Where educational measurement policy is now, how we got here, and where it may be going:

Implications for graduating scholars

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Presentation at the invited symposium

"Impact of Changes in the Federal Educational Landscape for Graduating Scholars"

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Main Points

- Graduating scholars and all measurement practitioners and researchers must be aware of policies that provide context and constrains applied measurement
- Policy will be ever-changing; prepare to change and keep learning too
- Recent policies demand more complex measurement models and systems--and skills

Why be concerned with policy?

- Validity and purpose are tied with policy
- US federal policy has had huge impact on US state, district, and school educational practices
- High-profile measurement jobs, associated with high-profile policy, often rise/fall with policy adequacy, magnify need for technical adequacy
- High-profile policy work challenges & is changing the field, basic and especially applied

A Monday's "To Do" list from a SDE

- Approve test specs for PARCC/SBAC, including alignment to CCSS' "learning progression," (vertical?) scaling & (CAT?) equating plans
- Assure Supt./Commissioner that test results will be back in 2 weeks, perfect, instructionally useful & compliant with accountability
- Devise plan for bridging current operations and reporting to new assessment
- Recommend growth model for teacher evaluation, including non-state tested grades
  - Prepare SBE & TAC presentations on uses, options, and associated risks
- "Crystal ball" how ESEA will affect need for score comparability
- Plan state support for interim & formative assessment with districts & schools
- Run & analyze results; write documentation; respond to 40 emails

The ideal measurement employee can…

- Understand the intents and implications of policy and advise from a technical perspective
- Anticipate policy-relevant problems and develop solution options within reasonable constraints
- Communicate effectively with policy makers, consumers, and professional peers
- Manage complex operational programs with staff, educators, and contractors
- Perform needed measurement analysis, reporting, interpretation

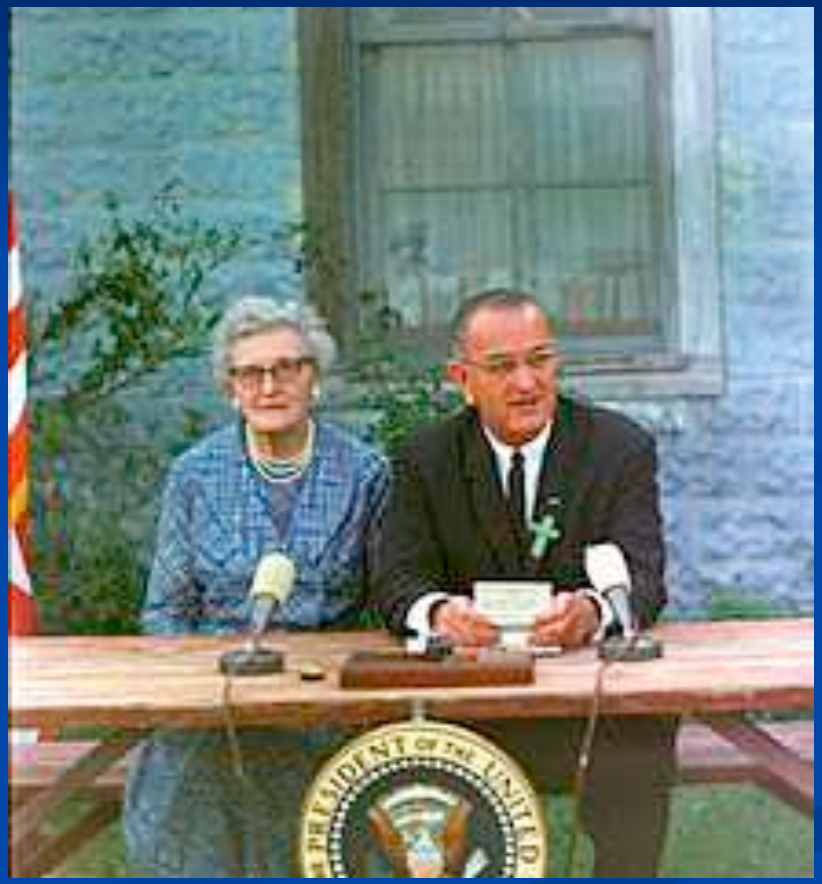
Some pointers to historical federal education measurement policy

ESEA, 1965 ("Elementary and Secondary Education Act") Focus: compensatory education for children in poverty.

