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## Teacher Self-Efficacy and the Civic Knowledge of Secondary Social Studies Teachers in a Large Urban School District: A Policy Study

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Teacher Self-Efficacy and the Civic Knowledge of Secondary Social Studies

Teachers in a Large Urban School District: A Policy Study

by

Dennis Holt

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Secondary Education  
College of Education  
University of South Florida

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## Dedication

You have heard the old saying that behind every successful man is a great woman. I am fortunate to have the loving support of two; my wife—Elizabeth Holt—and my mother, Ann Holt. This dissertation is gratefully dedicated to the both of them.

## Acknowledgements

Many individuals have had a hand in the development of this research. I'd like to express special thanks to Dr. Howard Johnston, Dr. Michael Berson, Dr. Arthur Shapiro, and Dr. Dick Puglisi—all members of my doctoral committee—and to Dr. Steve Permuth, the outside chair. I extend additional thanks to Dr. Barbara Cruz and Dr. James Duplass of the Department of Secondary Education at the University of South Florida. The members of the Hillsborough County School Board—Jennifer Faliero, Carol Kurdell, Doretha Edgecomb, April Griffin, Jack Lamb, Candy Olson, and Susan Valdez, along with Superintendent Mary Ellen Elia—have provided encouragement and support for secondary social studies and Project ELECT. Project ELECT's project manager, Erin McGaffney, has overseen the smooth operation of the grant and provided professional development opportunities for several hundred social studies teachers in this district. Lanette Cezair saw to the day-to-day administration of Project ELECT's considerable payroll and clerical requirements. Aimee Wilbanks supplied valuable advice and assistance with data analysis. Lastly, I give special thanks to Suzanne Murray of StyleMatters for her editorial support.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	iii
List of Figures .....	iv
Abstract .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Context of the Problem .....	13
Problem .....	16
Purpose of the Study .....	17
Research Questions .....	17
Significance of the Study .....	18
Limitations of the Study.....	21
Definition of Terms.....	22
Ethnicity .....	22
Experience .....	22
Gender .....	22
FCAT.....	23
HCPS .....	23
NCLB .....	23
Personal Teaching Efficacy.....	23
Policy .....	23
Project ELECT .....	23
Teacher Self-Efficacy .....	23
Teacher Efficacy Scale .....	23
Research Plan .....	23
Research Summary .....	27
Chapter 2: The Policy Context and Literature Review .....	29
Why Teachers Lack Self-Efficacy .....	30
What Contributes to Teacher Self-Efficacy .....	39
Pilot Study.....	41
Method .....	41
Results .....	43
Conclusions .....	46
Linking the Pilot Study to the Present Research Study.....	47
Teacher Civics Knowledge and Teacher Self-Efficacy .....	47

Chapter 3: The Policy Context and Current Environment.....	51
Summary .....	63
Chapter 4: Research Plan and Results .....	65
Procedure .....	66
Results.....	71
Summary .....	76
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, Summary of Findings and Policy	
Decisions.....	78
Policy Challenge .....	78
Context of the Problem .....	79
Problem .....	82
Purpose of the Study .....	83
Research Questions .....	83
Policy Decision: Focus on Content Training .....	90
Chapter 6: Epilogue.....	98
References .....	105
Appendices.....	114
Appendix A: Teacher Efficacy Survey.....	115
Appendix B: High School Teacher Civics Survey .....	116
Appendix C: Pilot Study Survey Statistics.....	118
Appendix D: Project ELECT Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey Breakdown of Responses – Aggregate 2008 .....	120
Appendix E: Advanced Placement Government Scores Compared to PSAT .....	122
About the Author.....	End Page

## List of Tables

Table 1: Selected Responses to the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) Used in the Pilot Study.....	44
Table 2: Responses to the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES).....	73

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Mean teacher efficacy rating at pre-test and post-test.....	72
Figure 2: Policy decision framework.....	94



# Teacher Self-Efficacy and the Civic Knowledge of Secondary Social Studies

## Teachers in a Large Urban School District: A Policy Study

Dennis Holt

### ABSTRACT

This policy study contributed to an understanding of the types of professional growth activities that improve teacher self-confidence to teach challenging subjects and helped determine the future allocation of resources relative to teaching secondary social studies in Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS), the eighth largest school district in the United States. An important implication and result of this study consisted of a change in HCPS secondary social studies professional development policy from an emphasis on promoting literacy strategies, or reading in the content area, to a focus on improving social studies teacher content knowledge. Additionally, the study describes the culture of change in the district in an era of high-stakes testing and accountability. Research determined whether secondary social studies teachers increased their self-efficacy after participating in civic knowledge and engagement activities. Secondary social studies teachers were administered a version of Gibson & Dembo's (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) at the beginning and end of summer institutes in civics and government. A one-way analysis of variance of the TES results revealed no significant difference in

teacher pre- and post-test scores. However, teacher perception of their efficacy was high and scores from a Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey clearly indicated that high school teachers welcomed the new innovative professional development opportunities afforded to them through the summer institutes. The study was conducted under the Project Educating Learners to Engage in Civics Today (ELECT) grant, the goal of which was to expand the civic knowledge of the district's students and teachers.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power.

—Thomas Jefferson

The secondary social studies program in Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) is facing a challenge. The challenge for this district, the eighth largest in the United States with nearly 200,000 students and 200 schools, is similar to that faced by districts across the state of Florida and the nation. Namely, HCPS must ensure that knowledgeable teachers have the resources to provide meaningful instruction in social studies subjects to a diverse student population in a large urban setting at a time when high-stakes testing and accountability, which have previously focused more on reading, writing, math and science, may include social studies subjects in the near future. Complicating matters is that the funding for professional development of social studies teachers must compete with those disciplines that have been the focus of state and national accountability plans, and all at time when the economic situation has worsened and resulted in decreased funding for public education.

Like many school districts in the United States, many secondary social studies teachers come into the profession having graduated from college with degrees in education but with little content knowledge in subjects such as government and civics, American history, or world history. Indeed, their teacher preparation programs may have only required one or two classes in these subjects. This is true of the universities in the Tampa Bay region that supply most of the secondary social studies teachers to the district. For example, in a *Washington Post* article, Diane Ravitch says that “The field of history has the largest percentage of unqualified teachers. The Department of Education found that 55 percent of history teachers are "out of field," and that 43 percent of high school students are studying history with a teacher who did not earn either a major or minor in history. This may explain why nearly 60 percent of our 17-year-olds scored "below basic" (the lowest possible rating) on the most recent test of U.S. history administered by the federally funded National Assessment of Educational Progress.” (Thomas E. Fordham Institute, n.d.). The preparation of social studies educators has been an area of heated debate, and the question of whether prospective teachers should come out of colleges of education or departments of history and government is beyond the scope of this research. However, most of these teachers facing their first high school students in HCPS will find themselves teaching courses for which they possess little content knowledge and for which they may feel less than effective. An additional complication is that while the social studies are currently not tested in Florida as

part of the state's plan for accountability, that appears about to change and to be tied to teacher compensation, all of which will be addressed in more detail below.

The research described in this study serves as a vehicle for determining policy for HCPS. Additionally, the lessons learned will allow me, as the Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies, to make informed decisions regarding the administration of currently scant professional development dollars and declining resources at a time when the social studies will be coming under increased scrutiny as a separate and distinct subject in an era of accountability.

Florida's Department of Education does not publish a formal definition of policy nor can it be found in HCPS School Board Policy Manual. For purposes of this study we will borrow from the North Carolina State Board of Education, which defines policy as "a broad course of action, a general statement of principle, or any resulting rules and regulations implementing these actions or principles" (North Carolina State Board of Education, n.d.).

Under the federal government's No Child Left Behind legislation and Florida's A++ Plan for education, which are addressed in more detail in Chapter III, district, school and teacher accountability for improving student academic achievement have become central to the strategic planning of HCPS. District and school-based administrators have been forced to focus on strategies and to make decisions that would directly improve student learning as measured by the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT). Reading, writing, math, and later science, were the first subjects to be tested. As a result, in HCPS, the social studies were relegated to a supporting role. Earlier supervisors of

secondary social studies made the strategic decision to focus teacher professional development on reading in the content area. Essentially, it was determined that secondary social studies teachers would become reading teachers, who would be trained in instructional strategies designed to improve student literacy. That students would learn valuable social studies content was viewed as an important by-product, but a by-product nonetheless. To further illustrate the point, American Government, a course required for graduation in Florida is taught in HCPS as a freshman course, whereas most of the rest of the districts in the state teach it as a senior level course. The rationale for this decision was that ninth graders would benefit from taking a “reading based” social studies course and that student reading scores would show improvement. That policy decision has been continued during my six year tenure as supervisor. As you will read below, this policy decision allowed secondary social studies to continue as a vital and in fact growing discipline, particularly in the area of elective offerings. Secondary social studies has earned a place as a valued subject area among district and school-based administrators chiefly as a support for improving student reading scores, a phenomenon discussed in detail in Chapter III.

If the current educational environment were to remain static then secondary social studies could likely continue in its supporting role. However, the State Board of Education has recently revised the Sunshine State Standards for K – 12 social studies. The Next Generation of Sunshine State Standards for social studies are far more detailed than the older version, with specific

benchmarks for what students should know and be able to do in the elementary, middle and high school grades. In addition, plans are being considered to expand state-wide testing of social studies, first through district created end-of-course exams and eventually through state-wide tests of social studies subjects. Complicating matters is that plans to compensate teachers based on student achievement are currently in place, first via the Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR) plan and later the Merit Award Program (MAP) plan described below. Tying teacher compensation to student achievement, as determined by student performance on standardized tests, is a subject that has been taken up by the state legislature, and seems likely to expand. This eventuality has the potential for causing concern for secondary social studies teachers, particularly those who have little teaching experience and/or content knowledge.

If we are indeed entering a time when the social studies are to become a discipline that is held accountable via high stakes testing, then how are teachers to be supported? What training will contribute to their ability to teach the subject confidently? Research conducted during the Project Educating Learners to Engage in Civics Today (ELECT) grant has provided some answers. Lessons learned from the grant, and the resulting educator professional development opportunities in the area of content knowledge in government and civics along with the purchase of teaching resources, may provide a basis for making policy decisions relative to the teaching of social studies in general.

From the standpoint of district policy, the present research serves as a vehicle for the school district to determine the circumstance and forces that have

shaped the teaching of social studies, in general, and on the secondary level, in particular. The research conducted provides insight into HCPS for all those interested in social studies in the district, including me as program director for the Project ELECT grant and as the Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies. In this sense, the research functions as a tool for assessing the current state of professional growth in social studies education in HCPS and can provide the basis for evaluating both the effectiveness of one aspect of the grant—namely, teacher professional development—and for determining future professional development goals.

If you were to ask a school-based or district-level administrator in a Hillsborough County Public High School, “why is social studies important?” you would likely hear a response that included something like “because social studies teachers help teach reading” or “students in social studies classes show reading gains.” Principal Sharon Morris of East Bay High School immediately responded, “They are my go-to department; they are all about reading.” The same question posed to a high school social studies teacher in a Hillsborough County Public High School would likely result in answers such as, “because we teach active citizenship” or “because we teach about the history of our country and America’s role in the world.” Both sets of responses indicate that social studies in Hillsborough County Public High School’s is a valued discipline, but for markedly different reasons. As Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies for the HCPS district, I have played a part in forming both sets of answers. This policy study describes the educational environment that has led to such diverse perceptions



of the social studies discipline among educational professionals in this district and seeks to describe the long-term implications that this perception has for our discipline. Additionally, on the basis of the research described below, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the future course of social studies in HCPS, particularly when it comes to educator professional development and allocation of resources.

For the past several years, social studies teachers, along with teachers of other subjects, have received professional development training designed to improve student reading in the content area. While assessing the effectiveness of this training goes well beyond the scope of this study, it is useful to note here that administrators observing these secondary social studies teachers as a whole have noted an increase in teachers' positive attitude toward teaching reading along with their subject matter and have observed that students in these teachers' courses have made gains in reading comprehension. This perception, which has led to the aforementioned administrator comments, will be described in greater detail below.

In the fall of 2007, the HCPS District, in partnership with the University of South Florida (USF), was awarded a 2.04-million-dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education to promote understanding of the U.S. Congress and the Florida Legislature. The resulting project, entitled Project Educating Learners to Engage in Civics Today (Project ELECT) has a primary goal of expanding civic knowledge among the district's teachers and students. Supporters of this initiative believe that increased knowledge of civics and government will lead to

students becoming well-informed adults who are actively engaged in the democratic process (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Among a number of objectives, Project ELECT seeks to provide HCPS social studies teachers, from kindergarten through twelfth-grade, with necessary instructional strategies and tools to teach civics in the classroom. Dr. Michael Berson of USF is co-researcher of the grant and, as a member of my doctoral committee, has also served as a guide and mentor for this study. Before describing the scope of this study, time should be devoted to detailing some features of Project ELECT, given that the grant has provided the funding for the professional development and resources examined in the present study.

While training and resources for teachers is a primary objective of the Project ELECT grant, a number of different aspects to the project bear noting. The Project ELECT staff has been working successfully to meet the many objectives of the grant. The grant kicked off in January 2008 at a town-hall meeting featuring researcher and grant partner, Dr. Peter Levine, director of the Center for Information and Research in Civics Education (CIRCLE), who spoke to district teachers on the subject of youth civic engagement. Dr. Levine's speech helped build momentum and interest in civic engagement for the grant participants. Dr. Levine also helped the grant to reach out to the community, by speaking with the Mayor of Tampa, Pam Iorio, on her television show *The Mayor's Book Talk*. This episode aired on local cable stations and reached viewers across all of Hillsborough County, promoting civics education. Project ELECT also chose to utilize Dr. Levine's book, *The Future of Democracy*:

*Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens* in our first teacher book circle. Over 50 middle and high school teachers read Levine’s book and engaged in an online discussion with one another and the grant staff.

During the capacity-building phase of the grant, Project ELECT conducted both teacher and student focus groups in preparation and planning for the summer institutes described below. The voices of the youth and educators allowed us to develop relevant material that will make a significant impact on the civics content presented in classrooms in HCPS. Yet another aspect of Project ELECT were the Civics Education Curriculum Review Teams (CECRT). Knowledgeable K–12 social studies teachers from across the district worked together to improve the civics curriculums and to infuse the teaching of government and civics across the social studies curriculums into courses such as American and World History. Like much of Project ELECT, this is an ongoing process and these teachers have not only been infusing more civics into the classroom but have been creating supplemental resource materials that were distributed at our summer institutes and later throughout the school year.

Project ELECT also implemented “Politician Chats” into social studies classrooms around the county featuring local, state, and federal elected officials volunteering to talk to students. We will continue this process not only for the remainder of the grant but into the future, in hopes of providing more students with the opportunity to learn about democracy directly from elected officials and for those officials in turn to learn what is on the mind of our youth. We initially

utilized our school board to establish the procedures and protocols for these chats. More information on this topic is detailed below.

While our Board has been actively engaged in Project ELECT, their most significant contribution to increasing student civic engagement has been to bring the democratic process directly into the classrooms by participating in the aforementioned “Politicians Chats.” Our entire Board has made numerous visits to K–12 social studies classrooms to describe Board members’ role in shaping school-district policy, issues affecting public education, and members’ decision to run for elective office. Having witnessed a number of these interactions I have been impressed by our Board’s willingness to consider the student perspective relative to issues of concern to them (e.g., dress code). The genuine give-and-take between Board members and students has been exciting to observe. Both parties have come away with an increased appreciation of each other. Most important, students realize that they can play an active role in shaping policy and that our elected Board is accessible to them. In this instance, our Board has enlisted students as essential partners in our district’s mission, namely, “To provide an education that enables each student to excel as a successful and responsible citizen.”

Project ELECT is in the production phase of “Democracy Rules,” a 15-episode educational TV series that features local politicians and student actors explaining civics and government concepts. The series will be distributed to all social studies teachers in HCPS and will be made available to school districts nationwide. Likewise, Project ELECT is creating an interactive CD-ROM,

produced with the help of St. Petersburg College. The CD-ROM will contain a variety of civics resources and will include over 500 teacher-created lesson plans developed during the three summer civics institutes.

