Blue Ribbon Initiative

An analysis of the causes of the initiative

Division of Administrative and Instructional Leadership

Of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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By

Cohort 8

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Chapter I

Introduction

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Memphis City School District's proposal and implementation of a behavior intervention and supportive program entitled the Blue Ribbon Initiative. This study will also seek to analyze the causes of the Blue Ribbon Initiative's failure to thrive.

<u>Statement of Problem</u>

The Memphis City School District is an urban school district located in the state of Tennessee, with a population of over 650,000 residents and 115,000 students. In 2004, the Superintendent of the Memphis City School District proposed the Blue Ribbon Initiative. The purpose of this program is to create a coherent system of discipline which will contribute toward a positive school culture and environment. In addition, the Blue Ribbon Initiative calls for the elimination of corporal punishment in schools. This initiative will increase student achievement by creating a safe learning environment, where students with behavioral problems (are not given the opportunity to) do not interrupt the educational process. Initially supported by members of the community and school district and implemented throughout the district, there now appears to be much political discourse regarding the elimination of corporal punishment in the schools.

Context of the study

Not long after the Blue Ribbon Initiative was instituted in the fall of 2004, there were reports of teacher complaints of the effectiveness of the program. These complaints included excessive paperwork and the pressure to under report fights and cases of serious infractions, (i.e.) such as possession of weapons (brought to school). Criticisms were also reported by a member of the school board as well. With student violence mentioned as a primary concern of Memphis City school teachers, causes resulting in this behavior were discussed by members of the Memphis City Schools and surrounding community. This lack of unison and disagreement is a defining characteristic of the polis as expressed by Stone in her book, Policy Paradox (2002). Stone's focus is that real social problems are confronted and political life is lived between these tensions. Much of policy making involves people fighting over what the public interest is and trying to realize their own definitions of it.

Poverty is a common problem in this predominately African American community where 71 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced fee lunch. By using Stone's analysis of policymaking, we will establish that the issue in dispute goes beyond the Blue Ribbon Initiative. Policy making encompasses many factors. They include those who are direct (teachers and students) and indirect members of the polis, not involved in the school community. Policy making is not a quick remedy for instant solutions, such as Stone's rational analytic model suggests. Stone describes politics well by quoting Plutarch: "They are wrong who think that politics is like an ocean voyage or military campaign,

something to be done with some end in view or something which levels off as soon as the end is researched.   It is not a public chore, to be got over with; it

is a way of life" (Stone, 2002, p.34). Stone describes the controversy and conflicting views in society by using the analogy of the market and the polis model. The market represents individual goals and behavior, while the polis in contrast is a community or multiple communities with ideas, images, values and public interests. These interests will be analyzed in light of the arguments to follow.

Significance of the Study

This study is of vital importance for all administrators. Determining both positive and negative reactions toward the Blue Ribbon Initiative plays a significant role in identifying who is on board for the initiative and who is against it. Ultimately, the students will be most affected by the outcome of this case. The administration is at the forefront in changing the lives of children, hopefully for the better. This study will also attempt to prove Deborah Stone's works regarding problems, goals and solutions. In Chapter II of this study, such sections of Stone's Policy Paradox will be analyzed and later applied to the Blue Ribbon Initiative.

Research Questions

The researchers of this study will explore four question related to this issue.

1. Whose voice(s) do you hear and how does each voice present its case in making its value orientation or goal evident?

2. Whose voice(s) do you hear and how does each voice present its notion of the problem?   Whose voice becomes predominant?

3. Whose voice(s) do you hear and how does each voice present its idea and how to solve the problem?

4. To what degree and in what ways do these voices change over time?

Definitions

GOALS

Policy initiative begins with focusing on goals in order to attain specific objectives. The notion of **equity** is who gets what, when and how. Stone uses the cake illustration as a metaphor to present various aspects of equity. An equal slice of cake may not necessarily mean equity for all. Likewise, the most efficient scenario may not necessarily include adding more librarians in a library. **Efficiency** generally means the most output for a given input, also to be able to identify alternative courses of action for achieving objectives. **Security** is the argument within society that evaluates the essential needs of citizens and obligations and responsibilities of government. **Liberty** involves a person's freedom to act as long as their choices do not harm others. (Stone, 2002) Throughout this study, we will analyze how these four aspects of goals relate to the many conflicting issues within the Memphis City School's Blue Ribbon Initiative.

PROBLEMS

The Blue Ribbon Initiative controversy stems from the discrepancy between the goal and the status quo. Problems are a matter of representation because every description of a situation is a portrayal from only one of many points of view. **Symbols,** as well as words, are used as stories to dramatize a political point. **Numbers** convey numerical language to communicate and define issues. **Causes** reveal sources, consequences and potential accountability. **Interests** involve groups of multiple viewpoints which can be represented as distributive or non- distributive.   **Decisions** direct the course of action necessary to attain given goals. (Stone, 2002)   These factors help identify the inconsistent discourse present in the Memphis City Schools.

SOLUTIONS

"The means of tackling policy problems are often called policy instruments or policy **solutions.** These terms give the misleading impression that public policies create permanent mechanical fixes."(Stone, p259) The solutions, or policy strategies, are ways of exerting power in the polis. **Inducements** employ rewards and punishment, as well as incentives and sanctions, to change people's behavior. **Facts**, according to Stone, rely principally on persuasion as a way to influence others in the commons. **Rights**, particularly in government, allow individuals, groups or organizations to invoke power. In the polis, **powers** describe strategies "that seek to alter the content of decisions by shifting the power of decision making to different people." (Stone p. 262)

<u>Limitations</u>

This study is limited in the lack of reliability checks. The coding system was comprised under time constraints, which allowed for minimal interaction between coding teams. Additionally, some aspects of the coding system were not checked for reliability. Hence, the final word rested within each specific coding team.

Chapter II

Literature Review/ Conceptual Framework

Frank Smith in his paper "Advocacy Design Guide" writes of assessing the school as a whole discusses a focus on a holistic view of the school's culture and to focus on self-assessment by a core group of the school's stakeholders. Smith uses the framework of Instruction, Organization, Governance and Accountability (I.O.G.A.) to develop a shared way of looking at a school. The design has been found to be useful in evaluating a school's culture as well as to provide a standardized way of evaluating the school's shared of identity and character. "Instruction" involves "how" the material is to be presented. "Organization" refers to school staff working together. "Governance" deals with the use of authority and how decisions are implemented. "Accountability" examines the performance of the school as a design.

Other researchers have also contributed to the concept of community and education. Hargreaves and Fink in their book "Sustainable Leadership" wrote educational reform and the effects that followed. Unexpected by products of the concept included:

- An Impending graduation crises that effected primarily special education students.
- A narrowing or the curriculum and classroom creativity.
- Restricting innovative schools with their students.
- A widening of the learning gap between elite and other schools.

- Teachers teaching for the test to raise overall test scores.

- Not allowing teachers flexibility in their schedules to work individually with students.

- Teachers having no time to engage with peers thus affecting professional community

- An increase in teacher stress and resignation.

- Seasoned teachers becoming resistance to change.

