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The Development of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee From 1981 to 1986

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The development of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee from 1981 to 1986

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East Tennessee State University, 1994
The Development of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee from 1981 to 1986

A Dissertation
Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education Daris Anne Gose August 1994
APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Graduate Committee of

DARIS ANNE GOSE

met on the

_______ day of _______ , 1994.

The committee read and examined her dissertation, supervised her defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that her study be submitted to the Graduate Council and the Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean, School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Administration.

Chairman, Advanced Graduate Committee

Signed on behalf of the Graduate Council

Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean, School of Graduate Studies
ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM IN TENNESSEE FROM 1981 TO 1986

by

Daris Anne Gose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the origin, development, and implementation of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee.

Materials were gathered from East Tennessee State University Library, University of Tennessee Library, Walters State Community College Library, Belmont University Library, Tennessee State Library and Archives, and Morristown-Hamblen County Library. These materials consisted of government documents, presidential and gubernatorial speeches, audio and video tapes, books, and periodicals. Personal interviews were also collected from two TEA members and seven legislators. The materials were analyzed, and important passages were marked, incorporated into the paper, and documented.

The research questions were (1) What prompted the instigation of the Better Schools Program? (2) Who was instrumental in establishing the Better Schools Program? (3) What areas of education were affected by the Better Schools Program? (4) Who were the proponents and opponents of the Better Schools Program? and (5) How did the Better Schools Program's ten points translate into statutes or regulations in Tennessee? The researcher reached three conclusions based on an analysis of the materials.

It was determined that Governor Alexander's political philosophy closely coincided with those concepts held by the Better Schools Program. Despite the opposition from TEA, the Governor and his cabinet were able to solicit enough support from politicians, educators, business people, the media, and the public to enact their policies into laws governing Tennessee's educational system. The reform movement terminated in four acts: the unnamed act whereby vocational-technical schools were placed under the Board of Regents, the Public Education Governance Reform Act of 1984, the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984, and the Revised CERA of 1985.

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DEDICATION

My family and friends have supported my educational goals by encouraging me not to despair, but rather to persevere. My Mother has been my traveling companion during trips to Johnson City to attend meetings. My brother Gene has kept me on task by asking "Are you through yet?" every time we talk. My brother Jim sent me an illustration of a frog clutching a stork's neck as the stork attempts to devour the frog. The caption reads: "Don't ever give up." My sister, Mary, drove me to Johnson City to turn in my paper, because I was too fatigued to drive myself after having been up all night typing. My friends also called to wish me well and to offer their support. I would like to thank all who gave me encouragement.

My daughter, Angela Elaine Masengill, deserves a special thanks because she has done many chores so that I could spend time at the computer. Her name in Greek means angelic light, and to me, she is just that, the inspiration I need to brighten the path to success. Thank you, Precious.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express appreciation to those people who have assisted in this study. I would like to thank my chairman, Dr. Robert L. McElrath, for his expertise and guidance. I would also like to show my appreciation to the other members of my doctoral committee: Dr. Jack Higgs, Dr. Hal Knight, and Dr. Russell West. All members have offered advice that proved beneficial to this study. Without the assistance of my committee, I could not have completed this research project.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

When "The Great Communicator" spoke, Americans listened. President Ronald Reagan often greeted the public with his compelling speeches after he assumed office in 1981. One of the major topics that he discussed was America's educational system. Reagan (1983g) was well aware of the significance of education to the American people when he said: "Certainly there are few areas of American life as important to our society, to our people, and to our families as our schools and colleges" (p. 593). Reagan's ability to convince the public, the importance of education to Americans, and an economic recession coupled with failed military maneuvers--all combined as tinder to spark one of the most notable educational reform movements in the nation's and in Tennessee's history.

In 1981, America's economy was faltering, seemingly unable to meet the rising competition from other industrial nations. To determine if there was a parallel between a decline in the economy and education, Reagan (1983g) and United States Secretary Terrel H. Bell "discussed a plan of action to deal with the declining quality of education in America" (p. 593). They "agreed that it was imperative to assemble a panel of America's
leading educators, an assembly of such eminence that the Nation would listen to its findings" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 593).

Accordingly, on August 26, 1981, Secretary Bell "created the National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE] and directed it to present a report on the quality of education in America" to him and "to the American people by April of 1983" (National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983, p. iii). The commission was comprised of eighteen members who were charged with the responsibility of constructing a report that contained "practical recommendations for educational improvements" and that fulfilled the Commission's "responsibility to provide leadership, constructive criticism, and effective assistance to schools and universities" (NCEE, 1983, p. 1). The findings of the Commission, released in April of 1983, fell like "bombs . . . dropping on the American schoolhouse" (Ginsberg, 1983, p. 11).

The public response was mixed with shock and anger. Now that the educational problems facing America had been identified and the public had become alert to them, the public demanded reforms. To add further impetus to the outcry for reform, reports that criticized the educational system and that suggested ways to improve education began to emerge.
It was not uncommon to see reports which "made recommendations designed to prepare . . . children for life in this information era" (Siegel & Pipho, 1983, p. 9). In fact, several reports (for example, A Place Called School and Making the Grade) implied that the current educational system was neither adequately preparing children to cope with the technological advances already made nor to be computer or technologically functional.

Americans have been concerned about education for many years. Writing to Thomas Jefferson in 1813, John Adams exclaimed: "Education! Oh Education! greatest Grief of my heart, and the greatest Affliction of my Life" (cited in Cappon, 1959, p. 438)!

Unfortunately, many share John Adams's views on education. The public complains of high tax rates; the educators grumble about low wages; the students resent spending time and effort on studies; and the politicians exploit educational weaknesses to expedite either attaining or retaining political office. Americans often regard education as a panacea for their problems, regardless of the nature of the problems, which may range from military to medical. Whenever education falls short of those expectations imposed on it, then the familiar outcry for educational reform can be heard.

Education is dynamic, not static. From time to time, changes should be made in education to update it,
making it comply with as many demands placed on it as is humanly possible. With each new decade comes the desire for fresh ideas indicative of the times. In fact, after the NCES published its findings on the state of American education in the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* in April of 1983, the public seemed ready for sweeping reforms. Not since the former Soviet Union's threat of space supremacy, resulting from the launching of Sputnik in 1957, had the United States focused so intensely on educational reform as the nation did after this information was made public. But this time America was not intimidated by Russia's technological advances, rather mostly by Japan's ability to build and sell efficient automobiles. According to this report, the Japanese educational system was accredited as the core of Japan's economical and technological success. The report said that Americans must upgrade their educational system to compete effectively with Japan and other foreign markets.

The report appealed to many citizens and legislators on personal, local, state, national, and international levels. Citizens and government alike became concerned that unless the educational system was reformed in fundamental ways many private citizens might lose their jobs; several companies could shut down; in general, Americans would produce inferior products (for example, military weapons); and another nation might replace
America as the world leader. Since the inception of the United States Constitution, education primarily had been a function of the state and local governments.

Assuming the responsibility, Tennessee's farsighted governor, Lamar Alexander (1979-1987), initiated a reform plan which he dubbed "The Better Schools Program" to improve Tennessee's education even before any dangers in A Nation at Risk were mentioned. This plan consisted of ten points designed to improve the state's school systems, attract more and better-paying jobs, and to recruit, reward, and retain the best possible teachers.

This study traced the development of Tennessee's educational reform movement, known as the Better Schools Program, from the events leading to its inception as Senate Bill 1000 (S 1000)/House Bill 1081 (H 1081) to S 1/H 1, and to its enactment into law as the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 (CERA), including any amendments made through 1986.

The Problem

The Statement of the Problem:

Many writings exist about various aspects of the Better Schools Program, yet research lacks a comprised version of the program from its origin and development to its enactment into law. Although the Better Schools Program was one of the most publicized educational movements in Tennessee, researchers have not examined the
process whereby some of the political philosophies of the 1980s became laws effecting education.

**Subproblems:**

1. What prompted the instigation of the Better Schools Program?
2. Who was instrumental in establishing the Better Schools Program?
3. What areas of education were affected by the Better Schools Program?
4. Who were the proponents and opponents of the Better Schools Program?
5. How did the Better Schools Program’s ten points translate into statutes or regulations in Tennessee?

**The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the origin, development, and implementation of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee. To determine the movement's origin and development, the researcher identified the underlying causal factors of the reformation, the areas of education affected by the program, and the people, or groups, who either promoted or opposed its progress. To investigate its implementation, the researcher examined legislative bills and acts related to the Better Schools Program. The history of the Better Schools Program from 1981 to 1986 was comprised from the data findings.
The Significance of the Study

Borg and Gall (1983) explained the significance of historical research in education as follows:

Historical research in education is important for several reasons. The findings of historical research enable educators to learn from past discoveries and mistakes; to identify needs for educational reform; and, to a certain extent, to predict future trends. (p. 799)

Historical research can help the educational reformer to eliminate the mistakes made in the past. George Santayana said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (cited in L. C. Henry, 1945, p. 207).

Since new ideas and information perpetually emerge, the bulk of knowledge increases. Imparting this knowledge to educators and students requires adequate teacher preparation, teaching methods, materials, and equipment. Education, therefore, cannot maintain a stagnant quality.

Since change is inevitable, a study of how past educational problems were solved, or at least attempted to be solved, may suggest solutions to current or even future problems. Americans must continually strive to perfect education, if this country is to be competitive with foreign countries in economics, technology, defense, or any aspect touching peace and prosperity, and if
societal needs and desires are to be met. Learning from yesterday can enhance the quality of today's education.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited in that it was time bound from 1981 to 1986. Since many of the laws enacted to propel the Better Schools Program were still in force at the time of this writing, any revisions to these laws beyond the 1986-87 school year were precluded from this paper. The study was further restricted to a historical account of the Better Schools Program's development and implementation and does not attempt to explore the repercussions of the Better Schools Program on the public, educators, students, or government officials. In fact, no effort has been made to measure the value of the Better Schools Program as far as its effect on those involved in it. Instead, an investigation to discover how effectively the political philosophies of the eighties translated into law was conducted, and the results were analyzed and evaluated.

**Assumption of the Study**

The basic assumption of this study was that education must be reformed as often as necessary to meet the desires and needs of the public it serves. Reform should be adjudged as objectively as possible, not feared because of the changes incurred. History offered the best example of how reformational movements have improved
the quality of education. The education given to
students in the 1920s, for example, would be inadequate
for students in the 1980s. Education, therefore, must
change as necessary to comply with the expectations of
the society it serves.

Definitions of Important Terms
The definitions given below were assigned to the
listed terms for the purpose of this study. The meanings
attributed to many of the terms were suggested by the
General Assembly of the State of Tennessee to assist
comprehension of the CBRA of 1984, while other terms were
assigned definitions from the Tennessee Department of
Education, and one from The Knoxville News-Sentinel and
another one from Webster's Third New International
Dictionary.

Academy means the principal-administrator academy created
by the act.

Apprentice teacher means a person who has completed
satisfactory service as a probationary teacher and who
holds an apprentice teacher certificate issued by the
State Board of Education.

Assistant principal means a person who serves in a
position covered by the provisions of Section 46 whether
designated as assistant principal, associate principal,
deputy principal, vice principal, or otherwise.
Career level assistant principal means any person who holds a career level I or career level II assistant principal certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

Career level principal means a person who holds a career level I principal, career level II, or career level III principal certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

Career level teacher means a person who has been employed as an apprentice teacher for not less than three (3) years and who holds a career level I teacher certificate, career level II teacher certificate, or career level III teacher level certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

Content means the very "stuff" of education, the curriculum.

Educator means a teacher, supervisor, assistant principal, or principal eligible for certification under the provisions of this act, or such other professional persons as the State Board of Education, upon recommendation of the state certification commission, shall include and provide a job description for.

Expectations means the level of knowledge, abilities, and skills school and college graduates should possess.

Instigation means the act of goading or urging forward; the act of provoking or inciting.
Interim Certificate means a one-year, renewable certificate based upon a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree which includes a minimum of six quarter hours or professional education. (This was a type of certificate issued by the state before the passage of CERA, 1984.)

Permit means permission granted to a local school system to employ one who does not hold a valid certificate when that school system is unable to obtain the services of a qualified teacher for the type and kind of school in which a vacancy exists. (A type of authorization granted by the State Department of Education before the passage of CERA, 1984.)

Principal means any person employed on a full-time basis by a local education agency and certified as a provisional or career level principal under the provisions of this act, or any person who is certified by the State Board of Education as a principal, notwithstanding whether the person's working title is principal, assistant principal, or vice principal.

Probationary teacher means a teacher who has received a passing score on the state teacher examination and has received initial employment in a school system.

Professional School Service Personnel Certificate (Advanced) means a ten-year, renewable certificate issued after September, 1975, to applicants (school psychologists and social workers) who have completed the specific requirements for the various endorsements to
this certificate. (This certificate was issued before the passage of CERA, 1984.)

Professional School Service Personnel Certificate (Initial) means a five-year, non-renewable certificate issued after September, 1975, to applicants who have completed the specific requirements for the various certificates. Each endorsement is recorded on a separate certificate. (This certification was given before the passage of CERA, 1984.)

Provisional assistant principal means any person who holds a provisional assistant principal certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

Provisional principal means any person who holds a provisional supervisor certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

Provisional supervisor means any person who holds a provisional supervisor certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

Regulation means a rule or law by which conduct is regulated.

School month means any month except June, July, or August, regardless of the actual months in which a school may be in session.

School year means the months of September through May, regardless of the actual months in which individual local evaluation agencies conduct classes.
State Certification Commission means the State Certification Commission created by this chapter. Statute means a law passed by a legislative body. Supervisor means a person involved in staff or curriculum development on a full-time basis. This shall include those individuals who work as supervisors under various federal projects and special education programs. All supervisory duties shall be included in the description of administrative supervisors formulated by the State Board of Education under the provisions of this act. Teacher’s Professional Certificate means a ten-year, renewable certificate issued on the basis of a minimum of a Bachelor’s Degree and the completion of an approved teacher education program. (This type of certification was issued before the passage of CERA, 1984.) Tennesseans for Better Schools was a bipartisan education lobby group centered in Nashville who sought 30,000 signatures statewide to support Alexander’s Better Schools Program. Trade Shop Certificate was a five-year certificate issued upon a minimum of two years of appropriate employment experience and was renewable. (This certificate was issued prior to the passage of CERA of 1984.)

Procedures

The study began by identifying the problem to be addressed. Several subproblems were then recognized as relevant to the study, and a method of research was
selected. A qualitative method, namely historical research, was chosen to investigate the problem and subproblems since testing hypotheses was unnecessary to examine the development and implementation of the educational reform movement under study. Carr (1967) defined historical research as "the systematic search for documents and other sources that contain facts relating to the historian's questions about the past" (p. 35).

Materials, consisting of primary and secondary sources, were then collected from numerous libraries including the Tennessee State Library and Archives at Nashville, Belmont University at Nashville, East Tennessee State University Library at Johnson City, the University of Tennessee Library at Knoxville, Walters State Community College's Learning Resource Center at Morristown, and the Morristown-Hamblen County Library. Several references for locating documents were consulted: ERIC, card catalog, microfilm, videos, reserved folders, audio tapes, Dissertation Abstracts, Education Index, resource persons, interviews, as well as other sources of information.

A working bibliography was comprised during the initial investigation of materials. When working with written materials, the researcher underscored important passages and made notations of germane statements of audio and visual sources.
Three main types of media were pertinent to the purpose of this paper. The media were classified by the Tennessee State Library and Archives as government documents, legislative history, and published materials. Government documents encompassed copies of legislation and committee reports. Legislative history consisted of video and cassette tapes, whereas published materials included newspaper and magazine articles. All of these sources were carefully studied, incorporated into the paper, and documented.

Organization of the Study

This study was divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 was the Introduction; Chapter 2 contained the Review of Related Literature. Chapter 3 detailed the Methods and Procedures applied to gathering data. Chapter 4 was the Presentation of Data and Analysis of Subproblems, whereas Chapter 5 was comprised of the Summary, Findings, and Recommendations.
Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

This chapter divided the issues that prompted educational reform in the early 1980s in four subsections: the federal and state initiates, the role of the legislature, the advocacy groups, and the implementation of enacted reforms from 1981 to 1986. As many extant sources were reviewed as deemed necessary to examine the history of Tennessee's Better Schools Program, to show probable cause for the known outcome, and to lend lucidity to the ensuing legislative acts and public comments.

The Federal and State Initiates

Reagan, Alexander, and Other Initiates:

President Ronald Reagan's speeches, letters, and forums relayed the events pivotal to the nation's educational reform movement in the early 1980s. These materials showed how Reagan provided leadership at the national level to spur federal and state educational reforms, reforms which would eventually pervade almost every state and, in particular, Tennessee. One copy, found in Facts on File, and eight copies of these sources, anthologized in Volume 19 of The Weekly
Compilation of Presidential Documents: Administration of Ronald Reagan, were reviewed and presented along with Tennessee's efforts to show the sequence of their occurrence.

Among President Reagan's first speeches on education was his speech to Congress on the economy. It was recorded in Facts on File as the Transcript of President Reagan's Address on the Economic Recovery of the U.S. and was dated February 18, 1981. Reagan spoke before a joint session of Congress about the status of the economy in the United States. He acknowledged that inflation had "held to double-digit figures for two years in a row" and that interest rates had reached a 15 to 20 percent level (Reagan, 1981, p. 100). He said that almost eight million Americans, who wanted to be productive, were out of work and that their lives, and the lives of other Americans, who had to endure the hardship of inflation and an ailing economy, were dominated by despair.

Reagan proposed a comprehensive four-point program, which he outlined in his speech. He said his plan was aimed at reducing the growth in government spending and taxing, reforming and eliminating regulations which were unnecessary and unproductive, or counterproductive, and encouraging a consistent monetary policy aimed at maintaining the value of the currency. The plan anticipated a small reduction in the 8 percent of federal monies given to the schools to reduce the federal
government's "disproportionate share of control" over the schools and to "restore more authority to states and local school districts" (Reagan, 1981, p. 103). Another proposal to reduce federal spending was to "consolidate programs" which were currently "scattered throughout the federal bureaucracy" (Reagan, 1981, p. 103).

The Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study

On May 27, 1981, the Tennessee General Assembly "demonstrated courage and foresight in passing Senate Joint Resolution No. 56" and on June 12, 1981, "Governor Lamar Alexander displayed his support by signing the bill into law. The Resolution . . . [was] the enabling legislation which . . . [made] provision for the Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study (TCES)" (State of Tennessee, 1982, pp. xii & A-1). The Resolution directed the Speakers "to name the task force members no later than June 1, 1981, . . . and [to] report . . . [their] findings and recommendations to the Governor and to the General Assembly no later than December 1, 1982" (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. A-1). However, House Joint Resolution No. 471 extended the due date to January 1, 1983 (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. A-2).

In December of 1982 the TCES was made public to apprise Tennesseans of the current state of education. The Tennessee General Assembly undertook this study because twenty-five years (1955) had elapsed since "the last legislative task force completed a comprehensive
study of public education in Tennessee," because the public’s "confidence in government and education [appeared] to be low," and because the "role of the federal government . . . [in education was] declining" (State of Tennessee, 1982, pp. xi-xii). Governor Alexander "agreed [to conduct the study] only if the study was truly comprehensive and if Speaker Ned McWherter and Lieutenant Governor John Wilder would appoint people to the task force who had previously been tried and tested in improving education" (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, November 22, 1993). The Task Force members were chosen based on their "varied backgrounds and experience" (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. 4), and they have been listed in the front of the TCES (see appendix of this study for same listing).

The TCES attempted to determine "educational goals, governance, instructional quality, and distribution of funds" (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. 2). Various methodologies for gathering information pertinent to the study were utilized: researching literature, reviewing recent studies done by cooperating state agencies, hearing testimonies of resource persons at subcommittee meetings, holding open public hearings, contracting impartial experts, and interpreting four statewide surveys. The current condition of almost every aspect of Tennessee’s educational system was examined, along with the criticism lodged against any component. For example,
the report defined accreditation and looked at its effects on educational institutions. Some of the complaints about the existing method of accreditation were also reviewed.

The master teacher concept as proposed by TCES was "unique to Tennessee," although Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina had recognized the need for a master teacher in each school but had "not [yet] established that teacher rank" (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. 372). The TCES discussed the master teacher's objectives and responsibilities. The central purpose of the master teacher plan was to incorporate an apprenticeship in the teaching experience of public school teachers.

The TCES also focused on higher education, reviewing existing educational philosophies and teaching-learning goals and objectives. The TCES recognized the "diversity of mission and purpose in American higher education" and therefore did not recommend that "all broadly stated goals . . . [could] or should be carried forth by all postsecondary institutions" (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. 354), but rather that "the tenor of the times" should influence goal statements (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. 350). Fourteen goals were formulated, including the five prescribed by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). In addition, the governance options of higher education were examined in terms of their advantages and disadvantages, as well as the educational
quality in such areas as teacher preparation programs and the institution itself.

The study was both thorough and concise and lent insight into pressing educational problems of the state. Many alternative solutions to these problems were proposed with careful detail given to the pros and cons of each suggested remedy.

Alexander's Speeches and Writings

Some of Alexander's speeches acted as catalysts to incite educational reforms, while others served as impetuses to further spur reform. The Governor's speeches, therefore, were cataloged under the headings indicating their functions. The following speech was meant to initiate educational reforms in Tennessee.

Governor Lamar Alexander delivered the State of Education Address to the Tennessee Press Association at the Winter Convention held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Nashville on January 22, 1982. The message was embargoed for release after 6:30 p.m. CST to both radio and television audiences.

Alexander (1982) announced "a five-year plan to improve the teaching and learning of reading, writing, and arithmetic in Tennessee--a five-year action plan to put BASIC SKILLS FIRST (p. 1). As a ploy to captivate the audience's attention, Alexander asked three rhetorical questions regarding the current quality of education, the taxpayers' willingness to pay higher taxes
to improve education, and the views on competency testing as a prerequisite to high school graduation. Next, he focused on the so-called ABC's of the Basic Skills action plan, expounding on each letter as follows:

A. Establish exactly which basic skills a good elementary school should teach each child. We've done exactly that. A task force of 26 Tennessee educators--mostly master classroom teachers--has picked 1,019 reading skills and 607 mathematics skills. They have decided in what order these skills should be taught.

B. Measure each child's progress in mastering these skills. For this purpose, the task force developed 788 short, mastery tests, to be given every few weeks from kindergarten through eighth grade.

C. Teach each child to his ability, but expect every child (except a very few severely handicapped) to learn a certain minimum number of these skills. These are the skills a child must have to understand high school, live in modern society[,] and perform most jobs. The task force said 374 of the 1,019 reading skills are minimum skills; 414 of the 607 math skills are minimum. (Alexander, 1982, p. 1)

Alexander (1982) said that his BASIC SKILLS FIRST initiative relied on the expertise of 2,300 Tennessee
classroom teachers, who were testing the "curriculum guide or skills list this year by teaching it to 55,000 elementary school children in 115 schools from Memphis to Bristol" (p. 1). He then explained eight initiatives of the BASIC SKILLS FIRST plan:

* First, improved skill lists and mastery tests for reading and mathematics will be available for any elementary teacher who wants them.

* Second, most school districts will begin to phase in the program, perhaps one skill list at a time, to compare it with what they are now doing.

* Third, the task force will develop a third set of skills, emphasizing writing, spelling[,] and grammar. It will be available for pilot schools this fall.

* Fourth, I will ask the State Board of Education to establish a Tennessee Certificate of Basic Education--A BASIC SKILLS CERTIFICATE. To earn the certificate, a student must show competency in the minimum list of basic skills. We will develop tests to determine this competency. The tests will typically be given at the end of the third, sixth[,] and eighth grades.

* Fifth, the State Board will develop financial incentives for school districts--perhaps for teachers--demonstrating superior performance, especially in connection with BASIC SKILLS FIRST.
* Sixth, the tests for the BASIC SKILLS FIRST CERTIFICATE will be regularly compared to national student achievement standards to make certain we are setting and meeting reachable but challenging goals. Overall, Tennessee high school seniors perform at the 36th percentile in math and 38th percentile in reading. The 50th percentile is average. The goal of BASIC SKILLS FIRST is to beat the national averages by the end of eighth grade.

* Seventh, performance on the BASIC SKILLS FIRST tests will become the most widely accepted standard for determining whether a student is learning what he or she should in elementary school. It will also help to show whether teachers are teaching as well as they should. It will help parents decide what each child's goals must be from the time he begins kindergarten.

* Eighth, at the end of five years--the Spring of 1987--earning the BASIC SKILLS CERTIFICATE by the end of the eighth grade will replace passing the high school proficiency test as a requirement in most school districts. (Alexander, 1982, pp. 1-2)

After he explained the need for reform to begin at the elementary level of learning, he introduced the subject of discipline, affirming his belief that teachers should be upheld when they exercised "classroom control" (Alexander, 1982, p. 2). He stated that the new budget
would pay for liability insurance so that teachers would not "quit because of the threat of expensive judgments and legal fees" (Alexander, 1982, p. 2).