The Project ELECT grant staff has demonstrated their commitment to enhancing civics education in HCPS. Through the numerous and extensive teacher trainings that have been held over the summer and fall, Project ELECT has worked to advance both teacher and student civics content knowledge. In addition to the summer institutes, trainings have been presented by the Close-Up Foundation, Kids Voting Tampa Bay, the Teachers Curriculum Institute, the ACLU, the Patel Center for Global Solutions at USF, the Florida Law Related Education Association, and The Gus A. Stavros Center for Free Enterprise and Economic Education at USF, to name but a few.

Last, Project ELECT has also partnered with existing HCPS programs such as “Ought to Be a Law” and the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections voter registration “Youth Vote.” Supervisor of Elections Buddy Johnson’s office, along with the grant staff, has visited economics classrooms throughout the district to promote voter registration to improve the students’ civics engagement. This spring alone, 5,744 high school seniors were registered and preregistered to vote. Project ELECT and Representative Kevin Ambler’s “Ought to Be a Law” program has sent students to the Florida capital, in hopes of getting a student-designed bill passed for the second year in a row. (In the 2007 session, a bill introduced by the students became Florida Statute 1003.496: the High School to Business Career Enhancement Act.)

Project ELECT has taken full advantage of the presidential elections in the fall of 2008 and the buzz about civics that has been created from it. The grant will continue to implement pertinent civics programs and reach out to students, teachers, and the community of HCPS in hopes of improving civics knowledge.

In 2005, CIRCLE reported that teacher professional development in civic knowledge and understanding related positively with students' civic knowledge (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005). This study seeks to determine the relationship between teacher participation in professional development designed to improve their knowledge of civics and their self-efficacy, as well as provide information that could be useful in ultimately understanding how this self-efficacy may relate to students' civic knowledge.

A considerable body of research exists regarding the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. Alfred Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" relates to the concept that a teacher's self-efficacy affects a teacher's belief that he or she can help students learn. If teachers possess self-efficacy, they believe that they can influence student learning. Research indicates that a teacher's sense of self-efficacy can bring about success in student learning (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). Likewise, research conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) indicates that a teacher's feelings concerning his or her own efficacy is one of the crucial variables associated with

student achievement. Rosenthal and Jacobsen pointed out that teachers' expectations of their own abilities (as well as that of their students) can play a critical role in student achievement. More recent research (Tournaki & Podell, 2005) indicates that teachers with high self-efficacy have more positive expectations of student achievement and better student outcomes.

From the standpoint of policy, the research served as a vehicle for the school district to determine the circumstance and forces that have shaped the teaching of social studies, in general, and on the secondary level, in particular. The research conducted provided insight into HCPS for all those interested in social studies in the district, including me as Program Director for the Project ELECT grant and as the Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies for HCPS. In this sense, the research functions as a tool for helping to clarify the current state of social studies education in HCPS and can provide the basis for evaluating both the effectiveness of one aspect of the grant—namely, a specific program of teacher professional development—and for determining future professional development goals.

A central question that this study attempts to answer is whether after participating in summer institutes designed to increase civic knowledge and improve instruction, high school social studies teachers who completed this training report an increase in their civic knowledge and their self-efficacy.

#### *Context of the Problem*

According to the 2005 CIRCLE report (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005), students who had teachers who either possessed a degree in a civics-

related subject or who had participated in professional development in civic knowledge, scored better on tests of civic knowledge than did students of teachers who possessed neither.

Many secondary social studies teachers come to HCPS high schools without degrees in civics-related subjects (government, political science, etc.) and may have taken only one or two classes in the subject during their teacher preparation programs. Many of these new teachers find themselves teaching American Government, a course typically taught to ninth graders in HCPS as a Florida requirement for high school graduation. Many teachers feel that their efforts are less than effective, as they are teaching a subject in which they often have little knowledge, to a group of students who potentially require the most attention. This is particularly stressful for teachers at a time when accountability and high-stakes testing can impact teacher pay.

The Florida Department of Education first introduced the Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR) plan to compensate teachers who are able to help students achieve learning gains, and later replaced it with the Merit Award Program (MAP), effective March 2007 (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-a). The HCPS plan includes the use of student achievement on district tests, including American Government, to evaluate and compensate high school social studies teachers (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-b).

In addition to teacher compensation being tied to student performance, the State of Florida has explored the idea of a social studies Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) joining those already in place for reading, math, writing,



and science. State Senate Bill 2570, introduced during the 2008 legislative session, called for the Florida Department of Education to “develop and administer a statewide assessment for social studies that includes an emphasis on the integration of economics education and *civics education* (emphasis added) as required in state statute 1001.03(1)” (SB 2570). While the bill was not approved, a social studies FCAT, which would incorporate an emphasis on civics, could become a reality in the near future.

Finally, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) call for “highly qualified” teachers in U.S. classrooms. The law requires that teachers of core subjects, including social studies, be highly qualified. This status is determined based on three criteria: (a) the teacher has a bachelor’s degree or higher, (b) he or she has achieved full state certification, and (c) he or she demonstrates knowledge in the subjects taught. To summarize the goal of these measures, U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, stated that, “we know nothing helps a child learn as much as a great teacher. Great teachers are helping us reach our goal of having every child doing grade-level work by 2014” (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). In a speech delivered to the Florida State Legislature in Tallahassee in January of 2008, Spellings called for the reauthorization of NCLB, remarking that “Great teachers are critical to all this [NCLB and Florida’s student achievement gains] and to improving student learning. We need to do a better job of recruiting and preparing good teachers

and getting them to where they're needed most" (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Florida's revised plan for highly qualified teachers (HQT) recognizes that the state faces a challenge recruiting and retaining these individuals. The state's HQT Revised Plan (2006) stated that:

With the highest in-migration growth rate of all states, a steadily growing and diverse student population, and a state constitutional amendment requiring sweeping reduction of class size at all grade levels, Florida continues to face substantial challenges in its efforts to ensure that all students have access to highly qualified teachers... schools that are not making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress as measured under NCLB) have a higher percentage of not highly qualified teachers (NHQT) classes than for all schools in the grouping.

At the state level, school classifications with the most acute needs for teacher quality include secondary high-poverty schools (16.2% NHQT), secondary high-poverty schools not making AYP (16.1% NHQT), secondary schools not making AYP (13.1% NHQT), high-poverty schools not making AYP (12.9% NHQT), and high-minority schools not making AYP (12.9% NHQT). However, it should be noted that there are other classifications that also have more than 10 percent of core classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

### *Problem*

In this current environment, it is valuable for training and recruitment of highly qualified teachers, as well as resource allocation, to examine whether teacher self-efficacy plays a role in student academic achievement. Social studies teachers can also benefit from such an examination by learning whether their efficacy and efforts contribute to student achievement. Moreover, teachers could benefit from the knowledge that their efforts might be significantly financially rewarded on the basis of student achievement. Students would benefit from increased knowledge of civics, leading to more active citizenship and a greater potential of passing a social studies FCAT examination that may well be a graduation requirement in the near future.

In this era of high-stakes testing and accountability, HCPS site-based and district administrators benefit from knowing to what degree professional development activities relative to government and civics improve a teacher's ability to teach those subjects and to what degree they improve student academic performance. As noted above, there is an underlying societal goal of increasing student civic engagement and participation in our democracy.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this policy study was to determine if secondary social studies teachers in a large urban school district, namely Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS), demonstrated an increase in their sense of personal teaching efficacy after participating in civic knowledge and engagement professional development activities.

### *Research Questions*

Do secondary social studies teachers in HCPS, who have participated in training to improve their knowledge of civics and government, gain a greater degree of self-efficacy in relation to their teaching? In addition to exploring this central question, this study addresses the following contextual questions relevant to the ultimate revision or formation of policy regarding social studies teacher professional development:

1. How has the current environment of high-stakes testing and accountability shaped the teaching of government and civics in HCPS?
2. How have site-based and district administrators supported and altered the teaching of government and civics in this district?
3. What is the role of Project ELECT in transforming and improving the teaching of government and civics in HCPS?
4. Do teachers participating in Project ELECT and this study perceive that they have adequate training in civics and government?
5. What is the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and training, experience, and degree attainment?
6. Can Project ELECT and other district initiatives improve the teaching of government and civics and how can this knowledge improve strategic decision making relative to teacher training and allocation of resources?

### *Significance of the Study*

This study focuses on HCPS high school social studies teachers who participated in one of three summer institutes developed under Project ELECT. Project ELECT is a 2.04-million-dollar grant awarded to HCPS by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools in the fall of 2007. The duration of the grant is from October 2007 to March 2009.

Project ELECT is based on the premise that exemplary civics education, which includes an understanding of the U.S. Congress and state legislatures, is a requisite for producing adults who confidently participate in the democratic process (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). While HCPS has maintained a long history of professional development activities designed to improve the teaching of social studies, particularly history, little attention has been paid to teaching government and civics. In my tenure as Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies (September 2002 to the present), few professional development opportunities focusing on civics and government content and/or pedagogy have been made available to secondary social studies teachers in the district. However, the funding awarded through Project ELECT changed that circumstance.

The Project ELECT grant provides HCPS with the opportunity to create a civics education support system based on national and state standards as well as culturally competent teaching strategies and that assesses both teacher and student knowledge of civics and government using the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for civics. Training opportunities conducted during

the Summer of 2008 were intended to provide teachers with an updated curriculum designed to highlight the teaching of government and civics, to improve content knowledge, and to supply resources that would support both teacher and student knowledge of government and civics. These summer institutes also provided an opportunity to collect data on teacher self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge of civics and government.

HCPS has partnered with USF in Tampa, Florida, to provide content experts in government and civics and to assess the effectiveness of the grant's training and resulting increases (or decreases) in student and teacher knowledge of government and civics.

This study focuses on high school social studies teachers who participated in one of three summer institutes designed to improve teacher knowledge of government and civics. This study was designed as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of district training initiatives as they relate to teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. This study, therefore, contributes as a tool for myself and other HCPS policy makers to determine how best to organize and evaluate teacher training and resources.

There is a considerable body of research regarding the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. Alfred Bandura (1997) described self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments." In other words, teacher self-efficacy relates to a teacher's belief that he or she can help students learn. Teacher efficacy (rather than *self*-efficacy) refers to whether or not

teachers are, in fact, effective in helping students learn in a measurable fashion (Ashton & Webb, 1986). If teachers possess self-efficacy, they believe that they can influence student learning. Research indicates that a teacher's sense of self-efficacy can bring about success in student learning (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). Likewise, research conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) indicated that a teacher's feelings concerning his or her own efficacy is one of the crucial variables associated with student achievement. Rosenthal and Jacobsen pointed out that teachers' expectations of their own abilities (as well as that of their students) can play a critical role in student achievement. More recent research (Tournaki & Podell, 2005) indicates that teachers with high self-efficacy have more positive expectations of student achievement and better student outcomes. For the purposes of this study, a 22-item Teacher Efficacy Scale (illustrated below), as opposed to the 16-item version used in the Tournaki and Podell study, was used to determine the degree to which teacher self-efficacy increased based on teachers having participated in professional development designed to increase their knowledge of government and civics.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

The following are limitations specific to this study.

1. This study was limited to social studies teachers and students at 25 HCPS high schools. While this provided a significant sample size,

generalization regarding other measures of student achievement would be difficult.

2. Given the selection of specific HCPS courses and teachers, this study may not be generalizable to other grade levels and subjects.
3. Teacher subjects in this study worked under my supervision and, while day-to-day contact was limited, some influence on the teachers' degree of self-efficacy might have existed on the basis of their selection for this study and participation in the summer institutes developed under Project ELECT. However, this influence might have been minimized by the fact that teachers were accepted to the summer institutes on a first-come-first-served basis and that all of them were surveyed anonymously.
4. Teachers participating in the study were paid to attend the summer institutes at a rate substantially greater than the normal rate of pay for workshops (\$27 versus \$10 per hour). This may affect teacher perception of the positive impact of the summer institutes.

#### *Definition of Terms*

*Ethnicity.* The ethnic affiliation of the teacher as self-reported on the survey instrument.

*Experience.* The number of years a teacher has taught social studies, as self-reported on the survey instrument.

*Gender.* The sex of the teacher, as self-reported on the survey instrument.



*FCAT.* The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, used to determine school grades under the state's A++ plan (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-c).

*HCPS.* Hillsborough County Public Schools located in Hillsborough County, Florida.

*NCLB.* The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

*Personal teaching efficacy.* A synonym of the term *self-efficacy* coined by Ashton and Webb in their 1982 study of Bandura's social cognitive theory.

*Policy.* A broad course of action, a general statement of principle, or any resulting rules and regulations implementing these actions or principles.

*Project ELECT.* Project Educating Learners to Engage in Civics Today, a \$2.04 million U.S. Department of Education grant awarded to HCPS's in October of 2007 to Improve Public Knowledge and Support of Democracy.

*Teacher self-efficacy.* A teacher's self-reported "judgment of his or her capability to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, pp. 283-285).

*Teacher Efficacy Scale.* The 22-item version of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES).

### *Research Plan*

While data collection is but one aspect of this policy study, it does provide an opportunity to shape policy relative to teaching government and civics in

HCPS. The sample consists of teachers in HCPS who teach regular, honors, and/or Advanced Placement high school social studies courses. The selected social studies teachers are distributed across the district's 25 high schools, which serve approximately 50,000 students (HCPS Fact Sheet, 2008). These teachers were selected based on their participation in one of three summer institutes offered for the teaching of government and civics, supported by the Project ELECT grant.

During the summer of 2008, three week-long summer institutes were organized to provide approximately 600 K-12 HCPS social studies teachers with professional development in government and civics content knowledge and pedagogy. Political Science professors from the University of South Florida provided the majority of this professional development, lecturing on topics such as "Voting Rights," "Democracy Promotion in the Middle East," and "Civil Rights versus Civil Liberties in an Age of Terrorism." Additionally, teachers participated in workshops to acquaint themselves with resources to support the teaching of government and civics, for example, Teacher's Curriculum Institutes' (TCI) "Government Alive" materials. The institutes presented the same material to three different audiences of teachers.

There are numerous instruments available to measure teachers' self-efficacy, and most have come under scrutiny by researchers during the past 2 decades. Bandura (1997) proposed that efficacy beliefs were powerful predictors of behavior since they were ultimately self-referent in nature and directed toward specific tasks. Aston and Webb (1982) applied Bandura's social cognitive theory

to teaching and coined the term “personal teaching efficacy,” a synonym to this study’s use of the term *self-efficacy*.

In 1984, Gibson and Dembo developed the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), as an attempt to develop a data collection instrument to study teacher self-efficacy. In the past, similar instruments have included the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument (STEBI; Riggs & Enochs, 1990); Teacher Locus of Control (TLC; Rose & Medway, 1981), and the Responsibility for Student Achievement (RSA; Guskey, 1981). However, some variability does exist between the instruments’ abilities to yield reliable scores. In fact, a recent study indicates the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) to be among the most reliable measure of teacher self-efficacy (Coladarci & Fink, 1995; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

As stated above, one purpose of this study is to determine whether a relationship exists between HCPS high school social studies teachers’ self-efficacy and the training they receive in pedagogy and knowledge of government and civics. It was hypothesized that teachers would report a higher degree of self-efficacy scores, during the administration of Gibson and Dembo’s 1984 TES, after having participated in the summer institutes offered through the Project ELECT grant. Teachers of secondary social studies (regular, honors, and Advanced Placement) were administered the TES at the beginning and end of the summer institutes, and comparisons were made among those scores. Teacher anonymity was protected by use of an ID number that was not divulged to me. Participating teachers were also asked to take the National Assessment

Educational Progress High School Civics Assessment prior to beginning the summer workshops and several months after completion. While the pre- and post-test NAEP data were not compared for purposes of this study, data from a teacher satisfaction survey, conducted by USF, was used to measure teacher self-reported gains in content knowledge. It was postulated that participation in the institutes would produce a self-reported increase in teacher knowledge, as measured by the Project ELECT Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey, and that increase in knowledge would correlate positively with an increase in teacher self-efficacy as measured by the TES. The TES is available to teachers online at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=gwplGZ8JvGFR\\_2bInb8wqToA\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=gwplGZ8JvGFR_2bInb8wqToA_3d_3d).

