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## Collaborative Governance in Public Education Through Democratic Management of Polarities

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# Walden University

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Michele Greene

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Walden University  
2021

Abstract

Collaborative Governance in Public Education Through Democratic Management of

Polarities

by

Michele Greene

MSOL, Geneva College, 2002

BSBA, Geneva College, 1977

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2021

## Abstract

In a democratic society the use of inter- and intraorganizational collaboration as a pragmatic approach to addressing social issues germane to sustaining that democracy is a challenge, especially in the realm of public education reform. The Common Core State Standards Initiative, an attempt at collaboration to reform public schools initially adopted by more than three fourths of U.S. states, created an ongoing response that included proponents and opposers. The opposition in Pennsylvania led to the State renegeing on its original commitment to the Common Core State Standards created by the initiative. Research revealed a gap regarding the ability of the Common Core State Standards to solve social problems in a democratic society. To fill that gap and understand more about collaborative education reform initiatives within a democratic society the research question examined the perceptions of citizens in Pennsylvania regarding the CCSSI in regard to its collaborative nature. Benet's polarities of democracy theory served as the theoretical framework to explore perceptions about the collaborative initiative using Q methodology. Data analysis followed the Q method protocol which led to the key findings of no strong indications of disapproval of the collaboration but of requirements it created; most agreed with the State's repeal of CCSS; there was subtle recognition of democratic polarities. Findings suggest that the PA Department of Education should adopt collaborative reform initiatives that overhaul the PA Civics curriculum requirements. These initiatives should be rooted in democratic polarities management resulting in positive social change.

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Dedication

The late Rev. Morgan James Reynolds

The late Helen M. Reynolds

The late Alaina Howard

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Collaboration between government and non-government organizations (NGOs) has emerged in democratic societies as a method of solving social problems.

Collaboration within and between organizations is an important concept in bringing social change. NGOs throughout the world are collaborating with government agencies that create policies to deal with overwhelming social problems (Kamat, 2004). The collaboration is a confirmation of the progression of civil society's ability to self-adjust and self-administer its own interests (Kamat, 2004). Since the unfettered participatory actions of the nongovernment sector corroborates a civil society's capacity to adjust and administer its own interests from within, it is important to consider the unfettered nature of such actions as they fit within a democratic society.

The specific form of collaborative governance in democratic societies of interest in this study is in the education sector. Education in the United States is a fundamental component of representative democracy. Governmental systems such as public education that teach democratic values must model democratic values (Benet, 2013b). Reform efforts in the public education system should not only reflect the interdependent nature of the democratic society and public education, but also employ transformative educational actions that allow them to model those democratic values (Benet, 2013b). Consequently, when successful attempts at altering transformative actions occur, it is imperative to investigate the occurrence through a framework that emphasizes the managing of polarities of democracy as a means for social change.

The altering transformative action studied in this research was the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), a plan to reform public schools, adopted by more than three-fourths of U.S. states. CCSSI represents what some see as one of the pragmatic approaches to maintaining the well-being of public education. The CCSSI is an important program in the context of collaborative governance because policy makers have looked to collaboration between NGOs and government organizations to accomplish educational reform through CCSSI (DeHoog, 2017; Sollis, 1992). Many states have already adopted the CCSSI as a means to improve their public schools (Frizzell & Dunderdale, 2013-2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b). As a result, a focus on CCSSI was relevant due to its presence as a collaborative governance program. In this study, the focus was on the perceptions of individuals in Pennsylvania with respect to CCSSI as an initiative of collaborative governance designed to address social problems stemming from the educational sector.

The findings of this study could be significant both for research and practical purposes. By examining multiple perceptions of citizens, I contributed findings on furthering the process of democratic social change with respect to education. The findings of the study expand the knowledge regarding public opposition to government policies and fill a gap in existing research. Finally, the finding of the study could also be used to improve policy and practice by policy makers who may obtain an understanding and subsequently better framing for future policies in collaborative governance in the context of educational change.

Following this introductory portion, Chapter 1 includes a background section to briefly summarize research literature associated with the scope of this study. Also, in this section, a knowledge gap is explained as well as why the study is needed. The problem statement and purpose of the study are incorporated in Chapter 1, as well as a concise explanation about theoretical framework used in this study that will be further developed in Chapter 2's literature review. Short sections on the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope, and delimitations, possible limitations, significance of the study, and a summary will complete Chapter 1.

### **Background**

Although principally, schools must guarantee mastery of the necessary skills of civilization and comprehension of national, democratic, and communal rights and obligations of citizens, researchers and other stakeholders have questioned whether this common purpose is at the heart of policy created to reform public education. In the 20th century, educational thinkers and reformers such as Dewey (1916) and Allen (1937) recognized a disjointed and stagnant approach to sustaining democratic education. Many attempted solutions for problems plaguing public education ensued throughout the 1900s and even into the 2000s. Even though the way public education functions in the United States involves state level control, from the late 1970s through the early 2000s most reform policy attempts came from the federal level. Therefore, federal level education reform policy only occurred in states willing to implement that policy in exchange for federal dollars. Yet, 10 years into the new millennium, as problems in public education persisted, policymakers put forth new ideas and methods in sustaining education for



democracy at the state level. That change emerged in the form of a collaborative initiative, the CCSSI.

By embracing and supporting collaboration between government and NGOs through CCSSI, the state governments introduced what some consider different and even controversial education policy. CCSSI was introduced in 2009 (Cassidy et al., 2016). Since it occurred at the state level, it was launched by state leaders, which were represented by the National Governors Association (NGA) division of Center for Best Practices (Cassidy et al., 2016). CCSSI is a collaborative governance initiative because its development through the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and NGA occurred when these organizations contracted Achieve, Inc, a non-profit organization, for the purpose of developing the standards (Cassidy et al., 2016). Some of the problems that researchers have highlighted in this venture include the fact that Achieve, Inc, while drafting the standards, overrepresented testing and publishing companies and education sector bureaucrats in the drafting groups (Schneider, 2015). It did not involve English language professors or teachers (Schneider, 2015). Despite state support, Common Core standards are also criticized for the lack of state representation during their development and excessive funding from private organizations.

After the CCSSI was implemented, the Center on Education Policy created a compendium of research on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2013. The decision to create it followed spring and fall meetings of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who discussed ideas and ultimately decided there was a need for a synthesis of existing research on CCSS and their implementation and impact (CEP, 2013). Based

on an analysis of the 55 studies contained in the compendium, it became apparent that much of the current research does little in examining the collaborative group who created CCSS from a democratic education standpoint. For instance, all research contained in the Center on Education Policy Compendium fell within the following categories: communications and public opinion; comparison of CCSS content to wide-scale assessments; content, curriculum, and alignment; cost analysis; governance and leadership; implementation; teacher preparation; teaching and professional development; and teaching and assessment (CEP, 2013). Of these, the only categories to examine opposition movements were the governance and leadership and the communications and public opinion sections. However, the literature in those categories seemed to emphasize outcomes rather than the democratic nature of the collaborative initiative itself (CEP, 2013; Hess & McShane, 2013; Owens, 2015; Rothman, 2011; Schneider, 2015). Thus, the existing literature on CCSSI presented a gap in the literature with respect to democratic education.

There was a gap in the literature regarding the need to broaden the research to include insight into what determines public opinion with respect to CCSSI, which has not been comprehensively studied yet. Although researchers have addressed CCSS opposition (Benet, 2013b; Hess & McShane, 2013; Owens, 2015; Schneider, 2015), considering CCSSI as a move toward collaboration for solving ongoing struggles in public education, I found a gap in the literature regarding perceptions of reform/change initiatives of such nature by members of the public within a democratic society. Such a gap has been highlighted in multiple studies (Henderson et al., 2015; Jochim & Lavery,

2015) and in relation to the CCSSI (Henderson et al., 2015; Jochim & Lavery, 2015). It is important to address this gap to assist policy makers in addressing opposition attempts and strengthening communication describing and presenting new initiatives (Finnigan & Daly, 2014). It is against this gap that the focus of this research on perceptions of individuals was justified.

### **Problem Statement**

The general problem studied was the need to explore perceptions regarding a reform initiative in the educational sector, CCSSI, by members of the public within a democratic society. Although a stagnant approach toward democratic education has been recognized since the 20th century, it was only in 2009 that a form of a collaborative governance initiative in the form of CCSSI was introduced. CCSSI emerged as a collaboration between CCSSO and NGA as well as a non-profit contractor, Achieve, Inc (Cassidy et al., 2016). Even though over three-fourths of the United States' states and territories governors committed to CCSS in 2010 with the intention of starting implementation in 2013, CCSS has experienced a backlash in which opponents of the policy in some states successfully convinced their state legislatures and/or governors to renege on their commitments to implement CCSS (Henderson et al., 2015; Jochim & Lavery, 2015). Much of this opposition and backlash related to the new curriculum content, where those who oppose CCSS note reduction in traditional texts such as Shakespeare and seemingly unnecessarily complicated math problems (The Week, 2014). Other issues related to states reneging on CCSS relate to the costs involved in implementation as well as general public and political discontent with the policy

(Henderson et al., 2015; Jochim & Lavery, 2015). As a result, the need to include public perceptions with respect to CCSS, an initiative that has been criticized for not providing adequate representation to public, was significant.

I used Pennsylvania to represent the crux of the research problem being addressed in this study. The problem stemmed from the negative reaction to CCSSI, an unprecedented education reform initiative (Boehm, 2013; Murphy, 2013). The problem of opposition stopping what seems like forward progress in public education reform was significant because it represented another unsuccessful attempt at securing a component as vital as public education to the survival of the democracy (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2016; Hill & Varone, 2017; Murray, 2015). It also represented a key consideration in the broader attempts at managing polarities of democracy necessary in social change and forward progress for a democratic society (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2016; Hill & Varone, 2017; Murray, 2015). Hidden in opposition movements are perspectives often not considered by change-agents. Therefore, the problem of opposition to CCSSI was significant for those who support and push positive social change.

The CCSSI has been presented as a collaborative approach to governance reform regarding the US Public Education system. However, there have been limited studies of citizens regarding their perceptions of the collaborative nature of the CCSSI. In this study, this gap was addressed. Representatives and/or policy makers may use the findings of this study to be more proactive in their creation of policy rather than writing the policy only to receive backlash, as was the case in CCSSI (Henderson et al., 2015; Jochim & Lavery, 2015; McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Simons, 2013). Thus, the problem studied

related to an intersection of collaborative governance, social problems, education, and democratic education.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this Q methodological study was to explore perceptions of individuals in Pennsylvania about initiatives within the context of collaborative governance designed to solve social problems. The phenomenon studied was public perceptions within a democratic society framework in the context of reform initiatives in the educational sector. Public perception should be a strong consideration in policy created for a democratic society (Finnigan & Daly, 2014; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013a; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b; Stark Rentner & Kober, 2014). Through the polarities of democracy framework, the exploration specifically examined individual perceptions regarding CCSSI in Pennsylvania. Introducing a unique study of attitudes and subjective opinion to the field of public policy answered the call of Abowitz (2008) to find innovative tactics of scholarly inquiry concerning propositions and operations in public areas such as education. The outcome expected in the study was to attempt to understand and potentially provide literature for policy makers and other scholars to recognize the importance of opposing reactions in policy reform and change.

The use of Q methodology was the appropriate approach in this study because the focus in this study was on examining public perceptions in a democratic society. Perception drives reaction, which may either be a catalyst for or may thwart social change (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Q methodology is an investigative technique and is not suitable for the promotion and offering of particular hypotheses as in conventional

positivist methodology (Ward, 2009). I present more information regarding Q methodology later in this chapter, as well as in Chapter 3. In this study, I aimed to provide policy makers with the necessary understanding of what shapes public perception, with the intention to promote positive responses to education policies in the future and thereby avoid the same kinds of backlash as experienced with CCSSI.

### **Research Question**

The purpose of this Q methodological study was to explore perceptions of individuals in Pennsylvania about initiatives within the context of collaborative governance designed to solve social problems. The research question guiding this study was as follows:

RQ. What are the perceptions of citizens in Pennsylvania regarding the CCSSI in regard to its collaborative nature?

### **Theoretical Framework for the Study**

The theoretical framework in this study was based on the polarities of democracy theory. Benet (2006, 2012, 2013a, 2013b) suggested that there are critical elements/values of democracy that subsist in pairs of polarities: freedom and authority; justice and due process; diversity and equality; human rights and communal obligations; and participation and representation. Successfully controlling the five pairs of polarities in society require school systems and any new initiatives associated with them to model the management of these values (Benet, 2013b). Managing these pairs entails getting the most out of their positive aspects (Benet, 2013b). Benet (2013a) pointed out that these 10

pairs of polarities are necessary to effectively manage for the attainment of democracy so that each pair's positive elements are maximized, and negative elements minimized.

The polarities of democracy theory formed an important element in the study of perceptions, responses, and opposition to CCSSI. Due to the central role that the public education system must play in a true democracy, it is essential to evaluate whether current policy trends in theory associated with collaborative initiatives in public education push forward the concepts fundamental to sustaining the true democracy and a globally linked high-tech society (Benet, 2013a). Examination of those trends in theory was necessary to fill gaps in the literature that prevent models and new political context from being developed which ultimately provide accessible foundational theory for social change in the realm of public education policy. Discussing the theories of social change in the 1990s, Hallinan (1997) recognized that a future defined by worldwide connectedness, technological sophistication, instant communication, and rapid change necessitates the creation of frameworks for social change as well as the foundational assumptions underlying them that adequately reflect and explain contemporary, complex social occurrences. In the case of public education, that future may lie in the collaborative initiative approach that created the CCSSI, according to the collaborators and governors who embraced it (Doyle, 2013; Strauss, 2014). As a result, an integration of a collaborative initiative approach such as CCSSI and the central tenants of the polarities of democracy theory emerge in the intersection of collaborative governance, social problems, education, and democratic education, highlighting the appropriateness of the theory in the context of the study.

### **Nature of the Study**

In this study, the Q methodology was used to explore the research problem. The rationale behind using Q methodology for exploring multiple perspectives of collaborative governance designed to solve social problems, such as the CCSSI, rested in it being an alternative method for qualitative researchers to explore subjectivity significant in social phenomenon (Shemmings, 2006). By using either the structured or unstructured sampling method, Q methodology transports qualitative research as it draws out subjectivities devoid of perplexing operational measurements (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Q methodology is designed to explore the different perspectives and dialogues within groups as a way to take up practical issues such as the acknowledgment of new policies (Zabala, 2014). The significance of Q methodology is its provision for entering into subjective realms and supplying the tools to transform subjective meanings into something objective (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Due to its relevance as an approach for the purpose of the study, the use of the Q methodology was deemed appropriate for the study.

An aspect of collaborative governance in this study was polarities of democracy management in accordance with the polarities of democracy theoretical framework. This aspect informed the Q methodology design that I used in this study. Two design options in Q methodology are available to incorporate these aspects: the unstructured design and the structured design (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). While both methods provide a logically representative set of statements, the unstructured sampling method is derived from less developed theoretically based concourses (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Also,



like the structured design, the unstructured design maintains a logical beginning with the classification of the major themes and topics that define a subject focus to aide in a global or more general understanding of the subject (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The design that constitutes a structured method and provides a more balanced and representative approach in selecting statements from more developed and theory-based concourses is the structured method (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). As a result, the structured method was the approach used in this study.

The structured sampling method entailed commencing the sampling process by parceling the germane subject matter into levels and themes, or categories. This process was structured on the basis of a predetermined theory or through an extensive review of literature (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In this study, the categories were based on the theoretical framework and key concept in the research question of the study and my observations uncovered in the extensive literature reviewed for the study. In doing so, and by borrowing from Fisher's method of factorial experimental design, I began the process of creating a structured Q set/sample that offers conciseness and representativeness of the concourse and diminishes bias and partiality (McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Watts & Stenner, 2012). See Table 15 in Appendix B for details.

I created Q samples based on themes and taken from samples of the concourse, which was the whole set of possible expressions on a topic gathered from multiple possible points of view such as interviews, literature reviews, mass media, expert consultation, or participant observation. Next, I condensed the collection to a definitive representative array that usually ranges from 40 to 80 statements (Watts & Stenner,

2012). I asked respondents to sort the statements over a grid from most agreement to most disagreement. The goal in doing so was to retrieve the most varied range of opinions despite whether they were marginal ones (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Q methodology holds noteworthy depth in pinpointing commonalities between participants. In Q research, the distinctive pattern of each participant's interaction with the topic is maintained in the person's sort matrix that can be used to examine additional facets of their stance in relation to other germane data (Shinebourne & Adams, 2007). According to Shinebourne and Adams (2007), Q methodology allows researchers to understand how individuals' accounts and perceptions are intertwined with and mediated by their interactions with the world around them. This implies that the opinions of individuals, and subsequent acceptance or opposition to policies, for example, are informed and limited by social, cultural, professional, and/or other factors (Shinebourne & Adams, 2007). Thus, using Q methodology for this study allowed me to better understand perceptions of various stakeholders within the Q sample who opposed and supported CCSSI. This understanding could, in turn, feed into future policy endeavors by allowing policy makers insight into how public perception around an issue is formed.

### **Definitions**

*Collaboration:* When people from different organizations produce something together through joint effort, resources, and decision making, have common goals, and share ownership of the final product or service, it is known as collaboration (Bryson et al., 2014).

*Collaborative governance:* Collaborative governance is an encompassing term that covers a range of intertwined components of public administration scholarship such as intergovernmental and interagency collaboration, cross-sector affiliations, public service networks, consensus building, and public engagement (Bryson et al., 2014).

*Concourse:* The concourse is an integral component of Q methodology. It is made up of the general group of statements from which a final Q set is sampled. The character of the concourse to be sampled is dubious until it has been constrained by a specific research question in the framework of a specific study. Due to its nature as changing from study to study, it is diverse (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

*Q samples:* These consist of representative items selected from a concourse and presented to participants. Items constituting a Q sample have no prominence until sorted based upon self-reference (McKeown & Thomas, 2013) of the participants. Ideally, Q samples are collected statements that are natural in the language of the contributors to the concourse and complete in the portrayal of the subjective phenomena and perspectives possibly implied. The researcher can collect Q sample items from written narratives as well as resources equal to physical interviews (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Naturalistic Q samples could also be assembled from indirect sources that could come within reach of the operative equivalence of physical and written interviews (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

*Q sort:* Once the Q sample is assembled, it is administered to persons serving as participants in a study. Respondents model their opinions with these items in a modified rank-ordering procedure which leads them to produce a Q sort. The latter serves as an

empirical representation in the most genuine *operational* sense (Bridgman, 1927) of an individual's viewpoint of the matter at hand (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

*Reform/educational reform:* These are terms used throughout the study to indicate improvement in an organization by instituting changes therein (Pinar, 2014). Educational reform concentrates on systemic reform with consideration to standards, equity, and societal needs (Pinar, 2014). Education reform also works from the assumption that including different players within the educational system helps facilitate procedural change and encourages new educational objectives (Pinar, 2014).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are propositions presumed to be true during the research process. Therefore, it is important to consider the implications of philosophical assumptions from the aspect of practices of the researcher and ultimately the actions of the participants. When considering any qualitative study, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological philosophical assumptions are in play. In characterizing each philosophical assumption, Creswell and Poth pointed out how each should inform the routines of the researcher.

The ontological assumption indicates that there are various actualities observed through multiple lenses (Creswell, 2018); therefore, I addressed diverse perspectives as patterns or concepts that arose through the research process. In doing so, I was able to satisfy any queries that may have arisen surrounding reality or human nature as well as connecting with the axiological philosophical assumption. It can be posited that values impact how reality is perceived and defined. Therefore, in plainly explaining the presence

of values and biases of both researcher and participants, the axiological assumption is inherent in the study. Ontological and axiological assumptions were attended to in this study when I created the concourse. Through hours of research and examination of data, multiple perspectives were revealed and were included in the content ultimately chosen for the concourse, an integral component in this study's methodology.

Creswell (2018) pointed out that the epistemological assumption that the researcher thoroughly familiarize herself with multiple aspects of the topic to the point of abating gaps in knowledge between herself and the issue being studied. While the epistemological assumption came through in many aspects of a research project, it also was revealed in association with the methodological assumption characterized by the researcher's practice of induction logic contextually examining the topic and using an emerging method (Creswell, 2018). As with the ontological and axiological assumptions, both epistemological and methodological assumptions are at the root of the research method, particularly with the stage of gathering information to be chosen for the concourse, as previously stated, an integral element in the study. Hence, it required assurance that I thoroughly familiarized myself with multiple aspects of the topic as well as used an emerging process in ultimately creating the concourse from which the Q set is shaped. This was indeed the case for this study.

The four philosophical assumptions addressed by Creswell (2018) have been addressed above from the perspective of how they apply in what the researcher does. However, since a key portion of this study was on participant perceptions of a phenomenon defined and presented to them by the researcher, it was also assumed that

the participants would share honest, nondeceptive, subjective perspectives. The responses were considered as the best responses based on the abilities of the participants. Therefore, as the researcher, influenced by the four stated philosophical assumptions discussed above, I selected participants who were qualified to provide responses relevant for the study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The problem of opposition movements delaying, or in some cases ending, what seemed like progressive public education reform is the focus of the study. This is because it not only represents yet another failed attempt at securing public education, one of the factors imperative to sustaining democracy, but also represents a key concern in the broader attempts at managing polarities of democracy necessary in social change for a democratic society (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2016; Hill & Varone, 2017; Murray, 2015). Deep within opposition to change are perspectives often overlooked by change agents, who in this case are the members of the CCSSI program. Therefore, the problem of opposition to the CCSS could actually provide ways for those who support and push positive social change through collaborative governance in a democratic society to reflect and understand that ignoring opposition could disrupt balance within polarities (Anderson, 2015; Friedman & Solow, 2013). Such a disruption could delay progress, and the focus of this study is on ensuring such an outcome can be avoided.

The participants in this study were residents of Pennsylvania. This selection was made despite the fact that opposition groups have mounted in several states (Doyle, 2013; Henderson et al., 2015; Jochim & Lavery, 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013a;

McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b; Strauss, 2014; The Week, 2014). The selection was justified by the fact that although experts who were proponents and in opposition to CCSSI who contributed extensively to the literature were not direct participants in the study, their well-documented ideas, legislation, and contributions to the literature played a significant role in the study. This is because, in Q methodology, all information is germane in creating a concourse from which the Q samples are formed and then presented to the participants (McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Simons, 2013). As I am a resident of Pennsylvania, grounding the study in Pennsylvania made the findings more relevant and was a positive way to make initial contact with participants. Additionally, three quarters of the states who once committed to CCSS are questioned their decisions (Henderson et al., 2015; Jochim & Lavery, 2015). As a result, this study has potential for transferability since even though I concentrated on Pennsylvania, this study could be significant to leaders from other states grappling with the issues associated with opposition of CCSSI.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are aspects of the research that the researcher cannot control but can affect the generalizability of the findings. The most limiting aspect of Q methodology is creating a meaningful and understandable Q sample for the participants (McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Simons, 2013). Therefore, it makes sense to circumvent items including specialized complex terminology even though this may work for participants with expertise and knowledge in the field. Two-purpose items, with more than one proposition and/or characteristics of several kinds, can also be challenging (McKeown & Thomas,

2013; Simons, 2013). Negatively expressed items were left out of Q sample statements because it could be confusing to the participant (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Strong consideration for detail and meticulous navigating was essential to avoid the limitations identified.

Another source of limitation was the possibility of bias. Biases in research studies must be considered and minimized (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In Q methodology, Q sample items must be provided that are correspondingly representative of some germane perceptions of a population (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The exclusive items, and ultimately the Q set as a whole, must cover all the relevant positions and as thoroughly as possible lead to a balanced Q set (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). A balanced Q set does not appear to be value overloaded or biased toward some specific viewpoint or judgment. It was imperative that all the participants could reply successfully to the research question, in any way they wish, using the given items (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). A Q set must not make participants think they are limited or restricted or feel frustrated due to the researcher's failure to provide balanced coverage. Therefore, precise and meticulous construction of a Q set is crucial (Watts & Stenner, 2012) if that goal is to be achieved.

### **Significance**

The significance of the study was derived in part from its transferability. Specifically, transferability enhances its capacity to effect social change (Denscombe, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The findings could be applied to any social issue being addressed or considering being addressed that requires polarities of democracy management because it will make a strong connection to the level or role of public



perspective. In this way, the study added to the knowledge regarding public opposition to government policies and filled this research gap. It could also assist in advancing practice and policy in the future by assisting policy makers in understanding, and thereby better framing, future policies (Finnigan & Daly, 2014; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013a; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b; Stark Rentner & Kober, 2014). For example, recent events surrounding the United States presidential race made me realize that this same method and same theoretical framework could be used to examine public perception in connection to managing the polarities of democracy concerning, for example, the role of religious freedom in a democratic society or other issues facing the country. Thus, while I focused this study on opposition to CCSS, the study also has potential for use in many areas of public policy.

### **Summary**

This study used a Q methodology approach to investigate the literature and other documents that reveal a gap that seems to exist in public policy research addressing collaborative governance in public education reform within the framework of polarities of democracy theory. This research and methodology focused primarily on oppositionists. No matter what emerged from the study, the goal of creating more theoretical literature to promote progressive policy was significant, especially for policymakers. The findings might guide policymakers to take radical steps to develop policy that will promote the concept of collaboration as a path to transformational democratic solutions for education as well as other issues involving collaborative governance. The emergent model from this study could be a catalyst for societal change.

The literature review in Chapter 2 is an examination of prior research and concepts germane to each portion of the research topic. It includes discussions and elaborations around the theoretical framework and bases of the study, along with specific government documents to examine historical and current policy that were used to complete the Q study. There was additional information added to the literature review once the proposal was approved and the dissertation was completed.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The problem studied relates to public perceptions with respect to a collaborative reform initiative in the educational sector, which in the context of this study was CCSSI, from the perspective of members of the public. While policy makers recognized the existence of stagnant approaches toward reforms in democratic education in the United States, it was in the form of CCSSI that an initiative with a collaborative governance form was introduced. In CCSSI, a new approach was applied, involving collaboration between government and NGOs. However, several problems have been identified regarding the development and implementation of CCSSI, including the overrepresentation of publishing companies, education sector bureaucrats, and testing companies in drafting groups (Schneider, 2015), lack of members in the drafting group who were English language professors or teachers (Schneider, 2015), and lack of state representation during its development. Thus, despite its collaborative nature, issues have been raised regarding democratic representation.

Following its implementation, CCSSI has been studied by multiple researchers, and an analysis of the findings suggest that little current research considers the collaborative group who developed CCSS from a democratic framework. The literature is focused on emphasizing outcomes rather than the democratic nature of the collaborative initiative itself (CEP, 2013; Hess & McShane, 2013; Owens, 2015; Rothman, 2011; Schneider, 2015). Within the existing literature, a gap was identified with respect to democratic education, suggesting the need to broaden the research to include insight into

what determines public opinion with respect to CCSSI, which had not been comprehensively studied. Therefore, this study was necessary to explore perceptions about this phenomenon.

In this study, the purpose was used to explore citizen perceptions from the residents of Pennsylvania regarding the collaborative governance initiative developed to address social problems using a Q methodological approach. Public perception should be a strong consideration in policy created for a democratic society (Finnigan & Daly, 2014; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013a; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b; Stark Rentner & Kober, 2014). Through the polarities of democracy framework, the exploration specifically examined individual perceptions of CCSSI in Pennsylvania. In this way, I attempted to understand and potentially provide literature for policy makers and other scholars to recognize the significance of opposing reactions in policy reform and change.

The body of literature related to the scope of this study consists of an extensive and broad array of work covering interrelated concepts germane to understanding the breadth and depth of the problem being considered for the study. I examined multiple aspects associated with the problem for this study as well as social change within a democratic society in the literature review. The aspects examined range from the CCSSI—one in the legacy of major attempts at reforming public education in the United States such as ESEA, NCLB, and RRT—to collaborative governance resultant of NGO/government collaboration and the significant role public education plays in a democratic society.

I also explored literature associated with the theoretical framework, namely the polarities of democracy theory. The polarities of democracy theory is largely pertinent to this study because with any additional attempt of social change directly related to public education, it is imperative to consider its democratic nature (Benet, 2013a & 2013b; Haugaard, 2010). As this is a key element in a democratic society, it must be examined through the lens of a theory that provides a practical and logical way to understand management of change that has significant impact within the democratic society (Benet, 2013a & 2013b; Haugaard, 2010). The literature on the theoretical framework will be reviewed, and its relation to this study will be clarified.

Additionally, the concept of collaboration/collaborative governance as a policy tool is a major aspect of this literature review. It was the main concept connecting the array of elements in this interdisciplinary study about managing polarities of democracy associated with public education reform and positive social change in a democratic society (Benet, 2013a & 2013b; Haugaard, 2010). Following this introductory portion, Chapter 2 includes the following major sections: the literature search strategy, the theoretical framework for the study, the concept of collaboration within the context of this study as one of public policy and in connection to NGOs, and background and contextualization of the collaborative CCSSI.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The literature examined for this review has been derived from books, full text journal articles, blogs, government documents, and government reports. I obtained most of this literature through local library catalogs and Walden University Library searches,

Sage Publications, JSTOR, Ebsco, and Questia (online pay-for-use library) databases as well as internet searches of state and federal websites. Most of the literature used for this study consists of peer-reviewed journal articles, journal articles, books, and government documents with publication dates ranging from 1917-2017, with current literature written within the last 10 years.

The search terms used for obtaining literature for this study were *collaboration, education, public education, NGOs, nongovernment organizations, education policy, democratic education, public policy and administration, social change, polarities management, democratic polarities, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race To the Top (RTT), United States Constitution, Common Core State Standards, education solutions, education reform, federal education policy, democratic society, collaborative governance, educational experience, United States, democracy, representation, participation, communal obligation, human rights, equality, diversity, due process, justice, authority, and freedom*. These key terms were used individually or in combination with each other to lead to the creation of an extensive compilation of articles and other data relevant to this study.

The literature review for this policy study is multifaceted in its approach, as it includes a variety of concepts that are related to the public policy examination of collaboration between NGOs and government agencies leading to collaborative governance and its impact on social change. Additionally, I examined the concept of collaboration between governmental and NGOs from the theoretical framework of polarities of democracy (Benet, 2013a) as a means of examining the notion of schools

standing as institutions in a democratic society. This interdisciplinary theoretical approach, according to Morçöl (2005) in his mention of the work of Kiel (1994), is as a new paradigm that is nonlinear and has critical connotations for public policy that augments the authority of analyses by revealing the patterns and levels of constancy in the policy and institution's performance. Morçöl (2005) also pointed out that such an approach could uncover the shortcomings of the dominant theoretical means of examination in public policy studies. The review is organized by first examining the literature surrounding the noted theoretical framework, collaboration, the specific topic of the study and sub-themes that emerged through the research surrounding NGOs as agents for social change and the creation of public policy that provides solutions for social problems.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Democracy is a structure for managing divergence. The significance to the shift from a predatory system to democratic structures is the restraint of divergence within agreed upon parameters (Haugaard, 2010). In examining the idea of how a system deals with or builds processes to deal with conflict, Haugaard (2010) pointed out that a peculiar feature of democracy in comparison to other political systems is its establishment of a procedure of conflict management. It is a system whereby a clash could move from oppression to normalized institutional modus operandi. The restraints of the system function through value and logic (Haugaard, 2010). In this study, this characteristic of divergence is a fundamental aspect underlying the research problem and informing the choice of the theoretical framework.

In addition to accommodating diversity of thought, democracy involves a balance between obligations and freedom. Democracy is a procedure for conceiving of communal obligation to the authority and preference of others without forfeiting personal self-respect or willingly risking individual or family concerns (Dunn, 2014). Democracy gives each citizen the privilege and communal obligation, the choice over who is to govern, and how the sovereignty itself is to be wielded. Whether reluctantly or unintentionally, citizens individually empower the public officials, which in turn suggests that the citizen's own views openly become a part of their subjection (Dunn, 2014) to the extent to which citizen agreement to subjection is customarily authentic provisional, frequently disingenuous or intolerant, and always open to crucial abandonment (Dunn, 2014). The balance between obligation and self-respect allows the possibility of citizen opposition to governmental initiatives.

Specifically, in this study, the framework is based on an approach to study public perceptions of collaborative governance in the context of educational reform to further the effectiveness of such reform. Due to the central role that the public education system must play in a true democracy (Benet, 2013a) and as a component within the democratic system, it is essential to evaluate whether current policy trends in theory associated with collaborative initiatives in public education push forward the concepts fundamental to sustaining the true democracy and a globally linked high-tech society (Benet, 2013a). Examination of those theory trends should be performed to fill gaps in the literature that have prevented models and new political contexts from being developed or succeed. Filling the gap will ultimately provide accessible foundational theory for social change in



the realm of public education policy. In alignment with this goal, the polarities of democracy theory was selected to form the theoretical framework of the study.

Benet (2006) established the polarities of democracy theory in his dissertation in 2006 at the University of Toronto. Benet wrote a post-doctoral correction in 2012 and expounded upon the theory through articles in 2013 and papers in 2014. Experienced in many areas including politics, justice organizing, and fostering collaborative community/campus partnerships, currently an academic appointee in the School of Public Policy and Administration at Walden University and Associate Researcher with the University of Toronto's Adult Education, Benet (2012) used his model to advance citizen, worker, family, organization, and community involvement to uphold social and environmental conscientiousness through research and social change projects. Consequently, it is the intention in this study to add to his research, which could serve as a reference for policy that embraces Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013a) proposed aspects and polarities of democracy model. This model also serves as the theoretical framework for this study.

The polarities of democracy theory is based on several criteria. Benet (2006, 2012, 2013b) pointed out seven specific criteria that make the model accessible and valid. While some of those elements are specific to workplace democracy, there are others that clearly apply to societal democracy and are therefore suitable for this study. The model corresponds with and espouses those aspects necessary for the realization of societal democracy. The model provides a means of representing the concept of the evolutionary developmental requirements of the human species by being a factor in triumph over the

domination of individuals while permitting the progress of society (Benet, 2006), thus representing a central characteristic of the democratic process underlying the premise of the study in the form of public opposition of a collaborative governance project. The model also covers the effectiveness of the advantages of both altruistic and selfish inclinations (Benet, 2006), highlighting the possibility of strengthening the initiative to accommodate public cooperation for its success. This framework thus allows the researcher to examine collaborative change initiations, which may ultimately dictate policy within a democratic society.

Benet (2013b) saw societal democracy as ongoing toward two problems, which may arise in the progression and the development of society and that there are not two poles for democracy itself. However, he also posited that within democracy, there are 10 elements divided into five polarity pairs that must be managed following Johnson's (1998) polarities management model. I will address these elements in later paragraphs. Benet's (2012) model aligns with Johnson's polarities model, which indicated that managing polarities means recognizing the interdependent relationships and tensions between the poles. Johnson's model also highlighted that to manage polarities well means stakeholders need to pay attention to experiencing the positive aspects of each pole. If downsides of a pole occur, it triggers the need to actuate the upsides of the other pole. Johnson suggested one should exploit the intrinsic strain between the two poles. In his model, Benet (2013a) showed there are ten elements that when put into polarity pairs meet the criteria of Johnson's determinants for such.

The key in Benet's (2013b) theory and its relevance to this study rests in the idea that if true democracy is to be actualized, there are 10 polarity elements that must be managed effectively by maximizing the positive aspects of each component and minimizing the negative aspects of each component. Benet (2013a, 2013b) proposed that there are critical elements/values of democracy that subsist in pairs of polarities: freedom-authority, justice-due process, diversity-equality, human rights-communal obligations, and participation-representation. Successfully leveraging the five pairs of polarities in society require school systems and any new related initiatives to model the management of these values. Managing these pairs entails getting the most out of the positive aspects of each (Benet, 2013b). One of the main reasons to use the polarities of democracy model/theory for this study is its use of polarity maps that help explain an intentional social economy change undertaking. Benet (2013b) points out managing the 10 pairs entails getting the most out of their positive aspects. Thus, public perception forms an important element within the functioning of a democratic society, and by extension in a collaborative governance initiative. Opposition to such an initiative, as can be deciphered from this framework, need not be negative in the form of stagnation, but a healthy part of democratic societies and an opportunity for reform in the initiative.

