Ethics of Access: Provocative Impacts of K-12 Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Policy

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In K-12 settings, civic engagement curricula and service-learning hold promise for developing the agency and capacity of marginalized youth, their families, and their communities to effectively address self-identified needs. Yet, ethical issues of access around educator preparation, both teacher preparation and counselor preparation, and subsequent student participation exist even where state-level policy dictates civic engagement's use. In this multi-case study, three engaged scholars/teacher educators share three distinct cases, each focusing on a specific state's policy positions on civic engagement, including service-learning, in the U.S. K-12 context. Each case is discussed as either a bifurcation (divergence) or dichotomy (contradiction) of policy within the context of teacher preparation/practice. Further, each case's impact on K-12 students' potential access to participation in service-learning/community engagement initiatives is outlined. A cross-case analysis revealed that K-12 service-learning/civic engagement policy exhibits a large degree of disparity within the quintain, which, as defined by Stake (2006), is the complexity across the bounds of multi-case-study research.

Keywords: access, civic engagement, community service, ethics, policy, service-learning

Scholars who participate in community-engaged research often discover the tensions and discord that arise when policy and practice lack alignment and seemingly collide. How government entities communicate expectations within their own systems or to outside/community stakeholders is both relevant and timely. K-12 public schools in the United States highlight the contrastive context of the current climate of neoliberal policies (Au, 2011; Buras, 2014; Kovacs & Christie, 2008; McGill, 2015; Ravitch, 2014; Schneider, 2014, 2015), which focus on commodification and standardization of teaching and learning juxtaposed with the pressing need to authentically engage students with the historical and socio-political contexts of the issues and challenges facing the nation.

Tired of the political football of educational accountability—exacerbated by the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001)—educators are increasingly seeking a pedagogical model that shifts the focus from high-stakes testing and teacher accountability back to apprenticing the democratic principles of agency and activism, first suggested by Dewey (1900, 1916), for their students and community. Teacher educators are also concerned about the prescriptive aspects and influence of commercial interests, and the pressures of accountability. As such, curriculum for civic engagement, and service-learning in particular, has emerged as a viable pedagogical model (Sulentic Dowell, Barrera, Meidl, & Saal, 2015). The training of teachers has become not only a principal means of promoting and maintaining democratic society, but also an economic driver (Sulentic Dowell & Meidl, 2017) and, as the U.S. Constitution ensures, an equalizer, a means of achieving life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Particularly, many pre-service and in-service teachers want to

closely examine and reflect on how their K-12 classrooms could investigate the "ethics and the distribution of power, status, and rewards [as] basic societal concerns" (Nieto, 2018, p. 41) beyond one-off activities and lessons (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000).

As Wilhelm, Douglas, and Fry (2014) maintained, "classrooms hold empowering potential for teaching students generative ways to think and actively apply their learning to work toward substantive change rather than feeling overwhelmed and powerless" (p. 1). Service-learning, as both a critical pedagogy and curriculum (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Furco, 2000), is one pedagogical method that addresses this need. Yet, the theoretical underpinnings and best practices of implementing service-learning have not traditionally been covered by teacher preparation programs (Wilhelm et al., 2014). Further, U.S. national and state-level policies, even when they do mandate or incentivize service-learning, frequently do not offer professional development or pragmatic assistance to educators attempting to implement this pedagogy in their classrooms.

Following case-study methodology (Stake, 2005, 2006; Yin, 2009), each embedded case discussed in this article—Maryland, Louisiana, and Wisconsin, respectively—(1) examines the state and institutional policies and/or recommendations that mandate, encourage, and/or support community engagement and service-learning for K-12 students; (2) explores how/where in-service and pre-service K-12 teachers are prepared with the theoretical and practical underpinnings of service-learning or civic engagement curricula/method; and (3) assesses how corresponding access to service-learning or civic engagement curricula is limited or expanded for K-12 students. Specifically, multi-case methodology considers the situationality of the cases under investigation (Stake, 2006, 2013). In addition, multi-case methodology and subsequent cross-case analysis (i.e., the study of multiple cases within a larger phenomenon; Barela, 2007; Stake 2006) of state-level policies for K-12 service-learning and civic engagement (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008; Stake, 2006) highlight the congruities and overwhelming disparities of the quintain. Quintain is defined as the larger phenomenon that connects the cases (Barela, 2007; Stake, 2006, 2013) and in the present study relates to the lack of alignment between state policy/recommendations and practice regarding civically engaged learning.

Literature Review

The following literature review examines national policy, civic engagement, critical pedagogy, and recommended practice. We use service-learning as a primary example of civic engagement and a form of critical pedagogy. We were also expansive in our search of the literature for examples of educational preparation programs and of instances highlighting how states have addressed community service for K-12 student engagement. We also discuss implementation challenges.

National Policy Impact on Civic Engagement and the K-12 Classroom

Since the passage of the U.S. National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, service-learning activities in elementary and secondary schools have been supported by national policy and agencies (Skinner & Chapman, 1999). As a measure of how these policies were impacting student participation in service-learning and civic engagement, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) conducted, in 1999, the first national survey of the prevalence of service-learning in U.S. K-12 public schools (Skinner & Chapman, 1999). In that same year, the National Household Education Survey (NCES, 1999) also investigated the presence of service-learning or service/civic engagement in public and private K-12 schools. Together, the two surveys found that nearly 90% of private schools and almost 70% of public schools had students participating in either service or service-learning. The percentages of students participating were higher for high school students compared to elementary or mid-level students, but overall the estimates in 1999 indicated that approximately 75% of schools and 25% of students participated in some form of service or service-learning (NCES, 1999). In 2005, the Youth Volunteering and Civic Engagement Survey, a national survey of over 3,000 U.S. students (ages 12-

18), was administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service in collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau. The results of this survey indicated that 38% of students had participated in community service as part of a school-based experience or requirement. Additionally, in 2004, according to the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) report, *Growing to Greatness*, approximately four-and-a-half-million K-12 students were engaged in curriculum-grounded service (NYLC, 2004).