Along with the TES and satisfaction survey, teachers were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire that would determine the following:

1. their teaching assignment (regular, honors, Advanced Placement, or a mix)
2. their level of experience
3. their degree level
4. any honors they have achieved (Teacher of the Year, National Board Certification, etc.)
5. their age, gender, and ethnicity

The TES, satisfaction survey, and demographic questionnaire were distributed to all secondary social studies teachers who attended one of the three summer institutes sponsored by Project ELECT. Of the 452 teachers who

attended the summer institutes, 425 took the satisfaction survey, 116 of which were high school teachers. Eighty-one high school teachers took the TES. In order to maintain teacher anonymity, identification numbers were assigned to the TES's, satisfaction surveys, and demographic questionnaires. The HCPS Department of Assessment and Accountability was given the completed instruments and assisted in performing the appropriate statistical measures, including *t* tests and analyses of variance (ANOVAs).

### *Research Summary*

The purpose of this research was to provide data to enable HCPS to assess the degree to which HCPS social studies teachers' self-efficacy was affected by participation in government and civics training, as well as their training in pedagogy and exposure to new teaching resources. The resulting knowledge will be useful to me in my roles as Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies for the school district and Project Director for Project Elect. In a time of high-stakes FCAT testing and NCLB accountability, combined with limited budgets for professional development, it is critical that resources and training dollars be allocated in the most effective way possible. Moreover, since social studies teachers in the district benefit when they are able to produce gains in student participation in the democratic process, along with teaching valuable content, identification of the variables contributing to that success is desirable. Additionally, teacher compensation is increasingly tied to student achievement. Simply put, this study may contribute to an understanding of those factors that

play a role in social studies teachers' belief that their effectiveness leads to their students' success.

## Chapter 2

### The Policy Context: Literature Review

Central to this study is the concept of teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy refers to the teacher's sense that he or she is an effective teacher (regardless of whether that is true or not). Alfred Bandura (1997) described self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments." In other words, when applied to teaching, teacher self-efficacy relates to a teacher's beliefs that he or she can help students learn. Teacher efficacy (rather than *self-efficacy*) refers to whether or not teachers are actually effective in helping students learn in a measurable fashion (Ashton & Webb, 1986, pp. 3-6). If teachers possess self-efficacy, they believe they can influence student learning. If teacher efficacy exists, then teachers can, in fact, influence student learning in a measurable way. The present study focuses on teacher self-efficacy because research indicated that a teacher's sense of self-efficacy can bring about success in student learning (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). Likewise, research conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) indicated that a teacher's feelings concerning self-efficacy is one of the crucial variables associated with student achievement. Rosenthal and Jacobsen

pointed out that a teacher's expectations of his or her own abilities (as well as that of the students) can play a critical role in student achievement.

### *Why Teachers Lack Self-Efficacy*

In the studies cited above, a strong sense of self-efficacy was associated with gains in student achievement. The reverse, of course, is also evidenced in these studies—that a low sense of self-efficacy is associated with lower student achievement (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). In addition, low self-efficacy and general dissatisfaction with one's own job performance, as well as the poor performance of students, can contribute to teacher burnout and attrition. Burnout is described in the following definition:

A psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. Depersonalization refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people, who are usually the recipients of one's services or care. (Maslach, 1993, pp. 20-21)

Burnout is thus a job-related syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment. Reduced personal accomplishment is described as "a person's negative self-evaluation in relation to his or her job performance" (Schaufeli, Maslach, & Mareck, 1993, p. 17). What is key to note in this definition is that burnout is



based on an individual's perception of the workplace environment and the individual's ability to function within that environment. Burnout is found especially among such professions as social workers, police officers, doctors, and teachers working for and with people such as clients, patients, and pupils. Burnout is not a one-time occurrence or an instantaneous event; rather, it gradually builds to a level at which the professional begins to behave in a dysfunctional manner (Evers, Gerrichauzen, & Tomic, 2000, p. 33).

Studies of teacher self-efficacy indicate that emotional exhaustion and feelings of ineffectiveness can lead to teacher burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 1998, p. 10). While many factors can contribute to teacher burnout, according to Alfred Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory on the subject, it is not the tasks that cause one's stress but rather one's perceived ability to carry out these tasks. Often, classroom management problems, as opposed to content knowledge, lead to a teacher's lack of self-efficacy (Evers, Gerrichauzen, & Tomic, 2000, p. 33).

According to a study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (Ingersoll, Alsalam, Quinn, & Bobbitt, 1997), the following factors can also contribute to teacher burnout:

1. Teachers are underpaid.
2. Teachers have too little say in the operation of schools.
3. Teachers have few opportunities to improve teaching skills.
4. Teachers suffer from a lack of support and assistance.
5. Teachers are not adequately rewarded or recognized for their efforts.

This research addresses two of these factors. Namely, this research focuses on whether training in government and civics content knowledge and pedagogy, and the opportunity to be financially rewarded for improved student performance, improve teacher self-efficacy.

In addition, the above study points out that teacher attrition may also be caused by a mismatch between actual teaching experience and expectations. According to the Department of Education report and other reformers, the key to improving the quality of schools is to upgrade the status, training, and working conditions for teachers. The rationale behind this concept is that upgrading teacher status and skills will lead to improved teacher morale and performance and thus to increased student learning (Leming, 1999).

It should be noted that in the case of the factors listed above, perception is reality. On the basis of Bandura's theories on self-efficacy (that it is not the tasks themselves but the individuals' confidence in their ability to carry them out), teacher dissatisfaction with working conditions is largely a function of the teacher's perceived shortcomings in his or her working environment, rather than whether the conditions actually exist.

However, there is debate as to whether the problem of teacher attrition is as dramatic as the U.S. Department of Education study indicates. According to research sponsored by the Rand Corporation and conducted by Grissmer and Kirby (1992), teacher attrition levels are at their lowest rate in the past 25 years. They attribute their findings to the following factors:

1. Teacher attrition is greatest during the first 5 years of teaching, and the teacher workforce of the 1990's was made up largely of mid-career/middle-aged individuals rather than new teachers.
2. Women teachers have changed their workforce behavior. Rather than dropping out of teaching altogether when starting a family, they tend to drop out less often and for shorter periods of time.
3. Many teachers are entering the profession at a later stage in life (their thirties rather than their twenties).
4. Teacher salaries have been on the rise since the late 1980's.

An additional factor in teachers remaining in the profession relates to the amount of time they have spent teaching (Leming, 1999). More experienced teachers have a greater sense of teaching self-efficacy and are more likely to remain in the classroom. Additional factors that may influence a teacher's decision to remain in the profession include the fact that pay and benefits for teachers have increased significantly (Grissmer & Kirby, 1994). Certainly, this is true in Florida, where salary and retirement benefits are based primarily on seniority. Also, as noted above, the teacher workforce is largely older (starting in their thirties as opposed to their twenties), and this may contribute to their sense of self-efficacy and their desire to remain on the job. According to a study conducted by Ross, Cousins, and Gadalla (1996), teacher self-efficacy is stronger for experienced teachers. Additionally, the study indicated that teachers with graduate degrees were more self-efficacious than those without. Clearly, their study indicates that teacher self-efficacy increased with time in the

profession and with greater education. Ironically, many states have instituted efforts to reduce the number of experienced, and more expensive, teachers. These states have offered inducements for teachers to take early retirement as a way of reducing education budgets (of which salary and benefits make up the largest cost). Many teachers are eligible to retire in their fifties, with 25–30 years of service, rather than waiting until the traditional retirement age of 65.

Efforts to improve the profession have received support at the federal level in the form of Goals 2000 legislation (1994) and funding. Efforts in Florida and HCPS have focused on supporting and promoting National Board Teacher Certification. HCPS has also placed increased emphasis on teacher training and staff development. However, there is little actual consensus as to what will improve teacher performance. Disagreements exist as to whether efforts should focus on

1. salary and bonuses
2. improving individual teacher attitudes toward their work
3. training and educational programs to upgrade skills
4. staff collegiality and collaboration
5. decentralization of school/district decision-making.

All of the efforts listed above have been tried to some degree in HCPS.

However, no study known to the researcher has been implemented to determine the effectiveness of these measures. The present study is thus designed to explore a portion of teacher attitudes toward their work—self-efficacy.

A 1989 study of teacher recruitment and retention suggested a number of ways to improve teaching and schools in general. Ann Richardson Gayles (pp. 61-67) offered the following suggestions for improving teachers' professional experience:

1. Schools should give active encouragement to the basic principles of academic freedom.
2. Teachers should be provided with the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of the school and the carrying out of cooperative plans.
3. New teachers need to be made to feel a part of the school and to receive help in identifying resources.
4. Teachers should be provided with opportunities for research, study, professional travel, and membership in professional organizations.
5. Instructional supervisor/mentor programs should be developed and implemented.
6. Good teaching should be recognized.
7. Periodic and meaningful evaluations should be provided.

Relative to improving the actual working conditions of teachers, Gayles went on to recommend that student-to-teacher ratios should not be greater than 25:1. Teachers should also be given the opportunity to specialize in areas of interest to them, and their subsequent teaching assignments should remain stable enough over time to allow them to develop adequate knowledge and experience. Teacher workloads, particularly nonteaching duties, should be kept

to a minimum. Teachers should have access to adequate teaching facilities and resources and should enjoy the support of a competent administrative and clerical staff. Finally, Gayles recommended that an atmosphere of high faculty morale should be fostered.

Proposals for retaining teachers developed by Schnorr (1994) include welcoming and orienting new staff, encouraging support and collegiality, providing for teacher control of the work environment, and supporting professional development.

A study by Grissmer and Kirby (1994) has offered many of the same suggestions. In addition, however, they suggested the idea of differential pay based on teaching specialty, "teaching quality," and experience (p. 5). They further point out that teachers and teacher unions have not been strong proponents of differential pay. The state of Florida recently provided a bonus of \$2,000 to Science and English as a Second Language (ESOL) teachers. The state also provides funding (approximately 90%) for teachers to pursue National Board Teacher Certification and pays an annual bonus equal to 10% of the statewide average teacher pay, currently around \$4,000. Florida also provides money to schools that score high on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), money that can then be allotted to teachers in the form of bonuses.

More recently, the Florida Department of Education introduced the Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR) plan to compensate teachers who are able to help students achieve learning gains but replaced it with the Merit Award Program (MAP), effective March 2007 (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-a).

The HCPS plan includes the use of student achievement on district tests, including the subject of American Government, to evaluate and compensate high school social studies teachers (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-b). Clearly, the trend in Florida is for teacher compensation to be more directly tied to student achievement, whether measured by the FCAT or district exams.

Grissmer and Kirby (1994) also stated that, in addition to pay incentives, districts and schools should do a better job of recognizing the successes achieved by both individual teachers and the profession as a whole. They point out that much of the conventional wisdom regarding schools and teaching is inaccurate. As evidence, they have cited that national test scores are actually increasing rather than declining. They have pointed out that scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have increased in reading and math from 1970 to 1990 (pp. 7–8). They have noted that while SAT scores have declined, they are not representative of any identifiable group over time. The decline is primarily due to the self-selected sample taking the test—a sample which has grown and changed in composition over time. Additionally, due to the fact that this sample does not include the groups whose test scores have increased most rapidly over the past 20 years—namely, lower scoring or non-college-bound students—SAT scores provide a misleading picture of performance of youth over the past 20 years (p. 6). Grissmer and Kirby also stated that teacher morale and performance can be negatively affected by the fact that teaching is a profession that is undeservedly criticized. They have

called on researchers to contribute to teacher retention by simply “getting the message right.”

For purposes of this study, Project ELECT has funded the opportunity to provide teacher professional development in content knowledge of government and civics, as well as providing instructional strategies and resources. As was noted above, it was hypothesized that such training would produce a measurable increase in secondary social studies teachers’ self-efficacy and that they would self-report an increase in their content knowledge relative to government and civics. The grant provided a dual benefit to HCPS secondary social studies teachers by providing training in content and pedagogy; this, in turn, might potentially improve student performance on district tests, which could result in teachers receiving performance-based bonuses. Both positive outcomes could contribute to greater teacher self-efficacy and to a desire to remain in the classroom.

As has been previously stated, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), exacerbates the need to retain “highly qualified” teachers in our nations’ classrooms. The law requires that teachers of core subjects, including social studies, be highly qualified. This status is determined based on three criteria: (a) the teacher has a bachelor’s degree or higher, (b) the teacher has achieved full state certification, and (c) the teacher demonstrates knowledge in the subjects taught (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).



Florida's revised plan for highly qualified teachers (HQT) recognizes that the state faces a challenge recruiting and retaining these individuals. The state's HQT Revised Plan (2006) stated the following:

With the highest in-migration growth rate of all states, a steadily growing and diverse student population, and a state constitutional amendment requiring sweeping reduction of class size at all grade levels, Florida continues to face substantial challenges in its efforts to ensure that all students have access to highly qualified teachers... schools that are not making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress as measured under NCLB) have a higher percentage of NHQT classes than for all schools in the grouping.

At the state level, school classifications with the most acute needs for teacher quality include secondary high-poverty schools (16.2% NHQT), secondary high-poverty schools not making AYP (16.1% NHQT), secondary schools not making AYP (13.1% NHQT), high-poverty schools not making AYP (12.9% NHQT), and high-minority schools not making AYP (12.9% NHQT). However, it should be noted that there are other classifications that also have more than 10% of core classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

#### *What Contributes to Teacher Self-Efficacy*

Numerous studies exist that point to a relationship between teacher experience and teacher retention (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). Likewise, studies indicate a correlation

between teacher experience and efficacy (Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996). However, Leming's (1999) study of the relationship between years of teaching experience and self-efficacy found that only a low positive correlation (-.21) existed between the two constructs.

Teacher self-efficacy has proven to be significantly related to teacher effectiveness and student performance (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Teachers who are more experienced and more self-efficacious experiment more with a variety of teaching strategies (Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988), as well as plan more (Allinder, 1994).

In the past 2 decades, measures of teachers' sense of self-efficacy have come under scrutiny by researchers. Bandura (1997, p. 3) proposed that efficacy beliefs were powerful predictors of behavior since they were ultimately self-referent in nature and directed toward specific tasks. Ashton and Webb (1982) applied Bandura's social cognitive theory to teaching and coined the term "personal teaching efficacy," which is in common usage today.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) as an attempt to develop a data collection instrument to study teacher self-efficacy. In the past, similar instruments have included the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument (STEBI; Riggs & Enochs, 1990), Teacher Locus of Control (TLC; Rose & Medway, 1981), and the Responsibility for Student Achievement (RSA; Guskey, 1981). Variability exists between the instruments' abilities to yield reliable scores. However, a recent studies indicate that the TES to be among the most reliable as a measure of teacher self-efficacy (Coladarci &

Fink, 1995; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990).

### *Pilot Study*

Although Leming's (1999) work indicates that teacher experience has some impact on teacher retention, little work has been done to determine whether a relationship exists between a teacher's self-efficacy and a teacher's desire to stay in the profession. Additionally, his study shows that teachers have not been significantly affected (driven from the profession) by what he describes as the "repressive" aspects of school life (p. 5). Indeed, teachers seem to remain in the profession despite the well-documented shortcomings of the education system. In the spring of 2000 I conducted a study to examine whether there was a link between HCPS secondary social studies teachers' self-efficacy and their desire to remain in the profession; this study served as a pilot study for the present research.

