

The background features a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across the top and right sides. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

# TEACHER-ADVOCATES RESPOND TO ESSA

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# INTRODUCTION

- FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BADASS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION FORMED A COMMITTEE TO READ, INTERPRET, AND RESPOND TO THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA).
- THE RESEARCHERS INTERVIEWED EACH OF THE PARTICIPANTS TO LEARN HOW COLLECTIVELY THEY MADE SENSE OF THE NEW FEDERAL EDUCATION POLICY AND THE IMPACT IT HAD ON THEIR ABILITY TO ADVOCATE.



# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) HOW DID TEACHERS ENGAGE WITH THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT, EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT?
  - 2) HOW DID TEACHERS MAKE SENSE OF ESSA? WHAT ARE THEIR VIEWS AND PRIORITIES?
  - 3) IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, HAS ESSA INFLUENCED THEIR ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY?
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# GUIDING FRAMEWORK

- COLLECTIVE SENSE-MAKING: “FOCUSES ON WAYS TEACHERS CO-CONSTRUCT UNDERSTANDINGS OF POLICY MESSAGES [AND] MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT WHICH MESSAGES TO PURSUE” (COBURN, 2001, P. 145)
- INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS MUST NAVIGATE THE SOCIAL NORMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AS THEY MAKE SENSE OF POLICY CHANGES BASED ON THEIR PRIOR EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES.
- UNPACK HOW TEACHER PARTICIPANTS CO-CONSTRUCTED RESPONSES TO ESSA AND BECAME ADVOCATES FOR NOT ONLY THEIR OWN CLASSROOMS, SCHOOLS, DISTRICTS, AND STATES, BUT ALL THE EDUCATORS WHO ACCESS THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA SPACES.

# PARTICIPANTS

<b>Participant*</b>	<b>Years Teaching</b>	<b>Subject Taught</b>	<b>Title Reviewed</b>
<b>Anthony</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Title VI, VII</b>
<b>Julie</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>Title II, Title V</b>
<b>Kimberly</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>English as a Second Language</b>	<b>Title III</b>
<b>Melody</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Special Education</b>	<b>Title IV</b>
<b>Maria</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>English as a Second Language</b>	<b>Title I, Title V</b>

# THEME: IMPORTANCE OF PRIOR POLICY EXPERIENCE

- EACH PARTICIPANT HAD PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH POLICY WHICH INFLUENCED THEIR DECISION TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE REAUTHORIZATION OF ESSA.
- JULIE WAS THE ONLY PARTICIPANT WHO HAD PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH EDUCATION POLICY AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL.
- INVOLVEMENT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THESE TEACHER-ADVOCATES INTERPRET FEDERAL LEGISLATION THAT WAS OVER 1,000 PAGES.

# THEME: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL MEDIA- WEB 3.0 ENABLES TEACHER'S POLICY INVOLVEMENT

- PARTICIPANTS REPORTED USING OR CREATING
  - FACEBOOK MESSENGER
  - GOOGLE DOCS
  - BAT BLOG
  - DIGITAL TOOLKIT
  - ONLINE LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

# FINDINGS: RESPONDING TO ESSA THE POSSIBILITIES- MORE LOCAL CONTROL AND LESS FEDERAL CONTROL

- A DOMINANT THEME EVIDENT THROUGH ALL THE INTERVIEWS WAS ESSA OPENING THE DOOR FOR POSSIBILITIES TO UNDO THE HARM THAT FOLLOWED NCLB.
- ANTHONY NOTED THAT “[THE ESSA] LEGISLATION IS VERY CLEARLY A REPUDIATION OF WHAT’S BEEN HAPPENING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE LAST 15 YEARS.”
- MELODY ALSO STATED THAT AN “OPPORTUNITY WAS GIVEN FOR US AND THE STATES TO KIND OF “PUSH BACK” AGAINST A LOT OF WHAT WE SAW WAS WRONG WITH NCLB, SO I LIKED THAT POSSIBILITY.”