National community-service policy efforts were further bolstered by the 2009 Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. This act not only increased service opportunities for all Americans, but also provided additional supports for groups (including schools) that engage in service. Based on current participation trends and continued policy emphasis, civic engagement as part of the U.S. K-12 school experience continues to rise. We note that, historically, "characterizations of service-learning vary noticeably among individuals who embrace it" (Skinner & Chapman, 1999, p 2), and in current practices do no always align with definitions.

Service-Learning for Civic Engagement in the K-12 Classroom

Civic engagement is an inclusive term encompassing community service and service-learning. Service-learning contrasts starkly with community service, particularly because it is a research-based pedagogical approach that includes reflection and that extends the curriculum (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Sulentic Dowell & Bach, 2012). Service-learning engages students across developmental levels by fostering civic responsibility, personal growth, and academic learning (Swick, 2001) while investing in community assets and strengths. Service-learning links community-based service with academic learning through reflection (Galvan & Parker, 2011; Swick, 2001).

Service-Learning as Critical Pedagogy in the K-12 Classroom

The traditional mission of public schools in the United States was to educate the population (Carnoy & Levin, 1985), despite the historical denial of access to many segments of the population. The progressive education movement (1888–1929)—which Dewey (1900, 1916) is credited with founding at the turn of the 20th century—established a tradition of public schools furthering democratic principles. This tradition continued through the 1950s and 1960s as public schools secured more equitable funding and as U.S. education was perceived as an economic equalizer in addition to operating as a method of advancing democratic principles (Carnomy & Levin, 1985). Passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on April 1, 1965, firmly established the constructs of both economic viability and civil rights in education. Since the passage of ESEA, scholars have advocated social-justice frameworks; however, subsequent reiterations of ESEA, in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2016), and the resultant accountability movement of the last decade, have made teaching from a social-justice perspective increasingly difficult (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Nieto, 2018; Porfilio & Hickman, 2011; Wade, 2007a).

In line with Deweyian democratic teaching and learning principles and the notion of education as an economic driver, the field of teacher education has embraced service-learning as a way to achieve social justice through carefully constructed course components that allow students, pre-service teachers, teachers, and counselors to address issues of dominant culture, power relationships, privilege, and access through civic and community engagement (Saal, 2018; Wade, 2000a, 2007a, 2007b). Service-learning is a viable pedagogical pathway for teaching K-12 students as well as preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to teach authentically (Furco, 2000; Saal, Meidl, & Sulentic Dowell, 2017; Sulentic Dowell, 2009, 2010; Sulentic Dowell & Bach, 2012; Sulentic Dowell et al., 2015). For two decades, service-learning has been recognized as a pedagogical tool for facilitating teacher preparation—especially in urban communities where there is dissonance between teachers and the communities—by connecting civic engagement to curricular demands (Allam &

Zerkin, 1993; Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Sulentic Dowell & Bach, 2012; Sulentic Dowell, Barrera, Meidl, & Saal, 2015).

Recommended Practices for Implementing Service-Learning in the K-12 Classroom

Students and the community or community partners must be involved in all levels of the service-learning process, including identifying the need, planning, implementation, and evaluation (Delano-Oriaran, 2014). The NYLC is one of the leading organizations providing research, training, and development to ensure high-quality service-learning experiences at the K-12 level in the United States. The recommended standards for quality service-learning practice are best articulated by NYLC's standards, which include: meaningful service, links to the curriculum, reflection, diversity, youth partnerships, progress monitoring, and duration and intensity (NYLC, 2008). These standards help drive practices from planning to implementation for impactful service-learning experiences.

Preparation for Implementing Service-Learning in the K-12 Classroom

Implementing service-learning in the K-12 classroom begins with adequate preparation of the teacher, who chooses to embark upon this pedagogical approach (Sulentic Dowell & Meidl, 2017). Teachers must understand the distinction between service-learning and community-service activities (Sulentic Dowell & Meidl, 2017). Service-learning engages students in an organized service project that meets identified community needs and incorporates a systematic reflective process meant to further students' understanding of embedded academic course content and local issues of social justice and/or democratic participation (Porfilio & Hickman, 2011). Specifically, teachers who engage in service-learning pedagogy should have an understanding of the role and primacy of reciprocity within the curriculum for both the service provider and the service recipient (Porfilio & Hickman, 2011; Sulentic Dowell & Meidl, 2017).

Challenges of Implementing Service-Learning in the K-12 Classroom

In the United States, participation in service-learning and community/civic engagement has been shown to positively impact K-12 students—personally, socially, and academically—with research highlighting increases in or heightened awareness of academic achievement, social and personal responsibility, self-esteem/identity, and career exploration (Wade, 2000b). Yet, despite the increased participation in service-learning by schools and students and the corresponding positive outcomes, challenges to implementing service-learning in the K-12 classroom remain—even among those who seek out the pedagogical model (Kinloch & Smagorinsky, 2014). From balancing planning and instructional time in order to meet standards and deliver required curricula to a lack of support from administration, colleagues, and parents, school personnel who attempt to implement service-learning face significant logistical challenges and are often under-supported in their pedagogical efforts at the building level (Wade, 2007a; Wilhelm et al., 2014).