- A continual change of administration, i.e. principles as well as other administrators leaving altogether.   (P.11-12)

Additionally others have discussed solutions for educational networks, (D. Hargreaves; Castells) Included are criteria to:

- Have a clear and moral purpose.

- Have clarity focus and discipline.

- Have clear parameters

- Are evidence informed

- Emphasize strong professional learning communities.

- Nurture a culture of technical creativity

- Are actionable in real and chosen time

- Supported by distributed leadership

- Are linked to remodel school structure

- Cannot be controlled only disturbed

Edgar H Schein in his paper on Organizational Culture and Leadership also writes of defining organizational culture in a series of ten factors:

1. Observing behavior including language, customs and traditions
2. Looking at group norms including standards and values.
3. Publicly announced values
4. Mission or philosophy
5. Rules of the organization
6. Group climate
7. Embedded skills
8. Habits of thinking and shared thinking
9. Shared meanings of the group
10. Metaphors or symbols

With these concepts Schein discusses how culture is a phenomenon that affects all. Through culture we can begin to understand how an organization is created, developed, managed and changed. Furthermore, Schein states that as culture defines leadership, it is important to understand the culture to understand the organization.

Leithwood's writes of the importance of distributed leadership approach where the important factors include:

- Small but educationally effective learning.
- Teachers who provide influential leadership.
- Allowing teacher leadership to forge a positive influence.

- To recognize the unique challenges that come from different organizational programs.

- Teacher leadership has a significant effect on student engagement.

Hargreaves (2004) in a study on emotional responses to educational change found a number of contrasting meanings that come into play whenever change is considered in an educational setting. Hargreaves states that "Positive change, for these teachers was self-driven, flexibly developed, connected to teaching and learning, and professionally current"(p.167) Hargreaves further goes on to state that "Negative change was seen as driven by governments and bureaucracies that failed to understand classroom practice and even withdrew support from it so they could implement other, noneducational agendas" (p.167)

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) outlined five action principles for achieving sustainability in practice. They are *Activism, Vigilance, Patience, Transparency and Design.*

- Activist leadership influences the environment that influences it by   activating among other things activating personal and professional networks.

- Vigilance monitors the environment to insures that it stays healthy

- Patience allows one to delay gratification instead of expecting instant results.

- Transparency allows for scrutiny and criticism.

- Design creates a personalized system that is adaptable.

The ground work of our research is based on Stone's <u>Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making</u> (2002). Stone categorizes the theory of policy politics, concepts of society, the market model and the polis model. The market model foresees what is beneficial to an individual; in contrast, the polis focuses on the community. Stone declares in the polis, there is a concern with public interest and the process of government and control. Stone's concepts of society are listed below:

Stone's Concepts of Society

	Market Model	Polis Model
1. Unit of Analysis	individual	community
2. Motivations	self-interest	public interest (as well as self-interest)
3. Chief conflict	self-interest vs. self-interest	self-interest vs. public interest (common problem)
4. Source of peoples ideas and references	self-generation within the individual	influence from outside
5. Nature of collective activity	competition	cooperation and competition
6. Criteria for individual decision-making	maximizing self-interest minimizing cost	loyalty (to people, places, organizations, products) maximize self-interest, promote public interest
7. Building blocks of social action	individuals	groups and organizations
8. Nature of information	accurate, complete, fully available	ambiguous, interpretive, incomplete, strategically manipulated
9. How things work	laws of matter (eg., material resources are finite and diminish with use)	laws of passion (eg., human resources are renewable and expand with use)
10. Sources of change	material exchange	ideas, persuasion, alliances
	quest to maximize own welfare	pursuit of power, pursuit of own welfare, pursuit of public interest

(p.33)   Figure 1

The community struggles to agree on what is the public's best interest. This is represented in the polis; politics involve people fighting over public interests, and trying to grasp their own definition. Stone says in the polis, what seems to tear communities apart, actually brings them closer together. It is through this discourse where conflict attempts to be resolved. The concept of public interest and civic capacity are not restricted to Stone's model. There is a battle between the market and the polis in reference to public interest. The market indicates that individual desires are more influential than the community desires.
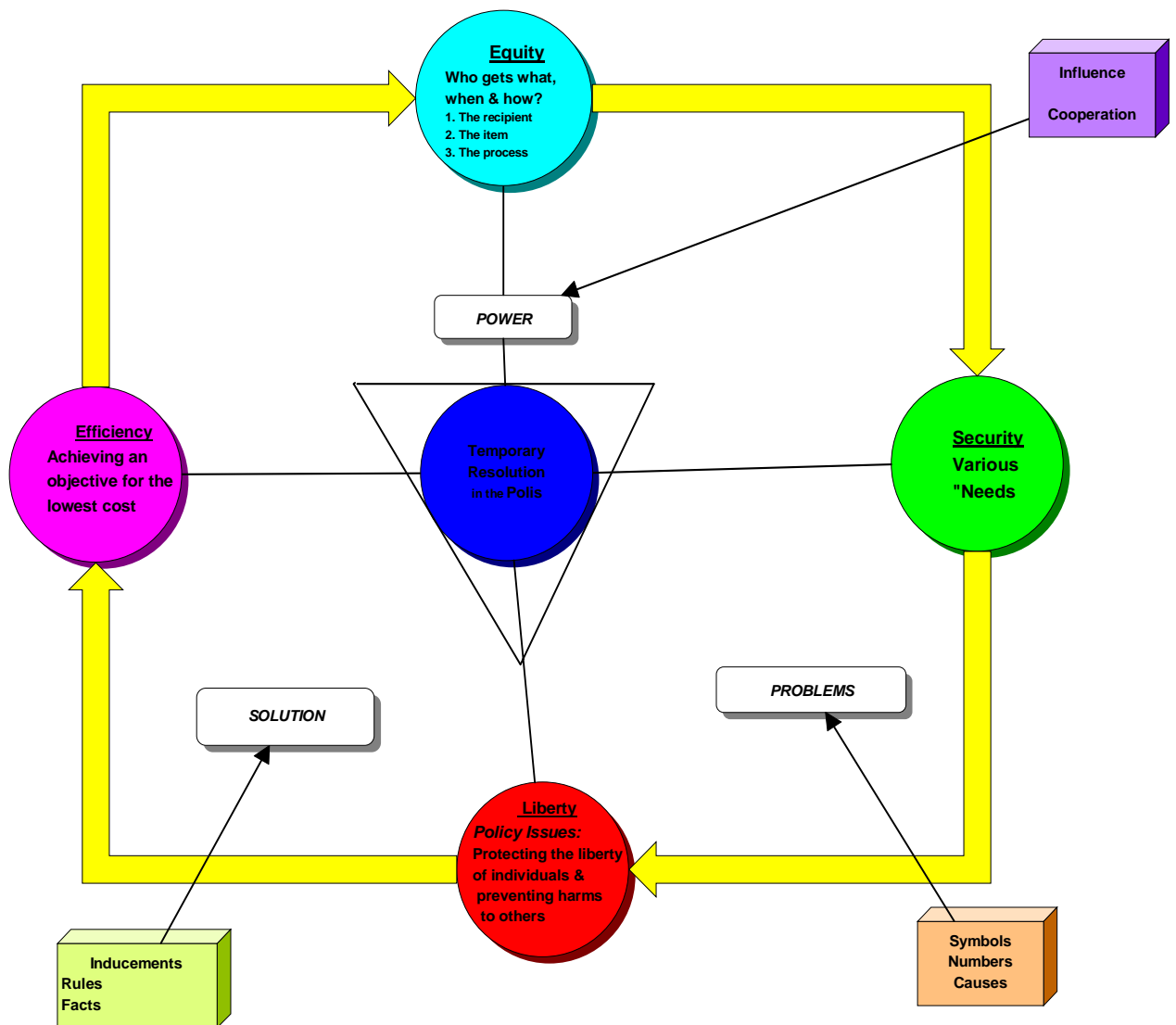
Stone's framework on security and/or safety is a goal that has been of public interest. Issues related to security continue to arise. The BRI represents much controversy. "Safety issues in the polis require a sense of community, solidarity, a sense of belonging; dignity, respect, self-esteem, and honor; friendship and love."(p.95)