EISSA, 1988. Focus: higher cognitive achievement, not just basic skills for children in poverty; NRTs for program evaluation & improvement

IASA, 1994. Focus: specified math and ELA content standards, assessment & accountability to be implemented by states (standards-based assm't)

NCLB, 2001. Report annual math & ELA assessments in grades 3-8 plus high school. Inclusive of all SWD. ELP assessment of ELL. Goal of 100% Proficient by 2013. Formulaic AYP. 20+ decisions by states in designing AYP systems. Mandated strong consequences. AYP reports in time for school choice (i.e., before school). States designate "highly qualified educator." Coordinated with **IDEA** ('75, '90, '97, '04)



Lyndon B. Johnson at the ESEA signing ceremony, with his childhood schoolteacher Ms. Kate Deadrich Loney

Source: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elementary_and_Secondary_Education_Act

Past national policy & measurement implications

- Standards, assessment, accountability paradigm
  - Outcomes vs. inputs/means
    - Interest in "direct" evidence; performance assessments
  - Standardized; inclusive; assessment-based vs. local
  - Linked to proficiency on content vs. normed
- Equity as reducing gaps for economic well-being & social justice (more frequent/individualized assessment + instruction)
- Focus on school program (instructional delivery system) and student performance (high school exit exams)

Recent national policy

- NCLB (including AA-AAS, ELP)
- NCLB Growth Pilot
- NCLB Alternate Assessment with Modified Achievement Standards
- Common Core State Standards
- Common Assessment Consortia
- ESEA/NCLB Waivers
- Race to the Top

Policy & Measurement

- NCLB – how to select and combine multiple measures into rating for schools; reliability of school ratings
- NCLB – how to specify content standards, translate into test specification, for all students (including students with [severe cognitive] disabilities and English language learners)
- NCLB – how to create technical documentation to comply with federal Peer Review, including validation evidence

Policy & Measurement – 2

- NCLB Alternate Assessment with Modified Achievement Standards (2% SWD) – create standards-based assessment with "reduced complexity" and "greater access" (reduce construct-irrelevant variance to minimum); set "modified achievement standards" that make sense with assessment and accountability systems

Policy & Measurement – 3

- CCSS content standards, assessment consortia – how to transition from current system to new system (specific content-based K&S; bridge studies for comparability; high school graduation legal requirements, anticipate implications of "college-readiness" achievement levels, etc.)
- ESEA/NCLB Waivers – design state's school accountability system with theory of action focused on interventions for bottom 5-15%+ of schools

Policy & Measurement - 4

- Race to the Top – educator evaluation systems
  - for all teachers & certified staff, building/district administrators
  - Include evaluation of "impact on student learning"
  - Conceptual clarity of constructs, claims, & criteria
  - Creation of appropriate measurement models
  - Gathering of credible data
  - Reliability/precision of ratings/scores
  - Validation of ratings/scores/claims/actions

Emerging national policy

- More complex depictions of content (e.g., "learning progressions," CCSS-"aligned" curriculum materials, "21st Century skills," examinee-directed)
- More complex achievement targets (e.g., "college- & career-readiness," "effective teaching") (empirical & judgment based standard setting)
- More complex depictions of student performance (e.g., student growth models, HLM, cognitive models; coordinated P-20 data systems)
- More complex assessment systems (e.g., CAT, auto-scoring, Bayes)
- More coherent "comprehensive assessment systems" (e.g., summative, interim, formative; state, common CCSS/NAEP/TIMSS/PISA)
- Less standardized state accountability systems for schools (in NCLB Waivers; may change in ESEA reauthorization; reporting)
- Very (technically) challenging educator evaluation systems
- More program evaluation (e.g., w/in validation frameworks)

Look forward to a great career

- Understand your policy context deeply
- Be a flexible problem-solver
- Develop technical and professional skills
  - Management, communication & collaboration, problem-solving, model-based assessment & accountability, etc.
- Continue learning
- Think about career development
- Stay connected to the measurement community; cultivate great colleagues
- Do good. Have a great life!

For more information:

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