Synopsis

Previous research has: (1) addressed how service-learning and civic engagement can address issues of inequity and social justice in K-12 schools (Billig & Furco, 2002; Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Nieto, 2018; Scales & Roehlpartain, 2005); (2) debated what constitutes effective service-learning with K-12 students (Elyer & Giles, 1999; NYLC, 2008; Scales, 1999; Wilhelm et al., 2014); and (3) begun to identify barriers to teacher implementation of service-learning (Kaye, 2004; Wilhelm et al., 2014). However, there is little research addressing the topic of equity in access of service-learning pedagogy and curricula in K-12 schools. Turning to this multi-case study to better understand the quintain of state-level policy for service-learning for K-12 schools, with a focus on the ethical impacts of K-12 service-learning policy across states, our inquiry

led us to the timely and provocative question: Who has access/opportunity to meaningfully engage with this critical curriculum and method, and who is left out?

Methodology

The case-study states were selected based on both convenience sampling (i.e., through prolonged engagement with each institution, ranging from four years working and residing within the state to 16 years, and our respective positioning/institutions) and criteria sampling (i.e., teacher education K-12 programming; Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2007).

Design

This research investigation utilized an embedded case design (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009) within a comparative/multi-case study (Stake, 2005, 2006, 2010). This design was appropriate as each case was first developed independently around the outlined purposes, and then cases were compared on the quintain (Stake, 2006) of specific state-level policy for K-12+ service-learning and civic engagement, with a particular focus on ethics of access. This quintain comprised case studies (i.e., Maryland, Louisiana, and Wisconsin) possessing both unique and shared issues.

Setting

Each case was situated within a distinct state, specific institutions, and particular K-12 public school districts, which served as the research sites. As teacher education, educational administration, and service-learning researchers, we were interested in the relationship between educator preparation at our respective institutions and K-12 state policy and practice. Two cases, Maryland and Wisconsin, focus on how the education preparation curriculum at private institutions adhere to state and national teacher accreditation mandates, and the third case, Louisiana, centers on how the educator preparation curriculum at a flagship state institution adheres to state and national accreditation requirements from PK through educational administration.

The first case is the state of Maryland, which is the site of Loyola University Maryland, an urban Jesuit university located in Baltimore, Maryland. The institution enrolls approximately 12,000 students. The School of Education is one of three academic units on campus and enrolls undergraduate and master's-level students across disciplines. Maryland Public Schools serves 859,638 students across 24 districts.

The second case is the state of Louisiana and the site of Louisiana State University (LSU), located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. LSU enrolls upwards of 35,000 students and contains within its School of Education students across disciplines and program levels (from undergraduate to doctoral). Louisiana Public Schools serves 710,903 students across 80 districts.

The third and final case is the state of Wisconsin and the site of St. Norbert College, a Catholic college located in De Pere, Wisconsin. St. Norbert College serves an undergraduate population of approximately 2,200 students, a large percentage of whom majors in education. Wisconsin public schools serve 872,436 students in 464 school districts.

Each of the institutions seeks, maintains, and is accredited for pre-service teacher preparation by its respective state, while the Case 2 site, LSU, is state-accredited for educators from PK to counseling through educational administration.

Empirical Materials

The embedded case studies included five sets of empirical documents (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and information from websites: state laws, state department of education websites and materials, school district websites and materials (including budgets and curricular plans), and university websites and materials (including college course catalogs and other curricular documents).

Analysis

Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Jude Smith, and Hayes (2009) advocated that qualitative inquiry align analytical processes with researchers' identified paradigms and preferred methods. Basing analysis on Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) constructivist paradigm within the embedded design provided the opportunity to create thick, rich descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of each state's policies regarding expectations or recommendations around the use of service-learning as a pedagogical tool for teachers and educators and corresponding implications for access for students.

After investigating the common research purposes and objectives within each case, we completed a cross-case analysis to facilitate a greater understanding of the quintain (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2006, 2010). Specifically, we sought to define the degree to which each of the case studies reflected the quintain—a mutual focus of civically engaged learning—for a set of case studies, with an eye toward congruity or disparity. We addressed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability by preserving the uniqueness of the cases (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008) while also conducting careful context stripping in the decontextualization and recontextualization of cases (Tesch, 1990) in our cross-case analysis.

Case-Level Findings

For each of the cases presented in this section, we provide a description of policy, the state's in-service and pre-service teacher and/or educator preparation for policy implementation in the classroom, and students' access to service-learning or community engagement curricula in the K-12 setting.