The study of the BRI bridges to all these emotions. Despite what side of the issue, people agree with the same feelings are clear and evident for both. The polis has no plan to promote self interest, just like the market has no concept of public interest.

Stone states: "The simplest, most common, in some way intuitively, most appealing definition of need is what is necessary for sheer survival." (p.87)

This study depicts that the need expressed is not necessarily that of comfort, but of survival. Communities lack a feeling of safety when their

individual comfort zone is threatened. In today's world, safety and security play a

vital role. The topic of safety and security can rouse a number of different

emotions within a community. In the polis, the concept of equity in reference to

safety is intangible. People want safe and secure schools. Policies have to reflect

the values, needs, and wants of the community. Passion is what will bring a

community together. The BRI represents complexities present in the cycle of

policymaking illustrated in Stone's model:

Equity
Who gets what, when & how?
1. The recipient
2. The item
3. The process

Influence

Cooperation

POWER

Efficiency
Achieving an objective for the lowest cost

Temporary Resolution in the Polis

Security
Various "Needs

PROBLEMS

SOLUTION

Liberty
Policy Issues:
Protecting the liberty of individuals & preventing harms to others

Inducements
Rules
Facts

Symbols
Numbers
Causes

"Membership in a community defines social and economic rights. What makes a collection of individuals a community if not only the definitional principles specifying who is in and who is out…sharing burdens and bounty is the glue that holds people together…sharing, caring, and maintaining relations is at least as strong a motivator of human behavior as competition, separation, and promotion of one separate self-interest."(Stone, p.20) Stone's framework establishes a solid method for the analysis of this study.

Chapter III

Methodology

The literature review revealed that in the polis, problem definition is never simply a matter of defining goals and measuring our distance from them. "It is rather the strategic representation of situations. Problem definition is a matter of representation because every description of a situation is a portrayal from only one of many points of view." (Stone, p. 133) In the research, newspaper editorials, citizen letters, interviews, district data and Memphis City School websites were used to interpret the distinct representations in Memphis City Schools (Appendix A). The purpose of using the artifacts is to gather qualitative data that would serve as a foundation for identifying the main voices and exposing underlying conflicting issues of the Blue Ribbon Initiative.

Stone's framework and the policy making concepts aid in creating a coding system (Appendix B). The coding system facilitates the analysis of the case study and its sources when recording central voices and the message each conveys. This data was then organized into three bins: goals, problems, solutions for further analysis.

In qualitative research reliability is vital. However, in this study due to time constraint, reliability was compromised because the findings were simply exchanged for cross-referencing and minor checks. These finding will be described in detail through further analysis.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV Findings

<u>Statement of Purpose</u>

The data presentation in this case study seeks to provide a way of discerning,

examining, comparing and contrasting,3.2t Tf-0100031 Tc -000121 8.6856.98 0 TdtioChaatatras n

under security. She speaks of the security needs of both students and staff and the community as a whole. Her goal orientation is evident in her first sentence of Article B, "Academic achievement is our number one goal, and we realize that positive student behaviors are critical to reaching this goal." KW also speaks of security. Two out of four of KW's goal oriented statements are categorized as SEREL. A prototypical quote of this from Article A reveals the difference in the way PR and KW represent their views: "We'd have to admit that countless teachers in our schools are teaching in fear." The two statements given above illustrate the two extremes in the political discourse and value orientations in this study.

As a whole, CA has the greatest number of categorized goal oriented statements. Of the eleven statements, seven of them are categorized under efficiency, with five of those subcategorized as EFOUT. Four out of the five EFOUT statements are contained in Article C written by Dakarai I. Aarons. Aarons presents his case by reporting on both sides of the issue. For example, he reports on teacher Nona Allen who is critical of the plan because "Teachers have more paperwork to fill out and there are more steps taken at the school level." Later, the author cites Allen as saying "I don't really know what the answer is. I do know that Blue Ribbon is not it in its current form."

Table 1

An Analysis of Value (Goal) Oriented Statements, Sorted By Voice

Voices vs. Goals	CA	KW	PR	MCS	CJ	T	TG	BM	KP	CL	TOTAL
EQRECG	1										1
EQIT										1	1
EF	1									1	1
EFOUT	5	1	2								8
EFIN	1										1
SE										1	1
SEND	1		2			1					4
SEREL	1	2									3
SEFU			1								1
SEC			2								2
L	1										1
LHB										1	1
LHM										2	2
LHE		1									1
TOTAL	11	4	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	

2. **Whose voice(s) do you hear and how does each voice present its notion of the problem? Whose voice becomes predominant?**

The predominant voices of problem related statements in the Memphis City Schools case study are CA, KW and T. Of KW's twenty two problem oriented statements, seventeen of them are categorized as symbols and causes. Similarly, of the CA's thirty one problem oriented statements, twenty are categorized as symbols and causes. Within the categories of symbols and causes each voice presents its case differently. CA's authors use the full range of the subcategories within symbols with the most utilized being SC. The story of conspiracy (SC) is told by Aarons when he speaks of KW's position. KW's use of symbols is concentrated in stories of synecdoche, stories that blame the victim, and metaphors of war. He chooses to blame the victim, in this case the children, as if they are not doing enough to overcome their dire situation. Stone argues that

using rhetoric that blames the victim insinuates that they have control of their fate. "Another variant of the control story is the *blame-the-victim* story. It too, moves us from the realm of fate to the realm of control." (Stone, pp. 143-144) KW's comments attempt to polarize the community over the Blue Ribbon Initiative. "Generational poverty robs its victims of the ability to behave in a controlled and calm way. How can I behave calmly if my very existence is the antithesis of calm?" (Whalum). KW also uses metaphors of war to clearly delineate the two sides of the battle. "The symbol of war is an obvious tactic used by leaders to create support for their policies." (Stone, p. 154) With respect to problem oriented statements related to causes, both CA and KW primarily speak of intentional and inadvertent causes. "The story of inadvertent cause is a common interpretation of poverty, malnutrition and disease." (Stone, p. 192) This statement speaks to the complexity of the Memphis City Schools situation.