Alexander mentioned increasing tax revenues to fund the BASIC SKILLS FIRST plan and merit pay for teachers. He also indicated his close tie with President Reagan (Alexander, 1982, p. 4). The message terminated with the call to rally behind educational reform and the BASIC SKILLS FIRST initiative and with a promise to reveal his reform plan for other levels of public education in the future.

Alexander (1983) kept his promise to Tennesseans to reveal his educational reforms for public education about a year later. On January 28th, he presented his ten-point Better Schools Program in the State of Education Address speech via the Tennessee Press Association. Among the many concerns voiced in the broadcast was the fear that too many Tennesseans simply did not have the adequate skills--basic skills, computer skills, new job skills--to create or to perform the kind of jobs demanded by the 1980s or the 1990s. He reminded the audience that "America's economy . . . [was] changing from the industrial age to the information age--from manufacturing jobs to service jobs--from giant smokestacks to small businesses--from blast furnaces to computers--from brawn to brains" (Alexander, 1983d p. 2).
The first point, Basic Skills First, was reiterated from the former speech, but the next nine parts of the proposed educational program consisted of a mix of educational reforms with the master teacher program as the centerpiece. Alexander also had changed the name of the reform package from BASIC SKILLS FIRST to the Better Schools Program, reducing Basic Skills First to point one of the Better Schools Program. (The words were not in all capital letters as before.)

Introducing the Better Schools Program, Alexander crystalized each content concept, delivering a point-by-point description. The ten points (capitalization is copied from quoted text) are as follow: (1) Basic Skills First, (2) Computer Skills Next, (3) Kindergarten for every child and Music in the early grades, (4) More High School Math and Science, (5) Special Residential Summer Schools for Gifted Juniors and Seniors, (6) Redefine High School Vocational Education Curriculum, (7) Re-establish discipline in the classroom, (8) Expand Adult Job Skill Training and Put Its Management Under the Board of Regents, (9) Centers of Excellence and Stronger Universities, and (10) The Master Teacher Program (pp. 4-5). Alexander (1983d) told the audience that these ideas had come, not from him alone, but rather from all directions:

* Most importantly from the Legislature’s excellent year-long Comprehensive Education Study completed
this month.

* From the long-term plan of the State Board of Education.

* From the Rose Commission of businessmen on what job skills we need in the 1980s.

* From Tennessee school parents, taxpayers, students, administrators, school board members and especially classroom teachers. (p. 3)

Alexander closed his message by reminding the taxpayers that they must foot the bill for the Better Schools Program. He also provided the public with a telephone hotline number to answer questions or to supply additional information on the proposed educational program.

Under Alexander's directive, the Better Schools Task Force (1983) promulgated a public document "at a cost of $0.01 per copy, to provide an explanation of the Better Schools Program" (p. 2). The pamphlet ("What Is The BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM?") supplied the reader with information relevant to the Better Schools Program, including a toll-free hotline number, the program's ten points (listed and explained), a lengthy discussion of the career ladder program, and a plan to acquire the funds for the program.

The Better Schools Program's ten points are chronologically listed by the Better Schools Task Force (1983) below:
* Basic Skills First. The teacher-designed new elementary curriculum is in 11,366 classrooms. It establishes 1,300 skills in reading and math, 680 of which must be learned. By 1990, every child (who is not severely handicapped) should pass the Basic Skills First eighth grade competency test before entering ninth grade.

* Computer Skills Next. Every child will know basic computer skills before the ninth grade.

* Kindergarten for Every Child. Every child must start school at the kindergarten level, even if the child does not start until age six.

* More High School Math and Science. Double the one credit of math and one of science we now require and pay for the extra teachers.

* Special Residential Summer Schools for Gifted Juniors and Seniors. Reward academic excellence, not just athletic excellence.

* Redefine High School Vocational Education Curriculum. Tie it more closely to the jobs of the 80’s [sic] and provide equipment.

* Classroom Discipline. Create alternative schools for students who disrupt classrooms. State-paid liability insurance for teachers and all other school personnel costs only $2.50 per teacher. We should support teachers, not sue them in court.
* Put Adult Job Skill Training Under the Board of Regents. Our 40 community colleges, technical institutes and area vocational schools should have a single overall management. Most of us over 21 will be going back to school to brush up on the basic skills and learn computer skills and new job skills.

* Centers of Excellence at Universities. Provide first-rate financing for first-rate programs and better overall support for good teaching and research. In the 1980's [sic], good universities will spin off the ideas that spin off new jobs.

* Music in the early grades. With budgets so tight, this is not a top ten priority. But a small state base of support will be provided, and additional money will be raised privately to bolster Tennessee's musical heritage.

* The Master Teacher Program and Master Principal Program. This is the heart of the plan. (p. 1)

The news of the ten-point program spread rapidly across Tennessee, and literature on the Better Schools Program reached every educational system in Tennessee.

The Better Schools Program was now well underway with the Basic Skills First and the Master Teacher/Principal Programs set in place and ready for initiation. But the merit pay plan would soon be countered by TEA, whereby a heated battle would rage
between the political and unionized educational forces in Tennessee.

Alexander (1983b) released several publications in January to promote the career ladder program advocated by Alexander's Better Schools Program. One brochure entitled Better Schools Program: Tennessee Master Teacher Program was among the earliest publications about his proposed merit pay program. This brochure contained (on pages i-v) Alexander's State of Education Address speech conveyed on January 28, 1983, as well as a fact sheet (on pages 1-7) explicating in detail the master teacher program.

Alexander hoped to establish the Tennessee Master Teacher Program as an incentive pay system for teachers. The goal of the program was "to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education in Tennessee by strengthening the knowledge, preparation, incentives[,] and rewards of classroom teachers" (Alexander, 1983b, p. 1). The program's five specific objectives were given, and the four career stages--the apprentice teacher, the professional teacher, the senior teacher, and the master teacher--were delineated. Teachers who were already practicing and certified could elect to follow the career path, but "persons entering public school teaching in Tennessee after the establishment of the MASTER TEACHER PROGRAM" would be mandated to follow it (Alexander, 1983b, p. 1).
The criteria for new teachers to be certificated by the state would be like those currently used. That is, the Apprentice Teacher's Certificate would be awarded to those who had completed (1) a degree from an approved teacher education program (or equivalent courses), (2) student teaching experience, and (3) the National Teachers Examination with passable grades. The apprentice teacher was to be "regularly observed, evaluated[,] and counseled by other supervisors" during the apprentice period (Alexander, 1983d, pp. 1-2). Those assessing the apprentice teacher included a team of master teachers outside the apprentice's district and in-house supervisors. Some of the factors determining the apprentice's qualifications to teach were students' test results, interviews with evaluators, and reviews based on in-service and other professional development activities. This process was to continue until either the third, fourth, or fifth year at which time the teacher would apply to the State Board of Education for a Professional Teacher's Certificate. In turn, the State Board of Education would confer with the Master Teacher Certification Commission (MTCC) for a recommendation which it would follow (Alexander, 1983b, pp. 1-2).

The professional teacher would be in the second career stage for a period of five years. If the teacher continued successful performance based on evaluations, student performance, and observations (by
Commission-designated Master Teachers), the MTCC would again renew the teacher's certificate for another five years (Alexander, 1983d, p. 2). The salary would be in accordance with the present state-local index plus experience and professional development.

A minimum of three years of experience as a Professional Teacher was required before a teacher could become a Senior Teacher. Whether the professional certificate was issued depended on the assessment of the teacher's entire professional experience, the regular evaluations by supervisors and administrators, the appraisal of Master Teachers outside the district. Like other teaching certificates, this five-year certificate approved by the Board of Education was in accord with the MTCC's recommendations. After receiving the Senior Teacher certificate, the teacher would be required to assume additional duties and responsibilities in the school setting; in other words, to work extra hours for part of the salary supplement. Alexander also proposed a 10 percent across-the-board increase plus $2,000 and $4,000 annual supplement for senior and master teachers.

The Master Teacher also had a five-year renewable certificate contingent upon continued successful performance, but with an extended twelve-month contract. The specific duties performed would be determined by the local school systems but should include in-service education; training, evaluating, and counseling
Apprentice Teachers; assuming curriculum leadership; organizing and coordinating other teachers' work; and spending at least 65 percent of time in classroom teaching, if possible.

Alexander conceptualized the MTCC as an agency to recommend the four kinds of teaching credentials to the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education, in turn, would actually issue the recommended certificate to the teacher. The inclusion of MTCC as mediator between the State Board of Education and the teacher would change the present system from "paper based" to "performance based" in that licensure depended on performance as opposed to degrees earned (Alexander, 1983b, p. 5).

Three regional commissions, each of which was composed of a five-person Executive Board to endorse Apprentice, Professional, and Senior Teachers, would be authorized. One regional commission would be located in each of the state's grand divisions. One statewide Master Teacher Commission would also be established. Recommendations would flow from Master Teachers to the Executive Board, from the Executive Board to the State Commission, and from the State Commission to the Board of Education whose responsibility was to issue the certificate.

The fact sheet stated the goal, objectives, and organization of the proposed master teacher program. In
theory, the Executive Board would be constructed of the following members:

Master Teachers elected by the Master Teachers residing in the region, a State Department of Education employee designated by the Commissioner of Education who will serve as chairman, and one Master Principal or other school administrator and one university-based teacher educator appointed by the State Board of Education. (Alexander, 1983b, p. 5)

In addition, the statewide Master Teachers, who assisted in evaluating other teachers, would form a Master Teacher Commission with a total of twenty-one members. Twelve of these were members of the regional commissions with the exception of the State Department employee; and three additional Master Teachers who represented each level of public education, one Master Teacher from each grand division of the state, two distinguished university educators who were appointed by the State Board of Education, three lay persons from each of the state’s grand divisions, and the Commissioner of Education, acting as Vice-Chairman, completed the MTCC.

To facilitate the initial Master Teacher Program, an Interim Commission was to be set up for a twelve-month period to appoint fifteen Master Teachers. The fifteen members were the President and President-elect of TEA; Tennessee Teachers of the Year (1980 through 1983); President of the Tennessee Organization of Schools
Superintendents; President of State Parent-Teachers Association; Chairman of Principals' State Study Council; President of Tennessee School Board Association; Chairman of Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher Evaluation; the Commissioner of Education; and finally three lay persons--representing each grand division and appointed by the Governor.

Alexander expected his Master Teacher Program to be fully operational by the fiscal school year 1986-1987. His integrity and determination were the major driving forces behind the escalating educational reform movement to improve the quality of teaching in Tennessee.

Alexander (1983a) announced the "Better Schools Program: Tennessee Master Principal Program" in February, 1983. The program's goal was "to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education in Tennessee by strengthening the knowledge, preparation, incentives, professionalism[,] and rewards of principals, supervisors[,] and other educational leaders" (Alexander, 1983a, p. 1). The proposed career path included Interim Principals, Provisional Principals, Principals, and finally Master Principals--all certificated as such. The certificates would be based on the compliance of the candidate with the qualifying factors effecting each consecutive step. The same commission as for teachers (MTCC) would advise the State Board of Education which, if any, certificate to issue to participating principals,
or for that matter, to any professional educator seeking certification.

A Principal’s Academy would be established to offer intensive summer in-service training to strengthen leadership skills. Although current principals with at least five years of experience could apply for a Master Principal’s Certificate and did not have to attend the academy, all other principals would be required to obtain certification by following the outlined procedures.

The NCEE’s Report

Of singular importance to the educational reform movement in the 1980s was the National Commission on Excellence in Education’s (1983) A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. In the Letter of Transmittal, dated April 26, 1983, David Pierpont Gardner, Chairman of the NCEE, acknowledged the Commission’s creator, purpose, report, and appreciation to Terrel H. Bell, U. S. Secretary of Education. Bell had created the NCEE on August 26, 1981, and "directed it to present a report on the quality of education in America" to him and "to the American people by April of 1983" (National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983, p. iii). NCEE’s purpose was "to help define the problems afflicting American education and to provide solutions, not search for scapegoats" (NCEE, 1983, p. iii). Gardner asserted that in eighteen months the Commission had fulfilled the responsibility charged
to it by compiling a report which contained candid, forthright discussions about the central issues facing the nation’s educational system. Each of the eighteen members' names, titles, and addresses was listed on pages iv and v.

The Introduction repeated some of the information mentioned in the above letter and added clarification to the Secretary's motives for having created the NCEE. It included his concern about "the widespread public perception that something . . . [was] seriously remiss in . . . [the] educational system" (NCEE, 1983, p. 1). Six of the responsibilities in the Commission's charter were listed as:

1. assessing the quality of teaching and learning in America's public and private schools, colleges, and universities;
2. comparing American schools and colleges with those of other advanced nations;
3. studying the relationship between college admissions requirements and student achievement in high school;
4. identifying educational programs which result in notable student success in college;
5. assessing the degree to which major social and educational changes in the last quarter century have affected student achievement; and
6. defining problems which must be faced and
overcome if . . . [Americans] are successfully to pursue the course of excellence in education.

(NCEE, 1983, pp. 2-3)

The charter also directed the Commission to pay special attention to teenage youth. The five main sources of information relied upon to formulate the report were as follow:

1. papers commissioned from experts on a variety of educational issues;
2. administrators, teachers, students, representatives of professional and public groups, parents, business leaders, public officials, and scholars who testified at eight meetings of the full Commission, six public hearings, two panel discussions, a symposium, and a series of meetings organized by the Department of Education’s Regional Offices;
3. existing analyses of problems in education;
4. letters from concerned citizens, teachers, and administrators who volunteered extensive comments on problems and possibilities in American education; and
5. descriptions of notable programs and promising approaches in education. (NCEE, 1983, pp. 2-3)

The report alleged that in effect the quality of American education had regressed to the extreme that: "If
an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might have viewed it as an act of war" (NCEE, 1983, p. 5). It accused Americans of having "squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge" and of "committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament" (NCEE, 1983, p. 5). The report noted that on the occasion of the Commission's first meeting, President Reagan had noted the significance of education to Americans. The Commission expressed its confidence that the American people, after they were informed, would do what was "right for their children and for the generations to come" (NCEE, 1983, p. 6).

The report began by identifying the risk, and the audience was reminded: "History is not kind to idlers" (NCEE, 1983, p. 6). The risk defined America's culpability as manifested not only in industry or commerce but also in intellectual, moral, and spiritual matters. The report then stressed that, to be free, a democracy demanded an adequately shared education to foster its culture, to maintain its pride and freedom, and to make progress. It also said a sufficient blend of humanities, science, and technology must exist to preserve creativity and humaneness. The report pointed out that although the average citizen today was better educated and more knowledgeable than those of a
generation ago the average graduate of the schools and universities was less well-educated than those of 25 or 35 years ago.

The consensus of those interviewed and/or surveyed was that Americans such as students, teachers, school board members, leaders of industry, minority groups, parents, and state officials have mixed emotions about education today. The emotions were described as hope and frustration, with frustration threatening to overwhelm hope. The Commission advised those whose quest was excellence to avoid finding scapegoats among victims, "such as the beleaguered teachers" (NCEE, 1983, p. 12).

The report stated that support for and improvements in the teaching of mathematics, science, English, history, geography, economics, and foreign language should be part of the educational reform movement.

Excellence in education was defined as meaning, to the learner, performing to the peak of personal ability and, to the school or college, setting high standards while enabling students to reach them. According to the report, goals should be set so the talents of all students could be developed to their fullest potential.

The Commission stated that it was convinced the essential raw materials needed to reform the country's educational system were at hand, waiting to be invoked by effective leaders. Some of the tools at hand were cataloged. Natural abilities of the young; commitment to
high retention rates; persistence in pursuing the American dream; dedication of underpaid teachers; understanding of teaching and learning; ingenuity of policy makers; scientists, educators, and scholars; willingness to accept paying for education as an investment; the Federal Government's supplementing state, local, and other resources; and the voluntary efforts of individuals, businesses, and parent and civic groups—all strengthened educational programs.

The Commission described four attitudes as indicators of the public's commitment to education. These attitudes were measured in a 1982 Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools (NCEE, 1983, p. 16). In a nutshell, these dispositions were as follows: the importance placed on education as the major foundation for the nation's future strength; the lack of patience with weak high school curricula; the citizens' patriotism in terms of preserving society's material well-being, pluralism, safety; and the country's preeminence in the world.

The decline in educational performance was blamed mainly on the way in which the educational process was often conducted. Four aspects of the educational process comprised the bulk of the Commission's findings: content, expectations, time, and teaching. The content, or curricula, of secondary education were criticized as being "a curricular smorgasbord, combined with extensive
student choice," and as having been "homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose" (NCEE, 1983, p. 18). Expectations of what was expected from students in regard to grades, graduation requirements of high schools and colleges, rigorous examinations, college admissions requirements, and difficulty of subject matter showed notable deficiencies. Too little time devoted to study by students and too many unqualified teachers were cited as an intricate part of education's problem.

Recommendations to remedy the weaknesses in content, expectations, time, and teaching were made by the Commission. These recommendations were organized alphabetically A-E. Recommendation A (Content) called for a back-to-the-basics curriculum, blended with computer science and foreign language, and suggestions of how to implement the new curricula were delineated. For B (Expectations), the Commission recommended that schools, colleges, and universities employ more rigorous and measurable standards and assume higher expectations for academic performance and conduct and that colleges and universities raise their requirements for admission. Time, Recommendation C, was necessary for the teaching-learning process to occur; therefore, more should be devoted to learning the New Basics by extending the existing school day, or the school year. Recommendation D (Teaching) reflected improved
preparation of teachers, as well as making teaching a more rewarding and respected profession. A final Recommendation E advanced leadership and fiscal support. Citizens were urged to hold educators and elected officials responsible for leadership essential to accomplish these reforms and to provide the funds required to finance these concepts.

Finally, Americans were encouraged by being told that they could overcome any obstacles to attain superior education. A special admonishment was given to both parents and students. The report terminated with a plea for all Americans to help the nation regain its educational strength by implementing the Commission's recommendations.

The Press's Reaction to NCEE's Report

On April 27, 1983, just one day after the Commission's report, an unsigned newspaper feature entitled "Report on schools: We flunk" was released by the Associated Press to its affiliates. Referring to Washington's report on the current state of America's education, the article said that "U. S. schools, from first grade through college . . . [had received] a scathing report card" ("Report on schools," 1983, p. A1). The introduction of the news report gave a general overview of NCEE's findings and recommendations, whereas the lead story condensed and recounted many details specifically. The introduction also quoted noteworthy
responses from President Reagan; David Pierpont Gardner, the commission chairman; Paul Salmon, executive director of American Association of School Administrators; Willard McGuire, president of the National Education Association; and T. H. Bell, Education Secretary. Since Reagan was the nation’s chief executive, the news media sought his comments first:

Reagan said the findings were "consistent with our task of redefining the federal role in education. I believe that parents, not government, have the primary responsibility for the education of their children.

We'll continue to work in the months ahead for passage of tuition tax credits, vouchers, educational savings accounts, voluntary school prayer[,] and abolishing the Department of Education." ("Report on schools," 1983, p. A1)


McGuire did not help Reagan's cause to reduce the federal deficit with his comeback that such reforms would cost "additional billions of dollars, with a big boost from the federal government, to achieve these sweeping objectives" ("Report on schools," 1983, A2). Neither Bell nor Gardner commented on the source of the funds demanded to make extensive educational reforms. In fact,
Gardner stated that the "commission members refrained from dwelling on financing questions" for fear of disagreement ("Report on schools," 1983, p. A1). Although Salmon exclaimed that the national report was probably "one of the most significant things done in a long time as far as education is concerned, maybe within . . . [his] lifetime," he also abstained from commenting on funding ("Report on schools," 1983, p. A2).

Ginsberg (1983) exclaimed in his article "Educators Escalate the Class War: Experts Add Details to Plan After First Attach Shook Nation":

> Bombs are dropping on the American schoolhouse. War cries sound the alarm that "the battle for the future of America will be won or lost" in the public schools, and that the United States is committing "unthinking unilateral educational disarmament." The words are fired from an armada of reports on education in the United States. The reports spray rhetorical shrapnel about the declining quality of education, strategies for counterattack, and--in one report--the cheer that "America can do it." (p. 11)

Parents were confused, but educators remained confident that schools were not as deplorable as depicted by the NCEE report. Ginsberg (1983) said:

> In recent interviews, educators across the country said that schools aren't as bad as the most
pessimistic of the reports indicate. The quality of education is slowly improving, they said, but there's a long way to go, and the stakes are high.

(p. 11)

"[E]ducation is too important to be treated as anything short of first-class expression" of national interest seemed to be the central idea of the writing (Ginsberg, 1983, p. 12).

Reagan's Campaign for National Reform

Addressing the NCEE, Reagan (1983g) responded to the Commission's report. His response was recorded as the National Commission on Excellence in Education--Remarks on Receiving the Commission's Final Report, April 26, 1983 in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents. In this address to the NCEE on April 26, 1983, Reagan (1983g) reviewed a discussion between himself and United States Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell in which they agreed on a "plan of action to deal with the declining education in America" (p. 593). The plan was "to assemble a panel of America's leading educators, an assembly of such eminence that the Nation would listen to its findings" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 593). The responsibility to select the panel members was delegated by Reagan to Bell, who, in turn, set up an eighteen-member Commission and charged them "to assess the quality of teaching and learning in America compared with . . . [its] own educational tradition and the rising
competition from other industrial nations" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 593).

Reagan (1983g) further reminded the Commission that at their inaugural meeting in October of 1981 he had pointed out the importance of education to the American people and noted that there was a "parallel between a decline in . . . education and a decline in . . . the economy" (p. 593). Reagan then told the Commission that $215 billion would be spent on the country's education in 1983 and asked a rhetorical question of what had been bought with the money. He expressed his interest in their research finding that there had been an "almost uninterrupted decline in student achievement in the scores during the past two decades, decades in which the Federal presence in education grew and grew" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 593). He quoted Thomas Jefferson: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 594). He capsulated his philosophy that federal intrusion into education should end and that the federal role in education should be redefined. He praised the panel for emphasizing "the Federal role in education should be limited to specific areas, and any assistance should be provided with a minimum of administrative burdens on . . . [American] schools, colleges, and teachers" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 594). He said that a 1982 Gallup poll proved the majority of those surveyed "thought Washington
should exert less influence in determining the educational program of public schools" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 594). He reiterated his political stance on tuition tax credits, vouchers, educational savings accounts, voluntary school prayer, and abolishing the Department of Education. Reagan promised that his educational agenda would "restore quality to education by increasing competition and by strengthening parental choice and local control" (Reagan, 1983g, p. 594).

Reagan (1983b) spoke to the nation concerning the state of America's education. The speech was listed as Education--Radio Address to the Nation. April 30. 1983. In a radio address to the Nation on April 30, Reagan (1983b) told the American public that the "subject [was] of paramount concern to every American family--the education of . . . [American] children" (p. 631). He alluded to the "disturbing report" given by the NCEE created shortly after he took office (Reagan, 1983b, p. 631). Appealing to the public's sense of national pride, Reagan (1983b) said:

We're a people who believe that each generation will stand upon the shoulders of the one before it, the accomplishments of each ever greater than the last. Our families immigrated here to make a better life not just for themselves, but for their children and their children's children. Education was not simply another part of American society; it was the key
that opened the golden door. (p. 631)

Reagan also reminded American parents how that those of them who had "never finished high school [must] scrimp and save so that their children . . . [could] go to college" (Reagan, 1983b, p. 631).

Reagan seemed to appeal to parental instinct, since parents generally want their children to have the best, which could mean to have a better existence, or quality of life, than they have had, or to have whatever the parent felt deprived of, or else to have an equally good life, if the parent felt fulfilled. Despite the sacrifices made by parents in behalf of their children, students would not match the educational skills of their parents according to the "tough report card" of the commission (Reagan, 1983b, p. 631).

Reagan said that the commissioners gave American education an uncompromising "U" for unsatisfactory and that action must be taken immediately, if an entire generation avoided failing. He blamed the failing grade on "misguided policy makers [who] have stamped a uniform mediocrity on the rich variety and excellence that had been . . . [America's] heritage" (Reagan, 1983b, p. 631). He pled with parents to demand that the reforms outlined by the NCEE be made in their local schools and also asked parents to hold local officials accountable.

Reagan suggested the federal government's role in education in the past twenty years had been such that the
more money spent at the federal level, the more dramatic
the decline in quality of education. He felt the monies
should come from the state and local levels; a tuition
tax credit plan and a proposed voucher system were
needed; and tax-deferred education savings accounts and
block grants for math and science teachers were mentioned
as possible substitutes for federal allocations. Reagan
closed his message with an admonishment from Solomon.