Case 1: Maryland

Maryland's in-service teacher preparation for classroom policy implementation. According to Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (1993), former lieutenant governor of Maryland and former head of the Maryland Student Service Alliance,

> Until students have a chance to participate in the ways that democracy demands, they can never truly take heart the lessons they are learning in class.… Children aren't born knowing how to be citizens. Like learning to read or add or throw a ball, citizenship is something that should be taught and nurtured in school. (p. C5)

As a result of Townsend's and others' lobbying efforts, in July of 1992, the state of Maryland passed the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.03.02.06, stating that every public school student, including special education students, must engage in service-learning as a condition of graduation. COMAR 13A.03.02.06 states:

> Students shall complete one of the following:
> (1) Seventy-five hours of student service that includes preparation, action, and reflection components and that, at the discretion of the local school system, may begin during the middle grades; or
> (2) A locally-designed program in student service that has been approved by the State Superintendent of Schools. ("Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland," 1992)

Interestingly, while the law does not specifically name service-learning as the pedagogical and methodological frame, it includes specific language around service tied to learning, with a focus on preparation, action, and reflection. With this law, Maryland became the first state in the country to require participation in service-learning to graduate from high school, beginning with the 1997 class

(Megyeri, 1997). This regulation exempts or modifies the requirements for special education students only if noted in the student's Individual Education Plan (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2019). Impressively, Maryland graduates approximately 55,000 students from the state's high schools, representing over four million hours of service over the course of their educational careers (MSDE, 2019).

As a result of COMAR 13A.03.02.06, each of the 24 local school systems (LSSs) is charged with designing unique service-learning programs to address academic and community needs (MSDE, 2019). Some LSSs also require that students conduct an independent service-learning project as a condition of graduation. In this iteration of service-learning, the students design, conduct, and document the project, and school staff members in charge of tracking the building's service-learning review these projects with the students (MSDE, 2019). Although local sites have some flexibility in implementing service-learning methodology, there are several additional policies and accountability structures in place. From unique Maryland service-learning standards to the creation of a service-learning plan for each LSS for official approval, the Department of Education outlines significant requirements for local service-learning infrastructure.

In 2004, Maryland transposed NYLC's K-12 Standards and Indicators for Quality Practice in Service-Learning into Maryland's Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning. The best practices include the tenets of:

1. addressing a recognized need in the community;
2. achieving curricular objectives through service-learning;
3. reflecting throughout the service-learning experience;
4. developing student responsibility;
5. establishing community partnerships;
6. planning ahead for service-learning; and
7. equipping students with knowledge and skills for civic engagement. (MSDE, 2019)

COMAR 13A.03.02.06 requires that all student services (whether school- or student-designed) meet each of the Maryland Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning (MSDE, 2019). Further, MSDE notes that, while each experience can include direct, indirect, or advocacy types of service, "students must spend a significant portion of their time engaged [directly] in meeting a recognized community need (action)" (MSDE, 2019, p. 17).

MSDE also requires each LSS to submit a comprehensive and up-to-date service-learning plan, known as an LSS Implementation Plan, for approval every four years and "submit an Annual Service-Learning Timeline to the MSDE each year which explains how the system plans to continue to support and enhance the quality of service-learning experiences for students" (MSDE, 2019, p. 19). All school systems must follow their outlined plans and also submit a summary of their plan each academic year. Further, each LSS must appoint a service-learning coordinator for its program and report this person to MSDE by August 1 of each year. The coordinator is responsible for attending all related meetings and appointing, training, and designating building-level service-learning coordinators (MSDE, 2019). Local school systems are also responsible for tracking students' progress toward fulfilling service-learning graduation requirements—even across school placement and systems on students' permanent Student Record 3 (SR3) card and notifying parents of students' involvement in service-learning activities (MSDE, 2019).

MSDE conducts assessments of the quality of service-learning programs for all local school system programs every four years (MSDE, 2019, p. 19). Three quality review rubrics are used: (1) the Rubric for Assessing the Use of Maryland's Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning, (2) the Rubric for Assessing the Quality of LSS Service-Learning Leadership, and (3) the Rubric for Assessing the Quality of School Service-Learning Leadership. The evaluation committee includes parents, students, LSS administration, service-learning supervisors, members of community-based organizations, and staff from the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism and MSDE.

Maryland's In-service Teacher Preparation for Classroom Policy Implementation. According to MSDE (2019), service-learning coordinators for each LSS can nominate educators from their system to be trained by the state as Service-Learning Fellows to support the coordinators and train and mentor other teachers. Professional development opportunities and online resources are also housed on the MSDE's Service-Learning website. As an example, in one resource provided, "Service-Learning Units," MSDE "highlight[s] links between projects and the MSC, as resources for use in conjunction with existing local curricula and service-learning implementation plan" (MSDE, 2019a, para 1). These lesson plans can be downloaded for modification or immediate implementation in the classroom.

Maryland's Pre-service Teacher Preparation for Classroom Policy Implementation. Although teacher certification and education programs could prepare teachers to implement service-learning in the classroom, MSDE does not hold teacher education programs or curricula responsible for teaching the tenets of service-learning as part of initial or advanced certification programs, nor are service-learning courses required as part of teacher education curricula. Further, service-learning is not listed as a K-12 priority in the Redesign of Teacher Education standards (MSDE, 2014).

Consequently, Maryland's 23 accredited colleges and universities are left to individually prepare (or not prepare) teachers and administrators for the requirements outlined by COMAR. For example, at Loyola University Maryland, education faculty are given the opportunity to designate their classes as service-learning or service-intensive; however, none of these courses teaches the theoretical foundations or implementation of service-learning pedagogy in the classrooms. Instead, courses like "Assessment and Instruction in Reading," which is part of the elementary education bachelor's degree and "Language, Literacy, and Culture," part of the master's in education in literacy degree, offer service-learning curricular components as a means of engaging in evidence-based best practice while extending learning and providing service to local education agencies with authentic need. While these courses align with the social-justice mission of the university, they do not address Maryland's service-learning policy or outlined best practices for implementing service-learning.

