator with four years experience teaching students with visual impairments in grades K-12. In addition the author has provided assistive technology services in the higher education environment for ten years and is familiar with legislation that guides services in both environments. As a doctoral student studying special education policy, the author completed an internship lasting three months in length totaling over 200 hours. The internship involved working with a lobbying firm in Washington DC specializing in special education policy. Internship activities primarily focused on the implementation of NCLB in relation to students receiving special education services. For the most part, the firm lobbied in favor of NCLB with an emphasis on protecting the rights of students with disabilities. Activities included working with advocacy groups such as the Consortium for Citizen with Disabilities (CCD), attending public hearings related to the No Child Left Behind Act, and researching issues related to disability policy. Through this internship the researcher was provided with opportunities to observe the processes involved in policy influence and formation. Relationships formed during the internship, and connections with faculty at George Mason University will help provide access to materials and people that will be essential to complete this research project.

Participants. Ten people were selected to be interviewed for this study. Selected interviewees were professions working in four distinct areas of policy related work (1) legislative aids, (2) the Administration (Department of Education), (3) current and former

ok
will
be
written
;

lobbyists in special education, and (4) members of special interest groups. Participants were selected based on their knowledge and participation in the formation of NCLB, in addition to their knowledge and experience with special education legislation and lobbying. The selection of interviewees was limited based on the researcher's access (See Table 1 for a full list of interviewees.). It is expected that additional interviews will be conducted as the research progresses, based on referrals from selected interviewees. Jane West, who acted as the researcher's Internship supervisor and mentor will act as a gatekeeper, helping to gain access to many of the interviewees selected.

Data Sources and Collection

Four sources of data will be collected for this case study. They include: (1) documents and archival records, (2) press releases, (3) media reports and (4) interviews

Documents and archival records. Documents to be examined include letters and position papers developed by special interest groups, papers written by the Congressional Research Service and lawsuits related to NCLB, filed by individuals, local school districts and states. These documents will be obtained through personal contacts including interviewees, various web sites and the collections at the National Library of Education.

Archival records to be examined include bills introduced by members of congress, conference and committee reports, records of hearings and testimony presented before the Senate Committee on Health Education, Labor and Pensions and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Many of these documents will be obtained from various web sites and from the collections at the National Library of Education. In

addition the researcher will personally attend many of the House and Senate hearings related to NCLB.

Press releases. Press releases from the Department of Education will be examined from the time of adoption of NCLB throughout the period of the study to determine a timeline and identify key issues and identify key terms related to special education provisions. These press releases will be obtained from the Department of Education website.

Media reports. Recognizing the increase role the media has played in setting the policy agenda (Kingdon, 1995). Articles published in national and state print media will be examined from the date NCLB became PL 107-110 on January 8, 2002 May. Articles will be obtained using Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe Database.

Interviews. Interviewees were selected from four relevant areas related to policy formation and influence, (1) legislative aids. (2) The administration (Department of Education), (3) current and former lobbyists in special education, and (4) members of special interest groups. Ten interviewees were targeted based on their role in the process of policy formation and influence as well as the researcher's access to willing participants. It is anticipated that additional interviews will be conducted as the research progresses, based on referrals from selected interviewees.

Data Collection Procedures

Documents and archival records and press releases. All Documents will be collected for a period of three months, beginning in March and continuing through May. Documents will be ordered chronologically and categorized by issue. They will be placed into three ring binders. Prior to interviews, documents and records will be

↓
or digital versions on CD?

to go from hearing to document the process for the media?

reviewed. A detailed chronology of events will be created and will act as a case record. The case record will be used to identify causal links and frame interview questions. In addition, pieces of the chronology will be used to aid the interviewee's recollection of events and correspondence. Interview questions will explore issues related to policy influence and will be individualized to allow the researcher to explore areas of expertise and experiences. However, general themes developed through the case record will be evident in all interview protocols.

Media reports. Media reports related to NCLB and special education will be collected between March and May from the -Nexis Academic Universe Database. The search will focus on major print media sources and will be separated by publication, issue, and date of publication.

Interviews. After approval is obtained from George Mason University Human Subjects Review Board, consent forms will be collected from all participants prior to the interview. Interviews will be completed over a period of three months from June through August, during the summer recess. It is expected that legislative aids, lobbyist and leaders of special interest groups will be more accessible during this time due to the lack of activity on the hill.

Interviews will be requested by phone or letter. Interviews will be conducted over the phone or in the office of the interviewee depending on availability. Participants will be provided with the interview questions in advance of the interview to reduce the amount of time needed to complete the interview and to facilitate more complete answers. It is expected that the average interview will be one to two hours in length. All Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. In the event that an interviewee does not

agree to a recorded interview, notes will be taken during the interview. Directly after the interview the researcher will record her impressions of the interview to aid in recall.

Transcripts from interviews will be coded using an open-coding will be used to determine initial categories or themes.

Artifacts

Chronology. A comprehensive chronology of events will be developed from documents, archival records and press releases. This will act as the case record detailing the sequence of events related to the issues concerning special education.

Data matrix. A visual matrix of data will be created organizing documents by issue, time frame, type of document, and author or source. This matrix will include media reports collected.

Interview notes. Transcripts of interviews and corresponding interview notes will be typed and used as a source of data that will be coded using open coding to develop themes.

Proposed Data Analysis

To explore the answer to question 1 (a) (b) and (c) , the researcher will collect archival records detailing bills introduced to the House of Representatives and the Senate and press releases from the department of education to develop a comprehensive chronology of proposed provisions related to special education issues. Additional data will be compiled regarding question 1(b). In addition to detailing the timeline for bills, the sponsors of bills will also be tabulated to determine the person or persons sponsoring the bill as well as the state or states represented. This data will be used later to help

determine patterns of policy activity. A secondary analysis of the documents will use open coding techniques to identify and categorizes main issues for further investigation.

To explore the answer to Question 2, documents, including position papers, research reports, position papers, lawsuits filed and media coverage will be examined. They will be divided by issues identified earlier in the study. The data matrix (see artifacts) will be examined to determine if patterns emerge that demonstrating a greater influence of one type of document over another.

To further investigate influence this information will be triangulated with personal interviews and the timeline to determine if patterns emerge showing a stronger influence of one organization or method over another.

Finally, the researcher will further investigate the role media coverage played in the policy agenda of NCLB by doing a secondary analysis of the matrix created to determine the relationship between media reports alone and the policy agenda. This analysis will look at the relationship between the total number of reports written about each issue identified, the source of the report, and its relationship to provisions proposed through bills or incorporated into the implementation of the law.

Handwritten signature

References

- West, J. E. (1988). The handicapped children's protection act of 1986: A case study of policy formation. *Digital Dissertations*, (AAT. 8818234)
- Kingdon, J.W. (1995). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies* (2nd ed). New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.

*asks like
was a supervisor
John P*

Table 1. Proposed Interviewees

1. David Angor? , Department of Education
 2. Tec Chapman, Majority Professional Staff Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee
 3. Connie Garner, Democratic Policy Director for Disability and Special Needs Populations, Senate HELP Committee
 4. Katy Neas Co: Chair of the Education Task Force, Consortium of Citizen's with Disabilities
 5. Ellin J. Nolan, President, Washington Partners, LLC
 6. Rucki Sabia, J.D., Associate Director, NDSS National Policy Center
 7. Brad Thomas, Majority Professional Staff Member, House Education and the Workforce Committee
 8. Jane West Jane West, Vice President for Government Relations, American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
 9. Member of the National Education Association
 10. Debra Zigler, Council for Exceptional Children
-