*Method.* To determine whether a relationship exists between secondary social studies teachers' self-efficacy and their desire to stay in the profession, I developed a 22-item survey (see Appendix A based on the study conducted by Ashton and Webb, 1986), to be administered to Hillsborough County secondary social studies teachers. The survey questions ranged from simple demographic data (age, experience, degree level, subjects taught) to questions related to their attitudes toward their teaching. I also developed twenty formal interview questions (see Appendix A) to ask each teacher. However, it should be noted that the interviews often deviated from the formal structure intended, but this

often led to interesting (and possibly useful) data. The interviews were tape-recorded.

My expectations were that the surveys and interviews would somehow correlate. With teacher scarcity already being felt and even greater shortages looming on the horizon, the expectation was that a study of this nature could provide useful data to HCPS as well as to me in my (then) role as a social studies department chair. Subjects of this research were high school social studies teachers selected on the basis of proximity and availability. I interviewed and surveyed a total of 10 teachers at three separate high schools (Armwood, King, and Wharton). The teachers that were surveyed/interviewed ranged in age from 22 to 45 years old and had from between 1 and 15 years of teaching experience. It should be noted that the majority of these teachers were younger (in their mid- to late-twenties) and had less than 5 years teaching experience. I purposefully did not interview teachers from my own school nor did I expand this research to include teachers from other disciplines. Permission to interview the teachers was obtained first from the school district's supervisor of secondary social studies and then from individual schools' social studies department chairs. The interviews and surveys were held in the strictest confidence to protect the privacy of participants.

Two important items included in the survey were based on Ashton and Webb's (1986) study of teacher self-efficacy. These items were as follows:

1. If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated student.

2. A teacher really can't do much because much of a student's motivation and performance depend on the home environment.

The teachers were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with these statements. In the case of question 1 (Item 6 on the survey), a response of *strongly agree* or *agree* would indicate a positive sense of teacher self-efficacy. Conversely, a response of *agree* or *strongly agree* with Item 2 (Item 7 on the survey) would tend to indicate that the teacher had a negative sense of teacher self-efficacy.

Teachers were also asked to predict whether they would remain in the profession for "many years to come" and whether they had plans to further their own education.

The interview questions focused on the teachers' current assignment, their students, and their teaching and classroom management styles. The teachers were also asked what they thought made them an effective teacher. Finally, the interview focused on teachers' plans for the future.

*Results.* On the basis of the survey results, this group of 10 secondary social studies teachers considered themselves to be highly effective educators. In other words, they possessed a positive sense of teacher self-efficacy. To the first item noted above ("If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated student"), 70% strongly agreed and 30% agreed. To the second item ("A teacher really can't do much because much of a student's motivation and performance depend on the home environment"), they agreed at a rate of 10% and disagreed at a rate of 90% with the idea that there was little

that they could do to motivate students. To other selected items, they responded as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Selected Responses to the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) Used in the Pilot Study*

Item no.	Item	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
8	I use a variety of instructional strategies	90%	10%		
9	I am able to see improvement in my students' performance	90%	10%		
13	I can't seem to motivate my students			40%	60%
16	I find teaching social studies to be a rewarding experience	80%	20%		
19	I plan to be teaching social studies for many years to come	40%	50%	10%	

Two other items in the survey yielded interesting results. All respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statements that teachers should have more support and smaller class sizes and that many would leave the profession unless given more support.

As a whole, these teachers considered themselves to be effective teachers, and some extremely effective. All believed that they “make a

difference” in terms of affecting student learning. They indicated using a variety of teaching strategies in their classrooms and using multiple forms of assessment. All believed that their students generally had positive feelings toward them and their teaching. They described themselves as intense and demanding but caring. All had plans to improve their teaching, either through staff development training or by pursuing advanced degrees. All could describe effective teaching and ineffective teaching in extremely clear terms. They described effective teaching as motivating, interesting, and not routine; they also supplied examples based on their own classroom experience. Likewise, they found it easy to describe ineffective teachers as unmotivated and relying heavily on seatwork and handouts. With one exception, all the teachers interviewed planned to continue teaching 5 and 10 years into the future. The exception planned to move on to college-level teaching. When asked what they would do if they could go back in time to college and start over, all responded that they would still teach.

Clearly, on the basis of the surveys and interviews, this group of teachers considered themselves to be effective teachers who planned to remain in the profession for years to come. Moreover, I conclude that, taken together, the surveys and interviews reveal the same pattern. In other words, both the surveys and interviews indicated that these teachers possessed a strong sense of self-efficacy and that the majority of them planned to remain in the profession. None of the teachers interviewed mentioned money as a primary motivating factor, but all expressed a desire to receive training to improve both their content knowledge

and teaching. However, the small sample size precluded the researcher from drawing any final conclusions from the data; further studies using a larger and more varied sample needed to be conducted. Some flaws in this pilot study must be acknowledged; they include the following:

1. sample size was limited and fairly homogeneous
2. no effort was made to include “incompetent” or “ineffective” teachers in the study
3. no interviews or surveys were conducted with teachers who had left the profession
4. this study did not replicate previous work, particularly Ashton and Webb’s (1986) study. Rather, it was a modification of their efforts.

*Conclusions.* While no previous studies that I could locate at the time the pilot study was undertaken revealed a direct link between teachers’ self-efficacy and a desire to remain in the profession, some conclusions can be drawn based on similar research. Indeed, teachers who possess a positive self-efficacy have been shown to have a positive effect on student learning (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). In contrast, teachers who possess a negative self-efficacy are likely to burn out and leave the profession (Brouwers & Tomic, 1998). According to Leming (1999), teacher experience leads to a greater sense of self-efficacy and a greater likelihood of remaining in the classroom. The findings of Ross, Cousins, and Gadalla (1996) further stated that teacher efficacy increases with experience and education. The pilot study



also indicated that teachers who possess a positive sense of teaching efficacy and considered themselves to be effective teachers are likely to remain in the classroom. However, the teachers featured in the study did indicate a desire to improve their teaching. It is therefore likely that, as they gain experience and more time in the classroom, their sense of self-efficacy will grow and they will be even more likely to continue teaching.

#### *Linking the Pilot Study to the Present Research Study*

The pilot study provided me with the following benefits:

1. a background on the literature relative to teacher self-efficacy
2. familiarity with the TES.

It is my belief that this experience provided a fair background to understand the factors that support a positive self-efficacy. Furthermore, the 2000 pilot study led me to expect that a teacher's self-efficacy would be positively influenced by experience and education. The current study is intended to assess further whether training in government and civics, provided during the summer institutes sponsored by Project ELECT, positively affected secondary social studies teachers' self-efficacy.

#### *Teacher Civics Knowledge and Teacher Self-Efficacy*

There is a considerable body of research that has explored the factors influencing teacher self-efficacy. Far less research has investigated the degree to which teacher knowledge of civics and government affects teacher self-efficacy. As noted above, a 2005 CIRCLE report (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005) revealed that students who had teachers who possessed a degree in a

civics-related subject or who had participated in professional development in civics knowledge scored better on civics tests than did students of teachers who possessed neither.

Strong self-efficacy has been linked to positive teaching behaviors and student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Likewise, researchers found that teacher self-efficacy was strongly related to student achievement (Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992). Teacher self-efficacy has also been related to student motivation (Midgley, Fieldhoffer, & Eckles, 1989) and students' sense of self-confidence as it relates to subject matter (Anderson, Green, & Loewen, 1988). Tournaki and Podell (2005) concluded that teachers with a positive self-efficacy were likely to have positive views of their students' ability to learn, which in turn affects students' self-perception.

The 2005 CIRCLE study of teacher preparation and knowledge of civics and government indicated that teacher content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and self-confidence in a given subject matter, all related positively to student outcomes. However, the study noted a lack of research concerning the link between student achievement and civic engagement, and teacher knowledge of civics and government.

In his book, *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens*, Peter Levine (2007) concluded that a correlation exists between students having taken classes in government and civics and the likelihood of engaging in civic activism. A 2003 poll of young people indicated that those who had taken a course in government and civics were twice as likely

to vote and follow the news, and four times as likely to volunteer for a political campaign, than their peers who had no civics education (Kurtz, Rosenthal, & Lufkin, 2003).

A 2008 CIRCLE Working Paper (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008) recommended that teachers receive professional development in government and civics in order to help their students become civically active, particularly students who live in poverty or are members of racial minorities. The working paper pointed out the following civics education best practices:

1. discuss current events
2. study issues of interest to students
3. have discussion of social and political topics in an open classroom environment
4. study government, history and related social sciences
5. interact with civic role models
6. participate in after-school activities
7. learn about community problems and ways to respond
8. work on service learning projects
9. engage in simulations.

CIRCLE noted that students' opportunities to participate in civic opportunities and develop a political voice will depend in large part on the civic knowledge and professional development of their teachers. The Project ELECT grant provides the vehicle to improve teacher content and pedagogical knowledge of government and civics and, by extension, their self-efficacy.

Currently, there is significant research regarding improving the civic engagement of youth. Feldman and Pasek (2007) concluded that school-based civics education provided a platform for promoting student political awareness and participation. Additionally, Gibson and Levine (2003) noted that school-based civics education was one of the best ways to increase civic engagement among youth. Finally, McDevitt and Kiousis (2006) found that a hands-on and interactive civics curriculum generated increased student interest in politics and an increased likelihood of participation in the political process. The link between teacher knowledge of civics and government content and pedagogy, and the resulting increase in self-efficacy is a subject worthy of exploration.

## Chapter 3

### The Policy Context and Current Environment

My tenure as Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies Education for HCPS has coincided with implementation of the NCLB and the introduction of the use of Florida's FCAT as a tool for grading schools (Florida Department of Education. n.d.-c). Both plans initially placed emphasis on reading and mathematics, with writing and science being added later. Under the premise of "what is tested is taught," social studies in HCPS could have been relegated to the back burner. Fortunately, HCPS has maintained a relatively strong program of social studies education, particularly at the secondary level.

The 1996 version of Florida's Sunshine State Standards for social studies (Florida Department of Education. n.d.-d) and the new standards (Florida Department of Education. n.d.-e), only recently approved by the State Board of Education, require teaching social studies at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels. Courses in American Government, World History, American History, and Economics are requirements for a high school diploma in our state. However, both NCLB and the FCAT, which do not currently measure student achievement in the social studies, have required HCPS social studies teachers to support district and site-based efforts in those areas that are measured, particularly reading.

Over the past 5 years, HCPS social studies teachers at all levels have received professional development training in reading in the content area. The result has been that far less emphasis has been placed on improving their content knowledge in all areas of the social studies, including government and civics. In addition to the reading training, social studies educators in HCPS are currently measured against their peers, again primarily in their ability to improve their students' reading comprehension as measured by the FCAT.

For purposes of this policy study, it is important to review the standing of social studies, particularly at the secondary level, in HCPS. While both district and site-based administrators value the teaching of social studies, and particularly those social studies subjects that potentially enhance active citizenship, it is fair to say that the recent focus on reading in the content area has yielded greater recognition for teachers of this discipline. According to Mr. Charles Fleming, Director of Staff Development for HCPS, and formerly General Director of Secondary Education and Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies, "unless the individual in question is a former social studies teacher, social studies is valued more for its contribution to reading gains than citizenship."

Mr. Fleming helped shape HCPS social studies in many ways during his tenure as Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies. Specifically, he brought "History Alive!" into the district as an instructional tool. Developed by the Teacher's Curriculum Institute (TCI), History Alive! is a product that utilizes research-based active instruction and utilizes multiple intelligence strategies to teach United States and world history (Teacher's Curriculum Institute, n.d.). The

TCI approach consists of a series of instructional practices that allow students of all abilities to master key social studies concepts. Their approach is characterized by eight features. Lessons and activities are based on five well-established theories: Understanding by Design, Nonlinguistic Representation, Multiple Intelligences, Cooperative Interaction, and Spiral Curriculum.

TCI has recently introduced "Government Alive!," which is being introduced into HCPS under the Project ELECT grant. Both History Alive! and Government Alive! have strong reading, writing, and critical thinking components, skills that are measured by the FCAT. Additionally, Mr. Fleming, and subsequent social studies supervisors, including myself, have stressed reading in the content area. In particular, the district has made a huge investment in Project Creating Independence Through Student-Owned Strategies (Project CRISS, n.d.) to improve the level of reading instruction in the district. While gauging the effectiveness of these programs is beyond the scope of this research, suffice it to say that HCPS social studies teachers have generally adopted these teaching strategies into their instruction, contributing to the perception that social studies educators and courses have helped improve student reading.

Kathy Taylor, my immediate predecessor as social studies supervisor, echoed this characterization of social studies teachers supporting reading improvement. In particular she pointed out that reading in the content area improves the ability of students to more readily gain knowledge of social studies concepts and that our teachers saw this (or acquiesced to it) early on.

There are data to indicate that the perception described above has some basis in reality. For example, according to the HCPS Office of Assessment and Accountability (2007, 2008), students enrolled in required social studies courses such as government and world history make gains in reading at rates that exceed state and district averages. This same phenomenon is reflected in social studies electives such as Law Studies, Psychology, Sociology, and so forth, where the gain is even greater. This has led to the view among district and site-based administrators that students enrolled in social studies required courses and electives make reading gains. I use the word *perception* because there is no data that can specifically link enrollment in social studies courses with reading gains. In other words, students in these courses are also enrolled in mathematics, language arts, and science, and research has not been conducted by the district to determine which of these courses has the greatest impact. However, because HCPS social studies teachers have demonstrated a willingness to adopt instructional strategies that promote reading, a factor of which administrators are acutely aware, they are viewed as contributing to the district's goal of improving reading. At a time when social studies courses in many districts in Florida are in decline, particularly in the area of electives, HCPS has seen strong growth. In fact, while student population growth has been flat and no new high schools have been opened in the past 3 years and the discipline has seen only a handful of retirements, secondary social studies has continued to add new teachers, 22 in the 2008–09 school year alone. As has been noted throughout this dissertation, social studies teachers can be financially



compensated based on the student performance of the FCAT and resulting school grade, as well as via MAP results (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-a).

District-level administrators have supported social studies education by funding professional development, usually in the form of district-created content and pedagogical workshops, and by funding textbook purchases. HCPS social studies has received an equitable share of resources vis-à-vis other disciplines.

As has been described above, school-based administrators have generally been supportive of the social studies. This manifests itself in allowing teachers to offer electives and to attend training during the school day. Again, the perception that social studies teachers contribute to gains in student reading comprehension have contributed to this support. The HCPS Office of Assessment and Accountability (2007, 2008) indicated that, on average, 59% of 9th graders and 53% of 10th graders made gains in reading in 2006 as measured by the FCAT. Students enrolled in ninth-grade regular government classes made gains of 45% and 68% for honors government. Tenth-grade regular world history students gained 39% in reading and honors students gained 59%. Ninth and 10th graders in social studies electives made much more significant gains in reading than the district average. Some examples include Advanced Placement Human Geography at 74%, Advanced Placement World History at 68%, Psychology at 52%, Sociology at 61%, and Philosophy at 56%. Reading gains in some high schools were even more pronounced. For example, 78% of students enrolled in 9th-grade government honors at Newsome High

School made reading gains compared with the district average of 68%, and 69% of 10th-grader world history honors students at Sickles High School made reading gains compared with the district average of 59%.

These numbers are not lost on school-based administrators who have come to the conclusion, on the basis of similar results from the recent past, that students in social studies courses, particularly honors, Advanced Placement, and elective courses, studying a subject in which they were interested, were more likely to read in that course and, by extension, make reading gains as measured by the FCAT.

Both district-level and school-based administrators, admittedly more focused on reading than content, perceived the need to have professionally trained and qualified teachers in front of social studies classrooms. School-based administrators in particular are careful to create class schedules where engaging and motivating teachers are assigned to those 9th and 10th graders who will be taking the FCAT. While this practice is not applied uniformly throughout the district, it is safe to say that school-based administrators are at least aware that they should schedule teachers in such a way as to positively impact FCAT reading scores. Put another way, they do schedule less than stellar social studies teachers into classes where they will do the least harm relative to FCAT test scores.