Reagan (1983e) made a speech to relay his beliefs
about merit pay. The speech was called Merit Pay Scales
for Teachers--Letter to the President of the National
Education Association. May 26, 1983. Reagan wrote a
letter to Willard McGuire, President of the National
Education Association (NEA), on May 26, 1983. The main
thrust of Reagan’s letter was to defend the
recommendations concerning teacher preparation programs
and teacher performance-based pay made by the NCEE
against the assaults of the NEA. Reagan (1983e)
expressed his surprise at having read in the press that
NEA considered his remarks about teachers’ pay being
determined by other assets besides seniority and college
credits earned "as a disgraceful assault on the teaching
profession" (p. 787). Reagan (1983e) said he upheld the
Commission’s report and that in his view the teaching
profession "has suffered for years from lack of
recognition and reward of . . . [the] most talented
teachers" (p. 787).
Reagan (1983e) said he felt that teachers should be "professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based" (pp. 786-787). He proclaimed:

I was heartened to learn that Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander had proposed to his State legislature a Master Teacher salary scale that would recognize and reward outstanding teachers. But I was disappointed to learn that his proposal was not enacted largely because of the vigorous opposition by NEA and its State affiliate, the TEA. Secretary Bell has been working with governors, State legislatures, school boards, school administrators, and teachers on the Master Teacher concept, and we believe that the Tennessee plan would have been a great first step. (Reagan, 1983e, p. 787)

Emphasizing his deep concern for the condition of the teacher profession and the need to improve it, Reagan closed by expressing his hope that NEA would reconsider its position on merit pay proposals. Reagan (1983e) feared that "NEA's long-standing opposition to new ideas like the Tennessee Master Teacher proposal . . . [would become] a major obstacle to paying . . . outstanding teachers what they deserve" (p. 787).

In a National Commission on Excellence in Education: Question and Answer Session at a Regional Forum in Hopkins, Minnesota, June 9, 1983, Reagan (1983f) answered questions at the gymnasium of the Hopkins-Eisenhower
Community Center. The regional forum was the second of eleven to be held around the country and consisted of a day-long program of panel discussions and group sessions on the findings of the NCEE. Reagan divulged that in 1982 the total budget for national defense was $179 billion and for education $215 billion. He stressed his belief that neither national defense nor education should be neglected because "education is truly important and as important to our national security as defense" (Reagan, 1983f, p. 846). Specific educational programs and their costs were discussed.

Reagan (1983c) held a forum, Farragut, Tennessee—Remarks at a Panel Discussion on the Tennessee Better Schools Program, June 14, 1983, to discuss education. The President spoke in the English classroom 203 of Farragut High School in Tennessee. Following his meeting with students, he met with Tennessee Republican Party leaders, including Tennessee’s governor, Lamar Alexander. Reagan questioned the abandonment of compulsory courses and whether the average person entering high school was qualified to determine subject choices. He also commended the zealousness of various states’ governors who, since hearing the NCEE’s report, were implementing compulsory courses such as English, math, and science. In addition, he argued that federal government’s educational costs should be proportional to its interest in education and that local, state, and federal control
of education should be horizontal, or more equally divided than it was.

To further promote educational reforms, Reagan (1983h) continued to travel and to speak. The article entitled *National Teacher-Parent Association--Remarks at the 87th Annual Convention in Alburquerque, New Mexico, June 15, 1983*, revealed his effort to promote educational reforms. Reagan (1983h) began his speech to the National Parent-Teacher Association by praising a student's spelling ability and the group's safeguarding "the value of education" (p. 877). Appealing the Biblical authority, Reagan (1983h) quoted Solomon: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (p. 877). Alluding to quality education, Reagan (1983h) told the members they, not "some faraway bureaucracy," were the "true guardians of that sacred trust" (p. 877).

Reagan reminded the listeners of what he had previously said during his 1980 presidential campaign: the country should recognize the problems in the educational system and find remedies for them. He then proclaimed that he had set up a bipartisan group called the NCEE to study such problems; moreover he enumerated some of the various results of the study. He asked the members to support the proposed educational improvements and to hold educators and elected officials responsible for essential reforms.
President Reagan promised to do anything he could to promote these reforms, singling out Governor Lamar Alexander's merit-pay program as a productive incentive toward educational reform. On the other hand, Reagan orated his disdain at the NEA's stand on pay scale for teachers based on seniority and college credits, accusing NEA of delaying desperately needed reforms. Among the many reforms Reagan recommended were teacher testing and school prayer. Another of Reagan's endeavors to improve the quality of America's education was recorded as the Federal Advisory Committees--Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report, June 16, 1983. Speaking before the Congress of the United States, Reagan (1983d) transmitted the Eleventh Annual Report on Federal Advisory Committees. He summarized the NCEE's report on education and commended the paper, especially as it pertained to "an end to Federal intrusion . . . [and] redefining the Federal role in education" (Reagan, 1983d, p. 594). To reinforce his political view on a decreased role for the federal government in education, Reagan (1983d) referred to a 1982 Gallup poll in which the "majority of those surveyed thought Washington should exert less influence in determining the educational program of the public school" (p. 594). Closing, he encouraged all present to rally the cause of educational reform.
In *Education--Radio Address to the Nation, June 25, 1983*, Reagan (1983b) responded to the "noisy debate" created by the accusations of special interest groups, political factions, and demagoguery (p. 925). He explained that his accusers had assailed him for supporting the Commission's report because the special interest groups desired more money for their causes; politicians wanted to campaign for their party; and demagoguery assisted in raising the noise level. To clarify the different amounts of money spent on education and defense, he said that "government at all levels spent $215.3 billion on education" during the 1982-83 school year, whereas $214.8 billion was spent in 1983 on defense (Reagan, 1983b, p. 925). He explained that the federal government's "regulating and kibitzing" surpassed its (less than) 10 percent awarded to education and that such intrusive actions contributed to the decline in educational quality (Reagan, 1983b, p. 925). In other words, the money itself was not so much a destructive factor as were the conditions of receiving the money. He featured some of the report's recommendations and applauded the efforts of many educators, school boards, governors, and state legislators who had read the report and were endeavoring to implement it. Concluding his speech, he asked the citizens to ignore the hubbub and to continue the course of educational reform.
Other Catalysts


Siegel and Pipho (1983) compared and contrasted the diagnoses and prescriptions of these four reports, stating that such knowledge could "provide state policy makers with powerful medicine to alleviate the ailments of education" (p. 10). According to Siegel and Pipho (1983), the four main questions permeating the reports were as follow:

1. What changes should be made in school curricula?
2. How much time should students spend in school?
3. How can teaching be improved?
4. Who is responsible for policies and programs and
who should pay for them? (p. 9)

Each report advocated answers to the four questions, but each report did not necessarily agree with the solutions advanced by the other reports.

Although all the reports reviewed agreed "that curriculum standards need[ed] to be strengthened," each offered "a different route to recovery" (Siegel & Pipho, 1983, p. 10). For example, A Nation at Risk advocated a certain number of basic courses for all high school students and two years of foreign language for college-bound students, whereas Action for Excellence urged states to fortify curricula at all levels of learning, including kindergarten through high school. The latter report did not spell out the changes in curricula which should be made, but did call for the elimination of unessential courses, for the involvement of students in learning, and for the mastery of advanced skills like problem-solving, interpretation, and persuasive writing.

Goodlad (1983) advised federal support for elementary programs designed to procure proficiency in English and for bilingual programs to teach non-English speaking children how to read, write, and speak English, and to allow all students the chance to learn a second language. Their study, A Place Called School, argued that schools already taught enough of the so-called basics, especially English and mathematics, which
monopolized the curriculum. The problem was facts were stressed instead of how to think.

As to how much time should be spent in school, *A Nation at Risk* and *Action for Excellence* agreed on an extended school day and year; *A Place Called School* said extended teaching-learning time would be beneficial only if what happened in the classroom changed, but *Making the Grade* did not address the issue. In addition, many other thought-provoking suggestions touching curriculum reform were made by the authors.

The reports concurred that states should improve how they attract, endow, and retain quality teachers. They supported a career ladder for teachers to recognize and reward them and to provide additional teaching responsibilities resulting in monetary gain to reinforce competency. *A Nation at Risk* sanctioned salary increases based on an evaluation system, while *Action for Excellence* condoned the use of teacher input to invigorate reforming the entire gauntlet of becoming and staying a teacher. *A Place Called School* upheld the career-ladder approach and suggested that elementary education majors receive a general education more like the liberal arts. Siegel and Pipho (1983) said *Making the Grade* supported a national master teachers program and challenged the federal government to create and support a national master teachers program. The best from
each state—from every congressional district—would be designated master teachers and awarded five-year grants to fund a year of professional improvement and four years of teaching while helping other instructors.

(p. 12)

Besides the advice of the four reports, Siegel and Pipho set forth two questions that policy makers might consider to improve teaching. These questions asked why teachers leave the classroom and how states could obtain teachers where shortages existed.

Although all reports indicated that restoring educational excellence would be costly, only Making the Grade mentioned the amount of money ($5 billion) to fund its master teacher program. Action for Excellence called for more expedient use of existing resources, whereas A Nation at Risk stated that mediocrity costs more in the long run than the monetary expenditures would. The authors did not comment on the specific response of A Place Called School.

The researcher also examined each of the primary sources used in Siegel and Pipho’s comparative analysis to glean additional information pertinent to this study. The NCES’s report has already been reviewed. The other three reports entitled Making the Grade, Action for Excellence, and A Place Called School added many relative details to this study.
The Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy (1983) made a report entitled *Making the Grade* at the request of The Twentieth Century Fund, an independent research foundation (established in 1919) that studies policies of economic, political, and social institutions and issues. The Trustees had Paul E. Peterson, professor of political science and education at the University of Chicago, prepare a background paper on the federal role in education. The data given in this paper were used as a starting point for the Task Force and as information for the lay reader.

The background paper assessed "the current state of American education, describe[d] and evaluate[d] the impact of federal policy on education, and provide[d] a framework for evaluating the recommendations for change" (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983, p. 34). The paper noted that national policy had been redefined in 1965 with the advent of equal opportunity centralized and that federal influence had been mainly exercised in areas such as compensatory education, school desegregation, bilingual education, and handicap programs. The research revealed that, "[t]aken as a whole, the increased federal role has had only modest effects on . . . [the] educational system" (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983,
He said there was "little evidence for concluding that the American system of education is in serious trouble, much less that it has failed," and "just because federal guidelines . . . [were] in need of modification . . . [did] not mean that the federal role in education should be eliminated altogether" (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Policy, 1983, p. 35).

The Task Force attempted to assess the condition of American education, to describe how the federal policy had impacted that condition, and what, if anything, should be done. Statistical data measuring demographic changes, teacher employment and salaries, educational expenditures, and public support for education from 1931 to 1981 were gleaned; the tables were then presented and translated.

The group found that in the 1970s demographic changes had led to a declining education in as much as capital expansion had slowed; employment opportunities were fewer; teacher salaries had fallen; educational expenditures had reached a plateau; and the percentage of gross national product allocated to education had dropped. Along with demographic changes, other negative shifts had also impacted education. The public's confidence in education and voter support for bond referenda were waning, whereas attendance at nonpublic
schools and federal cuts in social programs had increased.

Yet some positive trends emerged in the 1970s, for per pupil expenditures, pupil-teacher ratios, and teachers with graduate degrees all formidably improved, peaking at the end of the decade. Moreover, elementary schools were not experiencing the same difficulties the secondary schools were in so much as the test scores of the primary levels had remained constant. But these changes were "difficult to accept," since they came "after the rapid growth that occurred in the educational system in the 1960s" (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983, p. 59).

The Task Force did find some need to redefine the federal role in education, especially in the Title I laws and regulations. Berated as too "rigorous and complex," the federal government was criticized for stringently seeking detailed compliance with its numerous regulations and for being naive about the intricate nature of educational processes (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983, p. 104). In fact, the group felt that "federal policy should be restricted to assuring fair, equitable allocation of tangible resources; how these resources [were] to be used should be left to the principals and teachers of local schools" and that a "federal
policy . . . [touching] the classroom . . . [had] penetrated beyond the point" where it could reap positive outcomes (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983, p. 104).

The study closed by acknowledging the renewed interest in education in the 1980s. Drawing a parallel between the 1950s and the 1980s, the Task Force said: "Just as Sputnik inspired concern for the quality of education in the 1950s, so Japanese technology and vigorous competition from other foreign countries have awakened public interest in education as a means to enhance national productivity" (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, 1983, p. 161). The group applauded the efforts of national, state, and local leaders for their commitment to quality education in America.

Goodlad (1983), a former dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Los Angeles, wrote A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future. The report was intended for a general audience of all persons interested in improving education. It contained the findings, recommendations, and conclusions he derived from an eight-year study involving visits to more than 1,000 classrooms in seven states. The schools included kindergarten through high school. Goodlad (1983) had the following findings and recommendations dispersed throughout the study:
1. Children should enter kindergarten at age four and graduate at age sixteen.

2. Students should remain with the same classmates throughout their years of schooling.

3. The students' work should not be ability grouped, placed in grades, or given marks. Instead team teachers should evaluate their learning progress based on the students' ability to think and apply knowledge rather than on rote or memorized data.

4. Small schools should replace large schools because students can gain the extra attention they need to meet their needs and to aid their academic progress.

5. A career ladder should replace the current method paying teachers. Teaching salaries would be based on responsibilities, education, and experience.

6. The curricula should be comprised of math, science, literature and language, social studies, arts, vocations, and electives.

7. Principals should be carefully selected from a pool of candidates who have combined a two-year leave of academic study with an assistant principal internship at a major university.

8. School authority should be decentralized, separating responsibilities among the state, the
school district, and the individual school. Goodlad’s conclusions included virtually every aspect of public education. These conclusions, if activated, would have completely overhauled America’s educational system.

Hunt (1983), North Carolina’s Governor, chaired the 41-member Task Force on Education for Economic Growth of the Education Commission of the States in 1983. The purpose of the study was to apprise state and local policy makers of a comprehensive plan to improve the nation’s schools, kindergarten through high school. The report was called *Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve our Nation’s Schools*.

The first of the recommendations made by the Task Force advocated the immediate application of all necessary reforms. These reforms included the creation of broad, effective partnerships in the states and communities, the marshaling of vital educational resources, the expression of a high regard for teachers, the intensification of the academic experience, the provision of quality assurance in education, the improvement of leadership and management in schools, and the effort to meet the educational needs of those who were either unserved or underserved.

The report linked each state’s educational well-being to its future economic growth. It further stressed the value of public-private sector partnerships,
as well as many other generally lacking educational needs.

The Public Agenda Foundation (1983) prepared a commentary of significant events and relative quotations dealing with the educational unrest experienced by the nation. The authors looked at some of the expectations imposed on American's educational system and at some of the reforms that could be made to attain them. "What's Going on in the Nation's Schools?" declared education was too "important to be left to the professional educators" (Public Agenda Foundation, 1983, p. 6). The article also clarified the presidential candidates' positions on education: Reagan favored "a return to some basic tasks" and "merit pay for teachers," whereas Mondale wanted "a substantial increase in Federal spending for education" (Public Agenda Foundation, 1983, p. 5). Many other opinions and options for changing education were discussed in this article.


While other states are still assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their schools, Tennessee educators are moving ahead--beginning the task of acting upon
the recommendations that have come from these two reports. The NCEE stated in its report, "We are confident that the American people, properly informed, will do what is right for their children and for the generation to come." I hold this same confidence in the people of Tennessee and offer this document, Fulfilling the Promise, as a blueprint for assuring that the next generation of Tennesseans can take their rightful positions among the best educated citizens in the nation. (p. 3)

In essence, what Commissioner McElrath accomplished in this writing was to elucidate Tennessee's implied compact with the national government to keep America's promise to the children that they all could hope to gain "the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost" (McElrath, 1983, p. 4).

The document visibly displayed the efforts exerted to restore education in Tennessee to comply with the national expectations. The paper systematically organized data into four separate columns so as to compare the goals and recommendations of the NCEE and the TCES with the State Board's tentative plans to realize these goals and to meet these recommendations, as well as to leave room for any anecdotal responses in the margins. In other words, that which had been identified as lacking, or needing reform, in education at the national level not only served as a guide but also supplied a
basis of comparison for that which was essential at the state level, followed by the State Board's plans to initiate the suggested reforms. The efforts of other states to reform their educational systems were featured in a special section, "Notes on Research & State or Local Initiatives," following a previously related topic.

This format allowed the reader to see clearly how Tennessee's educational reforms complied with the National Commission's expectations and to observe how Tennessee was progressing in comparison with other states. Under the heading of "Goals of Education," the NCEE's goal that "all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain . . . [the ability to achieve] gainful employment and to manage their own lives thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself" was placed beside TCES's statewide goals that every person should attain the academic, personal, social, and civic goals spelled out in the study (McElrath, 1983, p. 4).

McElrath recalled that the State Board of Education had met on January 8, 1982, to discuss and revise the long-range plans proposed by the Long Range Planning Committee of the Board. Although the revisions were still in draft form when the Work Retreat Agenda recessed in July of 1983 the "Board's initial efforts and continuous work toward the development and completion of
its long-range plans were examples of its commitment to excellence in education" (McElrath, 1983, p. 5).

The initiatives of Texas, Illinois, California, Vermont, Florida, and many other states toward educational reforms were updated on the notes sheets. Recommendations A through E on content, standards and expectations, time, teaching, and leadership and fiscal support were listed concurrently in Filling the Promise with NCEE's comparable recommendations. Tennessee's legislators diligently strove to upgrade the quality of education in their state.

Newman (1985) with the Board of Trustees of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching acknowledged that the "searchlight of educational reform, which has been focused on elementary and secondary schools, . . . [was] moving to include colleges and universities" (p. xiii). To address the new demands placed on higher education, the Carnegie Foundation issued a special report in 1985 entitled Higher Education and the American Resurgence. This report resulted from the collaborative efforts of special panels and from the author, Dr. Frank Newman, President of the Education Commission of the States and a member of the Board of Trustees. The report urged increased federal support for colleges to insure "the advancement of key national objectives: social justice, economic growth, civic and cultural enrichment, and the security of the nation"
(Newman, 1983, p. ix). In particular, the report stressed the crucial role of higher education in enabling Americans to meet the emerging foreign competition in the global economy by strengthening America's technological and scientific leadership, by expanding access for minorities to higher education, and by insuring all students economical and civic preparedness.

The report accentuated the exigency for the United States Congress and educational leaders to debate the purposes of higher education and the means to achieve them. Past debates changing the role of higher education were discussed, namely the Cold War, Sputnik, and the civil rights revolution. According to Newman (1983):

In all three cases new needs of American society, external to higher education, led to changes in the universities and colleges. It might seem inappropriate to make higher education policy based on such large societal issues. A careful examination of the results indicates that it has been neither inappropriate nor ineffective. The outcomes of these adjustments--the creation of the GI Bill, the establishment of the federal government-university research system in response to the Cold War, the improvement and expansion of science in the universities and colleges in response to Sputnik, and the broadening of access to higher education for minorities and
low-income students in response to the civil rights revolution—have permanently and positively transformed higher education. (p. 6)

National policies, though powerful, were not fixed and continued to evolve in compliance with societal needs. Since the federal funds represented only 34 percent of higher educational revenues, Newman argued that future federal cuts should not be made. Newman elaborated on the use of federal funds, mentioning varietal expenditures from student loans to faculty research.

In addition to the need for Washington and higher education to work together, Newman (1983) said: "To excel in the current world economy, industry needs the stimulation of close contact with faculty, graduate students, and the most advanced technology . . . [, and] universities need the linkage in order to stimulate the development of technology and . . . to focus basic research in needed areas," without the interference of government (p. 141). Many educational attributes and deficits were discussed, along with many means to reform the current higher educational system to meet the new demands placed on it.

After the publication of these and several other reports, a call for educational reform swept the country. Each state, led by its governor, began to make strides to improve its educational system.
The Role of the Legislature

American education primarily had been a function of the state and local governments since its inception. The Constitution of the United States (Article 10) said that "[t]he powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people" (p. 14).

Each state had its own legislature and official manual containing the laws among which were those governing education. In Tennessee, the State of Tennessee (1983-1984) said the Tennessee Blue Book had been considered the "official manual of Tennessee State Government" for many years (p. v). Under Article XL, Section 12, the 1983-1984 edition read:

The State of Tennessee recognizes the inherent value of education and encourages its support. The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance, support and eligibility standards of a system of free public schools. The General Assembly may establish and support such postsecondary educational institutions, including public institutions of higher learning, as it determines.


Although some states, including Tennessee, had already begun to take legislative steps leading to educational reforms before the NCEE's report, many states became
engaged in such reforms only as an aftermath of the NCEE's report. Some of the reforms made by various states were reviewed and compared to those made by Tennessee.


When the NCEE called for education reform in A Nation at Risk, it fell in at the head of the parade that had already begun to take shape. Just as Sputnik became a symbol around which the math and science reformers of the late Fifties rallied, the report of the National Commission and the dozen or so other major reports that followed transformed 1983 into a watershed year for American education. It was the year we discovered the term mediocrity, and the national reports from the state-level task forces and blue-ribbon commissioners.

All this activity gave the media something to report, the public something to identify with, and the state policy makers a cause to champion that was above ordinary political bickering. That many of the reports had a consistency among them, that they called for a broad range of reforms, and that they came with such rapidity combined to move public
opinion. Suddenly the parade was moving under the unifying banners of more rigorous standards for students and more recognition and higher standards for teachers. (p. K1)

Under the strong influence of the federal government and the report of Terrel Bell's task force, education, which had always been a state function with local control, took on a new meaning. Suddenly, the states became involved in the control of education.

Since academic standards had made no visible advance in the Seventies, the need for reform became evident via the plethora of proposals made in 1983. To conjure public support for the proposed reforms, state policy makers, especially governors, assumed the responsibility to lead their states toward reform, and ultimately educational improvement. For example, James Hunt, governor of North Carolina, realized the connection between economic growth and education and recommended that other governors set up their own task forces comprised of state policy makers, business leaders, and educators to create a "broader, more effective partnership for improving education in their states" (Piho, 1986b, p. K2).

Governor William Winter of Mississippi called a special session of the legislature in December of 1982 that led to the enactment of legislation of
state-supported kindergarten programs, a change in compulsory school attendance ages, a teacher aide program in reading for primary grades, salary increases for teachers, fines for parents who did not comply with compulsory attendance laws, changes in teacher certification and school accreditation, a lay board of education to choose a state superintendent, and increases in sales and income taxes to support the reforms. Governor Winter's goal was "to make Mississippi competitive with other states in the South" (Pipho, 1983b, p. K2). Both he and his staff made speeches between June and December of 1982 to push legislation.

In 1983 California, Florida, and Arkansas passed legislation to initiate educational reform. California enacted S 813 that made more than eighty changes to improve K-12 education. Included in these improvements were merit pay for teachers (mentor program), lengthening of school year from 175 to 180 days, incentives for longer school days, increased salaries for teachers, consolidation of regular and special transportation programs, mini-grants to encourage teachers to improve classroom instruction, and a pilot program to reward high schools for their students' achievements.

Florida's legislature, headed by Governor Robert Graham, sanctioned many reform laws, the most influential of which was S 6B, known as the Raise Bill. Increases in performance standards for academic courses in grades
9-12, funding for a writing skills program, and course requirements for secondary teacher certification were mandated. Incidentally, "Florida copied segments of Tennessee's Master Teachers Program, after Governor Graham attained permission from Tennessee's legislature to use it" (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, November 22, 1993). Included, too, were a visiting scholar program, a merit pay plan for teachers, the creation of twenty-eight regional coordination councils for vocational education and an instruction incentives council, and a plan to phase out remediation programs at the postsecondary level by 1990.

Governor Bill Clinton led the Arkansas legislature to improve education in Arkansas. Clinton kept pressure on the legislature by appealing for public support on television. The legislature ended in November of 1983, after enacting a series of laws to reform the state's educational system. Many of these laws encompassed some form of testing for both teachers and students. In fact, Act 89 required that students be held at the eighth-grade level until they passed a competency test in the basic skills and that 85 percent of all students in a district pass the test, or else the district would lose its accreditation. To test the competency of teachers, Act 76 was enacted, forcing all practicing teachers to pass a general test on academic skills to renew their certificates.
Governor Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, after a long interim study conducted in late 1983, directed the legislature to pass S 1, the career ladder law. (Governor Alexander had introduced his Better Schools Program in January of 1983 before the NCEE's report.) The five-step ladder could be advanced by means of vigorous evaluations of teachers, along with a probationary entry year for new teachers. The program also contained provisions for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors and gave a 10 percent across-the-board pay increase to all teachers. A one-cent sales tax was levied to meet the additional costs incurred from the career ladder program.

In Texas, Governor Mark White called a special legislative session that ended on June 23, 1983, after producing a major tax hike and an education reform bill (H 72). H. Ross Perot headed the governor's special committee rendering the 226-page H 72, incorporating a full year's work. The state gained a four-step career ladder for teachers with a teacher evaluation component, a management training program for superintendents and principals, alternate routes to teacher certification, banned social promotion, required 70 percent passing grade, which was also linked to athletics known as no-pass/no-play and passing basic skills testing for graduation, evoked statewide standards of training for school board members, raised salaries for beginning
teachers, and limited extracurricular activities during a school day.

The enactment of South Carolina's Education Improvement Act of 1984 emerged from the efforts of Governor Richard Riley and State Superintendent of Education Charlie Williams. The reform package included a one-cent sales tax increase and provisions for higher academic standards for students, six-hour school days and 180-days school year, twenty units of course work for high school graduation, local board approval for more than ten absences a year, no more than 30:1 pupil/teacher ratio, loans for students who plan to teach in critical areas (like math), incentive programs to reward exceptional administrators and staff, community parenting classes, money for building construction and renovations, an adopt-a-school program, property tax relief, and an early learning program for four-year-old children with developmental problems.