Table 2

An Analysis of Problem Oriented Statements, Sorted By Voice

Voices vs. Problems	CA	KW	PR	MCS	CJ	T	TG	BM	KP	CL	TOTAL
S	1	1									2
SD	1										1
SP	1	1				1					3
SCI	1										1
SHC	1	1				1				1	4
SC	3										3
SBV		2									2
SHN	1										1
SS	1	2									3
MW		3									3
SA						1					1
N	1					1					2
NN	1										1
NS		1									1
NF	1	1				1					3
N	1										1
NCR			1							1	2
NS	1			2							3
C	1	1				1					3
CINT	3	3									6
CINA	6	3		1						1	10
I	2	1									3
IOBJ			1								1
ISUB	1			1							2
IDIF		1									1
ICON	3										3
D	3	1								1	5
DG			1							1	2
DC						2				1	3
DB						1					1
Totals	34	22	3	4	0	9	0	0	0	6	

3. Whose voice(s) do you hear and how does each voice present its idea about how to solve the problem?

In disaggregating the data in voice vs. solutions, the category of inducements is strongly represented. Inducements involve "changing people's behavior with rewards and punishments or incentives and sanctions." (Stone p.261) In this category, future oriented inducements are predominant.   In

carefully examining the Blue Ribbon Initiative, it is evident that inducements that

occur far in the future likely have less impact than those that occur immediately

and this contributes to the problems Memphis City Schools experience.

In review the data illustrates that Kenneth Whalum views stress the

problem and completely disregards posing any possible solutions. In contrast,

Patrice Robinson offers solutions and clearly identifies future-oriented goals for

the Blue Ribbon Initiative.

Table 3

An Analysis of Solution Oriented Statements, Sorted By Voice

Voice vs. Solutions	CA	KW	PR	MCS	CJ	T	TG	BM	KP	CL	TOTALS
I	2	2	1							1	6
IUA	1										1
IFO	3	1	3							1	6
IA			1			1					2
			3							1	4

Stone's policy paradox), determine which model more accurately reflects what actually happened to the Blue Ribbon policy initiative. Explain your position.

Consistency of Voices

The researchers began the significant case study of Memphis City Schools' Blue Ribbon Initiative with the litany of frustrations bemoaned by Kenneth T. Whalum, dissenting MCS Board Commissioner. Whalum, who blames the district's children, among others, for its extreme discipline problems, signals poverty as its root cause. Whalum excuses black families from discipline, referring to discipline as a "foreign concept," yet contradicts himself when he states: "We're losing another generation because we don't have the courage to administer proper discipline." (Whalum, A-2).

While he argues for reinstatement of corporal punishment, Whalum champions the Catholic Diocese of Memphis for its relationship building in that "teachers and staff openly display love for their students and their families. (Whalum, A-2) Whalum appears to miss the very essence which this comment serves to illuminate...that love begets love, and violence begets more violence. Moreover, Whalum fails to recognize Martin Luther King's poignant words regarding peaceful conflict resolution, ultimately blaming King for the segregated condition of Memphis City Schools. Whalum has been Blue Ribbon Plan's biggest public detractor. Yet a *Commercial Appeal* Editorial on June 10, 2007, regarding the ban on corporal punishment suggests Whalum had expressed that "it would be a shame to restore this inheritance from plantation society to the hallways of the Memphis City Schools. Herein lies another paradox.

The timeline of events in this study encompasses less than three years (since Blue Ribbon's inception). In that time, Kenneth Whalum displays consistently paradoxical views aimed at accruing power. One blogger accuses Whalum of abusing his pulpit – a reminder that Whalum is a minister, and indeed, a lawyer, as well. Additional research portrays Whalum as an active politician in the community. It can then be expected, as in the polis, that the views he expresses may have more to do with the need or desire to align himself with a particular group – in this case, the teachers and parents in Memphis City Schools." – For political gain.

Memphis Board President, Patrice Robinson, has remained firm in her support of the Blue Ribbon Plan, advising that the initiative needs time to build upon its success. In her guest column in *The Commercial Appeal,* June 10, 2007, Ms. Robinson reminds readers that most (95 per cent) of Memphis City Schools students "exhibit the kinds of attitudes and behaviors that are critical to academic achievement" (Robinson, B-1). She relies on the district's data to underscore the "great gains since the Blue Ribbon Plan went into effect." Robinson may be writing poetry with numbers, since the data does not compare common categories. It is, therefore, impossible for the researchers to determine Blue Ribbon's efficacy. Nonetheless, Patrice Robinson has been a consistent supporter of Blue Ribbon since its inception, and she had been a proponent of the ban on corporal punishment prior to Carol Johnson's tenure.
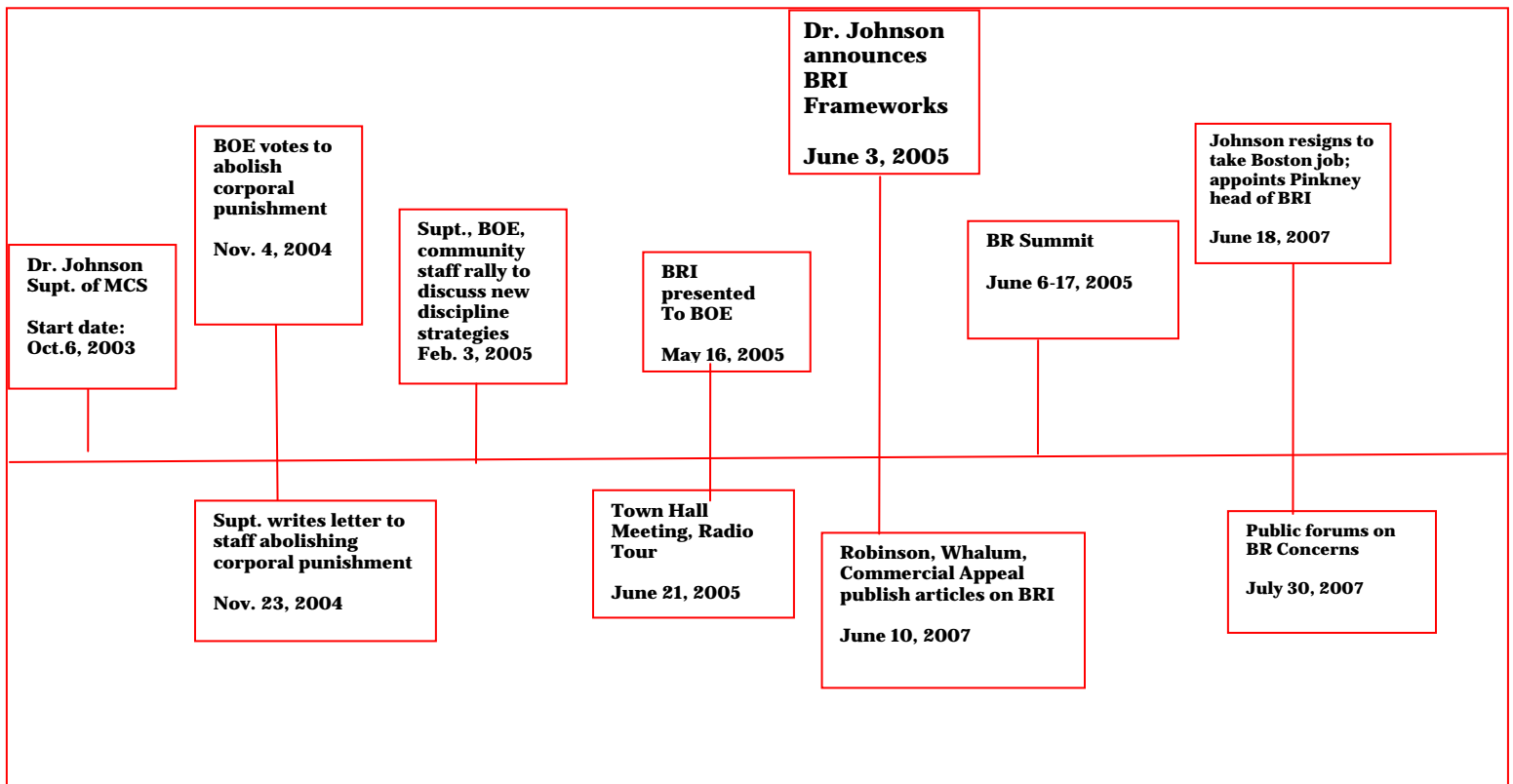
Dukarai I. Aarons, education reporter for *The Commercial Appeal,* gives the illusion of a fair and balanced report in his column, "Black eye for Blue Ribbon" (Aarons, C-1). Yet again, the numbers reported are not convincing. No