# FINDINGS: THE LIMITS- UNINFORMED DECISION MAKERS

- THE PARTICIPANTS FEARED THAT THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS WHO AUTHORIZED ESSA CONTINUED TO BE UNINFORMED ABOUT THE REAL ISSUES FACING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THUS THE POLICY WOULD ALLOW FOR MORE OF WHAT WAS CREATED UNDER NCLB.
- MELODY CRITICIZED THE SPEED AT WHICH THE NEW FEDERAL LEGISLATION WAS PASSED. KIMBERLY AGREED, “I GUESS I WISH THAT LEGISLATORS WOULD HAVE HAD MORE TIME TO READ THIS BILL, AND I KNOW THAT SOME OF THEM ARE SAYING, “WAIT WHAT, HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?” STILL SO, I GUESS THAT’S SAYING THAT I WISH WE ALL HAD BEEN GIVEN MORE TIME TO READ IT.”

# FINDINGS: STILL A LIMIT- PRIVATE CORPORATIONS' GREATER CONTROL OVER PUBLIC EDUCATION

- ANOTHER LIMITATION EXPRESSED BY THE PARTICIPANTS WAS THE NOTION THAT ESSA CONTAINED AN INVITATION FOR PRIVATE CORPORATIONS TO CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC EDUCATION.
- THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE SENSE-MAKING SUPPORTED THE PARTICIPANTS' AWARENESS OF THE LIMITATIONS OF ESSA TO BECOME A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH TO IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION.
- THEIR ORIGINAL SENSE OF OPPORTUNITY AND HOPE WAS INSUFFICIENT TO CHANGE THEIR BELIEFS THAT THE NEW LEGISLATION COULD SHIFT FROM SOMETHING DONE TO TEACHERS TO SOMETHING DONE WITH TEACHERS.

# TEACHER-ADVOCATES RESPOND TO ESSA: SUPPORT THE GOOD PARTS RESIST THE BAD

- AS THE PARTICIPANTS' COLLECTIVE SENSE-MAKING LED THEM TO BECOME AWARE OF THE NEED TO RESIST THE BAD PARTS OF ESSA, THEY CREATED THE *BATS TOOLKIT FOR FIGHTING ESSA IN YOUR STATE*.
- ANTHONY NOTED, "RESIST THE BAD PARTS, AND COMMUNICATE THOSE DIFFERENCES CLEARLY TO OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS. I SAY THAT'S TRUE AT FEDERAL LEVEL, IT'S TRUE HERE AT THE STATE LEVEL. LET'S TRY TO TEASE OUT THE STRUCTURE. THIS SYSTEM IS SO HUGE IT CAN'T JUST SAY SOMETHING IS GOOD OR BAD. SO YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE CLEARLY WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE FIXED.

# IMPACT ON TEACHING

Participant	Impact
Kimberly	Advocate to other teachers to become knowledgeable; inform parents about requirements for English Language Learners; speak out at meetings; request to be on committees to address parts that should be resisted; join assessment think tank to create alternative assessments
Julie	Work with colleagues to examine alternative assessments for their subject area; advocate to local lawmakers on how to resist the bad
Anthony	Continue to advocate for reforms that address the needs of students and put an end to public education as a regressive system
Melody	More cognizant of use of technology in classroom and will create uses for technology that are teacher/student driven
Maria	Continue to advocate for students, reject testing/performativity

# IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION, LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND NATIONAL UNIONS

1. TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS SHOULD INTRODUCE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS TO EDUCATION POLICY AND PROVIDE THEM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE AT THE LOCAL AND FEDERAL LEVEL.
2. LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHOULD ENCOURAGE TEACHERS TO ENGAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY THROUGH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES.
3. LEGISLATORS MUST INVITE CURRENT PRACTICING TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS AT EVERY STAGE.