The Quality Basic Education Act was passed in Georgia in early March 1985 without a single dissenting vote. The reform act resulted from the efforts of the Task Force on Education which was led by Governor Joe Frank Harris. Provisions for phasing in the law over a four-year period and for raising the $700 million needed to finance the act were established. Based on the law's guidelines, kindergartens were made mandatory,
state-supported, and full-day. Teachers and administrators received a 10 percent and 17 percent pay increase respectively. A statewide core curriculum, new school finance formula, competency testing for practicing teachers and for students K-12, a career ladder for teachers and administrators, and an annual performance evaluation for all school employees were enmeshed in the act. In addition, a school readiness instrument had to be administered during kindergarten and early in the first grade, and norm- and criterion-referenced testing had to be elevated at all levels.

Under the guidance of Governor Michael Dukakis, Massachusetts joined the other states that were making educational reforms. Governor Dukakis signed a "scaled-down version of a 1984 model" of reform legislation in early September of 1985 (Pipho, 1986b, p. K3). One of the changes from the 1984 to the 1985 version was the substitution of incentives for mandates. Other changes included the reduction of a school improvement council, grants for poor teachers and bonuses for experienced teachers, and a provision to allow the local government to reject state funding despite the approval of the local school board.

In late spring of 1985, Missouri followed suit and passed legislation to create a career ladder program with a maximum salary increase of $5,000, testing of students on "key skills and objectives," codes to protect teachers
from liability, training programs for administrators, salary increases for teachers, competency testing for students, an assistance program for new teachers during the first two years of practice, college tuition rebate if students pursuing teacher careers earned all A's and B's in their areas of certification, and simplifying the raising of taxes in a political subdivision (Pipho, 1986b, p. K3).

Governor George Nigh signed a reform bill into law in late summer of 1985 to improve Oklahoma's educational system. Improvements contained in the legislation were the 20 percent increase in spending for secondary schools, a reduced class size for grades 1-3, additional funding for early childhood development programs and small school cooperatives, norm-referenced testing for grades 3, 7, and 10, and mandatory evaluation for teachers.

Governor James Thompson directed the omnibus reform laws passed in Illinois in the summer of 1985. The reform package contained a plan to reorganize and consolidate some elementary and secondary districts, a provision for administrators to attend an academy, a handicap program, a mandate for local school districts to establish learning objectives and for the state board of education to provide basic skills testing of beginning teachers, a ban on social promotion, and a written school board policy on discipline.
New Mexico had a tougher time making needed educational reforms. Three legislative sessions defeated reform proposals before the legislature approved a comprehensive reform package. The reforms incorporated the elimination of tenure for teachers, across-the-board salary increases for all certified personnel, smaller classroom sizes in primary grades with phased in future decreases for higher grades, eligibility requirements for student programs, and a set number of hours for primary students to study basic skills. These, as well as other reforms, were made in New Mexico.

While some states opted for the large omnibus bill, others chose a collection of bills. But, in the end, almost every conceivable aspect of education had been affected. It was as though every state wanted to comply with the national standards of excellence in education and that each state strove to compete with the others to effect legislative changes either faster or more comprehensively or both.

The Select Committee on Education (1984b) offered a report to the 93rd Tennessee General Assembly in January. The report entitled *Tennessee General Assembly: Report on the Select Committee on Education* gave a summary of recommendations for educational reforms and listed "those persons who testified before the Select Committee on Education" in the appendix (Select Committee on Education, 1984b, p. 95).
The Select Committee of Education (1984b) had been "created by Senate Joint Resolution No. 96 of the Ninety-third General Assembly . . . to study the varied proposals contained in S 1000/H 1081 and S 1125/H 1099 [sic]" (p. 82). The Select Committee on Education (1984b) had also been directed "to examine the issues of college preparation and in-service training as they relate to the quality of the teaching profession" (p. 82). These recommendations resulted in the CERA of 1984. Alexander had introduced his Master Teacher Program in 1983, and the Committee studied and revised it to yield the CERA. But Alexander's bill was not the only consideration of the Committee, for the Select Committee on Education (1984b) acknowledged that the "proposed legislation . . . [contained] ideas taken from both S 1125/H 1099 [sic] and S 1000/H 1081" (p. 82).

As a rule, legislators endeavored to scale down the proposed legislation to save money and for other reasons, but the recommendations of the Select Committee on Education (1984b) actually added proposals (for example, "a 10 percent across-the-board increase for all K-12 and higher education employee") beyond what had been requested (p. 84). These additional proposals probably resulted from the thoroughness of the work done by the Select Committee. With Representative Steve Bivens as its elected chairman, the committee divided into three subcommittees to address teacher compensation,
instructional development, and teacher training. This Committee did not, however, devote time to evaluation criteria but delegated the responsibility to the Interim Certification Commission, "an eighteen-member group funded by the legislature and composed of laypersons from across Tennessee" (Select Committee on Education, 1983b, p. ix).

The report's purpose was "to identify present and future problems confronting Tennessee's teachers [and] . . . to offer some proposals for responding effectively to these problems," and to approach the problems realistically with the understanding that the issues were diverse and required more than simple solutions (Select Committee on Education, 1984b, p. 3).

The Select Committee on Education (1984a) debated the composition of three commissions to be established by S 1 and the choice of terms used in S 1 on January 11. The session was recorded on audio tape and housed in the State Library's archives.

At this session, Senator Rucker designated the three commissions as the State Certification Commission, the Regional Certification Commission, and the Interim Commission. The State Certification Commission would consist of thirteen members and was charged with the responsibility of evaluating teachers and of determining those entitled to special classification and pay. The Regional Commission would be made up of nine members.
whose responsibility was to receive "applicants from teachers that wish to receive the distinction of classification of either professional senior or distinguished senior" (Select Committee on Education, 1984a, Cassette Recording No. 1). The members also would be in charge of doing teacher evaluations and making recommendations to the State Certification Commission. The Interim Commission consisted of eighteen members who were charged with the responsibility of "making first selections, doing first evaluations, and establishing a pool of senior teachers, supervisors, and principals from which the Governor made the appointments to the State Certification and the Regional Certification Commissions" (Select Committee on Education, 1984a, Cassette Recording No. 1). In addition, the eight duties of the Certification Commission were listed and explained. The Academy Program, teachers' appeal procedure, career ladder pay scale, and termination of the Interim Commission were discussed.

In fact, all of the Select Committee on Education (1984a) Cassette Recordings Nos. 1-55 on the legislative hearings from January 11 to February 22, 1994, were reviewed by the researcher. In these tapes, the 94th Tennessee General Assembly's Select Committee on Education debated S 1124, sponsored by Senator Darnell, and S 1000, sponsored by Senators Elkins, Rucker, and Garland. The debates resulted in a compromise between
the goals set by Alexander's Better Schools Program and those set by TEA. The legislature also agreed on the method of taxation to budget the educational reforms, namely by increasing the state sales tax by one cent. On February 22, 1984, S 1, the compromised version of S 1000 and S 1124, was enacted into law as the CERA of 1984.

Odden (1986), who was an associate professor in the School of Education and director of the Southern California Policy Analysis for California Education Center at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, wrote "Sources of Funding for Education Reform" in January's issue of Phi Delta Kappan (pp. 335-340). Updating the various states' legislative actions to purport and to fund educational reforms, Odden (1986) said:

Less than three years have elapsed since the release of A Nation at Risk and the accompanying calls to improve U. S. public schools. Yet a number of state legislators have already acted on the basic recommendations of that and other, similar reports. Indeed, the education reform movement has moved faster than any public policy reform in modern history. All the states have expanded their school improvement programs, nearly all have increased high school graduation requirements, most have stiffened college admission requirements, many are deepening the content of course offerings, and many are
enacting a variety of policies to strengthen the teacher profession. (p. 355)
The author continued by showing the amount of money allocated to education by various states, including Tennessee, in the school years 1982-83, 1983-84, and 1984-85 on Tables 1 and 2. He stated that Tennessee's major source of funds had been derived from sales tax increases and that Tennessee's "one-cent sales tax increase [had] produced about $325 million in 1985, with elementary and secondary education receiving a hike of $165 million" (p. 339).

The writer closed by reminding the public that increased funding for education must continue if the desired quality expected from education was to be maintained. In his opinion, America had "no other options" than to amply fund education (Odden, 1986, p. 340).

The Advocacy Groups

By far the most visible advocate for the Better Schools Program was Governor Lamar Alexander, whereas the most formidable adversary, not to the entire program but to the merit pay component, was TEA. During the early 1980s, fierce competition between the political advocate and the union opponent raged openly into a war of words, while the public, educators, politicians, and interested others began to take sides.
Williams et al. (1983) pointed out in "Can the Schools Be Saved?" on May 9th that

Alexander [had] managed to win the backing of parents, businessmen[,] and special-interest lobbies, which were more or less willing to swallow the sales tax hike needed to fund the plan (more than $200 million over four years). But he was unable to convince the powerful teachers' union, which feared that the merit-pay system would undercut its negotiating power and that the five-year review would jeopardize job security. Last month a state senate committee decided by one vote to table the controversial proposal until next year. Alexander vowed to continue his crusade while the union, claiming victory for seniority and tenure, proposed a business-as-usual[,] across-the-board pay raise. (p. 51)

The authors also mentioned that the federal government was acting to help education, at least in math and science, by providing additional funds. In fact, "The House this year easily passed a $425 million bill to help the situation, and two weeks ago a Senate subcommittee reported out a $400 million version that would provide for precollege and in-service teacher training in math and science" (Williams et al., 1983, p. 54).

Hartiz (1983) quoted TEA as saying in "TEA Declares Opposition to Master Teacher Proposal" that the master teacher bill was "virtually beyond cleaning up" (A1) and that TEA preferred to "promote its own bill" (A2). TEA alleged the master teacher plan would render teachers "defenseless in the palms of politicians" and would also "practically nullify tenure and negotiating rights" (Hartiz, 1983, p. A2).

The TEA Legislative Report, for the week ending February 18, 1983, contained a host of comments about the current state of the Better Schools Program and noteworthy quotations collected from Governor Alexander, Education Commissioner McElrath, and various senators and representatives. The report contained many innuendoes about the Better Schools Program's Master Teacher component, calling it "controversial" and accusing it of singling "out a few teachers for sizeable pay raises" (Tennessee Education Association [TEA], 1983, p. 9).
When asked why the program limited the number of Master Teachers to 10 percent and the Senior Teachers to 25 percent, Alexander responded:

There is no limit for issuance of Senior and Master Teacher Certificates. Initially, the state will pay for the first 10 percent for Master Teachers and the first 25 percent for Senior Teachers. A local school system could choose to pay for additional Senior or Master Teachers. The legislature could at a later time decide to increase those percentages.

(TEA, 1983, p. 11)

Alexander's response suggested that he was willing to be flexible with his quotas, and it alleviated the pressure on him to ease them by shifting the responsibility for the quotas from himself to the state legislators and the local government. His defense strategy seemed to mollify the volatile quota issue for the moment.

TEA (1983) also quoted Alexander's answer to a reporter's question about waiting "to see how TEA responds to his 'master teacher' plan before deciding on a base-pay recommendation" (p. 1). Alexander replied: "Since when did the decision about what kind of schools we have in this state depend on the governor's negotiating with the teachers" (TEA, 1983, p. 9)?

The report further implied that Alexander was exploiting the office of governor by creating a "commotion" in order to enhance his clout enough to place
him as a "forerunner in the senatorial campaign" (TEA, 1983, p. 10). The notoriety emanating from Alexander's campaign was escalating into quite a disturbance.

According to TEA, Alexander spent weeks "touring the state, seeking news coverage, and meeting with newspaper editorial writers and boards . . . [, and planned] a series of radio and television appearances" to promote his program (TEA, 1983, p. 10).

Similarly, McElrath was mentioned by TEA for having defended the quota to members of the State Board of Education by expressing his accord with the public's perception: "Right now, the public knows we're scraping the bottom of the barrel in the teaching profession" (TEA, 1983, p. 2). TEA had a field day with this response, calling it a "foot-in-the-mouth statement" (TEA, 1983, p. 2). When TEA objected to his comment and when the Metro Nashville Education Association (MNEA) called for either a public apology or his resignation, McElrath refused either option, claiming he had been "misquoted by a reporter who favors TEA" (TEA, 1983, p. 2).

As emotions intensified, politicians, educators, the public, and the news media began taking sides with either Alexander or TEA. The stage was set for a long, embittered battle.

The report concluded by presenting the survey results collected from legislators about Alexander's
Master Teacher Program. TEA had compiled the comments from numerous newspaper accounts across the state. Of course, most of the politicians interviewed sided with their political party. However, the report proved that those who either favored or opposed the merit pay plan were fervent in their belief.

TEA (1983) also contained a clipping of a negative newspaper report on Alexander. M. Lee Smith, a political analyst with the Nashville Banner illustrated these heated emotions in this feature. In "Alexander's strategy analyzed," Smith caustically remarked that the Better Schools Program was "one of the shrewdest political mousetraps" of Alexander's career (TEA, 1983, p. 13). Smith explained that the "trap" was Alexander's threat to "veto any general tax increase unless the Master Teacher Program is passed" (TEA, 1983, p. 13). When the reporter asked about the budget, Alexander said he was undecided and would give answers on the first of March.

Alexander (1983c), the Better Schools Program's most devoted advocate, delivered his budget message on March 1st, to the 93rd General Assembly and to fellow Tennesseans. He had introduced his Better Schools Program in January, and now he had begun to push for its enactment into law. To purport his Master Teacher Program, Alexander warned the legislature and public that they should beware of where they aimed because they would
probably get there. He reminded them that they had been "aiming low" in terms of teachers' salaries (Alexander, 1983c, p. 3). He cited an example of a beginning teacher in Fayette County who made $12,200 for a starting salary, whereas a teacher who had taught there thirty years made only $15,000. He told the legislators that they should "change their aim" and alluded to the recommendations of the TCES to reinforce his opinions relating to the Better Schools Program in general and to the Master Teacher Program in particular (Alexander, 1983c, p. 4).

Alexander discussed the pros and cons of the allegations lodged against his proposals, arguing that teachers' salaries should be based on more than just degrees and seniority; rather they should be determined by the teachers' performance. He explained the different phases of the Master Teacher Program and told how much additional money a teacher would make at each level. He said that he did not intend for the statement in his State of Education Address in January "that he would veto any general tax increase that did not include the Master Teacher [P]rogram" to sound like an ultimatum (Alexander, 1983c, p. 12).

After reaffirming the depth of his conviction concerning the Master Teacher Program, Alexander (1983c) closed his message by admonishing the legislators to "aim in the right direction" (p. 13). "This is no ordinary moment," Alexander (1983c) said. "It is a historic
moment" (p. 13). He closed his speech by predicting that "this Legislature and its leaders . . . [would] go down in history as the finest, most progressive General Assembly that ever served the people of Tennessee," if they could "be first for a change" (Alexander, 1983c, p. 13). Evidently, Alexander hoped to arouse the legislators' spirit of competition when he rallied them to be "first," that is, to pass legislation to reform education before the other states did. The theme of being first would be reiterated in many of his successive speeches related to the Better Schools Program, especially to its centerpiece, the merit pay plan.

Stedman (1983), Dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Austin Peay State University at Clarksville, Tennessee, reported one of the TEA's most aggressive actions taken during the turbulent times of making educational reform in Tennessee. The article--"Tennessee's Master Plans for Teachers, Supervisors, and Principals"--illuminated the problems, criticisms, and concerns lodged against the Better Schools Program by TEA and said that TEA had "met with the Governor's staff in an attempt to develop a compromise version of the Master Teacher Plan" (Stedman, 1983, p. 58). TEA was, however, unsatisfied "with the progress being made" and consequently developed its own competing bill which was also introduced in the House and Senate as H 1099 and S 1124 (Stedman, 1983, p. 58).
The TEA counterproposal provided "an alternate to the Governor's plan and marshal[ed] heavy lobbying against it" (Stedman, 1983, p. 58). In essence, the TEA bill required that all candidates for certification be graduates from a National Council from Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)-approved institution. The plan included a "two-tiered certification process (intern and professional)," a 10 percent pay increase for all teachers with three years experience and a fifth year of college preparation, and a "powerful Professional Educator Certification Board controlled by teachers" (Stedman, 1983, p. 58).

At the time of Stedman's writing (March-April, 1983), the House and Senate's Education Committees had met in several sessions trying to reach a compromise between "the best features of the Governor's plans and the TEA proposal," but had failed to pass either plan in its present form (Stedman, 1983, p. 58). The failure of successful concession was charged, in part, to Alexander's steadfastly adhering to Joseph Rice's system of pedagogical management.

Rice, a pediatrician, conducted an extensive study of American education and concluded that superintendents had an insufficient knowledge of pedagogy, that typically school board members were unqualified political appointees, and that the quality of teaching was mainly liable for the adverse condition of education. To remedy
these deficiencies, Rice thought that a pedagogical management system should be established to measure results based on fixed standards (Stedman, 1983, p. 58). Exactly how reliable Alexander found Rice's theories of education had been the object of conjecture by many other authors.

Bob Palaich (1983), a political scientist at Education Governance Center, prepared the article "Restructuring Careers in Teaching" in the ecs issuegram dated April 15. Polaich discussed the issue of two major educational reforms, namely the Charlotte-Mecklenberg Proposal (North Carolina) and the Tennessee Master Teacher Proposal. He described the two different career ladders planned by each state and outlined some advantages and disadvantages of these, as well as other merit pay plans.

Cavit C. Cheshier's "The Merits and Demerits of Merit Pay" which was published in TEA News on March 15, 1983, discussed some of the reasons TEA opposed the merit pay plan. Cheshier, Executive Secretary of TEA, admitted Alexander had convinced the public that a teacher's pay should be performance based. However, Cheshier disagreed with Alexander's argument that claimed distinguishing between good and bad teachers was easy. Regarding "good and bad teachers," Cheshier (1983) pointed out that "[o]pinions var[ied] widely as to which ones fit the mold. It . . . [was] at this point that merit ha[d]
consistently failed virtually every time it has been tried" (p. 2). To prove his statement, he offered examples of Florida, New York, Delaware, and South Dakota whose legislatures had mandated statewide merit pay plans and then rescinded them. He concluded that "the ivory tower theory had not held up" (Cheshier, 1983, p. 2).

The proponents of the merit pay plan argued that teachers should not ostracize other teachers who received the extra pay because they felt favoritism was a motive in their selection. Cheshier countered this argument by stressing the difference between what ought to be and what is. He said: "This may be true; but teachers . . . [were] human and they work[ed] in a political arena" (Cheshier, 1983, p. 2). In addition, he predicted that the merit pay plan was destined to fail because it was "forced upon a group of teachers who did not want it" (Cheshier, 1983, p. 2). He closed his discussion by saying that there were more demerits than merits in this type of pay plan and that if Alexander wanted Tennessee to be first one time he should not "reinstate an idea which had a proven record of failure" as a way to accomplish his goal (Cheshier, 1983, p. 2).

Loftin (1983), editor of The Chattanooga Times editorial page, wrote "An opportunity for improvement" on June 27th. The editorial discussed the state's and the federal government's roles in reforming education. The article said:
The most significant actions to improve education in Tennessee will come from the legislators and the governor. But if they muffle the opportunity again like they did this year, Tennessee's future, including its effort to improve economic development, will be compromised. Gov. Lamar Alexander's Better Schools Program was an excellent first step toward boosting Tennessee ahead of many states. Unfortunately, in a lapse of leadership, the governor sacrificed it all because the Senate deferred his "master teacher" scheme for further study, even though that plan was only one point in a 10-point program. True, the legislators declined to raise the sales tax to pay for the program, but that wasn't surprising; the governor had pledged to veto any funding plan that did not include the "master teacher" proposal. (A6)

The paper recommended that TEA be given a role in identifying the criteria for a "master teacher" (A6).

Newcombe (1983) addressed the major debate on merit pay plans then underway in a research paper for Better Schools, Incorporated. "Rewarding Teachers: Issues and Incentives" reported the use of performance-based pay as an incentive, the examples of teacher incentive plans, and the progress made in various states toward implementing merit pay plans. Among the merit pay plans
reviewed were those in Tennessee, Florida, California, Los Angeles, Houston, and Charlotte-Macklenburg.

Alexander (1983e), in an effort to promote the Better Schools Program, sent "We Need This Master Teacher Program. The Endpaper" to the Executive Educator in September. He stated that he had "proposed the program to the Tennessee legislature in January" and that it had "been endorsed by just about everyone" (Alexander, 1983e, p. 48). Of those who opposed the program, TEA, an affiliate of NEA, stood foremost. He stressed that since TEA had introduced an opposing bill to the General Assembly the passing of his bill would be deferred. In fact, the legislators had "voted in April to defer action on it until next session, after further study" on both bills had transpired (Alexander, 1983e, p. 48).

The article explained the four stages of the Master Teacher Program in great detail. Afterwards it was closed by Alexander's saying: "When this program passes, Tennessee, for once, will be first in public education--first to set important precedents for other states to study and follow" (Alexander, 1983e, p. 48). The motif of "first" and the importance of being first as a means of gaining praise and respect from other states was repeated throughout Alexander's quest for the enactment of this component of the Better Schools Program.
The Tennessee Department of Education (1983b) published a "Summary of Teacher Certification in Tennessee" on August 3rd. The summary explained the types of certificates and the Permit issued to educators. The certificates included the teacher’s professional certificate, the professional school service personnel certificate (initial and advanced), the interim certificate, the trade shop certificate, and the Permit (p. 2:01). All the listed qualifications for attaining each certificate or permit are listed in the definition section of Chapter One.

"Better Schools Sought" (1983), an unsigned article dated November 1st, was published in The Knoxville News-Sentinel. The column informed the local public that Jane Leuthold, wife of County Commissioner Frank Leuthold and chairman of the Knox County petition drive for Tennesseans for Better Schools, was seeking 5,000 signatures to support Alexander’s Better Schools Program. She had already sent out 250 letters to civic and neighborhood groups to solicit their support for the governor’s educational program. She reported that at least 90 percent of those interviewed favored the program.

O’Reilly (1983), a professor of Educational Administration and Supervision at the University of Nebraska, presented his work "Selected Legal Considerations Bearing Upon Alternative Salary Plans for
Teachers" to the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration in August of 1983; then revised it for presentation to the Midwest Conference on Alternative Salary Plan for Teachers on November 3, 1983 (p. 2). One of the most significant means for educators to convey information among themselves about the proposed merit pay system was by holding conferences.

The author used this forum to discuss the current state of the career ladder. He referred to Bell's response when presented with data showing that "fewer highly qualified women . . . [were] entering education careers than in 1972" (O'Reilly, 1983, p. 5). Bell responded: "I think we are past due for a change in the way we compensate teachers" (O'Reilly, 1983, p. 5). O'Reilly (1983) also quoted President Reagan on this issue: "If we want to achieve excellence, we must reward it" (p. 5).

When Reagan made that statement on June 14, 1983, he was in Knoxville, Tennessee, with Alexander who shared his views on the subject. They appeared together in Alexander's state to enhance the chances of getting the legislature to pass his bill.

Then, too, O'Reilly spoke on the pros and cons of single salary schedules versus incentive pay and on federal law and fair compensation (civil rights problems), and on many other topics akin to educational reforms. He, nonetheless, upheld the merit pay plan even
though he foresaw the problems--one being law suits for the violation of civil rights--that might result from implementing such a program.

Beecher E. Clapp (1983), Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Education, spoke to the Harvard Education Conference on November 22, about his "participating in the Tennessee General Assembly legislative hearings conducted by the Select Committee on Education" (p. 2). His speech was entitled *Tennessee Teacher Career Ladder*. He told the audience, after addressing Mr. Heckinger directly and after bringing "greetings from Dr. Robert McElrath, Commissioner of Education and the Honorable Lamar Alexander, Governor of Tennessee," that the Select Committee was in session to discharge the responsibility of preparing "master teacher/master administrator" legislation (Clapp, 1983, p. 2). The legislation was to be derived from both Alexander’s Better Schools Program and TEA’s proposals.

The bottom line was that of this moment there was "no consensus on an evaluation process for identifying master teachers" (Clapp, 1983, p. 3). Besides, one of the ongoing debates pertained to formative versus summative evaluation. The speaker said that educators had an adequate, if not ample, amount of formative information from staff development activities, but not enough summative information in terms of how to be
accountable for their work. He also reminded his audience that Tennesseans were "facing many issues related to evaluation," and then he began to explain the Better Schools Program's ten points, focusing on the three major components of the merit pay plan (Clapp, 1983, p. 4). The three components are as follow: first, teacher education; second, the beginning teacher's plight; third, the career ladder.