In creating his model, Benet (2013a, 2013b) provided questions that researchers could answer with the theory/model containing his ten elements that function in polarity relations in a democracy. The questions Benet (2013a, 2013b) raised, as well as the suggestion that researchers could address them through engaging the polarities of democracy theory, focused on concepts germane to collaborative governance within the

social economy. Benet's (2012) third question asked whether the ten elements of freedom, authority, justice, due process, diversity, equality, human rights, communal obligations, participation, and representation are fundamental principles of democracy with none being adequate in and of itself. When considering any collaborative social economy initiative that deals with public education, researchers must consider its democratic nature (Benet, 2012). The fifth and sixth questions by Benet (2012) asked whether the ten elements exist in polarity relationships. Benet (2012) determined, based on Johnson's (1996) analysis, that each should have both positives and negatives. Finally, in his tenth question, Benet (2013a) asked if effectual management of the polarities of democracy accommodate a social economy foundation that leads to flourishing viable communities. These questions played particular importance as part of the theoretical framework for this study in relation to the tradeoff between public perception as an opportunity for constructive criticism and opposing views that hinder progress and success of collaborative governance initiatives.

In this study, the relationship between NGOs and CCSSI can be framed through the relationship described by Benet in the pair of freedom and authority. Benet (2012) asserted that the pair of freedom-authority is a polarity of meaning, and do indeed seem, through the literature, to be as Benet (2006) expressed, the most complicated of the polarity pairs. Understanding or considering freedom and authority from a polarities perspective without referring to it as such, Berlin (1958) pointed out the negatives and positives of freedom. One could be free to the extent that another human impedes one's endeavors. Political liberty is, therefore, the space in which one accomplishes what they

desire (Berlin, 1958). Berlin (1958) continued to point out that if one cannot accomplish what they desire by others, one is to an extent un-free. Unmitigated inability to achieve one's goal, such as improved educational outcomes, may not be lack of political freedom. Lack of political freedom comes from others preventing one's achievement of goals, which can be interpreted as governmental implementation of initiatives without consideration of public perceptions. The broader space of obstruction, the broader one's freedom may exist (Berlin, 1958). McMahon and Dowd (2014) posited that it is a mistake to equate freedom with democracy. While democracy may bolster freedom, it is detached from it and characterized by its own convention. These two scholars represent the very concept that Benet (2013a) posited about poles having both positives and negatives. However, what the researchers failed to do was show freedom in a polarity relationship with authority. The complicated and multifaceted relationship between freedom and authority has similarity to the role of public perceptions with respect to collaborative governance in which public opinion may either be an expression of freedom or a roadblock, working against the very goals that are identified as desirable.

As a point in treating authority as a polarity to manage within a democracy, the question George (2013) raised must be considered. The question that George raised was about how the sovereignty of the people could be sustained if they are in a physical place to identify who or what is affecting choices that have an impact on their lives when examining collaborative governance like CCSSI. According to George, authority is employed without approval of the governed who are often not educated enough to comprehend who is actually running what. Corporations employ dominance without

matching accountability unlike elected officials who could be sanctioned by voting them out of office. A concern about these groups is their consolidation and ability to dominate and permeate governments. George (2013) raised valid points that examine authority in what Benet (2013b) would call a polarity relationship with freedom. This point is also relevant in the context of public input in governmental policy for educational reform as a counterargument for the inclusion of opposing public opinion on an initiative.

Like George (2013), Philip (2010) addressed authority in a democracy. However, Philip (2010) investigated the historical record of citizen dissents to government policy examining the tension between Marshall's and Jefferson's views on governmental authority in the citizens' freedom to react to Shay's Rebellion in particular. Philip (2010) characterized Marshall's view as one of disdain and questioning the ability of men being able to govern themselves. Jefferson, on the other hand, viewed the rebellion differently as an action of people to democratically demonstrate against policies they did not like, and while the violence was unjustifiable this was a factor of Republicanism (Philip, 2010). Madison, like Jefferson, saw some rebellion occasionally as a suitable thing to hinder the corruption of government, calling it "medicine necessary for the sound health of government" (Philip, 2010, p. 31). As was the case with the collaborative governance initiative examined in this study, opposition mattered, but was not evident in a polarity relationship between authority and freedom (Philip, 2010). Individual freedom was not manifest as a pole to manage in relation to the pole of authority, which indeed seemed apparent in the realm of what Benet (2006) referred to as the capitalist economic system and effectively a pole to be managed. While both George (2013) and Philip (2010)

addressed the concept of authority in a democratic society, neither approached it within a polarity relationship with freedom as did Benet (2006).

Benet (2012) further singled out the polarity of participation and representation as distinctive and somewhat of a combination of meaning and function. He explained that, when the participation and representation polarity is supervised adequately, a positive aspect of representation could function as a procedure through which a person's capacity to become involved "is strengthened and/or regenerated" (Benet, 2012, p. 241) Benet (2012) pointed out that representation operates as a polarity of function, a channel to the attainment of participation. On the other hand, according to Benet (2012), in pursuance of satisfying that aspect of a polarity of function, representation could be seen as the opposite of participation. In this role it tolerates a person's release from the participatory procedure, giving the personage the ability to rejuvenate. In this situation, representation still stands as a polarity of function, but continues as a polarity of meaning (Benet, 2012). Since in a democracy citizens elect officials who represent them, including in the context of educational initiatives, it can be argued that the existence of such representation undermines public perspective. On the contrary, it can be argued that the opinion of public may not be informed. However, the representation may or may not represent the views of the public, and as a result, it is important to consider such views.

Trust is at the crux of a successfully functioning representative government. Moreover, it is essential to manage cases of collaborative governance. According to Behrouzi (2008), when considering the concept of trust, one must acknowledge its association to delegation and vulnerability. The person or group delegates its duty of

servicing others to another person or group, assuming the trustworthiness of that person or group. Thus, the group or person that was handed the task will likely do what is necessary to complete that task. However, this makes the group or person who handed over the tasks vulnerable, especially when the trusted person or group fails to fulfill that responsibility. The apprehension about vulnerability of the typical inclination to avoid suffering often deters people from trusting others. Hence, the idea of trust in the larger context of liberal democracy. Even though he did not approach the concept of balancing the relationship between participation and representation in the relevant polarity relationships as Benet (2012) would advocate, Behrouzi (2008) did recognize the effects of imbalance within the liberal state.

Researchers looking at representation from aspects other than polarity management have conducted other studies considering collaborative governance to make social change, particularly when NGOs and corporate interests are participants (Choi & Robertson, 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). One such aspect includes critical analysis of the role privilege plays in ascertaining if markets are actually free in the government policies, if equality does exist and its impact on sustainability (Choi & Robertson, 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). Tactics of some organizations include manipulating laws and statutes to accommodate the few. The concept that all people are created equal is a key principle in the United States, set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and is challenged with formalized private privilege (Choi & Robertson, 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). Another consideration is the component of trust that is not so obvious but essential to human rights and understanding how participation in a representative democracy could happen



and affect communal obligations (Behrouzi, 2008). Behrouzi (2008) pointed out that governments cannot survive the loss of people's trust in their government unless that government employs forced restraining methods. In modern nation states, trust and business activities could only develop through the agency of the law and culture of conforming to it through the state in a social contractarian way (Behrouzi, 2008). In this regard, consideration for and inclusion of multiple views, especially opposition views, is an important aspect of democratic societies.

One might see the collaborative initiative examined in this study in compliance with what Behrouzi (2008) calls participatory democracy. According to Behrouzi, as the level of power shifts from the liberal state to the freehand of the wealthy and business interests guiding the legislature, it is imperative to set up economic and business standards associations and practices focused on reinforcing society's democratic ideals in policy. In a participatory democracy, the objective of achieving profit is secondary to the necessity of providing for the needs of the people and the common good. In a participatory democracy, workers are valued and seen as being able to monitor their own work environment and contribute to the direction of the company. Behrouzi (2008) saw participatory democracy as a solution to the problem of trust for the following reasons: (1) democracy and social justice are conjoined because both are based on the concept of equality; (2) it increases the moral communal obligation of the government to its people; (3) responsibilities are dispersed; and (4) the center of power lies in civil society. While Behrouzi (2008) did not use the same concept of Benet's polarities (2012), his ideas are

similar and show how some of Benet's (2012) polarity pairs are embedded in participation and representation.

While some studies by political scientists have correlated educational accomplishments with expanded democratic participation, such as voting in social networking, it seems that there are few studies examining if there is a connection between social studies education and how students see themselves as United States citizens (Journell, 2011). Journell investigated this by examining citizenship education and what approach to teaching it should take. He pointed out major concepts directly relevant to those elements named in Benet's (2012) polarities of democracy model. Interestingly, Journell (2011) seemed to put diversity and representation in a polarity relationship differing from Benet's (2012) model, where participation is in polarity relationship with representation and diversity with equality. Benet's (2012) description of the polarity pair—participation and representation—as being unique and a hybrid could be seen in its intertwined nature between other polarity pairs. The polarity pair of diversity and equality also comes through as being subthemes of participation and representation (Benet, 2012). For example, participation could remedy something like inequality (Benet, 2006). This is an obvious concept in relation to a collaborative initiative.

Other researchers have also used polarities of democracy as a theoretical framework in dissertations. For instance, in his doctoral dissertation, Strouble (2015) looked at possible relationships between structural and internalized racism arising from existing patterns and used the polarities of democracy model to analyze data collected for the study. In using the polarities of democracy model as a guide in observing democratic

processes in different communities, Strouble (2015) pointed out an assumption in the model that if a society has an unevenness of power, it could result in the extended experience of the worst aspects of paired poles. This assumption serves as a great reminder that polarities of democracy are not in themselves solutions, but instead need to be managed in the democratic society.

Tobor (2014) also used the polarities of democracy as a framework to analyze and investigate Urhobo cultural values, practices, traditions, and beliefs and elucidate whether they are a factor in the success of the amnesty program. Like Strouble (2015), Tobor (2014) emphasized a key concept in the polarities of democracy model that underscores each element in the polarity pairs of diversity and equality, freedom and authority, participation and representation, justice and due process, as well as human rights and communal obligations has both negative and positive aspects. Tobor (2014) pointed out that if a genuine democracy is to be achieved, the goal is to effectively manage the poles of each pair by advancing positive aspects of them and reducing the negative aspects of them.

This current study also employed the polarities of democracy model; emphasizing similar concepts to Tobor (2014) and Strouble (2015), particularly in the idea that there are negative and positive aspects for poles in each polarity pair and that maximizing the positive elements of those is important in managing them for the advancement of the democratic society. The use of the polarities of democracy model in yet another study, such as this one, also emphasizes just how significant it is in examining multiple aspects of public policy and social change within a democratic society. When considering public

education in a democratic society, Biesta (2016), Ichilov (2013), and Spring (2016) pointed out the importance of educational conventions assessing societal norms and seeking sociopolitical elucidation for problems. In using the polarities of democracy model as a theoretical framework for this study, a door was opened for future studies within the realm of educational practices to continue to use the framework to evaluate societal norms and seek sociopolitical explanations for specific problems.

### **Literature Review Related to Key Variables**

#### **Democracy and Public Education**

##### ***Dewey: Public School Pioneer***

In the realm of democracy and public school, the contribution of Dewey was significant. Dewey (1859-1952), a philosopher and educator, stands out as a key figure in the history of United States public schools. Like Horace Mann (1796-1859), and William Torrey Harris (1835-1908), Dewey's (1916) thoughts have been instrumental in establishing and advancing the philosophy of the American Public School. According to McCluskey (1958), the most significant contribution of Dewey was the approach taken toward American education structure in which humanity and democracy as well as nature and science were fused. Because of Dewey's (1916) significant contribution to the literature about public education and democratic society, it is important to point out some of his concepts considering the recent phenomenon of collaborative governance initiatives like the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and social change in a democratic society within the framework of polarities of democracy.

Chief among the reflections of Dewey relevant to this study are those on democratic society. Dewey (1916) thought that purposeful and methodical education is significant in a progressive democratic society that consists of interpenetrating shared objectives between groups that lead to social readjustment. The commitment to education in the democracy is a recognizable reality. The apparent rationalization is that a government established upon the vote cannot thrive unless those who elect and comply with their government authorities are educated (Dewey, 1916). Since the democratic society rejects the tenet of outside power and must find an alternate involuntary nature and concentration; these could be shaped only by education (Dewey, 1916). These ideas seem to be implicit in Benet's (2013a) idea about education in a democracy that goes a step farther by implying that it is essential for students to become viable citizens by recognizing, comprehending, and devoting themselves to values required to maintain a democratic society; teaching democratic values necessitates modeling democratic values; and the public education systems must employ transformative educational procedures to model democratic values.

A democratic society is a form of structuring society that is defined by public participation. Dewey (1916) pointed out that in a society there are multiple objectives intentionally conveyed and disclosed; and there are wide-ranging and unbound points of contact with other means of association. Consequently, the education such a society provides is fractional and imprecise. Therefore, to obtain a substantial quantity of principles in common, all the affiliates of the community must be justly given the occasion to accept and to procure from it (Dewey, 1916). There must be a large variety of

shared undertakings and experiences. Or else, the authorities that educate some into masters also educates others into slaves. In connecting a concept of collaboration between affiliates in providing education, Dewey's (1916) points, while not stating so directly, seem like the Benet (2013a) idea of managing the polarities of participation and representation as well as the polarities of diversity and equality.

Another important aspect to Dewey's views on education is the collaborative aspect, which are related to democratic society. Some of Dewey's (1916) ideas seem to be in line with collaboration as a way toward solving problems in a democratic society. He described society by pointing out that while it is one word it represents many facets of human association that involves many different levels and objectives. He suggested that there are many secondary groups within larger social organizations including political, industrial, scientific, and religious (Dewey, 1916). A faction that is providing education is inclined to socialize its constituents, but the worth and significance of the socialization is contingent upon the practices and goals of that faction and requires evaluation. In addressing ways to evaluate multiple organization initiatives, Dewey (1916) posited that finding ways to evaluate the process must not be excessive based upon something like an ideal society, but instead be based upon the social realities that exist. The challenge is to obtain realistic attractive qualities from the community and use them as a standard by which to assess detrimental features while also signifying change for the better (Dewey, 1916). In any community, there exists mutual interests and on some level communication and cooperation between groups. These qualities lead to two questions that help create a standard of evaluation. First, how frequent, and diverse are the willfully shared

objectives? (Dewey, 1916). Second, how comprehensive, and uninhibited is the interchange with other types of involvement? (Dewey, 1916). Written several decades earlier, these concepts of standards of evaluation set forth by Dewey (1916) interestingly seem like Benet's (2006, 2013b) point that rather than having problems to solve, there are polarities to manage in the democratic society.

Dewey understood the multifaceted nature of collaboration. Dewey (1916) would seem to suggest that collaboration is a necessary trait when he posits that deficiency in multifaceted and proportionate social awareness, results in insufficient incentive for consideration of the human factors and associations in industry. More frequent and diverse instances of mutual common objectives and advanced dependence upon the acknowledgment of shared significance is an aspect in social power (Dewey, 1916). Additionally, the altering social practice to accommodate freer interface between social groups results in unremitting modification to address the new situations created by interaction. These qualities exemplify the democratically comprised society (Dewey, 1916) and ground the basic premises of this research.

Dewey approaches the concept of democratic society and education through a broader perspective on the nature of democracy. On a more profound level, a democracy is not simply a form of government; it is chiefly a form of connected living, or the attached shared experience. In a democracy, a mobile populace gains many paths for the opportunity to modify situations regardless of where they reside (Dewey, 1916). However, there must be assurance that its members are educated to individual incentive and flexibility, or else they will be beleaguered by the changes in which they are trapped

or whose implication or associations they do not comprehend. Dewey's (1916) significant concepts are key in considering perceptions of citizens who are the recipients of collaborative initiatives like the CCSSI, namely, if the populace do not perceive there is an assurance of education reform that produces incentive and flexibility, they will respond accordingly.

### *Education in the Democratic Society*

Education is an essential element in the emergence and sustenance of a democracy through its relationship to the characteristic of self-governance. Democracy is the term used to describe a political arrangement in which the people are self-governing, and it is the entire, rather than only a portion who presides over the polity and therefore itself (Brown, 2011). The way in which this has occurred throughout history has varied to a great degree, hence, there are multiple philosophies of democracy (Brown, 2011). At its least, democracy necessitates that the people sanction their own laws, either directly or through elected representatives. Likewise, the people modestly contribute to various non-legal influences governing their lives. If this is not the case, then it cannot be that the people rule—i.e., a democracy. In conferring about issues associated with schooling, it is crucial to remember the significant place of education in a democracy. A democracy not established upon the underpinnings of education cannot last (Brown, 2011). As a result, it is necessary that education in a democracy is both pervasive and available while the educational process must be beneficial to everyone.

Since democracy may not demand total social and economic equality yet cannot endure the reverse, its necessity for an educated citizenry creates a similar dilemma.



Democracy does not command universal political involvement, but it cannot endure across-the-board ignorance about the influences shaping people's lives and knocking down their future (Brown, 2011). According to Brown (2011), inherently, principal essentials of democratic continuity consist of organizations and traditions of equal opportunity; checked excess of clustering of wealth and poverty; inclination regarding citizenship connected to a habit of respecting the public good; and citizens sufficiently knowledgeable about the attributes of influence, history, representation, and justice. As of 2011, Brown saw each of these essentials is dangerously jeopardized and posited that neoliberal governance and the breakdown of the social state led to the loss of confines on wealth and poverty as well as equal opportunities. While not exactly like Benet's (2012) polarities of democracy management concept, Brown (2011) did seem to suggest that not "managing" opposite phenomenon leads to a breakdown in the democratic society.

Education has been an important element of the United States since its beginning as a democratic society. The original United States public school movement stressed grooming students for participation in democracy education (Glaeser et al., 2007). In a democracy, education must be tailored to local environments and to individual capabilities (Allen, 1937). It must be carried out with a liberal embrace of new ideas and approaches and managed in such a way that following generations of citizens may have the tools to deal with altered circumstances sensibly, affably, and with broadmindedness for the views of others (Allen, 1937). The relationship between education and civic participation is evident in the fact that instruction about political participation is a main element of education (Glaeser et al., 2007). Education elevates the advantage from social

participation because it makes the exchange of information somewhat effortless. Educated people are better able to articulate what they know, to enlighten, and to influence education (Glaeser et al., 2007). Rather than positing that education should model the concept of citizen participation, as Benet (2013a) emphasized, Glaeser et al. (2007), more recently, and Allen (1937), many decades ago, both pointed out the importance of the concept of educating students to become participating citizens which would imply that collaborative education initiatives would need to ensure that element remains.

Notwithstanding the conventional media fixation with the electoral politics that saturates the public consciousness, a different perspective that should not seem to be exceedingly strange is that for democracy to be significant and substantial, it must be attached to education as well as social justice. Multiple researchers, such as Biesta (2016), Chomsky (2003), Dewey (1916), Ichilov (2013), and Portelli and Solomon (2001) have highlighted this point. Students, members of the work force, the general public, assemblages, organizations, and innumerable other groups in society are capable of, and are obligated to participate, in multiple ways in politics, endeavoring to have their voices taken seriously, to transform society, and to offer options that may not be straight away acknowledged as customary democracy (Biesta, 2016; Ichilov, 2013). The implication of authors, such as Biesta (2016) and Ichilov (2013) put forth in this paragraph, seems to suggest that participating in collaboration between many in the name of furthering the democracy through education is not only customary, but also assures the significance of multiple influences and the changing of society.

Researchers have also proposed approaches to public education in the context of democratic societies. For instance, Potthoff et al. (2009) promoted a four-part objective to advance the public purpose of schooling for democracy: shaping the young into a social and political democracy by emersion in democratic cultural values; granting a way for all students to gain knowledge; commitment to pedagogical development; guaranteeing accountable management of schools. Additionally, the value of public deliberation in getting to the bottom of complicated issues has led to its basics being integrated into spheres beyond the public policy or political areas and particularly in the educational pedagogy arena (Longo, 2013). Deliberative pedagogy secures great assurance in advancing the civic mission of higher education through more collaborative methods to teaching and learning that react to critical and quickly shifting contextual leanings: rising diversity, new technologies that advance clarity and collaboration, and the fervent wish of young people to take part in important social action (Longo, 2013). Researchers have, in general, promoted the purpose for public schools, collaboration as well as other democratic ideals, along with necessary polarities as a deliberate part of public education.

Researchers have also highlighted the goals of public education in relation to a democratic society, along with its implications. For instance, Sabia (2012) pointed out that since the democratic school is a public organization providing a benefit to a community, and since its far-reaching intention is to cultivate democratic citizens, it ought to be a neighborhood school as well. Potthoff et al. (2009) warned that even though historically, authority of local control of schooling, established by the 10th Amendment to the United States Constitution was the norm, it has come into question as a rising

proportion of schooling pronouncements have occurred at the state and/or national levels throughout the past 50-60 years. This could be seen for instance in the No Child Left Behind act adopted during the George W. Bush administration (Potthoff et al., 2009). However, the school and the community have a reciprocal role that ultimately leads to all members of the community being students of the democratic school (Sabia, 2012). It is clear that the curriculum in a democratic school must comprise the chief objective of trying to instill in students a knowledgeable, judicious, political, and historical awareness. With emphasis on the local authority of schools being a strong force still accepted, it is often the standard by which society judges any attempts at reform by questioning the level of national interference in those reforms.

The role of the public is also important for civic engagement that is central to democracy. Public involvement is vital for generating citizens who have a say in civic goals, and for sustaining a democracy of citizens who are leaders (Biesta, 2016; Pinar, 2014). A curriculum for democracy exhibits a confidence in young people's aptitude for citizenship and acknowledges that they are the imminent practitioners and beneficiaries of democracy. The need to build a curriculum for democracy is urgent (Biesta, 2016; Pinar, 2014). Biesta (2016), and Pinar (2014) pointed out several practices for creating democratic curriculum for schools. Some of those practices include groups working together with the assurance of members of the group participating as equals; functioning in concert for mutual objectives; functioning for a long time; commitment to constant evaluation (Biesta, 2016; Pinar, 2014). The idea of practices for creating democratic

curriculum suggested by Biesta (2016), and Pinar (2014) could be seen as an example of schools in a democratic society modeling democratic ideals.

The relationship between democracy and education is multifaceted. Sabia (2012) pointed out that even though democratic ideals should be taught in locally controlled schools, democracy is more a lifestyle to be refined or a type of affairs of state to be practiced than it is a topic for a course (Sabia, 2012). Given that premise, democracy, and a democratic education, is a thing that citizens ascertain empirically, through democratic involvement or engagement in democratic procedures and shared self-government. The author suggested types of learning linked with democratic instruction or with involvement in polarities of democracy that include gaining knowledge of political information, developing of democratic skills, and an expansion of democratic virtues and commitments (Sabia, 2012). The literature seems to bear out that education in a democratic society must teach and reflect democratic ideals. Therefore, it follows that any initiatives for education reform or improvement that will ultimately impact or change things in the society must be judged from a standard of democratic values and ideals.

### ***Whittier on Education and Democracy***

A habitual issue for the school system is found in each generation's communal obligation. As Whittier (1976) pointed out, this is based on the schools' comprehension of the diverse social system and being able to account for it successfully to the student. The schools must preserve honesty with respect to the significant communal obligations of society. Speedy transformation that occurs in society puts schools in an arduous place . Whittier's (1976) point is significant in that it conveys an aspect of the importance of

how when social change in a democracy dealing with education occurs those changes may impact schools in ways that often lead to camps of both opposition and support as this study reveals.

When social change comes to be, schools are often slow to react, which necessitates urging from political realms and the judicial establishment, creating a tension that is at the center of this study. Schools have faced an increasing range of the problems facing society in addition to serving the traditional role (Whittier, 1976). They have expanded their machinery for response at all levels of government, entailing a greatly expanded staff of specialists who not only have conflicting views on the roles of the schools, but who have conflicting directions from the various lay legislative bodies that carry responsibility for policy direction. Still relevant in 2016, schools have continued to be confronted with a mounting scope of the troubles occurring in society while also continuing their traditional function. Schools have lengthened their workings as reactions to directives from all levels of government responsible for policy objectives and utilizing specialists who have contradictory views on the roles of the schools and impacting the traditional way and proviso of local control (Whittier, 1976). A consequence of these moves is the creation of an initiative like CCSSI.

The duties of the school to react to shifting demands are amplified without sufficient re-examination of the repercussions of the new duties. In such situation, Whittier (1976) noted, an imbalance develops between human expectations and human and fiscal resources available to the schools to meet these expectations. Over the years, the schools have become the focal point for implementing social and individual reform

and as such have become the social conscience of the democracy. Even though schools are legally a state responsibility, while the degrees of which vary, it is expected that provision for the schools be made available by the state government. Schools have developed into the central site for executing social and individual reform and as such have become the public conscience of the democracy (Whittier, 1976). Currently and in most recent years with the rise of collaborative governance, this has been seen as becoming an even greater truth as this study focuses upon.

### **Collaboration**

Contemporary social problems, such as those in education, require solutions from collaboration between various sectors of the population. Traditional government bureaucracies that were formed to solve social problems that existed are not sufficient in addressing the complicated and most urgent current day problems, such as in education. These problems demand compliant measures, continual modification, and the sensible combining of proficiency and trustworthiness that necessitates stepping over the restrictions and rules of the respective groups involved in the collaborative initiative (Keast & Mandell, 2014). This is because collaboration between governmental and other players could be complex; allowing at once for multiple views and approaches to plans, services, and policy creation, while also requiring all participants to share some common understandings and sets of variables to ensure that collaboration is effective and meets the makeup, standards, procedures, and purpose of said collaboration (DeHoog, 2017). From the literature, it seems clear that if such understanding and common ground is not

established, the differences brought from the varying players may hinder rather than promote progress, especially progress through a reform initiative such as CCSSI.

Collaboration, then, requires different sectors of society and government (such as NGOs, opposition groups, and policy makers) to attempt working together and finding solutions that benefit the largest amount of the population. This point has been made by researchers such as Bryson et al. (2014) and Jaggars (2013). Researchers such as Eppel et al. (2014), Hunter (2014), and Ljungholm (2014) note that such collaboration requires governments and organizations to constantly reassess and evaluate their intentions and endeavors to ensure strong and effective collaborative efforts. Within the idea of collaboration is the understanding that ignoring, misrepresenting, or limiting opposition voices could be detrimental to the long-term success and sustainability of programs and policies (Anderson, 2015; Friedman & Solow, 2013; Shinebourne & Adams, 2007). The United States governmental tradition holds the idea that ‘the people’ govern, and that they should be heard and addressed regarding social and governmental concerns (Choi & Robertson, 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). However, such collaboration efforts are often harder to accomplish and rarely successfully meet the needs of all differing groups affected, as could be seen with the opposition to the CCSSI.

Before examining the literature around Collaboration in Education and Collaborative Governance, which are two key concepts relevant to this study, it was important to examine the rise of NGOs. This is because they are often main collaborators in changes created to solve social problems. While NGOs are not immediately thought of in the context of developed countries, NGOs do in fact play a large role in collaborative



initiatives and governance in the United States as is evident in this study examining an initiative that involved many NGOs creating the CCSSI.

### ***The Rise of NGOs***

The emergence of NGOs as systematic organizations is a relatively recent phenomenon. Before the 1980s, the materialization of NGOs was for the most part an unprompted development with little worry about scrutiny and assessment (Scott & Hopkins, 1999). During the 1990s, the number of NGOs grew. In recent years, NGOs have been working around the world to assist in providing services and other needs to various populations, which governments struggle to do on their own. NGOs play a key role in collaboration and must be considered in this study as some of the organizations that partnered in the CCSSI are NGOs. To understand the rise and importance of NGOs in the world necessitates this literature review cover some of the history behind them before delving into the concept of collaborative governance.

This phenomenon has motivated studies and much of the literature about NGOs reveals the crucial roles they have played, and continue to play, in developing countries, as these countries strive to become fully participating members of the global community. Reinman (2006) pointed out central reasons that have prompted the increase of NGOs and their broadening into non-Western regions of the world in the past two decades. These reasons include the progressive encouragement of NGOs as assistants and backers in the development of international institutions and administrations' management of new global issues (Reinman, 2006). Additionally, an upsurge of new international prospects for financial support and involvement of the NGOs have increased the participation of

NGOs (Reinman, 2006). Sollis (1992) pointed out a shift in not only the increased references to NGOs between the 1980s to the 1990s, but also the shift in tone from negative to more positive depictions about the contributions of NGOs as Multilateral Agencies (MLAs) and policy reform. The trend in recognizing NGO's roles in society has continued to be addressed and evaluated in the scope and purpose they do serve (Sollis, 1992). Not only has the literature shown that NGOs could fill the void governments have in providing services, but research also demonstrated that NGOs could fill in other areas where governments fall short (Sollis, 1992). Mitlin (2013) examined how NGOs could be instruments for social change in those regions where people have lost faith in the State and political course of action in providing necessary social changes. Research suggests that NGOs' provision of collective and public hope in any region of the world could arise due to their capacity to function externally from state-based structures.

While NGOs have existed for many years, it appears that the 1990's surge in NGO creation, as well as the role they have recently assumed in most regions of the world, have had a great impact upon the United Nations relationship with them. Sollis (1992) pointed out the United Nations Development Program's affirmation that NGOs are significantly functioning in development, and that their assistance is progressively acknowledged more by governments. Citing the historical significance of NGOs that existed as far back as the 1800s and early 1900s, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out that the Geneva conventions of 1864, the multilateral labor conventions of 1906, and the International Slavery Convention of 1926 as having resulted

from the work of NGOs who suffused the international community with a determination of transformation (Alger, 2002). The UN had over 90 offices managing NGO affairs in 1990. By 1995, when the fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing, 4000 NGOs participated (Alger, 2002). The relationship between NGOs and the United Nations (UN) over the years exemplifies the importance and growth of NGOs.

The relationship between NGOs and the UN reflects why the latter has incorporated NGOs within its functions as key collaborators with the UN. NGOs have been active in addressing ad hoc meetings of the Security Council as well as providing representatives to make suggestions for measures concerning NGO associations with the General Assembly (Alger, 2002). In the 2000 Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly, the United Nations renewed its commitment to give more opportunities to NGOs (United Nations Millennium Declaration, 2000). The UN recognized the importance of NGOs to the extent that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has in Article XI of its Constitution included the directive to continue building on its significant association with NGOs that provide the same services and deal with the same issues that UNESCO does. The constitutional article pointed out that the partnership between UNESCO and NGOs is one that endorses the work of NGOs that collaborate with governments as a means of international cooperation in assisting advancement, equal opportunity, and international awareness and peace (UNESCO, 2014). UNESCO even has a 12-part formal document outlining relations between UNESCO and NGO partners that covers topics such as communal obligations and advantages among other things. Those NGOs that partnered

with the UN make up an important component for potentially effective collaboration. Such a rise of NGOs highlights their importance in collaborative governance initiatives.

**NGOs: Diverse Organizations.** The NGO sector is broad and diverse. This factor is what allows it to function despite, alongside of, or collaboratively, with traditional social structures. NGOs come in many forms, sizes, and have various goals (Rotberg, 1996). International and local NGOs clearly function distinctively and with various constrictions. Some are highly funded while others have very little finances (Rotberg, 1996). Many NGOs fit into more than one category (Rotberg, 1996). Another study looking at NGOs, Mitlin (2013) defined NGOs as autonomous, self-regulating, work toward improving the lives of deprived people, and are not earnings induced organizations. Sollis (1992) defined NGOs in his work on the role they play in policy reform as organizations whose basic intentions are to ease suffering and to advance progress in less industrialized countries. These organizations could be religious, nonreligious, national, or international (Sollis, 1992). According to Dauvergne and LeBaron (2014), and Banks et al. (2015), NGOs resemble public institutions but are not necessarily perplexed with the conventional organization of a given state or with its policies. NGOs are different from governments, and they are different from corporations (Johnson & Prakash, 2007). NGO scholars use different typologies and vocabularies to study NGOs, and they also use various conceptual theories by which to conduct their studies (Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014; Johnson & Prakash, 2007; Rotberg, 1996). However, what most NGO scholars would agree upon is that NGOs vary in their missions, organizational structures, operational behaviors, sizes, and locations

(Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014; Johnson & Prakash, 2007; Rotberg, 1996). No NGO is formed in the same way. Regardless of the vast variety of organizations that make up the NGO sector, there is no question that the sector has come onto the scene as a force for social change. Indeed, NGOs represent a significant group of the democratic collaborative initiative that was the focus in this study.

In the past 20 years, NGOs have become a force for change throughout the global community. In examining ways to solve the global problems of the 21st century through transformational means, NGOs have a fundamental responsibility in cultivating the transformations, and must therefore be considered in solutions to social problems that may have either eluded or been ignored by policy makers all over the world (Dauvergne, & LeBaron, 2014). Based upon the theoretical framework of this study, the NGO sector must then be considered in relation to the complexities that exist within a democratic context that must constantly manage the polarities of democracy within it. NGOs are part of collaborative efforts which must be measured by management of the polarities that impact them. Additionally, according to Dauvergne and LeBaron (2014), and Banks et al. (2015), the term NGO is really a catchphrase for a wide range of organizations with multiple policies, of extensively variant sizes, endeavors, or missions and, therefore, in this study, will be used to describe the many participating organizations behind the CCSSI.

### ***Collaboration in Education***

Schools are obligated to provide an education that supports a strong democracy that relies on its citizens' aptitudes. Schools need to comprehend and involve themselves

in resolutions that have an impact upon not only them but their families and society as well (Orr & Rogers, 2011). In other words, schools need to form part of a larger collaborative effort and serve as mediator between government and their communities. Many people in the United States rely on public education to maintain and manifest the guarantee of democracy by making available high-quality educational experiences to students of any race, economic class, or ethnicity, to prepare them for economic comfort and public commitment (Orr & Rogers, 2011). The concept of manifesting the guarantee of democracy in collaborative initiatives means that any perception to the contrary could have an impact on it.

Organizations are the principal drivers in human potential for democratic actions. Turk (1970) postulated that individuals' actions rely upon the existence of organizations that support them, thus they must be seen as both catalysts and the instruments of individual action. Turk (1970) asserted that organizations, in the context of this study schools, are large complex structures that, as participants in society, have effects upon large-scale social settings. If Turk's point could be applied to the role organizations play in society both in shaping individual public-school students who are members of the society, but also as members themselves in the broader community, it is imperative that they begin to function in relation to each other and improve their collaborative efforts within their realm. Turk (1970) claimed that great reactions to the wider setting are both devised and endorsed by organizations. That is, organizations such as schools, can assist with positive policy creation, and endorse educational policy implementation, or, as with the case of the CCSSI, such organizations could frame and represent a large part of the

opposition dialog (Henderson et al., 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013a; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b; Turk, 1970). Since schools hold within them such power to either promote or disrupt policymaking and implementation, it may behoove governmental policymakers to include various school representatives actively and substantially (from teachers and principals to school board members and school district leaders) into the initial and continuous process toward, and after, implementation. In other words, greater attempts need to be made to ensure that proactive attempts at collaboration occur.