As described above, the need to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers of government and civics is acute in Hillsborough County Public

Schools (HCPS) as well as in Florida as a whole. The following illustrate a number of factors that contribute to this circumstance:

1. the emergence of an educational environment where high-stakes testing is tied to school grading and teacher compensation
2. the need to supply the content training and pedagogical strategies necessary for teachers to confidently teach civics and government
3. the broader societal goal to teach students the skills and knowledge that will allow them to function as effective citizens in our representative democracy.

For HCPS, the Project ELECT grant has provided an opportunity to address the need to provide highly qualified social studies teachers. Specifically, it provides the district the opportunity to engage K–12 social studies teachers in professional development training that will increase their knowledge of civics and government content, as well as supplying them with engaging teaching strategies and resources. Doing so is expected to have the benefit of increasing student knowledge of civics and government; this should then result in their performing better academically, as measured by end-of-course exams, and potentially, by a social studies FCAT. It is anticipated that students who have more knowledge of civics and government are more likely to be engaged as citizens. In 2005, CIRCLE reported that teacher professional development in civic knowledge and understanding related positively with students' civic knowledge (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005). Better student performance benefits the schools and the district in the sense that the state now grades schools based on student

achievement, and student achievement is increasingly tied to teacher compensation. This, in a sense, becomes a cumulative process with better prepared teachers providing better instruction to students who perform measurably better, resulting in better grades for schools and districts and, thus, greater teacher compensation. In a larger sense, society then benefits from a more informed and engaged citizenry. However, the current educational environment of high stakes testing, which impacts teacher compensation, deserves to be addressed.

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The often controversial measure represented a sweeping overhaul of elementary and secondary education in the United States. The central goal of NCLB is to ensure that every student will be performing on grade level by the 2013–14 school year. To measure progress toward that goal, the U.S. Department of Education requires states to develop benchmarks and tests to make sure every child is learning. To that end, Florida has created the A++ plan for education (Florida Department of Education. n.d.-f), which is described in greater detail below. Among its many features, the NCLB law:

1. identifies where improvement in learning is needed on the basis of data disaggregated by student subgroups
2. alerts parents to student, school, and district performance and provides them options if their child's school fails to measure up

3. emphasizes researched-based educational programs to promote student achievement, and, important for this policy study,
4. requires that students be taught by “highly qualified” and well-trained teachers who possess deep content knowledge of the courses they teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

NCLB requires each subgroup (all ethnic groups, students with disabilities, students learning English, and economically disadvantaged students) in schools, districts, and the state as a whole to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in reading, mathematics, writing, and graduation rate. Schools that do not make enough progress 2 years in a row are in need of improvement and must provide alternatives to parents—such as transfers to other schools or participation in a different program within the school. Schools that need improvement 2 years in a row (i.e., do not make AYP for 3 consecutive years) must provide tutoring to students in the schools that don’t make AYP (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-c). The message for schools and districts is that they must improve student performance or risk losing funding, a feature of the legislation that some have criticized as punitive.

Much debate, both in political and educational circles, has surrounded the implementation of NCLB, and describing this debate exceeds the scope of this research. Suffice it to say that NCLB has altered the “rules of the game” governing teaching and learning in Florida and across the nation.

NCLB requires that states develop plans to guarantee that all students, by the 2013–14 school year, are performing on grade level. Florida’s plan to address this requirement is the A+, and the subsequent A++ plan. Under the A++ plan (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-f), school grades are based on how well students have mastered the Sunshine State Standards—the skills that Florida teachers have determined children must learn at each grade level—as measured by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Student scores are classified into five achievement levels, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Schools earn points based on three factors: how well students are doing, how much progress they are making (learning gains), and how much progress struggling students are making in reading and mathematics (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-c).

Though not currently tested under the A++ plan (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-f), a social studies FCAT is a looming possibility. Senate Bill 2570, introduced during the 2008 legislative session, called for the Florida Department of Education to “develop and administer a statewide assessment for social studies that includes an emphasis on the integration of economics education and *civics* education (emphasis added) as required in state statute 1001.03(1)” (SB 2570). While the bill did not pass during the 2008 legislative session, a social studies FCAT, which would incorporate an emphasis on civics, could become a reality in the foreseeable future.

Additionally, former U.S. Senator Bob Graham and Congressman Lou Frey have established institutes for the study of government and civics at the

University of Florida and the University of Central Florida, respectively (Bob Graham Center for Public Service, 2008; Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida, 2008). Both institutes have as their mission teaching government and civics to Florida's youth, and both gentlemen have called for inclusion of those subjects as part of the state's FCAT assessment.

Thus, it appears that in Florida, the subject of social studies, previously ignored as an FCAT-assessed subject, may now be given more attention. At the very least, it appears that end-of-course assessments for social studies may soon be required, as called for in SB 2570 above. Social studies is therefore likely to take its place along with reading, math, and science in the high-stakes world of FCAT testing. Moreover, it is likely that government and civics will be among the first of the social studies to be assessed.

For HCPS social studies teachers, this means that any self-perceived deficiency in their ability to teach government and civics could contribute to their being less than confident about teaching these subjects. Recall that at the outset of this research it was noted that in HCPS, many teachers enter the profession with little or no coursework in civics or government-related subjects.

Many of these new teachers find themselves teaching American Government, a course taught to ninth graders in HCPS as a requirement for high-school graduation in Florida. The combination of (a) teaching a subject of which he or she has little knowledge to (b) a group of students who potentially require the most attention can contribute to a teacher feeling that his or her

efforts are less than effective. This is particularly stressful to teachers at a time when accountability and high-stakes testing can impact teacher pay.

NCLB declares that for teachers to be “highly qualified they must possess a bachelor’s degree, obtain full state certification for the subject(s) they teach, and demonstrate subject-matter knowledge” (usually by passing a state certification exam). NCLB has forced districts across the state to focus on recruiting and retaining the very best teachers. Unfortunately, for subjects such as math and science, this has proved difficult because a shortage of traditionally trained teachers of those subjects exists. Districts have been required to develop plans to recruit and to provide on-the-job training to teacher candidates of those subjects. These Alternative Certification Programs (ACP) provide a pathway for prospective teachers to meet the “highly qualified” status demanded by NCLB.

Fortunately for HCPS, there is no such shortage of traditionally trained social studies teachers, meaning teachers who have graduated from a college of education and held an internship. The majority of secondary social studies teachers in the district’s classrooms come from traditional programs, such as those available at the University of South Florida (USF) and University of Tampa. However, as noted above, many of the traditionally trained secondary social studies teachers in HCPS may have a limited background in government and civics. A limited background in this area would be significant, given research that indicates that students of teachers who either possess a degree in a civics-related subject or who had participated in professional development in civics



knowledge, scored better on civics tests than did students of teachers who possessed neither (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005).

Moreover, Florida's current Merit Award Program (MAP; Florida Department of Education, n.d.-a) has added a degree of pressure to district social studies teachers because teacher pay is now tied to student achievement on district tests, including American Government (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-b).

Using the reasoning described above, HCPS secondary social studies teachers who feel more self-efficacious because they have received training in civics and government-related content knowledge and pedagogy may be in a better position to help students achieve greater understanding of those subjects. Student success as measured by end-of-course exams and, potentially, a social studies FCAT exam would contribute to better school grades under NCLB and the A++ plan, as well as to greater financial compensation for teachers.

### *Summary*

NCLB and Florida's A++ plan have altered the environment of education. Current high-stakes tests, such as the FCAT, require districts to focus attention on staffing schools with highly qualified teachers who can help students achieve measurable learning gains. Fortunately for HCPS, well-prepared teachers are available from local colleges of education. However, few of these teachers, as well as few of those already serving in HCPS high schools, have a background in government and civics-related content. This lack of content knowledge and pedagogical skills can contribute to a diminished sense of teaching self-efficacy.

This lack comes at a time when calls for the expansion of government and civics education is coming from a variety of sources; this is also a time when teaching is primarily assessed on the basis of student achievement and when teacher compensation is tied to that student achievement.

Secondary social studies teachers find themselves at the nexus of these converging trends. Fortunately, the Project ELECT grant provides the opportunity for content and pedagogical training, as well as classroom resources to improve teacher confidence in these subjects. For the present study, it was anticipated that statistically significant gains would be made concerning teacher content knowledge of government and civics, as measured by the NAEP, and teacher self-efficacy, as measured by the TES.

## Chapter 4

### Research Plan and Results

As stated previously, Alfred Bandura (1997) described self-efficacy as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.” Thus, teacher self-efficacy relates to a teacher’s beliefs that he or she can help students learn. Teacher efficacy (rather than *self-efficacy*) refers to whether or not teachers are effective in helping students learn in a measurable fashion (Ashton & Webb, 1986). If teachers possess self-efficacy, they believe they can influence student learning, whether or not this is the case. Teacher efficacy confirms that teachers can in fact influence student learning in a measurable way. Research indicates that a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy can bring about success in student learning (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a).

For the purposes of this study, a 22-item version of Gibson and Dembo’s (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES; a 30-item measure of teacher self-efficacy) was utilized. The TES has been used to measure teachers’ beliefs in their ability to affect student learning. The reliability of Gibson and Dembo’s TES has been well documented. Studies indicate that the TES is among the most reliable measures of teacher self-efficacy (Coladarci & Fink, 1995; Guskey & Passaro,

1994; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990a). In their 1990 study of the TES, Woolfolk and Hoy determined a .82 reliability score for the personal teaching efficacy (PE) scale and .74 for the general teaching efficacy (TE) scale based on a Cronbach's alpha. A more detailed discussion of PE and TE appears below. Using factor analysis they found the instrument to be a valid tool for predicting instructional behaviors (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990a). Factor analysis is used to uncover the dimensions of a set of variables. It reduces attribute space from a larger number of variables to a smaller number of factors and as such is a "non-dependent" procedure. More recent research extended a critical evaluation of the TES, finding it to be a reliable measure of teacher self-efficacy and one of the most widely used tools (Henson, Kogan, & Vacha Haase, 2001). Overall, the TES has become widely recognized as the predominant instrument used to measure teacher self-efficacy (Ross, 1994). The researcher also has experience using this instrument to measure teacher self-efficacy and is familiar with procedural aspects of the instrument.

The TES was administered to secondary social studies teachers as a pre- and post-test during each of three summer workshops funded under the Project ELECT grant.

#### *Procedure*

The sample for this study consisted of secondary social studies teachers from high schools in the Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS), located in Hillsborough County, Florida. The region is perhaps best known as the Tampa Bay area. HCPS is the eighth largest school district in the United States, with

over 200 school sites and more than 200,000 students, kindergarten through adult. The district operates 25 high schools serving approximately 50,000 students (HCPS, 2008). There are approximately 400 teachers assigned to secondary social studies, and I supervise them in my role as Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies Education.

It is my belief that, after having participated in summer institutes designed to increase civics knowledge and improve instruction, high school social studies teachers will show an increase in their self-efficacy and will self-report an increase in their knowledge of government and civics. Participation in the summer institutes consisted of 452 K-12 social studies teachers; of these, 81 completed the TES. A total of 116 teachers took the satisfaction surveys. Typical teaching assignments for these teachers include “core” courses required for graduation, namely, American Government, World History, American History, and Economics. Those courses are offered in regular, honors, and Advanced Placement levels. These teachers may also teach electives that range from Psychology to Law Studies to History of the Vietnam War. For purposes of the grant and for this study, all secondary social studies teachers who attend the workshops were included in the study, regardless of the subject or level taught.

Participants were administered the TES prior to beginning the workshop and then again after the conclusion of the institutes. Teacher self-reported gain in civics content knowledge was assessed using a Project ELECT Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey administered by USF. (Additionally, teachers completed the National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP] High

School Civics assessment prior to the institutes and again as a post-test to assess the overall effectiveness of the Project ELECT grant in producing an increase in teacher content knowledge relative to government and civics.) The TES and Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey could be accessed online at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=gwplGZ8JvGFR\\_2bInb8wqToA\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=gwplGZ8JvGFR_2bInb8wqToA_3d_3d).

The independent variable in the study was teacher participation in the Project ELECT summer institutes. The dependent variable was teacher self-efficacy as measured by the TES, which was administered prior to the first day of the institute and again shortly after the institute. Teachers were encouraged to participate in the online surveys via e-mail and also verbally by Project ELECT staff during the summer institutes. It was hypothesized that there would be a statistically measurable increase in teachers' self-efficacy after having participated in the institutes.

Along with the TES and satisfaction survey, teachers were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire to determine the following:

1. their teaching assignment (regular, honors, Advanced Placement, or a mix)
2. their level of experience
3. their degree level
4. any honors they had achieved (Teacher of the Year, National Board Certification, etc.)
5. their age, gender, and ethnicity.

The TES and satisfaction survey, as well as the demographic data, were collected anonymously. Teachers were asked to identify themselves using their district identification, or Lawson, number. It was anticipated that this would encourage teachers to respond confidently and without fear of recrimination. As noted in the introduction, a limitation to this study is that I serve as the supervisor of the secondary social studies teachers participating in the research and that this knowledge among teachers could influence their responses.

The TES identifies two subsets of teacher self-efficacy: general teaching efficacy (TE) and personal teaching efficacy (PE). TE represents a teacher's confidence that he or she can overcome external factors, such as a student's home environment, to help students learn. PE refers to a teacher's belief that he or she can personally affect changes in students (Tournaki & Podell, 2005). Tournaki and Podell noted that inconsistencies in the two subscales have emerged, leading to the development of alternative instruments, such as the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES), developed by Tschannen Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). However, they acknowledge that the TES remains in widespread use and is generally accepted (Tournaki & Podell, 2005). The TES has, in fact, become the predominant instrument used in the study of teacher self-efficacy (Ross, 1994, p. 382).

A *t* test for paired samples was used to compare pre- and post-test data collected with the TES. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare demographic differences between the teacher participants. Additional standard statistical measures were utilized to interpret the raw data from this

study. Tournaki and Podell (2005) performed this function on their data, finding that, relative to student reading ability, teacher predictions of students' academic success were influenced by perception of student ability. However, they found that students benefited from teachers with high self-efficacy because those teachers tended to be less negatively influenced by student characteristics.

Research indicates that a teacher's sense of self-efficacy can bring about success in student learning (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). Likewise, research conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) indicated that a teacher's feelings concerning his or her own efficacy was one of the crucial variables associated with student achievement. Rosenthal and Jacobsen pointed out that teachers' expectations of their own abilities (as well as that of their students) could play a critical role in student achievement.

It was anticipated that teachers participating in the Project ELECT summer institutes would show a measurable increase in self-efficacy as measured by the TES. It was postulated that teacher gains in civics content knowledge, self-reported in the satisfaction survey, would correlate positively with gains in teacher self-efficacy. It was also postulated that teachers with more experience and higher degree attainment would show a greater increase in self-efficacy than less experienced social studies teachers and/or those with lower levels of degree attainment. Indeed, according to a study conducted by Ross, Cousins, and Gadalla (1996), teacher efficacy is stronger for experienced teachers.



Additionally, the study indicates that teachers with graduate degrees were more efficacious than those without. Their study indicated that teacher self-efficacy increased with time in the profession and with greater education.

### *Results*

Thirty-nine high school social studies teachers, 18 males and 21 females, took the online version of the TES. Seventy-eight percent of the sample was White, with the remaining 22% made up of Hispanic, Black, and Multiracial individuals. Over half of the respondents reported having a Bachelor's degree ( $n = 20$ ), while the rest had one or more post-secondary degrees. The majority ( $n = 27$ ) underwent a traditional teacher education program, while 12 others utilized an alternative certification program. Thirty-four teachers held a permanent teaching certificate. Teachers reported a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 32 years of teaching experience, with a mean of 10.4 years ( $SD = x$ ). About half of the teachers ranged in age from 21 to 40, while the other half ranged from 41 to 50 or older. Courses taught by the responding teachers include 20 American Government classes, 19 World History, 18 American History, 13 Economics, and 20 social studies elective courses.