Maryland Students' Access to Service-learning or Community Engagement Curricula in the K-12 Setting. The researchers sought to delve into how COMAR 13A.03.02.06 and its corresponding MSDE requirements impacted two large school districts in very close proximity in Maryland. One, Baltimore City, is a large, diverse urban school district (enrollment 82,354 students); 83.3% of elementary school students are Title 1, and 63.9% receive free or reduced-price school lunch. The second is a large, diverse suburban district in Baltimore County (enrollment 112,139 students); 40.2% of elementary school students are Title 1, and 50.6% receive free or reduced-price school lunch. These two districts were chosen for closer analysis of issues related to access to service-learning since they not only share a district border, but also together constitute 22% of the enrolled public school students in the state. Further, these two districts are representative of some of the pronounced socioeconomic heterogeneity across school districts in Maryland.

Across the required school performance plans and corresponding school report cards, we noted distinct differences in service-learning integration within the curriculum. While COMAR 13A.03.02.06 mandates a written implementation plan, Baltimore City Schools did not have a publicly available plan. However, the Baltimore City Schools website states,

> Because service projects are tied to what students are learning in school, they can take place during class time—and students then earn service learning hours while also meeting academic requirements. At City Schools, service learning projects are part of the curriculum in science and social studies in grades 6, 7 and 8, with students earning 25 service learning hours when they pass each grade. Additional service learning projects are part of the health curriculum, so it is possible for a student to finish middle school with extra service learning hours—beyond what's needed for high school graduation.

Unfortunately, in speaking informally with Baltimore City teachers, the researchers could neither confirm nor refute this claim. However, Baltimore County has an 11-page publicly available implementation plan outlining multiple pathways of implementation for service-learning. Other key findings related to the implementation of COMAR 13A.03.02.06 across counties are noted in Table 1.

Table 1: Maryland Cross-County Service-Learning Policy Implementation Comparison

Baltimore City County	Baltimore County
Curricular Impact	
Service-learning not explicitly mentioned or outlined in publicly available curriculum.	Curricular Infusion Projects developed by district and aligned to standards and MD service-learning best practices outlined.
City Schools website states, "Students with a specific interest and desire to serve in a particular way can still ask for approval of independent service learning projects."	Teachers can get assistance to develop and implement other service-learning initiatives.
No contact information for independent interest nor plan for students who enter system post-middle school explicitly outlined.	Students can get assistance to develop and implement other service-learning initiatives.
Service-Learning Supports and Policies	
No indication of how service-learning hours are documented.	Service-learning hours documented in STARS, the online student record system, and service-learning records are included on report cards and transcripts.
Baltimore City's service-learning curriculum coordinator email was outdated by three years. More updated information was not found.	The Office of Family and Community Engagement oversees school site service-learning coordinators.
No evidence found of continuing information mechanism for teachers or school coordinators.	All service-learning coordinators are provided with a weekly bulletin via email, which details upcoming service opportunities in and around Baltimore County.
No evidence found of continuing education units offered this school year for service-learning.	Ongoing professional development and support offered throughout the school year.
Budget	
No mention of service-learning in the 2016-2017 budget.	$110,000 (2016-2017), which covered: – 10% of time for program specialist – Middle and high school service-learning coordinators stipends – Service-learning project budget

Specifically, when individual districts are unable to provide funding or professional support for practices required by COMAR 13A.03.02.06 and corresponding MSDE requirements (see Table 1),

the researchers deduced that service-learning curriculum and method were limited in these settings. In summary, the researchers found significant discrepancies around access to effective, high-quality service-learning and civic engagement opportunities for K-12 students within each county. These access gaps paralleled other resource gaps across districts within Maryland.

  Case reflection. In the Maryland case, the results indicate an explicit dichotomy of policy and practice. While K-12 students are expected to participate in "high-quality" service-learning projects as a condition of graduation, pre-service and in-service teachers are not required to learn the theoretical underpinnings of service-learning to meaningfully engage in the pedagogy—leaving many at a loss for how to implement or problem-solve as issues arise. Further, in-service support for service-learning practitioners is relegated to individual school districts whose instructional training priorities and budgets may not support long-term engagement in service-learning pedagogies and curricular design. Based on this exemplar comparison between Baltimore City and Baltimore County school systems, the researchers concluded that even where participation/access is mandated for all, the access to and quality of service-learning experiences for students in socioeconomically disadvantaged districts are not equitable.

Case 2: Louisiana

Louisiana's policies for service-learning or community engagement in the K-12 setting. In Louisiana, while there is no explicit requirement of service-learning for high school graduation, the Community Service Diploma Endorsement was authorized by Act 295 of the 2012 regular session of the Louisiana legislature. However, this endorsement does not mandate service-learning as a specific pedagogical model to attain this endorsement and applies only to Grades 9 through 12. Based on the framework outlined on the Louisiana Department of Education's (DOE, 2019) website, school counselors are charged with the supervision and management of this endorsement. Unfortunately, school counselors are also in charge of accountability and test administration on campuses as a result of increased accountability measures and high-stakes testing. Thus, school counselors have assumed test-monitor responsibilities as a primary job function to the detriment of providing counseling services for adolescents and teens who may need or seek out counseling. Based on the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA, 2012) national model, school counselors are tasked with providing comprehensive opportunities for career, academic, and personal and social growth for all K-12 students. On a secondary campus, where a counselor is responsible for 400 to 750 children, escalation of testing has all but eliminated oversight for all forms of civically engaged community service.