The concept of collaboration between NGOs and government schools has been a focus of research. There were serious calls for such collaboration in the early 2000s (Levine, 1985; Peddle, 2002). Since the concept of collaboration is fundamental to this study, it still benefits from scrutiny of that earlier literature as it could be seen as influencing not only ongoing literature, but also the decisions of nongovernment and government educational organizations to collaborate (Levine, 1985; Peddle, 2002). Levine (1985) argued for collaboration to address problems in the public education system that would have future indications for the United States on a global level. Peddle (2002) questioned the role of government in primary and secondary schools in relation to market assessment. In comparing these two perspectives that served as evidence that there has been a weak movement toward looking seriously at collaboration between NGOs and government schools, the researcher recognized subtle differences that should be pointed out as this study hopefully represents a more theoretically sound approach to it.

Looking first into Peddle's (2002) postulation, one finds an approach regarding primary and secondary educational reform. He managed to point out a key element that must be considered in the realm of education collaboration. Peddle posited that market role valuation should be considered in the process of public policy decision-making. Peddle (2002) claimed that market role assessment facilitates public administrators in assessing their institutions' affiliation or bond to its environment, along with the appropriateness of changes in that affiliation. In addition, this type of thinking and acting should be done in the realm of primary and secondary education policy. Peddle (2002) suggested that if policy makers do in fact begin to use market role assessment in dealing with education, then there will be a blossoming of potential utilization of a partnership approach to solving difficult problems. While the concept of partnership is a form of collaboration, which is at the root of this study, to reduce primary and secondary education to the vicissitudes of market-type thinking may serve only to exacerbate the problems that exist in public education because it may remove the human factor which is so necessary when dealing with the lives of students.

Levine (1985) also approached the concept of collaboration as a possible solution to public school problems from an economic perspective. Levine (1985) offered an additional approach in showing the economic aspect as being affected by a poor public school system, rather than a discipline that offers the business model that Peddle (2002) described. Levine (1985) argued that global competition, a growing high technology industry and dependence on a highly skilled work force has caused business and industry to acknowledge their reliance on strong public-school graduates. Hence, this result of the



desire to see the problems in the schools be solved poses questions around the idea of the potentiality of private sector-public school collaboration. Levine (1985) mentioned three possible scenarios, namely: inter-institutional collaboration; public-private partnerships; and interaction of school, workplace, and community. It appears that some 30 years later, we see stakeholders attempting these types of collaborations.

Researchers have also approached collaborative initiatives uniquely in the context of education. Leahy et al. (2016) examined collaborative initiatives in relation to education, referring to them as private public partnerships that could increase equity in education. According to Leahy et al., these partnerships could include a wide array of public, private, and civil society participants. In education, such participants could be regarded as means toward attaining more involvement of the private sector and bettering and fortifying education systems by transforming education into something useful to the economy. The authors noted, however, that such partnerships could also pose challenges, as they could lead to limiting governmental input in favor of privatization. This, in turn, could potentially remove (almost) all forms of public accountability when it comes to education and may lead to stakeholder resistance (Draxler, 2008; LaRocque & Lee, 2011; Leahy et al., 2016; Patrinos et al., 2009). Leahy et al. (2016) concluded that accomplishments of partnerships is predicated on the outcome of their proceedings on education, enhanced teaching and learning, advanced grounding and administration of education systems, more involvement by the community and extensive commitment by all sectors of society to augment education value. In other words, the best collaborative initiatives are those that manage to maintain a balance between all involved participants,

and further the ends of sound education policy (Leahy et al., 2016). These concepts suggest similar points of polarity management necessary in a democratic society; specifically, those polarities that fall within the poles of participation and representation.

Studies seemed to emphasize the immediate solving of problems in education rather than emphasis on democratic values and public perception. They also often overlook the unseen reality in managing a democratic system reliant on voters. Wallender (2014) brought to light that in 2010 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) announced a policy statement that student success would come through the collaboration between institutions and organizations that all serve young people. Due to this statement, the CCSSO started the work of having state departments of education work with other organizations that serve students in areas that also influence the students' learning (Jochim & Lavery, 2015; Wallender, 2014). Other studies have also broached the subject. Selden et al. (2006) looked at collaboration between human services organizations that give early care and education to children in New York State and Virginia. Selden et al. (2006) used data from a comparative case study of 20 human services organizations. While these researchers suggested a generalized approach to improving education through collaboration, they dealt more specifically with interagency collaboration rather than intra-organizational collaboration.

From the studies reviewed so far, collaboration and partnering between public and private sectors could assist in education reforms. The idea and practice of Private Public Partnership (PPP) has seen a steady increase over the last two decades (Kaur, 2013). Kaur (2013) described PPP as a tactic used by governments to carry out quality services to the

public via the proficiency of the private sector. In such a contractual agreement, a private participant implements part of the operations of the government while taking on some of the related risks (Kaur, 2013). This could be a successful strategy, as not only are more stakeholders represented, but they are also all more invested in achieving positive outcomes. However, it is only possible to observe its positive impact if it is implemented well.

PPP is, therefore, an important element to consider within education, as it has the potential to lead to the attainment of significant educational, social, and economic purposes. Involving for- and non-profit organizations, NGOs, and other key players such as parent and teacher representatives allows for a shift away from the long-established model of the government being solely responsible for providing public services, such as education (Kaur, 2013). This, in turn, could provide greater advances in education policies, and better meet the needs of all those affected by such policies (Kaur, 2013). The CCSSI included all such organizations and participants; and while the initiative seemed by some to be generally considered a failure, it does speak to greater attempts by the government to involve representatives from the greater society in policymaking endeavors. Additionally, the perceptions of the collaborative nature of initiatives that are successful are not apparent in the literature.

### ***Collaborative Governance***

Collaborative governance has been an important focus in research in the 21st century. Over 10 years ago, Ansell and Gash (2007) examined collaborative governance. Now, a decade later, the strategy continues to grow. The goal of the Ansell and Gash

(2007) study was to generate a way to examine the concept of collaboration from its effectiveness as a method to policy making and public management. The materialization of collaborative governance is a reaction to the breakdown of downstream execution in addition to the elevated price tag and politicization of regulation. It has grown as an alternative to the far-reaching opposition of interest group pluralism and accountability malfunction of supervision, particularly as the power of authority is contested. It may also be argued that inclination in the direction of collaboration evolves from the expansion of knowledge and institutional competence. As knowledge becomes gradually more focused and disseminated and as institutional infrastructures grow to be multifarious and inter-reliant, the charge for collaboration amplifies. The elements of knowledge expansion and institutional competence are catalysts for the propensity for collaborative governance (Ansell, & Gash, 2007). These elements could also be a way to solve social problems, yet, even as they have become more of a reality, literature dealing specifically with their phenomenon is lacking. The literature also lacks the discourse needed to properly explore these elements, which suggests knowledge expansion and institutional competence should be evaluated based upon a polarities of democracy framework.

Collaborative governance, which is the focus of the study, could be defined as the procedures and construction of public policy decision making and administration that connect people practically across the borders of public agencies, ranks of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres for the purpose of accomplishing a public objective that may be very difficult to achieve. If implemented well, collaborative

governance could receive the needed backing and associations across different sectors of society that could result in better public policies, and lead to solutions that a single organization or governmental institution may not be able to reach on its own (Bingham, 2009; Tucmeanu, 2014). Understanding collaborative governance in this way provides a wide-ranging rational construct to be used in public administration studies of collaboration (Emerson et al., 2011). While studies focusing on collaborative governance from a perspective of solutions leading to better public policy exist, it is also important to consider the democratic nature of those collaborative initiatives, as well as the acceptance of it by the public who become stakeholders by default. This current study fills such gaps.

Collaborative governance can be understood as a governing agreement where public agencies connect with non-state actors in a joint decision-making course of action that is official, openly in agreement, and deliberative in constructing or employing public policy or administration public programs or resources. According to Plotnikof (2015), it is through intricate, effusive, meaningful actions that collaborative governance results. Therefore, the indication is that collaborative governance should be an ongoing process of organizing through the design and implementation of the associated initiative. further established that a consensus of what collaborative governance entails is that it incorporates assorted types of networks and partnerships composed of participants from within governmental, public, and private sectors, as well as NGOs. These stakeholders attempt to work together to better craft and implement public policy. Collaborative governance could, therefore, be seen as an attempt to provide a solution toward more purposeful and quality management (Plotnikof, 2015). Such an attempt requires public

managers, or those responsible for heading collaborative governance initiatives, to cultivate good relations with all parties involved, particularly due to the delegate approach (i.e., the idea of sharing responsibility) of such governance (Bommert, 2010; Plotnikof, 2016). In pointing out that collaborative governance could provide solutions to problems in a democratic society, a key point not addressed in the literature, and one that presents a gap to be addressed, is how such governance measures up to assuring that polarities of democracy are properly managed and how the public could understand that such governance represents or aligns with those polarities of democracy they are accustomed to having in public policy.

Collaborative innovation offers government the chance to move the position of execution and dissemination to the participant who is most proficient and consequently bolsters the execution and dissemination essentials of the innovation cycle. Thus, collaboration often stems from the development, recognition, and utilization of different individual and institutional expertise, skill, resources, and time (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Ljungholm, 2014). Delegating execution and dissemination to external participants permits the needed amount of risk taking for execution and dissemination. NGO participants are less likely to be blamed for wasting taxpayers' money and therefore enjoy more leeway with helpful leadership, funding, and trialing (Bommert, 2010). This could lead to possibly getting around cultural barriers, making the concept of collaborative governance more universal.

The concept of collaborative governance is multifaceted. Collaborative governance stresses six important criteria: (1) the discussion is instigated by public

agencies or institutions, which includes local, state and federal level bureaucracies, courts, legislatures, and other governmental bodies; (2) contributors include non-state stakeholders; (3) participants are all unequivocally included in decision making as opposed to only consulting of non-state actors; (4) the meetings are officially structured and collectively attended; (5) even though consensus may not occur the initial goal for the initiative is consensus; and (6) the central tenant of the partnership is on public policy or public management (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Collaborative governance could be useful or employed to enlighten participatory governance and civic commitment to varying degrees (Emerson et al., 2011). Thus, collaborative governance reaches into the core of far-reaching perceptions of public administration and democracy.

A noted problem with collaborative governance that, as acknowledged in the literature, is power imbalances that arise between participants and is often in unequal footing amongst stakeholders leading to stronger actors manipulating the situation. Additionally, power imbalances do not ensure that stakeholders have the organizational infrastructure to be represented in collaborative governance processes (Ansell & Gash, 2007). While stakeholders may scrutinize nongovernment participants differently than government participants, their involvement may alter not only the positive effects of managing polarities of democracy in a fair and consistent way, but they may also be perceived in a way that impacts the scrutiny. As a result, it is important to consider the perceptions of stakeholders, in this case citizens, with respect to the collaborative governance initiative of CCSSI.

**Collaborative Initiatives.** As a step in collaborative governance, collaborative innovation was a concept apparent in the literature. Some studies focused on collaborative innovation, showing that the innovation method and cycle is available for all actors from within an organization, other organizations, the private and third sector and citizens to contribute from the initial phase and throughout (Bommert, 2010). A key aspect within collaborative innovation is to develop or ‘push forward’ public policy (Waldorf, 2014). Including public and private stakeholders in collaborative efforts who may likely achieve solutions to problematic policies, allow for better understanding of where and how these policies are problematic, and strengthen policy initiatives (Waldorf, 2014). From the literature, it can be deciphered that plans for collaborative initiatives are founded on the supposition that the quality and quantity of creative ideas coming forth is from a broad array of participants possessing various assets ranging from creative idea formation to material assets.

Questions have been raised regarding whether collaborative innovation is a fitting type of improvement in the public sector which, while being very relevant in a study that includes the democratic aspects of a collaborative initiative, does not fill that gap in the literature. Bommert (2010) asserted that according to proposals for collaborative innovation, government should tap into the vast innovation assets inside and outside of the organization, but also leverage internal innovation assets externally. By opening the innovation cycle, it allows the flow of innovation assets across internal and external boundaries. When Bommert (2010) examined collaborative innovation, he offered possible risks and issues that may arise in collaborative innovation that has a significant



impact upon public value, especially when the NGO participants' role is greater than the government role. Questions about government accountability and authority trigger constitutional issues in a representative democracy. These types of questions which represent polarities of democracy and assertions came into play when examining perceptions of initiatives like the CCSSI.

Modern governments have begun to realize the importance of meeting social challenges through collaborative initiatives. Governments have begun to understand how working with other sectors of society could better promote goal attainment (Sanders, 2014). This, however, requires leadership that could understand and mobilize all participants to achieve the relevant undertaking. For such leadership to be successful, and to promote collaborative initiative ends, leaders need to possess skills such as being able to understand and value the institutional, organizational, and individual participants in the collaborative initiative; consider the initiative as a dynamic and changing social system; and differentiate between various complex social networks that could impact on and influence actions and collaborative objectives (Sanders, 2014). Sanders (2014) noted that oftentimes a more informal approach to leadership, rather than following strict authoritative and bureaucratic hierarchical structures may best allow for collaborative initiatives to work. It should be noted that if the elements pointed out about collaborative innovation are not evident within a democratic foundation, said perception of those innovations may be affected, thus it is important for the functioning of a collaborative initiative to manage a balance between the factors critical for its sustenance.

Whereas the advantages of networks are apparent, we cannot presume that collaborative policy networks do not have drawbacks that may cause them to be unsuitable arrangements for policy improvement and execution. In their theoretical exploration, DeLeon and Varda (2009) examined collaborative networks in hopes of providing evidence for the claim of the practice representing a “more participatory/discursive democracy” (p. 61). The joining together of multi-sectoral involvement has the typical rudiments of public–private partnerships and the possibility for malfunction when the integration of principles, standards, power, confidence, and familiarity might collide and produce unwanted disagreement and strain (DeLeon & Varda, 2009). This swing from specific bureaucratic agencies taking independent action in providing public policy requirements to the combined work of multiple agencies to solve complex public problems signifies the necessity for concepts to elucidate the materialization and growth of the phenomenon.

To address the perceived need, DeLeon and Varda (2009) put forward a theory of “collaborative policy networks”. This theory examines the participant make-up of a group, the affiliation between any two stakeholders and the way participants are entrenched in various levels of institutionalized configuration and the rational inclination of exchange among them that advances policy initiative, execution, assessment, and perhaps termination. Rather than addressing manageable polarities of democracy as qualities to measure in collaborative groups, DeLeon and Varda composed a list of actions to test significant hypotheses they saw as germane to collaborative networks. The actions are measures used to address these premises. For instance, in measuring

homophily as characteristics of network, participants were used to address the high probability occurrence of heterogeneity in the midst of stakeholders; measuring reciprocity to address whether there is a high probability of reciprocity taking place; measuring centralization as a means to examining the high probability of minimal centralization of ties within a collaborative policy group; measuring multiplicity and the length of relationship to determine the high probability of such; measuring formality of ties rooted in agreements and interaction as well as the high probability of trust occurring being measured by reliability, equivalence of task and communication lucidity; measuring cognitive social structure of transparency, centralization, decision making roles within the network used to examine the high probability of transparent relationships; and measuring structural equivalence to look at the high probability of structurally equivalent leaders (DeLeon & Varda, 2009). The concepts, if put into the context of managing the polarities of democracy, would show a key aspect of collaborative governance that is often not visible to the public.

According to Emerson et al. (2011), the Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR) model includes collaborative forces and procedures, and facilitates political, legal, socioeconomic, environmental, and additional influences. From this approach, policy makers, along with incentives, dependence, and ambiguous contexts could assist in instructing and directing the CGR (Emerson et al., 2011). In the CGR model, “regime” is used to include the specific means of public decision-making, where collaboration is characterized by the main determinants for performance and action (Emerson et al., 2011). This means that those in collaboration mutually agree upon the values and degrees

on which the CGR is built, to ensure success. Emerson et al. highlighted “principled engagement”, “shared motivation”, and “capacity for joint action” as three key components to collaboration. The authors noted that these three elements worked together to assist in creating collaborative proceedings or providing the means to conduct the public function of the CGR (Emerson et al., 2011).

The gist of the Emerson et al. (2011) tabulated information is that dimension and components could represent collaborative dynamics, such as resource conditions; policy legal frameworks; prior failure to address issues; political dynamics/power relations; network connectedness; levels of conflict/ trust; socio-economic/cultural health and diversity. Leadership, consequential incentives, interdependence, and uncertainty also all play an active role (are drivers of) in collaborative dynamics. Furthermore, principled engagement within collaboration often leads to discovery, definition, deliberation, and determination, while shared motivation develops elements of mutual trust, mutual understanding, internal legitimacy, and shared commitment (Emerson et al., 2011). Finally, procedural/institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and resources all work to promote better capacity for joint action (Emerson et al., 2011). Thus, collaborative output or action is often context-dependent, relying on a combination of elements, such as providing endorsements, developing, and implementing policies, making proper use of resources and deploying staff, accordingly, promoting new management practices, and monitoring and enforcing changes. In essence, then, collaborative dynamics or outcomes attempt to change the status quo to promote improvements.

Thriving collaborative governance is challenging to attain. It counts on generating a purposeful atmosphere that cultivates reliance, shared devotion, mutual responsibility, and a readiness to share consequences (Bryson et al., 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). Stakeholders must feel assured that all participating during a course of action have the same occasion to affect the choices made and believe that they are likely to have selected effect on the core problems the collaborative is attending to (Bryson et al., 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). Aspects within collaborative governance as discussed by Emerson et al. (2011), Bryson et al. (2014), and Gerlak et al. (2013) infer some of Benet's (2012) democratic polarity pairs but uses different language to delve into intricacies that may exist within those general pairs. The authenticity of a public sector collaboration lies on its allegiance to broad public validation; public policies, since they contain the implementation of influence, should be rationalized in discussions where all touched by the decision have an equivalent chance to take part in preparing and testing the public explanation defending the use of power.

**Adaptive Collaborative Governance.** A norm that appeared in the literature is the examination of collaboration simply as a means for finding a way to deliver public policy and public services more proficiently or successfully. Diverging from this norm, Dickinson and Sullivan (2013) instead looked at it as an expression of cultural occurrence connected to all associated dimensions. Dickinson and Sullivan's examination of social effectiveness filled one of the gaps in the comprehension of collaborative functioning and aids in explaining the continual allure of collaboration amid policy makers and practitioners. It can be deciphered from the literature that collaboration is strongly linked

with network governance although its structural appearance fluctuates to adapt its application across chains of command, markets, and networks, such as public-private alliances, provider-user associations, multi-actor leagues, and policy networks.

Dickinson and Sullivan (2013) drew on performance studies literature explaining McKenzie's (2001) identification of cultural performance as an articulation of pointed or commemorated representations or endorsements of distinct social and cultural traditions. Performances may lead to total change or contravening, supporting, and attaining compliance to a gaggle of mores and values or advancing rebellion against those same mores and values in search of others (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2013). In this context of cultural performance, there exists a divergent way to view collaboration focusing not only on interactions and actions of individuals and organizations but going beyond this and examining rational motives (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2013). Determining to collaborate is complicated and driven by motivations that are not rational but reflective of values or meanings that are attached to it. Understanding collaboration based on cultural performance, contradictory to organization efficiency or technological effectiveness, provides a means to consider alternative explanations on the reasons why actors collaborate. This means that collaboration is seen as a discursive structure that is constrained and shaped by social values of individual agents. The elements within adaptive governance seem to suggest that collaborative initiatives like the CCSSI do in fact reflect social values. However, what was not discussed is that relationship to democratic polarity pairs which must be managed to assure the positive aspects of each.

## **Common Core State Standards Initiative**

### ***The Initiative Within Prescribed Democratic Parameters***

In the United States democratic society, the provision of public education traditionally comes from local and state government with a minor role of the federal government in accordance with the tenth Amendment of the Constitution. Owens' (2015) view of the collaborative initiative that produced CCSS seems to lie in her assumption that Americans do not know how it came to be and that it is an initiative that has made the public school system an arena for those seeking economic gain. Owens (2015) posited that the creation of the CCSS was like past government actions that enhanced the role of the Federal government in public education, which was boosted with creation of the DOE under President Jimmy Carter in 1979. In effect, Owens accused the Carter Administration of opening the door to and moving the relationship between the federal level and the state/local levels responsibilities for public education from a minor federal role to a more major federal role. Yet, the DOE assured that even with the CCSSI the local level would be the place for education policy to be created and the federal government would not do so (Owens, 2015). Like Saad (2014) who seemed to suggest the CCSSI was created to institute national standards, Owens (2015) connected the concept to a historical trend started many years ago.

The need for social reform in the context of education has been in existence for almost half a century. Owens (2015) attributed the ongoing social perception that public schools are in need of reform and that decade after decade initiatives must be created to provide that reform to the 1983 report published by the NCCE that claimed that the

nation was at risk due to the so-called failing public schools. Since the NCEE report, titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, came about under Republican leadership, Owens (2015) assumed that free-market ideals were attached to the blaring call for education reform that would carry through with subsequent reform attempts from that time forward including the latest initiative, namely the CCSSI. Owens (2015) claimed that the 1986 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act placed corporate leaders in a position representing those who had and could institute big ideas including ones which could help reform education. Owens' (2015) speculation that the free-market emphasis that entered the discourse and goals for public school reform in the 1980s continued into the 1990s with the business model of Total Quality Management (TQM) and another step toward corporate driven reform. TQM promotes a full makeover of the very conception of public schools. Under this formula, rather than learners, students would be seen as principal customers in addition to being employees whose outcome is their own constant development and progress represented in their test scores. Therefore, in addition to teaching, teachers dispense educational assistance to children (Owens, 2015). Owens' work addressed aspects that bring the democratic nature of a collaborative initiative like CCSSI into question by linking the initiative to something counter to the role each level of government plays in public education within the democratic society.

In a pluralistic society, engaging in their own self-interests in many different areas, institutions squelch the emergence of a unified focus to bring together those individual pursuits. When applied to the United States' public schools where the process



to exhibit public decision-making within a democracy comes into play, this concept, as discussed by Buchholtz (2012) and Owens (2015), suggests that it is the task of local school boards to act as both negotiator and choice-maker in taking into account the proposals of certain groups concerning education, and the level of influence groups should have while creating a unified focus for the public education sector the boards represent (Owens, 2015). Amid the ever-present tension of assessing and reassessing which organizations or groups will provide paramount aid in helping students prepare for their eventual roles in society, school boards must be flexible, adaptable and quite aware of the social, economic, and political environment due to the context in which they exist (Owens, 2015). School boards in the United States expect board members to fulfill duties and deliberations, considering the goal of providing the best possible education to children and their respective districts (Owens, 2015). In the context of this study, CCSSI being a collaborative one, without using the terminology, Owens (2015) and Buchholtz (2012) exposed just how significant managing democratic polarity pairs is and seemed to suggest that those collaborators in the CCSSI caused imbalance in them.

Business and philanthropy have direct effects upon the United States' education. Schneider (2015) questioned whether the school boards and teachers were in charge or owned schools or if it was those who made up the members of the collaborative program known as the CCSSI. According to Schneider (2015), the involvement of Bill Gates and the Pearson Corporation was the contrivance of their aspirations to be inserted into the education system, which would lead to the marketing of education. By utilizing the Gates Foundation for promotion of the CCSSI, it brings into question the collaborative initiative

of members and their actions. Schneider called the nonprofits, businesses engrossed with the desire for profit, and those on the federal level outsiders. Schneider referred to the CCSSI as an overly costly, financial, large-scale, stupid mistake and saw the Initiative as having an influential grip on American education which is unsound and implausible as an education scheme. It was not an investigation of the standards that created the product of the collaborative initiative, nor a docket outlining the backlash (which this study recognizes) but was presented as one way for the public to perceive why teachers, parents and students have refused CCSSI (Schneider, 2015). Schneider made the claim that results of the collaboration/collaborative governance legalized the ownership of the CCSSI to NGA (National Governor's Association) and CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers), which boiled down to state education systems being dictated to by two individuals (high ranking state officials) from the respective state.

Like this study, Schneider (2015) did include a negative component of the collaborative aspect of the CCSSI by pointing out the dominate role of one of the NGOs associated with its creation by accusing Achieve (NGO) of promoting CCSS in contracts even before the standards were supposedly established. In its reports, Achieve was very careful in its communication during pre-Common Core days that are arguably the roots of the actual CCSSI. The careful communication attempted to claim that the term "common" did not mean each state would have identical standards but only that a central portion of their standards would mirror those of the other states (Schneider, 2015). The claim of Schneider was that the structure of the high school portion of CCSS was based upon a prior project—the American Diploma Project (ADP). Achieve created this project

and was not a state-led initiative, yet those organizations involved using the motivation of global competition pushed state governors to adopt it. States used the MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding) in their appendices of applications for federal dollars in the RTTT program because the MOU was sufficient proof of guaranteed reform. Pennsylvania took the voluntary aspect seriously (Schneider, 2015) and eventually reneged on the MOU. In pointing out some of the actions of the NGOs associated with persuading states to sign off on the work of the collaborative initiative, it is important to remember that such initiatives are still at the discretion of how public education is set up to function according to the Constitution in the democratic society, an assertion that provided a rationale for this study.

### *Multiple Studies Examining the Common Core State Initiative*

**Compendium Studies.** While researching the literature associated with this study to ensure it fills a gap in the literature, the researcher found and examined a compendium composed of multiple studies focusing on the CCSSI. For example, Achieve, the independent nonpartisan, nonprofit education reform organization (NGO) created in 1996 by a bipartisan group of governors and business leaders, committed to working with states to advance standards and graduation prerequisites as well as augment assessments and enhance tractability performed research by monitoring voter awareness and support for the CCSS (Frizzell & Dunderdale, 2013-2015). Through publicly consigned polling, Achieve administered multiple polls between the years 2011 and 2013. The study found that there was majority backing for states having alike standards and tests instead of individual ones (Frizzell & Dunderdale, 2013-2015). In this section, I will summarize

significant information from these studies to reveal a gap in the literature which this study will fill.

In 2014 researchers from Gallup combined a sequence of five publications and sampled 532 public school kindergarten- through 12th grade parents and 854 public kindergarten- through 12th schoolteachers in all 50 United States, and the District of Columbia (Saad, 2014). The author weighted both segments to conform to national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, and religion. Population density and phone status also counterbalanced the original sample. In the study, approximately 44% of teachers considered the CCSS negatively with 40% saying it was positive. Their views seemed to align with political Party affiliation. They saw associating student test scores with their evaluations as prejudiced and even though they supported national standards in reading, writing, and math, they were not positive about standardized, computer-based assessments. There were more teachers worried or disheartened than were positive about CCSS. By including the concept of so-called national standards, the study made a glaring assumption about what the CCSSI was formed to accomplish. Also, rather than focusing on the collaboration itself, the study focused on the standards for students created by the initiative, which was made up of collaborating policy makers, and NGOs (Saad, 2014). Hence leaving the gap in the literature that this study fills.

In the Gallup (2014) study, researchers surveyed K-12 school district superintendents about the CCSSI. This survey of K-12 school district superintendents was to understand opinions of these superintendents and focused on many education

issues including CCSS (Gallup, 2014). However, the portion on CCSS dealt with standards to which 73% of the supervisors felt were right and 60% felt that states should stick with CCSS (Gallup, 2014). This was yet another study that did not focus on public perception of the CCSSI. Nor did the study include frameworks associated with managing the polarities of democracy. Furthermore, The Center on Education Policy conducted a study in 2013. The researchers surveyed superintendents by asking 43 questions that dealt mostly with ESEA/No Child Left Behind waivers as well as costs and other hurdles in implementing the CCSS (Center on Education Policy, 2014). Like many others covered in the compendium, this study did not reveal a connection to individuals reacting to the collaborative nature of the Initiative in relation to managing polarities of democracy (Center on Education Policy, 2014).

One recent study contained in the Common Core State Standards Compendium, addressed by Henderson et al. (2015), focused on acquiring public opinion about multiple education initiatives such as school evaluations, school budgets, policies dealing with school choice, policies dealing with personnel accountability and college readiness. The report about the study was based on a random subsample of 2269 respondents who were given information about student performance in their local districts (Henderson et al., 2015). The reason the study is mentioned in this literature review is because it did have some questions specific to the CCSSI and it also was concerned with public opinion which is something that arises from public perception. Those questions associated with CCSS focused on standards like other studies in the compendium but did show a decrease in support for it from a study reported on just a year earlier by Henderson et al. (2014).

However, unlike this study, perception motivating opinions about the collaborative initiatives that led to CCSS was not a part of the study by Henderson et al. (2015).

In Kornhaber et al.'s (2014) study the goal was to understand how CCSS policy entrepreneurs viewed how the role and meaning of equity was in the reform. While the title would suggest a study very similar to this one, as equity is a component in understanding collaborative initiatives done through democratic means, the findings showed instead a definition of equity in the context of school inputs that would equalize student outcomes. Like the other studies previously mentioned, Kornhaber et al. focused their study on dealing more with the effects of the initiative rather than the collaborative nature of those involved in creating the CCSS, which was the focus in this study.

McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) did a study in the beginning of 2013. It pulled on political and policy learning theories and investigated the causes that both supporting and opposing groups mobilized about CCSS and the roles they played. The study seemed the most like this study but failed to fill the same gap in the literature highlighted for this study. The authors collected data through interviews, national publications, congressional testimony, and other sources. The study found that those who supported CCSS came from a diverse group of organizations, their roles were also diverse, and they mobilized. The study put their reasons for support into 6 categories: 1) promoting an idea, 2) developing the standards, 3) articulating constituent concerns, 4) building support and states, 5) informing constituents and looking toward implementation, and 6) funding the CCSSI and building a network. McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) also found a diverse set of reasons for the supporters' mobilization.

The authors concluded that those reasons included concerns about global economic competitiveness by policymaker proponents, while equity-based groups saw low quality of state standards and unequal distribution of student learning opportunities as a reason to support it. Other organizations saw it as a way to push their advocacy agendas (Center on Education Policy, 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). While the McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) study strongly considered the proponents of the CCSSI, they also addressed those in opposition. Opponents seemed to come from more groups that were more ideologically aligned with each other, but the groups seemed only to be loosely allied. These groups saw the standards as an unnecessary federal interference and hazardous to state autonomy. The opposing organizations constructed their arguments against CCSS by being suspicious about the evidence base, positing that some states have more rigorous standards than those in CCSS, and worried that the cost of execution and evaluation were unknown. Examining the opposition is relevant to any study concerning the collaborative nature of the CCSSI. Therefore, unlike the McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) study, this study included perspectives of those opposed to the collaborative nature of the initiative.

In a second McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) study, an examination of how research and various types of evidence were used in developing and adopting the CCSS was carried out. The researchers interviewed 111 stakeholders, including its leaders, members of the work groups associated with it and committees that created and authenticated the CCSS, both national and state education policymakers, education policy researchers, and even opponents/critics of the CCSS (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013).

Interview data was classified by the policy stage in which the interviewees contributed. The documented explanations of categories of evidence used were evaluated based upon hypotheses that researchers obtained from policy analysis literature (Center on Education Policy, 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). The key findings from the study included the following: the research used to characterize the problem and establish a potential resolution for the CCSS embraced international contrasts and state standards contrasts (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). Those who instigated the discussion of the CCSS alluded to low achievement on international assessments; the connection of education to global economic viability; national achievement disparities in educational accomplishments based upon race, social class, or geographical position; and state to state standards that differ in exactitude and profundity (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). Four aspects influenced the evidence used.

The first of the aspects that influenced the evidence from McDonnell's & Weatherford's second study was the declaration that the expansion of the CCSS needed to be grounded in research to circumvent ideological debates (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). Second, without enough peer-reviewed research to help shape the standards, it would result in standards writers' necessity to use other types of evidence; thus, the ultimate outcome was based on exploration and data (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). Third, there was an appeal to involve stakeholders as well as educational researchers in the Initiative's processes (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). Fourth, McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) established that a foundation in accessible research and data was a major directive employed by the validation committee. Due to



the small amount of available research some of the committee members' determinations were derived from professional assessment. During the state adoption stage, stakeholders frequently adapted formerly used evidence to speak to different state audiences (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). The researchers indicated that evidence was modified to focus on the necessity for states to accept standards swiftly to satisfy federal prerequisites and the necessity for state policymakers to distinguish the rigor of the standards in comparison with their states' former standards (Center on Education Policy, 2015; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). While these findings include important aspects needed to be considered in public education reform initiatives it still leaves a gap in the literature.

In 2014, Phi Delta Kappa International and Gallup conducted studies gleaning Americans' attitudes toward public school policies in general with some questions about the CCSS. In the Annual PDK/Gallup Poll, those questions and responses had most to do with standards, teacher's inability to be flexible and the perceived notion that the CCSSI was initiated by the federal government (Center on Education Policy, 2015; Phi Delta Kappa International & Gallup, 2014). The study, like previously mentioned ones, did not reveal a connection to individuals reacting to the collaborative nature of the CCSSI in relation to managing polarities of democracy. Hence, there was a large gap in the literature determining the need for this study that considered the collaborative nature of the involved organizations.

**Non compendium Studies.** The latest update to the Center on Education Policy responsible for the compendium studies previously examined and the major works about

CCSS examined for this literature review were published in 2015. Therefore, the researcher searched Sage education and policy journals for additional literature that may have been published between 2015 and 2017, since the current study is still ongoing. The researcher found that when exploring 300 journal articles, only 15 studies were discovered from 2015 in which 13 dealt with CCSS only on a curriculum, assessments, standards, or teaching strategies level. There was one study that dealt with school leadership or implementation of the standards.

One study from McGuinn (2015) seemed to deal with ongoing opposition to CCSS, mentioning the discovery of growing opposition to the Common Core between 2014 and 2015 the years it was fully implemented nationwide. The opposition was discovered from surveys taken by various people, and it was found that people do not like Common Core and unusual political alliances were occurring in opposition to it (McGuinn, 2015). It appeared that Tea Party adherents, and some others who appear to be on the political right errantly think Common Core is unconstitutional because it leads to too much federal control over education, therefore violating the rights of states. Former President Obama's vocal support for the CCSS and his administrations creation of the RTT (Race to The Top) competition and waiver applications for NCLB (No Child Left Behind) seemed to have fueled these opponents. Others opposed the CCSS based upon a perception that the centralized collection of student information and test scores will be used for data mining and the federal government will have access to private information on individual students. Also, some concerns centered on the business community's involvement in the initiative. However, the focus of this opposition seemed related to

schemes by corporations to make money on textbooks as well as fear of the wealthy elite dictating government policy (McGuinn, 2015).

These two concepts are related to this study, as they are relevant to managing polarities of democracy. However, the survey study did not present as a study specifically about collaborative governance being managed in connection to polarities of democracy (McGuinn, 2015). In that same search, only 12 articles appeared to be published in 2016, all of which were also centered around curriculum, assessments, standards, or teaching strategies and one dealing with leadership or implementation. However, there were some studies in 2016, which require mention. Liou (2016) looked at the concept of collaboration in relation to CCSS. However, the collaboration was not focused on the governance or policy spectrum, or as a concept to understand within a democratic society. Instead, Liou (2016) looked at the significant social characteristic of collaboration among educational leaders as they continue to work through implementation and other changes associated with CCSS.

Polikoff et al. (2016) examined the role opposition to CCSS has played in damaging its implementation. The authors polled California voters looking at demographic and policy predictors associated with CCSS opposition. The study focused on three research questions concerning who was opposed, other education policy perceptions connected to Common Core, and if voter knowledge had anything to do with opposing it (Polikoff et al., 2016). While this study focused on opposition, it approached the concept in relation to the actual undermining of the goals of the CCSSI, rather than looking at opposition to the actual make-up of the collaborative group who created it.