A one-way ANOVA was utilized to examine the difference between high school teachers' self-efficacy before and after attending the 1-week intensive summer institute. Teachers' mean pre-test and post-test scores on the PE portion of the TES were virtually equivalent: 27.3 before attending and 27.0 after the institute. There was no significant difference in those scores,  $F(1,77) < 1$ . It is possible that the time period between the pre-test and post-test administrations

was not lengthy enough to elucidate any changes in teachers' attitude. The score of .27 on a scale of .12 to .72, with a lower number representing greater self-efficacy, indicates that these teachers were confident in their ability to bring learning gains among students both prior to and after the summer institutes.

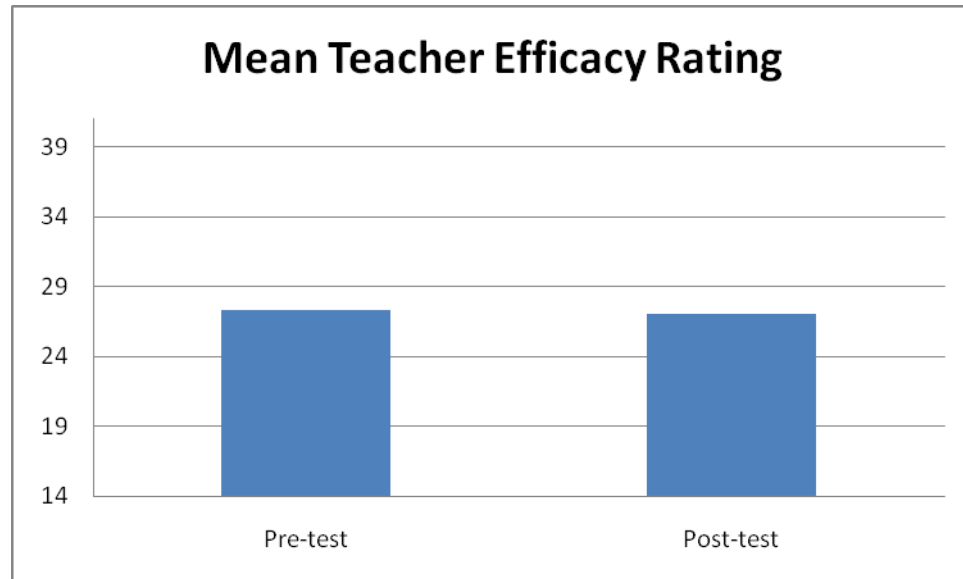


Figure 1. Mean teacher efficacy rating at pre-test and post-test.

Despite the nonsignificant difference evidenced in the statistical analysis, teachers were overwhelmingly positive in their views of their own efficacy. The table below depicts the percentage of teachers responding to each question of the TES. To simplify the analysis, I have aggregated the *moderately agree* and *slightly agree* responses, as well as the *moderately disagree* and *slightly disagree* responses.

Table 2

*Teacher Responses to the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)*

Scale Item	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Moderately/ Slightly Agree</i>	<i>Moderately/ Slightly Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
When a student does better than usually(sic), many times it is because I exert a little extra effort.	27%	68%	4%	1%
The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.	5%	43%	41%	11%
The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background.	3%	38%	39%	21%
If students aren't disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept any discipline.	9%	44%	35%	13%
I have enough training to deal with almost any learning problem.	14%	67%	19%	1%
When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to his/her level.	26%	72%	2%	0%
When a student gets a better grade than he/she usually gets, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student.	17%	78%	5%	0%
When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students.	21%	77%	2%	0%

Table 2 (Continued)

A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment has a large influence on his/her achievement.	5%	43%	43%	9%
Teachers are not a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered.	5%	6%	59%	30%
When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective approaches.	16%	77%	6%	1%
If a student masters a new concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concept.	14%	80%	6%	0%
If parents would do more for their children, I could do more.	20%	57%	17%	6%
If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	14%	80%	6%	0%
The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.	10%	81%	8%	0%
If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly.	25%	74%	1%	0%

Table 2 (Continued)

Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students.	4%	49%	41%	6%
If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.	15%	81%	4%	0%
If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.	16%	77%	7%	0%
When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.	1%	23%	62%	14%
Some students need to be placed in slower groups so they are not subjected to unrealistic expectations.	6%	48%	40%	6%
My teacher training program and/or experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	25%	69%	6%	0%

In addition to completing the TES, 116 high school teachers also filled out a satisfaction survey (see Appendix D) before and after attending the week-long summer institute. While just over 60% of high school teachers indicated their knowledge of civics prior to the institute was “Very Good” or “Excellent,” that number increased to over 90% after the institute. It is also interesting to note that

around 90% of teachers rated the institute as “Very Good” or “Excellent,” and 90% also stated that they would recommend the institute to a friend (see Appendix D for full survey results). Although it was not possible to delineate any significant trends, the data clearly indicate that high school teachers welcomed the new and innovative professional development opportunities afforded to them through Project ELECT. Future research should consider spacing out the administration of the TES over a longer period of time, to give teachers’ newfound content knowledge a better chance to impact classroom practices.

### *Summary*

Gibson and Dembo’s (1984) TES has been found to be an accurate measure of teacher self-efficacy. This instrument was administered as a pre- and post-test to HCPS social studies teachers participating in one of three summer institutes sponsored under the Project ELECT grant.

It was hypothesized that a statistically measurable increase in teacher self-efficacy would occur on the basis of their having participated in content and pedagogy training relative to government and civics. Likewise, teachers were asked to self-report an increase in civics content knowledge, as measured by the Project ELECT Summer Satisfaction Survey administered by USF. It was expected that these two factors—teacher self-reported increase in content knowledge and self-efficacy—would correlate positively. In their 2005 report, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) noted that teacher professional development in civics knowledge

related positively with students' civics knowledge (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005).

In sum, statistical analysis of the TES results revealed that there was no significant difference in teacher scores before and after the summer institute, but it is possible that the time period between the pre-test and post-test administrations was not lengthy enough to elucidate any changes in teachers' attitude. Despite the non-significant difference evidenced in the statistical analysis, teachers were overwhelmingly positive in their views of their own efficacy. Although it was not possible to delineate any significant trends, the data clearly indicate that high school teachers welcomed the new and innovative professional development opportunities afforded to them through Project ELECT.

An interesting subject for future study is the discrepancy between teachers self-efficacy, which was high in both the pilot study and this research, and actual teacher content knowledge and student performance. Data on teacher and student content knowledge, as measured by the NAEP, will be available in the latter stages of the Project ELECT grant.

Last, the present research provided a valuable opportunity for me, in my dual roles as Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies and Project Director of the Project ELECT grant, to evaluate the effectiveness of the training opportunities and resources funded by the grant. Additionally, the research also functioned as a policy study enabling me, as well as other administrators and teachers in HCPS, to make wise decisions on future staff development and curriculum development in an era of limited budgets and high-stakes testing.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions, Implications, Summary of Findings and Policy Decisions

#### *Policy Challenge*

The mission statement of Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) states that the district will strive “[t]o provide an education that enables each student to excel as a successful and responsible citizen.” Few would argue the value of such a goal, and most would agree that fostering responsible citizenship is an important duty for HCPS secondary social studies teachers. According to the National Council for the Social Studies (n.d.), “Social studies educators teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy.” Likewise, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for Grades 9–12 social studies asserts in the Civics and Government Strand, Standard 2, that students will “Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system (Florida Department of Education. n.d.-e).

This policy study contributed to an understanding of the types of professional growth activities that improve teacher self-confidence to teach challenging subjects and helped determine the future allocation of resources relative to teaching secondary social studies in Hillsborough County Public



Schools (HCPS), the eighth largest school district in the United States. An important implication and result of this study consisted of a change in HCPS secondary social studies professional development policy from an emphasis on promoting literacy strategies, or reading in the content area, to a focus on improving social studies teacher content knowledge. Additionally, the study describes the culture of change in the district in an era of high-stakes testing and accountability. Research determined whether secondary social studies teachers increased their self-efficacy after participating in civic knowledge and engagement activities. Secondary social studies teachers were administered a version of Gibson & Dembo's (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) at the beginning and end of summer institutes in civics and government. A one-way analysis of variance of the TES results revealed no significant difference in teacher pre- and post-test scores. However, teacher perception of their efficacy was high and scores from a Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey clearly indicated that high school teachers welcomed the new innovative professional development opportunities afforded to them through the summer institutes. The study was conducted under the Project Educating Learners to Engage in Civics Today (ELECT) grant, the goal of which was to expand the civic knowledge of the district's students and teachers.

### *Context of the Problem*

According to the 2005 CIRCLE report (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005), students who had teachers who either possessed a degree in a civics-related subject or who had participated in professional development in civic

knowledge, scored better on tests of civic knowledge than did students of teachers who possessed neither.

Many secondary social studies teachers come to HCPS high schools without degrees in civics-related subjects (government, political science, etc.) and may have taken only one or two classes in the subject during their teacher preparation programs. Many of these new teachers find themselves teaching American Government, a course typically taught to ninth graders in HCPS as a Florida requirement for high school graduation. Many teachers feel that their efforts are less than effective, as they are teaching a subject in which they often have little knowledge, to a group of students who potentially require the most attention. This is particularly stressful for teachers at a time when accountability and high-stakes testing can impact teacher pay.

The Florida Department of Education first introduced the Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR) plan to compensate teachers who are able to help students achieve learning gains, and later replaced it with the Merit Award Program (MAP), effective March 2007 (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-a). The HCPS plan includes the use of student achievement on district tests, including American Government, to evaluate and compensate high school social studies teachers (Florida Department of Education, n.d.-b).

In addition to teacher compensation being tied to student performance, the State of Florida has explored the idea of a social studies Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) joining those already in place for reading, math, writing, and science. State Senate Bill 2570, introduced during the 2008 legislative

session, called for the Florida Department of Education to “develop and administer a statewide assessment for social studies that includes an emphasis on the integration of economics education and *civics education* (emphasis added) as required in state statute 1001.03(1)” (SB 2570). While the bill was not approved, a social studies FCAT, which would incorporate an emphasis on civics, could become a reality in the near future.

Finally, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) call for “highly qualified” teachers in U.S. classrooms. The law requires that teachers of core subjects, including social studies, be highly qualified. This status is determined based on three criteria: (a) the teacher has a bachelor’s degree or higher, (b) he or she has achieved full state certification, and (c) he or she demonstrates knowledge in the subjects taught. To summarize the goal of these measures, U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, stated that, “we know nothing helps a child learn as much as a great teacher. Great teachers are helping us reach our goal of having every child doing grade-level work by 2014” (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). In a speech delivered to the Florida State Legislature in Tallahassee in January of 2008, Spellings called for the reauthorization of NCLB, remarking that “Great teachers are critical to all this [NCLB and Florida’s student achievement gains] and to improving student learning. We need to do a better job of recruiting and preparing good teachers and getting them to where they’re needed most” (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Florida's revised plan for highly qualified teachers (HQT) recognizes that the state faces a challenge recruiting and retaining these individuals. The state's HQT Revised Plan (2006) stated that:

With the highest in-migration growth rate of all states, a steadily growing and diverse student population, and a state constitutional amendment requiring sweeping reduction of class size at all grade levels, Florida continues to face substantial challenges in its efforts to ensure that all students have access to highly qualified teachers... schools that are not making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress as measured under NCLB) have a higher percentage of not highly qualified teachers (NHQT) classes than for all schools in the grouping.

At the state level, school classifications with the most acute needs for teacher quality include secondary high-poverty schools (16.2% NHQT), secondary high-poverty schools not making AYP (16.1% NHQT), secondary schools not making AYP (13.1% NHQT), high-poverty schools not making AYP (12.9% NHQT), and high-minority schools not making AYP (12.9% NHQT). However, it should be noted that there are other classifications that also have more than 10 percent of core classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

### *Problem*

In this current environment, it is valuable for training and recruitment of highly qualified teachers, as well as resource allocation, to examine whether teacher self-efficacy plays a role in student academic achievement. Social

studies teachers can also benefit from such an examination by learning whether their efficacy and efforts contribute to student achievement. Moreover, teachers could benefit from the knowledge that their efforts might be significantly financially rewarded on the basis of student achievement. Students would benefit from increased knowledge of civics, leading to more active citizenship and a greater potential of passing a social studies FCAT examination that may well be a graduation requirement in the near future.

In this era of high-stakes testing and accountability, HCPS site-based and district administrators benefit from knowing to what degree professional development activities relative to government and civics improve a teacher's ability to teach those subjects and to what degree they improve student academic performance. As noted above, there is an underlying societal goal of increasing student civic engagement and participation in our democracy.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this policy study was to determine if secondary social studies teachers in a large urban school district, namely Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS), demonstrated an increase in their sense of personal teaching efficacy after participating in civic knowledge and engagement activities.

#### *Research Questions*

Do secondary social studies teachers in HCPS, who have participated in training to improve their knowledge of civics and government, gain a greater degree of self-efficacy in relation to their teaching? In addition to exploring this question, this study addresses the following:

1. How has the current environment of high-stakes testing and accountability shaped the teaching of government and civics in HCPS?
2. How have site-based and district administrators supported and altered the teaching of government and civics in this district?
3. What is the role of Project ELECT in transforming and improving the teaching of government and civics in HCPS?
4. Do teachers participating in Project ELECT and this study feel that they have adequate training in civics and government?
5. What is the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and training, experience, and degree attainment?
6. Can Project ELECT and other district initiatives improve the teaching of government and civics and how can this knowledge improve strategic decision making relative to teacher training and allocation of resources?

Project ELECT, and the more than \$2 million in funds that accompanied it, provided HCPS social studies teachers with a unique, possibly once in a career, opportunity to improve the teaching of government and civics in our district.

While improvements in teacher and student content knowledge relative to government and civics will be assessed during the later stages of the grant, the research described above sought to determine whether participation by HCPS secondary social studies teachers in summer civics institutes improved their perception of their ability to teach that subject. Put another way, the research sought to answer the question of whether teacher self-efficacy for the teaching of

civics improved as a result of their participation in the institutes. In addition, the research served as a policy study to determine the degree to which professional development that was focused on content knowledge and pedagogy could take a more central role for HCPS secondary social studies teachers, supplanting the reading in the content area training that had been the focus of teacher training in the recent past.

The decision on whether to focus less on reading and more on social studies content, in general, and civics, in particular, comes at a critical time. Under Florida's A++ plan, No Child Left Behind, and the Merit Award Program, teachers are increasingly held accountable for, and their compensation is tied to, improving student academic performance. Also, the Florida State Board of Education voted in December 2008 to adopt the next generation of social studies standards. The standards, which will not go into full effect until 2012, are much more detailed than the original developed in 1996. In particular, these standards with much more detailed benchmarks for student knowledge, require teachers to possess a greater degree of content knowledge of government and civics. Finally, while there is currently no formal FCAT assessment of student knowledge relative to the social studies, recent initiatives such as the introduction of SB 2570 during the 2008 Florida legislative session indicate that social studies subjects may soon be tested. Combined with support from influential individuals such as former U.S. Senator Bob Graham and Congressman Lou Frey and the overall interest in politics generated by the 2008 election, it is possible that government and civics will be among the first social studies subjects assessed.

As was pointed out in the introduction, many secondary social studies teachers come to HCPS high schools without degrees in civics-related subjects (government, political science, etc.) and may have taken only one or two classes in the subject during their teacher preparation programs. Many of these new teachers find themselves teaching American Government, a course typically taught to ninth graders in HCPS as a Florida requirement for high school graduation. Many teachers feel that their efforts are less than effective, as they are teaching a subject in which they often have little knowledge, to a group of students who potentially require the most attention. This is particularly stressful for teachers at a time when accountability and high-stakes testing can impact teacher pay.