  While it appears that the Louisiana DOE accounts for community service—minus a clear definition of what this entails—the DOE's website contains limited resources. For example, links to some resources are provided electronically, and forms are offered, which allow counselors to actually oversee and track community-service efforts. An examination of resources revealed the following: a Counselor Resource Library, whose only community-service resources include guidelines for describing endorsement requirements, a list of 12 community-service categories (animals; arts and culture; community; crisis support; disaster relief; education/literacy; environment; faith-based; health, medicine, and wellness; homelessness, housing, and hunger; veterans/military; and "other"), and two documentation/tracking forms—one for students and the other for districts/schools. Table 2 delineates the number of hours required for the Louisiana Community Service Diploma Endorsement.

Table 2: Louisiana Community Service Diploma Endorsement

Grade	Number of Hours
9	10
10	20
11	25
12	25

Louisiana's in-service counselor preparation for policy implementation in the classroom. A total of 643 Louisiana secondary school counselors were invited to participate in an electronic questionnaire survey; 164 responded to the electronic invitation, and 157 agreed to respond to the questionnaire. However, not all respondents provided responses for all items. The study utilized Qualtrics survey software to assure anonymity of participants and integrity of data. According to the survey results, 43% of school counselors received training in pedagogy involving community service, community engagement, or service-learning in their graduate programs (chi square, df = 1; p =. 05; 3.84 < 86.41). In addition, for this sample, 28% of school counselors had knowledge of teachers receiving in-service training in pedagogy involving community service, community engagement, or service-learning. Thus, counselor preparation to implement policy was lacking despite a state Community Service Diploma Endorsement.

Louisiana's pre-service counselor preparation for policy implementation in the classroom. Louisiana does not hold its teacher or counselor preparation programs accountable for teaching the tenets of effective, high-quality service or service-learning, and there is no mandate to insure implementation of the state policy. As per the policy established in Act 295, counselors are charged with tracking community service. However, this tracking requirement has little to do with their jobs as school counselors, and there is no mechanism for connecting this tracking requirement to what teachers do in classrooms as learning objectives for student growth. However, individual faculty members are given the academic freedom to integrate service-learning within a required course.

For example, within its School of Education (SoE), Louisiana State University (LSU) offers two secondary programs. A counselor education graduate program prepares students to function as professional counselors in a variety of human-service settings such as schools. The program prepares students to meet the mental health needs of clients in the state of Louisiana and nationally by mastering the knowledge and skill areas specified by standards in the counseling profession. According to the SoE website, "Graduates use their knowledge and skills to help individuals, couples, and families from diverse populations to enhance life adjustment, foster personal growth and wellness, *promote social justice and advocacy*, and expand competencies in coping with environmental demands across the lifespan" (emphasis added). A specialist certificate in education is also listed, but no specific courses are offered, only the total number of hours needed.

Louisiana students' access to service-learning or community engagement curricula in the K-12 setting. Considering the lack of clear communication of or preparation for the policy among those charged with implementation, there is a significant ethical concern around student access to this component of the Louisiana curriculum. Despite several requests for data from the DOE on the number and location of students who have received the Louisiana Community Service Diploma Endorsement, the researchers were unable to obtain a complete account. Further, repeated attempts to contact the politician who created the endorsement were unsuccessful.

Case reflection. In the Louisiana case, while counselor coursework does not specify community-service topics, the DOE specifically addresses the role of counselors in community service. However, the DOE does not address community engagement in any discernable way in teacher preparation coursework. In the second author's 10 years at LSU, just one LSU SoE faculty member has highlighted service opportunities within coursework, such as working in community

soup kitchens and participating in food drives, which is the faculty member's attempt to support integration of service-learning pedagogy.

Overall, in the Louisiana case, the results indicate a bifurcation of policy and practice around integrating service-learning or any form of community engagement in the K-12 context. Although a potential opportunity exists, the policy of the Louisiana DOE does not translate to the preparation of teachers or counselors. While students in Grades 9 through 12 are provided with an opportunity to engage in community service, awareness of and support for teacher preparation for policy/service-learning in the classroom are nonexistent.

Case 3: Wisconsin

Wisconsin's policies for service-learning or community engagement in the K-12 setting. The standards developed by the National Youth Leadership Council drive Wisconsin's programmatic push for service-learning implementation. The benefits of service-learning are understood and articulated on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (WDPI) website as well as in the 2010 publication, *High Quality Instruction that Transforms: A Guide to Implementing Quality Academic Service-Learning* (Dary, Prueter, Grinde, Grobschmidt, & Evers, 2010).

The WDPI supports service-learning as an impactful pedagogical approach and encourages districts and teachers to infuse it into or make it a visible part of the curriculum because of its "enduring impact on student achievement" (Dary et al., 2010, p. 6). The WDPI has also defined service-learning as "a teaching and learning method which fosters civic responsibility and links classroom learning and applied learning in communities" (Dary et al., 2010, p. 7). This definition, along with its explanation, is framed within the context of quality education and serves as a means to reducing drop-out rates and addressing the achievement gap (Dary et al., 2010).

Aside from state-level policies and incentives for districts, schools, and teachers, each of the 424 school districts (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2016) has various co-curricular opportunities and expectations for graduation. According to the legislative policies that govern school districts within Wisconsin, "a school board may require a pupil to participate in community-service activities in order to receive a high school diploma" ("High School Graduation Requirements," 2017). Each school district interprets this policy differently; therefore, policy implementation varies from district to district. Districts may require service hours, one service-learning course, or a combination of hours in conjunction with a service-learning course.