data is presented for comparison of violence rates in preceding years. In this

article, Aarons, and thus *Commercial Appeal*, offers input from Superintendent

Carol Johnson, Commissioners Patrice Robinson and Kenneth Whalum, and

teacher, Nona Allen. We do not hear the voices of students or parents. If Aarons

had done a full investigation, he would have reported that *The Commercial

Appeal* ran a story in 1998 that clearly demonstrated the community's support

for corporal punishment. His article, in essence, appears to gather support for

Whalum's position against the Plan. Consider again his title: "Black eye for Blue

Ribbon."

Also on June 10, 2007, *Commercial Appeal's* editor presents a more

balanced view of Blue Ribbon, while it is evident that the editor favors the ban on

corporal punishment. As the editor reminds us, "...discipline is still a work in

progress in the Memphis City Schools. Patience will be required to find the

perfect formula in the country's 21st largest school system...Discipline is

undeniably one of the most difficult issues to deal with in this environment. It

has been for a long time, though." (*Commercial Appeal, D).* Herein, the

researchers contend that *Commercial Appeal* fairly portrays the dilemma of Blue

Ribbon – to continue or discontinue the ban on corporal punishment. One voice

from *Commercial Appeal* that was not represented in the literature, (save for a

reference in the letters to the editor) is that of Wendi C. Thomas, one of the

paper's reporters. She states, "The problem isn't Blue Ribbon, it's the

parents...School administrators should not be the first line of discipline, even

though it often seems that they are." (*Commercial Appeal, 2006).*

Memphis City teachers share a common voice against the Blue Ribbon Plan. It is noteworthy that no positive letters were represented in *Commercial Appeals* Letters to the Editor.   The citizen letters praise Dr. Johnson and herald her efforts to move the schools forward. Unlike Whalum and the teachers, they acknowledge that physical punishment was not working. All of the source were from the same time period, rendering the element of time a moot factor for the purposes of this research.

BLUE RIBBON TIMELINE

Dr. Johnson announces BRI Frameworks

June 3, 2005

Johnson resigns to take Boston job; appoints Pinkney head of BRI

June 18, 2007

BOE votes to abolish corporal punishment

Nov. 4, 2004

Supt., BOE, community staff rally to discuss new discipline strategies
Feb. 3, 2005

BR Summit

June 6-17, 2005

Dr. Johnson Supt. of MCS

Start date: Oct.6, 2003

BRI presented To BOE

May 16, 2005

Supt. writes letter to staff abolishing corporal punishment

Nov. 23, 2004

Town Hall Meeting, Radio Tour

June 21, 2005

Robinson, Whalum, Commercial Appeal publish articles on BRI

June 10, 2007

Public forums on BR Concerns

July 30, 2007

The sequence of events involved in the Blue Ribbon Initiative (BRI) demonstrates a shift in the desired outcomes:

- The community fails to embrace the BRI because they are in conflict over the practice of corporal punishment;

- MCS staff does not support BRI due to the extensive paperwork requirements;

- Superintendent Carol Johnson, as the key proponent for the BRI, resigns.

- Carol Johnson appoints James Pinkney as Blue Ribbon's third Blue Ribbon director in two years.

Using C. Stone's concepts as a guideline the following are Civic Capacity categories and references to the Memphis City School with individuals providing quotations and their respective viewpoints based on the printed material available:

CIVIC CAPACITY		**Memphis City Schools Reference**		
1. **Urgency**	Kenneth T Whalum	Memphis Education Assoc.	Teacher Nona Allen	
" "	Teacher Kay Russell	Teacher Heather Limbaugh	Graduate Shep Fargotstein	
2. **Institutional Power**	Patrice Robinson	School Board		
3. **Collaboration**	Board Member Betty Mallot	Citizen Craig Turner	Citizen Tim Faris	Citizen Tim Mudder
4. **Data**	Reporter Dakara I. Aarons	By The Numbers Fact Sheet		
5 . **Distributive Leadership**	Dr. Tom Glass	Principle Kenneth Pinkey		
6. **Professional Pride**	Teacher Lea Leet	Letter To The Editor		
7. **Extra Resources**	Memphis Police Dept.			
8. **Relational Building**	Memphis Police Dept.			
9. **Peer Group Culture**				
10 **Accountability**	Carol Johnson	Editorial		
11. **Human Agency**	Patrice Robinson			

<u>Civic Capacity Concept</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Urgency-	This concept (voice) was the predominant one identified from six separate citations of the documents reviewed.
Intuitional Power-	On two documents this concept was found as a need
Collaboration-	Four individuals alluded to the use of using a collaborative effort in solving the issue discussed
Data-	There were two references that discussed the data (statistics) related to the issue discussed
Distributive Leadership-	The concept was found on two documents
Professional Pride-	A relatively minor reference located on two Documents
Extra Recourses-	There was a tangential reference made and indirectly stated
Relational Building-	No cohesive voice was found albeit a minor reference to the Memphis Police Department
Peer Group Culture-	The issue of peer group influence was not located from the documents reviewed
Accountability-	This issue was reported on two individual documents
Human Agency-	The guidelines utilized could only find one

notation related to this concept

Prototypical Quotes

The goal of the following segment is to provide insight into the political rhetoric being categorized and analyzed in this study.