After clarifying the details of all three of the Master Teacher Program's components and merit compensations, Clapp outlined the eight sources from which information would be secured to evaluate teachers. The eight sources were classroom observations; portfolio; applicant, principal, and peer interviews; student questionnaire; knowledge of subject matter and English language tests. He explained that the Select Committee had begun an attempt to identify the competencies characteristic of effective teaching over a year ago by asking Susan Rosenholtz and Jane Stallings of Peabody-Vanderbilt University to assist them. These women studied the Effective Schools Research and established twenty-three competencies in four domains: planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and professional development and leadership. The 5,000 members of the Tennessee Teachers' Study Council reviewed and evaluated the competencies and volunteered input to improve wording or to add other competencies.
Clapp (1983) suggested that many "old merit pay plans failed because of a poor evaluation process and the mistrust it generated" (p. 7). To him, "evaluation . . . [was] the heart of the career ladder" (Clapp, 1983, p. 7). For this reason, the National Governor's Association Ad Hoc Committee on Rewarding Teachers for Performance (chaired by Alexander) had proposed four bases for a successful evaluation. These include the clear definition of evaluation criteria, the planning for continuous, long-term evaluations, the providing for mixed teams of observers, and the requiring of rigorous evaluations. He closed by recommending that his audience read two books: Jay Millman's *Handbook of Teacher Evaluation* and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

Raze (1983) discussed two merit pay plans: California's Mentor Teacher Program and Tennessee's Master Teacher Program. Raze highlighted the reasons teacher unions opposed merit pay plans. Unions believed that there was no fair way to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness; merit pay encouraged competition rather than cooperation among teachers; it also threatened job security; and educational quality could not be improved by it.

Raze recalled how in January of 1983 Education Secretary Bell had requested master teachers who would be selected by their peers and paid increased salaries. But "Bell met with opposition from NEA and AFT who saw this
idea as an extension of merit pay" (Raze, 1983, p. 3).

Raze (1983) said:

The National School Boards Association supported
Bell's idea but opposed a national mandate.
Although this proposal and many that followed it use
the term "master teacher," most combine aspects of
merit pay and the career ladder for teachers.
Echoing Secretary Bell, Tennessee Gov. Lamar
Alexander proposed the Master Teacher Program for
his state. . . . The Tennessee legislature has
postponed action on the Master Teacher Program until
April[, 1984. Other states becoming involved in
merit pay and master teacher experiments include
Florida, Virginia[, and Oklahoma. (pp. 3-4)
Raze not only revealed the origin of the name master
teacher but also mentioned the progress of Tennessee's
legislation on the merit pay proposal. The name
originated with Secretary Bell in January of 1983. The
delay of legislative action was due to NEA's
counterproposal, S 1124.

The author also stated that NEA objected to "any
compensation based on subjective evaluation, student
achievement, or grade and subject taught" (Raze, 1983,
p. 4). However, AFT was willing to negotiate teacher
career ladder plans, even though AFT did not support
merit pay. Other educational entities such as the NCEE,
the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force, the bipartisan
Merit Task Force of the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor—all recommended making merit pay a part of the educational reforms. Actually, the most recent surveys showed that 80 percent of the general population and 63 percent of teachers now supported merit pay plans (Raze, 1983, p. 4).

Clapp, Puckett, and Simpkins (1983) coauthored a conference paper titled "The Tennessee Plan: A Discussion of Teacher-Related Aspects of the 'Better Schools Program' under Development by the Governor and Legislature." Simpkins presented it orally to the National Forum on Excellence in Education in Indianapolis on December 6-8, 1983. Simpkins identified teachers' most frequently asked questions about the incentive pay plan and attempted to quell any fear caused by lack of understanding the plan. The paper included the questions that teachers usually asked about the issues of recertification/tenure, fair evaluations, across-the-board pay raises, and promotion quotas. The authors also purported solutions to the teacher-identified problems inherent to the merit pay system.

Alexander (1984a) delivered his State of the State Address to the Tennessee Press Associated on January 27. The Governor reminded the public, to whom he was appealing for support of his Better Schools Program, that seventeen days ago he had called a special session of the
Tennessee Legislature to consider the Better Schools Program. He told his audience that if his plan was enacted into law, Tennessee would have "better schools and lower taxes than California, than Kentucky, than Alabama, than Pennsylvania, than almost any state" (Alexander, 1984a, p. 2).

Referring to his first State of Education Address on January, 1982, Alexander reported that his BASIC SKILLS FIRST plan announced during the speech had already begun to help students learn the basic skills. Alexander continued to speak about the importance of his proposed educational reforms and about those legislators who supported these reforms. He thanked Speaker McWherter and Lieutenant Governor Wilder, and a host of other legislators, for their efforts to pass the Better School Program legislation. By doing so, he called the public's attention to those who supported his plan without revealing those who did not endorse it. Alexander's (1984a) address to the legislature was conveyed via the press:

If legislators and governors are elected to do the most important work the people need done, and if education is at the top of our list, and if the Legislature has worked for three years to develop the best education reform package in the country, and if the bill for all of state government is still the lowest in the south after we enact the program,
how can you explain voting against that? (p. 9) Alexander tried to convince the legislators to support his reforms, and he pursued his goals unrelentingly.

Alexander appealed to the political mind-set, as was shown in his next statement. He clearly reminded the legislators that they were "elected officials . . . [who had] a responsibility to explain carefully [to the voters] what . . . [they proposed] to do" (Alexander, 1984a, p. 9). After delivering this admonishment, Alexander explained how the Better Schools Program was comprised, how inexpensive it was, and how beneficial it would be to Tennesseans.


Kapel, Benningfield, Brooks, Liedke, Mour, and Whitford (1984) jointly wrote and presented a research paper called "A Proposal to Establish Demonstration Schools and the Identification, Training[,] and Utilization of Master/Mentor and Master Teacher: A Joint School District and University of Louisville Project." The paper analyzed the genesis for the reappearance of merit pay plans, identified objective methods for evaluating teachers, and suggested the type of training conductive to outstanding teaching.
Saunders (1984), proponent of the Better Schools Program and Dean of the College of Education at Memphis State University, described the reform processes in teacher education over the past ten years, that is, from 1975-1984, in the "Efforts to Reform Teacher Education in Tennessee: A Ten-Year Analysis." The National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education at Washington, D. C., sponsored Saunders research which was released on the 20th of September.

Saunders (1984) recalled that ever since the NCEE's report had been publicized "about two dozen other reports having similar thrusts and producing similar findings and recommendations" had been published in approximately two years time (p. 1). He expressed his opinion that Tennessee was second to none in its efforts to improve education. In fact, the last twenty months of intensive debating had crescendoed in March, 1984, "when Governor Lamar Alexander signed into law the CERA of 1984 and the PEGRA of 1984, which established a new state board of education with significantly different composition, role[,] and function" (Saunders, 1984, pp. 1-2).

Speaking of the CERA, Saunders (1984) said:

The CERA dramatically accelerated and elevated the state's efforts to improve schools as well as teacher education programs. Actually, the CERA was a follow-up of the Governor's Better Schools Program presented to the legislature a year earlier. Only
one of the ten provisions in the Better Schools Program (transferring control of post-secondary vocational education programs from the State Board of Education to the State Board of Regents of the State University and Community College System of Tennessee) was enacted by the 1983 legislature. The other nine provisions, including the centerpiece of the program, the Master Teacher Program, was carried over for a year and assigned by the legislature to a Select Committee on Education for protracted study, fact finding, and debate. The Select Committee's findings and recommendations formed the basis for the proposed CERA and was a major item in the Extraordinary Session of the 1984 General Assembly called by the Governor on January 4, 1984. The final version incorporated the remaining nine of the governor's earlier ten recommendations. (p. 2)

In addition, the author recalled Alexander's Back to the Basics efforts in 1981 and 1982. To promote the plan, he said that Alexander visited several schools but changed the name to Basic Skills First and included the Computer Skills Next after teachers countered that they had never gotten away from the basics.

In December, 1982, the findings and recommendations of the TCES were released. There were "four major areas of concern: Goals, Governance, Quality, and Fund..."
Distribution" (Saunders, 1984, p. 10). Saunders (1984) condensed the TCES's recommendations as follows:

1. increased admission and graduation requirements,
2. increased use of field-base classroom experiences,
3. establishment of on-going evaluations by the respective governing boards of existing preparation programs and means for assessing the need for and the quality and productivity of all teacher preparation programs and specialties, eliminating unnecessary duplication,
4. the issuance of temporary endorsements to teachers in "surplus" fields to teach math and science, with specified "refresher" courses to be taken within the year,
5. establishment of the rank of "lead teacher" to act as a mentor for new and student teachers,
6. provision for lead teachers, with assistance of teacher educators, to provide inservice [sic] education programs to enhance the skills of current teachers, and
7. the certification of new teachers only after competency has been demonstrated during a year's internship with a "lead teacher." (p. 11)

Alexander's Better Schools Program, "coming only one month after the TCES report," resembled the TCES in that
it contained similar wording and content (Saunders, 1984, p. 13).

Saunders (1984) referred to the Better Schools Program as "one of the best kept secrets in modern Tennessee political history, . . . a factor which may have contributed to the program's difficulty in the General Assembly" (p. 13). Reactions to the Better Schools Program were mixed, but TEA was the major force against the program; business leaders were the main proponents.

Actually, TEA upheld some of the ten points, remained neutral on some, and denounced adamantly the master teacher-principal component. TEA was so vehemently opposed to this component that the organization sponsored a bill of its own, which failed to be enacted into law.

Among the Joint Committee's myriad recommendations emerged a revised, compromised version of the Master Teacher-Master Principal Program. All certified personnel, except superintendents, in grades K-12 could join the career ladder program. The key features of the career ladder were its five steps: advancement through rigorous evaluations, probationary entry year, pay supplements, statewide certification commission with three subordinate regional commissions, and the role of school leaders in evaluating and recommending teachers. The reform legislation contained many other provisions.
related to teacher, learning, and leadership. In fact, "this extraordinary session of the legislature resulted in two landmark enactments: the CERA of 1984" and PEGRA (Saunders, 1984, p. 15).

Saunders (1984) extolled the CERA of 1984 as "far and away the state's most comprehensive and ambitious effort to improve education in the history of the state, . . . [though] in many respects the Act was a revised version of Governor Alexander's Better Schools Program presented to the 1983 General Assembly" (p. 26). To Saunders (1984), what was so unique about this Tennessee legislation was its farsightedness: the Act set forth goals to be achieved within five years, and the Act established a Legislative Oversight Committee to ensure that the "state's mammoth effort to reform education in Tennessee" would be productive and endure (pp. 28-29).

Alexander (1984b) narrated the video *Tennessee's Better Schools Program* for the Department of Education: Communication Division as part of the state's plan to inform the public about the program and also to elicit the public's support for the program and for education in general. Alexander said that politicians and educators were doing their part to make education better in the state and that now was the time for the public to take an interest in education and to contribute something worthwhile to it.
The Governor outlined and briefly delineated the recently devised "twelve components" of the Better Schools Program. (Music and money were added to the original ten components.) These twelve components were (1) Basic Skills First, (2) Computer Skills Next, (3) More Math and Science, (4) Better Classrooms, (5) Music and Art, (6) Special Children, (7) Kindergarten for every child, (8) Vocational Education, (9) Career Ladder, (10) Re-Organization, (11) Higher Education, and (12) $1,200,000,000, the tax money to fund the program. Alexander (1984b) closed by saying that the state of education was "very exciting" since the Better Schools Program was in place and rallied the public to respond to improve education.

The Tennessee Department of Education (1984) announced the news in November that Tennessee was tied with Florida as "first" in educational reform. The staff report named "Tennessee Is 'First' in Education Reform" hailed the state for being "singled out for its Career Ladder Program, improvements in teacher training, increased science and math requirements, administrative training, extending the school year, and strengthening school discipline" (p. 2).

French (1985), a professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Tennessee, explained the CERA of 1984 as being a tool to "weed out mediocre employees, . . . [and to encourage] superior teachers and
administrators with scheduled evaluations and incentives throughout their careers" (p. 9). French's writing "Dispelling the Myths About Tennessee's Career Ladder Program" supported the merit pay system and described its benefits to educators.

"TEA offers its school improvement package" (1985) was an unsigned editorial released by TEA in TEA NEWS on January 15th. The vignette criticized the CERA of 1984 for failing "to address some of the biggest obstacles to better schools," denouncing the CERA as a "product of a political storm and a nationwide reform movement that sold the public on solutions much too simplistic to solve . . . [the] real problems" ("TEA offers," 1985, p. 1). TEA offered a set of recommendations called TEA's School Improvement Package. These recommendations embodied class-size reduction, time to teach, mandatory kindergarten, kindergarten aides, competitive pay, state insurance plan, and parent-teacher conferences.

In this same issue, a caption reading "CERA changes discussed" reported that the CERA might require a few amendments. Those portions of the CERA pertaining to the career ladder program were mainly the target of TEA's criticism.

Alexander (1985b) delivered his State of Education Address on January 25th via the Tennessee Press Association at Marriott Hotel in Nashville. During the course of the speech--shortly after a brief introduction
and at the end of the speech--Alexander showed two films provided by the Department of Education on the status of Tennessee's education after the reforms. He praised the media, the legislators, and the public for making educational improvements possible; he encouraged parents to participate in their children's education, and he acknowledged the need for more revenues to support education.

Alexander (1985c) addressed the 94th General Assembly, his cabinet, and fellow Tennesseans to apprise them of Tennessee's current status on March 4th. Of the four points he discussed in this State of the State Address, two pertained either directly or indirectly to education: a new tax system and parental involvement in schools. By a new tax system, Alexander advocated initiating a flat-rate, state income tax that legislatures could not raise without consent of the public's vote. This tax would abolish, reduce, or replace many other tax sources—for example, property taxes, business taxes, inheritance tax, all privilege taxes. Alexander's second point was to allow parents to choose the public school of their choice for their child[ren] and to reimburse any tuition incurred at the state level. These reforms, if adopted, would require changing Tennessee's constitution which would, of course, take several years to complete the legal process.
The March 1985 unsigned issue of *Tennessee Teacher* highlighted "TEA’s School Improvement Package." TEA unequivocally stated that the CERA of 1984 had failed "to address some of the biggest obstacles to better schools" ("TEA’s School," 1985, p. 16). TEA promised its members that its recommendations would remain "a top legislative priority of the Association until all items are accomplished" ("TEA’s School," 1985, p. 16). Most of the items that were mentioned in the *TEA News* literature have been previously reviewed with the exception of a few new items. These new items were classified by TEA as additional reforms needed by the state. TEA prioritized their proposed educational improvements as follows: class size reduction, elementary guidance counselors, mandatory kindergarten, time to teach, kindergarten teacher aides, programs for the gifted and talented, and increased funding for textbooks and instructional materials.

Alexander (1985a) sent the one-page leaflet "After Just One Year, Here’s What’s Happened" in July to teachers to update them and other Tennesseans on the first year of progress of the Better Schools Program. Among the twenty-five events listed were those entailing pay raises for educators, additional math and science equipment, improved college preparatory courses.

Dowd (1985), an associate professor of Foundations of Education at Memphis State University, presented
"Educational Policy in Transition: Teacher Education and the Foundations of Education" at the annual meeting of the American Educational Studies Association in Atlanta, Georgia, on November 9, 1985. Dowd discussed many of the problems facing educational training during the 1985 transitional period. One of these problems was that at the behest of ambitious politicians, school boards were, in various ways, openly or subtly, discouraging teachers in many areas for pursuing courses and graduate degrees in academic and professional education areas because of the added expense involved in the employment of teachers with advanced degrees. (Dowd, 1985, pp. 1-2)

Some of the other problems mentioned by critics of education programs were that education majors did not take enough liberal arts courses or other academic disciplines outside of education. Dowd felt that with all the pressure from political, educational, and public sources combined the field of professional education would see a decline in student enrollment in educational studies in the future, unless the present trend changed.

"the development and implementation of the evaluation system for teachers who apply for the upper levels of the Career Ladder Program--Career Levels II and III" (Furtwengler, McLarty, & Malo, 1985, p. 14).

The authors recalled that the Select Committee on Education had been asked by the General Assembly to study the reform bills (Alexander’s and TEA’s) during the fall of 1983. The Committee voted to recommend certain educational reforms to the General Assembly on November 23, 1983. The Committee spelled out the reforms, making those reforms relevant to present educators voluntary and to educators certified after July 1, 1984, mandatory. The authors also discussed six of the modifications made to the Master Teacher Program of 1983.

Joan Todd Gray (1986), a career ladder teacher, narrated the video produced by Tennessee’s Department of Education: Communication Division to evoke support for the program from other teachers. Gray explained in detail how the career ladder functioned to allow capable teachers to earn extra money. Other co-narrators clarified other aspects of the career ladder program. For example, William R. Willis, Chairman of the Certification Commission, expatiated the fairness of the program’s evaluation system. Robert McElrath, Commissioner of Education, elaborated on the amount of money paid at each of the three rungs and the number of months work required in exchange. And Nelson Andrews,
Chairman of the State Board of Education, gave the latest features of the career ladder, the elimination of the portfolio and other unnecessary paperwork. Andrews praised the merit pay plan by saying that twenty-seven other states were following Tennessee’s lead and implementing similar programs.

Alexander (1986) spoke about the progress of the Better Schools Program, commended "Tennessee’s Ten Great Schools for 1986," and projected Tennessee’s educational status in ten years, that is, in 1996 (pp. 1-2). This speech was aired on January 24th by the Tennessee Press Association as Alexander’s fifth annual State of Education Address presented at the Marriott Hotel in Nashville.

Alexander (1986) recounted that in his second State of Education Address in 1983 he had presented "a 10-point Better Schools Program" (p. 4). He stated that he had taken most of the ideas for the ten points from the recommendations of the O’Brien Task Force, but had added a few of his own. Then he began to delineate the various points and to explain how they had translated into improved teaching-learning productivity in the classroom. After the accolade, he encouraged parents, educators, politicians, and all Tennesseans to continue endeavoring not only to reach but also to surpass the goals set to improve education in Tennessee.
Anderson (1966), TEA assistant executive secretary and manager of government relations, reported "The Education Reform Movement: Phase II" in February's Tennessee Teacher. Betty Anderson (1986) reminded her readers that TEA's Board of Directors and staff had gathered in Nashville to watch as Governor Alexander "outlined on statewide television the ten points of his Better Schools Program" (p. 9). She described the TEA's responses as follows:

TEA leaders sat quietly through his [Alexander's] first proposals. Basic Skills First, Computer Skills Next, alternative schools, programs for the gifted--if funded and implemented properly, these should be a boost to the state's public schools.

But the tenth point, the Master Teacher Plan, met with a different reaction. The TEA leaders recognizing that the governor was recommending a plan that had failed repeatedly in school systems across the country since the early part of the century, murmured in disbelief as his on-camera explanation continued.

"Why not pay better teachers more?" he asked. By doing so, he rationalized, Tennessee could attract the best and brightest to its teaching ranks.

"Isn't that what the public wants for its children?" he asked. "Isn't that what teachers want
Anderson (1986) said: "Only teachers themselves recognized the plan for its inherent unworkability. Categorizing all teachers, testing all teachers, and rewarding only a few . . . would never attract the best and brightest" (p. 10).

TEA's feelings ran contrary to Alexander's. TEA believed that a merit pay plan would elicit "less incentive for bright young people to enter a profession that already was losing the recruitment battle because of low salaries, poor working conditions, and waning public support" (Anderson, 1986, p. 10). Anderson remarked that public sentiment was unquestionably with the governor and that TEA had to fight a battle like no other it had fought before. Consequently, TEA "turned its attention to another arena, politics[, and] the rest is history" (Anderson, 1986, p. 10).

By the narrow margin of one vote, "TEA managed to postpone action on the Master Teacher Plan during the 1983 legislative session. The 5-4 vote in the Senate Education Committee bought one year of time and produced significant changes in the governor's plan" (Anderson, 1986, p. 10). In Anderson's opinion, the resulting legislation known as CERA of 1984 would never be accepted by teachers as a "true education reform," but rather as "compromise legislation" at best (Anderson, 1986, p. 10).
Anderson warned educators that further reforms should be expected in the next few years, for example national standardized testing of students and teachers, freedom of parental selection of schools, vouchers, alternative certification, and privatization. The bottom line of the message was that educators should be politically knowledgeable and should vote for pro-education candidates to ensure the protection of their rights.

The Tennessee Department of Education (1986c) capsulated Alexander's top ten priorities for the next ten years in the February issue of Report Card Time: An Update. Citing from Alexander's Fifth Annual State of Education Address, the article "Better Schools--Top Priority for Next Ten Years" quoted the Governor's evaluation of Tennessee's progress toward making educational reforms. "We are doing more than we've ever done to improve our schools," Alexander said. "We are leading the nation, and the nation is fascinated by what we are trying to do" (Tennessee Department of Education, 1986c, p. 1). Successful educational reformations and recommendations for future improvements were discussed.

McElrath (1986) wrote about the Better Schools Program, and on March 16, 1986, the Associated Press's affiliate The Knoxville News Sentinel carried McElrath's article as "McElrath: Education improves the quality of life." The report praised Alexander's efforts on behalf
of the Better Schools Program, stating that Alexander had
"championed the career ladder as part of his Better
Schools Program . . . [and had] appointed Robert L.
McElrath to serve as Tennessee education commissioner
Since McElrath had "presided over the enactment of the
state's 1984 Better Schools Program," he "discussed a
wide variety of subjects, including how Tennessee's
educational programs helped attract [the] Saturn
Corporation" (McElrath, 1986, p. F1).

Lutz (1986), issue editor of the *Peabody Journal of
Education*, published "Reforming Education in the 1980s."
Lutz's column offered a general overview of Tennessee's
educational reform movement from the TCES to the CERA.
Lutz (1986) also analyzed the reformation in terms of who
was mainly instrumental in precipitating and maintaining
it. He found that:

The governor's staff of energetic professionals
proved to be a major factor in the outcome of his
proposals. Chief among his team was a popular
commissioner of education [McElrath]. The
governor's administrative aides and others
orchestrated his plans. Support for the education
commissioner's [State Department of Education] SDE
was augmented by two University of Tennessee
education professors. One professor [Russell
French] became Executive Director of the Interim
Certification Commission, and was responsible for developing a teacher certification and evaluation system; the other [Fran Trusty] was responsible for the administrator-supervisor evaluation system.

One of the governor’s earliest actions was to seek the involvement of the Democratic Speaker of the House [Ned McWherter], a frequently mentioned candidate for the gubernatorial election. Although not originally a CERA advocate, the Lieutenant Governor also became active in the legislative proceedings and supported CERA. From the outset a few Democrats (in the Democrat-controlled legislature) enthusiastically supported the Republican governor’s reform plans. Significant among those were some key legislators. Although she cast the deciding vote to delay the governor’s Better Schools bill when it was first considered in the Senate Education Committee, the chair of the Senate Education Committee [O’Brien] later became a vocal supporter for the reform effort . . . . [She] held considerable influence . . . . [Although] . . . the governor had a distinctly promanagement image, he nevertheless courted and received the favor of the AFT . . . . Utilizing his positions in the National Governor’s Association, the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, and the Southern Regional Education Board, Tennessee’s governor
frequently invited key legislators to accompany him to major meetings. The legislators could observe what other states were doing and see that, for once, Tennessee could be a leader in education . . . .

The governor's personal efforts were aided by visits to Tennessee by President Reagan and Education Secretary Terrel Bell.

(Lutz, 1986, pp. 31-34)

All of these variables--intense energy, pressure, power, and influence--were at least in part responsible for the success of the Better Schools Program to reform education in Tennessee. Despite the attempts of TBA to dissuade Alexander's plans, Alexander succeeded in thwarting TBA's resistance to the Better Schools Program.

The Tennessee Department of Education (1986e) released "Task Force Goals Help Children Catch Up" in Report Card Time: An Update with an exclusive on the Better Schools Program's past, present, and future (or projected) progress in each of its ten areas for 1980, 1986, and 1990. In addition, several Task Forces, among which were Madison, Roane, Rutherford, and Sumner Counties, revealed the results of surveys and questionnaires mailed to the public to determine if the majority would favor a tax increase to support educational improvements. These counties also submitted their recommendations for the specific educational improvements lacking in their schools. One of the Better
Schools Program's initiatives already put in place, the summer remedial program in Clay County School System, was praised by the system's superintendent, Mayfield Brown.

The Clay County remedial program had been partially funded by the Department of Education as a pilot program for teachers to use extended contracts. The school selected eighty students "in grades one through three whose test scores indicated that they had the greatest need for improvement" (Tennessee Department of Education, 1986e, p. 1). Superintendent Brown said:

Eighty students had a chance to catch up. . . . The concept behind the program was to reach children while they are young and not start remedial programs after they are three or four grades behind.

The program was a big success. . . . The average student improved 1.5 grade levels and some improved as much as 4.5 grade levels. The projected achievement level determined by pre-tests was surpassed by 74 percent of the student enrollment.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 1986e, p. 1)

According to Brown, both teachers and students "loved the summer program" (Tennessee Department of Education, 1986e, p. 1). In fact, one teacher wrote that "it had produced a blossoming effect for the majority of students" and that in general "the teachers found the experience to be 'most gratifying and a worthwhile endeavor'" (Tennessee Department of Education, 1986e,
Throughout the bulletin, news of the Better Schools Program's acceptance by educators, students, and local government officials could be read in one success story after the other.