The rewards, engagement with the community, and unique learning opportunities connected to community engagement—which may include service-learning—could be missed by many students attending schools in Wisconsin. While some districts may include service-learning as a graduation requirement, many do not. In fact, the WDIP offers a Wisconsin Global Scholars Achievement Certificate, which is offered only at the high school level and requires engagement in global community engagement, which may include a service-learning experience. It is at the discretion of the district that this opportunity is available to students.

Wisconsin's in-service teacher preparation for policy implementation in the classroom. Teachers across Wisconsin regularly engage in professional development to support curricular endeavors; however, support for integrating service-learning as a high-impact pedagogical practice is lacking. Although the use of technology has changed what professional development looks like across the United States, many districts continue to invest in "Professional Development Days" that are often topical, based on content areas. Service-learning support is often limited to web pages on the WDPI website, with many links dedicated to service-learning and several documents for supporting teachers in the implementation of service-learning. The website also includes links to NYLC's standards for service-learning, WDPI's service-learning implementation guide, a forum for engaging in online discussions with other service-learning practitioners in the state, and several national service-learning organizations. In addition, there are specific resources for schools offering differentiated support for teachers and administrators, and resources to support school districts,

particularly from a risk-management perspective. Despite the variety of resources available from the WDPI, there are no explicit policies for service-learning in the K-12 setting or expectations for graduation; rather, this is an instructional approach that is highly encouraged.

Despite the state's encouragement of service-learning—as evidenced by the information available for teachers, schools, and districts vis-à-vis the WDPI website and state-produced publications—one wonders if there are any incentives at the district, school, or teacher level to implement this high-impact practice. A sub-link within a web page dedicated to service-learning titled "Grants and Funding Opportunities" raises the question of whether budgeted funds for supporting service-learning work are set to recur annually. A review of each funding opportunity on the website shows that all of the funding sources were not aligned to state-level funding. Rather, funding opportunities were available through private entities, such as the State Farm Youth Advisory Board Grant, or national grant opportunities such as NEA Foundation grants.

Wisconsin's pre-service teacher preparation for policy implementation in the classroom. St. Norbert's teacher preparation program is accredited by the WDPI. Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 34 informs the requirements for preparation programs; however, PI 34 does not include any language regarding service-learning as a requirement for certification. However, the mission of St. Norbert College is informed by the value of "communio" and the development of the whole person through study, reflection, prayer, wellness, play, and action. The call to action is expected of all students, through either curricular or co-curricular activities.

Service-learning is a valued pedagogical approach and an identified high-impact practice. To ensure that faculty have an opportunity to employ the tenets of service-learning into their courses, there is a Faculty Fellows for Community Engagement program offered through the St. Norbert College Center for Community Service and Learning. The Faculty Fellows engage faculty across the college who wish to utilize service-learning tenets or who are currently applying service-learning attributes to their courses and seek to refine their practice. A faculty member serves as the director for academic service-learning and facilitates the Faculty Fellows program, and there is an advisory group comprising tenure-track faculty across various disciplines to support service-learning pedagogy and research.

Unless a faculty member within the teacher preparation program wants to infuse service-learning attributes into a course, it is not required of the college, the program, or the WDPI. However, faculty members at St. Norbert College, a mission-driven institution, have participated in the Faculty Fellows for Community Engagement program. Faculty have displayed their academic freedom by integrating service-learning components into their individual courses. Students are also aware of what courses include service-learning components because the college appends a "community-engaged" ("CENG") tag on courses as a means of tracking the courses offered each semester. The CENG tag is also used for assessment purposes and is a concrete way to identify how the mission of the college is actualized.

The teacher preparation program at St. Norbert does not have any specific expectations for pre-service teachers. However, two courses within the program have a community engagement designation, indicating that there is a service-learning component of the course. Pre-service teachers, regardless of their certification area, have one service-learning experience—"EDUC 130: Educational Psychology." The early childhood certification program and the elementary program are quite similar; however, early childhood pre-service teachers have an additional opportunity to participate in a service-learning experience.

Since Wisconsin does not have a policy but recommends community engagement as a graduate expectation or requirement, there is no explicit teacher support within the preparation program at St. Norbert College. Pre-service teachers can participate in service-learning courses to broaden their cultural competence or understanding of traditionally marginalized groups, but there is no focus on developing their ability to utilize this pedagogical approach in their future classrooms.

Wisconsin students' access to service-learning or community engagement curricula in the K-12 setting. Exploring one district more deeply, in the Green Bay Area School District, the fourth

largest district in the state, equity and access to service-learning as a high-impact pedagogical approach has different consequences. In this particular district, each high school has a different level of investment as well as visibility, which leads to disparities as to who has access and, to a greater extent, who has the privilege of wearing the cords at graduation that signify civic-engagement hours. While the district has initiatives such as the graduation cords and the Presidents Volunteer Award, it is more disturbing when a high school that fails to meet expectations, as identified in the state-level report card, indicates that "service-learning is no longer a requirement for graduation for the Green Bay Area Public School District." This statement speaks to its value at the district level, even though at the state level it is seen as a desired pedagogy.

The conflicting narratives regarding service-learning in Wisconsin raise a question about access and equity when specific districts are analyzed in their approach to supporting and celebrating service-learning. In addition, when schools within districts are analyzed, issues of equity come into sharp focus especially when students who are in the same district have access to very different learning opportunities. Wisconsin, with more than 300 school districts, is a prime location for service-learning policy and pedagogy to be explored.