As has been cited in this dissertation, Alfred Bandura (1997) described self-efficacy as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.” In other words, when applied to teaching, self-efficacy relates to a teacher’s beliefs that he or she can help students learn. If teachers possess self-efficacy, they believe that they can influence student learning. The present study focused on teacher self-efficacy because research indicates that a teacher’s self-efficacy can bring about success in student learning (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990a). Likewise, research conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) indicated that a teacher’s feelings concerning self-efficacy is one of the crucial variables associated with student achievement. Rosenthal and



Jacobsen pointed out that a teacher's expectations of his or her own abilities (as well as that of the students) can play a critical role in student achievement. Additionally, a strong sense of self-efficacy has been linked to positive teaching behaviors and student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Likewise, researchers found that teacher self-efficacy was strongly related to student achievement (Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992). Teacher self-efficacy has also been related to student motivation (Midgley, Fieldhoffer, & Eckles, 1989) and students' sense of self-confidence as it relates to subject matter (Anderson, Green, & Loewen, 1988). Tournaki and Podell (2005) concluded that teachers with a positive sense of self-efficacy were likely to have positive views of their students' ability to learn, which in turn affects students' self-perception.

Relative to the teaching government and civics, a 2005 CIRCLE report (Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005) revealed that students who had teachers who possessed a degree in a civics-related subject or who had participated in professional development in civics knowledge scored better on civics tests than did students of teachers who possessed neither. The 2005 CIRCLE study of teacher preparation and knowledge of civics and government indicated that teacher content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and self-confidence in a given subject matter all related positively to student outcomes. In his book, *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens*, Peter Levine (2007) concluded that a correlation exists between students having

taken classes in government and civics and the likelihood of engaging in civic activism.

With new standards, potential new high-stakes testing, and secondary social studies teachers who could arguably benefit from increased professional development in teaching government and civics, the current policy environment can be summed up by the following points:

1. New social studies standards with much more detailed expectations for what students should know and be able to do are forthcoming and will require social studies teachers to expand their content knowledge and pedagogical skills.
2. Teacher and school accountability, based on student academic performance, will continue to play a key role in teacher compensation.
3. Social studies will likely join the ranks of subjects formally tested in Florida in the foreseeable future, with civics and government being among the first.
4. Many social studies teachers in our district enter the profession with little formal training in civics and government, in particular, and the other social studies disciplines, in general.
5. The following question persists: While HCPS secondary social studies is perceived as being supportive of school and district efforts to improve student reading scores as measured by the FCAT, would a shift to content and pedagogical training risk that positive perception?

It is important to address the final point first, particularly since the steady growth of social studies courses, especially electives, has been tied to school-based and district administrator perceptions that social studies has been important in improving student reading scores. Any change in that perception could run the risk of social studies declining in the number of course offerings in the district. An HCPS report (2008b) indicates that 59% of ninth graders and 53% of tenth graders made reading gains at all levels. Ninth and tenth graders enrolled in social studies courses, particularly honors, Advanced Placement, and elective courses made gains at rates exceeding the district average according to another HCPS report (2008a). That being the case, at least in the near term, social studies is likely to maintain its reputation as having a positive impact on student reading performance as measured by the FCAT.

As to the other points impacting the policy decision, it is safe to say that teacher accountability and compensation, tied to student performance on high-stakes tests, will remain a factor with which to be dealt. With new standards coming into play, social studies teachers are likely to feel less than efficacious, or confident, in their ability to teach courses in which they have had little or no formal training. This lack of confidence will likely increase among social studies teachers as a whole in HCPS as older teachers retire and are replaced by younger, less experienced teachers.

Complicating all of this is the fact that Florida is in the midst of a budget crisis and that the funding for public education, in general, and teacher professional development, in particular, will be increasingly difficult to acquire.

Any decision to alter staff development goals and to purchase teaching resources will have to take into account this difficult economic environment. The funding from Project ELECT allowed for greatly expanded opportunities for secondary social studies teachers to gain valuable content and pedagogical knowledge and resources for the teaching of government and civics.

Unfortunately, the same level of funding does not appear to be on the immediate horizon for similar, continued efforts.

*Policy Decision: Focus on Content Training*

Of the 116 secondary social studies teachers who participated in the Project ELECT Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey administered after each of the three summer institutes, over 60% of respondents indicated before the institutes that their knowledge of civics was “Very Good” or “Excellent”; that number increased to over 90% after the institute. It is also interesting to note that around 90% of teachers rated the institute as “Very Good” or “Excellent” and that 90% also stated that they would recommend the institute to a friend.

Unfortunately, the Teacher Efficacy Scale administered both prior and after the institutes failed to show any increase in teacher self-efficacy as a result of the trainings. As was noted in Chapter IV, it is possible that the time period between the pre-test and post-test administrations was not lengthy enough to elucidate any changes in teachers’ attitude. Teacher participants considered themselves highly self-efficacious both prior to and after the summer institutes. This assurance was mirrored in the less formal pilot research data on teacher self-efficacy which indicated that those teachers who participated had a strong

degree of confidence in their ability to teach social studies. Although it was not possible to delineate any significant trends regarding self-efficacy, the data from the Project ELECT Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey clearly indicate that high school teachers welcomed the new and innovative professional development opportunities afforded to them through Project ELECT.

On the basis of the educational environment described above, coupled with newer and less experienced teachers entering the ranks of HCPS secondary social studies, teachers' overall sense of positive self-efficacy may see a decline. If that becomes the case, one way to increase secondary social studies teacher self-efficacy may be to provide meaningful professional development in content and pedagogy, exactly like that provided by Project ELECT.

As Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies, I face the challenge of providing such meaningful professional development in a time of tight budgets. The experience thus far with Project ELECT has shown that teachers will enthusiastically participate in training that they perceive adds to their content and pedagogical knowledge and that pays them a professional stipend to attend.

With new standards coming into play and high-stakes testing a feature of the educational environment, it is important to prepare social studies teachers for the challenges they will face. Specifically, secondary social studies professional development will need to shift from a focus on reading in the content area to social studies content specifically, not just for government and civics, but for all disciplines. This will require the identification of funding sources, particularly government grants, and the expansion of partnerships, such as the one already

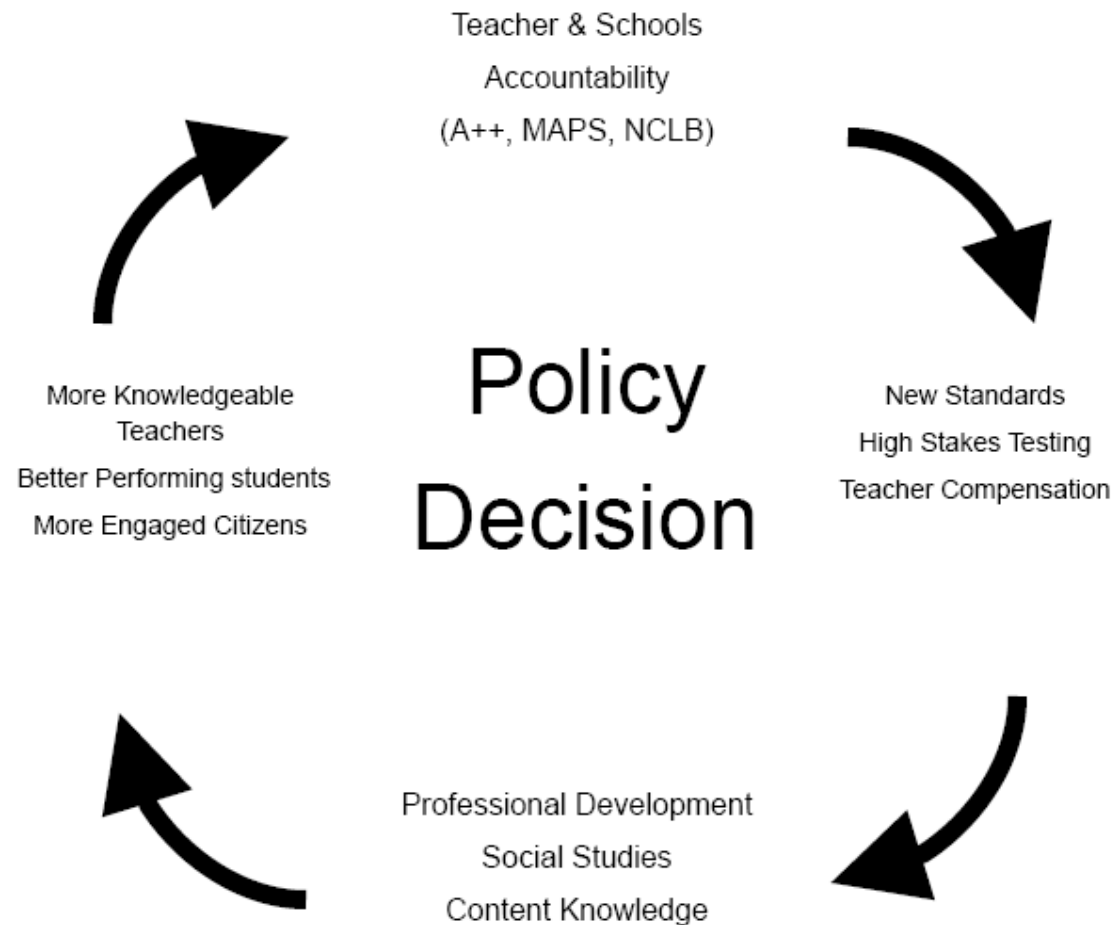
established with the University of South Florida. Also, it will require that secondary social studies teachers be mindful of the positive perception they enjoy among school-based and district administrators and that they continue to actively support whole-school efforts to improve student achievement.

While funding these efforts may be a difficult challenge for many social studies disciplines, particularly those electives such as psychology or sociology which are not addressed by the new generation of Sunshine State Standards, the task may be easier for government and civics. In the current political environment and in light of the 2008 election, government and civics have been given greater attention. In a recent conversation with Dr. Doug Dobson, director of the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship at the University of Central Florida, he indicated that former U.S. Senator Bob Graham would continue the push for civics to be tested on the state level. Likewise, Senator Graham would approach the new presidential administration to look for increased funding for teaching government and civics in our state. Dr. Dobson pointed out that professional development funding has historically flowed to subjects such as reading, math, and science as they became FCAT tested.

Another way to offset the high costs of professional development is for the district to rely on our own “in house” experts on content and particularly pedagogy. With nearly 400 secondary social studies teachers in HCPS, a wide range of expertise exists in all social studies disciplines that could be utilized. Teacher professional study days can be an opportunity to tap into this knowledge base and allow teachers to network. Mentoring teachers new to the district can

take place, and partnerships can be established with other districts to share best practices and information.

The diagram below helps explain the policy decision and expected outcomes. Teacher accountability in an age of high-stakes testing affecting teacher pay calls for a greater emphasis on social studies content and pedagogical knowledge, as opposed to reading in the content area. Professional development will produce more knowledgeable teachers and better performing students, who are more likely (in the case of government and civics) to become engaged in the democratic process. Of course, this cycle of developing teachers in order to educate students better is endless. New challenges, whether legislated or not, will require that social studies educators continually adapt to new circumstances.



*Figure 2. Policy decision framework.*

Relative to Project ELECT, sustainability of the initiatives described above is key to the successfully teach government and civics in HCPS, whether measured by an FCAT or student civic engagement. The grant allowed for the establishment of a website, the production of an educational DVD series, and the



creation of a CD-ROM with teacher resources. Additionally, TCI resources such as the new "Government Alive" resources were purchased. HCPS secondary social studies now has at its disposal a wealth of resources to go along with well trained teachers.

Another source of support for teaching government and civics in our district is from the local elected officials, including members of our school board, who have participated in our "Politician Chats." This program has been extremely satisfying to both politician participants and students alike, with the face-to-face exchanges providing an extension of lessons well beyond the scope of the textbook. An additional benefit is the improvement of our ability to teach about state and local government, an area heretofore given little coverage in our curriculum. As of this writing, one of our county commissioners has volunteered to teach about local government on a regular basis in one of our high schools. These types of partnerships also help promote the outstanding work our social studies teachers do every day.

As Project ELECT comes to a conclusion in 2009, opportunities for additional research will present themselves. Of particular interest is the long-term effect, both on teacher self-efficacy and teacher content knowledge, produced by participation in the summer institutes and other workshops offered under the grant. Student content knowledge will be assessed by both the National Assessment of Educational Progress for civics and by district-created end-of-course exams in American Government. Both could serve as predictors of student achievement should a civics FCAT present itself.

The paradigm of summer institutes, teacher mentoring, development of resources, and ongoing partnerships that were fostered under Project ELECT can provide an excellent model as funding becomes available to promote content and pedagogical knowledge in the other social studies disciplines. HCPS is applying for a new Teaching American History grant that will provide up to \$1 million to improve the teaching of that subject.

The implementation of this new policy will call for new and ongoing research. It will be important to continue to measure student knowledge of various social studies content by administering the district end-of-course exams. Teacher content knowledge can be assessed to determine the effectiveness of professional development opportunities. It would also be of interest to network with other school districts, particularly those in the Tampa Bay region, to determine who they are addressing the changing educational environment relative to social studies, and perhaps partner with them in improving teacher content knowledge.

The conclusion of this dissertation completes only one aspect of the research being conducted under the Project ELECT grant. As part of my duties as Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies, it is challenging to find ways to help teachers become more expert in teaching our subjects. Project ELECT funded an opportunity to examine, in the short run for purposes of this study and over time as we face new standards and high-stakes tests, how to most effectively provide teachers with the training and resources needed to help their students learn. As has been cited throughout this research, improving teacher self-

efficacy, along with their content knowledge, has the benefit of improving student achievement. Relative to government and civics, improved teacher content knowledge and confidence for teaching the subject positively impacts the societal goal of producing more engaged and active citizens. The potential to help individual students and teachers, and to benefit our democracy as a whole, are the primary rewards of being a social studies educator.

## Chapter 6

### Epilogue

This policy study is an example of translational research. As described by Mary Brabeck, the goal of translational research is to provide practitioners with the latest research in usable form (Brabeck, 2008). For educators this means that, rather than remaining with the researcher, vital knowledge is disseminated and shared quickly with those most likely to benefit from it. In this case it means our senior leadership as well as our teachers. In order to help teachers meet the challenges posed by the need to address new and detailed standards and prepare for high-stakes testing that may impact compensation, it is critical that they be informed of policy decisions that will effect them directly and that they be involved as partners in implementing policy. The course of action, the policy decision if you will, is to shift professional development of HCPS secondary social studies teachers from a reading in the content area focus to one that is designed to improve teacher content knowledge. The memorandum to the (then) General Director of Secondary Education that appears below is presented as evidence of this policy shift being set into motion:



**DATE:** December 1, 2008

**TO:** David J. Steele, General Director, Secondary Education

**FROM:** Dennis Holt, Supervisor, Secondary Social Studies

**SUBJECT: Content Training for Secondary Social Studies Teachers**

Over the past several years, secondary social studies teachers in our district have taken a leading role in the teaching of reading in the content area. As a result, our discipline has enjoyed the perception among district and site-based administrators that our efforts have had a positive influence on student reading achievement as measured by the FCAT, and thus school grades. This perception is confirmed to some degree by the data provided by our office of Assessment and Accountability.

While this perception is critical to social studies, and has in fact led to steady growth in our electives, recent events call for a change in policy relative to social studies professional development. As you are aware, the Next Generation of Sunshine State Standards for social studies has been completed and will go to the State Board of Education for approval this month. These new standards are far more detailed than the older version and contain very specific benchmarks for what students should know and be able to do. In addition, recent efforts in our state legislature indicate that a social studies FCAT, or at least end-of-course exams, are likely to be required in the near future. This being the case, it is critical that we begin shifting our professional development focus toward social studies content and pedagogical training. Reasons supporting this initiative are as follows:

1. Site-based resources such as reading coaches are in place to promote reading in the content area and provide support for teachers.
2. Given the level of reading in the content area that our teachers have received and the instructional strategies they have adopted, it is likely

that social studies teachers will continue to positively influence student reading as measured by the FCAT. However, it will be important to provide ongoing encouragement for the teaching of reading.

3. In an era of accountability (ex: MAP) and high-stakes testing, secondary social studies teachers will come under increasing pressure to master the content and pedagogical skills that will enable them to remain at the top of their profession. This will become increasingly true as more experienced teachers retire and are replaced by younger teachers.
4. Lessons learned from the Project ELECT grant indicate that our teachers are very anxious to receive content and pedagogical training. Data collected confirms this.
5. The development and purchase of engaging teacher content resources is ongoing and needs to be combined with professional development to promote their use. Examples include TCI's Government Alive! and Economics Alive! products, and the DVD and CD ROM we created under Project ELECT.