McLarty (1986) of Tennessee’s Department of Education presented "Tennessee’s Career Ladder: How Far to Space the Rungs" to the American Educational Research Association and National Council on Measurement in Education at San Francisco, California, in April. McLarty recounted the goals of the career ladder and explicated the problems incurred and adjustments made to improve the varietal aspects of the evaluation process. An illustration of the evaluation instrument used to determine a teacher's strengths and weaknesses in the classroom was placed in the appendix of the report. The evaluation instrument was comprised of data sources for competencies and indicators in six areas of teaching effectiveness.

Furtwengler, Malo, McLarty, and Stouss (1986) presented the paper "Multiple Data Sources in Teacher Evaluations" to the National Council on Measurement in Education at San Francisco, California, on April 17th through 19th. The paper explained the Tennessee Career Program's objectives and the bases for these objectives. The paper reported "the 1984-85 evaluation of 3,000 experienced classroom teachers," detailing the evaluation procedure (Furtwengler, Malo, McLarty, & Stouss, 1986,
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p. 1). The authors specified the improvements made to
the career ladder evaluation system for the 1985-86
school year (p. 5).

McCamish (1986), teacher of eighth-grade social
studies at Roy Waldron Junior High and member of the
Rutherford County Education Association, related
school-community partnerships to public education
improvements. The work of project Public Education
Nashville Citizens Involved in Leadership (PENCIL) was
slated as the "most comprehensive partnership program in
Middle Tennessee" (McCamish, 1986, p. 16). The services
of PENCIL's four programs Adopt-A-School, Youth Service,
Hospital Corporation of America Teacher Awards, and Jobs
for Tennessee Graduates were listed and explained in the
article "Public Schools Are the Public's Schools" in the
April, 1986, issue of Tennessee Teacher. Partnership
activities whereby the private sector was contributing
valuable services and materials to public schools were
mentioned for Knoxville, Kingsport, Nashville, Memphis,
Rutherford County, and Clarksville-Montgomery County.

Armour (1986), professor of English at Virginia
Commonwealth University and president-elect of the Phi
Kappa Phi chapter there, showed concern for "Faculty
Roles in Education" in the spring edition of National
Forum. The article compared and contrasted the 1960s and
the 1980s educational reform movements. In the past, the
faculty had been "in control of the curriculum and had to
bear responsibility for its successes and failures," but now the faculty had "lost both the responsibility and control" (Armour, 1986, p. 20). The loss was attributed to the governors and state legislators replacing "educators as the central figures in the education reform movement" (Armour, 1986, p. 20). Although "nothing will enter college curricula without the approval" of faculty-headed curriculum committees, Armour expressed his fear that these committees might lose "the initiative and their effectiveness," if they "discover that reform is mandated by state law and that their only role is to implement the details" (Armour, 1986, p. 21).

Pipho (1986a), writing in June's issue of Phi Delta Kappan, recalled in "Education Reform--It Looks Like a Keeper" the following:

The big excitement three years ago was the statewide master teacher program in Tennessee. The first effort by the governor and the legislature did not produce a law, but an interim study did produce a plan for a career ladder, and that plan was enacted in special session early in 1984. Meanwhile, South Dakota, Florida, and the District of Columbia enacted similar programs.

The implementation state quickly differentiated the experience of these states. Tennessee is much further along than the others.

While the career ladder plan in Tennessee
attracted everyone's attention, some 25 to 30 states have actually taken action of some kind. (p. 701)

In response to Pipho's question "How are the reforms working?" Representative Steven Cobb of Tennessee, who chaired the Joint Oversight Committee said "that five to [ten] years will be necessary to measure the effects of the career ladder plan in Tennessee. He cautioned against forming hasty judgments and trying to modify the reforms too quickly" (Pipho, 1986a, p. 702).

Pipho (1986a) stated that educational reform was a keeper because "its goals have permeated state and local education throughout the U. S." (p. 702). He relayed his belief that even "if the state reform laws are repealed or left unfunded, the ideas of more academic rigor for students and higher status and pay for teachers will continue to be the operating goals" (Pipho, 1986a, p. 702). He closed by saying: "Parents, taxpayers, and business leaders understand the concept of reform, and education reform has become a fact of life" (Pipho, 1986a, p. 702).

The Tennessee Department of Education (1986d) published Report Card Time: An Update in June. The bulletin contained an article called "States Fall Short of Reagan Challenge" which was reprinted for Education USA, February, 1986. The main idea of the piece was that although most states had improved their SAT and ACT test scores, fewer were "meeting President Reagan's
challenge to regain the levels of 1972 by 1990” (Tennessee Department of Education, 1986d, p. 2). Governor Alexander responded to the charge of falling short of Reagan’s expectations by remarking "communities fix schools, not the governor or the legislature" (Tennessee Department of Education, 1986d, p. 2).

Locke (1986), president of TEA, parodied the children’s story "The Emperor’s New Clothes," adding "my version" to the original title to produce an imitative designation for his satire of Governor Alexander’s career ladder program published in the August’s Tennessee Teacher. Locke’s emperor was paralleled with the Governor, who in essence was accused of making educational reforms--especially, the merit pay plan--to gain national prominence for future political aspirations. According to Locke’s version, the Governor’s cohorts spurred his ambitions with their admonishments, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

The governor then sent his Commissioner of Education to look at the plan and the commissioner, not wanting to appear stupid or uncooperative, said the program was sound and wonderful and that no good teacher could possibly be against it.

(Locke, 1986, p. 5)

Such disparagements were often hurled back and forth among the opponents and proponents of merit pay. In
fact, aspersion marked much of TEA’s literature about Tennessee’s Career Ladder Program, as well as the retaliations of the proponents of the plan.

The Tennessee Department of Education (1986a) published an appraisal on the progress of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee. This September account, "The Better Schools Program: An Update," was extremely upbeat in praising the educational progress made since "the implementation of the Better Schools Program two years ago" (Tennessee Department of Education, 1986a, p. 1). The report claimed that positive things were happening in Tennessee’s education every day. Some of the accomplishments mentioned were those associated with the career ladder, staff development, student achievement, Basic Skills First, Computer Skills Next, Gifted Student Program, Kindergarten for Every Child, More Music and Art, Alternative Schools, and More Math and Science.

Nelson Andrews (1986), Chairman of the State Board of Education; Joan Litterer, of the State Certification Department in Nashville; Carol Transou, Johnson City’s Teacher of the Year; and Mike Dalton, Assistant Commissioner of the Career Ladder—all narrated the film Tennessee’s Career Ladder: Update. The Department of Education sponsored the film to notify educators of the changes incurred in the career ladder program from 1984 to 1986.
The major changes reviewed were that the conversion scales had been eliminated from the evaluation program and that evaluations would take only half the time they previously took to complete. The video hosts also informed teachers that 39,000 educators had voluntarily joined the career ladder and that 17,000 of them had become career I or II in 1984, that 25,000 more had successfully joined in 1985, and that 3,000 more teachers had applied to be evaluated in 1986. Throughout the presentation, the career ladder was praised for its benefits to educators. The ten-minute video was designed to be used at school in-service programs.

The Implementation of Enacted Reforms

On March 3, 1983, Senator Darnell introduced S 1124, and Representative McKinney, both opponents of the Better Schools Program, introduced the corresponding H 1099. The bill was introduced as:

an act to repeal Title 49, Chapter 12 [of Tennessee Code Annotated] and [to] enact the "Professional Educator Certification Act of 1983", [sic] relative to certification of teachers and entry to the teaching profession; to repeal, amend or redesignate . . . [the Sections] relative to authority or duties of the state board of education and commissioner of education; to amend Title 49, Chapter 2, relative to evaluation of teachers, principals[,] and supervisors; to amend Sections 49-602 and 49-605,
relative to professional educator career pay.

(Darnell, 1983, p. 1)

The summary portion of the S 1124 set forth some of the following provisions. First, the **Professional Educator Certificate Act of 1983** would create a nineteen-member Professional Educator Certification Board (PECB) to certify teachers, principals, and supervisors, transferring the authority of certification from the State Board of Education to PECB. Second, certification would require new teachers to pass a written proficiency test and the studies endorsed by the Senate and House Committees. Third, there would be two types of certificates available: the intern/provisional which was good for five years and the professional which was good for ten years if the applicant had completed the fifth year of college training. A Screening Committee would be established to review and to endorse applicants. If denied certification, the applicant would have to wait sixty days before submitting a written application. PECB would then make its final decision.

Fourth, the bill would make language changes to transfer certain duties from the State Board of Education, Department of Education, and the Commissioner of Education to the PECB. Finally, the evaluation process was presented in intricate steps; an analysis of the PECB, the terms of service, powers and duties were reviewed; requirements for entry into the teaching
profession were enumerated; and certifications of intern/provisional and professional teachers were explained. The unique features of the bill were that permits dated before July 1, 1957, in lieu of certificates would not be valid, and a State Program for computation which provided "for a pay step computed at 10 percent of training level with [three] years experience" in accordance with rules of PECB (Darnell, 1983, p. 3).

The designated TEA bill was defeated on April 13, 1983, by the Senate Education Committee.

Senators Elkins, Rucker, and Garland and Representatives Cobb, McNally, Kelley, and J. Henry (1983) introduced S 1000/H 1081 in January, and presented this bill as:

an act to enact the Better Schools Master Teacher-Master Administrator Act of 1983, to define terms and prescribe certification and pay for teachers, to create certification commissions and to assign duties there to, to authorize state agencies to implement this act, Title 49.

Most of the details of this bill have already been discussed; however, a brief overview of the summary and analysis sections of the bill might clarify some differences between S 1000/H 1081 and S 1124/H 1099.

After July 1, 1983, all educators would be mandated to comply with the terms of this act to receive certification. Four commissions would be created to
perform the duties prescribed by the act. These commissions were the State Certification Commission with thirteen members and three Regional Commissions with nine members, as well as an Interim Commission (to be dissolved on July 1, 1984, or when three Regional Commissions existed) with eighteen members. The composition and duties of the commissions were outlined in the bill.

The bill also called for a new Chapter 15 to be added to Tennessee Code Annotated. The analysis section of the bill contained all the definitions pertinent to the act; the commission members, terms, and duties; conditions necessary for a failing person to receive certification; length of terms of service for educators; percentage to receive supplements; and reasons for denial of supplement (pp. 2-4).

The First Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly enacted into law S 16 (substituted for HB 19), known as the Public Educational Governance Reform Act of 1984 (PEGRA). The act is recorded in Chapter 6 of the Public Acts 1984 on pages 8-19. The purpose of this legislation was "to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the State Commissioner of Education, and to amend or repeal applicable provisions of the Tennessee Code Annotated" (Elkins, Rucker, & Garland, 1983, p. 8).
The act was divided in thirty-one sections. Most of the main provisions of the act (spelled out in various sections) designated the specific duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education and abolished the present State Board of Education, installing instead the State Board of Education whose members would be "appointed by the Governor subject to confirmation by the Senate and the House of Representatives" (Elkins, Rucker, & Garland, 1983, pp. 8-9).

The Tennessee General Assembly, meeting in the first extraordinary session, passed S 1, the CERA of 1984 on February 22, 1984, and Alexander approved it on March 6, 1984, by signing it into law (p. 42). The CERA amended the Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, by:

adding Sections 3 through 78 of this act as a new chapter, divided into a part on general provisions, consisting of Sections 3 through 13, a part on certification, consisting of Sections 14 through 25, a part on the career ladder for teachers, consisting of Sections 26 through 39, a part on the career ladder for principals, consisting of Sections 40 through 55, a part on the career ladder for supervisors, consisting of Sections 56 through 64, and a part on teacher training consisting of Sections 65 through 74, and a part on the principal-administrator academy, consisting of
Sections 75 through 78. (p. 1)

Section 3 of CERA established "a new professional career ladder program for full time [sic] teachers, principals[,] and supervisors" (p. 1). This act changed the names of the educational participants ascribed by the Better Schools Master Teacher-Master Administrator Act of 1983 from apprentice, professional, senior, or master teacher to probationary, apprentice, career level I, II, or III teacher, amending the names of the administrative participants as well. Certified teaching and administrative personnel could apply for pay supplements as career I with at least three years experience, as career I or II with at least eight years experience, as career I, II, or III with at least twelve years experience, but were not required to participate in the merit pay program (pp. 1-7). Educators were soon notified about all of CERA's changes in a two-page leaflet.

The State Board of Education (1984) issued a "Summary of the Education Reforms and Improvements Adopted by the Tennessee General Assembly." The notice, a harbinger of good tidings, heralded the news of legislation that would put "more than $401 million in new revenues into education programs from kindergarten through higher education during 1984-85, and more than a billion new dollars over the next three years" (State Board of Education, 1984, p. 1). The leaflet announced
that the function of the legislation was to attract and keep highly qualified teachers and to produce better schools. The CERA gave Tennessee "the first comprehensive career incentive pay system for teachers in America" (State Board of Education, 1984, p. 1). Some of the key features of CERA were listed as a five-step career ladder, an advancement procedure based on state and local evaluations, a greater role for local school leaders in teacher certification, a probationary year for beginning teachers, a tougher standard for training teachers, a special pay supplement for apprentice-level teachers, and a provision for teachers aides in the lower grades. In addition, similar career ladders were made available for administrative and supervisory members, and an across-the-board 10 percent pay increase for teachers was approved by the General Assembly.

The act also provided a re-structured State Board of Education; a Computer Skills Next program ($9 million allotted); a first-grade readiness program ($1.25 million); an incentive program to encourage math and science teachers ($3.5 million); a funding program for gifted students, for music and arts in early grades, and for math and science equipment ($1.4 million); an allocation for vocational equipment ($8.5 million); an alternative school for disciplinary problems ($1.25 million), and many other monetary provisions for textbooks, instructional supplies, transportation, basic
maintenance and operational expenses, regional library books, and university Centers of Excellence (State Board of Education, 1984, p. 2). To pay for these initiatives, sales taxes were increased by one penny.

On May 30, 1985, Governor Alexander approved S 872/H 846, an "act relative to the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984, and to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49" (Public Acts, 1985, p. 947). The bill, recorded as Chapter No. 465 in Public Acts, 1985, was sponsored by Representatives Cobb, Rhinehart, and Henry and by Senator Dunavant. The act gave second-year teachers a five-hundred-dollar-salary supplement and third- or fourth-year teachers "a salary and supplement" equal to "the salary and supplement provided to teachers commencing a second year of teaching" during the 1985-1986 school year (Public Acts, 1985, pp. 947-948).

Among the many provisions of the act (Section 3) were merit pay supplements to career ladder educators based on their rung of the ladder. Section 8 amended Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-5201, by deleting from the third line "four (4) levels of teaching certificate: apprentice" and by substituting instead "five (5) levels of teaching certificate: probationary, apprentice" (Public Acts, 1985, p. 949).

On May 1, 1986, Governor Alexander approved S 1965/H 1960, which was sponsored by Senators Rucker, O'Brien, Person, Dunavant, and Elkins and by Representatives Cobb,
Henry, Peroulas, and Drew. The purpose of the act was "to revise certain provisions of the CERA of 1984, and to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49" (Public Acts, 1986, p. 1217). The act was recorded as Chapter No. 933 in Public Acts, 1986.

Section 1 allowed the following:

Educators employed by the Department of Correction, the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the Department of Human Services shall be eligible to participate in the career programs provided for in Parts 50 through 55 of this chapter. (p. 1218)

Other sections stipulated the change of titles from Career I to Career II based on certain qualifications, designated the amount of monetary compensation appropriated at each progressive level, and stated the number of months of work required at each level.

Summary

The reviewed literature revealed the origin and development of the Better Schools Program from its beginning as Basic Skills First to its final state as the CERA of 1984. Those who opposed or supported the program dealt with adversity. A war of words ensued between the forces who supported and those who opposed the program. Educators, legislators, and interested others took sides. TEA emerged as the most visible opponent, while Governor
Lamar Alexander was known as the leader of the proponents.

The Better Schools Program underwent changes which left it in a compromised state when enacted into the CERA of 1984. Most of these changes were due to TEA's influence.
Chapter 3

Methods and Procedures

Introduction

Two major factors contributed to the number of extant primary sources collected and used in this study: The Better Schools Program was a recent educational reform movement, having begun in the early 1980s and still ongoing in 1994; and the Better Schools Program, after being enacted into law (CERA of 1984), became a function of state government which in turn houses relevant data in various libraries, especially in the State Library Archives at Nashville, Tennessee. Then, too, the initiators of the Better Schools Program were alive at the time of this writing and could volunteer information to assist comprehension of the reform movement.

Secondary sources also proved beneficial in that they often lent insight into the perspectives of those who articulated their opinions about the Better Schools Program. In addition, the preponderance of the literature available on the subject was massive and readily retrievable.

Sources of Data

Among the references consulted for assisting the researcher were the Education Index, Books in Print, the

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Periodical Guide to Literature, Dissertation Abstracts, ERIC, card catalog, microfilm, reserved folders, resource persons, personal, audio and video cassettes, and other sources. A thorough listing of what previously had been published on the Better Schools Program was conducted through an ERIC search at the East Tennessee State University Library. Afterwards, the research for the needed materials began at the East Tennessee State University Library and branched out to the University of Tennessee Library, to Walters State Community College Library, to Morristown-Hamblen County Library, to the Tennessee State Library and Archives, to Belmont University Library, and finally to Dr. Robert McElrath's privately owned collection of media, as well as to a personally owned assortment of data on the subject. An assortment of government documents and audio/video tapes; books; magazine and newspaper articles; presidential and gubernatorial speeches, writings, and excerpts, and personal interviews embodied the bulk of media reviewed.

To attain a firsthand account of the Better Schools Program, a questionnaire comprised of five open-ended questions was specifically designed to extract relevant information about the subproblems contained in Chapter 1 from the former TEA president and Tennessee's governor and from ten now retired or active legislators on the Tennessee General Assembly, some of whom made CERA possible. A cover letter explaining the sender's
purpose, an audio cassette tape for the oral reactions, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed to them. The packages were sent by certified mail to insure their receipt. To assure as much objectivity as possible, both known proponents and opponents of the Better Schools Program were contacted for data. The proponents were those who supported the Better Schools bill, whereas the opponents were those who sponsored the TEA bill. Although all of the respondents did not complete the questionnaire, the eight respondents who did complete and return their questionnaires gave an inordinate amount of beneficial information. The interviewees have been assigned their former titles and include: Governor Lamar Alexander (Republican); TEA President Marjorie Pike; Senators John Rucker (Democrat), Leonard Dunavant (Republican), Anna Belle O'Brien (Democrat), Tom Garland (Republican); and Representatives Steve Cobb (Democrat), John Bragg (Democrat), James (Jim) Henry (Republican), Steve Bivens (Democrat), Paul Starnes (Democrat); and Commissioner of Education Robert McElrath. In addition, Al Mance, TEA Assistant Secretary, gave information regarding the Better Schools Program via a telephone interview.

To ascertain objectivity, Dr. Wayne Quinton, emeritus Professor of Education at Walters State Community College and Associate Professor of Education at the University of Tennessee, proofread troublesome
passages and made suggestions as to how the writer could refrain from making value judgments and from using biased or emotive language.

**Methodology**

The historical-descriptive method of research was employed to demonstrate the relationship between reform and education. Borg and Gall (1983) differentiate between historical research and other types of educational research as follows:

Historical research in education differs from other types of educational research in that the historian discovers data through a search of historical sources such as diaries, official documents, and relics. In other types of educational research, the researcher creates data by making observations and administering tests in order to describe present events and present performance. (p. 801)

It was also deemed necessary to question the sources by using two types of criticism: external and internal. External criticism enabled the researcher to answer such questions as whether the source was authentic, original, or variant and who wrote it, when, and where were considered. The researcher visited and gathered government materials including government documents, video and cassette tapes, and newspaper and magazine articles from the Tennessee State Library Archives at Nashville. The library guarantees the authenticity of
the materials it houses. The library took many precautions to prevent theft and contamination of its materials. A guard issued each person a library card and had the person sign in and out of the library. The time of entrance or departure was noted in the appropriate column by the guard.

After entering the library, the researcher had to use the materials there according to a strict set of rules. All materials were on reserve. Nothing could be checked out and taken from the library. The researcher was not allowed to gather or reshelve materials. The librarians retrieved and copied any requested materials and had the user sign and note time of usage. The library held the user accountable for damages, stationed user in a walled-in area, and monitored the handling of materials. After the user signed the materials in, the librarian reshelved them.

Internal criticism was used to analyze the competency of the speakers or writers by assessing their motives for speaking or writing in terms of their biases, expertise, truthfulness, accuracy, roles, and/or involvement in the event taking shape. The political parties, whether the persons supported or opposed the Better Schools Program, and/or the organizational affiliations of participants in the reform movement were considered when evaluating their motives. The biases of
TEA for across-the-board pay and of the Better Schools Program for merit pay were also taken into account.

To gain an overview of major educational reform movements in America, reference books and textbooks on the history of American education were consulted.

The purpose of the study was to trace the development, implementation, and early revisions of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee. The descriptions of the circumstances surrounding this educational movement rendered by politicians, educators, historians, journalists, students, critics, and lay persons were categorized and, in most instances, chronologically presented in the study's second chapter. This arrangement of the descriptive data clearly showed the progression of the Better Schools Program as it developed into a mandated program of improved education for Tennesseans.

Procedures

To examine the subproblems, the researcher began with the writings of two political leaders, namely President Ronald Reagan, on the national level, and Governor Lamar Alexander, on the state level. The reports of the task forces created or established by these two leaders were also found to be invaluable sources of information, for example, the NCEE and the TCES. Some members of TEA and either retired or active legislators supplied a great deal of useful data given in
telephone conversations, letters, or audio cassettes. In fact, some of these key players wrote and/or spoke at length about the Better Schools Program. Basically, the data provided by these people would be classified as primary sources and therefore superior to other indirect methods of obtaining data through secondary sources. Whenever possible, primary sources of data were gathered and analyzed for the purposes of this study. Primary sources, that is, interviews were beneficial in subproblems #3 and #4. Primary sources, that is, government documents were helpful in supporting subproblem #5. Several sources relevant to each subproblem were located and reviewed before an assumption was made.

Subproblem #1: What prompted the instigation of the Better Schools Program?

To answer this research question, the researcher examined the conditions faced by America during the time under study. The speeches by Reagan and Alexander, the personal interviews, educational documents, news and educational periodicals, the World Book Encyclopedia, and the NCEE and the TCES reports were particularly helpful in determining the foundations of the reform movement under study. Political speeches, government documents, periodicals, The World Book Encyclopedia, and responses to questionnaires were assessed to find the
cause-and-effect factors leading to the establishment of the Better Schools Program. The researcher used the content-analysis technique to examine the chosen materials. For example, the themes of speeches and the objectives of government documents, periodical articles, and interviews were analyzed. The researcher then determined whether the data collected were related to the research questions of the study. Alexander’s views of on education were also examined to see if these concepts coincided with the kinds of educational reforms proposed by the Better Schools Program. Other factors impacting education, especially the economy, were scrutinized to gain insight about any parallels that might exist between America’s and Tennessee’s economy and education.

Subproblem #2: Who was instrumental in establishing the Better Schools Program?

Government documents, interviews, the TCES, an educational journal, and Alexander’s speeches were helpful in determining who established the Better Schools Program. The reform activities of those who supported the educational reform movement in Tennessee were also studied as an endeavor to understand the manner in which these people perpetuated the Better Schools Program.

Subproblem #3: What areas of education were affected by the Better Schools Program?
Gubernatorial speeches and government documents were the main sources advancing a solution to this subproblem. Interviews and educational journals and documents were also beneficiary. Details pertaining to the effected areas of education were recorded in the Review of Literature to insure that the exact area, whether teaching, learning, or administrative, would be identified and that any changes incurred by that area would be noted.

Subproblem #4: Who were the proponents and opponents of the Better Schools Program?

Interviews, TEA and educational periodicals, newspapers, legislative bills and acts, and government documents provided the best sources of information to discern the answer to subproblem #4. The first question on the questionnaire asked if the respondent was an advocate of the Better Schools Program. The newspapers and magazines, especially the educational periodicals published by TEA (TEA Today and Tennessee Teacher) and some of the honor societies such as Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Delta Kappan (National Forum and Phi Delta Kappan), contributed to subproblem #4. The researcher listened to audio tapes of the original legislative hearings whereby the Special Education Committee of the General Assembly debated the two disputed bills, S 1000 and S 1124, ultimately leading to a compromised version of S 1000
and the inception of CERA of 1984. Although many of
these tapes did not relate directly to the subproblems in
this paper, they were, nonetheless, helpful in conveying
the methods employed by politicians to make educational
reforms.

Subproblem #5: How did the Better Schools Program's
ten points translate into statutes
or regulations in Tennessee?

The CERA of 1984, the revised CERA of 1985,
interviews, and Public Acts provided the best answer to
the fifth subproblem. These acts could be compared with
Alexander's original Better Schools Program to note any
changes.

