

# School Reform and the Superintendency

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Northeast Superintendents'  
Annual Leadership Institute

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**The Northeast Superintendents' Leadership Council**, a consortium promoting equity and excellence in American schools, is an organization of superintendents and for superintendents, which explores the many equity and excellence issues surrounding current educational reform. All of these explorations are seen through the special lens of meeting the educational needs of diverse student groups.

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The LAB, a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University, is one of ten regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The goals of the LAB are to improve teaching and learning, advance school improvement, build capacity for reform, and develop strategic alliances with key members of the region's education and policymaking community.

The LAB develops educational products and services for school administrators, policymakers, teachers, and parents in New England, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Central to our efforts is a commitment to equity and excellence.

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# Leadership Institute 2000

# INTRODUCTION

On May 24, 25, and 26, 2000, the Northeast Superintendents' Leadership Council held its 12th Annual Superintendents' Leadership Institute in Newport, Rhode Island, at the Newport Harbor Hotel and Marina.

The theme—"Children in Motion: The Whole Child - Standards, Assessment, and the Search for Accountability"—and its critical role in public schools were underscored by a major article on the topic that appeared in *The New York Times* on May 25, the second day of the Newport Institute.

The goal of the Institute was to examine the issue of student mobility from several perspectives, including Northeastern University professor Dr. Barry Bluestone's economist's view and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform's Dr. Kate Nolan with her analysis of the impact of curriculum and standards on children in motion.

Dr. Isidra Albino, undersecretary of education for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, having considerable knowledge and understanding of the issue, offered her reflections and observations, and Dr. Martin Huntley, director of technology at the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (LAB), posed concerns about the developing "digital divide."

Special guest Milagros Lanauze, senior program specialist in the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs at the U.S. Department of Education, shared greetings from her department and participated as an active observer.

Responding to the Bluestone and Nolan keynotes, superintendents met in two breakout groups: Impact of Mobility on the Whole Child, and Impact of Curriculum and Standards on Children in Motion. Each group was led by colleague facilitators and reporters, and Education Alliance staff served as recorders at the sessions.

Two special-interest group dinners were held as part of the Institute program. Charlene Heintz, director of professional development for educational leadership at the LAB, led the Women in the Superintendency group, and Jennifer Borman, research and evaluation specialist at The Education Alliance, facilitated the Deans and Superintendents session.

Summaries of the two breakout sessions are included in the Appendix along with reports from the two special-interest dinners. The Northeast Superintendents' Leadership Council is particularly interested in these topics and will continue to include them on the organization's active agenda.

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Director, Superintendents' Leadership Initiatives

The Education Alliance at Brown University

## THE ECONOMY AND STUDENT MOBILITY

### Barry Bluestone

I have been rather active this past year (2000) in writing a series of books that all happen to be coming out at the same time. One of them is a book that is already in the bookstores called *Growing Prosperity: The Battle for Growth with Equity in the Twenty-first Century*. Because that book deals with why America is doing so well now economically after 20 years of wandering in the economic desert, I have been invited all around the world to speak about that book. In just the past 4 months I have traveled to Italy, Spain, Germany, and, in December, Japan. What is quite interesting is that we go to all of these countries—and I particularly thought about Germany and Japan as I thought about my comments here tonight—and the question that gets raised over and over again is: “Why is America doing so well, and why are we doing so poorly?” Here in the United States our unemployment rate is down to 3.9% nationwide. In some parts of New England, in greater Boston, it is below 3%. In Europe it averages 11%, with unemployment at 12% in France, 16% in Spain, 11 or 12% in Italy. In Japan, while the unemployment rate is low, it is rising, and for the first time in post-World War II history it is higher than that of the United States.

At the last conference I attended in Europe, in Berlin just a few months ago, there was a panel that included none other than Chancellor Gel Harshhoda, the chairman of the board of the Deutsche Bank—which was about ready to merge with the Dresna Bank (that merger was called off)—and various other officials at the very highest level. The two Americans who were there, Amitai Etzioni, a famous sociologist from Columbia University, and myself, sat and smiled at each other as we heard them diagnose what was wrong

in Germany. Why is Germany doing so badly? Why is its unemployment rate so high? Why is its growth rate somewhat lower than ours? The answer: “Our schools are no good.” Germany? “Our schools are no good. We have to do in Germany what the Americans are doing.” Etzioni and I smiled at each other.

A month later I am in Japan. I am in Tokyo with a fairly distinguished group of government officials and university professors. And again the question is, “Why is America doing so well? Why does Japan have essentially a zero growth rate? You know the reason? Our schools are no good.” Japan! “We need to have a better school system and maybe you, Dr. Bluestone, can tell us how you do it in America?” Well, of course, if you come to America, despite the fact that we have a 3.9% unemployment rate; despite the fact that we have a better than 4% growth rate; despite the fact that we now have productivity growth which is every bit as good as during the boom years at the end of World War II, everybody is complaining about the school system that created the kids of our generation who are rebuilding the American economy. Something is not right here. We have to understand that.

What I want to do today is to talk about the issue that you are going to be talking about for the next three days. And I have to tell you at the outset that this is not my forte. I am a labor economist who studies labor markets. I direct the Center for Urban and Regional Policy now at Northeastern University, which is dealing with housing and workforce development. But quite frankly, I have not looked too closely at this question of the churning of our student population and family mobility. So I went back to the drawing board—like a good student, particularly one who has to face so many superintendents, not to speak of principals and teachers of social science—to try to figure out what is going on here. What I am going to do in the next few minutes is give you an idea of how an economist would look at this issue of student mobility and where we are in America and particularly in the American schools. I will try to put it into a

broader context that may or may not have relevance for your discussions this week.

I think, as I have suggested, that despite our economic growth rate, despite our productivity boom, despite our low unemployment rate, there is perhaps no time in American history when the public schools have been under more scrutiny, or indeed, attack. Why?

I think one reason why the schools are now under scrutiny is that the information revolution, which has brought us this new-found wealth, presumably requires a much higher level of education and training than in any time in our history. Therefore, to the extent that our information revolution drives our new economic renaissance, and the information revolution is driven by brain power, the schools become a central part of this whole nexus.

The second reason why I think the schools are under scrutiny and attack is that, despite the growth in the economy in the last 6 years, the level of wage and income inequality has been growing sharply over the last 25 years. And a large part of it—not all of it—is due to the globalization of the American economy and, indeed, the world economy. What that means is that this new globalization, this new inequality, is leaving those with the least schooling further and further behind in a world of haves and have-nots.

Between 1973 and 1995, while average raises rose slightly, the average raises of high school drop-outs dropped by almost 30%. The average wages of those who had no more than a high school degree dropped by 13%. And indeed, the only people who saw their real wages—controlling for inflation—rise in America were those who had at least a college education or more. So inequality in education is driving massive inequality in income, and people are naturally asking, “Why such inequality in our schools?”

I think a third reason why the schools are under scrutiny is that schooling is now seen as the answer to almost all of our questions. It is the answer to low wages; it is the answer to inequality. Unlike past

generations, where you might turn to trade unions or minimum wage laws or social safety-net programs in order to try and develop greater equality in our society, we turn more and more to the individual and say, “You are on your own, and the way you succeed is through schooling,” because of the demise or the weakening of the trade union movement, the inability to raise minimum wages to stay up with inflation, and the partial decimation of social safety nets.

A fourth reason why I think the public schools are under scrutiny is that standardized testing seems to show that public schools are failing a large proportion of students just when schooling is seen as the most critical factor in individual economic success. Nowhere is that more true than in my state of Massachusetts, where we are testing all of our public school students again in a series of tests over two weeks. The first reviews of the test over the past year suggest a very high failure rate, particularly in inner-city schools.