Bin	Source	Claim #	Voice	Prototypical Quote
EQRECG	D	14	CA	And there was no escaping the fact that corporal punishment was being administered disproportionately to African-American students, sending a message to students that race matters on issues of discipline and punishment.
EQIT	G	7	CL	Kudos to Wendi C. Thomas for her willingness to say something about our education system and the attitude of all too many parents toward the education of our children (June 21 column).
EF	D	7	CA	Complaints that students are not being treated equally throughout the district under the Blue Ribbon plan should be starting to level off by now.
EFOUT	A	22	KW	There is much that is right about what Memphis City Schools are doing to produce productive citizens,…
EFIN	C	13	CA	Johnson is giving principals surveys this week to get their candid opinions on the plan and its effectiveness. She will use the responses to help formulate any changes.
SE	F	14	CL	Between classes, hallways in some of the MCS's best high schools are a free-for-all where teachers and students live with fear on a daily basis. What teacher would want to try to stop a fight and two 6-foot thugs, who - because of Blue Ribbon - will be back the next day?
SEND	B	2	PR	However, we recognize that there are students whose behaviors impact in a negative way their learning environment, and sometimes the learning environment for other students as well.
SEREL	A	20	KW	We'd have to admit that countless teachers in our schools are teaching in fear.
SEFU	B	1	PR	Academic achievement is our number one goal, and we realize that positive student behaviors are critical to reaching this goal. Most of our students in Memphis City Schools exhibit the kinds of attitudes and behaviors that are critical to academic achievement.
SEC	B	4	PR	Where do we focus our energy to ensure academic excellence in a safe learning environment?
L	A	11	KW	…was implemented two years ago over the strenuous objections of roughly 70 percent of parents surveyed.
LHB	F	15	CL	During classes, some teachers are afraid to turn their back on the class for fear of bodily injury.
LHM	F	18	CL	Teachers fear their cars will be vandalized or that they will be bodily harmed before or after school. It is time to take back control of the schools, let the students know that there are serious repercussions for misconduct, and let the teachers know that Supt. Carol Johnson's administration supports them over those who don't want to learn.
LHE	A	21	KW	We'd have to admit that we have failed to provide one of the most basic constitutional rights.
S	A	10	KW	Sadly, it appears that our schools Superintendent and - so far- a majority of the Memphis City Schools Board of Commissioners are reluctant to hear from teachers, principals, students and the general public about troubling trends that have developed since the so-called Blue Ribbon Behavior Initiative...
SD	C	24	CA	"Before Blue Ribbon, there was a sense of respect for the teacher," Allen said. "After Blue Ribbon, students have been known to say:' You can't do anything to me.' "

SP	F	7	T	The problem to me is much more complex than just putting a paddle back in the school. We as a society must find a way to make parents accountable.
SCI	C	8	CA	District staffers have gone on the defensive, highlighting double-digit drops in fighting, office referrals, uniform violations and class cutting.
SHC	F	17	CL	Good students - even in honors classes - have to put up with unruly students who disrupt the classes on a regular basis, knowing that there are no repercussions for their actions.
SC	C	18	CA	"I know I am absolutely right on the issue." he said "I know the more they try to cover it up, the more the grassroots people will move to uncover it."
SBV	A	8	KW	And, of course, we can blame the children for being unable to overcome generations of communal dysfunction and suddenly become college material. Though they would never admit it, I suspect that the latter is the position of many educated black Memphians who hold great influence.
SHN	D	9	CA	But it would be a shame, as a school board member Kenneth Whalum Jr. has suggested, to restore this inheritance from plantation society to the hallways of the Memphis City Schools.
SS	D	19	CA	The problem did not originate with the ban on physical punishment. It won't magically go away if the whippings return.
MW	A	27	KW	I just hope more of my colleagues will begin to see the same crisis I see. If not, we'll have to begin to use the blue ribbon as a tourniquet to stop the flow of lifeblood (literal and figurative) form our communities.
SA	F	4	T	What are my well behaved students doing? Good question.
N	F	5	T	I am sure some study has been done that shows the statistics for the Blue Ribbon Plan and that they are great results. But in my classroom those students are people, not statistics, and for the most part they need help dealing with many issues.
NS	C	6	CA	The plan was instituted just as the 115,000-student urban school district began its first year without corporal punishment and is one of the signature initiatives of Supt. Carol Johnson's four-year tenure.
NF	A	28	KW	One final word about Dr. King: He is partly responsible for the fact that our school system is roughly 85 percent black and poor.
NCR	B	3	PR	Approximately 5 percent (or less) of our students exhibit chronic problems…Should our focus as a school board be on that 5 percent…should our teachers be focused on that group?
NS	A	11	KW	(BRI was implemented) two years ago over the strenuous objections of roughly 70 percent of parents surveyed.
C	A	1	KW	The bad behavior we are witnessing in Memphis City Schools, especially among our elementary and middle level students…
CINT	A	2	KW	…is partially the strange fruit of years of insidious poverty, psychological hurt and benign community neglect…
CINA	A	7	KW	We can blame the faceless "system," which is a favorite whipping boy of many societal ne'er-do-wells whose own failures have made them bitter about life in general.
I	D	12	CA	On a 5-4 vote, the board took a brace stand against the practice, despite considerable opposition to the ban in the community.
IOBJ	B	10	PR	The board and Dr. Johnson have heard the teachers' concerns about the need for additional training for teachers and inconsistency or irregularities in enforcement across the district.
ISUB	C	7	CA	An increasing number of parents, community members and even teachers have come to vent their frustration about student behavior at the Memphis Board of Education meeting and have sent a flood of e-mails to board members and staff alike.
IDIF	A	5	KW	When it comes to discipline problems in those schools, there is plenty of blame to go around.

ICON	C-2	5	CA	A growing chorus of community members, concerned about the violent incidents that take place in and around schools, is demanding change more quickly.
D	A-2	19	KW	Because to do so would be to admit that not every child, every day, is college bound. We'd have to admit that countless children in our schools are fortunate just to live through a school week.
DG	B	11	CL	I am sure their recommendations and concerns will be addressed on June 25.
DC	F	2	T	I do not actually believe this is the fault of my administrators; it comes from higher than that... much of my time is spent creating an alternative plan for the disruptive students in my classroom.
DB	F	10	T	As a high school teacher in Memphis City Schools, I believe the Blue Ribbon Plan is not working.
I	D	12	CA	...despite considerable opposition to the ban in the community.
IUA	C-2	19	CA	I can't go a day without someone saying, "Rev. Whalum, please don't stop crying out about Blue Ribbon.
IFO	A-2	30	KW	If we don't restore discipline in our schools we may see worse unrest than we saw after April 4, 1968."
IA	C-3	47	CA	In order for the plan to work at our schools, the staff and community must embrace the shift in culture...
IP	G-1	6	CL	The Blue Ribbon Initiative may need minor or major change, but returning to a failed approach is certainly not the answer...those who wish simplistic solutions...for complex problems.
IN	B	8	PR	According to the data, we have made great gains since putting Blue Ribbon Initiative into effect.
IT	G	2	CL	Throughout history, people have achieved great things through vision, planning, determination and perseverance -- no matter what their personal circumstances may have been.
IIR	C	48	CA	Violence begets violence. We have to teach them conflict resolution skills that last a lifetime.
IS	C	14	CA	His campaign last fall called for immediate reinstatement of corporal punishment as a last resort measure under Blue Ribbon.
RP	F	20	CL	The Memphis City Schools should be ever more unwavering in teaching these kids the most valuable lesson they may ever learn -- that there are repercussions for bad behavior, and rewards for good behavior.
RF	F	12	T	The students do not receive severe enough consequences; therefore, they behave inappropriately more often because their punishments are not immediate enough or strident enough.
FP	C	5	CA	But even as district-provided data show that many categories of offenses covered by the behavior plan are decreasing.
FPR	D	13	CA	The evidence was overwhelming: More effective behavioral modification techniques were available to maintain order in the classroom.
P	G	8	CL	If we were willing to be proactive...maybe we wouldn't run off people like Dr. Carol Johnson.