Baltodano (2016) reviewed historical literature to explore how political philanthropy has become ingrained and indistinct in United States politics, such that the public fails to identify where the restrictions between public good and unbridled privatizing neoliberalism are positioned. While the study was not specifically about the CCSSI, it did set forth the idea of continual movement of the business sector to ultimately control education starting back in the 1970s with business partnerships to what we see happening today. The article also pointed out The Melinda and Bill Gates foundation as one of the stakeholders of the CCSSI. This concept of neoliberalism is indeed germane to looking at collaborative initiatives as they relate to public education in a democratic society, yet it still leaves a gap in the literature (Baltodano, 2016). Only four results appeared in 2017 in the search; three dealing with curriculum, assessments, standards, or teaching strategies, and one with leadership or implementation (Friesem & Prest, 2017; McCaffrey & Corapi, 2017; Murawski & Scott, 2017; Nazir, 2017). All these findings in the search suggested a gap in the literature regarding opposition to the Initiative as collaborative governance within a democratic society. In this study, this gap is addressed.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

In this study of collaboration between NGOs and public schools I used the Q method grounded in the polarities of democracy theoretical framework. I took an emergence approach to recognizing and defining the problem and choosing and designing the methodology of the study. The Q methodology design guided me to a holistic look behind problems facing the democratic society in relation to improving its public school system.

The review of the literature noted opposition to the CCSSI, as well as how various studies failed to provide the reasoning or factors behind such opposition. This established the need for my study. The review also addressed areas around the important role education plays in a democracy; how and why policy is important in improving education and promoting active citizenship; and the importance of ensuring collaborative governance. These issues were important for my study, in that opposition to collaborative government education policies might negatively impact on both education and democracy; issues which were dealt with in this study.

The review also provided extensive groundwork on the polarities of democracy theory making up this study's framework. After providing insight into what these frameworks entailed, the review noted how these theories play an important role in understanding public responses and opinions to government policy, education systems, NGO creation, and other key players regarding this study's problem and purpose. By addressing current knowledge and views regarding CCSS, along with notions of education and democracy, and placing these within the theoretical framework, the review provided a comprehensive overview of the issue.

I established that there was a gap in the literature regarding reasons for opposition to government policies. This gap called for the inclusion of this study, which focused on understanding opposition to collaborative government initiatives within a democracy. Particularly, this study fills the established gap in the literature regarding education policies and the CCSSI within Pennsylvania. Thus, this review both highlighted various aspects of the issue, and promoted further areas of study, some of which was addressed

through this Q methodological study. Chapter 3 provides further explanation of this chosen methodology, as well as its relevance and suitability for this study.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this Q methodological study was to explore perceptions of individuals in Pennsylvania about initiatives within the context of collaborative governance designed to solve social problems. Through the polarities of democracy framework, the exploration specifically examined the perceptions of groups and individuals in Pennsylvania of the CCSSI, a collaborative public education reform initiative. The use of Q methodology was the appropriate approach in trying to pinpoint just how significant public perceptions are in a democratic society because perception drives reaction which may either be a catalyst for, or may thwart, social change. Likewise, public perception should be a major consideration in policy created for a democratic society.

Following this introductory portion, Chapter 3 includes a short preface containing a reiteration of the research question, statement, and characterization of the phenomenon being examined via the Q methodology. Also in the introduction is the rationale behind using the methodology. The chapter continues with an explanation of my role as the researcher in the study as well as a detailed description of Q methodology adapted for this study, which includes explanations about participation selection logic and the background of the method.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The problem of opposition delaying, or in some cases ending, what seemed like progressive public education reform was the focus of the study. I chose this focus

because CCSSI opposition represents yet another failed attempt at securing public education, which is one of the most important sectors responsible for sustaining the democracy (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2016; Hill & Varone, 2017; Murray, 2015). It also represents a key concern in the broader attempts at managing polarities of democracy necessary in social change for a democratic society (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2016; Hill & Varone, 2017; Murray, 2015). Buried in public opposition are perspectives often ignored by change-agents who in this case were the participants in the CCSSI.

The way in which states have and are reacting to the opposition as well as the opposition itself are significant to the democratic society looking to collaborative governance as a transformational practice in addressing what may seem to be unsolvable social problems. This was particularly true for the case of this study on public education. Therefore, it was essential that I use a methodology able to embrace the interconnected components central to the phenomenon. Q methodology provided a way to do so. Central to this study were the following interrelated concepts: collaborative governance, polarities of democracy, and public spheres.

## **Central Concepts**

### ***Collaborative Governance***

The concept of collaborative governance was central to the study, as the focus of the study was on exploring public perceptions about a collaborative governance initiative in education. Public policy studies over many years have revealed that in the realm of public education, employing vast, national initiatives that require distinct groups to liaise is extremely complicated and has left the United States beleaguered with policies that,



while designed for and verbally presented with grandeur, fell apart during execution (Hess & McShane, 2013). Within the representative democracy, groups both for and against collaborative governance support their opinions by supplicating to democracy (Choi & Robertson, 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). Therefore, evaluating the qualities of collaborative groups, while not easy, requires the active and rigorous exploration of all opinions, including those against a collaborative initiative (Choi & Robertson, 2014; Gerlak et al., 2013). Exploring such opinions with respect to collaborative governance was the purpose of the study, and it was undertaken against the context of democratic societies within which collaborative governance operates.

### ***Polarities of Democracy***

Polarities of democracy forms the theoretical framework of the study and grounds the relationship between public opinion and government authority. Benet (2013b) pointed out that modeling democratic values in transformative practices used to move the education system forward is essential. In this study, I viewed CCSSI as an occurrence of democratic collaborative governance and a transformative practice in bringing reform to public education. As 10 fundamental elements of democracy, the five pairs of polarities, freedom-authority, justice-due process, diversity-equality, human rights-communal obligations, and participation-representation, are the features of Benet's (2013b) polarities of democracy model, some of which provide a framework by which practices deemed transformative like CCSSI could be examined within Q methodology.

### ***Public Spheres***

The concept of public sphere is another basic concept within the study, as the focus in this research was on public perceptions. In a democratic society, the voice of the people is the quintessential element behind its functioning. Even when those voices are of resistance or opposition toward policy, they make up public spheres that present a distinctive style of political interface that moves from debate to action (Dryzek, 1996). The involvement of public spheres in democratization is usually based upon their authenticity. However, they also contribute to the scope of democratic control by raising issues to get non-participants involved in their cause (Dryzek, 1996). Challenges from public spheres bring re-creation and re-evaluation of concepts such as self-sufficiency, liberty, and democracy itself (Dryzek, 1996). Since local and international democracies and general equality are based on tolerance of others (Biesta, 2016; Birkland, 2015; Ichilov, 2013), when policy is created and public spheres arise to challenge and, in some cases, impact the results of that policy, it is essential that these spheres of public opposition be examined within the parameters of the policy they oppose, its democratic nature (Birkland, 2015). Such an opposition in the context of CCSSI was explored in this study through the perception of citizens using Q methodology.

### **Research Question**

To best study this phenomenon and consider the various perspectives on collaborative governance in the realm of public education in the democratic society, I selected a Q methodological approach. The following research question guided this Q

study: What are the perceptions of citizens in Pennsylvania regarding the CCSSI in regard to its collaborative nature?

### **Methodology**

There are disagreements regarding the methodological status of Q methodology. Q methodology is described by some as qualitative and others as quantitative in nature (Shemmings, 2006; Watts & Stenner, 2005). Based upon the design, some may even describe it as a mixed method (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). However, Q methodology fits the conventional qualitative approach in that it allows the evaluation of policies and practices through a phenomenon to be understood from the participants' point of view (Lewis-Beck & Lewis-Beck, 2016). Yet, while fundamentally qualitative, Q methodology deviates from a conventional qualitative, quantitative, or even a mixed methods approach.

The literature contains explanations about Q methodology that make it difficult to define as qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method. Some see Q methodology as an atypical qualitative research method because of its quantitative features (Shemmings, 2006; Watts & Stenner, 2005). Watts and Stenner (2005) referred to this methodology as *qualiquantological*, while others, such as McKeown and Thomas (2013), put it somewhat in the quantitative realm. Q methodology brings qualitative research into the quantitative realm (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). A methodology that rises above the traditional researcher's necessity to decide on and adhere to either qualitative or quantitative methods, Q methodology is neither entirely qualitative nor quantitative; however, it draws upon and values both (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

Due to its dual characteristics, some may want to define Q method as a mixed method. However, it is difficult to do so (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). On one hand, it seems to fit the definition of mixed method that maintains: the inclusion of assorted qualitative or quantitative approaches within a distinct study that may be theoretically propelled by either qualitative or quantitative strategies (Bernard, 2013). Yet, when considering the next concept conveyed in this definition, which notes that mixed methods combine one method (i.e., the core method) with the other as a supplement, one must recognize that Q methodology is not exactly such (Bernard, 2013). While Q does make available a more comprehensive conception of the issue being examined due to a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, how this occurs in Q methodology differs from the conventional explanation of a mixed method (Creswell, 2014). This approach stays away from proposing a hypothesis in advance; an abduction from a priori premises is the foundation of Q (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Q methodology could be best summarized as giving participants a set of items that epitomize the full array of communicated information about the topic of interest and asking them to rank that information following provided instructions. In general, the Q method is not a standard factor analysis because rather than studying connections among variables that are traits, the variables are people (the participants). Therefore, the researcher is looking for similarities between perceptions within a population or group of people. Some who perform Q technique do in-person one-on-one interviews with participants. However, this added step is very difficult and expensive, and many who use Q find it limiting and it need only be done if it benefits the study. Since in this study the

goal was to not merely explore the perceptions of the participants, but to do so against a framework of democratic society and with the aim of reforming collaborative governance through policy contribution, a more unique approach of Q methodology provided an appropriate research method.

The principal intention of a Q methodological study is to discover people's perceptions based upon the position of self-reference. These notions comprise the Q methodological comprehension of subjectivity (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Q methodology allows for natural subjectivity in letting participants communicate their meanings of Q sample items separate from a conjectural or speculative structure of the researcher (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Q methodology provides an efficient and logical approach to examining subjectivity (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Q methodology provides efficient and logical procedures for empirical examination of human subjectivity (Durning & Osuna, 1994; McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The strength of Q methodology is its provision for aspiring to configure stimuli, assign worth, or present one's viewpoint with any set of statements (Zabala, 2014). Due to the qualitative and quantitative properties inherent in the methodology, this provision could lead to constructive results in a Q sample (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). As a result, the goal of exploring public perceptions involving diverse views was served by the use of Q methodology.

Due to the focus of the study, an important factor in selecting the research design was the possibility of including diverse views. In Q studies, participants arrange a set of assertions collected from diverse sources characterizing a great variety of views and perspectives on the phenomenon being examined (Shinebourne, 2009; Shinebourne &

Adams, 2007). Key in the rationale for such is that by collecting the assertions/statements from various sources addressing specific issues being addressed, the Q process brings out the intertwined nature and engagement between individual explanations of meaning and social, cultural, and professional discourses available (Shinebourne & Adams, 2007). Such explanations could strengthen the CCSSI implementation as a collaborative governance initiative through reform and changes based on public perceptions that are critical but constructive.

I also considered other methodological approaches for this particular study. For example, I considered a case study method for this examination due to its ability to add comprehension of phenomena associated with political policy and social issues and a distinct need to grasp complexities therein. Case study has been a frequent method used in many corresponding disciplines (Yin, 2013). While a case study method permits researchers to get to the holistic and significant characteristics of real-life events, the questions that must be asked in a case study seek to answer *how* or *why* in relation to a social phenomenon (Yin, 2013). In the Q method, however, the questions asked are designed to understand people's perspectives on a given phenomenon (McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Simons, 2013). Therefore, the Q method was found to be more appropriate compared to a case study.

Another potential option for this study was grounded theory. When using the grounded theory method, a researcher must stick with a systematic procedure with adaptable guidelines when collecting and analyzing qualitative data (Chamaz, 2006). The data are collected to aid in the creation of theoretical analysis from the beginning

(Charmaz, 2006). This differs greatly from Q methodology, because there is no hypothesis or theory to begin with due to its highly subjective component. That component is essential for examining perspectives that will have an impact on policy. Therefore, I did not choose grounded theory for this study.

In the rationale for choosing a research method, I also considered phenomenology, as it is closest to Q methodology. This is because it could be characterized as a subjectivity study, but it scrutinizes how the phenomenon is experienced by the respondents or research participants (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The phenomenology approach is a philosophical prospect focusing on subjective understanding of the world (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). However, this approach does not offer the key to what was examined in this study and was not selected.

Q methodology provides an efficient and logical approach to examining subjectivity (Brown, 1993; Durning & Osuna, 1994; McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Q methodology is designed to investigate the individual perceptions, dialogue, or decision-making approaches within a group to focus on issues such as the agreement to new policies or mounting public involvement (Zabala, 2014). Thus, I deemed this the best methodological approach for this particular study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in this study was derived from the research design. Unlike the R methodological researcher-led objective measurements as the goal, the researcher in Q methodology provides the opportunity for participant subjective positions and perspectives to emerge (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Q methodology offers a way to

attain outcomes unburdened by instrumental effects due to the researcher and the participants being equal (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Within the procedures carried out by the participants, their subjectivity is measured by the individual themselves. Additionally, as the researcher I was responsible for examining articles, documents, diaries, recorded interviews, books, formal interviews, informal discussions and via pilot studies, surveying social media as well as other web-based sources of information and any other means of germane communication to divulge the inbuilt flow of communicability related to a topic to compile the concourse (Watts & Stenner, 2005). It is within the concourse that the forces of thought around a topic feed it and are fed by it (Brown, 1993; Watts & Stenner, 2005). Thus, a primary role of the researcher was to develop the concourse for the Q study.

After creating the concourse, I then created a Q sample drawn from and representative of it. Key themes contained in academic literature could also have been placed into the Q sample (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The Q sample is administered to participants by the researcher in the procedure known as a Q sort (Brown, 1993; Watts & Stenner, 2005). In creating a Q set that must be broadly illustrative of the opinion sphere at issue, the researcher does not play the role of a theorist but rigorously carries out the task of sampling. This differs from those creating test or questionnaire studies. (Watts & Stenner, 2005). As a result, the Q methodology determines the role of the researcher.

### **Personal/Professional Relationships**

As noted previously, for this study, my main role was as an observer. That is, I simply posed questions and gathered information with little to no active participation,



outside of the data collection process (Bernard, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Henwood, 2014).

As a result, I had little direct contact with participants (as would be the case with interviews), and simply collated and analyzed the data gathered.

Additionally, in defining the role of the researcher, it was important to note any personal or professional relationships that might influence the outcome of the study (Bernard, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Henwood, 2014). However, because I had very little direct contact with participants, such issues were not of concern. Furthermore, I had no professional relationships with any of the participants in the study. This could have been advantageous as the participants' responses will not be affected by such dynamics.

## **Researcher Bias and Ethical Issues**

### ***Ethics***

In the social sciences, which was the type of this study, human beings are the participants. Therefore, close examination of any ethical implications of how they and the researcher interact is important (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The areas in which ethical concerns in research emerge include shielding participants from harm, informed permission, entitled confidentiality, and integrity amongst fellow professionals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). It was important, to ensure ethical issues were addressed, to address these concerns.

As is consistent with research projects, this study employed the standard of voluntary participation. As a result, people were not forced into taking part in the study (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Likewise, I utilized an informed consent form in fully explaining the procedures and if any, risks involved in being a participant in the study.

This informed consent was presented in a digital form, which participants needed to read and digitally sign before taking part in the Q sort (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This informed consent form included information related to the purpose and process of the study, the voluntary and risk-free nature of the study, how long the sort would last, how the researcher planned on keeping any potential personal information anonymous, that they may be contacted and asked to answer some follow-up questions, and a note on how participants were not compensated for their participation (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I did not place participants for this study in any situation in which their participation would have led to physical or psychological harm (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). This is because the sort could be done at the participants' convenience, in the safety of their own home or workspace. Additionally, no repercussions would have occurred if participants chose, at any time, to end their participation in the study. As was the customary practice, there was also a guarantee of confidentiality for participants, such that no identifying information about them are obtainable to non-directly involved parties (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). This was ensured by the anonymity (i.e., no need for providing identifying information, such as name or birthdate) of the survey. Furthermore, participant 'categorization' of their work position, or any other potentially identifiable data needed for data analysis were coded.

While transparent ethical values exist, at times the call for accurate research clashes with the rights of impending participants occur (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). In compliance with Walden University's requirements, the researcher took part in Walden's

IRB procedure. This procedure ensured that the study was conducted in an appropriate and ethical manner, and that the researcher had considered ethical issues associated with the research plan (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) IRBs assist in the defense of the organization and researcher against possible legal consequences (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

As a researcher, I recognize that a participant's right to privacy is an inherent part of an ethically sound research project. An important element in this regard is to ensure measures are taken so that no personally identifiable information about the participants is shared in public (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). However, due to the nature of this particular study, no such approval, apart from the signed consent form, was required.

### ***Bias***

I recognized the possibility of hidden or unobserved influences that could have led to bias from my part and negatively influenced the integrity of the facts in the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), bias in research refers to any effect or sway, restriction, or set of circumstances that individually or collectively interferes with the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Measures were taken, as a result, to ensure that bias was kept to a minimum when conducting research.

As a researcher, it was not possible for me to eliminate the possibility of bias, since bias cannot be completely avoided in research, as noted by Creswell (2014). To minimize bias in this particular study, I ensured that no professional relationship (to my knowledge) existed with any of the participants. This ensured that the responses/rankings were not slanted toward a specific outcome. Hence, by ensuring coding for identifying

information, and using analysis software I, the researcher was not influenced by such factors during the analysis process.

## **Methodology**

### **Population**

The target population for this study consisted of Pennsylvanians associated with public education. The target population was representative of the general population concerned with the specific issue studied. The general population consisted of opposition movements, parents, educators, policy makers, and other education-related members of the population. This study could, therefore, be applied to other states and education systems within the country, as a large portion of the general population is affected by, or has made decisions around the CCSSI, or similar education approaches and collaborations, both currently, and in the future.

### **Sampling**

Researchers have noted that typically, due to its subjective domain, a Q methodology study consists of small sample size (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The participants were selected from five groups, each consisting of five participants. These potential groups initially included opposition movement members, parents, educators, and policy makers. A fifth group consisted of other education-related individuals. The total number of participants was 22. Q methodology normally seeks only to ascertain the existence of specific perspectives and subsequently grasp, elucidate, and evaluate them (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). As a result, copious numbers of participants are not essential to uphold a high-quality Q methodological study, since the participants are the

variables in the framework of methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The sample selection strategy was in alignment with the practice used for Q method studies in which five participants from each of the factors or groups identified (Simons, 2013).

### ***Participant Choice Process and Recruitment***

Q methodologists often use tactical approaches to enlist participants (Watts & Stenner, 2012). To recruit participants, several databases (such as PA Department of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Ebsco, JStor, Eric, Google Scholar), as well as general online search engines, library catalogs and PA newspapers, were used to obtain information regarding individuals and groups in opposition to and support of the CCSSI. For the purposes of the study, the potential participants from these sources were able to provide significant data expressing their views of the initiative if they chose to participate. Throughout the process, I also found proponents of the initiative. Therefore, proponents were also included in the Q-set which is in line with what McKeown and Thomas (2013) described as an intentional effort to guarantee as much variability in the makeup of the P-set as is workable within the issue.

I emailed identified possible participants directly, as I gained their contact information either online or through speaking with them. As noted earlier, the email consisted of significant information regarding the study including instructions and an online consent form. However, other potential participants were recruited through emailing or posting information online via various Pennsylvanian NGOs, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) opponents and proponents, and educational institutions' contact or online information. The goal was to send a maximum of 100 emails, after initial

contact. I did not end up sending so many because I did not get 100 responses. Likewise, I considered initial contact with local PTAs and regional libraries to ask members if they would be participants in the study. I did not receive responses from those sources, so appealed to members of activist and professional groups with whom I am affiliated but have no professional relationship with individual members to recruit participants for the Q set. These groups included Voter Empowerment Enrichment and Education Movement (VEEEM), The Doctoral Dissertation Cohort, The Ph.D. Support Group and Bread for the World. Once potential participants replied to my email consenting in agreement with the consent form another email was sent to them with instructions and the link to where they would do the actual Qsort or rankings of the statements.

### **Instrumentation**

In administering the Q sort, I explained and oversaw the process of the participants taking part in the Q sort, as suggested by McKeown and Thomas (2013). The process usually involves the researcher giving participants items on cards, which they lay out and sort into horizontally ordered category piles on some type of table or desk like surface (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). For this study, I used the Web Q JavaScript application to replicate this process. Q sample items were exhibited designed for participants to rank them by clicking radio buttons that accompany each item (see Appendix C). Statements could be reordered into *piles* when participants clicked the update function button until the participant was satisfied with their final regrouping when they hit the send button and the data passed into a ready to send email to the researcher. Additionally, I deemed legal and historical documents to be appropriate secondary

sources for data collection, as they hold credibility and validity (Silverman, 2013). I used findings within these relevant documents to substantiate the participant data.

Once I received the data from the participants, appropriate methodological packages for analyzing that data were chosen, as recommended by McKeown and Thomas (2013). The software I chose was based upon what was needed for interpretation and recommendation for the study. According to Watts & Stenner (2005) PQ and PCQ for Windows make data input a smooth process, automatically produce the original by-person correlation matrix, and formulate methods of factor extraction, alternation, and inference very clear-cut. While the original intent was to use these software options to collect and analyze the data, the choice was made to use different but equal in task and quality software to accommodate occurrences during the actual implementation of the literal data collection and analyses process. More comprehensive information regarding the method and instrumentation is presented in the Data collection section of Chapter 4.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

#### ***Procedures in Q Methodology***

Q methodology begins with construction of a Q sample/Q set consisting of assertions generally reflecting discourse on the researched topic (Durning et al., 1997). The Q sample was constructed from a concourse (Durning et al., 1997). The assertions or statements in this Q sample were sorted by participants resulting in what is called a Q sort. Appendix B contains the Q sample for the study. I then analyzed the completed results to understand attitudes of each participant and similarities between those

participants resulting in the charting and comprehension of their operant subjective perception of the topic (Durning, et al, 1997).

In alignment with the procedure in Q methodology, I did not use hypotheses and deduction. Since abduction is the goal in Q methodology, the researcher avoided vagueness and insertion of multiple assertions in the question, as suggested by Watts and Stenner (2012). I ensured the use of deductive reasoning and logical inferences to understand subjective concepts and provide simple and likely explanations for findings. As a result, questions in the study were simple and clear, to allow for easy answering and analysis.

**The Research Question.** A key point about the research question in Q methodology is its significant role in the procedure because it drives the makeup and construction of the Q set (Watts & Stenner, 2005). One criterion the research question must satisfy is that it must be direct and plainly stated, since it serves as a stipulation of direction for the participants and will steer the actual sorting process (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The research question designed for the study fit this criterion.

**Created a Concourse: Part of Data Gathering Techniques.** The concourse is a diverse global collection of statements surrounding the research topic and serves as the resource from which the Q set is sampled. A concourse contains self-referent comments about a topic taken from a multiplicity of sources (McKeown, 1984). In creating the concourse for the study, I compiled a vast set of viable proclamations on the topic from multiple perspectives from a wide spectrum of sources that included mass media, literature, interviews, topic experts and even participant opinion, as suggested by Zabala



(2014). The concourse served as the source for generating the Q sample/Q set, as suggested by McKeown and Thomas (2013). The specific sources used for creating the concourse for this particular study will be discussed later in the chapter. I built the concourse and presented it in Appendix D.

**Created a Q Sample.** The Q sample/Q set refers to a subset of the concourse to be used by participants in a Q sort (Brown, 1993). It consists of an assortment of diverse statements compiled into a collection to be sorted by participants in the study (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Q sample was composed of statements taken from the concourse and reflected the language of the discourse as well as expansively characterized the research phenomena and the perspectives of those drawn into the discourse, as suggested by McKeown and Thomas (2013). The structure of the statements used in the Q sample was operant or authentic to the natural wording and opinion originally conveyed, which necessitated editing, as noted by McKeown and Thomas (2013).

The precise make-up of the sampling task was not significant as long as the final Q set rightly represented the sphere containing the perspectives relevant to the topic, as suggested by Watts and Stenner (2005). While the subject matter of the study had much to do with determining the final Q set size, I considered what provided adequate coverage of the topic. As a result, a Q set was required for this study that was neither too small nor so large it may lead to loss of control. In this study, therefore, a Q set of 40 to 80 statements was found reasonable.

**Q Sorting.** Q technique consists of an adapted ranking process in which the participant disseminates a sequence of stimuli in keeping with some stipulation of

instruction given by the researcher (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). In this study, Q sorting involved me administering the Q sample (randomly numbered per statement) to participants who under a condition of instruction were asked to position the statements along a continuum from 'agree' at one end to 'most disagree' at the other end, as suggested by McKeown and Thomas (2013). The process was fully subjective because the sort done by the participants was based upon their own perspective (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Consequently, the factors that materialized from each Q sort signified operative groupings of subjectivities. As a result, the universal nature of subjectivity was possible to measure using Q methodology in this study. As noted by McKeown and Thomas (2013), the process of subjectively sorting items from a Q sample by participants mimics actions mutual to many life situations and provides a means of subjectivity being operant.

In addition to reflecting subjectivity, Q sorting enabled synthesizing, since the process of item ranking involved the participant developing function relationships between the components of Q sample, as highlighted by McKeown and Thomas (2013). In this study, scores assigned to Q sample items were reliant on associations of one with another instead of the independence of scale items and test scores. An example of the Q sort for this study is presented in Appendix C.

**Analysis/Factor Analysis.** A benefit of using qualitative research is that it authorizes the organized gathering of data which may not be compliant to quantification (Brown, 1993). However, in this study it was important to be able to assess the subjectivity being considered, which was achieved through Q method. The role of

mathematics is fairly restrained in Q and it functions mainly to organize the data to expose their structure. For the purpose of factor analysis, then, Q methodology involved an exploration of a correlation matrix to uncover the apparent Q sorts that are decidedly correlated or having a family likeness to some but not all, as suggested by Brown (1993). Factor analysis revealed how many families exist. The number of factors was entirely empirical and completely reliant on the operation of the Q sorters, as suggested by Watts and Stenner (2005). An example of the Q sort conducted in this study is presented in Appendix C.

**Factor Interpretation.** Yielding a sequence of summarizing explications of the viewpoint expressed in a factor is the charge of factor interpretation in Q method (Watts & Stenner, 2005). In order to capture the subtle elements contained in the viewpoints expressed by participants, during the factor interpretation process in this study I recognized and treated any significance appearing in the neutral areas of configurations. Likewise, during the factor interpretation stage, I protected against fundamental interpretative breakdown by not concentrating on too few items contained in the array and when it appeared that a participant had loaded extensively on the factor being interpreted, revisiting qualitative comments gathered from participants if available helped substantiate initial interpretations of particular item rankings (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Factors in this Q method study were qualitative thought groupings, and the inclusion of more participants would not have had an effect on the factor scores (Brown, 1993). Compared to other qualitative methods, the procedure for Q method involved losing some ecological validity, compensation for it was provided by the researcher in the form

of extensive interpretation, as suggested by Watts and Stenner (2005). I did, during the interpretation of Q data, reject ineffectual understandings, and permitted range for several subtly distinct proficient understandings to coexist, as recommended by Watts and Stenner (2005).

### **Historical and Legal Documentation**

In addition to collecting data from many other sources, I used documentation as a secondary data source instrument to inform the study. I gathered transcripts of legislation relating to both federal and state level issues surrounding the issue as well as transcripts of testimony before the PA legislator concerning the topic. Government documents are reliable sources, and in the case of this study provided significant information concerning the policy and debate at the root of the research problem studied. In Q methodology, some statements from these documents were used in the concourse for the study. As suggested by Watts and Stenner (2012) concourse will recapitulate policy and convention of a specific institution, or even the ways in which a distinct article of enquiry is characterized within a particular society.

Combining first-hand participant data with these documents provided a comprehensive understanding of views and opposition to the CCSSI in Pennsylvania (see Appendix D). This also allowed me to gain insight through the use of Q methodology and data analysis that could be used to assist policymakers to better navigate public opinions regarding collaborative governance decisions. In essence, the Q methodology, participant selection, and document inclusion all assisted in meeting the purposes and providing solutions to the research problem noted in this study.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), trustworthiness criteria must be considered in social science studies and respond to concerns about “truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality” (p. 18), by comparing transferability to internal validity, comparing dependability to reliability, and comparing confirmability to objectivity as criteria for qualitative studies. To ensure credibility practices such as persistent observation, triangulation, and peer debriefing can be used. Strongly developed narrative around the context of a study can provide transferability. Dependability and confirmability can be acquired by external audit. Credibility and transferability are the key criteria for trustworthiness applied to this study.

To ensure the study’s credibility, I maintained ethical conduct. Additionally, I guaranteed minimal bias, by framing the research and Q method statements in such a way as not to slant or suggest participant responses; to ensure this, before placing the survey online, I thoroughly reviewed the contents of the concourse. I included as part of the research technique the use of historical and legal documents as a secondary source of data, to substantiate the participant findings, a method according to Henwood (2014). Additionally, the practice of using historical and legal documents to assure trustworthy elucidation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was a part of the methodology. These methods, along with using coding and analysis software, promoted the study’s credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

The study is also transferable, thus adding to its trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) as the Q methodological approach could be used to study other forms of public

opposition to government policy, or the same issue in different regions. The chosen method, like transferability also provided the study with dependability and confirmability. Q methodology is a well-established data collection and analysis tool that allows for in-depth interpretation of subjective subject matter, providing a way for other researchers to conduct the same study and make the same findings (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

As noted in an earlier section on bias and ethical concerns, I asked for IRB approval before commencing the study. This ensured that the study was credible and followed the requirements of conducting studies with human subjects (Creswell, 2014). Other ethical considerations included providing potential participants with information about the study, confirmation that partaking in the study posed little to no risk for their persons, and that their participation was purely voluntary, and they were permitted to exit the study at any time with no repercussions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants were also guaranteed their privacy and confidentiality, as no identifying information, such as names, was required. Additionally, any potentially identifying information was coded and not published in the final study (Bernard, 2013). All of these issues were included in a digital informed consent form, which potential participants had to digitally sign before gaining access to the Q study.

Data collected for this study were, as previously noted, confidential and participants were and will remain anonymous. However, further precautions were taken in that all collected data were password protected. The information is stored on an external hard drive for the required 5 years after the study's completion, and then

destroyed (Bernard, 2013). Furthermore, the study was ethical in that participants received no compensation for partaking in the study, and no conflict of interest existed between the researcher and the participants.

### **Summary**

The examination of the opposition to the CCSSI in Pennsylvania, in the United States, is a complex and interconnected phenomenon. As a constructionist study, Q methodology is a somewhat unique approach in that to some it is qualitative and to others quantitative in nature. This method was used to get to the core of the phenomenon. Based upon the design of the Q method, some may feel that it should be described as a mixed method. However, Q methodology corresponds to the conventional qualitative approach in that it allows the evaluation of policies and practices through a phenomenon to be understood from the participants point of view. Thus, for the purposes of this study, it was considered qualitative due to the nature of the studied issue.

The focus of this study was based on the opinions of those who opposed the initial collaborative CCSSI policy in Pennsylvania. Their views were heard when the state was just on the verge of implementing CCSSI. Public voice or subjectivity is a key factor in understanding how collaborative governance fits into the concept of polarities of democracy management when considering social change. Therefore, it was essential that the research method used to further that understanding provided the depth, yet accessibility needed to do so. Q methodology provided that efficient and logical approach to examining subjectivity.

Participants who fit the criteria of the study were recruited via email or online postings. They took the Q survey online. These findings were used in combination with relevant historical and legal documentation related to the study issue. All participant information remained confidential and I ensured IRB approval before commencement of data collection. The study's validity, credibility, and reliability were ensured through the maintenance of ethical conduct, the minimization of researcher bias, the use of various data sources, and analysis and coding software that ensured data collection and analysis accuracy.

Q methodology provided rich analysis, which is outlined in Chapter 4 and yielded information that was the basis of recommendations and other pertinent information in Chapter 5 of the dissertation. The key effect of using Q methodology in this study was that it could serve as a prototype for more research having to do with collaborative governance or any social change because of policy. As the researcher, I also deemed it the best option to answer this study's research question, to meet the purpose of exploring the phenomenon of opposition movements to collaborative governance designed to solve social problems, and to address the noted gaps in the literature regarding this issue.



## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

Chapter 4 includes the study's data collection and data analysis. The chapter presents the purpose of the study and the research question, the setting and demographic data required for data collection, and the data collection process. There is a detailed description of the data collection process followed by data analysis, trustworthiness, results, and a chapter summary.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Pennsylvania citizens about collaborative initiatives addressing social problems, particularly in the realm of education. Through the polarities of democracy framework, the study focused on perceptions of the CCSS Initiative in Pennsylvania. The study's guiding research question was: What are the perceptions of citizens in Pennsylvania about the collaborative nature of CCSS?

### Demographics

The participants completed their Q-sorts via a link received through the participant process. The participants could have completed the Q-sorts in their homes, libraries, or any places with Internet access. All participants were Pennsylvania residents over the age of 18 years.

Gender	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	
	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	
Age Groups	<i>Ages 20 – 39</i>	<i>Ages 40 – 60</i>	<i>Over 60</i>
	6	9	7

Religious Affiliation	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>		
	17	5		
Education	<i>Some college or Associates Degree</i>	<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	<i>Master's Degree</i>	<i>Doctor's Degree</i>
	5	9	10	1
Geographical Region	Western Pennsylvania			
	22			

### Data Collection

Data collection occurred over 6 months between the end of 2019 and early 2020. There were several attempts made to contact PTAs across the state through their social media sites. Searches commenced for information about groups opposed to CCSSI. However, only one PTA from Scranton responded and indicated that participation could only occur with school board permission. Thus, that group was not used, and recruitment followed the additional method presented in Chapter 3. After reaching out to several people by word of mouth and social media groups, I obtained 30 individuals to participate in the study. Twenty-six people followed through by checking into the Q-sort link, which remained active for 6 months during the period of participant recruitment. Upon clicking the link, participants accessed instructions and the platform to complete their Q-sorts.

One unusual circumstance occurred when the raw data recorded through the Q-sortouch link showed that all participants had submitted their Q-sorts; some of the submissions showed “null” in each column. The error occurred because some participants did not follow the instructions and placed more than six statements under each category. These participants received requests by me to redo the Q-sorts. Four participants did not respond to the request, resulting in 22 completed Q-sorts for the study. Rather than prolong the study by recruiting more participants and pursuing those who did not respond to redo requests, I considered 22 participants a sufficient sample, as it exceeded the minimum of 20 suggested in Chapter 3. Pragmatic considerations are important components of the Q method. Also, a researcher using the Q method does not need complete representation across a pool of participant characteristics, as the factors that emerge are generalizations of the viewpoints held by participants who define those factors (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

There were raw data recorded automatically into a secure .csv file via the Q-sortouch link the participants used to complete their Q-sorts. The site enabled viewing and saving of the .csv file while the participants loaded their Q-sorts. Closing the participant link meant the raw data were complete. Q-sortouch indicated that the .csv file created through the independent process was not importable into PQ or PCQ, as initially intended. Thus, there was a need for different but equally sufficient software to open, import, and process the .csv file with the raw data. The Q method package version 1.5.5 within the R-integrated suite of software was the one indicated by Q-sortouch to import

raw data from an independent source and was therefore the one I chose and used to generate appropriate output data that I analyzed.

### **Data Analysis**

This section presents the initial steps used to prepare for the data analysis. The steps used came from guidance in key publications: *Doing Q Methodology: Theory, Method and Interpretation* (Vols. 1 and 2) by Watts and Stenner (2005 and 2012, respectively) and *Q Methodology* (2nd ed.) by McKeown and Thomas (2013). The guides by these established experts enabled an acceptable and robust study.