The fifth reason why the schools are under scrutiny and attack is that the minority population—particularly in central cities—becomes larger, and more and more African Americans and Hispanics are demanding school choice to improve the chances of their children succeeding in school and in the workplace. This adds to a rather interesting coalition between minority populations—often seen as among the most progressive in our country—and at least some members of the conservative right who have been pushing for school choice, charter schools, and voucher systems.

The sixth and final reason I think the public schools are under scrutiny is that, to a real extent, the Reagan revolution was successful. Ronald Reagan told us that “government that governs least governs best.” In true historical fashion, there has been a widespread push—not only in terms of schools but all through our economy—toward privatization and free-market solutions as the answer to all of our problems. Hence, charter schools and vouchers are increasingly seen as the answer to improving school quality. As I said, this produces a rather remarkable, single-issue political

coalition between political conservatives and people of color. That is all going on in one part of society.

There is also something else that is happening, though. At the very same time that schools are so much more important, and at the very same time schools are being scrutinized, we continue to have a revolution in family structure and inner-city immigration, leading to extremely high mobility and churning of students in school. I looked at some of the reports from the LAB that were sent to me, and I was fascinated particularly by the data gathered in the Providence Demography initiative and reported in *Counting on Ourselves*. This really does produce a remarkable picture, and I recommend this piece to you if you have not read it in anticipation of these meetings. In Providence, just a few minutes north of here, students come from 57 countries and speak a total of 62 different languages. Indeed, in the high school at the end of my walk (I live near Harvard Square in Cambridge), Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, we have 43 different languages—in one school. More fascinating is that of the 1,845 children who began first grade in 1987, only 158, according to this study in Providence—or that is, only 9%—went to an elementary school, stayed there, moved on to middle school, stayed there, and then moved on to high school and entered the 11th grade—only 9%. And of 129 new students entering Grade 1 in 1991, only 57 of them (44%) are in the same school by Grade 6.

So precisely when schooling seems to be so much more important for economic success; precisely when the public schools are under so much scrutiny for their apparent failure—particularly in the inner city; precisely when new political coalitions are demanding radical change in education, the churning of the public school population makes teaching that much more difficult. That is part of the education crisis in this country. And ironically, just when this is occurring, we are judging schools, schoolteachers, and school administrators on the average performance of their students on standardized tests. I might ask,

“Which students are you talking about?” That urban public schools cannot easily win this battle is an understatement. So in my remaining remarks, I will touch upon many of these issues. As I said at the beginning, I do this not as an expert on public schools or demography but as an economist who has been studying the American economy and, most recently, the economy of greater Boston’s metropolitan region.

The first point that I want to make is that student mobility is not new. Student churning is not new in America. A few months ago my wife and I took our 8-year-old son to Ellis Island. It is a fascinating trip, and if you have never made it you must do it. It gives you a remarkable picture of mobility at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Just between 1901 and 1910, 8.8 million immigrants came to America, swelling America’s population by more than 10% in a single decade. And from 1881 through 1920—roughly 40 years—almost 25 million immigrants came to American shores. Many of them lived in tenements in the inner city. In fact, in New York on the Lower East Side, there is a tenement museum that I would also suggest you visit. It is one building, not very large. I would say that it has no more than 24 units in it. But over the history of that building they estimate that close to 110,000 different people lived there—different ethnic backgrounds, different races, from different countries.

What that means is there must have been enormous churning in the tenements of New York, and in the tenements of Boston and Providence. People moved in, got a grubstake in America, and presumably moved on. During the Great Depression in the ’30s, families often moved from house to house and from neighborhood to neighborhood in order to find affordable housing. My father tells me that he, his two siblings, and his mother moved every few months after his father died (when my father was 13) because in New York City during the Depression many landlords enticed families to live in their underoccupied apartment buildings by granting the first 2 months rent

free. So you moved in, you lived for maybe 2 or 3 or 4 months, and then you looked for another apartment where you could get the first 2 months free. As a result, my father attended three different elementary schools and two high schools when he was growing up. This was sufficient to get him into the City College of New York, where he graduated in 1937 and earned a master's degree, following his Phi Beta Kappa award to study German literature in Switzerland just before World War II. So there was a lot of churning all the time.

But what is new in society is the importance of education. In my father's day, the route to a good job for most Americans was finding a blue-collar job in a unionized factory. If you could do that as a high school dropout or with a high school degree—and about 45% of Americans worked in such blue-collar jobs—you had a decent chance of having a good life. Schooling was less important for success in the world. Most of the training was on the job. If the school gave you a little literacy in language and math, you were golden. Today we expect schools to produce students who can enter the Information Age with sufficient language, math, and social skills to survive in a globally competitive world economy. For those who do not obtain those skills, the number of good-paying, secure jobs in old-fashioned, blue-collar industries is mighty small. The alternative is low-paying, often part-time and contingent work with little or no employment security.

What is also new is the inability of parents today, or at least many parents, to pass on skills to their children. In my father's day, children moved from school to school, but the extended family played a more critical role in education. If the school did not provide all that the child needed in the way of reading or writing or arithmetic it was often a parent, an uncle, an older brother, or a grandparent who could step in. Today this is much less likely to occur. Families are more splintered than ever before with many children growing up in single-family households. Families are more spread out geographically. It is less likely that

uncles and aunts and grandparents live nearby. And most important, Mom's no longer home. She is at work; her income is needed to support her family given, until quite recently, the slow growth in wages and incomes during the past quarter century.

Hence, the school becomes the exclusive means to education—not simply one partner in the education equation. Mobility and churning are not new, but the economic context and family demographics are. And that, to me, is what you are going to be grappling with this week. I want to turn my attention now from that to taking a look at some of the data from our greater Boston study—our Boston Renaissance study—to drill some of these things home.

I have witnessed all of these changes up close in my own community in greater Boston. In this book, *Boston Renaissance: Race, Space, and Economic Change in an American Metropolis*, we take a look at the whole range of issues particularly affecting white, African American, and Hispanic populations in the greater Boston area—an area that includes not only greater Boston but also 154 towns and cities up to the New Hampshire border; out to Framingham, Massachusetts; and south to northern Plymouth County. There are about 3 million people who live there. The study is part of a very large research project—a multimillion dollar research project where similar studies were previously done in Detroit by the University of Michigan, in Los Angeles by UCLA, and in Atlanta by Georgia Tech and Emory University.

We interviewed, in their homes, 1,820 families. The interviews took anywhere from 2 to 3 hours. A whole range of questions dealt with racial and ethnic attitudes, where people live, and why they live there. We gathered all kinds of background information but also a great deal of information about their labor market outcomes. In preparation for this work, we studied all of the census data we could get our hands on from the end of World War II to the present. And what we found was that Boston in the 1990s and since the beginning of the 1980s has undergone a tremendous triple revolution.

The first part of that triple revolution is a demographic revolution. This is happening all across the country. We have gone from a Eurocentric community to a multicultural community. We have also had an industrial revolution. We have gone from the mill-based industries of textiles and smoke stacks to mind-based industries—financial services, higher education, health and hospitals, high tech and biotech. And we have had a spatial revolution. Boston has grown from being the hub—some would say not only of Massachusetts but most of the universe—to a metropolis. All of these revolutions have had a profound impact on the chances for economic success in the region. But one of them has made the Boston story so much more sanguine than the Detroit story or even the Atlanta story or the Los Angeles story. We have now had a decade of rapid, red-hot, economic growth housed in an industrially diverse region based on high tech, hospitals, higher education, financial services, defense, and construction. And as you will see, it has produced economic opportunity for minorities more so than in most other cities.

My friend, William Julius Wilson, at the John F. Kennedy School of Government (at Harvard University), one of the leading sociologists in the country, has written a whole series of books based on his work in Chicago, where he used to work—at the University of Chicago—with the truly disadvantaged underclass that was living in a jobless ghetto. We really do not have that in Boston. It is very different because of the red-hot, diverse economy, and this has some implications for further growth nationwide. We have focused to a great extent on these changes in the economy, and what I would like to do is very quickly just show you some of the results.