Summary

The researcher began the study by constructing a
problem statement and five research questions. Materials
were then sought to answer the research questions.
Reputable libraries such as the State Library Archives at
Nashville, the East Tennessee State University Library at
Johnson City, the Walters State Community College Library
at Morristown, the Belmont University Library at
Nashville, and the Morristown-Hamblen County Library at
Morristown were used to guard against contaminated
materials. Utilizing Education Index, Books in Print,
the Periodical Guide to Literature, Dissertation
Abstracts, ERIC, card catalog, microfilm, reserved
folders, resource persons, audio and video cassettes, and other sources enabled the researcher to find an assortment of materials containing information that was helpful to the study. Since many of the materials used in the study, especially government documents and cassette recordings, were housed and guarded at the state library, the researcher was assured of receiving genuine materials.
Chapter 4

Presentation of Data and Analysis of Subproblems

Introduction

The Better Schools Program made an indelible impression on Tennessee's educational system, influencing major changes and impacting education even beyond the state's borders. Part of the research task included tracing the origin and development of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee from 1981 to 1986. The researcher identified the forces both promoting and resisting change, since these parties directly affected the development and implementation of the reform movement.

Change did not occur in the educational policies of the 1980s without a struggle. Certain groups were strongly in favor of the changes inherent in the Better Schools Program while other factions were just as adamantly opposed to them. Even those who wanted changes, however, did not necessarily agree on what the reforms should be. The researcher attempted to identify these perplexing circumstances along with these individuals or groups in terms of what or who they were, what they stood for, and how they promoted or impeded the instigation of the Better Schools Program. She further sought to examine the stance of the Better Schools Program on educational reform and the legal impact it
made on Tennessee’s education.

**Application of Data to Subproblems**

Subproblem #1: What prompted the instigation of the Better Schools Program?

Several factors combined to instigate the Better Schools Program. Some of the factors prompting the instigation of the Better Schools Program were Tennessee’s economy, the TCES, Alexander’s supporters, Alexander’s political philosophy, Alexander’s close ties with Reagan and Bell, the national reform movement, Alexander’s desire to be first with educational reforms in the nation, and Reagan’s cutting federal funds to the states. Probably, no one factor would have offered enough motivation to initiate educational reforms, but together these factors helped Alexander and his legislators to promote change.

In 1981, Tennessee’s economy was not good. Many people were out of work, and family incomes were low. The Task Force members who constructed the TCES described Tennessee’s "economic recession and accompanying unemployment" as being one reason that the study was done (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. xi). Actually, as far as being unsound, the economy in Tennessee mirrored the national economy. According to Reagan (1981a), "Almost eight million Americans... [were] out of work" and interest rates were more than 20 percent (p. 1). The dismal economic picture painted by Reagan and the TCES
members became one of the factors leading to the Better Schools Program.

Alexander understood the effect that education had on Tennessee's economy. Referring to Tennessee's economy and to its educational needs, Alexander (1983d) said:

Better schools will mean better jobs and higher incomes for Tennesseans--The BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM is the most important proposal I will make in my eight years as Governor.

We need better jobs because our family incomes are low, 44th in the country.

To get better jobs, we will have to learn Basic Skills, Computer Skills, New Job Skills. The new jobs will be different jobs, relying more on brain power than muscle power.

We have the brains but haven't developed them. Too many eighth-graders don't have eighth-grade skills. Half our adults don't have a high school degree. We have one of the highest high school drop-out rates. Most of us don't know anything about computers and have too little technical education.

We can't get better jobs without better skills. We can't get better skills without better schools.

Alexander designed the Better Schools Program to strengthen the state's educational system. He believed
that through quality education Tennesseans could develop the skills they needed to obtain lucrative jobs. The end result would be an improved state economy.

The TCES Task Force members also recognized the relationship between education and the economy. Their study identified several areas in Tennessee's educational system that needed reformed to improve job skills (see Chapter 2). In fact, nine of the recommendations in the TCES were incorporated in the Better Schools Program, except classroom discipline which was not in the TCES. The TCES played a major role in the instigation of the Better Schools Program.

Two legislators were instrumental in assisting the establishment of the Better Schools Program. In fact, Representative Henry and Commissioner McElrath offered both personal and civic reasons to motivate Alexander to instigate the program. According to Representative James Henry, Alexander's cabinet encouraged the Governor to found the Better Schools Program for personal reasons. Henry (1994) explained that "he and other (unnamed) legislators wanted Alexander to be favorably remembered after he left office" (personal communication, February 5, 1994). Alexander was in his second term and was "held in high esteem" by both the citizens and the legislators because he was not a "self-serving politician" (J. Henry, personal communication, February 5, 1994). Henry said he and some other legislators told Alexander that "it seemed
as though all governors, like Frank Clement, who had left their mark on history had done so through their efforts on behalf of education" (J. Henry, personal communication, February 5, 1994). Since test scores in the state were "floundering," Alexander was interested in making improvements in education anyway and had often spoken of doing so (J. Henry, personal communication, February 5, 1994). The legislators encouraged Alexander to promote his educational reforms so that he, too, could leave his mark on history. Henry said that Alexander deserved to be recognized for restoring integrity to the office of governor.

Commissioner Robert McElrath said that, in general, the "public was not too satisfied with what was going on in the schools" (personal communication, April 6, 1994). For example, "70 percent of the ninth graders who took a proficiency test, written on a sixth-grade level, failed on the first attempt" (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, April 6, 1994). He also mentioned that Tennessee had not done well in terms of southeastern averages, being 39th in pay for educators and 40th in effort to support education (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, April 6, 1994). Alexander’s supporters wanted him to consider the personal and civic concerns they had voiced as incentives to pursue educational reforms.
Alexander's political philosophy was another variable that motivated the Governor to promote the Better Schools Program. Alexander believed that he could improve the quality of education in Tennessee. He admitted that all the points in the Better Schools Program did not come directly from him but from other sources like the public, legislators, educators, business people (see Chapter 2). Nonetheless, he embraced the ideas contained in the Better Schools Program and diligently worked for their acceptance.

Alexander stressed the benefits of the Better Schools Program to Tennesseans. Showing citizens how education could enable them to acquire the skills necessary to earn more money took time. But once he had convinced them that the program would enhance the quality of education and in turn their lives, they were ready to accept it and also to support it. In fact, a poll conducted by Peter Hart in 1983 showed that 80 percent of Tennesseans wanted the Better Schools Program and were willing to support it (R. L. McElrath, personal interview, April 6, 1994). Making citizens aware of their need for quality education, therefore, helped Alexander to promote the Better Schools Program.

Many of the ideas Alexander felt would improve education were presented to the public on January 28, 1983. Alexander (1983d) presented the following ideas to
improve Tennessee's educational system in the State of
Education Address:

1. Salaries for educators should be based on merit, not just on education and/or experience.
2. Students should pass a basic skills test in reading, writing, and math before receiving a high school diploma.
3. Every student should be literate in English and computer skills before the ninth grade.
4. Kindergarten should be compulsory for every five-year-old child.
5. Tennessee's musical heritage should be preserved via the schools.
6. The curricula should be reinforced with more math and science courses.
7. Academic excellence should be rewarded with summer schools for the gifted.
8. The high school educational curriculum should be closely tied to the jobs of the eighties.
9. An alternative school should be provided for disruptive students.
10. The state's vocational schools and technical institutions should be placed under the Board of Regents.
11. Appropriate and adequate funding should be allocated for centers of excellence in universities. (pp. 4-10)
These concepts were included in the Better Schools Program, and they also represented Alexander’s political philosophies to improve education. Alexander expressed his confidence in these ideas by traveling, speaking, and working to persuade the public and the state legislators to accept them.

The influence of the President and the Secretary of Education also helped Alexander to instigate the Better Schools Program. Reagan, Bell, and Alexander were friends and advocates of merit pay. In fact, both Reagan and Bell wanted to learn more about the Better Schools Program, especially merit pay, and once they had learned about it, they supported Alexander’s reform program with visits and speeches designed to convince Tennesseans to accept it (R. L. McElrath, personal interview, April 6, 1994). On June 14, 1983, Reagan visited Alexander in Knoxville, Tennessee, to show his position on merit pay. Reagan said: "If we want excellence, we must reward it" (cited in O’Reilly, 1983, p. 3). Reagan praised Alexander’s efforts on behalf of merit pay publicly, which in turn made the public more receptive to Alexander’s reforms.

The national reform movement gave additional impetus to the Tennessee’s reform movement. The NCEE report was made public in April, 1983. It shocked Americans to hear that their educational system was mediocre and that it needed drastic improvements. Once alerted, the public
outcry for educational reform became so pronounced that the nation found itself in the "midst of an educational reform movement of epochal proportions. Its impetus . . . [came] not from the federal government or the teaching profession, but from the people" (cited in Public Agenda Foundation, 1983, p. 5). Armour (1986) predicted that "governors and state legislatures . . . [would] replace educators as the central figures in the education reform movement" and that "reform . . . . [was] greater now than at any other time since the student rebellion in the 1960s" (p. 20). Such reports as Williams's "Can the Schools Be Saved?" in Newsweek and the unsigned "Report on schools: We flunk" in the Orlando Sentinel further piqued the public's interest in its educational system. As shown in Chapter 2, these reports reiterated the NECC's findings and recommendations, along with Reagan's response to them.

Several other reports followed in 1983 to promote national educational reforms. Goodlad's eight proposals outlined in A Place Called School for educational reform, if set in motion, would have completely overhauled the American educational system (see Chapter 2). The Public Agenda Foundation (1983) expressed its opinion that educational reforms should not be "left to professional educators," but rather to politicians (p. 6). Action for Excellence linked education with the economy and also
recommended schools to fortify the curricula by eliminating unessential courses.

When analyzed, most of the reports asked four main questions about educational reform: (1) what to change in school curricula, (2) how much time students should spend in school, (3) how to improve teaching, and (4) who should be responsible and pay for policies and programs (Siegel & Pipho, 1983, p. 9).

Then, too, Odden's "Sources of Funding Education Reform" updated the progress of some states' reforms including Tennessee's, and strongly advocated the funding of these reforms. Odden (1986) felt that to have quality education Americans had "no other options" than to adequately fund education (p. 340). Many states agreed and began funding reforms (see Chapter 2).

Although these reports accelerated the call for educational reforms in Tennessee, they did not initiate them. Unlike other states, Tennessee seemed to base its educational reforms more on internal findings than on external ones. Even though the NCEE's report (and other later reports) started many states along the course of educational reform, it simply served to refuel the effort of reforming education already underway in Tennessee. According to Newsweek's "Can the Schools Be Saved":

The only good news in all this [NCEE's report] is that the commission's call to action has been anticipated in some quarters around the country.
"There are indications that what the commission wants is already underway," says Scott Thompson of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). "The whole landscape has changed. There has been a real shift in public opinion on the importance of schools." For many of the same reasons cited by the commission—the dawning of the computer age, the economic challenge of other countries, just plain intolerance of shoddy education—the public is rallying to the cause of quality. A dozen governors are planting flags on the issue of education—James Hunt establishing a science and math magnet school in North Carolina, William Winter haranguing the Mississippi Legislature into funding kindergarten classes, Lamar Alexander stirring up Tennessee over his master teacher plan. (Williams et al., p. 50)

As the national reform movement intensified, many other states joined in the competition, producing a domino effect among states vying to be first with major and/or novice educational reforms. (Many of the reforms made by other states are depicted by Pipho and McElrath in Chapter 2.)

Tennessee, already caught up in reformation, joined in the competition and later became a key player in a host of innovative reforms, particularly those reforms involving merit pay. In fact, Tennessee’s reforms had a
national impact on education. McElrath recalled that more than ten governors came to Tennessee to study the components of the Better Schools Program, and, in particular, the merit pay plan. He said that twenty career ladder programs emerged in the nation within a year or two after the governors' visits (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, April 6, 1994). Although Reagan's efforts did not initiate the educational reforms in Tennessee, they did help promote them. With the President's backing, Alexander seemed delighted to enter in the state competition, viewing the situation as an opportunity for Tennessee to receive praise and recognition for educational improvements.

Alexander's desire to be first with educational reforms also prompted the instigation of the Better Schools Program. Admonishing the 93rd General Assembly to vote for an increase in sales tax to support the Better Schools Program, Alexander (1983c) said:

Tennessee needs to move now in the right direction.

If we don't, we'll get worse as the country gets better off.

You can move us.

This is not an ordinary moment.

It is an historic moment.

You have a chance based upon the work you have already done and the budget and legislation you can
approve now to move us from the back of the line to the front.

We can throw up our hands and say it's just not worth the effort--and be satisfied trailing the pack.

Or we can be first for a change.

Either way you will make history in these Chambers this year.

(p. 13)

Alexander's desire to be first in the nation with educational reforms became a prominent reason for his urging the legislature to fund the Better Schools Program.

Reagan's cutting federal funds to the states had a bearing on the Better Schools Program. On February 18, 1981, Reagan presented his Address on the Economic Recovery of the United States to Congress. In this address, Reagan stressed the poor economic condition of the country. The Congress responded by passing "the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, which took effect on October 1" (Nault, 1982, p. 244). The slackened federal funds to education had to be absorbed by state and local governments, making economic reforms essential. Since the state was placed in the position of having to make budget cuts and/or raise taxes anyway, Tennessee had its reform package sponsored in the process. Evidently, no single factor caused the
instigation of the Better Schools Program; rather the program came about as the result of a combination of several factors.

Subproblem #2: Who was instrumental in establishing the Better Schools Program?

Governor Lamar Alexander and his staff, along with the support of politicians of both parties, citizens, educators, business people, and the media who believed in the Better Schools Program, established the Better Schools Program. The Governor began the reform movement by having a Task Force to study the condition of education in Tennessee. The result was the Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study. The Tennessee General Assembly working with Governor Alexander made the TCES possible. This was the first comprehensive study undertaken by Tennessee since 1955 (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. xi). Without this study, Governor Lamar Alexander would not have had the basis for his Better Schools Program. Actually, the Better Schools Program was introduced "only one month after the TCES report" and contained similar wording and content (Saunders, 1984, p. 13). Since all but one (classroom discipline) of Alexander's ten components were rooted in the TCES, he could simply point to the study's findings and recommendations to support the other nine, if an opponent criticized one of them (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, April 6, 1994).
Alexander worked in tandem with his supportive staff members. Lutz (1986) said:

The governor’s staff of energetic professionals proved to be a major factor in the outcome of his proposals. Chief among his team was a popular commissioner of education. The governor’s administrative aides and others orchestrated his plans. Support for the governor’s SDE [State Department of Education] team was augmented by two University of Tennessee education professors. One professor (Russell French) became Executive Director of the Interim Certification Commission, and was responsible for developing a teacher certification and evaluation system; the other (Fran Trusty) was responsible for the administrator-supervisor evaluation system.

(p. 31).

In addition, Alexander sent legislators and staff to every county to establish the "Tennesseans for Better Schools." This "organization had but one itinerary: to solicit public support for the Better Schools Program" (J. Henry, personal communication, February 5, 1994). Governor Lamar Alexander formed the "Tennesseans for Better Schools" as a bipartisan group to lobby for the Better Schools Program. The group was headed by the son of the late Governor Frank Clement and by the mother of Governor Alexander. McElrath reported that "over 40,000
citizens joined the organization and lobbied for passage of the program. This was the largest lobbyist group recorded and registered in legislative history" (personal communication, April 6, 1994).

The majority of Tennesseans supported the Better Schools Program. In fact, a 1981 "statewide survey revealed the public's perception of public education. The results were fair (42.3 percent), good (32.2 percent), poor (19.8 percent), excellent (less than one percent), and no opinion (4.8 percent)" (Saunders, 1984, p. 11). The survey proved that those citizens responding to the questions were dissatisfied with their educational system. In 1983, "80 percent of the Tennesseans surveyed by Peter Hart (a Democratic pollster who had done Mondale's polls) responded in favor of the Better Schools Program" (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, April 6, 1994). This same survey proved that Tennesseans not only favored the program but also were "willing to pay for educational improvements" with additional taxes (Lutz, 1986, p. 38).

The majority of teachers in Tennessee favored the Better Schools Program. Raze (1983) said that 80 percent of the general population and 63 percent of the teachers surveyed supported the merit pay plan (p. 4).

Tennessee's newspapers also supported the Better Schools Program. Actually, "all major editorials in Tennessee newspapers supported the Better Schools
Program, except *The Chattanooga Times* (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, July 24, 1994). The news media can be a powerful source of persuasion to its audience. The Tennessee newspapers offered the proponents a great deal of assistance in gaining public support for the Better Schools Program.

Even so, Alexander was the "vanguard of Tennessee's Better Schools Program" (J. Henry, personal communication, February 5, 1994). His efforts on behalf of this program's merit pay plan, moreover, were highly praised by President Ronald Reagan. Alexander traveled across the state delivering speeches about his Better Schools Program in an attempt to sell his ideas to the public. Newspapers, broadcasts, films, and periodicals were all buzzing about his educational reforms (see Chapter 2). Marjorie Pike, President of TEA from July 1, 1983-1984, said she "could not stop at the gas station, go to a restaurant, or to church without someone asking . . . [her] about the legislation [progress of the Better Schools Program in the legislature]" (personal communication, January 14, 1994).

Subproblem #3: What areas of education were affected by the Better Schools Program?

The ten areas affected by the Better Schools Program were clearly spelled out by Alexander in his speeches and by the Better Schools Task Force. For the most part, the elements of the Better Schools Program remained the same
once assembled as such. There were, however, a few minor changes as the program evolved into its final state.

Alexander first announced segments of his plan for improving Tennessee's education during the State of Education Address on January 22, 1982. Showing his close nexus with Reagan, Alexander (1982) said: "I have encouraged the President and Congress to take over the state's role in Medicaid and let us [state, especially governors, and local governments] take over the federal role in elementary and secondary education" (p. 4). After acknowledging his intention to reform Tennessee's educational system, he then alluded to what would become his first improvement package. He described a five-year plan designed to improve teaching and learning in reading, writing, and arithmetic (Alexander, 1982, p. 1). He called it BASIC SKILLS FIRST, and enumerated and explained its eight components. He also mentioned discipline and merit pay for teachers after the eight points were described but did not elaborate on them until his next State of Education Address on January 28, 1983.

Then Alexander (1983d) announced that he had changed the name of his educational reform package from BASIC SKILLS FIRST to the Better Schools Program (p. 3). This package contained a ten-point improvement plan with Basic Skills First merely as the first component listed instead of being the sole module. Alexander (1983d) said that better schools would mean better jobs and better pay for
Tennesseans and that, although the ideas contained in the program did not come from him but rather from the TCES, the State Board of Education, the Rose Commission, and the public, he would "fight for it [program] as hard as . . . [he] had ever fought for anything" in his life (p. 3).

Shortly thereafter the Better Schools Task Force (1983) promulgated the public document "What is the BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM?" explaining the Better Schools Program's ten points, replete with information about the Master Teacher Program. A toll-free hotline number was provided to answer questions. The ten points on the Better Schools Task Force (1983) document were listed and explained as follows:

1. Basic Skills First. The teacher-designed new elementary curriculum is in 11,366 classrooms. It establishes 1,300 skills in reading and math, 680 of which must be learned. By 1990, every child (who is not severely handicapped) should pass the Basic Skills First eighth grade competency test before entering ninth grade.

2. Computer Skills Next. Every child will know basic computer skills before the ninth grade.

3. Kindergarten for every child. Every child must start school at the kindergarten level, even if the child does not start until age six.

4. More High School Math and Science. Double the
one credit of math and one of science we now require and pay for the extra teachers.

5. Special Residential Summer Schools for Gifted Juniors and Seniors. Reward academic excellence, not just athletic excellence.

6. Redefine High School Vocational Education Curriculum. Tie it more closely to the jobs of the 80's [sic] and provide equipment.

7. Classroom Discipline. Create alternative schools for students who disrupt classrooms. State-paid liability insurance for teachers and all other school personnel costs only $2.50 per teacher. We should support teachers, not sue them in court.

8. Put adult Job Skill Training Under the Board of Regents. Our 40 community colleges, technical institutes and area vocational schools should have a single overall management. Most of us over 21 will be going back to school to brush up on basic skills and learn computer skills and new job skills.

9. Centers of Excellence at Universities. Provide first-rate financing for first-rate programs and better overall support for good teaching and research. In the 1980's [sic], good universities will spin off the ideas that spin off new jobs.
Music in the early grades. With budgets so tight, this is not a top ten priority. But a small state base of support will be provided, and additional money will be raised privately to bolster Tennessee's musical heritage.

10. The Master Teacher Program and Master Principal Program. This is the heart of the plan. (p. 1)

These ten points represented the components of the original Better Schools Program after it was so named.

Subproblem #4: Who were the proponents and opponents of the Better Schools Program?

The most avid advocates of the Better Schools Program were Governor Alexander, Commissioner McElrath, and the legislators who supported the Better Schools Program. The formidable opponents were TEA, Senator Darnell, and The Chattanooga Times.

According to Lutz, Alexander worked towards his educational reforms until his term as governor expired. Lutz (1986) said:

Governor Alexander maintained his emphasis on education and became very active in the education activities of the National Governor's Association. He worked with the Association on its report, A Time for Results, and produced an article for the November, 1986 Phi Delta Kappan (68) pp. 202-205 entitled, "A Time for Results: An Overview." Tennessee, by late 1986, was one
of the states to receive a special grant for an "experiment" to test some recommendations of *A Time for Results*. Governor Alexander had carried the education agenda to the end of his term in office. (p. 40)

Commissioner Robert L. McElrath also worked diligently to support the Better Schools Program. From July 1983 to July 1984, he and the Governor, sometimes together and sometimes separately, "traveled across Tennessee speaking to civic groups to explain the importance of the Better Schools Program" (R. L. McElrath, personal communication, April 12, 1994).

One legislator who was an advocate of the Better Schools Program was Senator Leonard Dunavant. Senator Dunavant (1993) "served as a Co-Prime Sponsor of the bill that was passed into law" (personal communication, December 27, 1993). Dunavant stated his reasons for supporting the bill as being Tennessee's illiteracy problems, high student drop-out rate, and low expenditures on public education.

Senator John Rucker was another advocate of the Better Schools Program. He was the Prime Senate Sponsor of the Better Schools bill. He particularly favored the merit pay plan contained in the program, and met with teachers, on one occasion in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, to explain the program. Rucker (1993) gave the following account of the teachers' response:

They jumped on me rather strenuously and made
this sort of plaintiff appeal: "John, how could you do such a thing without first consulting with us?"
Well, my answer was that I could not conceive of the teachers being in opposition to a program that would result in their getting more pay.

(personal communication, December 22, 1993)

In addition, Rucker said his son-in-law, Jeffrey Combos, assistant to the governor:

"took the bill in its redrafted position and circulated it among the Senators who were known supporters of the previous program. By the time it was introduced into the Senate, . . . [those who sponsored the bill] had seventeen supporters of the bill, which was a majority of the Senators."

(personal communication, December 22, 1994).

He believed in the merit of the Better Schools Program and worked on behalf of its passage into law.

Representative James (Jim) Henry advocated the Better Schools Program. He gave at least two reasons that he wanted the program. First, he wanted Alexander to gain the recognition he deserved, and second, he favored "a mechanism to get rid of the worst teachers" (J. Henry, personal interview, February 5, 1994).

The most visible opponent of the Better Schools Program was the TEA. In general, the TEA did not disagree with the first nine components of the program, but strongly disagreed with the tenth and the second part
of the seventh (A. Mance, personal communication, July 27, 1993). Under the seventh point, Alexander had asked the state to pay liability insurance for all school personnel. The TEA was concerned that this stipulation could cost the organization members, since the "inclusion of a million-dollar liability insurance package had been a strong motivation for teachers to join TEA" (Lutz, 1986, p. 35). The TEA objected so severely that this portion of the seventh point was dropped.

TEA also objected to the tenth component of the Better Schools Program. This component, the Master Teacher and Master Principal Program, was the centerpiece of the Better Schools Program. Almost all the controversy was lodged against this merit pay plan. TEA objected to merit pay because its representatives felt that distinguishing between "good and bad teachers," along with human fallacies like favoritism, made fair evaluations all but impossible (Cheshier, 1983, p. 2). He pointed out that the legislatures of New York, Delaware, and South Carolina had all mandated statewide merit pay plans in past times and then had rescinded them (Cheshier, 1983, p. 2).

Cheshier (1983) predicted Tennessee's merit pay plan, too, would fail, mainly because it was "forced upon a group of teachers who did not want it" (p. 2). Armour addressed what he perceived as a problem with the reform movement in higher education. He said the college
faculty had "lost both the responsibility and control" of the curricula since legislatures had replaced educators as the central figures in the educational reform movement (Armour, 1986, p. 20).

O'Reilly (1983), on the other hand, was concerned that the plan might be interpreted by some to violate an educator's civil rights, though he personally felt that there was "no pressing ethical reason why teachers should not be paid different amounts, on the basis of performance appraisal" (p. 17). He stated that "a variable pay plan for teachers . . . [could] survive the burden of proof in a civil rights suit," if it was not "haphazard or whimsical" but rather was "fair" and "responsible" (O'Reilly, 1983, p. 16). Recognizing both the pros and cons of merit pay, O'Reilly (1983) said:

The single salary schedule is not race or sex biased. That has value. It does show preference for years in position. In an enterprise that is female dominated, the single salary schedule was the device that accomplished parity between sexes, prior to the national drives for civil rights. Such salary schedules are not always evenly implemented, given the fact that thousands of the nation's school districts have such schedules as basic to their pay plan, and some deviations should be expected as a function of that magnitude. Theoretically, they eliminate invidious discrimination on the basis of
sex, race, age, national origin, and so on. Their value is grounded in a past history of favoritism and discriminatory contracts imposing many conditions that, today, are not accepted as related to the quality level of instruction and are contrary to civil rights legislation. (p. 6)

Newcombe (1983) recognized many failures in previous attempts of states to uphold mandated merit pay plans, but she felt that government could learn from these past mistakes and create a merit pay plan that would work. She stated some weaknesses: "There is considerable evidence to show that merit pay plans have failed at different times and in different places for similar reasons, such as a detrimental effect on morale, difficulties in administration, and evaluation problems" (Newcombe, 1983, p. 19).