Before importing the raw data into the Q-sort functions software, the first two steps were creating the raw data file and using Microsoft Excel to produce individual representations of each Q-sort. The first step entailed removing null entries and changing the e-mail addresses participants had used to enter the Q-sortouch link to protect their identities. Next, I changed the columns and rows in the .csv file to import the data into the software. I then created a Microsoft Excel file to show each Q-sort used to understand and analyze the Q method software configurations.

There were issues with the software showing errors for unrestricted Q-sorts, necessitating consultation with the software author. After I imported the data and completed the appropriate processes, the software produced the output file necessary for the study's analysis, interpretation, and results.

The organization of the remaining sections is in the order of the basic steps in the Q method statistical analyses produced by the R-qmethod software and required in Q studies. The first section presents the preliminary results in the output file showing data

quality through the descriptives. After the preliminary analysis, the main portion of analysis in a Q method study commenced by examining the correlation matrix.

According to Watts and Stenner (2005), the fundamental correlation matrix appropriately represents the interconnections of each Q sort configuration with every other configuration. The remaining sections of the analysis address the factor extraction, the varimax rotated solutions, and factor interpretation followed by a summary.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

#### ***Data Quality***

The raw data underwent processing through the Q method package. The output file indicated no apparent discrepancies in the data, as all 22 participants recorded positions for unique 51 items and placed all items. Thus, the data were of good quality.

#### ***Descriptives***

Free distribution was the approach taken for this study, although most Q method scholars use forced distribution. With free distribution, the study commenced according to Q method protocol. According to Watts and Stenner (2005), researchers can use atypical forms of distribution and completely free distributions in Q methodological studies; the selected distribution does not contribute to the factors that emerge. The use of free distribution in the Q-sorting procedure showed differences in the descriptives across both participants and items. Table 1 includes 10 items out of 51 and Table 2 includes 10 participants out of 22 to show how descriptives can differ across participants and items.

**Table 1***Example of Differing Descriptive Statistics Across Statements*

Statement	Mean	Median	Standard deviation
1. Since 2005, the organization Achieve has led collaborative activities with state teams, governors, state education officials, post-secondary leaders, and business executives to work at getting education policies (like CCSS) that match what is needed in the real world.	7.32	7.5	2.10
2. The Common Core initiative was not committed to local control of schools.	5.41	4.5	3.45
3. Despite the emphasis of Common Core being a state-led effort, it is actually an extended sprouting model of federal government and corporate mutualism.	5.64	6	2.48
4. Corporate reformers are behind trying to change America's public schools based on economic matters.	6.82	7	2.77
5. The Common Core Initiative opened the door to partnerships between organizations and the Department of Education to simply collect data from the standards it created.	6.5	7	3.17
6. Common Core is a complete debacle.	5.91	6	3.16
7. The Common Core State Standards endeavor is deeply defective due to how those involved went about forcing it upon the nation.	5.5	5	2.96
8. The Common Core State Standards Initiative has diminished the autonomy of state authority over public education.	4.95	5	2.90
9. Economic collapse will occur if Common Core is not adopted.	3.27	2.5	2.27
10. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is educational malpractice because it can't be changed.	4.73	4	2.99

**Table 2***Example of Differing Descriptive Statistics Across Participants*

Participant	Mean	Median	Standard deviation
-------------	------	--------	--------------------

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Pat 01	6.29	6	3.09
Pat 02	7.08	7	2.75
Pat 03	4.96	5	2.69
Pat 04	6.31	6	3.08
Pat 05	6.94	7	2.94
Pat 06	6.31	7	3.22
Pat 07	5.29	5	3.01
Pat 08	5.86	6	2.97
Pat 09	6.04	6	2.99
Pat 10	5.51	6	2.98

---

### *Item Placement Explanations*

Item placement output provided preliminary information about the variance of many of the statements sorted by the participants. Summary results of the item placement by item showed quite a bit of variance, although there was some consistency around the following statements: Common Core is nothing more than Obamacare for education, there is a risk of national security without Common Core, the standards created by the CCSSI collaborators are liberal propaganda pushed by federal government officials to instruct children in Marxist ideology, and economic collapse will occur if educators do not adopt Common Core.

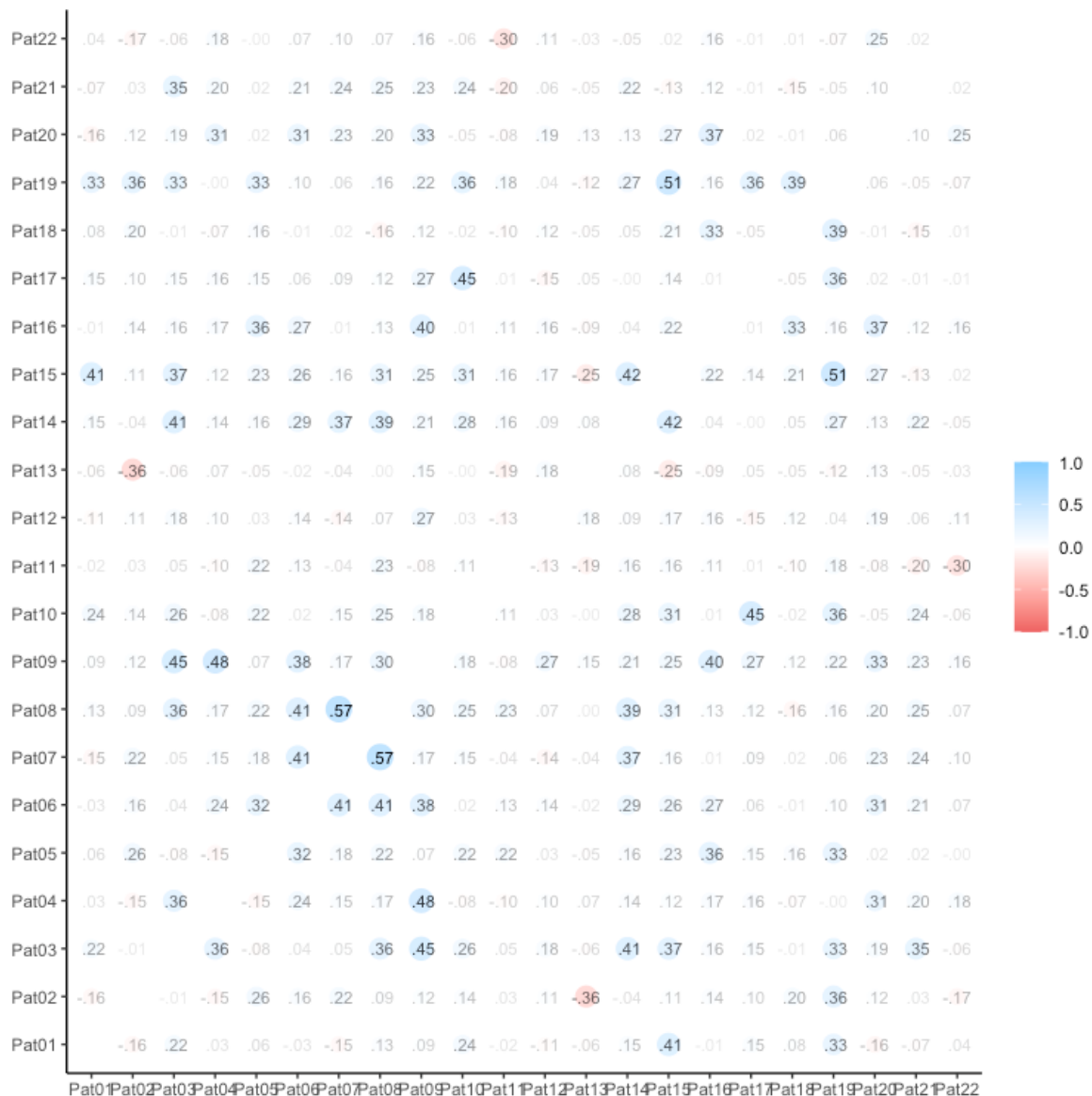
The item placement summary results also showed similar spread and center of sorts across all the participants, indicating that the participants used the ranking scales similarly. The preliminary data analyses are snapshots and show some statistical representations. The next step in the analysis is key in Q methodology and provides a guide for full interpretations and analyses.

## **Main Analysis**

### ***Statistical Criteria in Determining Significance of Factors/Components***

**Correlations.** According to Watts and Stenner (2012), a correlation matrix is formed via the intercorrelation of each Q-sort with all other sorts. The Q methodology correlation delivers a measure of the manner and magnitude of the association between any 2Q sorts and therefore a measure of their likeness or difference. The correlation matrix shown in Figure 1 presents weak correlations and limited covariance among the Q-sorts of pairs of participants.



**Figure 1***Correlation Matrix*

**Factor/Component Retention.** As noted by McKeown and Thomas (2013), the factoring procedure launches after a matrix Q-sort correlation is calculated. McKeown and Thomas (2013) provided guidance on factor and component retention, pointing out that the method for ascertaining whether a factor is meaningful or not as multifaceted, a

mixture of statistical measures and alternatively, theoretical benchmarks can be engaged in making that resolve. Statistically, the most customary way is to use the eigenvalue criterion to represent a factor's significance being approximated by the sum of its squared factor loadings. In practice, factors with Eigen values greater than 1.00 are deemed meaningful, while those with Eigen values of less than 1.00 are thought to be too weak to be worthy of sincere attention.

**Figure 2**

*Parallel Analysis*

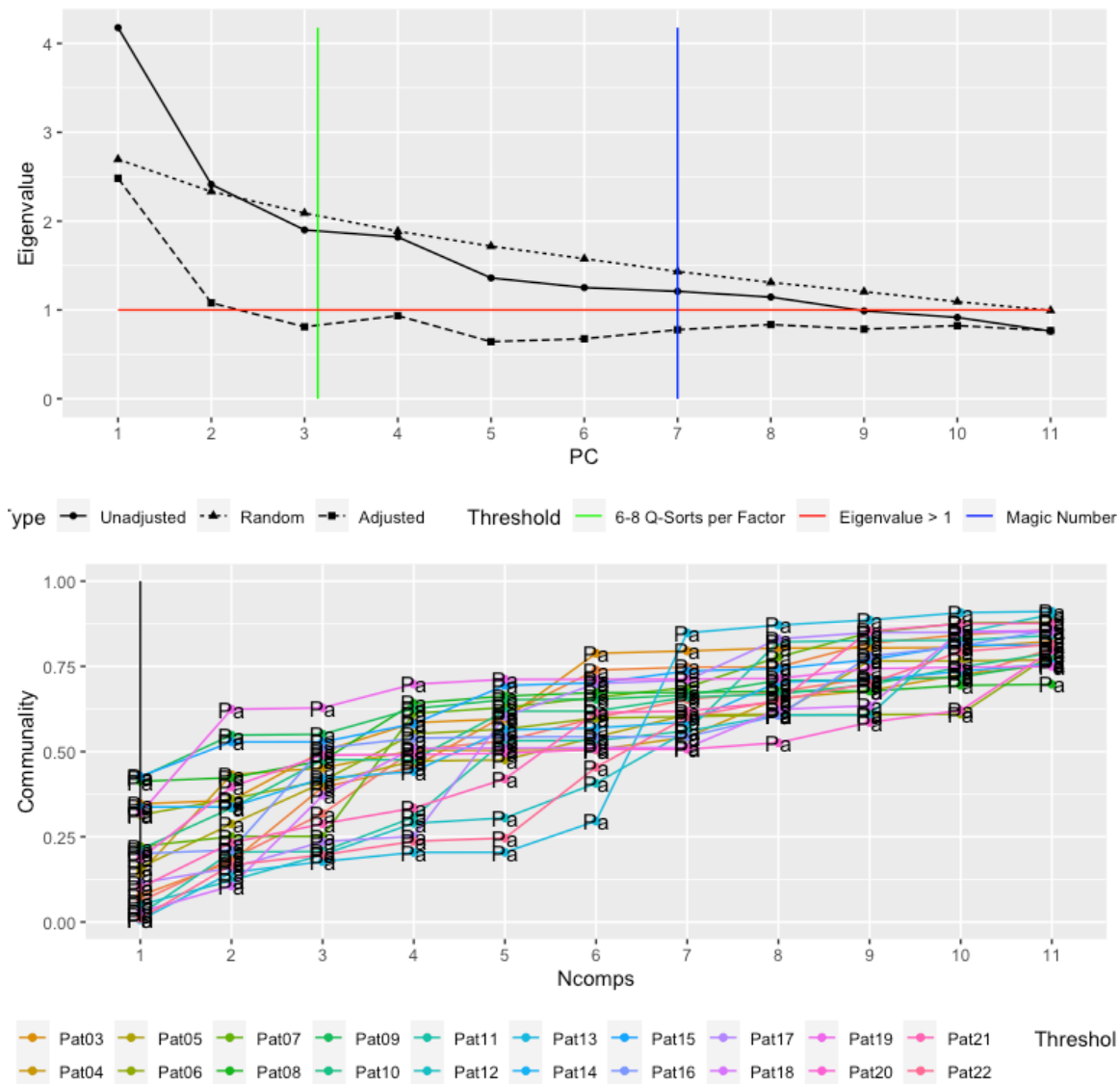


Figure 2 shows the results of a parallel analysis and suggests only two components/factors extracted at the conventional .95 percentile. Thus, only the first two components are distinguishable from random patterns of covariance (output file). Determining to extract two factors to address the variance between them is a step closer

to revealing the range of perspectives that are favored by the participants (Watts & Stenner, 2005) when the software enabled the rotation loadings of those components/factors.

Watts and Stenner (2012) conveyed that the communality for each Q-sort is determined by summing its squared factor loadings. A clearer way of describing communality is seeing it as a functional gauge of how communal a specific Q-sort is and, how much it has in common with all the other Q-sorts in the study set of participants. A high communality intimates that the Q-sort is standard or highly illustrative of the set of participants as a whole. A low communality is atypical. Q-sorts with a principally low communality usually are not connected with any of the extracted factors in a study because of the absence of adequate, variants, even though they can link if their common variance is almost entirely bound to a single factor.

A parallel analysis was appropriate to establish the number of components/factors to extract (Horn, 1965 & Glorfeld, 1995). This analysis commenced based on Pearson's correlation coefficient and did not address the ranked nature of the data; however, given the large number of ties and ranks, this is improbable to have an impact on the results.

### ***Rotation Solutions***

There were three rotation solutions run in the Q-sort software: unrotated, varimax, and quartimax. Although there were differences in the statistical information of each rotation (see Table 3), varimax was the selected rotation because scholars consider it objective and trustworthy and recognize its solutions without much reservation.

Additionally, varimax is an inductive analytic tactic to mechanically steer the researcher to a feasible factor solution (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Varimax has statistical functions and rotates according to Thurston's (1947) principle of simple structure; such a process enables the positioning of the factors so that the overall solution capitalizes on the amount of study variance. According to Watts and Stenner (2012), varimax is an exceptional means of discovering identifiable and crucial points of view thought to be of significance.

**Table 3**

*Varimax rotation*

Varimax solution	Factor 1	Factor 2
Average reliability coefficient	.80	.80
Number of loading Q-sorts	22	22
Eigenvalues	3.55	3.04
Percentage of explained variance	16.14	13.81
Composite reliability	.99	.99
Standard error of factor scores	.11	.11

Based on the varimax rotation solution, the next step commenced in the main data analysis: factor interpretation. According to Watts and Stenner (2012), the explanatory task in Q methodology includes the construction of a sequence of succinct accounts, each of which elucidates the perspective being conveyed by a specific effect. These accounts are created by careful indication to the emplacement and global alignment of the items in the germane topmost approximate factor arrays.

**Factor Interpretation****Figure 3***Factor-1 Factor Array*

	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
43	25	38	9	33	21	24	31	50	6	45	
	26	32	39	37	49	36	8	28	27		
		46	17	30	42	19	41	47			
		12	11	10	51	5	29	44			
			2	18	34	22	40				
			48	15	7	20	3				
				16	14	35					
				4	13	1					
					23						

**Figure 4***Factor 2 Factor Array*

	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
26	25	46	38	2	20	34	6	28	30	50	
	43	48	22	11	45	13	21	39	1		
		3	17	42	51	37	35	33			
		12	16	27	8	14	19	44			
			29	18	47	4	36				
			5	49	31	7	32				
				40	24	41					
				15	10	9					
					23						

Table 4 indicates the rankings assigned to each item within each of the factors exemplifying Q-sort configurations.

**Table 4***Rankings*

Likert score	Ranking
-5	Most strongly disagree
-4	Strongly disagree
-3	Somewhat strongly disagree
-2	Disagree
-1	Somewhat disagree
0	Neutral
1	Somewhat agree
2	Agree
3	Somewhat strongly agree
4	Strongly agree
5	Most strongly agree

**Table 5***Item Scores per Factor*

Statement	F1	F2
1. The results of the CCSS initiative may hurt our deteriorating education system by neglecting students' unique needs and diversity of the country taken as a whole.	+1	+4
2. The Common Core State Standards Initiative has diminished the autonomy of State authority over public education.	-2	-1
3. The frustration with the standards that were created by the CCSS Initiative made up of bureaucrats and corporate interest groups, was its attempt to force them on the States.	+2	-3
4. States were not represented in the initiation of the Common Core State Standards initiative, and the massive funding for it came from private interests like the Gates Foundation.	-1	+1
5. The US Department of Education was very involved in the lead up to creation of Common Core (CC) and has poured millions of dollars into creating national tests to align with CC standards.	+1	-2
6. Bill Gates was one of Common Core's biggest advocates.	+4	+2

7. Common Core is evil posing as good.	0	+1
8. Had the Common Core Initiative been in harmony with the U.S. Constitution, those governed by it would be able to exercise amendable actions toward it.	+2	0
9. The use of checks and balances in our democratic system, which was intended to deter a small group of people controlling government policy, does not exist in the CCSS initiative.	-2	+1
10. The origination of the Common Core Initiative was not legitimate because it is not in harmony with the Constitution.	-1	0
11. The Common Core Initiative was not legitimate because it does not limit the role of the federal government in the governance of public education, a condition established in the Constitution.	-2	-1
12. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is educational malpractice because it can't be changed.	-3	-3
13. Bill Gates, an unelected businessperson and part of the CCSS Initiative, contributed millions of dollars for technology to decrease the influence of teachers in the classroom.	0	+1

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Statement	F1	F2
14. The Common Core Initiative opened the door to partnerships between organizations and the Department of Education to simply collect data from the standards it created.	0	+1
15. The Common Core Initiative was not committed to local control of schools.	-1	-1
16. The Common Core Initiative is about control, not the education of our children.	-1	-2
17. The Common Core Initiative is a step toward phasing out State authority.	-2	-2
18. The Common Core Initiative means loss of control and freedom, which is unconstitutional.	-1	-1
19. The Common Core Initiative represents loss of family privacy because of unparalleled data collection and the sharing of it with non-school system groups rather than protecting us from these types of things.	+1	+2
20. Like the business partners in the Common Core Initiative, some state boards of education members are not elected, yet they went along with it before seeing standards that were created from the initiative.	+1	0
21. None of the three organizations (National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Outfitters and Achieve) that collaborated to develop the Common Core Standards were accountable to parents, teachers, students or taxpayers.	0	+2
22. Despite the emphasis of the Common Core being a state-led effort, it is actually an extended sprouting model of federal government and corporate mutualism.	+1	-2
23. Names of members of development groups created to work on standards were kept secret from the public.	0	0
24. Even though there were two main organizations collaborating in the CCSS Initiative, many other groups and organizations were represented.	+1	0
25. Economic collapse will occur if Common Core is not adopted.	-4	-4
26. There is a risk for national security without Common Core.	-4	-5
27. Common Core standards were not created or forced on States by the Obama administration; they were developed by governors and state school superintendents.	+4	-1
28. The motivation behind the Common Core Initiative was the goal of seeing improvement in math and science education, help college education systems parallel state economies, and increase innovation.	+3	+3

Statement	F1	F2
29. Common Core standards are internationally benchmarked.	+2	-2
30. Common Core standards are not internationally benchmarked because no information was presented showing how they compared to other high-achieving countries.	-1	+4
31. Since 2005 the organization Achieve has led collaborative activities with state teams, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders, and business executives to work at getting education policies (like CCSS) that match what is needed in the real world.	+2	0
32. The Common Core State Standards endeavor is deeply defective due to how those involved went about forcing it upon the nation.	-3	+2
33. Even though President Obama and Secretary Duncan repeated that the States created and voluntarily accepted the Common Core Standards, that is not the case.	-1	+3
34. The Organizations Achieve and the National Governors Association that created the CCSS with very little public input, without state origins, and without grassroots movement, were liberally funded by the Gates Foundation.	0	+1
35. By connecting 'Race to the Top' funding and No Child Left Behind waivers to adopting Common Core, the federal government coerced states into accepting it.	+1	+2
36. The reason the organizations that collaborated to create the CCSS was not transparent and did not reach out to parents, teachers, and lawmakers is because states would not have signed off on them.	+1	+2
37. Tracking the money will show that the federal government was the principal supporter of CC.	-1	+1
38. President Obama's beliefs of progressive reform were at the center of the mess known as CCSS.	-3	-2
39. Common Core is a complete debacle.	-2	+3
40. Corporate reformers are behind trying to change America's public schools based on economic matters.	+2	-1
41. The federal government did not inform the public that education policy was being created in the private sector (Corporate America), which, when brought to light through RTTT (Race to the Top), caused the public to resist.	+2	+1

Statement	F1	F2
42. The formation of the Common Core was a speedy development to take advantage of the economic crisis impacting America so that America's public-school system could grow to be one more addition to free-market adventurism.	0	-1
43. The standards created by the CCSS collaborators are liberal propaganda pushed by the federal government to instruct children in Marxist ideology.	-5	-4
44. The standards created by the CCSS corporate influenced collaborators are one-size-fits-all methods of educating driven by standardized testing and removal of the arts from curriculum.	+3	+3
45. The collaborating groups involved in CCSS pinpointed the goals of ensuring that no matter where they live, all students should graduate high school prepared for college, career, and life.	+5	0
46. Common core is a subtle federal government takeover of local education.	-3	-3
47. Common core standards were repealed in March 2010 and replaced with Pennsylvania core standards.	+3	0
48. Common Core is nothing more than Obama care for education.	-2	-3
49. People from outside Pennsylvania with no teaching background imposed untried Common Core standards on the state.	0	-1
50. Like other very complicated initiatives of collaborating diverse participants, the CCSS initiative is a huge enterprise.	+3	+5
51. It is a myth that the federal government (White House) asked the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to lead the CCSS Initiative.	0	0

### *Factor 1 interpretation*

**Demographic Factor Information.** Factor 1 had six significantly loading participants who ranged between 27 and 60 years of age; four identified as female, and two identified as male. All six participants came from Western Pennsylvania, and all had some postsecondary education, including two with master's degrees and one with a Juris Doctor. As shown in Table 3, Factor 1 addressed 16.14% of the study variance, and it had an eigenvalue of 3.55.

**Composite Explanation Describing Factor 1.** Factor 1 consisted of the most significant scores that presented the participants' strong beliefs: +5, +4, -5, and -4. Factor 1 shows the general consensus that Bill Gates was a major advocate of CCSS and that members of the collaborating groups, including governors and state school superintendents but not Obama administration officials, created CCSS to ensure that all students graduate prepared for college, career, and life. The participants further believed that Common Core collaborators did not create liberal, Marxist ideological standards; federal government officials do not push Common Core; and economic collapse or national security do not connect to Common Core.

Although lower in rankings, statements with +3 and -3 composite rankings were still significant for describing the factor. These statements suggested that the collaboration that produced CCSS was a huge, diverse enterprise to improve math and science, decrease the arts, and increase innovation on the college level for the sake of state economies with one-size-fits-all standardized tests to meet those goals. Additionally, participants reported as unfounded the assumption that CCSS is an unchangeable, deeply defective, subtle federal takeover of local education rooted in President Obama's progressive reform beliefs mess.

According to Watts and Stenner (2012), researchers should consider not only the high-ranking statements but also all relevant statements when interpreting a factor. Thus, I examined those statements loaded on Factor 1 that addressed CCSS and the study's theoretical framework. This analysis showed that 18 statements about CCSS contained polarities of democracy subtext. The indication was that the participants did not

recognize the polarities of democracy (i.e., freedom and authority and participation and representation) when applied to a negative view of CCSS.

### ***Factor 2 Interpretation***

**Demographic Factor Information.** Factor 2 had four significantly loading participants—two male, two female—who ranged in age between 31 and 67 years. All four participants came from Western Pennsylvania, and all had some postsecondary education, including one with a master’s degree. As shown in Table 3, Factor 2 consisted of 13.81% of the study variance and had an eigenvalue of 3.04.

**Composite Point of View Describing Factor 2.** The explanation for Factor 2 consists of the most significant scores or characterizing statements that indicate the participants’ strong beliefs, in this case, scores of +5, +4, -5, and -4. Factor 2 presented the general consensus that CCSS is a huge, diverse, collaborating enterprise that produced a non-internationally benchmarked set of standards that do not provide for students’ unique needs and the country’s diversity and that it may cause harm to a deteriorating education system. The participants further believed that the collaborators of Common Core did not create an Obamacare for education with liberal, Marxist ideological standards to remove education from local control. Factor 2 also presented the view that Common Core is not a federal initiative, but a state-driven debacle motivated by the desire to improve math and science, decrease the arts, and increase innovation on the college level for the sake of state economies with one-size-fits-all standardized tests to meet those goals. Additionally, the factor showed the claims unfounded of CCSS as an initiative comprised of bureaucrats and corporate stakeholders who created standards to

force an unchangeable, subtle federal takeover of local education that is Obamacare for education.

As with Factor 1, when interpreting a factor, researchers should not only consider the high-ranking statements; they should consider all relevant statements (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In keeping with this practice and the study's theoretical framework, examination commenced of the statements loaded on Factor 2 of the CCSS that also presented the study's theoretical framework. After examining 18 statements about CCSS that contained polarities of democracy subtext, the indication was that the participants agreed on the polarities of democracy (i.e., freedom and authority and participation and representation) without indicating positive or negative views of the CCSS.

#### ***Comparative-Factor Interpretations***

Examining those points with statement scores either the same or within one step of each other showed a consensus between the factors. The consensus showed significance because of notable statements within two different exemplifying groups (see demographic information per factor). There were 13 consensus statements; however, only one fell within the extremes of the composite sort. That statement was 43: The standards created by the CCSS collaborators are liberal propaganda pushed by federal government officials to instruct children in Marxist ideology (ranked -5 on Factor 1 and -4 on Factor 2). This finding showed that members of both exemplifying groups identified this claim as illegitimate. Four of the 13 consensus statements received the same rankings in both factors, two +3 rankings and two -3 rankings. The findings indicate that in both factors, the participants believed that the purpose of CCSSI was to improve math and science,

decrease the arts, and increase innovation on the college level for the sake of state economies with one-size-fits-all standardized tests to meet those goals. Both factors also showed that CCSS is not an inflexible, deeply defective, federal takeover of local education.

There were significant differences between factors in the rankings of those statements containing polarities of democracy subtext. In all significant statements of this type, each factor had a different ranking, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Factor differentiation amongst polarities of democracy subtexts*

Statement	F1	F2
2. The Common Core State Standards Initiative has diminished the autonomy of State authority over public education	-2	-1
4. States were not represented in the initiation of the Common Core State Standards initiative, and the massive funding for it came from private interests like the Gates Foundation.	-1	+1
9. The use of checks and balances in our democratic system, which was intended to deter a small group of people controlling government policy, does not exist in the CCSS initiative.	-2	+1
11. The Common Core Initiative was not legitimate because it does not limit the role of the federal government in the governance of public education - a condition established in the Constitution.	-2	-1
13. Bill Gates, an unelected businessperson, and part of the CCSSI, contributed millions of dollars for technology to decrease the influence of teachers in the classroom.	0	+1
32. The Common Core State Standards endeavor is deeply defective due to how those involved went about forcing it upon the nation.	-3	+2

Statement	F1	F2
33. Even though President Obama and Secretary Duncan repeated that the States created and voluntarily accepted the Common Core Standards, that is not the case. [freedom and authority]	-1	+3
34. The organizations Achieve and the National Governors Association that created the CCSS with very little public input, without state origins and without grassroots movement, were liberally funded by the Gates Foundation. [participation and representation]	0	+1
36. The reason the organizations that collaborated to create the CCSS was not transparent and did not reach out to parents, teachers, and lawmakers is because states would not have signed off on them. [participation and representation]	+1	+2

As can be seen in the factor differences of the statements representing either the polarities of participation and representation (statement numbers 4, 9, 13,34,36) or freedom and authority (statements 2, 9, 11, 32, 33) participants had variant views on these statements. Overall, the composite analysis of the data provided a broad basis for the discussion of the results of the study which will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

As indicated in Chapter 3, there were various ethical issues addressed during this study to ensure credibility. Additionally, framing the research and Q method statements so as not to slant or suggest participant responses was essential to minimize bias (Creswell, 2014). Historical and legal documents were the secondary sources of data used to substantiate participant findings (Henwood, 2014) and assure trustworthy elucidation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These methods, along with credible Q method service providers and software, contributed to the study's credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

The study has transferability, as researchers can use this Q methodological **approach to study other forms of public opposition to government policy or study**



**the** same issue (CCSS) in different regions (Bernard, 2013). The chosen method also provided dependability and confirmability, as Q methodology is a well-established data collection and analysis tool for in-depth interpretation of a subjective subject matter. Other researchers could use the same Q method providers and follow the same steps to conduct the same study and achieve similar findings (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

### **Results**

This section presents the findings from the data analysis in relation to the research question: What are the perceptions of citizens in Pennsylvania about the collaborative nature of CCSSI? There is a focus on the factors presented in the analysis section and those within the scope of the study's theoretical framework.

#### **Factor 1**

As shown in the data analysis, Factor 1 indicated that the participants had significant opinions about CCSS; however, the research question focused on their views of the collaborative nature of CCSSI. Addressing the research question required looking at the high-ranking statements (see Table 7) that contributed to that factor.

**Table 7***Factor 1 High-Ranking Statements*

Statement	Consensus ranking
4. The collaborating groups involved in CCSS pinpointed the goals of ensuring that no matter where they live, all students should graduate high school prepared for college, career, and life.	+5
27. Common Core standards were not created or forced on states by the Obama administration; they were developed by governors and state school superintendents.	+4
6. Bill Gates was one of Common Core's biggest advocates.	+4
25. Economic collapse will occur if Common Core is not adopted.	-4
26. There is a risk for national security without Common Core.	-4
43. The standards created by the CCSS collaborators are liberal propaganda pushed by the federal government to instruct children in Marxist ideology.	-5

Of the six composite high-ranking statements in defining Factor 1, only Statements 4 and 43 showed high significance in relation to the collaborative nature of CCSSI. According to those rankings, the participants saw the creators, who were members of the collaborating groups involved in CCSS, as individuals able to create reform to meet the needs of all students. The participants also rejected the statement that those who collaborated in creating CCSS are liberal propagandists who used CCSS as a way for federal government officials to instruct children in Marxist ideology. Therefore, regarding the statements showing a direct connection to the collaboration, the participants' perspectives suggested a positive impression of that collaboration.

However, the statements that did not clearly indicate the collaborative nature of the CCSS creators received high rankings for Factor 1. Thus, there was a need to consider such statements when parsing out the participants' perspectives. The four other highly

ranked statements showed that the participants considered Bill Gates a strong advocate of CCSS and that economic collapse and risks to the nation's security were not likely occurrences. The participants appeared to know about CCSS and could discern hyperbolic claims about the initiative. As table 7 showed, the composite view of these Pennsylvanians does not seem to necessarily support the State's repeal of CCSS.

Addressing the research question also required examining the midrange ranking statements in that factor (see Table 8). The rankings in the range of -3 and +3 suggested somewhat strong disagreement and somewhat strong agreement with certain Q set statements. As shown in Table 8, eight statements fell within those ranges. Statements 50, 32, and 44 focused on the collaborative nature of CCSS, indicating that participants understood the diversity of the collaborators, the actions of those involved, the vastness of the collaboration, and the strong corporate influence on those collaborators.

**Table 8***Factor 1 Midrange Statements*

Statement	Ranking
38. President Obama's beliefs of progressive reform were at the center of the mess known as CCSS.	-3
46. Common Core is a subtle federal government takeover of local education.	-3
32. The Common Core State Standards endeavor is deeply defective due to how those involved went about forcing it upon the nation.	-3
12. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is educational malpractice because it can't be changed.	-3
28. The motivation behind the Common Core Initiative was the goal of seeing improvement in math and science education, help college education systems parallel state economies and increase innovation.	+3
44. The standards created by the CCSS corporate influenced collaborators are one-size-fits all methods of educating driven by standardized testing and removal of the arts from curriculum.	+3
47. Common Core Standards were repealed in March 2010 and replaced with Pennsylvania Core Standards.	+3
50. Like other very complicated initiatives of collaborating diverse participants, the CCSS initiative is a huge enterprise.	+3

As indicated by table 8 the midrange responses seem to show some knowledge of the State's repeal but responses about the collaborative nature of the initiative are not necessarily negative.

Table 9 shows other indications of the underlying parallel of the theoretical framework in some of the statements. Statements 2, 4, 9, and 11 of the 18 statements contain polarities of democracy subtexts on the negative side of agreement. Although these statements did not directly connect to the research question, they indirectly aligned by suggesting that CCSSI could influence polarities of democracy, such as freedom and

authority and participation and representation. The participants somewhat strongly disagreed with the statements ranked on the composite sort. This trend also emerged in lower rankings of statements with polarities of democracy subtexts. As shown in Table 9, there was disagreement with these statements with polarities of democracy subtexts that could appear to present CCSSI in a somewhat negative light.

**Table 9**

*Factor 1 negative responses to statements with polarities of democracy subtexts*

Statement	Ranking
2. The Common Core State Standards Initiative has diminished the autonomy of state authority over public education	-2
4. States were not represented in the initiation of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, and the massive funding for it came from private interests like the Gates Foundation.	-1
9. The use of checks and balances in our democratic system, which was intended to deter a small group of people controlling government policy, does not exist in the CCSS initiative.	-2
11. The Common Core Initiative was not legitimate because it does not limit the role of the federal government in the governance of public education - a condition established in the Constitution.	-2

Two indications based on Table 9 emerged. First, the possibility that participants saw the polarities of participation and representation as well as freedom and authority actually being respected within the collaboration, or second, participants did not recognize the level of importance of those polarities.

## **Factor 2**

As shown in the data analysis, Factor 2 indicated that the participants had significant opinions about CCSS; however, the research question focused on those

opinions of the collaborative nature of CCSS. Addressing the research question required examining the high-ranking statements in that factor (see Table 10).

**Table 10**

*Factor 2 high ranking Statements*

Statement	Ranking
50. Like other very complicated initiatives of collaborating diverse participants, the CCSS initiative is a huge enterprise.	+5
25. Economic collapse will occur if Common Core is not adopted.	-4
26. There is a risk for national security without Common Core.	-5
30. Common Core standards are not internationally benchmarked because no information was presented showing how they compared to other high-achieving countries.	+4
43. The standards created by the CCSS collaborators are liberal propaganda pushed by the federal government to instruct children in Marxist ideology.	-4
1. The results of the CCSS initiative may hurt our deteriorating education system by neglecting students' unique needs and diversity of the country taken as a whole.	+4

Of the six composite high-ranking statements in Factor 2, only Statements 50 and 43 showed high significance about the collaborative nature of CCSS. According to those rankings, the participants saw the collaborators of CCSS as multiple and different stakeholders involved in a vast undertaking, not liberals out to spread Marxist propaganda to students. Therefore, regarding the statements showing a direct connection to collaboration, the participants did not express approval or disapproval, just what they thought it was. The high-ranking statements about collaboration in Factor 2 also suggested that participants saw negative results of that collaborative effort. However, the other statements that did not clearly indicate the collaborative nature of the CCSS creators also had high rankings in Factor 2. Hence, there was a need to consider those

statements when parsing out the perspectives of Pennsylvanians. Examining the other four highly ranked statements showed that the participants felt skeptical about the initiative's actual results and could discern hyperbolic statements about it.