This is all based on census data going back 200 years. This is Boston, the city itself. What I have done is tracked the minority population. What is staggering about it is Boston, of course, was lily white right through to 1950. Essentially we were ivory, snow white for most of that time. Even as late as 1950, after World War II, only 5% of Boston's population was

non-white. In fact, it was the only city of the 154 that we looked at in the whole greater Boston area that had as many as 5% non-white—African American, Hispanic and Asian at that time. By 1960, it had doubled to 9.8%. By 1970, it had doubled again to 18%. By 1980, it had almost doubled again to 32%. By 1990, 41% of Boston's population was black, Hispanic, or Asian. We will, in another year and a half, have data for the year 2000, and it will show that Boston—this bastion of white, ethnic working-class communities—is majority minority.

We can see it in other communities as well. Here is the town of Brockton, the famous shoe town south of Boston. As late as 1960, 98.2% of the population was white. Even in 1980, less than 10% was minority. By 1990, it was about 21% minority, heavily black with some Hispanic, and today it is estimated to be about one third minority.

Look at Lowell. As late as 1970, it was 98.8% white. Massive immigration, particularly of Asians and to some extent Hispanics, made it a center of Cambodian and Vietnamese community. But no community has changed more dramatically than Lawrence. In 1970, it was 98.5% white. By 1990, it was half minority and the overwhelming majority of those were Hispanic, Dominican, and Puerto Rican. That is a demographic revolution. You can imagine what it means for the schools.

We also see it in terms of the changing demographics of where people were born. In 1950, if you went into Boston and you asked people where they were born or where their families come from in terms of foreign born, the three major countries were Ireland, (French) Canada, and Italy. That is, the North End was Italian, and East Boston and South Boston were overwhelmingly Irish. By 1990, Ireland was still there, but the largest single number of people came from Haiti, followed by China.

Take a look at Lawrence. Back in 1950, it was Italian, French Canadian, and people from England and Wales. Now, by far, the largest population comes from

the Dominican Republic, Canada, and then Italy. In Lowell the largest population came from Canada, Ireland, and Greece. Senator Paul Tsongas, the late senator, hailed from Lowell—a large Greek population up there. By 1990, Cambodia, Portugal, the Azores, and Laos—a demographic revolution.

We have also seen a massive change in the industrial structure of the region. In metro Boston there has been a particularly large decline in non-durable manufacturing—from over 20% of all jobs to only 5% of all jobs—between 1950 and 1990. Where is the big increase? The big increase is in service, from about 20% to almost double that, 40%. You can also see that within services we have not only had a massive increase, but the jobs have become more professionalized. Back in 1950, about 54% of service employment was professional, 6% was in business, 7% was in repair, 11% was in private households. By 1990, much more of service employment was professional service—occupational distribution, a massive increase in professional and technical work, and large increases in executive managerial work, with a massive decline in operatives and laborers.

Another way to look at it is simply to ask, “What is the ratio of employees in various occupations relative to the number of professional and technical workers?” For example, if you look at skilled blue-collar workers, in 1950 we had 129 skilled blue-collar craftsmen for every 100 white-collar professional and technical workers. By 1990, there were only 39 skilled blue-collar workers for every 100 white-collar workers. The most extraordinary example, of course, is the shift in semi-skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers. In 1950, 233 of them versus 100 professional and technical workers; by 1990 only 41—an industrial revolution.

What does this all mean, particularly for minorities? In many cities we have an image of inner cities, particularly of minorities living in inner cities who are outside of the labor market almost altogether. But in Boston we found something extraordinary in this

study. We literally calculated billions of statistics out of this project. This may be the most extraordinary one of all, or at least one of the most extraordinary. We are looking at black, Hispanic, and white men who have no more than a high school degree, and the labor force participation rates are virtually identical. Over 85% of black men in Boston in the mid-1990s when we did this study—and it might even be higher today given the booming economy—over 85% actually reported they were in the labor force. That means that they were either at work or they were seriously looking for work. About the same amount as Hispanic men and, if anything, a little higher than white men with that amount of education.

If you were to look at the question, “Were you employed sometime last year?”—again, pretty much the same across the board. More than not held a job sometime last year. Median hourly wage rates varied a little bit. The highest, of course, were for whites. Whites averaged about \$11.54, blacks about \$9.62, Hispanics about \$8.14 per hour in terms of their hourly wages.

All of that might seem reasonably good. Then we run into some problems. The unemployment rates for Hispanics and whites are identical – 7.1%, but it is double for black men. You might ask, “How can it be that they would have the same labor force participation rate and the same probability that they would be employed sometime last year?” The answer is: blacks are in the labor force. While they have enough skills to get some jobs, they are moving in and out of the labor force; they are moving in and out of work much more rapidly, and therefore, at any given point in time, they may be counted as unemployed. This is the beginning of at least one little problem.

Moreover, there is a massive difference in the amount of hours blacks, Hispanics, and whites work. White men with no more than a high school degree are workaholics. In some sense you have to be to survive in high-cost Boston if you have no more than 12 years of education. They average over 50 hours per week.

Hispanics average about 43 hours; black men only about 34 hours. Why? Black men are much more likely to be in part-time work, much less likely to have any overtime, and much less likely to have some self-employment work in addition to regular employment than whites or even Hispanics.

The result is that even though the wage rates are about 15 or 20% different, there is a massive difference in annual incomes. Of course, people live on the basis of annual income, not hourly wage rates. So the annual earnings of white men are nearly double that of blacks and almost double that of Hispanics. Hispanics have the hours but not the wage rates. How do we explain this? What happens when we do some simulations where we say, “What would happen if black men and white men had the same human capital?” Same age, the same education, the same occupational experience. It turns out when we control for human capital we find something quite fascinating. The hourly wage rates, which began with Hispanics 29% below whites, and blacks 17% below whites, converge to one. That is, after we control for human capital, if we could get enough education and skills, black and Hispanic hourly wage rates would equal that of whites. However, that does not happen for blacks on annual earnings; for Hispanics it does.

Interestingly, if we get Hispanics the additional education they need—and they are way behind in education because many of them are new immigrants with less education—we would get to the point where we would have a convergence between their annual earnings and those of white men. Not true for black men. Even after we were to do that we would still have somewhere in the neighborhood of a one-third (that is the .68) annual earnings scale between blacks and whites. These are lingering forms of discrimination which are based more on skin color than on ethnic background, and they say we have the same old pecking order—that blacks, no matter who comes in, in terms of new immigrants, ultimately seem to end up at the bottom.

It is not a problem of not having any work experience. Most have work experience. It is a problem of getting enough education, enough training, and breaking down barriers of discrimination to allow blacks, particularly men with limited initial education, to get the kinds of full-time jobs that will give them the same kind of annual earnings that white men earn.

Well, I have probably bored you enough with a lot of statistics. Let me tell you what I think all of this means. Number one, maintaining a red-hot economy is critical to the economic success of the disadvantaged in our society. If I were to do these same charts for Detroit or Los Angeles where the economies are not anywhere near as strong, you would find very low labor force participation rates; you would find a huge gap, bigger than Boston's, between whites and blacks. Maintaining a red-hot economy and a diverse economy is critical.

Number two, going back to what I said at the beginning of my talk, mobility and churning are practically inevitable in our fast-moving, immigrant society. Number three, public schools have to fight back against the naive criticisms raised by the testing movement, particularly in light of these statistics. Four, with enormous intra-city, that is, within-the-city mobility, it may be useful to consider methods to keep kids in the same school as much as possible—regardless of where their families move—through voluntary busing, through citywide elementary schools, and perhaps through charter schools in the inner city.