Of course, the difficulty in undertaking this initiative at this time is that we face severe budget constraints. It will be important to continue to look for outside sources of funding for teacher training. We will apply for the Teaching American History grant and have requested a no-cost extension of Project ELECT that will allow us to extend teacher training in government and civics into the summer. Additionally, we will continue to work with our partners such as USF, the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship, the Florida Holocaust Museum, and the Tampa Bay History Center to provide meaningful professional development for our teachers. We will also shift our staff development requests away from those that are reading focused to those that are focused on content.

In support of this initiative I can cite the example we have seen relative to Advanced Placement courses. The district has pursued funding and partnerships to promote AP and provided ongoing professional development and resources for teachers. As a result we have seen teacher confidence for teaching AP courses rise along with student achievement. It is my belief that providing secondary social studies teachers with professional development in content and pedagogy will allow HCPS to continue to be an educational leader in the field of social studies in our state.

The memorandum is of course brief and to the point, a requirement in this district as I assume it must be in most where there are many challenges facing educational leaders. Since the writing of this original memorandum, Dr. Steele has been promoted and replaced by a new general director, Denny Oest. He too has seen the memo and granted his approval. What is interesting is that Mr. Oest was, until his appointment in late December 2009, a principal at a high school with a large proportion of students with low scores in reading achievement. He agreed with the conclusion that schools now had the resources in place to conduct their own teacher professional development in reading. His support would have been unlikely were the resources not in place at his former school. Moreover, with new standards for social studies and some form of teacher accountability relative to the discipline on the horizon, he agreed with implementing this new policy initiative.

Having completed my study, I have begun to take notice of additional data that confirm the policy decision. In Appendix E scores for students who took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) are compared to Advanced Placement (AP) United States Government and Politics scores. According to the College Board, there is a moderate to high correlation between PSAT/NMSQT scores and student performance on AP exams (College Board, n.d.). The data seem to indicate that our students should be performing better on AP exams, than they are. For example, nationally 51.5% of students who score between 161 and 170 on the PSAT/NMSQT score a 3 (passing grade) on the United States Government and

Politics AP exam. In HCPS only 35.3% of students who score in the same range on the PSAT/NMSQT pass the AP exam. This may be due to many factors but a lack of teacher content knowledge may be part of the explanation. Similar underperformance occurs in other AP social studies exam scores.

Underperformance on AP scores could have implications for high schools. An email sent on January 28, 2009 from our Office of Assessment discussed proposed changes to the state's system of grading high schools that would include pass rates on AP exams as a component.

In discussing the implications of providing more content training with teachers, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Teachers of a number social studies subjects have indicated eagerness to receive more content training. Those who attended the Project ELECT summer institutes related their positive views of the workshop offerings, a situation supported by their overall satisfaction noted in the Project ELECT Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey Breakdown of Responses – Aggregate (see Appendix D). While their satisfaction with the workshops was apparent, it will not be until the end of the grant that data is available to assess any change in their content knowledge.

This decision does have risks however. Chief among them are that HCPS social studies could lose the positive perception it has enjoyed among district and site-based administrators. It will be important to remind social studies teachers that they will need to continue to promote student literacy. This will maintain the positive reputation that secondary social studies has enjoyed and



will help foster the growth of the discipline in HCPS. Simply put, while there may be high-stakes social studies tests on the horizon, FCAT Reading is not going to go away and social studies will be expected to support efforts to improve student reading skills. Literacy also helps our students access the stimulating stories and content that help make social studies so important to our society.

As was noted in Chapters I and III, our school board has been supportive of Project ELECT and secondary social studies as a whole. However, at least one board member has expressed concern over the fact that our American Government class is taught as a freshman rather than senior level course. As was noted in the introduction, this was done as a way to support literacy rather than for curricular reasons. With a new focus on content it may be appropriate to revisit this decision and consider moving the course to the senior year.

A final anecdotal story may help the reader appreciate the need to improve the content knowledge of HCPS secondary social studies teachers. I was recently visiting the classroom of a newly hired teacher, a young woman certified to teach social studies and currently enrolled as a master's student at a local university. She was going over a pre-test in her regular American history class. Unfortunately, as she was helping the students go over the test, she gave them three answers out of twenty that were clearly wrong. Even more troubling was the fact that, being new, she had borrowed a copy of this pre-test from another member of her department who had passed on the erroneous answers. Although this is, I hope, an isolated incident it drove home to me the need to equip our teachers with the content knowledge in the subjects they teach. Not

only would this improve their teaching self-efficacy, it would more importantly help ensure that our students get the rich education they deserve.

I believe that this research describes the culture of change that exists in HCPS, and other large urban school districts, and the steps that can lead to improving social studies. It is likely that a policy decision designed to improve secondary social studies teacher content knowledge would be made as high-stakes testing in those subjects become a more real possibility. However, this research provided an opportunity to look over the educational horizon and to take steps to address the need to improve teacher content knowledge in an organized and informed manner, well in advance.

The research and resulting policy decision described above were not arrived at lightly. I operate in an environment of educational accountability, just like our schools and teachers, with new standards and high-stakes testing among a number of challenges in this rapidly changing educational environment. Coupled with declining funding for education it is important that I make good strategic decisions that have been arrived at after research and thoughtful consideration. It is my hope that the research described above serves as just such an example.

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## Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher Efficacy Scale (22-Item-Long Form)  
Demographic Questionnaire

**Teacher Efficacy**

**Thank you for your participation in Project *Educating Learners to Engage in Civics Today* (Project ELECT) grant program.**

**A number of statements about organizations, people, and teaching are presented below. The purpose is to gather information regarding the actual attitudes of educators concerning these statements. There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are interested only in your frank opinions. Your responses will remain confidential.**

**This survey is being conducted by the Department of Assessment & Accountability using "SurveyMonkey.com" as part of the Project ELECT evaluation. Surveys conducted through this site have SSL encryption to protect any information you enter.**

**If you have any questions, feel free to contact Amie Wilbanks, Coordinator of Grant Evaluation, at Amie.Wilbanks@sdhc.k12.fl.us or 272-4341. Thank you very much for your participation!**

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**\* Please enter your 6 digit employee ID number (i.e., your Lawson number) in the space below.**

**Your Lawson ID will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside the Department of Assessment & Accountability.**

Employee ID number / Lawson number:

**Please indicate the number of years you have been a classroom teacher.**

Number of years:

**Which of the following grade levels do you teach?**

Elementary                       Middle School                       High School

Other (please specify)

**High School Teachers ONLY:**  
**Please indicate the courses you will teach in the 2008-09 school year.**

**Select all that apply and indicate the level(s) of the courses.**

	Regular	Honors	Advanced Placement	Dual Enrollment
American Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
World History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
American History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electives (please specify)	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>			
	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>			

Appendix B: Teacher Demographic Survey

Teacher Demographic Survey

1. Please provide your "Lawson" ID number \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Please indicate the number of years you have taught \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Please indicate, with an X, the courses you will teach in the 08-09 school year. Select all that apply and indicate level(s). Regular = R, Honors = H, Advanced Placement = AP, Dual Enrollment = DE.

American Government \_\_\_\_\_  
World History \_\_\_\_\_  
American History \_\_\_\_\_  
Economics \_\_\_\_\_  
Electives (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please indicate, with an X, your highest degree attainment:

Bachelor's \_\_\_\_\_  
Master's \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please indicate, with an X, the type of teacher preparation you received:

Traditional \_\_\_\_\_  
Alternative \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please indicate, with an X, the type of certification you hold:

Permanent \_\_\_\_\_  
Temporary \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please indicate, with an X, your gender:

Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please indicate, with an X, your age group:

21-25 years \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B (Continued)

26-30 years \_\_\_\_\_  
31-35 years \_\_\_\_\_  
36-40 years \_\_\_\_\_  
41-45 years \_\_\_\_\_  
46-50 years \_\_\_\_\_  
51+ years \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please indicate, with an X, your ethnicity:

African-American \_\_\_\_\_  
Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_  
Asian-American \_\_\_\_\_  
White \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Pilot Study Survey Statistics

1. Age:	21 to 25	60%
	26 to 35	30%
	36 to 45	10%
2. Gender:	Male	60%
	Female	40%
3. Degree Level:	BA	60%
	MA	40%
4. Number of years teaching:	1 to 5	70%
	5 to 10	20%
	10 to 15	10%
5. Subjects: All secondary social studies subjects (Government, World History, American History, Economics) and some electives.		
6. If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult students.		
	Strongly Agree	70%
	Agree	30%
7. A teacher really can't do much because much of a student's motivation and performance depend on home environment.		
	Agree	10%
	Disagree	90%
8. I use a variety of instructional methods in my classroom.		
	Strongly Agree	90%
	Agree	10%
9. I am able to see an improvement in my students' performance over the course of the year.		
	Strongly Agree	90%
	Agree	10%
10. My students generally respond positively to my teaching.		
	Strongly Agree	90%
	Agree	10%



Appendix C (Continued)

11. My classroom management style keeps disruptions to a minimum.
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 60% |
| Agree          | 40% |
12. I use a variety of methods to assess student learning.
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 40% |
| Agree          | 60% |
13. No matter what I try, I can't seem to motivate my students.
- |                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Disagree          | 40% |
| Strongly Disagree | 60% |
14. I believe that most social studies teachers are able to instruct students effectively.
- |          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Agree    | 60% |
| Disagree | 40% |
15. Many students are not in school to learn.
- |          |      |
|----------|------|
| Agree    | 0%   |
| Disagree | 100% |
16. I find teaching social studies to be a rewarding experience.
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 80% |
| Agree          | 20% |
17. Social studies teachers could be more effective if given more support and smaller class sizes.
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 80% |
| Agree          | 20% |
18. Unless social studies teachers are given more support, many will leave the profession.
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 10% |
| Agree          | 90% |
19. I plan to be teaching social studies for many years to come.
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 40% |
| Agree          | 50% |
| Disagree       | 10% |
20. I have plans to improve my teaching and/or further my education.
- |                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Strongly Agree | 100% |
|----------------|------|

Appendix D: Project ELECT Summer Institute Satisfaction Survey

Breakdown of Responses – Aggregate 2008

Question	Overall (Elementary, Middle and High School) N = 425	Elementary School N = 146	Middle School N = 163	High School N = 116
<b>2. How would you rate the instructors' facilitation of your learning (i.e., delivery of content) throughout the institute?</b>				
Excellent	67.80	91.61	53.85	56.25
Very Good	24.46	5.59	32.69	37.50
Good	6.30	1.40	11.54	5.36
Fair	1.21	1.40	1.28	0.89
Poor	0.24	0.00	0.64	0.00
<b>3. How would you rate the schedule?</b>				
Excellent	50.35	56.85	45.40	48.28
Very Good	33.26	28.77	34.97	37.07
Good	11.94	10.96	14.72	9.48
Fair	3.51	3.42	3.68	3.45
Poor	0.94	0.00	1.23	1.72
<b>4. How would you rate the facilities (e.g., comfort, convenience)?</b>				
Excellent	28.87	24.14	32.52	29.31
Very Good	35.92	35.86	33.74	38.79
Good	26.53	31.03	22.70	26.72
Fair	7.28	6.90	9.20	5.17
Poor	1.41	2.07	1.84	0.00
<b>5. Would you recommend the Summer Institute to a fellow teacher?</b>				
Yes	88.71	91.78	84.47	90.52
Maybe	8.47	5.48	12.42	6.90
No	2.59	2.74	3.11	1.72
<b>6. How would you rate your knowledge of civics <u>prior</u> to attending the Summer Institute?</b>				
Excellent	9.84	1.37	9.82	20.69
Very Good	26.70	9.59	32.52	40.52
Good	32.08	36.30	28.22	32.76
Fair	24.82	43.15	22.09	5.17
Poor	6.56	9.59	7.36	0.86

Appendix D (Continued)

Question	Overall (Elementary, Middle and High School) N = 425	Elementary School N = 146	Middle School N = 163	High School N = 116
<b>7. How would you rate your knowledge of civics <u>after</u> completing the Summer Institute?</b>				
Excellent	34.35	33.56	27.78	44.35
Very Good	53.18	56.16	55.56	46.09
Good	11.06	9.59	13.58	9.57
Fair	1.18	0.68	2.47	0.00
Poor	0.24	0.00	0.62	0.00
<b>8. How would you rate your knowledge of culturally competent practices <u>prior</u> to attending the Summer Institute?</b>				
Excellent	14.29	7.53	14.72	22.41
Very Good	30.91	21.92	35.58	36.21
Good	31.62	28.77	33.13	32.76
Fair	18.97	34.25	13.50	7.76
Poor	4.22	7.53	3.07	0.86
<b>9. How would you rate your knowledge of culturally competent practices <u>after</u> completing the Summer Institute?</b>				
Excellent	30.52	23.97	29.63	39.66
Very Good	48.59	51.37	50.62	42.24
Good	15.96	21.23	15.43	10.34
Fair	3.76	3.42	2.47	6.03
Poor	1.17	0.00	1.85	1.72
<b>11. Overall, how would you rate the Summer Institute?</b>				
Excellent	54.25	64.83	45.34	52.59
Very Good	33.02	26.21	36.65	37.07
Good	10.14	6.90	13.04	10.34
Fair	1.89	2.07	3.11	0.00
Poor	0.71	0.00	1.86	0.00

Note: The numbers represent percentages.

Appendix E: Advanced Placement Government Scores  
 Compared to PSAT Scores

<i>Range</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>≥3</i>
<b>Government &amp; Politics: United States</b>							
PSAT/NMSQT CR <sup>†</sup> +M+W Score		AP Exam Grades					Sample Size
		≥3	≥4				
240-231	99.0	87.4	792				
230-221	97.5	80.4	2,628				
220-211	93.8	71.1	5,714				
210-201	90.3	61.0	9,623				
200-191	83.7	48.2	14,276				
190-181	75.9	36.5	18,636				
180-171	64.4	25.8	20,779				
170-161	51.5	16.3	20,059				
160-151	37.3	9.2	16,582				
150-141	24.5	4.6	11,655				
140-131	12.9	1.7	7,215				
130-121	6.6	0.6	4,007				
120-111	2.7	0.1	1,903				
110-101 <sup>**</sup>	1.6	-	773				
100-91	0.7	-	278				
90-81	3.2	-	62				
80-71	-	-	13				
70-60	-	-	1				
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>134,996</b>				

Appendix E (Continued)

*AP Potential HCPS  
Gov/Politics vs 2006 PSAT CR+W+M*

<i>Range</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>&gt;=3</i>
240 - 231	1				1		100.0%
230 - 221	6			2		4	100.0%
220 - 211	10		1	2	4	3	90.0%
210 - 201	14		1	2	6	5	92.9%
200 - 191	29	1	5	11	9	3	79.3%
190 - 181	42	4	11	18	4	5	64.3%
180 - 171	57	12	25	14	4	2	35.1%
170 - 161	68	21	23	19	4	1	35.3%
160 - 151	81	38	29	12	2		17.3%
150 - 141	57	32	16	8	1		15.8%
140 - 131	43	34	8	1			2.3%
130 - 121	21	16	5				0.0%
120 - 111	15	15					0.0%
110 - 101	3	3					0.0%

## About the Author

Dennis Holt is the Supervisor of Secondary Social Studies and Driver Education for Hillsborough County Public Schools—the eighth largest school district in the United States—located in Tampa, Florida. He is Project Director of Project Educating Learners to Engage in Civics Today (ELECT). Additional duties include coordination of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation for the district, as well as responsibility for a wide range of district and community initiatives.

Mr. Holt received a Bachelor of Art degree from the University of South Florida in International Studies in 1978 and a Master of Arts in Secondary Social Studies Education in 1994. While in the doctoral program at the University of South Florida, he has made presentations before the National Council for the Social Studies and the Florida Council for the Social Studies and has contributed to textbooks on teaching social studies.