Stone's Paradox As A Model for Memphis' Blue Ribbon Initiative

According to Stone, "the Rationality Project misses the point of politics. Political reasoning is instead reasoning by metaphor and analogy." (Stone, p.) Thus, the Rationality Project resembles the market model, where individual advancement and well-being is the modus operandi. The market model does not provide for a community's fight for the public interest or common good.   For this reason, Stone's model of society as a political community best fits the Blue Ribbon Initiative:

Goals

The "common good" in this case study is positive discipline – the means by which to reach the Memphis City Schools' goal: Every child. Every day. College bound. This is the idea at the center of the Blue Ribbon Initiative. Ideas, in keeping with Stone, are at the center of all political conflicts. Stone presents policy making as a constant struggle over the criteria for classification, the boundaries of categories, and the definition of ideals that guide the way people behave.

In Memphis City Schools, the commons problems, or collective action problems, stem from the lack of discipline among elementary and middle school students, in particular, and from a lack of discipline in the home, in general. The long history of parent and teacher support for corporal punishment creates a strong body of influence which creates enemies and friends in Memphis. In the polis, as these researchers have learned, information is interpretive, incomplete and strategically withheld. This is seen throughout the articles referenced. Whalum places blame on poverty and violence and argues for the reinstatement

of corporal punishment; Robinson wears rose-colored glasses to portray all that is right with Blue Ribbon. Carol Johnson pleads for more time. Teachers detest the burden of paperwork. All are imperfect and incomplete representations of the polis problems in Memphis. All are strategic representations intended to assuage influence to achieve a goal.

Kenneth Whalum is perhaps the most passionate voice we observe. Indeed, his power is evidenced throughout the portrayal of Blue Ribbon. It is clear that Whalum has positioned himself as the voice for all who reject Blue Ribbon. Interestingly, as researchers, we are left to ponder whether Whalum is also the voice of the faith-based community, who otherwise remain silent.

The quest for security is a passionate call in the Memphis commons. Students require a safe learning environment. Teachers need to work in a place where they are free from fear. In Memphis, this quest for safety commands urgency. In examining the security/efficiency tradeoff in Memphis, it becomes evident that there is more to be gained from Blue Ribbon than a sense of safety. What if, more than gains or loss of instructional time, more students feel valued, and therefore, begin to succeed? In the polis, Stone teaches us that societal progress involves individual gains and losses.

Liberty is offered through new alternatives for Memphis students. According to Stone, "liberty is expanded whenever a person's control over his or her life is increased." (Stone, p. 128) In the positive sense, students are being given access to college in their future – a goal that may or may not seem realistic to some poor black students. In the negative concept, liberty is the absence of

coercion – in this case, by teachers and administrators who no longer have access to the paddle to induce desired behavior.

Problems

The strategic representation of the Blue Ribbon Initiative revolves around the issue of corporal punishment, which has been banned in the schools. Dr. Johnson and Patrice Robinson offer one brand of strategic representation; Dr. Whalum offers another. *Commercial Appeal* portrays both sides with alternative support. Ultimately, Carol Johnson recognizes that her carefully planned initiative to provide dignity and hope to students whose lives are threatened by hopelessness may come undone.

Kenneth Whalum and Memphis teachers effectively employ stories of decline to attempt to force the superintendent and board to reinstate corporal punishment. By blaming the victims, they create policy stories to further their influence against Blue Ribbon. In this case study, corporal punishment becomes the plausible synecdoche for Blue Ribbon, even though it serves to replace corporal punishment with more humane and effective discipline measures. Indeed, Whalum employs metaphors of war to assuage influence in achieving his goals.

Ambiguity serves both sides of the Memphis polis. Johnson never asserts how every child will manage to achieve a college education without the benefit of funding or supportive parents. Whalum proselytizes that not every child is meant to attend college, but when it comes to improving discipline, he offers no real prescription for improvement.

Numbers are employed by both sides in Memphis to achieve their goals. As stated early in Chapter 4, there is more art (poetry) than science in the data that is offered.   We do not really know whether and if so, to what degree, student behavior has improved as a result of the Blue Ribbon Plan. Numbers are metaphors for desired changes here; they are also metaphors for a system in chaos, depending on who is reporting the data.   In Memphis, numbers are employed to create a desired change, and each side uses them to press their points, gather influence and affirm their positions.

Whalum ascribes poverty and violence as the "root cause" for the lack of discipline in the schools. He views poverty as an intentional cause generated as a result of segregation.   Johnson, however, sees lack of hope as the inadvertent cause of black students' plight. Each, nonetheless, is a historical model of causality in that the pattern repeats or reproduces itself. These causal stories invite passion. They provide victims and oppressors and portray innocence and guilt. Indeed, they compel us to choose a political side.

Solutions

With Blue Ribbon clearly meeting resistance, one considers whether Dr. Johnson might have offered direct inducements to principals and staff to participate. Dr. Johnson hesitates to impose "top-down" mandates. Does the lack of rewards and sanctions inhibit Blue Ribbon's chance of success? Kenneth Whalum pushes his indoctrination in order to manipulate the community into demanding the reinstatement of corporal punishment "as a last resort." He references support in numbers and withholds information to create his own

propaganda machine.   Patrice Robinson employs facts and persuasion to buy more time for Blue Ribbon to work.

Size matters in the polis, as it does in Memphis. Tyranny of the majority presents itself in the case of Blue Ribbon. How can the reinstatement of corporal punishment serve the common good? Yet, if we are to believe Whalum and *Commercial Appeal,* there is a growing majority who reject Blue Ribbon.

Again, it is evident that Blue Ribbon represents politics, not policy. "Policy is potentially a sphere of rational analysis, objectivity, allegiance to truth and pursuit of the well being of society as a whole.   Politics is the sphere of emotion and passion, irrationality, self interest, short sightedness and raw power." (Stone, p. 376). In this policy argument, the question of whether corporal punishment is included or excluded is essential to which political side of Blue Ribbon one belongs and how value is established.   Blue Ribbon is a policy paradox in which intense passions have been evoked over the boundaries of corporal punishment. In the current chaos, the future of Blue Ribbon remains in question.