Case reflection. Wisconsin represents a bifurcated system regarding teacher preparation and policy. Absent any explicit policy for preparation, it is up to individual programs to determine the value of service-learning in teacher preparation. With no policy and only recommendations, it is in the hands of school districts to implement service-learning and create their own framework for civic engagement. The assumption of knowledge then rests with school administrators, counselors, and, most of all, teachers. In this case, a deeper look into teacher preparation was necessary because that is where teachers gain experience with service-learning as a learner or learn how to create service-learning experiences and infuse them as a pedagogical approach.

At St. Norbert College, the focus on providing pre-service teachers with service-learning experiences, rather than preparing them to utilize service-learning pedagogy within their own classrooms, is a gap that can be addressed. The bifurcation within the current context can be rectified by making explicit connections for pre-service teachers who participate in service-learning courses as part of their preparation. For the knowledge transfer, it would be the responsibility of the instructor to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to analyze their experience as a student and make connections to how the service-learning pedagogy could be actualized in their classroom.

From an equity and access standpoint, the implementation of service-learning pedagogy is left up to the individual classroom teacher, school administration, or district. Although autonomy is desired, support beyond a website is imperative to ensure that teachers and school and district leadership have a firm understanding of service-learning. As a critical pedagogy, this work is not devoid of issues of difference across race, ethnicity, class, citizenship status and other forms of oppressive structures that could be explored in Wisconsin schools.

Cross-Case Analytic Summary

The case study data were divided into units of meaning. They were first decontextualized (separated from the individual cases) and then recontextualized by integrating and clustering them around the theme of ethical impacts of K-12 service-learning and civic engagement policy across states.

Findings

After cross-case analysis (Stake, 2005, 2013), the Maryland and Louisiana cases were found to represent a dichotomy, or contradiction, between policy and practice. For each, while explicit policies on implementing service-learning and community engagement in the K-12 context exist, the researchers found limited to no support for in-service teachers or other school personnel charged with implementing these policies into practice with K-12 students—even where participation for students is mandated. Wisconsin, by contrast, was found to represent neither a dichotomy nor a bifurcation, or split, between policy and practice. Each Wisconsin school district is given autonomy

to decide if service-learning or community engagement/service are graduation requirements because there is a lack of policy and only a recommendation from the state department of public instruction. For all three cases/states, pre-service training for implementing service-learning or civic engagement in the K-12 setting was not included as a required condition for certification or program accreditation for teacher/counselor/school personnel preparation. Perhaps not surprisingly, there were significant discrepancies around access/student participation across cases, and significant intra-district anomalies were also noted for each case/state (see Table 3).

Table 3: Cross-Case Analytic Findings

Analytic Component	Maryland Case	Louisiana Case	Wisconsin Case
K-12 Policy Presence	xx	xx	x
Support for In-Service K-12 Policy Implementation	x	---	x
Requirement for Pre-Service K-12 Policy Implementation	---	---	---
K-12 Students' Curricular Access	x	x	x

Note: xx = full case participation; x = limited case participation; --- = no case participation.

Little research has addressed the topic of equity in access of service-learning pedagogy and civic engagement curricula in K-12 schools. The findings from this cross-case analysis are clear: State level policies for K-12 service-learning and civic engagement exhibit a large degree of disparity within the quintain, and these differences within and across cases lead to (un)ethical impacts for students and teachers.

Mandating student participation while failing to adequately support teacher preparation can lead to lack of access to or less meaningful participation in service-learning and civic engagement activities. Perhaps worse, we argue that, in an educational era in the United States when systems prioritize accountability structures over democratic ideals of schooling, teachers and students may be penalized or sanctioned for policy requirements they were not supported in accomplishing in meaningful ways. We draw this conclusion based on the punitive environment resulting from high-stakes accountability (Ravitch, 2014; Schneider, 2015, 2016).

Implications for Educator Preparation and Practice

Civic engagement in the form of service-learning as part of the K-12 learning experience has the potential to engage students in critical reflection about unjust and oppressive structures and systems. This type of engagement welcomes students as active partners in the democratic process. Therefore, pre-service teachers and school personnel must leave their programs with more than the ability to deliver content.

The call, then, is for educator preparation programs, especially (but not limited to) teacher preparation programs, to become more intentional in ensuring that courses and field experiences provide opportunities for pre-service educators to engage in high-quality service-learning opportunities that facilitate exposure to the breadth of inequities and oppressive systems and structures that exist in the U.S. public education system. Also, pre-service teachers must have ample opportunities to reflect on and deconstruct their own learning process, allowing them to confront their own biases, privilege, and power. In addition to the pre-service teachers' civic engagement via

service-learning, they must have opportunities within their respective preparation programs to utilize this pedagogical approach effectively. The same holds true for counselor preparation, especially since counselors typically come from the teaching ranks. Teacher educators and educational leaders have the responsibility of preparing pre-service educators/teachers with the skillsets needed to develop critical thinking, problem solving, and agency within their students. Preparing teachers and counselors to incorporate service-learning into curricula holds the potential to authentically meet these goals.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

While this cross-case analysis was limited in its inclusion of cases and availability of data, the quintain of state-level policies for K-12 service-learning and civic engagement has already proven disparate and divergent. Additional cases (states) should be explored to further understand how these policies (if present) influence teacher preparation and support for this critical pedagogy and curriculum. Perhaps most importantly, further understanding how students' access to participation in service-learning and civic engagement opportunities is buttressed or mitigated by state-level policy should be a critical question for researchers concerned with student outcomes.

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