We need to find alternative forms of student mentoring, particularly for the mobile student. The school cannot do this job on its own. If kids move from school to school, is it still possible to have an outside-the-school mentor who moves with the kid? Can schools work better with parents to ensure that their kids are getting a decent education? And can we at least keep better track of where our kids are going and find ways to get teachers together across schools so that there is some continuity of care?

These are all tough questions. I am happy to see that you are studying them and trying to face up to these enormous challenges. And I wish you well in your deliberations this week. But clearly what you are doing in the work before you is bringing all of this demographic revolution, all of this industrial revolution, and all of this spatial revolution together and focusing it on that child in your school. You are asking the fundamental question given all of this momentous revolutionary change—how do we build an island for our kids where they can learn to live in a setting which maximizes their opportunity?

### Discussion with Barry Bluestone

**Participant question:** With regard to the African American populations involved in Boston, do you see the difference between public schools and parochial schools or public schools, parochial schools, and Black Muslim schools?

**Barry Bluestone:** I am afraid, as I said at the beginning of my talk, I am not an expert on education. If my colleague Jim Fraser, the dean of Northeastern's education school and the director of the Center for Innovation and Urban Education, were here he could probably give you a very good answer to that. What I can tell you is the following, and this is all something that occurred very recently. There is a very close friend of ours whose daughter, Tamika, is a very close friend of my son, Josh. Tamika's mother, Sue Allen, works for our METCO program, which is a 30-year-old program where inner-city kids—specifically African American kids—have a chance to enroll in suburban schools. It is a program that is now under great attack. It is a program that has been inadequately funded.

Susan called me and asked whether I would be willing to set up a meeting with some of our leaders around Northeastern University who have been thinking about this. And I sat in that meeting with some of the most progressive leaders we have, including many from our African American faculty, and the point that kept coming up over and over again is that we have

these faculty members and these parent leaders in the inner city looking at Milwaukee and Cleveland, where you have large charter schools and voucher systems, to see whether their systems would not be a better substitute for the METCO program that we have. And what was interesting here is that Susan, who has been inside the schools her entire life and has built this METCO program, was saying, "Maybe it is time we took off the blinders and started looking at these programs at least for the inner city."

I must admit I have been in public school all of my life. I went to a famous high school in Detroit, a public school. You may not remember it. It is Mumford High School, made famous by Eddie Murphy in "Beverly Hills Cop." A t-shirt has kept an inner-city school afloat—Mumford High School is a beautiful school today mainly because of the t-shirt sales and the sweatshirt sales. But I must admit, having listened to this whole conversation and many like it, even I have been asking the question, "Do we need to find some rather radical experiments, not for the whole country, but specifically for inner-city schools?"

And, boy, am I hearing it loud from all of my African American friends and Hispanic friends. Maybe the parochial schools are not doing any better of a job. Maybe the private schools are not doing any better of a job. But there certainly is a great deal of distress over the public schools in the inner city. I am not hearing that in the suburbs, but I am hearing it in the Boston public schools.

**Participant question:** What about the Chinese in Boston? How do they compare to the African Americans and Hispanics?

**Barry Bluestone:** The question is how are Asian students doing, particularly Chinese? Essentially, there is a giant gap in the Asian American population. It is the most bimodal population; that is, we have two extremes. The older Asian population, which is Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Pakistani, is doing very well. In fact, in terms of average incomes, the Chinese

and Japanese income levels are higher than the white level. But we have a large influx of Southeast Asians—Cambodians, Vietnamese, Laotians. They are still not part of the American mainstream, nor are their children. Although some of their children are doing well, others are not. It is a serious problem in Lowell, as was mentioned earlier. It is a very, very difficult problem there. You cannot talk about the ‘Asian population,’ because there are Asian subpopulations that are experiencing very, very different outcomes.

**Isidra Albino:** Before Professor Bluestone had started his speech, we were talking. I was telling him that economists are doing something for education. They are in the movement, and we have received a visit to Puerto Rico from representatives of the New York Federal Reserve Bank. This group of economists that visited us was invited by a university, the Sacred Heart University—it is a private university and very prestigious—and by the Banco Popular, a member of the Federal Reserve also. They invited this group of economists and they invited us, a group of educators, to move us toward integrating into the curriculum the concept of economy. They were sort of demanding from the school to start dealing and working with the concept of economy in all the grades from K to 12, but focusing on the middle schools and the high schools. We are in a project with them. You mentioned that you were also working from this Federal Reserve Bank in Boston with a project in middle schools. I see that something may be developing that demands from us, as educators, a move into dealing with economy. In Puerto Rico we have devised the standards and we have already decided that one of the concepts that will be added to the content standards will be economy. So, I would like you to tell us what your views are on this and if you feel that we can do something, because we do have to prepare our students to enter into this economic revolution.

**Barry Bluestone:** Let me give you a brief answer to that question by an advertisement that I promised my friends at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. There

has been a great concern about the lack of economics literacy in this country. As an economist I am concerned about it. But I take a particularly interesting view of it because I think not only are most students illiterate, unfortunately, I think most of our political leaders are illiterate when it comes to this, including a number of presidential candidates. So I am interested in seeing more literacy. But there is something that we would like your help on. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, which is one of the 12 regional banks and the bank that serves our community, is building a new museum dedicated to the economic development of the New England economy. It will be housed in the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston at South Station. They have got a 14,000-square-foot area where they are going to have that. It is going to be aimed specifically at developing educational materials where we can enhance economics literacy through the excitement of understanding economic history and economic growth. It will be aimed at middle and high school students. And we would very much like to work with you on this project as it goes forth. We are awaiting the final approval by Alan Greenspan.

Northeastern University and my center have been named as the educational partners with the Fed Bank in doing this. We are going to be building—catch this—a one million dollar Web site for the museum which will take this museum out so that, even if you cannot get down to Boston, all of the materials of the museum and a lot more will be available in your school within the next 3 years. We would love to work with superintendents on that.

I might add this Web site is not the only project we are thinking of doing, and we would love feedback on it. One of the other projects we are talking about is developing short, 20- to 30-minute video documentaries of your own hometown and the economic development of your hometown. We would like to get social science teachers and their students into actually using video equipment to do mini-documentaries in which they would use library materials. They would go to the museums in your own hometown, they

would interview some of the elders in the community, and put together short documentaries. We are going to offer editing equipment at Northeastern University. We are going to offer 3-day courses so that students and their teachers can come and learn how to make documentaries. And then on top of it, after we have done a number of these over the next 4 to 5 years, we are going to have a kind of film festival. The idea is to invite all of those who have made films to a festival. We want to get some fairly high-visibility judges that live in the New England community. People like Paul Newman and Bill Cosby, Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, and others to possibly judge these films. And the top three films each year will be exhibited in the large auditorium of the Boston Fed. It would be great if we could get schools across the region involved in this kind of project. And we would love to work with you. So any of you who have an interest in doing that please e-mail me or see me some time at Northeastern.