There was a need to examine the midrange-ranked statements in Factor 2 to address the research question (see Table 11). The rankings in the range of -3 and +3 suggested somewhat strong disagreement and somewhat strong agreement with certain Q set statements. As shown in Table 11, eight statements fell within that range. The statements about the collaborative nature of CCSS were Statements 3 and 44; this indicates that the participants did not have strong feelings about the actual collaboration but focused more on the results. This was a similar finding to the higher rankings.

**Table 11***Factor 2 midrange-ranked statements*

Statement	Ranking
12. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is educational malpractice because it can't be changed.	-3
46. Common Core is a subtle federal government takeover of local education.	-3
48. Common Core is nothing more than Obama care for education.	-3
28. The motivation behind the Common Core Initiative was the goal of seeing improvement in math and science education, help college education systems parallel state economies, and increase innovation.	+3
33. Even though President Obama and Secretary Duncan repeated that the States created and voluntarily accepted the Common Core Standards, that is not the case.	+3
39. Common Core is a complete debacle.	+3
44. The standards created by the CCSS corporate influenced collaborators are one-size-fits-all methods of educating driven by standardized testing and removal of the arts from curriculum.	+3
3. The frustration with the standards that were created by the CCSS Initiative made up of bureaucrats and corporate interest groups, was its attempt to force them on the States.	-3

As indicated by Table 11, factor 2 midrange rankings suggest both positive and negative views of the CCSSI.

Table 12 shows other indications about the underlying parallel of the theoretical framework in some of the statements. Statements 4, 9, 13, 32, 33, and 34 were six of the 19 statements that contained the polarities of democracy subtexts loaded on Factor 2. These statements did not directly correlate to the research question; however, they connected indirectly by suggesting that CCSS could influence the polarities of democracy, such as freedom and authority. The participants on this factor suggested that



the relationship between the federal and state governments put the polarities of freedom and authority into an unbalanced relationship.

In the rankings, the Factor 2 participants all fell on the agreement side of statements with the polarities of democracy subtexts. There is a need to see if this trend exists in lower-ranking statements with polarities of democracy subtexts. As shown in Table 12, the Factor 2 participants agreed with the statements that showed polarities of democracy subtexts, possibly indicating imbalances in freedom and authority and participation and representation.

**Table 12**

*Other indications with underlying theoretical framework*

Statement	Ranking
4. States were not represented in the initiation of the Common Core State Standards initiative, and the massive funding for it came from private interests like the Gates Foundation.	+1
9. The use of checks and balances in our democratic system which was intended to deter a small group of people controlling government policy does not exist in the CCSS initiative.	+1
13. Bill Gates, an unelected businessperson and part of the CCSS Initiative contributed millions of dollars for technology to decrease the influence of teachers in the classroom.	+1
32. The Common Core State Standards endeavor is deeply defective due to how those involved went about forcing it upon the nation.	+2
33. Even though President Obama and Secretary Duncan repeated that the States created and voluntarily accepted the Common Core Standards, that is not the case.	+3
34. The organizations Achieve and the National Governors Association, which created the CCSS with very little public input, without state origins and without grassroots movement, were liberally funded by the Gates Foundation.	+1
4. States were not represented in the initiation of the Common Core State Standards initiative, and the massive funding for it came from private interests like the Gates Foundation.	+1

From somewhat agreeing to somewhat disagreeing the participants on factor 2 seem to indicate some understanding and importance of the polarities of participation and representation as well as freedom and authority. The second indication from table 12 showed participants thinking the collaboration did not respect those polarities.

### **Follow-Up Interviews**

Due to varied perspectives that were revealed in the results of the Q methodology factor analysis, I returned to exemplar participants to ask follow-up questions addressing specific elements relevant to the study and to see if clarification could be found about some of what seemed to look like inconsistencies in the findings from the Q sort results. The resultant data from a post-sorting interview (achieved via an open-ended questionnaire) provided complementary qualitative data (see Tables 13 and 14)

**Table 13***Question 1**Do you agree with Pennsylvania's decision to repeal CCSS?*

Participant	Yes	No	Neither	Explanation
14	x			I don't think PA core standards are a better substitute.
9	x			
18	x			Even though the concept when initially was rolled out seemed to be a win-win for all but the government's involvement has made it a matter of politics and control. As I understand it these Federal standards are unproven and untested. Also, the government program will be enforced by people from outside PA that have no background history, no track record or teaching experience when it comes down to the specific needs of the local students. I believe the students that will be adversely impacted are low income and minorities that always suffered with a doubled unfair system.
3	x			It seems that PA Core Standards that replaced the Common Core are narrower in scope but more in depth, which I believe is a better recipe for quality education. So I guess that means I agree with the decision. That being said, implementation and equity remain issues, as always.
5	x			
8		x		
19			x	
7			x	I believe we need some universal standards to provide a framework for education.

**Table 14***Question 2*

*Do you think collaboration between education departments, nonprofits, and corporations is a good way to help reform education in Pennsylvania?*

Participant	Yes	No	Neither	Explanation
14		x		I think that any time you include nonprofits and corporations into public planning, you open the process up to the possibility of gross inequity and possible corporate interference. I also don't think that public educational quality should in any way be linked to the property taxes that a particular borough, township, city, or school district is able to collect. The state needs to find an equitable way to fund education and a flexible yet standardized way to administer and facilitate learning.
9			x	Educators and students need resources. We need to put our own (PA) academic standards in place.
18	x			As long as it well-represented by local interested parties, and not government watchdogs, and not too large that nothing gets accomplished. No government involvement...because when money is needed and the government bails out...the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
3	x			In general, I think collaboration between entities tends to strengthen and/or broaden options and viewpoints. When it comes to as sacred an obligation as education, I think there need to be intentional and deliberate boundaries and roles set for each entity. Private corporations will always need to make money; that's their purpose. Government entities can get caught up in justifying their existence. Nonprofits provide a good balance in mitigating those two weaknesses with research and expertise. So I think that collaboration could work with good oversight and balance.

Participant	Yes	No	Neither	Explanation
5	x			I believe this type of collaboration can help improve educational institutions, but I hope that there will be adequate input from teachers and educational professionals. The individuals that often have the best ideas for how to improve education are too often neglected or left out of the discussions. Administrators, to be blunt, have been working in an office and absent from a classroom for too long to have a keen sense of what works and what doesn't for students, parents, teachers, and communities.
8	x			I think the collaboration between all these groups would be a good way to reform education
19		x		Education should be public
7	x			I believe collaboration is always good.

While the follow up interviews revealed some more specific information, it also revealed just how different the views of the exemplar participants were.

### Summary

Chapter 4 presented a summary of the results to answer the research question: What are the perceptions of Pennsylvania citizens about the collaborative nature of CCSS? The results of the Q method study indicated no one consistent perspective. The participants reported that they believed that the collaborating organizations involved in CCSS consisted of a large, diverse combination of people able to create reform to meet the needs of all students. Corporations had a significant influence on the collaboration. The participants strongly rejected the statement that those who collaborated in creating CCSS were liberal propagandists who used CCSS as a way for federal government officials to instruct children in Marxist ideology.

The collective perspectives of the Pennsylvanians in this study did not indicate approval or disapproval of CCSSI; however, the participants did see negative outcomes of the work and creation of CCSS and its standards and requirements. Likewise, the study found that more people agreed with the state repeal of CCSS in Pennsylvania than those who did not agree. However, the participants approved of the repeal for various reasons. The study respondents provided important perspectives for scholars, policymakers, and social change agents.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this Q methodological study was to investigate the perceptions of Pennsylvania residents about collaborative governance initiatives designed to solve social problems—in this case, the context of reform initiatives in the educational sector. As indicated in Chapter 1, public perception should be a strong consideration in the policy created for a democratic society (Finnigan & Daly, 2014; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013a; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b; Stark Rentner & Kober, 2014). Through the polarities of democracy framework, the study focused on Pennsylvania residents' perceptions about CCSS in Pennsylvania. The unique study with the Q methodology on attitudes and subjective opinions about public policy was in response to Abowitz's (2008) call for scholarly inquiry into the propositions and operations of public areas, such as education. The study's findings provide policymakers and other scholars with research on the importance of opposing reactions to policy reform and change.

### **Key Findings**

There was no one dominant perspective on the collaborative nature of CCSS in this study. There were three major findings, including that the collaborating organizations that contributed to CCSS consisted of a sizeable and varied combination of people able to generate reform to address the needs of all students and that corporations had a heavy influence on the collaboration. Third, the participants soundly disregarded hyperbole about CCSS.

Although the participants did not indicate strong approval or disapproval of CCSS, they expressed some negativity about the standards and requirements of CCSS.

However, there was substantial agreement with positive statements about the collaboration. Another key finding was that most of the participants agreed with Pennsylvania's repeal of CCSS, although they had various reasons for agreeing with the repeal.

Similar to the findings of the collaborative nature of CCSS, the participants responded to the statements about practices consistent with some of the polarity pairs of the polarities of democracy with both approval and disapproval on the main factors that emerged from the study. Yet, the participants' varied views between the statements indicating approval and indicating disapproval presented the key concepts of the polarities of democracy theory in relation to the meaning and management of the polarities.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings in this study overlapped with the results of some of peer-reviewed studies presented in Chapter 2. Overall, the findings added knowledge to the discipline instead of aligning or contrasting with the literature. The overlap occurred due to the subject matter. However, due to the unique methodology and the research question framing, there was neither specific confirmation nor rejection of the literature's findings. Findings based on the theoretical framework of this study also contributed to the discipline, providing insight into the polarities of democracy as meaning behind reform attempts in a democratic society and confirming some of the meaning associated with the theory.



This study's findings aligned with the reviewed literature, specifically studies on CCSS and public opinion about the collaborative nature of CCSS. In a 2014 Gallup survey, roughly 44% of teachers viewed CCSS negatively and 40% viewed it positively (Saad, 2014). The teachers in that survey perceived bias in the association between student test scores and evaluations and favored national standards in reading, writing, and math. Respondents also expressed a lack of confidence about the standardized computer-based assessments affiliated with CCSS. Including the concept of so-called national standards, the survey showed a conspicuous assumption about the purpose of CCSS. In another Gallup study on school district superintendents, 60% of the respondents surveyed felt the need to remain with the initiative's standards (Gallup, 2014). Another public opinion study (Henderson et al., 2015) contained questions about CCSS focused on decreased public support of CCSS standards. Finally, Kornhaber et al. (2014) examined equity in the CCSS reform policy through those who created it. Their findings provided a definition of equity in the context of school inputs to equalize student outcomes.

The overlap in this study occurred in participants' rankings of statements that aligned with prior findings. In this study, the participants somewhat strongly agreed that the CCSS standards created by the corporate-influenced collaborators are one-size-fits-all methods of education driven by standardized testing and removal of the arts from curriculum. Thus, the motivation behind CCSS was to improve math and science education. This study's findings also overlapped in the sense that CCSS correlates with a loss of family privacy because of unparalleled data collection and sharing with non-

school system groups. Alignment with the peer-reviewed literature neither confirmed nor disconfirmed the results but contributed to the discipline.

There was also overlap between this study and that of McDonnell and Weatherford (2013) with regard to a key component: the collaborative nature of CCSS. McDonnell and Weatherford interviewed members of the creator group (collaborators). They found that the motivation behind the initiative consisted of concerns about many things, particularly low achievement on international assessments, the connection of education to global economic viability, and national achievement disparities in educational accomplishments. These aspects overlapped with statements in this study with which participants agreed strongly. The participants agreed with the following statements:

- Since 2005, members of the organization Achieve have led collaborative activities with governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders, and business executives to create education policies (such as CCSS) that provide what students need in the real world.
- The collaborating groups in CCSS focused on the ensuring that no matter where they live, all students should graduate high school prepared for college, career, and life.

The overlap in the findings from this study and the peer-reviewed literature neither confirmed nor disconfirmed the results but contributed to the discipline.

Chapter 2 presented concepts of the polarities of democracy theory, which was this study's framework. The review indicated the importance of the theory in

understanding public responses and opinions to government policy, education systems, and other key players related to this study's problem and purpose. This study's findings aligned with Benet's (2013b) concept that the essential purpose of the public education system is to perform in a true democracy. As CCSS is a factor within the democratic system, there was a need to evaluate whether current policy trends associated with collaborative initiatives in public education contribute to the notions fundamental to maintaining true democracy (Benet, 2013a). For example, Q-sort Statement 9 in this study suggested this concept. Statement 9 had a low ranking on both factors but had opposite composite responses that aligned with the analysis in Chapter 2. The composite opinion for this statement on Factor 1 showed nonagreement, whereas on Factor 2, it showed somewhat agreement. The findings are in line with the literature suggesting that public perception is an important component in a democratic society and, by extension, in a collaborative governance initiative. Therefore, opposition can be a healthy part of democratic societies and an occasion for reform or even rejection of an initiative.

Some of the findings in this study aligned with a key point about the polarities of democracy theory presented in the literature review. The literature showed a complex and multilayered association between freedom and authority comparable to the role of public perceptions of collaborative governance. Public opinion can be either an appearance of freedom or a roadblock, functioning against the very goals characterized as necessary (Benet, 2013). The composite rankings of Statements 2 and 4 on Factor 1 and Statements 4, 13, and 32 on Factor 2 aligned with the literature. The analysis of responses to these statements showed the multifaceted relationship of authority and freedom, indicating the

existence of complex multifaceted perspectives. For Factor 1, the participants disagreed with Statement 2 and somewhat disagreed with Statement 4. For Factor 2, the participants somewhat agreed with Statements 4 and 13 and agreed with Statement 32.

Also contributing to the literature review was that the polarity of participation and representation is distinguishing and somewhat of a blend of meaning and function (Benet, 2012). Sufficiently managing participation and representation polarity enables the operation of a positive facet of representation as a procedure through which a person's ability to become involved is bolstered and/or invigorated (Benet, 2012). Representation is a polarity of function, a means to realize participation. Conversely, filling that aspect of a polarity of function could cause representation to appear as the opposite of participation. These concepts were somewhat confirmed in this study because the statements about representation and participation (Statement 11 on Factor 1 and Statement 34 on Factor 2) presented those concepts as both meaning and function. For Factor 1, the participants disagreed with Statement 11; for Factor 2, the participants somewhat agreed with Statement 34.

These findings aligned with the literature, suggesting that public perception is important in the functioning of a democratic society and, by extension, a collaborative governance initiative. Therefore, opposition can be a beneficial part of a democratic society and an opportunity to modify or even refute an initiative.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Like most research, this study had some limitations. A limitation is a situation beyond the researcher's control that may pose drawbacks to the study. This study had a

strong participant population with diverse ages, genders, education levels, professions, religious affiliations, and income brackets; however, all participants came from the same U.S. region of Western Pennsylvania. Consequently, regional social norms may have influenced the participants' perspectives. Also, attempting to ensure the Q-sample statements presented the correct meaning of perspectives about the CCSS, there may have been some confusion among the participants as they read the statements to rank them.

### **Recommendations**

Research with the theoretical framework of the polarities of democracy provides a basis for diverse research methods and subject matters related to social change. The polarities of democracy theory is an integrative framework that scholars can use to arrange, steer, and assess social change endeavors (Benet, 2013b). This study was no exception. It was distinctive due to the use of Q methodology and its focus on perceptions of collaborative governance and social change related to education reform. The findings contributed to the general knowledge of the polarities of democracy theoretical framework; however, the findings spurred recommendations for social change which will be presented in the next several paragraphs as well as the discussion for a need for additional research that will follow the recommendations.

The findings discussed in Chapter 4 of this study suggest a basis for recommendations to public policy in two broad areas of social change on the state level. The two social change areas are curricular manipulation in the Civics and Government Pennsylvania State academic standards of public schools and the creation of guidelines

and requirements for collaborative initiatives/collaborative governance. Both recommendations are for actions that reflect solutions associated with troublesome or insightful findings of the study relevant to the polarities of democracy presenting as both meaning and function.

The recommendation of curricular manipulation in the Civics and Government curriculum speaks to findings mentioned in Chapter 4 that indicated participants in this study had significant differences between factors in the rankings of those statements containing polarities of democracy subtexts and seemed possibly to struggle with recognizing some polarities of democracy like freedom and authority as well as participation and representation when they were applied to a negative view of CCSS. Likewise, in analysis and results pointed out in Chapter 4, participants seemed a bit confused with concepts that represented the polarities of democracy, concepts fundamental to the continuance of the democratic society. I was troubled by this finding. I recognized that, as pointed out in the literature, the indispensable role of the public education system is to perform in a true democracy (Benet, 2013b). Therefore, I began to wonder what policy change must be made to help people build a foundation for knowing, and being able to apply the basic concepts of a democratic society. I wondered what would help them sustain such learning and meaning throughout their adult lives. Hence, I examined the academic standards (See Appendix F) for Pennsylvania, the state of focus in this study, and realized that some changes in the scope and sequence of the way students are taught Civics and Government may be the very place where sustainable change can begin to take place.

First set of recommendations:

- Add to the scope by titling Civics and Government academic standards as: Defining “The American Citizen.” Have these courses be driven by concepts and themes around all forms of diversity that must carry through all 12 years of curriculum as well as in the GED arena. Even in the years that students are not literally enrolled in a civics or government course, the theme must be incorporated in either language arts or social studies.
- Add to and change the sequence of the broad themes of the current (See Appendix F) Civic and Government courses as follows:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – Introductory Unit – emphasizing the new title and to be driven by concepts around diversity. This newly added unit is also where students will learn how each remaining unit is connected to the other units. (added)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> – How Government Works – (Include teaching polarities of democracy, obviously tailored to the age and level of cognition of the students [teachers will attend in-service around this, possibly Institute for Polarities of Democracy consulting].)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Principles and Documents of Government (Continue to build on Polarities of Democracy)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> – Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship\*
  - 5<sup>th</sup> – How International Relationships Function.

Based not only on the findings from this study that gave me pause about just how unrecognizable the concepts of democracy are for many people, but also in light of what

we have recently (2016 -2021) seen going on in the United States - a hard and strong assault on democracy at both the State and National levels, I believe it is imperative to bring about social changes that will result in a return to understanding what is necessary for a democracy to continue and actually grow stronger. The set of recommendations stated above is a first step to creating that change. Additionally, the State Education Board should require this recommendation be met in private, parochial and charter schools.

\*Develop what was introduced in the introductory unit in more depth and include a major project (NOT TEST) for Students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, GED. The 12<sup>th</sup> grade project should include a research component, include a guardian or parental component, and most importantly, be used as a graduation requirement. The 12<sup>th</sup> grade and GED project should be done in collaboration with either a university or an NGO that focuses on voting, voting rights, citizenship, and citizen duties. These NGOs need to be approved by the PA Education Board.

The second recommendation area based on the findings from this study is the creation of guidelines and requirements for collaborative initiatives/collaborative governance. While results from the participants' Q-sorts revealed troubling things like confusion and inability to recognize democratic concepts. Other findings discussed in chapter 4 suggested that the collaborative nature of the initiative studied may have revealed some recognition of an unbalanced connection between federal and state government in relation to the polarity - freedom and authority. It also revealed some things about imbalance within the government and non-government organizations



participating in the collaboration in relation to the polarity - participation and representation. These findings along with one of the guiding concepts of this study's theoretical framework pointed out by Benet (2013a) that because of the essential role that the public education system must play in a true democracy and as a component within the democratic system, it is crucial to assess whether or not contemporary policy trends in theory connected with collaborative initiatives in public education advance the concepts central to supporting the true democracy and a globally interconnected high-tech society (Benet, 2013a) are the bases for the following set of policy recommendations as a means to attaining some social change.

If there were a title given to this set of recommendations it would be "Transparency", because as seen in this study much of the confusion may have come from lack of transparency about the collaborators and collaborative initiative which opened the door to copious amounts of misinformation as well as a strong reaction to the CCSSI. Therefore, the need for transparency must guide any future attempts at collaboration driven social change associated with education reform.

Second set of recommendations:

Actions for collaborative initiatives associated with Education Reform:

- Registration with relevant government agency before any actions are taken.

As part of the registration requirements:

The first action is creating and presenting an accurate and specific list of all collaborators.

The second action is proof of management of democratic polarities within the makeup of the collaborating group: Diversity and Equality, Participation and Representation, Freedom and Authority. An appointed member of the agency will work closely with the Collaborators to make sure these criteria are met.

A third action is to have completed a clearly worded mission statement, philosophy, purpose, and goals set for the initiative. The purpose and goals must be rooted in relevant and reliable research.

A fourth action is to have a completed report showing funding sources.

- Approval Process part I

The assigned agency member will go through documents from required actions as well as lead meetings with collaboration leaders for assurance that all requirements have been met. The assigned agency member will report back to the decision-making personnel of the agency. Once discussion and any necessary clarifications are made, “Pending Approval” will be granted - Pending because the next and maybe most crucial step in assuring that a collaborative initiative does indeed serve and perpetuate the ideals of the democratic society is how it is perceived by groups who will be affected by its work.

- Approval Process part II - Pending Approval Plans

To get final approval for the collaborative initiative the group of collaborators must be very conscience of all stakeholders and their place in a democratic society. The polarity of participation and representation comes into strong focus

here. Therefore, the collaborators must create and with the assistance of the approving agency implement those plans before they can begin the reform work.

- First the TIP – Teachers Input Plan
- Second the PRP – Public Relations Plan
- Third the SIP – Students Input Plan

All plans must include concise explanations of the collaboration and its initiative.

While remaining concise, it must include all relevant information that had previously been included in the registration process. Remembering that transparency is the driving force for this process.

Each plan must include how the stakeholders in these groups will be reached with the information.

Each plan must include a way for members in those stakeholder groups to be either participants or give feedback about who or what is representing them in the collaboration.

Each plan must include how the agency can help the collaborators implement the previously stated plans.

Similar to what was stated about the first set of recommendations, this one was based not only on the findings from this study that seemed to suggest that people actually did recognize some imbalance in participation and representation around the collaborators of the CCSSI, but also in light of what we have recently (2016 -2021) seen going on in the United States when we see NGOs or other types of organizations

collaborating with government agencies yet not being models or representatives of the democratic way of being, I believe it is imperative to bring about social changes that will result in fair, democratic and therefore authentic collaborative governance. The recommendation stated above is yet another step to creating positive social change.

Future researchers who employ the polarities of democracy model as a theoretical framework for social change can steer approaches to establish respectable, maintainable, and fair-minded communities and produce data on the efficacy of social change endeavors and be used as a strong choice for participatory research (The Institute for Polarities of Democracy Research and Social Change Agenda, <https://instituteforpod.org/>). There may be a need for such approaches using a unique methodology like Q methodology to address the Institute's research agenda Areas 1 and/or 2:

#### Research Agenda for Area 1:

The American founding documents (the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution) and the Federalist and Anti-Federalist papers set forward a set of values, processes, and attitudes (e.g., the rule of law, checks and balances, fair elections) that contribute to institutionalizing Lincoln's government of, by, and for the people. Yet, these documents do not present a unifying definition of democracy and in fact offer conflicting concepts of what is required to maintain our "Republic if you can keep it." (The Institute for Polarities of Democracy Research and Social Change Agenda, <https://instituteforpod.org/>).

#### Research Agenda for Area 2:

The Trump Presidency has challenged our democratic and constitutional norms beyond any point in the history of the US. Yet many see Trump as a symptom rather than a cause of our constitutional distress. Some point to the abandonment of civic education in the US public school system as contributing to a significant portion of our citizens who are no longer committed to the values, beliefs, attitudes, processes, and behaviors necessary to sustain a democratic society.

To what extent, and in what ways, does the polarities of democracy theory provide a framework to ensure that our public education system teaches the values, beliefs, attitudes, processes, and behaviors necessary to sustain a democratic society? (The Institute for Polarities of Democracy Research and Social Change Agenda, <https://instituteforpod.org/>)

Future research based on the polarities of democracy framework and the stated topics using Q methodology could provide valuable data for projects and collaborative organizations looking to educate the populace as well as policy makers who see the need for more clearly defining “democratic” values and assuring such in laws passed.

### **Implications**

This study has implications for the field of Public Policy, particularly in areas dealing with initiatives that lead to reform and policy that affects social change within a proclaimed democratic society. There are three key areas in this study with such implications – its theoretical framework, its unique methodology, and its findings which

can provide literature for social change initiatives involving non-government and government collaboration.

This study revealed that the use of the polarities of democracy as a theoretical framework provides a strong basis by which to examine policy initiatives that have direct connections to the functioning of a democracy as well as revealing public opinion concerning its understanding of such. Therefore, this study not only provides an example for other policy studies needing to be framed around a model/theory that advances the concepts central to maintaining the just democracy and a globally networked high-tech society (Benet, 2013a), it also fills the gap for available theory for social change in the field of collaborative initiatives in a democracy.

The implications of using Q methodology in this study provided an example of a marginal method for qualitative researchers to investigate meaningful subjectivity in social phenomenon (Shemmings, 2006). The implication of Q methodology is its facility for entering into subjective spheres and providing the means to convert the subjective meanings into an objective entity (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The study was able to show that in Q methodology, qualitative research was moved to a level where subjectivities were extracted without convoluted operational measurements (McKewon & Thomas, 2013). Q methodology is devised to survey distinct perspectives and discourse within groups to raise real-world issues such as the recognition of new policies (Zabala, 2014). By presenting such, this study provided the potential for future Q method public policy studies.

This study had strong implications in relation to social change initiatives, partly because of its transferability which increases its worth for agents of social change (Denscombe, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Key elements from this study can be applied to social change initiatives that want to gauge public opinion if there is uncertainty about the initiative in relation to a perception of it that arises. In this way, the study has added to the knowledge regarding public opposition to government policies and has filled that particular research gap. It also aids in future forward-moving procedures and policy creation by heightening policy makers' insights, and thereby assisting them in better delineating future policies (Finnigan & Daly, 2014; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013a; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013b; Stark Rentner & Kober, 2014). While this study focused on opposition to CCSS, it provided a prototype to potentially be used in other areas of public policy.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, Q methodology was appropriate to fill a gap in public policy research on collaborative governance in public education reform within the framework of the polarities of democracy theory. This research and methodology focused primarily on opposition and produced significant findings showing Pennsylvanians' perspectives about social change in education reform because of collaborative governance. The findings contributed to theoretical literature and progressive policy for policymakers and community leaders with social change goals. Policymakers could use this study's

findings to develop policies to promote the concept of collaboration as a path to transformational change.



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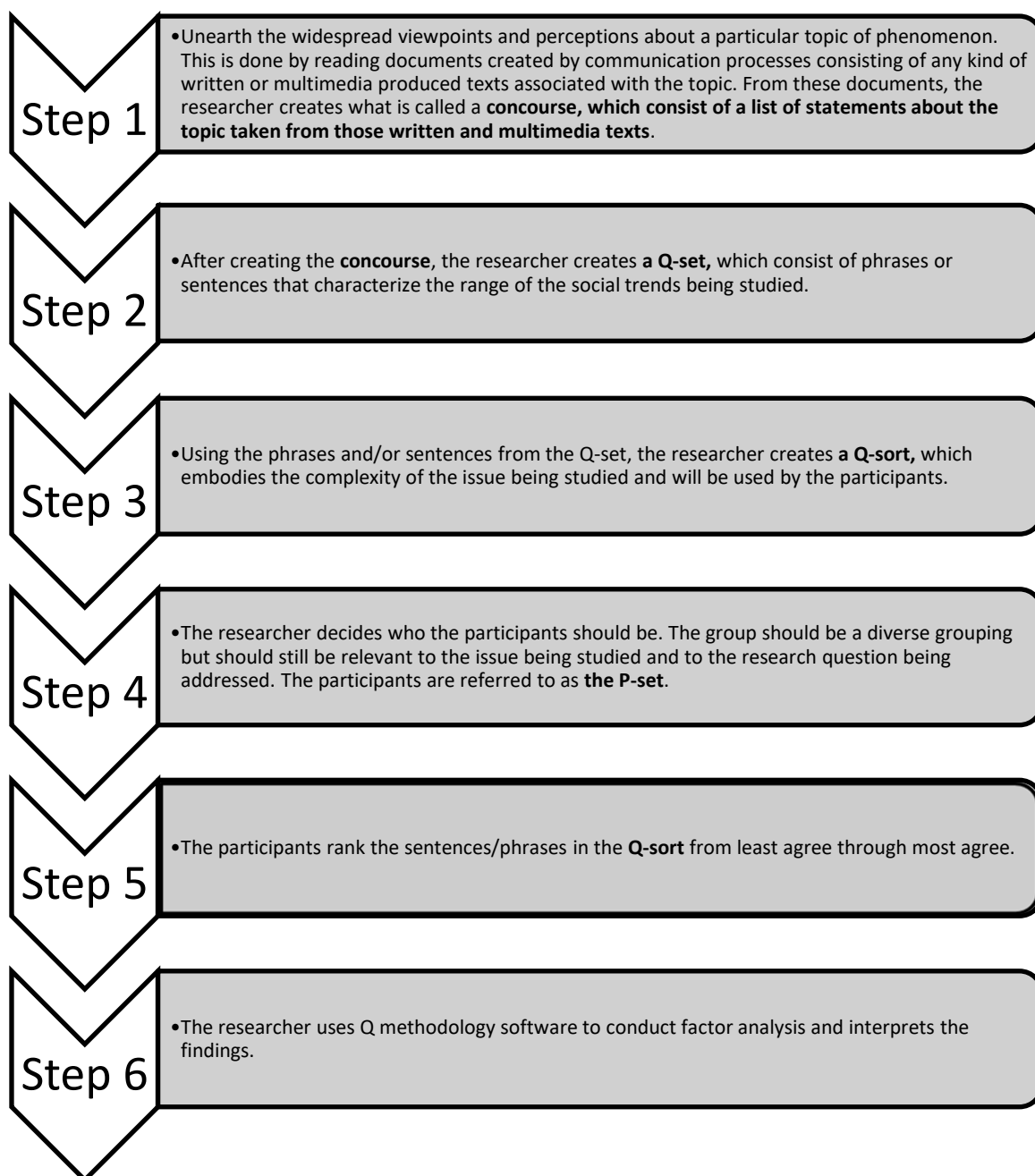
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## Appendix A: Q Methodology Basic Procedure

Figure 5

*Q Procedure*

## Appendix B: Creating a Structured Q Sample

**Table 15***Creating a Structured Q Sample*

Categories/factors	Levels	Number of levels
X = Issue awareness	General	2
	Specific	
Y = Collaboration	Democratic polarities	5
	• Authority	
	• Diversity	
	• Equality	
	• Participation	
	• Representation	
$2 \times 5 = 10 \times 5 = 50$		

*Note.* Statements are chosen based upon categories. The structure is attained by applying Fisher's methods of experimental design to samples. It offers succinctness and representativeness of the concourse and cuts down on bias and partiality.

**Table 16***Structured Q-set/Sample*

Statement	CS*
52. 1. The results (standards) of the CCSS initiative may hurt our deteriorating education system by neglecting students' unique needs and the diversity of the country taken as a whole.	17
53. 2. The frustration with the Common Core State Standards Initiative is the standards created by it being forced on the reluctant populace by bureaucratic institutions and corporate interest groups.	23
54. 3. The Common Core State Standards Initiative has diminished the autonomy of State authority over public education.	26
55. 4. States were not represented in the initiation of the Common Core State Standards initiative, and the massive funding for it came from private interests like the Gates Foundation.	28
56. 5. The US Department of Education was very involved in the lead up to creation of Common Core and has poured millions of dollars into creating national tests to align with CC standards.	29
57. 6. Bill Gates was one of Common Core's biggest advocates.	20
58. 7. Common Core is evil posing as good.	48
59. 8. Had the Common Core Initiative been in harmony with the Constitution, those governed by it would be able to exercise amendable actions toward it.	49
60. 9. The use of checks and balances in our democratic system, which was intended to deter a small group of people controlling government policy, does not exist in the CCSS Initiative.	50
61. 10. The origination of the Common Core Initiative was not legitimate because it is not in harmony with the Constitution.	51
62. 11. The Common Core Initiative was not legitimate due to its lack of harmony with Constitutional authority, which limits the role of the federal government in the governance of public education.	52
63. 12. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is educational malpractice because it can't be changed.	53
64. 13. Bill Gates, an unelected business person and part of the CCSS Initiative contributed millions of dollars for technology to decrease the influence of teachers in the classroom.	54

Statement	CS*
65. 14. The Common Core Initiative opened the door to partnerships between organizations and the Department of Education to simply collect data from the standards it created.	55
66. 15. The Common Core Initiative was not committed to local control of schools.	56
67. 16. The Common Core Initiative is about control, not the education of our children.	57
68. 17. The Common Core Initiative is a step toward phasing out State authority.	58
69. 18. The Common Core Initiative means loss of control and freedom, which is unconstitutional.	59
70. 19. The Common Core Initiative represents loss of family privacy with unparalleled data collection and sharing with non-school system groups rather than protecting us from these types of things.	74
71. 20. Like the business partners in the Common Core Initiative, some state boards of education members are not elected, yet they went along with it before seeing standards that were created from the initiative.	78
72. 21. None of the three organizations (National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Outfitters and Achieve) that collaborated to develop the Common Core Standards were accountable to parents, teachers, students or taxpayers.	79
73. 22. Despite the emphasis of the Common Core being a state-led effort, it is actually an extended sprouting model of federal government and corporate mutualism.	96
74. 23. Names of members of development groups created to work on standards were kept secret from the public.	98
75. 24. Even though there were two main organizations collaborating in the CCSS Initiative, many other groups and organizations were represented.	106, 109
76. 25. Economic collapse will occur if Common Core is not adopted.	3
77. 26 There is a risk for national security without Common Core.	4
78. 27 Common Core standards were not created or forced on States by the Obama administration; they were developed by governors and state school superintendents.	10
79. 28 The motivation behind the Common Core Initiative was the goal of seeing improvement in math and science education, help college education systems parallel state economies, and increase innovation.	18
80. 29 Common Core standards are internationally benchmarked.	31

Statement	CS*
81. 30 Common Core standards are not internationally benchmarked because no information was presented showing how they compared to other high-achieving countries.	31
82. 31. Since 2005, the organization Achieve has led collaborative activities with state teams, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders, and business executives to work at getting education policies that match what is needed in the real world.	38
83. 32. The Common Core State Standards endeavor is deeply defective due to how those involved went about forcing it upon the nation.	61
84. 34. Even though President Obama and Secretary Duncan repeated that the States created and voluntarily accepted the Common Core Standards, that is not the case.	64
85. 35. The organizations that created the CCSS were Achieve and the National Governors Association, with very little public input and without grassroots movement. The initiative did not come from the state, and the two organizations were liberally funded by the Gates Foundation.	65
86. 36. By connecting “Race to the Top” funding and No Child Left Behind waivers to adopting Common Core the federal government coerced States into accepting it.	69
87. 37. The reason the organizations that collaborated to create the CCSS was not transparent and did not reach out to parents, teachers, and lawmakers is because states would not have signed off on them.	80
88. 38. Tracking the money will show that the federal government is the principal supporter of CC.	83
89. 39. President Obama’s beliefs of progressive reform is at the center of the mess.	84
90. 40. Common Core is a complete debacle.	85
91. 41. Corporate reformers are behind trying to change America’s public schools based on economic matters.	89
92. 42. The federal government did not inform the public that education policy was being created in the private sector (Corporate America) which, when brought to light through RTTT(Race to the Top) caused the public to resist.	95
93. 43. The formation of the Common Core was a speedy development to take advantage of the economic crisis impacting America so that America’s public school system could grow to be one more addition to free-market adventurism.	100
94. 44. The standards created by the CCSS collaborators are liberal propaganda pushed by the federal government to instruct children in Marxist ideology.	104



	Statement	CS*
95.	45. The standards created by the CCSS corporate influenced collaborators are one-size-fits-all methods of educating driven by standardized testing and removal of the arts from curriculum.	104
96.	46. The collaborating groups involved in CCSS pinpointed the goals of ensuring that no matter where they live, all students should graduate high school prepared for college, career and life.	107
97.	47. Common Core is a subtle federal government takeover of local education.	115
98.	48. Common Core standards were repealed in March 2010 and replaced with Pennsylvania core standards	116
99.	49. Common Core is nothing more than Obama care for education	118
100.	50. People from outside Pennsylvania with no teaching background imposed untried Common Core standards on the state.	121
101.	51. Like other very complicated initiatives of collaborating diverse participants, the CCSS initiative is a huge enterprise	126
102.	52. It is a myth that the federal government (White House) asked the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers lead the CCSS Initiative.	131
103.	53. It is a myth that the federal stimulus package included incentives for the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to create standards.	131
104.	54. The CCSS Initiative was wholly a state-led one from its launch to its final work.	136
105.	55. There was an opportunity for the public to submit comments about the draft standards on the Common Core Website.	140
106.	56. State school officers support for the Common Core claiming it was in fact driven by the States is a smokescreen in order to hide a nationalized curriculum.	141
107.	57. The CCSS Initiative set up moderators to report noncompliance that will cause funds to be taken away.	53

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses reference Concourse statement.