TEA gained a former supporter of the Better Schools Program, Susan Rosenholtz. At one time, Susan Rosenholtz supported the Better Schools Program. In fact, she and Jane Stallings of Peabody-Vanderbilt University had begun "to identify from the Effective Schools Research those competencies characteristic of effective teaching. Twenty-three competencies were identified in four domains: planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and professional development and leadership" (Clapp, 1983, p. 6). These competencies, once established, were then sent "to the 5,000 members of the
Tennessee Teachers' Study Council for review" (Clapp, 1983, p.6). The teachers could examine and comment on them, thus having some input into the evaluation instrument measuring teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Shortly after Clapp had conveyed the information about Rosenholtz's work to a Harvard Education Conference on November 22, 1983, Rosenholtz resigned (in December). TEA press carried the following account of Rosenholtz's hasty resignation:

McElrath told the commission that Rosenholtz resigned because of changes in evaluation criteria "suggested by field input from teachers, by the Interim Commission, and by nationally known consultants."

Rosenholtz told TEA NEWS she resigned because of her concerns about "the method by which teachers are to be evaluated and the manner in which the State Department will test the adequacy of that method."

After state officials reworked the plan, most of the evaluation criteria had been changed from what commission members and teachers in the field had previously seen, Rosenholtz related.

"There are numerous things in their criteria that I have problems with," she said. "The criteria are not related to student learning. Some even countermand learning. Much of the criteria are not
research based . . . [and] a real possibility is that those who are selected may not in fact be those teachers who have the greatest impact on student outcomes." (TEA, 1983, p. 1)

Rosenholtz, for whatever reasons, turned against the Better Schools Program and seemingly sided with the opposition, that is, with TEA.

Marjorie Pike, President of TEA, also served with Rosenholtz and McElrath on the Interim Commission. Pike said she "voted to get the plan out in the open--not for its approval" (TEA, 1983, p. 1). Pike wanted the teachers to react to the evaluation instrument, but she "predicted they would not like it" (TEA, 1983, p. 1).

Most of those who opposed the Better Schools Program did so for the same reason that TEA opposed it, that is, because of the merit pay plan. Senator John Rucker (1994) explained why some teachers resented the merit pay plan and also gave what is probably the origin of the term career ladder program. Senator Rucker recalled that during the summer of 1983 he and Governor Alexander were flying to a meeting, an educational program, in Johnson City, Tennessee. Rucker (1993) said:

We discussed the use of the word Master Teacher Program or Master Teachers, and I pointed out that many teachers I had discussed the program with objected to the use of the word master. As a matter of fact, I had a little objection. We
discussed whether or not we could use another term, and somebody on the plane said what about career, and at that time the Governor said that he would drop the Master Teacher designation and label it a Career Ladder Program. I don’t know whether that’s where it originated or not, but I do know that conversation took place.  

(personal communication, December 22, 1993)

Anderson (1983), a staff member with TEA, definitely opposed merit pay for teachers. She said: "Categorizing all teachers, testing all teachers, and rewarding only a few . . . would never attract the best and the brightest" (Anderson, 1983, p. 10). She described Alexander’s plan as inherently unworkable. Locke, however, was not as kind as Anderson when expressing his opinion of the Governor’s plan. He wrote an article in which he taunted the Governor and implied that the merit pay plan served merely as a stepping stone (to the Senate) for Alexander. Locke’s parody of "The Emperor’s New Clothes" attacked Alexander on a personal level, painting him as an ambitious, cold person who demeaned teachers and students to "enhance . . . [his] political career" (Locke, 1986, p. 5).  

The Chattanooga Times was the only newspaper in Tennessee to oppose the Better Schools Program in its editorials (McElrath, personal communication, July 26,
But while we don't condemn such a plan [merit pay] out of hand, the legislature should include teachers in drawing up the criteria for identifying a "master" teacher, something the Alexander administration failed to do.

There are other things the state can do to improve education. Working with the Tennessee Education Association, which acknowledges there are some incompetent teachers in the state's schools, the legislators could amend the tenure law to make it easier to get those teachers out of the classroom. They could mandate tougher standards for schools that train teachers, and for teacher certification examinations. The state board of education could also consider extending the school year and the school day. (A6)

The newspaper carried articles expressing the viewpoints of TEA, who opposed the Better Schools Program. For example, Nancy Hartiz, reporter with The Chattanooga Times, quoted an undisclosed source from TEA who reported the "TEA board of directors had voted . . . to wage an 'all-out-effort' against Alexander's proposal after concluding the master teacher bill was 'virtually beyond cleaning up" (A1). TEA intended to introduce its own bill to the legislature.
The *Nashville Banner* carried a negative article on the Better Schools Program. Lee Smith, a reporter with the *Nashville Banner*, referred to Alexander's plan to fund the Better Schools Program as being a "political mousetrap" (TEA, 1983, p. 13). The "trap" was Alexander's threat to veto any sales tax increase which did not include funding his program (TEA, 1983, p. 13).

Despite the opposition, Alexander refused to relinquish merit pay. He intended to "weed out mediocre employees" and to encourage "superior teachers and administrators with scheduled evaluations and incentives throughout their careers" (French, 1984, p. 9). Chris Pipho agreed with Alexander. He felt the reform was a "keeper" because "its goals . . . [had] permeated state and local education throughout the U. S." (Pipho, 1986, p. 702).

Senator Darnell (1983) was the Prime Sponsor of the S 1124, commonly known as the TEA bill. This bill opposed the Better Schools bill. The Select Committee on Education opted to study the TEA bill, S 1124, along with Alexander's bill, S 1000, deferring the passage of either bill for one year (A. B. O'Brien, personal communication, January 15, 1994). The CERA of 1984 was a compromised version of the two bills. The purpose of the delay was to discern the "best features of the governor's plans and the TEA proposal" (Stedman, 1983, p. 58). The two bills
differed more about how educators were to be paid than about any other issues.

Several differences can be seen among the three bills proposed by Darnell (S 1124/TEA's bill); by Elkins, Rucker, and Garland (S 1000/Better Schools bill); and by the Select Committee on Education (S 1, the compromised version of the former two bills). Three of the distinctions were the names of the acts, the establishment of certification boards, and the kind of educator certification.

First, the names of the proposed acts differed. Had S 1124 been enacted it would be called the "Professional Educator Certification Act of 1983," whereas S 1000 would be called the "Better Schools Master Teacher-Master Administrator Act of 1983." The name assigned to S 1 was the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984.

Second, S 1124 proposed the creation of a Professional Educator Certification Board (PECB) comprised of 19 members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the General Assembly and authorized to certify teachers, principals, and supervisors. S 1000 called for the creation of an 18-member Interim Commission, a 13-member State Certification Commission, and three 9-member Regional Commissions. The Interim Commission would dissolve after choosing 20 Master Teachers and 5 Master Principals in each grand division.
The S 1, the bill which became the CERA of 1984, followed almost verbatim the recommendations of SB 1000 for the establishment, terms, and duties of an Interim Commission, a State Certification Commission, and a Regional Commission. (For further details see the final version of S 1.)

Third, although both the S 1124 and S 1000 would recommend procedures whereby teaching certificates could be granted, the S 1124's and the S 1000's versions disagreed on what steps educators should follow. Darnell's bill, S 1124, stipulated that two types of certificates should be available: the intern/provisional and the professional certificates. The beginning teacher would hold an apprentice certificate; the teacher who had taught for more than three years would hold a professional certificate; the teacher who had taught for more than six years would hold the senior certificate; and the teacher who had taught as a senior teacher for more than five years would hold the master certificate—all certificates were granted contingent upon the state and local evaluation results of the teacher's performance.

The CERA of 1984 legislated a merit pay plan but called it the Career Ladder Program. The five-step ladder included probationary, apprentice, and Career Levels I, II, and III. After the prescribed time and
acceptable evaluations, the educators could climb the next rung on the career ladder.

Both the proponents and the opponents of The Better Schools Program labored for their causes. But in the end the Better Schools Program prevailed against the objections of the TEA.

Subproblem #5: How did the Better Schools Program's ten points translate into statutes or regulations in Tennessee?

Nine of the components of the Better Schools Program were enacted into law as the CERA of 1984. Only one of the Better Schools Program's ten provisions was enacted into law in 1983. The control of post-secondary vocational education programs was transferred from the State Board of Education to the State Board of Regents of the State University and Community College System of Tennessee. This unnamed act was recorded in the Public Acts, 1983. The other nine provisions were assigned to a Select Committee on Education for a year's additional study and debate. By a vote of 5 to 4, the Senate Education Committee delayed taking action on the remaining points (A. B. O'Brien, personal communication, January 15, 1994).

After Alexander called an Extraordinary Session of the 1984 General Assembly on January 4th to consider the Joint Committee's recommendations, the General Assembly
passed a compromised version of the Master Teachers/Principals Program. The CERA of 1984 dealt almost exclusively with a five-step Career Ladder Program. In fact, of the 105 Sections of the CERA, the first 96 sections explained some aspect of the Career Ladder Program. Sections 97 through 99 spoke of legislature’s intended goals for the next five years. Section 97, subsection 11, would, within five years, establish the Centers of Excellence, listed as component nine in the Better Schools Program. Section 99, moreover, dealt with the remaining eight components of the Better Schools Program. According to Section 99 of the CERA of 1984:

Within five (5) years after passage of this act it is the legislative intent that the instructional program shall be improved to provide measurable improvement in the subjects in Chapter II "The Basic Academic Competencies," Chapter III "Computer Competency: An Emerging Need," and Chapter IV "The Basic Academic Subjects," all as set out in Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do, published by the College Board, 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York, 10106, 1983. The Betters Schools Program was realized in the CERA of 1984. The legislature would fund the act with a one-cent sales tax.
Summary

The Better Schools Program was Tennessee's "most comprehensive and ambitious effort to improve education in the history of the state" (Saunders, 1984, p. 26). "Public sentiment was unquestionably with the governor," conceded Anderson (1986), TEA's assistant executive secretary (p. 10). Although concessions were made to TEA, the Better Schools Program was passed on February 22, 1984, in its revised form. Alexander, his staff, and his supporters saw their efforts pay off.

Tennessee's educational system would receive a major overhaul. Teachers would have a Career Ladder Program enabling qualified teachers to earn additional money in education, instead of their having to work odd jobs to earn money. Every child would be given a chance to attend kindergarten. Computers would be made available to elementary and secondary schools. Centers of excellence would be established at universities. Basic skills would be taught and tested. Disruptive students would be placed in alternative schools.
Chapter 5

Summary, Findings, Recommendations

Summary

Much attention was given to Tennessee's educational reform movement, known as the Better Schools Program, in the 1980s. However, no composite study of the process leading to the reform based on the Better Schools Program had been made. The problem of this study was to examine the process whereby the political philosophies of the 1980s became laws effecting education.

The study began by identifying the problem and by identifying and listing the subproblems. The materials which related to the Better Schools Program in terms of its origin, development, and enactment into law were reviewed. The procedures of gathering data, the sources of data, and the methods of applying the data to the subproblems were explained. Finally, the reviewed sources of data were analyzed and applied to the research questions under study.

The conclusions were drawn from the five research questions based on the gathered information. These conclusions were founded on the information gleaned mainly from literature expressing both facts and conflicting opinions of the movement and from involved politicians or TEA members who were either supportive of
or opposed to the Better Schools Program.

The researcher acknowledged that those persons personally involved in the reform movement might well know information that could provide a greater amount of truth than a private citizen could acquire from research. The perspective of the researcher was based on the available resources.

Three recommendations were made that might ease the tensions created by change. Since educational reform movements almost always bring about some changes, the change agent(s) should learn as much as possible from former movements.

**Findings**

Subproblem #1: "What prompted the instigation of the Better Schools Program?"

1. Tennessee's economy: The first factor which prompted the instigation of the Better Schools Program was the state's economy. Tennessee was experiencing a recession brought about by double-digit inflation and a high unemployment rate. The state seemed dissatisfied with its condition and therefore ready to accept change.

   Tennessee was also beset by a "decline in some heavy industry, and technological industries were emerging" (Saunders, 1984, p. 10). These technological industries would need qualified employees. Tennessee's opting for change, therefore, reflected the state's mood.
2. The TCES: Governor Alexander signed Senate Joint Resolution 56 on June 12, 1981, enabling legislation to provide the TCES. The TCES's function was to determine Tennessee's "educational goals, governance, instructional quality, and distribution of funds" (State of Tennessee, 1982, p. 2). One of the concepts purported by the TCES was the master teacher. Alexander was an avid supporter of the concept. Since merit pay was the only component of the Better Schools Program that met with opposition, Alexander could allude to the TCES to assist him in his quest to legislate merit pay. The TCES recommended nine of the ten components of the Better Schools Program. Discipline was not included.

3. Alexander's political philosophy: Alexander's political philosophy seemed to develop after he took office. He seemed willing to be flexible as far as his educational program was concerned. This flexibility was proved when he expanded his program Basic Skills First to adapt it to the needs of Tennesseans as the Better Schools Program. He also acknowledged several sources from which he complied his program and did not attribute its content to himself. He believed in and supported the ten components of the Better Schools Program.

Some of the sources credited with the concepts upheld in the Better Schools Program were the TCES, the long-term plan of the State Board of Education, the Rose Commission (business people), and the taxpayers,
students, parents, educators, and school board members (State of Education, 1983, p. 3).

4. Alexander's, McElrath's, the cabinet's, and the legislators' efforts: Alexander, McElrath, the cabinet, and the legislators who supported the Better Schools Program traveled extensively and made many speeches, both formal and informal ones. Alexander also established a Task Force to propagate materials to reach the public in an attempt to procure support for the Better Schools Program. He used varied forums including newspapers and magazines, radio and television, videos, and college campuses to inform Tennesseans. The publicity about the Better Schools Program helped propel its evolvement into law.

6. The influence of President Reagan and Secretary of Education Bell: President Reagan and Secretary Bell used their influence to assist Alexander's efforts toward reform. Reagan visited Knoxville and praised Alexander's endeavors there as well as praising the Governor in other speeches (O'Reilly, 1983, p. 5 & Reagan, 1983e, p. 787).

7. The national reform movement: Although Tennessee was more of a leader than a follower in the national reform movement, the national reform movement did stimulate the reforms being made in Tennessee.

8. Alexander's desire to be first with reforms: The Governor worked diligently to be first with reforms. He
wanted Tennessee to receive the recognition he felt the state deserved for its creative reforms.

Subproblem #2: Who was instrumental in establishing the Better Schools Program?
1. Governor Alexander was the driving force behind the Better Schools Program. But he did not, nor could he, have accomplished the completion of the program alone. Many interested parties helped make the Better Schools Program possible.
2. Commissioner McElrath was instrumental in gaining support for the Better Schools Program. He traveled, sometimes with the Governor, making speeches to explain the Better Schools Program. He also wrote articles to clarify the educational reform efforts underway in Tennessee.
3. The majority of legislators supported the Better Schools Program, including Senators Rucker and Dunavant and Representative Henry.

Subproblem #3: What areas of education were affected by the Better Schools Program?

The Better Schools Task Force (1983) listed the following ten components of the Better Schools Program and explained the areas of education that were affected by them.
1. Basic Skills First: The teacher-designed new elementary curriculum is in 11,366 classrooms. It establishes 1,300 skills in reading and math, 680 of
which must be learned. By 1990, every child (who is not severely handicapped) should pass the Basic Skills First eighth grade competency test before entering ninth grade.

2. Computer Skills Next: Every child will know basic computer skills before the ninth grade.

3. Kindergarten for Every Child: Every child must start school at the kindergarten level.

4. More High School Math and Science: Double the one credit of math and one of science . . . now require[d] and pay for the extra teachers.

5. Special Residential Summer Schools for Gifted Juniors and Seniors. Reward academic excellence, not just athletic excellence.

6. Redefine High School Vocational Education Curriculum: Tie it more closely to the jobs of the 80’s [sic] and provide equipment.

7. Classroom Discipline: Create alternative schools for students who disrupt classrooms. State-paid liability insurance for teachers and all other school personnel costs only $2.50 per teacher. [Tennesseans] . . . should support teachers, not sue them in court.

8. Put Adult Job Skill Training Under the Board of Regents: [The] . . . 40 community colleges, technical institutes and area vocational schools should have a single overall management. Most . . . over 21 will be going back to school to brush up on basic skills and learn computer skills and new job skills.
9. Centers of Excellence at Universities: Provide first-rate financing for first-rate programs and better overall support for good teaching and research. In the 1980's, good universities will spin off the ideas that spin off new jobs.

Music in the early grades: With budgets so tight, this is not a top ten priority. But a small state base of support will be provided and additional money will be raised privately to bolster Tennessee's musical heritage.

10. The Master Teacher Program and Master Principal Program: This is the heart of the plan.

(Better Schools Task Force, 1983, p. 1)

Subproblem #4: Who were the proponents and opponents of the Better Schools Program?

Proponents

1. Governor Alexander: The chief proponent of the Better Schools Program was Governor Lamar Alexander. The Governor traveled extensively and spoke all over Tennessee.

2. Commissioner McElrath: The Commissioner of Education worked diligently to bring about educational reforms. He traveled and spoke throughout the state, striving to reach the people so as to convince them to support the Governor's efforts on behalf of educational reform. He also wrote many articles, and served on the Select Committee Task Force, as well as on other committees, to advance the Better Schools Program.
3. Sixty-three percent of teachers, including the AFL: The majority of teachers and the AFT supported the Better Schools Program. The AFT, "though membership in Tennessee was small, . . . provided an alliance of some consequence" (Lutz, 1986, p. 33). The AFT approved of the increase in compulsory courses like math and science recommended by Alexander (American Federation of Teachers, 1983, p. 11).

4. Tennesseans: Eighty percent of Tennessee's general population supported the Better Schools Program (Raze, 1983, p. 4).

5. Business people: The Rose Commission supported the Better Schools Program.

6. Major newspaper editorials: Tennessee's major newspaper editorials, except one, supported the Better Schools Program.

Opponents

1. A minority of legislators: For example, Senator Darnell opposed the Better Schools Program and introduced the S 1124, known as the TEA bill, to counter S 1000, the Better Schools bill.

2. The Chattanooga Times editorial: The Chattanooga Times editorial opposed the Better Schools Program.

3. TEA: The TEA opposed the Better Schools Program's merit pay plan. TEA upheld the other nine components.
Subproblem #5: How did the Better Schools Program's ten points translate into statutes or regulations in Tennessee?

1. Senate Bill No. 746: This bill was enacted into an unnamed law in 1983 to "transfer the governance of the state technical institutes and the statewide system of area vocational-technical schools from the State Board for Vocational Education to the State Board of Regents and to amend Tennessee Code Annotated" (Public Acts, 1983, p. 282). The eighth component of the Better Schools Program became law via this act. The other nine components were carried over for further study for one year (A. B. O'Brien, personal communication, January, 1994).

2. The PEGRA of 1984: The main thrust of this act was to "clarify the duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the State Commissioner of Education" (Public Acts, 1984, p. 8). Lutz (1986) said:

   Through the PEGRA of 1984, the Tennessee General Assembly dismantled the fifteen-member [State Board of Education] SBE and established a new nine-person SBE to be appointed by the governor (subject to legislative confirmation). The SBE then appointed its own chief executive officer in late summer, 1984. At this point, the state had a governor-appointed [Chief State School Officer] CSSO (primarily responsible for administration and a SBE-
appointed executive director (primarily responsible for policy). The PEGRA seemed to be a step to strengthen the SBE and limit the power of the CSSO.

(p. 28)

According to legislators and education interest-group leaders, "the CSSO was successful in getting the legislative program adopted". . . The localistic nature of the staff [often staff are of rural backgrounds, have been teachers and administrators] nurtured the CSSO success" (Lutz, 1986, p. 28).


4. The Revision of the CERA of 1985: The 94th General Assembly enacted the revision to broaden the scope of the career program to include:

Educators employed by the Department of Correction, the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the career programs provided for the Parts 50 through 55 of this chapter.

(Public Acts, 1985, p. 1218)

Collectively, these acts led to the fulfillment of Alexander's dream to reform education in Tennessee.
Conclusions

Based on this study, the following conclusions are made:

1. The Career Ladder Program offered Tennessee's educators a means to earn extra income without having to work outside of education. The more a teacher teaches, the more experienced and capable the teacher becomes. Students benefit from improved teaching and from the additional time teachers spend with them.

2. Making Tennessee's educational system the focus of attention brought about needed reforms. Education was in the lime light in the 1980s, and many needed reforms were made possible, in part, because of the publicity. Education is too important to be neglected or taken for granted.

3. Alexander's ability to lead others made Tennessee's educational reforms possible. He persuaded the legislators, the Rose Commission, 63 percent of teachers, 80 percent of the general public, all major newspaper editorials, except one, to join forces with him to support the Better Schools Program.

Recommendations

Mistakes were made in the development of the Better Schools Program. All of them cannot be attributed to a single person, but rather to both the opposition and the proponents of the program. Three recommendations were
made based on the research to mitigate problems in future educational reform movements.

1. Further studies on educational reforms should take into account the effect the reforms have had on educators.

2. Further research should be conducted regarding the manner in which TEA and politicians solve their differences.

3. Further research should be conducted to determine how often the quality of education in Tennessee should be apprised.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SUBJECTS EXPLAINING STUDY
Dear XXXXXXXXXX:

Dr. Robert McElrath, former Commissioner of Education, is the chairman of my doctoral committee at East Tennessee State University, and he highly recommends you as an expert source of information on the Tennessee Better Schools Program, 1981-1986.

Would you please record your answers to the attached questions on the tape provided and return your recorded responses in the enclosed, stamped envelope as soon as you can?

Thank you for your assistance with my study.

Sincerely,

Daris Gose
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR LEGISLATORS AND TEA
Questionnaire

1. Were you an advocate of the Better Schools Program? Why?

2. Did you try to convince legislators, educators, and/or the public to accept your ideas? Explain.

3. What was the greatest obstacle you had to overcome to realize your goal(s)?

4. List and explain what you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Better Schools Program.

5. In retrospect, would you change any aspect of the Better Schools Program? Explain.

(For Legislators)
Questionnaire

1. When did you become President of TEA and how long did you serve in that position?

2. What was TEA’s position on the various components of the Better Schools Program in Tennessee in its original form?

3. Was TEA instrumental in influencing any change(s) made to any component(s) of the Better Schools Program? Explain.

4. If TEA influenced change(s) in the Better Schools Program, what change(s) benefitted educators most in your opinion?

5. How would you rate the Better Schools Program as far as the improvement of Tennessee’s education is concerned? Why?

(For TEA’s Marjorie Pike)
APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP CORRESPONDENCE TO SUBJECTS
Dear XXXXXXXXXX:

Two weeks ago I mailed a letter and questionnaire materials to you concerning the Better Schools Program in Tennessee. Your response is important to my study, and I would appreciate your participating in this project by returning your taped or written responses at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Daris Gose
Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study Task Force

Task Force Officers

Senator Anna Belle C. O'Brien  Chairman  Crossville
Commissioner Robert L. McElrath  Vice Chairman  Nashville
Representative C. B. Robinson  Secretary  Chattanooga

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Dr. Merlin L. Cohen  Tennessee School Board Association  Union City
Sen. Joe L. Crockett  Tennessee Senate  Madison
Mrs. Shirley Curry  Private Citizen  Waynesboro
Dr. Warner Dickerson  Vocational Education  Nashville
Mr. Lewis R. Donelson  Tennessee Higher Education Commission  Memphis
Sen. James E. Elkins  Tennessee Senate  Clinton
Mrs. Connie Elliott  Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers  Nashville
Dr. Kenneth P. Ezell  State Board of Regents  Murfreesboro
Mr. H. Lynn Greer, Jr.  State Board of Education  Nashville
Mr. James A. Haslan, II  University of Tennessee Board of Trustees  Knoxville
Mr. Ben S. Kimbrough  University of Board of Trustees  Nashville
Rep. Robert L. King  Tennessee House of Representatives  Johnson City
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<td>Sen. Avon Williams</td>
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Daris Anne Gose

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University of Tennessee, B.A., 1978
East Tennessee State University, M.A., 1980
East Tennessee State University, Ed.D., 1994

Professional Experience: English Adjunct Faculty, Walters State
Community College, Morristown, Tennessee, 1980-1988
Teacher, Hamblen County School System,

Honors and Awards: American Business Women's Association
Scholarship, 1976
Phi Theta Kappa Honorary Society, 1976
Phi Kappa Phi National Honorary Society, 1980
Phi Delta Kappan Honorary Society, 1984
Kappa Delta Pi Honorary Society, 1994