*Professor Barry Bluestone is the Russell B. and Andr e B. Stearns Trustee Professor of Political Economy and director of the Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Before assuming this new post, Bluestone spent 12 years at the University of Massachusetts–Boston as the Frank L. Boyden Professor of Political Economy and as a senior fellow at the UMass–Boston’s John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs. He was the founding director of UMass–Boston’s Ph.D. program in public policy. Before coming to UMass in the fall of 1986, he taught economics at Boston College for 15 years and was director of the school’s Social Welfare Research Institute. Professor Bluestone was raised in Detroit, Michigan and attended the University of Michigan, where he received his Ph.D. in 1974. On partial leave from UMass–Boston in 1995, Bluestone served as a member of the senior policy staff of Congressman Richard Gephardt, the Democratic Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives.*

*As a political economist, Bluestone has written widely in the areas of income distribution, business and industrial policy, labor-management relations, higher education*

*finance, and urban and regional economic development. He contributes regularly to academic and popular journals, and is the author of nine books. In 1982, he published The Deindustrialization of America (co-authored with Bennett Harrison of the New School for Social Research), which analyzed the restructuring of American industry and its economic and social impact on workers and communities. A sequel published in 1988, The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America, also co-authored with Harrison, investigated how economic policies have contributed to growing inequality.*

*Professor Bluestone has completed two new books. The first of these, co-authored again with Harrison and titled Growing Prosperity: The Battle for Growth with Equity in the Twenty-first Century, investigates the prospects for faster economic growth in the U.S. It was published by Houghton Mifflin and The Century Foundation in January 2000. The second, Boston Renaissance: Race, Space, and Economic Change in an American Metropolis, published by the Russell Sage Foundation in June 2000, is the culmination of nearly 5 years of research on the new Boston economy. It recounts the industrial and demographic revolution in post-World War II Boston and its impact on racial and ethnic attitudes, residential segregation, and the labor-market success of whites, blacks, and Latinos.*

*As a founding member of the Nommos Consulting Group, and working with Streamline Communications, he has been involved in the development of multimedia productions and CD-ROMs used in training sessions for labor and management groups and for public school teachers. Bluestone is also a founding member of the Economic Policy Institute along with Robert Reich, Lester Thurow, Robert Kuttner, Ray Marshall, and Jeff Faux.*

*In his spare time, he competes in team triathlons as a bicycle racer—fortunately, with a team otherwise comprised of orthopedic surgeons and an internist. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with his wife, Mary Ellen Colten, and their son, Joshua.*

## THE IMPACT OF STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM ON STUDENTS IN MOTION

### Katherine Nolan

What I really want to do for the next hour or so is structure a set of conversations that can help your thinking for the work that you are going to be doing in small breakout rooms concerning the issue of student mobility. But before we get started thinking about this issue of student mobility, I have a quote of Eleanor Roosevelt's that some of you have heard me use before. I am just so taken with this as an idea: "*We need to do what we can where we are with what we have.*" The ethos for the day is not going to be how do we solve society's problems, because that is often where we in education go. We feel so overwhelmed because we are so close to so many of the issues that our students and our families are dealing with that at times it can feel like there is nothing that we can do about it.

In fact, there is a lot that we can do about it. And we have some concrete measures that we have already collectively done some things about. Those measures are right here in this room. Would all the women who are involved in administration stand up, if you are a woman who is doing any kind of school leadership or administration work? If I asked that 10 years ago, you would not have had that many women stand up in a room. The fact that we have people of color in this room suggests we are getting there. Ten years ago, even 5 years ago, it was very unlikely that those groups would have been represented in the room at all. So what we talk about is that it is hard to make changes in education. That is true. But we have concrete evidence right here that we have begun to address the changes, some really important changes about who we are and how we do our leadership. That is something

that we always have to keep close. We have to know that we have done a little bit—we are not there yet—but we have done a little bit of what we can where we are with what we have.

Now I want you to start to think about the needs of mobile students and the behaviors of typical schools and how these things do not fit together. By way of helping us to get into that, I would like you to think first about your own student experience. Did any of you switch schools when you were growing up? What was that like for you? I did not. I went to the same school K through 12, Saint Mary's Academy of the North Country. K through 12—my father had gone there, my mother taught there, all of my brothers and sisters went there—one school. What was it like changing schools?

**Participant #1:** Disconcerting.

**Kate Nolan:** Tell us your story about it. When did you switch?

**Participant #1:** I moved from 9th grade in Puerto Rico to 10th grade in Louisiana. That was very interesting. There was a language change, a culture change, and an urban city change from a metro area to a capital where there was a small-town approach to how they did things—an ignorance about a lot of things. I was asked if I spoke Mexican, and if I would do a history lesson about Latin America.

**Kate Nolan:** Don't you just get humiliated by those kinds of questions?

**Participant #1:** And I spoke English, but I had a lot of trouble with southern English.

**Kate Nolan:** Me, too. Well, Rhode Island English I have a hard time with too. When you think about that experience, were there some things that you can point to that were especially helpful? You have named some of the things that were difficult. Can you name some of the things that were especially helpful?

**Participant #1:** A counselor was helpful.

**Kate Nolan:** So somebody who really zeroed in on you

and said, “This is somebody that I am going to work with.”

**Participant #1:** And kids who were open and really interested in learning about me.

**Kate Nolan:** OK. So being able to find some subculture kids that welcomed you and were curious and wanted to know you.

**Participant #1:** Those were the big things.

**Kate Nolan:** Those were the two big things. OK.

**Participant #2:** I have a very similar experience, but even more dramatic. I came from Italy at the age of 16, and the experience was rather negative. The guidance counselor refused to admit me because I did not speak English.

**Kate Nolan:** Where was this?

**Participant #2:** This was in New York City, at the New York High School. I went with a youngster who had come from Italy before. He had been admitted for some reason and in the same situation. He took me to the foreign language department chairman, who happened to know Italian. He was very upset that I would not be admitted. I had completed high school in Italy, with honors besides, and here they would not let me in. Because of his intervention, I was admitted. What helped me was the fact that I had a buddy that helped me around.

**Kate Nolan:** You had almost a mentor who was going to help you find your way through.

**Participant #2:** He was like a mentor to me. Those were the days before bilingual education, before even English as a second language.

**Kate Nolan:** The good old days, some people think. Back when it worked, right? Immersion—throw them in there. That is the way we are going to do it.

**Participant #2:** What we did have was English speech class, and that is where all the foreign kids were. So the youngsters from all over Europe—Lithuania, Italy, and so on—that is where you found the youngsters

from your own background with whom you had some sense of security. We kind of bonded, even though we were from different countries. That is another thing that helped us. We were in the same predicament. The other thing that helped me was that some of the teachers were sensitive enough to understand, to find a youngster in the class who knew some Italian, and have that youngster sit next to me to help me translate what was going on.

**Kate Nolan:** So, some teachers were really thinking about, “How do I use the resources in front of me to support this kid?”

**Participant #2:** That was helpful, though. The other thing that also helped me in those days was that they put in an Italian class—at which I started to laugh, because they put me in Italian I.

**Kate Nolan:** You are getting A’s though, right?

**Participant #2:** But that helped me with my English, strangely enough, because of the translation.

**Kate Nolan:** That is interesting. I actually never thought of that, but it would help you with your English, wouldn’t it?

**Participant #3:** I came to the states from Vietnam at the age of 16 as well. What I remember is that I used to stand in the hall when students changed classes and I’d just stand there until somebody came to get me. The thing that helped a lot was that I was in a Catholic school, and they did give me some English classes. They also put me in French classes, so I was able to talk a little bit in that class. All the other classes, all I can remember is that I slept a lot.

**Kate Nolan:** Any consolation, I did that in high school, too.

**Participant #3:** Thinking back, I think that none of the teachers really forced me to talk in the classroom. None of them forced me to participate a lot. So when I did a lot of teacher training I would tell them, you do not need to force these children to speak. They learn by listening. I was one of those that was thrown

into an all-English class without a lot of preparation.

**James Connelly:** I had kind of an unusual experience. I came here in first grade from Ireland via London via Scotland. I went to one of the Our Lady of the Lake Catholic schools that some of my relatives had gone to. The one thing that they wanted to do—and I remember it being very, very traumatic as a 6-year-old—was to get rid of my accent.

**Kate Nolan:** And they managed it.

**James Connelly:** Yes. They wanted me to speak like the other kids. It was traumatic. It got to the point where you did not want to speak at all. The nuns were insistent on this. What they did with people with accents was—and some of our better public schools still do it in Connecticut—they sent kids into speech therapy.

**Kate Nolan:** I actually have a close friend whose son is from Ireland, and he says “tree” instead of “three.” He is in speech therapy for that.