Appendix C: Sample Q Sort

**SAMPLE Q Sort**

Most disagree  
 -5    -4    -3    -2    -1    0    +1    +2    +3    +4    +5  
 Most agree

**EXAMPLE of a completed Q sort**

Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

\* Q Sample Statement Number - QSS

Most disagree  
 -5    -4    -3    -2    -1    0    +1    +2    +3    +4    +5  
 Most agree

QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS	QSS
52	20	10	1	4	3	15	17	12	18	2
8	4	13	14	9	5	23	7	25	11	16
32	19	27	29	51	24	6	28	26	32	
41	35	30	34	33	31	37	38			
	45	44	40	39	36	48	49			
			42	43	46					
					50					

## Appendix D: Concourse

**Concourse Building****Concourse  
source****A****Concourse  
Entry  
Resource  
Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**Website - *Common Core Failure, how an industrial engine is harming our kids and leaving our neediest behind.*<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=oGfrzimo&id=10ECC895BECD495F75600EBBA5A351AEE7CA7B22&thid=OIP.oGfrzimopVCrIUdUjgII4wEsDi&q=Common+Core&simid=607999931356873723&selectedIndex=0&ajaxhist=0>**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source A**

- 1 *“45 states vied for 4.35 billion dollars in Race to the Top Funds “*
- 2 *‘The requirement is that States must adopt “college-and-career ready standards.”*
- 3 *“We have to adopt Common Core because - 1. “economic collapse” - As warned by top corporations running full page ads in the NY times.”*
- 4 *“Without Common Core there is a Risk to National Security”- as warned by the council of Foreign Relations”*

**Concourse  
Item****B****Concourse  
Entry  
Resource  
Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**Newspaper Article: *How Bill Gates pulled off the swift Common Core Revolution: Outside in a new era of influence* by Lyndsey Layton**Washington Post (Politics), June7, 2014****Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source B**

- 5 *“Gene Wilhoit, director of a national group of state school chiefs, David Coleman a proponent of the standards movement, Bill and Melinda Gates, the Hunt Institute, the Thomas Fordam Institute, the National Council of La Raza, the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Governors Association, Achieve, and two national teachers unions worked as members of the Common Core State Standards Initiative and worked to influence policy makers and civic leaders to embrace the Standards they created”*
- 6 *“The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation provided funds to aid in the persuasion of state governments to make systemic and costly changes “*
- 7 *“The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation provided more than200 million dollars to build political support throughout the country “*

- 8 *The Gates Foundation provided funds to the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce*
- 9 *A Gates grant of \$959,116 was used in a 2009 study by Thomas B Fordham Institute finding that the work of the Initiative resulted in very, very strong standards that were clearly superior to those in many States.*

**Concourse  
Item**

**C**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource  
Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Internet Article: *Can A President Trump Get Rid of Common Core?*  
By Cory Turner

nprEd How Learning Happens  
<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/11/10/501426803/can-president-trump-get-rid-of-common-core>

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source C**

- 10 *The Common Core standards were developed by governors and state school superintendents and adopted at the state level. They were not created by the Obama administration or forced on states.*
- 11 *Indeed, several states chose not to make the switch. That said, President Obama did use federal dollars, through the Race to the Top program, to encourage (*critics* prefer “coerce”) states to adopt new, more rigorous standards.*
- 12 *“The writing of education standards is still, and always has been, up to the states,” says Chad Colby, spokesman for *Achieve*, a national nonprofit that helped develop the Core. “It remains to be seen if the new administration will use the same federal overreach to try and get rid of the Common Core in states the way they accused the Obama administration of coercing states to adopt it.”*
- 13 *Michael Petrilli, president of the Core-supporting but conservative-leaning Thomas B. Fordham Institute, is also doubtful.*  
*“[Common Core is] not an issue any president has much say over — academic standards are under the firm control of the state,*
- 14 *“The problem is that the main levers of coercion — the Race to the Top contest and waivers out of the No Child Left Behind Act — are gone,” writes Neal McCluskey of the libertarian Cato Institute. “Race to the Top is over, and No Child has been replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).”*
- 15 *SEC. 8526A. [20 U.S.C. 7906a] PROHIBITION AGAINST FEDERAL MANDATES, DIRECTION, OR CONTROL. (a) IN GENERAL.—No officer or employee of the Federal Government shall, through grants, contracts, or other cooperative agreements, mandate, direct, or control a State, local educational agency, or school’s specific instructional content, academic standards and assessments, curricula, or program of instruction developed and implemented to meet the requirements of this Act (including any requirement, direction, or mandate to adopt the Common Core State Standards developed under the Common Core State Standards Initiative, any other academic standards common to a significant number of States,*

*or any assessment, instructional content, or curriculum aligned to such standards), nor shall anything in this Act be construed to authorize such officer or employee to do so.*

**Concourse  
Item**

**D**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource  
Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Internet article that first appeared in Townhall Magazine,  
*The Case Against Common Core* by Sarah Jean Seman

Townhall; Education and Schools

Posted Sept 2, 2014 9:00 AM

<https://townhall.com/tipsheet/sarahjeanseman/2014/09/02/the-case-against-common-core-n1885963>

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source D**

- 16 *It is unquestioned that Americans are falling behind their foreign counterparts in academics. U.S. students tested below average in math and only nudged in close to average in reading and science when compared to 34 other developed countries, according to the 2012 Program for International Students Assessment.*

*“To maintain America’s competitive edge, we need all of our students to be prepared and ready to compete with students from around the world,” then-Vermont Gov. and National Governors Association vice chair Jim Douglas (D) said at the announcement of Common Core in 2009.*

- 17 *Unfortunately, this visionary overhaul has burgeoned into a federal government power grab. In its current capacity, the standards may end up hurting our already failing education system and overlooking our children’s unique needs and the diversity of the country at large.*

- 18 *The Common Core lobbying push began in 2006, when NGA chair and then-Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano (D) launched her Innovation America campaign. Napolitano’s goal was to “give governors*

*the tools they need to improve math and science education, better align postsecondary education systems with state economies, and develop regional innovation strategies.”*

- 19 *An ensuing task force composed of the NGA, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the progressive educational group Achieve Inc. produced a 2008 report titled “Benchmarking Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World Class Education.” The writers urged state leaders to “upgrade state standards by adopting a Common Core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive.”*

*This same advisory group proceeded to jointly develop the standards known today as Common Core State Standards.*

- 20 *Microsoft guru Bill Gates eventually became one of Common Core’s biggest champions after activists sold him on the idea in 2008. Gates then heavily funded the organizations that pushed the Common Core standards and those same organizations are now set to use Microsoft products for their digital learning programs.*
- 21 *“If you look at the history of Common Core, how it came to be, the pressure and the incentive that were put on states to adopt it, I think it’s easy to conclude that this was federally driven,” Lindsey Burke, Will Skillman fellow in education policy at The Heritage Foundation, tells Townhall.*
- 22 *The current administration’s[Obama] ideology of progressive reform is at the heart of the federal entanglement, Burke explains.*

**Concourse  
Item**

**E**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource  
Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Website Information

Website for organization

<https://parentsagainststhecommoncore.com> (copy right 2017)

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source E**

- 23 *Americans have become increasingly frustrated with the Common Core Standards (CCS) and related assessments, which were forced on an unwilling populace by bureaucratic institutions and corporate interest groups.*
- 24 *Across the country, parents and teachers have formed a network of grassroots activists dedicated to fighting the Common Core and restoring the people’s right to govern the education of their children.*

- \*  
25 **NOTE THAT NEXT Source is a tab from this website**  
*Who wrote the standards and who controls them?*

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) own the Common Core Standards (CCS) and have placed a copyright on them to control how they are used. While these two groups have very official-sounding names, they do not have the authority to act on behalf of states. They are simply private trade

organizations that governors and state superintendents join, similar to a doctor's joining the American Medical Association.

The NGA and CCSSO contracted with a non-profit corporation called Achieve, Inc., to write the standards. Achieve included no high-school English teachers or college professors of English on its working group that drafted the standards. Further, the mathematics working group included an inadequate number of professors of mathematics. Instead, the writing teams were dominated by representatives from publishing and testing companies, as well as bureaucrats from the education establishment. The final standards were submitted to a validation committee for final approval, where the only two content experts refused to validate the standards as college-ready.

26 *What role did the states play?*

Historically, states had the autonomy to govern their academic standards and testing, accountable only to the people and leaders of the state. By adopting the Common Core Standards, states are no longer the sole authority – they are one of forty-four states lobbying to influence a central power that is unaccountable to the people of their state. Of all the negative consequences the Common Core brings, this may be the greatest: As the authority and power of the state to influence policy decreases, so does that of individual parents and teachers.

**Concourse  
Item**

**F**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource**

website

**Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Truth in American Education, fighting to stop the Common Core State Standards, their assessments and student data mining  
<https://truthinamericaneducation.com/>

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source F**

27 (This is from the tab Gates bck...)In response to a speech given by Bill Gates one of the collaborators in the Common Core State Standards Initiative, Shane Vander Hart stated in a report on Gate's speech to the Council of the Great City Schools in Cleveland, Ohio So, they're doubling down on Common Core to develop curriculum because the lack of aligned curriculum and professional development was the problem with Common Core. \*Cough\*

28 **Myth** Common Core (CC) was a state-led initiative.

**Fact** The CC standards were initiated by private interests in Washington, DC, without any representation from the states. Eventually the creators realized the need to present a façade of state involvement and therefore enlisted the National Governors Association (NGA) (a trade association that doesn't include all governors) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), another DC-based trade association. Neither of these groups had a grant of authority from any particular state or states to write the standards. The bulk of the creative work was done by Achieve, Inc., a DC-based nonprofit that includes many progressive education reformers who have been advocating national standards and curriculum for decades. Massive funding for all this came from private interests such as the Gates Foundation.

- 29        **Myth** The federal government is not involved in the Common Core scheme.  
**Fact** The US Department of Education (USED) was deeply involved in the meetings that led to creation of Common Core. Moreover, it has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the two consortia that are creating the national tests that will align with CC. USED is acting as the enforcer to herd states into the scheme
- 30        **Myth** States that adopted CC did so voluntarily, without federal coercion.  
**Fact** Most states that adopted CC did so to be eligible to compete for federal Race to the Top funding. To have a chance at that money, recession-racked states agreed to adopt the CC standards and the aligned national tests sight unseen. In addition, the Obama Administration tied No Child Left Behind waivers to CC adoption, making it very difficult for a state to obtain a waiver without agreeing to accept CC.
- 31        **Myth** The Common Core standards are “internationally benchmarked.”  
**Fact** No information was presented to the Validation Committee to show how CC stacked up against standards of other high-achieving countries. In fact, the CC establishment no longer claims that the standards are “internationally benchmarked” – the website now states that they are “informed by” the standards of other countries. There is no definition of “informed by.”
- 32        Initially the National Governors Association (NGA), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) did not release the names of individuals involved.
- 33        From 2008 through 2010, the Gates Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided \$35 million to a consortium of two non-government trade associations (the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers) for purposes of developing and implementing a new education system in the United States. They called this the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) and published the plan in December 2008.
- 34        **Partnership Formed to Develop Digital Curriculum**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has partnered with the Pearson Foundation, the world’s largest publishing company, to create a curriculum for the nation aligned to the CCSS. According to the Gates Foundation’s press release, it will spend \$20 million to develop resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards including:

- Game-based learning applications
- Math, English language arts and science curricula built into digital formats
- Learning through social networking platforms
- Embedded assessments.

Other participants in the effort are: Educurious Partners, Florida Virtual School, Institute of Play, Reasoning Mind, Quest Atlantis, Digital Youth Network and EDUCAUSE.

The Gates Foundation expressly admits that its intention is to align learning tools with the Common Core State Standards and “to fundamentally change the way students and teachers interact in the classroom, and ultimately, how education works in America.”



<b>Concourse Entry Resource</b>	Website of Achieve one of the collaborating organizations in the initiative
<b>Concourse Resource Reference</b>	Achieve.org

#### Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source G

35 In 2009, 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia signed a memorandum of agreement with the National Governors Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), committing to a state-led process - the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI). Achieve partnered with NGA and CCSSO on the Initiative and a number of Achieve staff and consultants served on the writing and review teams [[www.achieve.org/achieving-common-core](http://www.achieve.org/achieving-common-core)]

36 Created in 1996 by a bipartisan group of governors and business leaders, Achieve is a nonprofit education organization that has spent two decades leading the effort to help states make college and career readiness a priority for all students.

Our diverse team of educators, researchers, advocates, and other experts represents decades of experience at the local, state, and national levels. For the past 20 years, we have delivered expertise and developed solutions for education leaders from across and within states as they tackle common challenges. [<https://www.achieve.org/about-us>]

37 **We convene states, experts, and partners** to develop solutions to their shared college- and career-ready policy and implementation challenges. [<https://www.achieve.org/about-us>]

#### Concourse Item



<b>Concourse Entry Resource</b>	Online document from Achieve - one of the collaborating organizations in the initiative
<b>Concourse Resource Reference</b>	<a href="http://www.achieve.org/files/VoterPerceptionsCCSSandTestsreport2014.pdf">http://www.achieve.org/files/VoterPerceptionsCCSSandTestsreport2014.pdf</a>

#### Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source H

38 When states want to collaborate on education policy or practice, they come to Achieve. At the direction of 48 states, and partnering with the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, Achieve helped develop the Common Core State Standards. Twenty-six states and the National Research Council asked Achieve to manage the process to write the Next Generation Science Standards. From 2010 to 2013, Achieve also served as the project manager for states in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, which are developing next generation assessments. And since 2005, Achieve has worked with state teams, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders and business executives to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning key policies with the demands of the real world so that all students graduate from high school with the

- knowledge and skills they need to fully reach their promise in college, careers and life.
- 39 Since June 2010, 46 states and Washington DC have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – K-12 standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy developed through a multi-state initiative led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Implementation of the standards is underway in all of these states with 35 states planning to have fully implemented the standards by the end of the 2013-14 school year, and the remaining 11 states with plans for full implementation by the end of the 2014-15 school year.
- 40 Most voters are still unaware of the Common Core State Standards, and among those who have heard at least something, opinions are nearly equally divided. □ However, upon hearing a brief description, a solid majority of voters support implementing the CCSS standards and tests.

**Concourse  
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**Concourse  
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On line document created by The Center on Education Policy

A Compendium of Research on the Common Core State Standards  
[https://static.ark.org/eeuploads/It-gov/Frizzell\\_FullReport\\_CCSSCompendium\\_021315.pdf](https://static.ark.org/eeuploads/It-gov/Frizzell_FullReport_CCSSCompendium_021315.pdf)

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source I**

- 41 Responses favoring the CCSS were split along party lines; 48% of Democrats held positive views and 23% held negative views. Conversely, only 19% of Republicans held positive attitudes toward the standards and 58% held negative attitudes. □ Teachers are also divided on the CCSS. o About 44% of teachers viewed the CCSS negatively and 40% viewed it positively. o Teachers with more experience with the CCSS were more likely to view them positively. o Teachers' views of the CCSS also aligned with party affiliation; 53% of those who lean Democratic had positive attitudes compared with 25% who lean Republican.
- 42 This poll included questions and key findings that are not directly related to the Common Core State Standards. For brevity, only key findings that are directly related to the CCSS or the CCSS-aligned assessments are presented below. □ The majority of respondents (73%) reported that the Common Core State Standards are just about right for students, in terms of challenge. Eight percent reported the standards are too challenging, 5% reported they are not challenging enough, and 15% of respondents said they did not know. □ When asked if more states should pull back from their Common Core assessment consortia, 64% responded no, 20% responded yes, and 16% said they did not know if more states should leave their Common Core consortia.
- 43 Researchers interviewed 11 CCSS policy entrepreneurs who were active in moving the CCSS from a conceptual reform idea to state adoption. The interview transcripts were coded by three researchers. They devised a framework for characterizing policy entrepreneurs' views on equity: □ An "equal" view, which assumes that equal inputs—especially standards, expectations, opportunities, curriculum resources, and instruction—will generate more equal student outcomes □ An "equalizing" view, which assumes that varying school inputs across educational setting are required to attain more equal educational outcomes □ An "expansive" view, which assumes that achieving more equal outcomes requires broad educational, social, health, and economic inputs that vary with educational contexts.

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Key Findings □ The CCSS supporters were a diverse group of organizations and their role in the Common Core initiative was equally diverse. The researchers placed groups' roles or activities into six categories: 1) promoting an idea, 2) developing the standards, 3) articulating constituent concerns, 4) building support in states, 5) informing constituents and looking toward implementation, and 6) funding the CCSS initiative and building a network. □ The reasons for supporters' mobilization were also diverse. Concerns about global economic competitiveness motivated groups that represented policymakers. Members from equity-based organizations spoke about the low quality of state standards and the unequal distribution of student learning opportunities. For some organizations, the CCSS advances their overall advocacy agenda. □ Most opponents of the CCSS were more ideologically aligned. Opposition to the Common Core has come primarily from loosely allied, conservative groups that view the standards as an unwarranted federal intrusion and a threat to state autonomy. These organizations have framed their arguments against the CCSS by questioning the evidence base, arguing that some states had standards that were more rigorous than the CCSS, and stressing that the costs of CCSS implementation and assessment are unknown.

45

Researchers interviewed 111 CCSS stakeholders, including leaders of the CCSS, members of the work groups and committees that wrote and validated the CCSS, national and state education policy makers, education policy researchers, and members of groups that are critical of the CCSS. Interview data was categorized by the policy stage in which the interviewee participated. (Three policy stages were used: problem definition/solution, policy design, and policy enactment.) The recorded accounts of types of evidence used were compared to hypotheses that researchers derived from policy analysis literature.

46

a lack of peer-reviewed research to help shape the CCSS meant that standards writers would need to use other forms of evidence; the final product was based on "research and evidence." Third, there was a desire to include stakeholders in addition to educational researchers in the CCSS creation process, such as teachers, teacher union leaders, and state department of education personnel. Fourth, "a grounding in the available research and evidence" was one of the guiding principles used by the validation committee. Because of the lack of research some of the decisions made by committee members were based on professional judgment. □ During the state adoption stage, stakeholders often customized previously used evidence to address various state audiences. Researchers point out that evidence was tailored to address the need for states to adopt standards quickly to meet federal requirements and the need for state policymakers to see the rigor of the CCSS compared with their previous state standards.

47

phone interviews with a nationally representative sample of adults.

#### Key Findings

This poll included questions and key findings that are not directly related to the Common Core State Standards. For brevity, only key findings that are directly related to the CCSS or the CCSS-aligned assessments are presented below. □ The majority of Americans have heard of the CCSS. Thirty-four percent of national respondents said they had heard only a little, while 30% had heard a fair amount, and 17% had heard a great deal about the CCSS. □ Many participants heard about the CCSS through national media sources. About 49% of the national sample and 38% of the public school parent subsample had heard about the CCSS through television, newspapers, radio, and other media. Other sources of information included teachers (17% of national sample, 23% of public school parent subsample); friends, neighbors, or relatives (11%, 7%); school communications (9%, 22%); and social media (8%, 6%). □ Opinions about the CCSS were divided by political party. For example, 76% of Republican respondents opposed the standards, compared with 38% of Democrats and 60% of Independents. □ The majority of respondents (60%) do not support the CCSS. The reason

most often cited for this opposition was that the CCSS will limit teachers' instructional flexibility (65%). Other reasons were that teachers in the community did not support the CCSS (51%), the CCSS were initiated by the federal government (40%), and the CCSS will lead to a national curriculum (38%).

**Concourse  
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**J**

**Concourse  
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Tumblr Blog by Christel Swasey a Utah Teacher

**Resource**

**Concourse**

**Resource**

**Reference**

[https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=5mOFc4Hv&id=81EABD63DF1D840A06F61EDC29D80652FAD8B3A1&thid=OIP.5mOFc4HvZUF98fr2dei\\_DgEgEs&q=Common+Core+Tumblr&simid=608022883662171403&selectedIndex=9&ajaxhist=0](https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=5mOFc4Hv&id=81EABD63DF1D840A06F61EDC29D80652FAD8B3A1&thid=OIP.5mOFc4HvZUF98fr2dei_DgEgEs&q=Common+Core+Tumblr&simid=608022883662171403&selectedIndex=9&ajaxhist=0)

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source J**

- 48 “Common Core is EVIL POSING AS GOOD”
- 49 COMMON CORE LACKS A REPRESENTATIVE AMENDMENT PROCESS.  
If the Common Core Initiative was in harmony with the Constitution, it would be amendable by those governed by it.
- 50 IT LACKS CHECKS AND BALANCES.  
The use of checks and balances was designed to make it difficult for a minority of people to control the government and to restrain the government itself.
- 51 IT LACKS AUTHORITY.  
If the Common Core Initiative was in harmony with the Constitution, it would have been born legitimately: but its only “authority” is the unprecedented assigning of money to the discretion of the Education Secretary without proper congressional oversight.
- 52 IT ALTERS THE LIMITS OF FEDERAL POWER.  
If the Common Core Initiative was in harmony with the Constitution, it would not be openly admitted even by its more notorious proponent, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to alter the traditionally limited role of the federal government

**Concourse  
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**K**

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Newspaper Article from The Fredrick News Post

**Resource**

**Concourse**

**Resource**

**Reference**

[https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/politics\\_and\\_government/rights/common-core-is-about-money-and-control/article\\_63c37f15-5f32-567f-9cb7-b9ff230f908d.html](https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/politics_and_government/rights/common-core-is-about-money-and-control/article_63c37f15-5f32-567f-9cb7-b9ff230f908d.html)

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source A**

- 53 The Common Core State Standards Initiative was presented in the 2009 stimulus package. States were “encouraged” to adopt the standards, which hadn’t been written yet, or face losing Race to the Top funding. Is that not blackmail or coercion? Adopt a blank document or lose your funds. It sounds like a classic protection racket. Now that it has been written, it has also been copyrighted so it cannot be changed. Who agrees to and signs a document like that? Prof. Christopher Tienken of Seton Hall University, one of Common Core’s many detractors, has called it “educational malpractice.” Within the CCSSI, there is an allowance for government moderators to be placed in each school to determine compliance. No compliance, no funding. This sounds a lot like the “political officers” that were dispatched by communist governments to ensure citizen compliance.
- 54 How do you feel about the funding of the Common Core? Did you know one unelected businessman, Bill Gates, funded the Common Core initiative, paid the PTA and the pro-Common Core think tanks (Fordham Institute, Manhattan Institute, Foundation for Educational Excellence) that advocate for it? Did you know he partnered with Pearson, the largest educational textbook sales company in the world to market it? Did you know that he publicly calls American schools his “uniform customer base” and that he has said his goal is for Common Core tests, curriculum and standards to align? Technology will take over the classroom. We will no longer need “highly qualified teachers,” we’ll only need moderators and political officers. Colleges can say goodbye to their teacher education programs, there will be no career path for teachers.
- 55 How do you feel about Secretary Arne Duncan’s stated goals for national Common Core educational standards and common data standards? To summarize, a few of Duncan’s stated goals are:
- n To have the federal government take control over American schools more than ever before.
  - n To make schools (not families) be community centers, open six to seven days a week, 12 months a year, 14 hours per day.
  - n To partner the Department of Education with the copyright owners of Common Core for both education standards and for data collection standards.
- Jim Stergios, executive director of the Pioneer Institute, says, “The Common Core initiative is more about ‘compliance’ than education.”
- 56 Crystal Swasey, author of “How the Common Core Initiative Hurts Kids Teachers and Taxpayers,” says, “Common Core has no legs, except expensive marketing legs and lies, to stand on. It has no academic pilot testing, no written amendment process for states to retain local control, no privacy protections for its tests’ data collection processes (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was gutted.), no wisdom, no international benchmarking, no chance of improving ‘global competitiveness,’ no heart, no state-led history, no commitment to local control; no hope to develop any real love of learning; no common sense. What it does have is millions upon millions of dollars gambled on this takeover of American schools as a ‘uniform customer base’ and many more millions spent on marketing its unsupportable talking points.”

- 57 So, what is the lesson? It's all about money and control, not the education of our children.

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**L**

**Concourse  
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You Tube video with Tamara Scott of Truth for our Time from Des Moin Iowa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO60rMxXZ2k> Published on Dec. 17 2014

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source L**

- 58 Scott Called it Federal Overreach. And that they are phasing out State authority “Phase out authority of states” under Arne Duncan regulations.
- 59 She says loss of Control and there can't be changes so she calls it unconstitutional and loss of freedom.
- 60 She mentioned that the Connect Ed initiative under Obama was phasing out textbooks (?)

**Concourse  
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**M**

**Concourse  
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Blog by Dianne Ravitch, historian of education, an educational policy analyst, and a research professor at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture

<https://dianeravitch.net/2013/02/26/why-i-cannot-support-the-common-core-standards>

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source M**

- 61 I have come to the conclusion that the Common Core standards effort is fundamentally flawed by the process with which they have been foisted upon the nation.
- 62 The Common Core standards have been adopted in 46 states and the District of Columbia without any field test. They are being imposed on the children of this nation despite the fact that no one has any idea how they will affect students, teachers, or schools. We are a nation of guinea pigs, almost all trying an unknown new program at the same time.

- 63 Maybe the standards will be great. Maybe they will be a disaster. Maybe they will improve achievement. Maybe they will widen the achievement gaps between haves and have-nots. Maybe they will cause the children who now struggle to give up altogether. Would the Federal Drug Administration approve the use of a drug with no trials, no concern for possible harm or unintended consequences?
- 64 President Obama and Secretary Duncan often say that the Common Core standards were developed by the states and voluntarily adopted by them. This is not true.
- 65 They were developed by an organization called Achieve and the National Governors Association, both of which were generously funded by the Gates Foundation. There was minimal public engagement in the development of the Common Core. Their creation was neither grassroots nor did it emanate from the states.
- 66 In fact, it was well understood by states that they would not be eligible for Race to the Top funding (\$4.35 billion) unless they adopted the Common Core standards. Federal law prohibits the U.S. Department of Education from prescribing any curriculum, but in this case the Department figured out a clever way to evade the letter of the law. Forty-six states and the District of Columbia signed on, not because the Common Core standards were better than their own, but because they wanted a share of the federal cash. In some cases, the Common Core standards really were better than the state standards, but in Massachusetts, for example, the state standards were superior and well tested but were ditched anyway and replaced with the Common Core. The former Texas State Commissioner of Education, Robert Scott, has stated for the record that he was urged to adopt the Common Core standards before they were written.

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**N**

**Concourse  
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Website - Wyoming Citizens Opposing Common Core

**Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

<http://wyomingcitizensopposingcommoncore.com/common-core/>

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source N**

- 67 **Myth:** Common Core (CC) was a state-led initiative.  
**Fact:** The CC standards were initiated by private interests in Washington, DC, without any representation from the states. Eventually the creators realized the need to present a façade of state involvement and therefore enlisted the National Governors Association (NGA) (a trade association that doesn't include all governors) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), another DC-based trade association. Neither of these groups had a grant of authority from any particular state or states to write the standards. The bulk of the creative work was done by Achieve, Inc., a DC-based nonprofit that includes many progressive

education reformers who have been advocating national standards and curriculum for decades. Massive funding for all this came from private interests such as the Gates Foundation.

- 68            **Myth:** The federal government is not involved in the CC scheme.  
**Fact:** The US Department of Education (USED) was deeply involved in the meetings that led to creation of Common Core. Moreover, it has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the two consortia that are creating the national tests that will align with CC. USED is acting as the enforcer to herd states into the scheme
- 69            **Myth:** States that adopted CC did so voluntarily, without federal coercion.  
**Fact:** Most states that adopted CC did so to be eligible to compete for federal Race to the Top funding. To have a chance at that money, recession-racked states agreed to adopt the CC standards and the aligned national tests sight unseen. In addition, the Obama Administration tied No Child Left Behind waivers to CC adoption, making it very difficult for a state to obtain a waiver without agreeing to accept CC.
- 70            Not “state-led” as claimed, developed and copyrighted by private interest groups
- 71            Federal government using “power of the purse” to coerce adoption
- 72            Three federal statutes prohibit what’s being done
- 73            Threats to freedoms for private and home schools
- 74            Loss of family privacy – unprecedented data collection, amassing and sharing planned with groups outside the school system, all as a result of quiet changes to laws designed to protect us

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O

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website

<http://www.educationviews.org/list-of-anti-common-core-resources/>

*[Below is specifically from <http://www.educationviews.org/state-membership-common-core-test-consortia-62-percent/> State Membership in Common Core Test Consortia Down By 62 Percent Breitbart, July 15, 2016]*

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source O**

- 75            Membership in the two federally funded multi-state test consortia tasked with designing assessments aligned with the Common Core standards has dropped 62 percent since 2011.
- 76            In 2010, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) indicated they had gathered 26 and 32



member states, respectively. But, by the start of 2016, 38 states had left one or both consortia, [reports](#) pro-Common Core *Education Next*.

- 77 *Education Next* admits that the Common Core standards reform received “support from the wrong places.” The pro-Common Core report states:

The Common Core standards and their aligned assessments drew many supporters from the federal and state governments, from the philanthropic community, and from reform advocates, but most members of these groups do not have a personal stake—a vested interest—in what happens in schools at the ground level. Therefore, their support alone is not enough to sustain education reform over time. Federal and state policymakers sometimes embrace high standards and quality assessments in principle, but when they experience intense pressure from interest groups and the public, their support is likely to falter.

- 78 Indeed, the state boards of education, many of them unelected, that signed onto the unproven Common Core standards did so with little, if any, public or media scrutiny, prior to even seeing the standards themselves.

- 79 The Common Core standards were [developed](#) by three private organizations in Washington D.C.: the National Governors Association (NGA), the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and progressive education company Achieve Inc. All three organizations were privately funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and none of these groups are accountable to parents, teachers, students, or taxpayers.

- 80 There is also no official information about who selected the individuals to write the Common Core standards. None of the writers of the math and English Language Arts standards have ever taught math, English, or reading at the K-12 level.

“They did not reach out to parents, teachers and state lawmakers,” Shane Vander Hart [notes](#) at Truth in American Education. “This was done intentionally however because there is no way they would have gotten as many states to sign on with the standards and assessment consortia if they went about adoption in a public and transparent way.”

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website

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<https://townhall.com/tipsheet/sarahjeanseman/2014/09/02/the-case-against-common-core-n1885963>

**Reference**

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source P**

- 81 An ensuing task force composed of the NGA, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the progressive educational group Achieve Inc. produced a 2008 report titled “Benchmarking Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World Class Education.” The writers urged state leaders to “upgrade state standards by adopting a Common Core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive.”

This same advisory group proceeded to jointly develop the standards known today as Common Core State Standards.

- 82 “I want to explain why Common Core is among the most important education ideas in years,” Gates wrote in a February 12, 2014 USA Today op-ed.

“If you look at the history of Common Core, how it came to be, the pressure and the incentive that were put on states to adopt it, I think it’s easy to conclude that this was federally driven,” Lindsey Burke, Will Skillman fellow in education policy at The Heritage Foundation, tells Townhall.

- 83 Follow the money and you will find that the federal government is the biggest backer of Common Core.

“From the get-go, there were \$4.35 billion dollars in Race to the Top grants offered up to states that adopted the standards,” Burke says.

President Obama’s 2009 law, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, funded \$4.35 billion to the competitive grant program, Race to the Top. This program offered monetary incentives (which for all intents and purposes can be referred to as a bribe) to implement educational reform.

- 84 The current administration’s[Obama] ideology of progressive reform is at the heart of the federal entanglement, Burke explains.

<b>Concourse Item</b>	<b>Q</b>
<b>Concourse Entry Resource Concourse Resource Reference</b>	Website - nprEd How Learning Happens Common Core Can A President Trump Get Rid of Common Core? No. 10, 2016 by Cory Turner <a href="http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/11/10/501426803/can-president-trump-get-rid-of-common-core">http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/11/10/501426803/can-president-trump-get-rid-of-common-core</a>

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source Q**

85 “Common Core is a total disaster. We can’t let it continue.”

So said presidential *candidate* Donald Trump in a [campaign ad](#) on his website.

To make sure there’s no confusion about where he stands on the learning standards that are now used by the vast majority of states, Trump also tweeted earlier this year:

“Get rid of Common Core — keep education local!”

The question for *President-elect* Trump and for the millions of teachers, parents and students living in Common Core states is pretty simple:

Can he do it? Can he get rid of the Core standards?

86 The Common Core standards were developed by governors and state school superintendents and adopted at the state level. They were not created by the Obama administration or forced on states. Indeed, several states chose not to make the switch. That said, President Obama did use federal dollars, through the Race to the Top program, to encourage ([critics](#) prefer “coerce”) states to adopt new, more rigorous standards. And, in the throes of a downturn, that extra [school money](#) was a powerful enticement.

87 SEC. 8526A. [20 U.S.C. 7906a] PROHIBITION AGAINST FEDERAL MANDATES, DIRECTION, OR CONTROL. (a) IN GENERAL.—No officer or employee of the Federal Government shall, through grants, contracts, or other cooperative agreements, mandate, direct, or control a State, local educational agency, or school’s specific instructional content, academic standards and assessments, curricula, or program of instruction developed and implemented to meet the requirements of this Act (including any requirement, direction, or mandate to adopt the Common Core State Standards developed under the Common Core State Standards Initiative, any other academic standards common to a significant number of States, or any assessment, instructional content, or curriculum aligned to such standards), nor shall anything in this Act be construed to authorize such officer or employee to do so.

88 Does all of this mean the Common Core standards are here to stay, even under a Trump administration?

Not necessarily, writes Petrilli:

“The Trump victory will surely give boost to anti-Common Core Republicans at the state level, in places like Kentucky (now under full GOP control). We Common Core supporters could be in for some more rough sledding.”