Chapter V

<u>Summary and Recommendations</u>

The introduction of the Blue Ribbon Initiative was created with what appeared to be noble intentions, specifically adopting alternative strategies to replace corporal punishment in order to address student behavior problems. What first began as a community in unanimous consensus, soon turned out to be a cacophony of many disgruntled voices. These different and conflicting voices resulted in an unraveling of the aim of the Blue Ribbon plan.

Using Stone's concept of "Society" as a general guideline, it can be viewed how the *market* and *polis* models clashed depending as each voice was making their respective case known in the printed media. As stated earlier in this research, the community struggled to agree on a method of "Efficiency", or as Stone states "getting the most out of a given input." (Stone p.61) A seemingly easy dilemma now was in conflict and voices demanding a return to corporal punishment were gaining momentum. An issue fiercely debated by the voices represented in this research. Kenneth Whalum in the article cited within was quoted as wanting a return of corporal punishment in the schools. His voice was found to be the most prominent mentioning numerous problems but offering no appropriate solutions. In an editorial regarding the Blue Ribbon Initiative, the author took issue with Kenneth Whalums statements made and that his suggestion of returning corporal punishment would restore this "inheritance from plantation society" an obvious symbol of slavery.   Finger pointing continued with teachers weighing in letters to the editor of the local newspaper.

To add insult to injury Superintendent, Dr. Carol Johnson was offered and accepted a similar position for the city of Boston.

One of the issues that arose from the blue Ribbon Initiative was a lack of a cohesive agreement in the approach the school district took prior to the beginning of the program. S. M. Hord (1997) in the book "Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement" wrote of the need of communities that share commitment to a common purpose.   In addition differences and disagreements can occur they should identify needed improvements with formal evidence, knowledge and intuition for decision making.   Clearly the aforementioned was not adhered to In this case study. Much of the ensuing political discourse could have been avoided if the polis was adequately informed and educated about the major constructs of the undertaking of the Blue Ribbon program.

In this undertaking the conflict between factions of the public sector and private sector were involved soon after the Blue Ribbon Initiative began. Approaches to the public and private sector can be seen as a dichotomy between two very different approaches. (K. Jackson, 2000) In the Blue Ribbon study there appears input from both. As in the public sector some members of the school district focused on the short term gains and certain voices attacked the initiative as positive change was not immediate. The superintendent however was looking at the long term effects of the change of policy of primarily corporal punishment. In addition members of the community and some school personnel were not willing to emphasize flexibility in the face of changing need.

A careful observation of the sequence of events may offer some clues as to the crises that occurred. According to available documents for this research it reveals that not all members of the Polis were adequately briefed about the implications of the Blue Ribbon Initiative. Of significant importance appears to be that many of the teachers and staff of the Memphis City Schools relied heavily on the use and/or implied threat of using corporal punishment. Although behavior intervention strategies were mentioned in the Blue Ribbon plan, it remains unclear whether teacher and school staff were adequately trained if at all in the techniques now to be utilized as a substitute for a procedure that apparently had been in existence for a significant length of time. In hindsight Kenneth Pinkney the former Middle School principle now heading the Blue Ribbon Team stated, "in order for the plan to work at every school, the staff and the larger community must embrace the shift in culture" The researchers find no disagreement with this statement however the timing appears late.

Possible errors that occurred in the Blue Ribbon Project could have been 2TJ)reementateCli

An additional factor to also be considered is the effect poverty has on the students and their families. Can poverty be a contributing factor behind school violence? What of home supervision and the percentage of single parent households? Should these factors be considered as well? Future researchers may consider the quandary worth perusing.   A secondary area of study would also be to review school districts in other parts of the country with similar economic distribution and what forms of discipline they utilize and find successful with their student population.

In the review of this research into the Blue Ribbon Initiative it remains unclear if the Board of Memphis City Schools or the Superintendent explored other districts use or non-use of corporal punishment in schools. Future school districts taking on a significant endeavor such as was done in the Memphis City Schools need to carefully prepare, evaluate and use Stone's concept of a distributive practice in dispensing information to the Polis prior to it's implementation, in the hopes of minimizing dissent that became a major liability in the success of the Blue Ribbon Initiative.   As Stone so aptly states in the title of her book the conflict over the Blue Ribbon Initiative was indeed a "Policy Paradox".

Appendix

Appendix A

Articles

Appendix B

Source	# claim	Voice	GOAL	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
A. Whalum		CA paper	**EqRec**	**S Symbols**	**I Inducements**
B Robinson		KW Whalen	EqRecM	SN Symb Narr	IUA Unitary Actors
C Aarons		PR prez	EqRecR	SD Decline	IFO FutureOriented
D Editorial		MCS	EqIt	SP Progress	IA Adaptable
E Numbers		CJ supt	EqPro	SCI Change Illus	IP Purposeful Cause
F Letters		T Tcher	EqProCom	SHC Helpless	
G postings		TG prof	EqProLot	SC Conspiracy	IN Numbers
H MCS web		BM mallott	**Ef Efficncy**	SBV Blame Vict	IG Giver
		KP Pinkney	EfOut		IT Target
		CL letter	EfIn	SS Synecdoche	IIR Incentive/Rewrds
			Se Secrty	SH Horror Story	IS Sanctions
			SeNd Needs		ISYM Symbolism
			SePdx Paradox	M Metaphor	
			SeSym Symbolic	MNL Norm Leap	RU Rules
			SeRel Relative	MUR Unintend Rew	RP Precise
			SeInst Instrumen	MM Machine	RF Flexible
			SeFu Future	MWI Wedge/Inclne	
			SeC Communal	MC Containers	RLC Custom/Tradtn
				MD Disease	RINF Informal norm
			L Liberty	MW War	RMOR Moral
			LH Harms		RPRI Private Assoc
			LHB Bodily Harm	SA Ambiguity	
			LHM Material		RNEU Neutral
			LHA Amenity	N NUMBERS	RPE Enforced
			LHS Structural	NM Metaphor	RPI Perverse Incent
			LHA Accumulat	NN Normative	RT Thumb
			LHE Emotional	NS Symbolic	
			LHM Moral/Sprt		FP Facts/persuasion
				Hidden Stories	FPR Rational

			Libty/Secur	NF Frequency	FPI Indoctrination
			Libty/Equity	NI Identifiable	
				N Boundaries	
				NCC Create Cmmnty	
				NCR Conflict Resol	
				NS Numeric Strateg	
				C CAUSES	
				Cac Accidnetal	
				Cint Intentional	
				Cina Inadvertent	
				CMc Mechanical	
				I INTEREST	
				Iobj Objecrtive	
				Isub Subjective	
				Irep Representation	
				Idif Diffused	
				Icon Concentrated	
	# claim	Voice	GOAL	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
				D DECISION	
				DG Goals	
				DC consequences	
				Dmax Max Tot Welf	
				DR Rational Choice	
				DCB Cost/Benefit	
				DR Risk Analysis	
				DW Weighting	
				DL Lateral Thinking	
				DB Brainstorming	
				DI Issue Framing	

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