**James Connelly:** But the school was welcoming. You just had this pressure on you to be like everyone else, to speak like everyone else. It really did something to you for a couple of months.

**Kate Nolan:** Have any of you had the experience of moving your own children from one school district to another? What was that like?

**Participant #4:** I came from a different country and had to learn English. In those days, in the early '50s, they just routinely put you back two years. So you were two years older than the other kids.

**Kate Nolan:** There is a strategy. We have lots of strategies for how we help English language learners. Keep them out.

**Participant #4:** We were the first group of Asians that came to this country in the 1950s—the first group allowed into this country since the Chinese Exclusion Acts. We were plucked from refugee camps, brought to the United States, and put in a rural area of New

Jersey. I was talking last night at dinner about looking Chinese and having a Russian last name during the McCarthy era.

**Kate Nolan:** You are going to heaven. You have got a ticket.

**Participant #4:** From that perspective, it just made it a little tougher for everybody. They did nothing. There were obviously similar experiences and, in fact, it worked against you. I remember my high school guidance counselor saying, “You people have done very well,” and then suggesting that we go out into mechanical trades rather than going on to college. I went on to college to play soccer. That was an issue, but rural areas are very different than New York City or other places where they have other languages. You were on your own, and I was the oldest so I was the first one who had to deal with that. An obvious solution to that is keeping quiet; do not speak. If you do talk and do not use the language properly, they will make fun of you.

**Kate Nolan:** And, of course, if kids are quiet and do not speak, we tend to think that nothing is going on in that head.

**Participant #4:** That is right. One of the things that brought my sensitivity to that is when I am looking at the Asian students in this country. We tend to stereotype all Asians as one. If you watch the Asian kids in these public schools, you see that they are very quiet and very rarely say anything for a variety of reasons. Even if we do change our names we are still going to be different. I went all through college being put in the foreign students' section. I was always being treated as, “You foreign kids....” I wanted to be Mickey Mantle when I was growing up, but it was not going to happen.

**Kate Nolan:** Me too. It was not going to happen to me either. With all my older brothers and their focus on the Yankees, I wanted to be Mickey Mantle.

**Participant #4:** As far as my children go, both of my kids went to three different high schools.

**Kate Nolan:** What did you do in order to support them through that experience?

**Participant #4:** I found that my son hated me for that year and a half.

**Kate Nolan:** I am going through this with my oldest daughter. That is part of why I am asking. I have moved both my kids to two different high schools.

**Participant #4:** Then he went to a third high school and he liked it over there quite a bit and was successful. I think my children said to me afterwards, after they finished college, it taught them resilience. The fact that they were successful, that they could survive, allowed them to take certain risks and so on. But I look at a lot of other kids who have never gone anywhere else, who have found that little niche and did not want to change; they are afraid to take risks.

**Kate Nolan:** Let us bookmark that because that is important. There are actually some benefits to moving from high school to high school in certain contexts, and resilience is one that comes up over and over again in the literature about kids who are mobile. In the best of situations, they develop that kind of resilience and they are actually quite good now at coming into new situations because they have had to develop those skills. I am not saying let us make this part of the curriculum that we toss everyone into new schools, but we do have to begin to think about the advantages. What are the assets that our mobile children bring to school? Resilience is actually one of them.

**Participant #4:** And flexibility—to have the ability to size up a situation and understand that not everything is the same. We did not move in a local neighborhood, but in different parts of the country—New Jersey, Kansas, and Tennessee. These were very distinct cultures, but the benefit for them was that they had a strong, supportive family behind them. It also made the brother and sister a little closer because they were walking into a new school together.

**Kate Nolan:** So, it can actually also help the family become closer?

**Participant #4:** Absolutely.

**Participant #5:** I moved my kids. I also had much more dramatic changes in my career, too. I went from 8 years of parochial school to those heathens at the public school. Not only that, but it was the first time that I realized there were girls that went to school. We never had any in my parochial school.

**Participant #6:** And you had four kids later?

**Participant #5:** Four kids later. I moved all of my kids four times, but my oldest moved in her junior year of high school. It was a real culture shock from really, really small, rural Vermont into Massachusetts—Greenfield, which was very urban. They do, they learn resilience. She took the attitude that she had two choices: she was either going to regress and just get by or take the place over. So she took the place over.

**Kate Nolan:** What kind of things did you do to support her in that?

**Participant #5:** Mainly it was just being there for her when she had problems. She had another problem—the fact that her father was also the superintendent. The first time in a new school and she had to live with that. Supportive family is the main thing.

**Kate Nolan:** What have others of you done for your kids when you have been in this sort of moving situation? My daughters, since I have been moving them, one of the first things that we did when we moved from Pittsburgh to Milwaukee...well, there were two things. One was that I made sure I got into the school quickly to find out what the curricular issues were that were going to align and which things were not. My daughter had gone to high school in Pittsburgh and had taken a particular set of courses. She was using a unified math, and I was not sure if that was going to translate. I had to make sure that I got in there and helped the school counselors understand what her first 2 years of high school had looked like.

For Hannah, it was less of an issue because she was going from middle school into high school. The articulation issues were not as difficult for her, although they were still there. The other thing I did was to get them both therapists. I figured they really need to be angry at their mother for a while, and I would rather they had somebody that I pay for them to take it to instead of taking it out on me. That is a very middle-class response to this sort of thing. But I have to say that those counselors really did help my daughters through this. That is a luxury that I had, to make sure that their emotional needs were met, not only by a family that was behind them but a family that also was providing places for them to vent about how angry they were about the experience. I am happy to hear that kids get over this because with my oldest daughter right now (just finished her freshman year at college) the refrain is: “I had no real high school experience.” What did you do for your kids?

**Participant #7:** I have an 8-year-old daughter who is Chinese and has been in this country since she was 4 months old. She is being taunted right now within her school. One of the things that we are trying to do is work with the administrators and the teachers to address the culture of the school so that the teachers are more aware of what is happening in their classrooms and able to address how to deal with those issues.

**Kate Nolan:** As much as we would like to think it is common sense in a changing and diverse society for any of us who are professionals and work with children and families to educate ourselves about that experience, in fact it is quite rare for even an individual teacher, but certainly for a whole faculty of teachers or a whole system, to have taken on those issues of the ethos of the system and how it responds to people who are “different.” But what we have heard in every case is the importance of addressing that. All right, so the bottom line is, mobile students in typical schools do not work very well together.

Who are your mobile students? As you think about the districts that you are currently running or the schools that you are running, who are your mobile students? Can you describe them for me? For how many of you is this a big issue? For how many of you is it an issue that you think is just around the corner? Who are the mobile students right now?

**Participant #8:** The poor ones.

**Kate Nolan:** Yes, it is a class issue—although not exclusively. A number of us who have just reported that we have moved our kids clearly are in middle- or upper-class families. So it is not exclusively an issue of poverty, but it is largely an issue of poverty. It is more likely that if you have a student who has moved schools three or four times, that student’s family has a relatively low income. What else?

**Participant #9:** Immigrants.

**Kate Nolan:** We have a large number of students who are coming from other countries—increasingly so on both coasts and in the large cities in the Midwest. What else?

**Participant #10:** DCYF placements, group homes.

**Kate Nolan:** Yes. Interestingly, the data indicate that if you have a child that you know is not living with either parent, it is very likely that the child is a school changer as well. A good number of our mobile students are living in two-parent families. A good number are living with single parents, either single mothers or fathers—largely mothers. But there are actually significant—somewhere between 15 and 22%—numbers of children who are moving from district to district or school to school who, in fact, are not living with either parent but are in foster home situations. Sometimes it is somebody in the extended family who is caring for them, but often they do not have that stable family environment. Even without the single mother—having been a single mother, and I am the daughter of a single mother and the granddaughter of a single mother—it is not always such a stable

environment. Nonetheless, at least if you have got that person there, as opposed to moving from foster home to foster home... So for some kids it is not only school mobility, it is home mobility as well. They are not with the same people. Who else are they?