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Reference**

Book

*The origins of the Common Core How the free market became public education policy*, Deborah Duncan Owens, 2015, United States St. Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, ISBN: 878-1-137-48267-9

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source R**

- 89 Money talks, it's commanding voice echoing in the education arena, increasingly reverberating along the path to the Common Core state standards. The corporate reformers, the impetus for reforming America's public schools has always been an economic issue
- 90 By 2008, one year before the final push to the creation of CCSS, Gates would infuse hundreds of millions of dollars into the CCSS initiative that would then be channeled into the coffers of diverse ideological and political groups such as the more conservative Alec, United States Chamber of Commerce, and the Thomas B Fordham Institute and the more liberal Center for American progress.
- 91 Gates also funneled money into the NEA and the AFT, America's two largest teachers unions enticing them to join the CCSS crusade. And very importantly, as Lindsay Layton would point out in 2014, gates systemic education reform dollars but also influence Pres. Obama, "his new administration was populated by former Gate staffers and Associates
- 92 Achieve would handpick a select writing team in order to make sure that those who were experts in K-12 education, let alone K-12 education, would not stand in the way of the curricular goals of achieving and its allies.
- 93 According to the NGA, following the release of the report "out of many one," "the NGA center and CCSSO can mean governors advisors and chief State school officers to gauge interest in developing a set of common, internationally benchmarked academic standards. 50 – one states and US territories signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) committing them to participate in the development process." 50 This meeting, however, was nothing more than mere for malady since it was highly unlikely that NGA and CCS SO would have abandoned their education reform course of action that had been developing since 1989
- 94 Two avenues of systemic education reform existed that ran parallel to each other on the eve of the Obama administration. One Avenue was lined with federal laws primarily associated with the reauthorization of ESEA as NCLB. The other Avenue was populated by the organizations operating within the

deep state, which reflected the “third way” of governance that had been operating since President Clinton’s administration. Clinton’s third way ushered in an era in which a bipartisan spirit could be created around privatization, deregulation, and the free market that simultaneously provided the environment needed for increased corporate influence on public policy issues.

95 What was not made clear to most American citizens, however, was that the CCSS were already being written by a team that had been formed by Achieve. The deep state already had a well – articulated systemic education reform initiative in place and they had not missed a step along the way. The federal government, operating in the public arena, carefully orchestrated the presentation of education policy to the American citizens. However, they withheld any disclosure to the public that education policy was actually being made in the private sector. Therefore, it is no wonder that within a few short years, when our RTTT was finally in place and corporate America’s influence would be felt, the American public would become alarmed and begin to resist federal intrusion in education policy.

96 The CCSS website declares that “the state – led effort to develop the Common Core state standards was launched in 2009 by state leaders, including governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia, through their membership in the national Governors Association Center for Best practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).”<sup>36</sup> These are, however, carefully chosen words since we now know this broad education reform effort is much more accurately described as a long – evolving example of government and corporate mutualism.

97 A better way to understand the CCCS developmental process, however, is to actually think of the April 2009 meeting as the final push to an education reform initiative that was long in the making.

98 in a 2009, a development work group was formed that began the final push to develop college – and career – readiness standards (CCRS). Following that work, and initial feedback group would be given the first draft of the CCRS for review. At the time, however, the list of individuals who made up these groups was secret, which naturally caused suspicion.

99 SAP would become connected at the hip with large corporate foundations such as the GE foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. For example, in 2012, SAP would receive an \$18 million grant from GE and two grants worth 6.5 million from Gates.

100 critics of the CCSS can make a valid claim that the creation of the Common Core was a hasty process moving forward at break neck speed in order to take advantage of the economic crisis was impacting America so that America’s public school system could become another drop in a bucket of free market adventurism.

- 100 critics of the CCSS can make a valid claim that the creation of the Common Core was a hasty process moving forward at break neck speed in order to take advantage of the economic crisis was impacting America so that America’s public school system could become another drop in a bucket of free market adventurism.
- 102 Stotsky criticized the fact that most of the actual standards writers were connected to Achieve, ACT, Inc., The College Board, and America’s choice, a for-profit project of the national Center for education and the economy (NCEE). She went on to explain that in her mind “the absence of relevant professional credentials in the two grade level standards writing teams helps to explain the flaws in the two sets of standards these private organizations produced.
- 103 Jim Stergois, Executive Director of the Pioneer Institute, explains that there was some public comment, but in his you, extensive public hearings and testimonials, did not happen.
- 104 Anti— CCSS sediment has created an unprecedented alliance among the desperate groups against the CCSS. Some parents aligned with the conservative right decry the standards as liberal propaganda to indoctrinate children in the Marxist ideology that represents further encroachment of the federal government into the lives of American citizens. Other parents aligned with the progressive left see the CCS S as a one – size – fits – all approach to education that squeezes the arts out of the curriculum while being driven by high-stakes standardized testing under the influence of corporate – led school reformers
- 105 the free market was prepared to take advantage of their access to the mother load of student data ready to be mined, thanks to the newly created inBloom Inc. According to Stephanie Simon, writing for Reuters, in bloom resulted from a joint project of the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (which provided most of the funding), the Carnegie Corporation, and amplify education (a division of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp). **15** working with school officials from several states, the group developed a database of student information ready to be harvested by private
- 106 many public schools were fighting for their existence under threat of closure, and then guard of systemic education reform advocates were busy behind the curtain of the deep state, wielding the levers that would carry the country further down the path to the Common Core state standards. Within this universe, individuals and groups his allegiance to a corporate – driven free market approach to reform continued to marshal their ideas in order to finally dominate America’s education landscape.

Concourse  
Item

S

<b>Concourse Entry Resource Concourse Resource Reference</b>	Official Common Core State Standards Website  www.corestandards.org
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#### Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source S

- 106 The development process of the CCSSI was a State led effort started in 2009 by State Governors and State Education Commissioners from 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia. The two main organizations that collaborated as members in the common Core SS I included the National Governors Association Center for Best practices and the Council of chief State school officers
- 107 These collaborating groups pinpointed the goals of ensuring that all students, the matter where they live should graduate high school prepared for college, career and life.
- 108 The standards were informed by: Best state standards already in existence, the experience of teachers, content experts, states and the leading thinkers; feedback from the public
- 109 The collaboration included professional education organizations in the drafting process; 1. Teachers served on work groups and feedback groups for the ELA and math standards 2. The national education Association (NEA), American Federation of teachers (AFT), national Council of teachers of mathematics (and CTM), and national Council of teachers of English (and CTE), and other organizations were involved in bringing together teachers to procure specific, constructive feedback on the standards.
- 110 Teachers were members of teams states convened to provide regular feedback on drafts of standards
- 111 Teachers were involved in the 2 public comment periods

**Concourse Item**            **T**

<b>Concourse Entry Resource Concourse Resource Reference</b>	Official Website of Achieve  Www.Achieve.org
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#### Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source T

- 112 In 2008 achieve collaborated with NGA and CC SO to create and release a generative report called “out of many, one: toward rigorous Common Core standards from the ground up “
- 113 Achieves ADP benchmarks played a foundational role for the CCS S project (initiative)
- 114 “Common education standards are essential for producing the educated workforce America needs to remain globally competitive.” Said Craig Barrett, achieve board member and former CEO of Intel Corporation. “This voluntary state led effort will

help ensure that all students can receive the college – and career – ready, world – class education they deserve, no matter where they live.”

**Concourse  
Item**

**U**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource  
Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

On line article in the news section. Titled quarrel over Common Core: a Pennsylvania primer by Randy Kraft posted September 19, 2014 updated May 27, 2016

<http://www.WFMZ.com/news/quarrel-over-common-core-a-Pennsylvania>

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source U**

- 115 “Or Common Core is an insidious federal government to take over of local education”
- 116 State officials insist that Common Core standards were repealed in March 2010 and replaced with Pennsylvania core standards
- 117 The core of the debate is not whether the standards served to foster educational success for PAs students, but whether adoption of the standards was federal government control over education. Although Common Core standards were not developed at the behest of the federal government, it did offer millions of dollars in grant money to encourage states to adopt them – and most states did
- 118 In announcing a request that the state board of Ed hold statewide hearings, about improving PA state standards, then governor Tom Corbett said that Common Core was “nothing more than a top-down takeover of the education system. It is nothing more than Obama care for education.”
- 119 Corbett said his goal was to ensure that any final influence of the national Common Core state standards is eradicated from Pennsylvania
- 120 Felice, the Eastern coordinator for Pennsylvanians against Common Core claims to have 5000 members from every county in the state
- 121 Felice said Common Core standards are unproven, untested and being imposed by people from outside the state who have no teaching background
- 122 “One of the biggest problems with Common Core is the local school boards are losing control” said by Felice
- 123 Felice also said “this program is all about control. That control ultimately will reside with the Department of Education in Washington”
- 124 Eller from the state Department of Education said federal law prohibits the federal government from getting involved in state educational curriculum issues

**Concourse  
Item**

**V**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource  
Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Chapter in Book

Common Core Meets Education Reform: What it all means for Politics, Policy, and the Future of Schooling, edited by Frederick M. Hess and Michael Q. McShane [This section written by Dane Linn -]



**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source V**

- 125 The national Governors Association (NGA) and Council of chief State school officers (CCS SO) could draw on the support of prominent Democrats like Pres. Obama and the US education Sec. Arne Duncan as well as notable Republicans like former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. This coalition was also backed by enthusiastic advocacy groups like a Democrats for education reform and philanthropies like the deep – pocketed Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.
- 126 Decades of study of public policy have led to an almost immutable truths: implementing large, national initiatives that require diverse actors to cooperate is really, really complicated. As a result, the landscape of American history is littered with policies that, while grandiose in vision and rhetoric, fell apart during implementation. The Common Core state standards initiative is an example of such an enormous undertaking
- 127 The new information will also play a central role in the political will to sustain the Common Core initiative. Maintaining this program over the coming years, especially with the public relations hit that a dip in scores or unfavorable comparisons might bring, will take political capital. At every turn, leaders will face incentives to leave the program for greener pastures and systems over which they exert more control. The organizations that support this endeavor including the national Governors Association, the Council of chief State school officers, the Gates foundation, and any governing body developed to manage the standards will need to be cognizant of these incentives and work to maintain the political coalition that supports the Common Core if they want the initiative to be successful.
- 128 2 national organizations played a key role in the development of the Common Core standards: the national Governors Association (NGA), a membership organization representing Governors of the 50 states, commonwealths, and US territories; and the Council of chief State school officers (CCS SO), the national organization representing the state superintendent of schools. These groups decided to partner with achieve Inc., a nonprofit supporting standards – based education reform to create a task force that produced benchmarking for success: ensuring US students receive a world-class education. This report laid out a set of recommendations articulating what it would take for the US education system to be globally competitive.
- 129 The national Governors Association is an organization in which governors from both parties Republican and Democrat work together on a range of policy issues: education, health, homeland security, workforce development, energy, and more. Each party’s caucus determines a leader to join a chairman which rotates parties on an annual basis. In addition, there is also a committee structure (EE. G., Education, children, and workforce) that informs the organizations policy positions at the federal level. Unlike many organizations in Washington DC governors make the decisions about where the organization will and will not focus its attention. The Common Core standards were no exception.
- 130 In 2009, I was charged with figuring out how to address education as part of NGA’s “innovation America” initiative. “Innovation America” largely focused on how governors could use innovation as a platform for rebuilding their state economies there was one problem. The agenda did not pay any attention to the role of K-12 education. The governors decided to launch a national task force chaired by former Gov. Janet Knapp Paula Tonto and former Intel CEO Craig Barrett to determine what it would take for the US education system to be internationally competitive. The NGA decided to partner with CCSS and achieve Inc. On the initiative, given the significant role these organizations play in education reform movement. (This was stated by Dane Linn)

- 131 It is important to understand that governors and chief State school officers started and determined the process for developing the Common Core state standards. There is an ongoing myth that the federal government, and the White House in particular, ask the national Governors Association and the Council of chief State school officers to lead a process to create national standards. Others have suggested the federal stimulus package contained incentives for the 2 organizations to create standards. As one of the leaders of the effort to develop common standards that were internationally benchmarked, I can attest that the statements are not and have never been true. (This was stated by Dane Linn)
- 132 The goal of the initiative was to give governors the tools they needed to improve math and science education and ensure that higher education was better aligned to state and regional economies. The initiative did not focus on what it would take for the country's education system to prepare students so they would be internationally competitive, even though the performance of the US 15-year-olds on the program for international student assessment (PISA), and assessment used by countries that represent two thirds of the world economy, indicates that our students performed at the bottom of the pile (25th) among participating countries.
- 133 Early in the initiative, several governors ask Napolitano to create a national advisory group to focus its attention on what it would take to create a system that was internationally benchmarked to top performing countries. The governors decided that NGA, CCS S0, and achieve would join together in this effort. The advisory group was co-chaired by Napolitano, then Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia, and Craig Barrett, former CEO of Intel. Other members of the group included former Secretary of Education Richard Riley, several state commissioners of education, and international representatives from the organization for economic cooperation and development (OECD) and the international Association for the evaluation of educational achievement.
- 134 And advisory group representing several national organizations achieve Inc., ACT, the College Board, the national Association of State boards of education, and the state higher education executive officers helped shape the initiative and provided guidance throughout the process
- 135 Governors were regularly informed during NGA meetings about the standards development process but the most significant way some of the governors was Sonny Perdue, then Gov. of the state of Georgia and lead governor for NGA's involvement in the standards initiative
- 136 As noted earlier, the initiative was completely state – led from beginning to end
- 137 At times, the growing number of conditions put on the availability of stimulus dollars, race to the top, and other funds put the eventual adoption of the standards at risk. Clearly it fed the argument being made by Gov. Perry of Texas, who state never considered adoption of the standards. The governor did not want to commit Texas taxpayers to unfunded federal obligations or to the adoption of unproven, cost prohibitive national standards and tests. To be honest, NGA and CCSSO made several requests to the US Department of Education to 1) stop referring to CCSS and leaving many groups, especially opponents of the standards, with the impression the federal government was either creating the standards for asking NGA and CCS SO to lead the development of the standards on their behalf, and 2) not set preconditions for federal funds on whether or not states adopted CCSS.
- 138 Even when the US Department of Education made the adoption of “college – and career – ready standards” the requirement versus the adoption of CCS S, it was too late to change the minds of those individuals and groups who firmly believe the effort was a federal effort. Beyond Texas, some Western states who never adopted the standards raised concerns about the federal government's involvement the states believed if they adopted the standards this would lead to other attempts by the federal government to preempt states rights
- 139 Engagement of national organizations. The standards were developed with extraordinary input from education organizations. NGA and CCS S of, along with members of the writing teams met with representatives from the Council of great city schools American Federation of teachers, national education Association, national Council of teachers of mathematics,

international reading Association, from K-12; and the American Association of State colleges and universities and the American Council on education, among others from higher education more important, we spent a considerable amount of time enlisting feedback from content experts in the higher education field who helped determine whether the standards especially those in high school would increase the number of students who would be successful in college coursework and would not need to enroll in remedial classes

- 140 Engagement of concerned individuals the public also had an opportunity to submit comments on the draft standards on the Common Core’s website. Over 10,000 comments were submitted by educators, parents, and other concerned citizens, and each was reviewed by the team. Many individuals agreed with the need to create a set of common standards across the states and, in general, liked what they saw in the draft documents

**Concourse  
Item**

**W**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource**

Chapter 6 in Book written by Peter Meyer

**Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Common Core Meets Education Reform: What it all means for Politics, Policy, and the Future of Schooling, edited by Frederick M. Hess and Michael Q. McShane

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source W**

- 141 The leaders of CC SS movement were acutely aware of the need to ensure that the process was driven by the states that the federal government. Support from Common Core standards by the Council of chief State school officers of the NGA was overwhelming according to Robert Rothman but much of that support came because of a deep respect for the belief that local community should set their own standards critics see this as a smokescreen, hiding what they believe is a nationalized curriculum, an argument made much stronger when the Obama administration tied race to the top funds for states to their acceptance of CCS S
- 142 According to James Hunt the major leader of the national standards movement “these new standards have not been imposed on states. They have emerged from states, ledges the United States did almost 225 years ago when the Constitution and Bill of Rights was adopted.”

**Concourse  
Item**

**X**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource**

Chapter 8 in book chapter written by Patrick McGuinn

**Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Common Core Meets Education Reform: What it all means for Politics, Policy, and the Future of Schooling, edited by Frederick M. Hess and Michael Q. McShane

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source X**

- 143 Less attention has been paid to crucial questions surrounding the governance of such an effort over the longer term, particularly if the federal government’s role in it is limited (or nonexistent). How might decision-making for voluntary, state base, but

- multistate set of common standards in education and be institutionalized? How can the interest of diverse governmental and nongovernmental actors operating at the national, state, and local levels be accommodated? What kinds of institutional structures can ensure that common standards and assessments remain rigorous and up to date, incentivize states participation, and create a stable governance and financing mechanism able to sustain the venture over time?
- 144 Although there were many participants in the development – and the funding – of CCS S, at the end of the day the national Governors Association and Council of chief State school officers kept a tight rein on actual decisions. Today the 2 groups literally hold the copyright on the standards on behalf of their respective memberships. It appears that they are, in effect “in control” of the Common Core until/unless an alternative structures developed that meets with their ascent. In some ways it resembles a privately held firm.
- 145 Such firms have many advantages in the corporate world, but they also have disadvantages a number of key players and stakeholders in the education space appear to believe that the Common Core over the long haul, given his likely central role in American K-12 education should be more akin to a publicly traded firm accountable to multiple shareholders, maybe even a public utility. This approach would of course, bring its own complexities and disadvantages as well as potential gains.
- 146 The implementation of the CCS S poses many challenges for governorates at the district, state, and national levels, as officials need to come to an agreement as to who owns what part of the standards their assessment in the systems of accountability and management built off of them
- 147 The most important governance question center on who should have the power to make decisions about the future of the Common Core which individuals or group should have a seat at the table? There are several tensions that work here – in particular, the need to balance inclusiveness with decisiveness in the decision – making process and the need to maintain states commitment to the standards and assessments while keeping them rigorous and the poll litter sized. The question about power can be further subdivided into 3 sub components: representation, structure and process, and function. 1st which individuals and groups should be involved in decision-making? 2nd, what are the structures and processes that should guide their decision-making? And 3rd, which decisions activity should they be responsible for?
- 148 The 1st question about representation centers on the appropriate size of the decision-making body. This is particularly thorny issue because of the large and diverse array of organizations that have a stake in the implementation and revision of the standards and assessments. There is a fundamental tension between the desire to be broadly inclusive – to include as many stakeholder groups as possible – and the desire to have an efficient decision-making process that can result policy questions in a timely and harmonious manner.
- 149 One observer noted that even if the decision-making bodies limited to governors and chief, there needs to be more than just a handful of them are presented. “There needs to be a way to weave states into this institutionally more than they currently are, at tighter knitting together of states into this so there is a feeling that they are more invested in it.”
- 150 Others argued however, that limiting the number of organizations and individual members on the executive committee would help to promote attendance, engagement, and ownership by those organizations and individuals because they will not just be “one of many.” What is needed one observer said is “a Goldilocks” middle ground between coherence and inclusion, and between stability and adaptability –[ the governance entity] should not be too easy to move or to put the move
- 151 A related question – which particular organizations are kinds of organizations are best suited to sit on a governing body? Some interviewees expressed confidence that place in the governance of the Common Core in the hands of membership organizations like the NGA and

- CCS SO is a good idea because it is their members to play the critical role in adopting and implementing the standards
- 152 Others caution that membership organizations are inevitably captive to the self-interest of their members that this could threaten the objectivity of their decision-making process around the standards, ultimately undermining the rigor of the standards and assessments themselves. One interviewee remarked, “having just NGA and sea CSSSO this is to slim membership organizations are noted for you sleep better at doing anything that would be controversial for any of their members.)
- 153 Another question related to representation is whether the standards decision-making entity should include only (or mostly) representatives from “supportive” quote organizations, or should it bring into the fold groups that have influence over the standards adoption and implementation process at the national or state level but who may be less sold on ideas of common standards and assessments. Interviewees for example highlighted the absence of state legislators from the long-term governance conversation is a major concern is widely acknowledged that legislators have not been consistent supporters of the Common Core and that they also may have a contentious relationship with governors and state chiefs however, it is wise to exclude them from the standards decision-making body, given the central role that they will inevitably play at the state level in determining the future of the standards.
- 154 Several people argue for representation for the business and higher education communities on any CCS S governance entity given their crucial role in certifying the Common Core standards as valid indicators of college and career readiness
- 155 Whatever specific organizations are given a seat on an executive committee, attention must be paid to the kinds of individuals that should be chosen to represent the designated organizations. In particular, should the representatives be elected or appointed policymakers, their deputies, or the staff of national membership organizations?
- 156 decision-making structure – what kind of governance structures best suited to the CCS S? When we think about the structural and procedural issues involved here is to identify the different types of decisions and decision-makers that will be involved. There appeared to be 3 quite distinct types of decisions that will need to be made in relation to CCSS: political decisions, operational decisions, and technical decisions. Theoretically all 3 kinds of decisions could be made by single governing entity, but there may also be advantages to separate them out and housing them in different kinds of structures with different memberships and decision-making authorities and processes.
- 157 Do governors, state chiefs, and school board presidents have the time and knowledge necessary to undertake engaged in a form leadership of the CCS S? Many interviewees believe the high – level public officials lack the necessary expertise to deal with technical issues that will be at the heart of the standards implementation, validation and revision process several one of a group of governors and cheese but actually discussed at their meetings.
- 158 That the political leaders need to be involved in some capacity given the fiscal policy implications of CCS S governance decisions and the need to give them public legitimacy that many people have expressed skepticism that elected leaders would be able or willing to make politically difficult technically complicated decisions interviewees remarked “there is a struggle/trade-off between the desire to have broad buy-in and in cage but at the highest policy making level, and getting the work done in avoiding political posturing”
- 159 Some suggestions include: a small executive committee that would be in charge of the day-to-day operational decision-making around CCSS; a technical advisory board comprised of experts; a high-level political board that would meet quarterly or biannually to said board policy; an advisory board with a large and diverse membership also be included to make recommendations in executive committee and political board
- 160 The crucial question will be to determine which group should have actual decision-making authority on an executive committee and which will be limited to making recommendations on an advisory Council

- 161 Another question centers on the independence of any new governance structure: should it be housed inside of an existing organization, or should a new 501(c) 3 be created?
- 162 In addition to the size, composition, and structure of any decision – making body, careful thought needs to be given to how it will make decisions. What will the voting protocol be? 3 possibilities come to mind – a majority Terry and system (50% +1), a super majority system (perhaps a two thirds or three quarters threshold), or decision-making consensus – unanimity. Each model has advantages and disadvantages and the approach chosen will have enormous consequences for governance, both in terms of how decisions are reached as well as how likely the body will be able to resolve contentious issues
- 163 A 2010 Fordham report recommended that an interim monitoring and coordinating Council be created to help guide the Common Core through the transition. Until the standards need to be revised. Call for this body to take on 5 tasks: 1) tracking and reporting on stain implementation of standards and assessments; 2) promoting interstate collaboration around implementation; 3) initiating research programs to prepare for revision of standards; for) undertaking public relations work to promote standards: and 5) recommending a long-term governance structure
- 164 A governance model for CCSS is the national network model – governance through a loose informal and diffuse group of stakeholders with little defined structure and decision-making authority some see this as more in line with the original approach to drafting standards and believe it worked well
- 165 The and AGB model institutionalizes governance within a structure that incorporates a large and diverse array of organizations and perspectives. This approach combines the broad representation of the network model with a more formal decision-making structure was called the and AGB model because the national assessment governing board which Congress established to oversee the national assessment of educational progress is made up in such a way to make sure the governing board is why the representative the law (Public Law 107 – 279) requires that the board be comprised of a representative group of stakeholders including governors, teachers, the business community and the director of the Institute of education sciences.
- 166 In the consolidation model governance powers and functions come under the leadership of one or 2 existing organizations many want those to be the NGA and CCS SO to continue to serve in the capacity rather than large membership and broad representation of groups outlined previously this approach would rely on a small executive committee of state policymakers selected by with an eye toward political and geographic balance a memorandum of understanding (M OU) could be created between organizations, which would contribute staff time and race initial funding to support the operation of the committee in any ancillary structures formed
- 167 A larger advisory structure could include representatives from a broader array of stakeholders. The small executive committee may promote ownership, engagement, and decisiveness. The trade-off, however is that only a few groups would have representation on the decision-making body for the CCS S. Whatever efforts are made to ensure a diverse mix of perspectives, this consolidated approach would ensure that a majority of states as well as a majority of state policymakers would not have a vote/voice in governance
- 168 The network, and AGB, and consolidation approaches to governance focuses on representing particular groups and perspectives in a national decision-making body and, as a result, do not treat state estate in this process. But some multistate regional organizations have been created that focus on states as the crucial unit of analysis. Some have also done so without official interstate compacts by relying instead on memoranda of understanding (M OU's) or other more informal agreements. Rather than taking a national approach, states could group themselves together on the basis of geographical proximity or a shared approach to common standards and assessments and create regional entities each with its own governing body
- 169 The new England, and assessment program (NEC AP) offers another interesting regional model. In response to end CLB's requirement that states expand annual testing in math and

reading, 3 states (New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) joined together to create a testing consortium in 2004. McDermott notes that the legal foundation of NEC AP is weak: “rather than formal written policies and memorandums of understanding, a great deal is done through “gentlepersons agreements.” “Significantly, “NEC AP opted not to create a new organization with its own dedicated funding and staff instead Pat Devito writes” the consortium operates as an association of state departments of education, not a formal legal entity. The state assessment directors act as the management team for an EE CAP. While the goal is to arrive at consensus across states, estate staff members cannot agree on an important issue, the management team besides on the course of action. Each state carries equal weight in the sentence, regardless of the size of the student population or other factors.” This more informal approach to governance meant that approval of NEC AP by governors and state legislatures was not necessary, only the approval of the standards and assessments for state boards of education

- 170 The inter-state compact model uses interstate compacts as mechanisms for collective action and common challenges that cross geographical boundaries these compacts create a much more centralized and powerful decision-making structure than any of the other potential models for core governance discussed above but retain a national rather than federal character compacts serve as formal agreements between state and resemble both statutory law and contracts that means they cannot be unilaterally repealed or amended by state as is possible with administrative agreement crucially compacts then compel a commitment by states that they cannot unilaterally abandon absent an explicit exit option contained in the compact agreement while participation in compacts remains fundamentally voluntary states choose to join them and can always withdraw the purpose of the Beamish create a public commitment in a high enough exit cost to deter states from leaving once they have signed on interstate compacts offer a middle ground of coordination between state autonomy and federalization and as such may represent an attractive option in areas like education where there is strong tradition of local control the growing pressure for common standards states could create a new national interstate compact which would enable a fresh start to deliberations about Common Core governance and would permit the new structure to be designed specifically to meet its needs

**Concourse  
Item**

**Y**

**Concourse  
Entry  
Resource**

Chapter 9 in Book author Ashley Jochim

**Concourse  
Resource  
Reference**

Common Core Meets Education Reform: What it all means for Politics, Policy, and the Future of Schooling, edited by Frederick M. Hess and Michael Q. McShane

**Statements/Phrases for Concourse from Source Y**

- 171 Political success and substantial success are inherently connected because public policies and democratic societies are sustained to politics, not around them. Policies are crafted, implemented, and sometimes repealed through politics. While public policies can serve political purposes without addressing public problems reverse is not true no policy can achieve its substantial objectives without securing political support
- 172 Public policies become sustainable when they create or mobilize groups with a stake in the reforms continuation but mobilization is not automatic. Those interests with the most at stake tend to be mobilized most readily. For example the business community tends to win a seat at the negotiating table because it is frequently a

- target of particularistic benefits and/or regulatory programs these increase their incentives to mobilize
- 173 Stemming from its legislative history (or in most cases, lack thereof), the political challenges of Common Core implementation loom particularly large. Most public policies emerge through the labor and of legislative politics fully vetted by those with the most at stake, giving them at least and in initial veneer of political legitimacy. But the Common Core followed an unconventional path, passing instead through state boards of education, whose members are often appointed by the governor and are thus largely immune from the political pressures that shape reelection – sensitive policymakers indeed, the use of such politically insulated bodies, which often lack strong executive or legislative oversight, is often grounded in the assumption that policymaking is best when it is conducted as a technocratic enterprise
- 174 While interest group politics can and do change over time, the Common Core is transformed from being what Peter may call a “policy without a public” – technocratic and largely apolitical in nature – 21 characterized by a highly diversified set of interest group stakeholders, including curriculum and instructional support providers and teachers unions
- 175 Private instructional support providers, including publishers related companies are particularly poised to win or lose in Common Core implementation as districts move toward online testing and require new textbooks, curriculum, and formative assessments that align with the standards. Just as new opportunities for contracts tend to exacerbate tensions between Boeing and Airbus, decisions about who will provide instructional supports related to implementation are likely to shake up the marketplace for education providers. This will occur even if states largely rely on the purpose thing existing resources, as appears to be happening in many states. The competitive pressures will be exacerbated by the fact that common standards open up opportunities for new providers to enter, as well as create the potential for securing near monopoly status on service provision
- 176 Public opinion is a potent source of change in American politics. Policymakers electoral considerations can trump ideology and interest group pressures. Political scientist Douglas Arnold noted more than 2 decades ago that policymakers become highly sensitive to public opinion when issues are selling it (or have the potential to become so) as a result of the select rural connection policymakers often pursue ambitious reforms education pokes when public opinion is on the side of reform, its impact can be powerful delivering political benefits to those who support is critical not just for whether a reform passes but also for whether the doors. But of course public opinion can also deliver political cost voters turn against reform the tide may turn because it disengaged public becomes newly aware of the laws intended or unintended impacts stemming from poor policy design or an effective implementation effort either way, when citizens move against the reform initiative, policymakers become more likely to present their support



## Appendix E: Q Sort Used by Participants

**Statements Participants will read and then rank in the chart**

\* QSS stands for Q Sort Statement.

- QSS  
1     **The results (standards) of the CCSS initiative may hurt our deteriorating education system by neglecting students' unique needs and the diversity of the country taken as a whole.**
- QSS  
2     **The frustration with the Common Core State Standards Initiative is the standards created by it being forced on the reluctant populace by bureaucratic institutions and corporate interest groups.**
- QSS  
3     **The Common Core State Standards Initiative has diminished the autonomy of State authority over public education.**
- QSS  
4     **States were not represented in the initiation of the Common Core State Standards initiative and the massive funding for it came from private interests like the Gates Foundation.**
- QSS  
5     **The US Department of Education was very involved in the lead up to creation of Common Core and has poured millions of dollars into creating national tests to align with CC standards.**
- QSS  
6     **Bill Gates was one of Common Core's biggest advocates**
- QSS  
7     **Common Core is evil posing as good.**
- QSS  
8     **Had the Common Core Initiative been in harmony with the Constitution, those governed by it would be able to exercise amendable actions toward it.**
- QSS  
9     **The use of checks and balances in our democratic system which was intended to deter a small group of people controlling government policy does not exist in the CCSS initiative.**
- QSS  
10    **The origination of the Common Core Initiative was not legitimate because it is not in harmony with the Constitution.**

- QSS 11 **The Common Core Initiative was not legitimate because it does not limit the role of the federal government in the governance of public education - a condition established in the Constitution.**
- QSS 12 **The Common Core State Standards Initiative is educational malpractice because it can't be changed.**
- QSS 13 **Bill Gates, an unelected business person and part of the CCSS Initiative contributed millions of dollars for technology to decrease the influence of teachers in the classroom.**
- QSS 14 **The Common Core Initiative opened the door to partnerships between organizations and the Department of Education to simply collect data from the standards it created.**
- QSS 15 **The Common Core Initiative was not committed to local control of schools.**
- QSS 16 **The Common Core Initiative is about control, not the education of our children.**
- QSS 17 **The Common Core Initiative is a step toward phasing out State authority.**
- QSS 18 **The Common Core Initiative means loss of control and freedom which is unconstitutional.**
- QSS 19 **The Common Core Initiative represents loss of family privacy with unparalleled data collection and sharing with non-school system groups rather than protecting us from these types of things.**
- QSS 20 **Like the business partners in the Common Core Initiative, some state boards of education members are not elected yet they went along with it before seeing standards that were created from the initiative.**
- QSS 21 **None of the three organizations (National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Outfitters and Achieve) that collaborated to develop the Common Core Standards were accountable to parents, teachers, students or taxpayers.**
- QSS 22 **Despite the emphasis of the Common Core being a State led effort, it is actually an extended sprouting model of federal government and corporate mutualism.**
- QSS 23 **Names of members of development groups created to work on standards were kept secret from the public**

- QSS 24 **Even though there were two main organizations collaborating in the CCSS Initiative, many other groups and organizations were represented**
- QSS 25 **Economic collapse will occur if Common Core is not adopted.**
- QSS 26 **There is a risk for national security without Common Core.**
- QSS 27 **Common Core standards were not created or forced on States by the Obama administration, they were developed by governors and state school superintendents.**
- QSS 28 **The motivation behind the Common Core Initiative was the goal of seeing improvement in math and science education, help college education systems parallel state economies and increase innovation.**
- QSS 29 **Common Core standards are internationally benchmarked.**
- QSS 30 **Common Core standards are not internationally benchmarked because no information was presented showing how they compared to other high-achieving countries.**
- QSS 31 **Since 2005 the organization Achieve has led collaborative activities with state teams, governors, state education officials, post secondary leaders and business executives to work at getting education policies that match what is needed in the real world.**
- QSS 32 **The Common Core State Standards endeavor is deeply defective due to how those involved went about forcing it upon the nation.**
- QSS 34 **Even though President Obama and Secretary Duncan repeated that the States created and voluntarily accepted the Common Core Standards, that is not the case.**
- QSS 35 **The Organizations that created the CCSS were Achieve and the National Governors Association with very little public input and without grassroots movement.  
The initiative did not come from the state and the two organizations were liberally funded by the Gates Foundation.**

- QSS 36 **By connecting “Race to the Top” funding and No Child Left Behind waivers to adopting Common Core the federal government coerced States into accepting it.**
- QSS 37 **The reason the organizations that collaborated to create the CCSS was not transparent and did not reach out to parents, teachers, and lawmakers is because States would not have signed off on them.**
- QSS 38 **Tracking the money will show that the federal government is the principal supporter of CC.**
- QSS 39 **President Obama’s Beliefs of progressive reform is at the center of the mess.**
- QSS 40 **Common Core is a complete debacle**
- QSS 41 **Corporate reformers are behind trying to change America’s public schools based on economic matters.**
- QSS 42 **The federal government did not inform the public that education policy was being created in the private sector (Corporate America) which when brought to light through RTTT(Race To The Top) caused the public to resist.**
- QSS 43 **The formation of the Common Core was a speedy development to take advantage of the economic crisis impacting America so that America’s public school system could grow to be one more addition to free market adventurism.**
- QSS 44 **The standards created by the CCSS collaborators are liberal propaganda pushed by the federal government to instruct children in Marxist ideology.**
- QSS 45 **The standards created by the CCSS corporate influenced collaborators are one-size-fits all methods of educating driven by standardized testing and removal of the arts from curriculum.**
- QSS 46 **The collaborating groups involved in CCSS pinpointed the goals of ensuring that no matter where they live, all students should graduate high school prepared for college, career and life.**
- QSS 47 **Common core is a subtle federal government takeover of local education.**

- QSS  
48 **Common core standards were repealed in March 2010 and replaced with Pennsylvania core standards**
- QSS  
49 **Common Core is nothing more than Obama care for education**
- QSS  
50 **People from outside Pennsylvania with no teaching background imposed untried Common Core standards on the state.**
- QSS  
51 **Like other very complicated initiatives of collaborating diverse participants, the CCSS initiative is a huge enterprise**
- QSS  
52 **It is a myth that the federal government (White House) asked the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers lead the CCSS Initiative.**
- QSS  
53 **It is a myth that the federal stimulus package included incentives for the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to create standards.**
- QSS  
54 **The CCSS Initiative was wholly a State led one from its launch to its final work.**
- QSS  
55 **There was an opportunity for the public to submit comments about the draft standards on the Common Core Website.**
- QSS  
56 **State school officers support for the Common Core claiming it was in fact driven by the States is a smokescreen in order to hide a nationalized curriculum.**
- QSS  
57 **The CCSS Initiative set up moderators to report noncompliance that will cause funds to be taken away.**

## Appendix F: PA Academic Standards for Civics and Government Courses



CIVICSANDGOVERNMENT standards for PA schools.pdf