**Participant #11:** Migrant farm workers.

**Kate Nolan:** Yes. All up and down—wherever we have crops—migrant farm workers. And also when we are dealing with immigrant populations, in some cases what we have is immigrants who come to the United States and stay. In other cases we have what my mother's mom from Portugal did. Her family would move back and forth every few months. Many of you know that families will come, they will be here from, say, August through January, and then they will go back to their country for a couple of months and then they come back again. Often they do not come back to the same school again. Some of our mobile families are like that. What else do we know?

**Participant #12:** Military.

**Kate Nolan:** Military is a big one. We are going to talk about them in a minute.

**Participant #13:** Winter rentals.

**Kate Nolan:** Winter rentals. That is one that I do not know.

**Participant #13:** Particularly those in Narragansett, Rhode Island. You have a lot of people who move in during the winter because the prices are lower.

**Kate Nolan:** As soon as the season starts, they are out. The season does not align with the school year necessarily.

**Participant #13:** So they come late and leave early.

**Kate Nolan:** OK. Well, collectively then, what we have is mobile students who are, by and large, living in poverty, although not exclusively; by and large children of color, although not exclusively; and, by and large, living in family situations in which they do not necessarily have two parents there supporting

them and finding them counselors to support them as well. They do not have all of that.

Who are our schools? I have put a few points up here about who we are as schools, and I would like you to argue with me about this if you think I have got it wrong. But let me name these four points. Typically, we have developed—and this is just a description of fact—schools that are modeled to serve non-mobile students. We assume that you come at the beginning of the year and you stay for a year. We even assume that you stay K through 12. If I am a fourth-grade teacher, I want to be able to assume that those incoming fourth graders have learned whatever is in the curriculum in third grade, second grade, first grade, and kindergarten. We know now that this is problematic. But nonetheless that is how we have set things up.

We like to pretend that we are serving non-mobile students. We like to assume local curriculum mastery. One of the most frustrating things for a teacher—and any of you who have been teachers know this—is a student coming in halfway through the year, and you do not know what that kid knows. If they are changing states, for example, in fourth grade—virtually every state does state history and geography in the fourth grade. They just spent half a year in Rhode Island and now they are in Wisconsin. They know a lot about Rhode Island and they do not know jack about Wisconsin. How am I going to get them caught up in time for that state test that is going to be looking at what we are doing?

Schools are, at this point, required to develop academic achievement, and we are not resourced appropriately for that. But we certainly have fewer resources provided for emotional well-being. You noticed that exclusively as we were talking to people around the room. What you were reporting in your own experience of mobility, and in your experiences as parents of kids who have moved, was the importance of emotional support. What we heard was, there really were no structures in place. It was the accident of finding

some other kids because you all got put in the same language class. Maybe that was planned; maybe somebody thought, “Let us put them all in the same language class and that way they will be able to support each other.” It is possible. But I did not hear any truly intentional structures that were about welcoming students who are mobile, welcoming students with special needs. Yet, the first thing that everybody referred to was needing to get those emotional and social needs met. We are not resourced appropriately to do this.

Most of our staffs—and actually most of us in this room—have not personally experienced mobility. I am a practicing Roman Catholic. I go to confession every weekend. I have lots of issues with being a wife and a mother that I talk to my priest about, even though he has never experienced marriage and he has not been a parent. I do not think you have to go through something to be able to talk about it intelligently. I actually appreciate what my confessor tells me every week. I am not saying that the only people who should teach kids who are mobile are people who have experience with it themselves, but I do think there is a tremendous amount of learning that we collectively need to do about what that experience feels like.

I am always interested, myself, in how much I learn from listening to the stories from people—just in this quick thumbnail sketch that we did this morning—about what the variety of experiences were and how people responded and dealt with them. The more that we can learn about what that experience is like, the better we are going to get at recognizing, like that one teacher recognized, that if I sit Tomasso next to John and I know John speaks a few words of Italian, things will be better. We think it is common sense and we figure it will just happen. In fact, it does not always just happen. We have to plan intentionally for addressing the fact that staffs do not always know the needs of mobile kids.

Now here are some interesting data. We need to do a lot more research on families that are mobile and how

they work with schools. There has been some research already done, and I know Barry Bluestone referred to some of the research in his talk as well. I was astonished to find out this first thing. In studies that have interviewed families whose children have moved one, two, three, four times in school, as much as 40% of that movement is because of some problem at the school. That is, they will report that the kid did not get along with the teacher, the school did not respond, the kid was getting picked on—all of those kinds of things. There is something about the school. It is not, “My family needed to go back to the Dominican Republic for 6 months,” although that happens. But up to 40% of school-leaving in this collection of studies—and they are not claiming it to be fully generalized because we do not have enough data—but the emergent data seemed to indicate that up to 40% of leaving is because of some sort of conflict between the student and family, and the school. If we go back to doing what we can with what we have, those of you who are dealing with mobility and those of you who imagine you will be soon, imagine if you could cut the problem by 40%. That is a huge chunk of the problem that has something to do with how we, as a school or a district, are interacting with our families.

**Participant #14:** It is exacerbated by the fact that Massachusetts has a very liberal school choice policy. The first time parents are not happy they get up and can move to the next school, the next district, and so on. This starts again, and they continue blaming the schools for the problem rather than analyzing and working with people that deal with these issues, teaching some stick-to-it-ness. Perseverance is one of the traits that is going to go down the tubes as you continue to run. With homeschooling they try to hold on, but now parents can pull out. The law in Massachusetts used to be that they could not leave until the school committee approved the plan, and they took it to court.

**Kate Nolan:** Now they can do home schools. My family actually lives in Milwaukee, so this issue of

charters and vouchers is one in which Milwaukee is leading the way. Absolutely that is an issue here. Families have a lot more choices than they once had.

**Participant #15:** Families with means have more choices.

**Kate Nolan:** Families with means. But actually, in Milwaukee, even families without means have more choices—although “means” means many things. It is not just the money to move the kids to another place, because within Milwaukee they actually have a number of neighborhood places that they can choose from. But it is also the family capital to make the decision together, to rearrange their lives such that the kid is no longer getting picked up by this bus going over here but catching it over there, that could be hard for a family to navigate.

**Participant #16:** In Massachusetts where I work, we do not have buses, so you have to get your travel through the community. And again, people with means do that.

**Kate Nolan:** So, transportation is a bigger issue.

**Participant #16:** I am in a relatively poor, urban center, and we have a couple of surrounding towns similarly situated, with Paris between Greenfield and Paris Falls. Some work there and because it is kind of close they drop the kids off. We have those who have the means and could afford to commute, but not everybody does. It creates a whole different dynamic for schools.

**Kate Nolan:** So the 40% that is school related is at least one set of descriptors exacerbated by choice and the fact that choice is becoming more open to more people.

**Participant #17:** Could you share with us where those statistics came from?

**Kate Nolan:** The first two come from work that has been published in JESPAR—the *Journal for the Education of Students Placed At Risk*. Much of the data

comes out of larger sites like Chicago, but they have actually moved it beyond that now to look more at state-level data from a variety of sources. It is available on the World Wide Web from the CRESPAR site if you want to see the study.

**Participant #17:** Were there any correlations done between percentage of moving and the economic foundation of the family unit?

**Kate Nolan:** Yes. It is actually a beautiful study, the particular one that I am referring to, which I think came out in 1996. They have done correlations between number of moves, student outcomes, family income, and they have also looked at patterns of how kids have moved in two different kinds of schools. What you just mentioned, that there is a particular set of schools that tend to be the places that are trading kids back and forth, seems to be supported by the data as well. When families are doing a lot of this moving, it is actually a small set of schools or districts that they are moving them from and to, which is an interesting phenomenon as well.

**Participant #17:** What is the predominance of economic background? Do you see middle- to upper-level income families, or lower?

**Kate Nolan:** Actually, because the number of middle- and upper-income families that are mobile is small, they are not represented. It is only about 15 to 17% of mobile students who come from high socioeconomic status families. This phenomenon is true of the whole population of mobile students. Only 15% of that 40% who leaving for school-related reasons could be accounted for by higher-income families. So, even if you eliminate that 15% of the 40%, you still have about 32% of families in poverty who are choosing to leave a school because the school does not meet their needs.

**Participant #18:** Another issue that I was astounded by was in North Carolina. A number of kids, grandchildren, coming back from New York, New Jersey, and so on—children who went there and were not

successful. They had issues, so the family shipped them down south to live with grandma and grandpa. That was a real serious issue.

**Kate Nolan:** Do you have the data for your own schools and districts? That is one of the first questions that I want to push. Because as you are hearing us talk here, what you are hearing is a lot of us speaking in anecdotes. I am a big fan. You cannot be Irish and not love an anecdote. I am a big fan and I actually do a lot of teaching through it. I think there is a tremendous amount of truth in anecdotes. The danger of anecdotes is when we allow ourselves to hide behind them and not be collecting the hard data ourselves. So, if studies are showing that as much as 40% of school-leaving appears to be because of conflicts reported by families with the school, if I were an administrator my next question would be, “What has been true about the families leaving our school in our district? Do we do exit interviews? How much do we really know about why somebody is leaving?”

There is also an effect of, if I remember the numbers correctly, about 20% of school-leaving that has less to do with conflict at the original school than it has to do with the attractiveness of the new school. What is attractive to our families about these other schools that they are going to? What is it that they think will be better over there? For me, these data are the beginning of questions about my own school site or my own district. They help us begin to say what we know about the families that are leaving more than anecdotally. Have we really collected the data?

**Participant #19:** Two things: I do not understand why you do not factor in changes in schools due to daycare reasons. I find that to be a very large reason for movement within our district, where we do have space open.

**Kate Nolan:** Right. Is it daycare for other children in the family or daycare because this kid needs care after school and before school?

**Participant #19:** The child needs daycare. They cannot get daycare in the school and district.

**Kate Nolan:** I cannot speak to how this data would address that because it was not addressed in this set of studies. But again, it is an interesting data point for me because it may not be that families are reporting conflict with the school data; it may be that everybody is saying, “I wish it did not have to happen, but I do not know what else to do.” And that would be data that I would want to be collecting about my school. How big a problem is it?

**Participant #19:** The other part that I wanted to say is, we have interdistrict kids from the urban center, a choice where students can go to the suburbs. What we have found—and my district is not the only one that experienced this—is the choice is being made to avoid Planning and Placement team decisions. It is almost an alternative to going through due process. That is becoming increasingly common as well.

**Kate Nolan:** Do you know what percentage of cases it is in your school or district where that factor is really operative?

**Participant #19:** Well, it is a very small number that are coming to our district from the urban center. I would say it is about a quarter to a third.

**Kate Nolan:** That then raises a set of issues about how do we work with those schools in the urban center to talk about his question? I want to table that for a second because in a minute I am going to talk about what I think some of the changes are that we have to make in our systems in order to address some of this data. But the first thing I am going to keep pushing on is the importance of the collection of the data. While anecdotes help us to be concerned about the students, it is actually having a profile of who our students are, why they are coming and going, and where they are coming and going from that gets us to the next step. Close to 60% of students who leave a school end up in another school that is very close by, within just a few miles of the original school. That

means that a good chunk, 40%, are really going elsewhere, like when I moved from Pittsburgh to Wisconsin. But close to 60% of school leavers are going to attend another school that is relatively close by. What is the percentage in your school and your district? How many of them are going to close-by schools?

**Participant #20:** Of that 60%, have they attributed why they are leaving the school? As an urban superintendent in New York state, and now being in Rhode Island, I had one point in time where the capacity rate for 17,000 students and my enrollment dropped 10,000, which meant that I had to do something differently with the schools. And in most urban areas you do not build; you close and renovate. What in those numbers represents those youngsters who had to move to different schools because of two different ways in which you utilized facilities, particularly in urban areas?

**Kate Nolan:** That also is not addressed in this data, but that is the next data we are going to collect.

**Participant #20:** You need anecdotes for that.

**Kate Nolan:** Actually, you need data for that too. Because if I know that 60% of my kids are moving from this school to a bunch of other schools nearby and I discover, when I do some investigation, that 55% of that 60% is because the school has reallocated where kids go, that is a very different set of problems that require a different set of answers than if 55% of those 60% are going elsewhere because there is something about my school that they are rejecting or something more attractive about the other schools. So the data by themselves do not tell us what to do; the data raise the questions that we have to ask about what to do next. The only correlation that they were willing to make in the CRESPAR studies was that there is a correlation between families being unhappy with a school and moving to another school nearby. They were not moving because of jobs or relocation or any of that; it was this dissatisfaction. There is a close correlation between these two.

**Participant #21:** You said that the third came from a study in Chicago.

**Kate Nolan:** Well, the main study was in Chicago, but it is a collection of studies actually.

**Participant #21:** That is probably a much more common occurrence, having kids move from one part of a city to another part of a city.

**Kate Nolan:** Probably, but what is your data? What I am saying is you are probably right. That is probably right.

**Participant #21:** From my experience in an urban school district, I think the issues for schools to address are probably easier to address within an urban setting where the kids are moving within the same school district than it is when they are moving from one district to another.

**Kate Nolan:** Absolutely. It is easier to address.

**Participant #21:** You can really focus on the instructional issues much easier than you can if they are going out of state.

**Kate Nolan:** With the exception that there are so many other issues that the large, urban areas are dealing with, that this issue never gets on the table.

**Participant #21:** I do not know if that is so.

**Kate Nolan:** Well, the data from Chicago, from New York, and from other large, urban areas is that this issue is not addressed. Kids are moving, and their emotional and educational needs are not met. Could they be met within a single system where there is one way that you could approach dealing with it? Absolutely. But it is not happening. And the fact that many districts like, say, Providence and Central Falls have movement that is back-and-forth means we have to solve that between the two districts. That is our problem. There are going to have to be different subsolutions that we come up with because we are talking about interdistrict movement rather than within a particular district. But the movement is what

we have to chronicle, and that is the data that we have to collect.

The other issue within small districts, especially in the Northeast, is moving in and out of the Catholic school system. That is another way movement happens. The little town I grew up in—in upstate New York, Glens Falls—if we had new kids come in to our school, they very likely were coming from a very small set of public schools in the same town. And kids who left our school, or were invited to leave our school, went into the public system. Yet there was no collaboration between the two systems about the needs of those kids—none. So, there are things about being in a small place that create the same kinds of problems that we still have to address.

**Participant #22:** As we look at the problem, one of the things that seems to be missing is, how do you define the difference between a resilient changer and a regressive changer?

**Kate Nolan:** That is so hard.

**Participant #22:** Because, before we start putting solutions in place, it would be nice to get some research on what defines or what are the attributes of a student who develops resilience. What are the characteristics of their backgrounds and families versus the ones that slip into some form of introversion and regression? It may be locked in personality. But before we do one-size-fits-all solutions, we need to look at that.

**Kate Nolan:** Absolutely. I would say that we cannot do one-size-fits-all solutions, which is why I keep saying that here is a set of data that indicates a set of problems. I do not know that those are the same problems in my school and my district. But what I do know is that I cannot begin to think about designing systems to address that before I know what the data look like. So are most of the kids leaving my school and my district because they are not happy with the school and the district, or are they leaving for other reasons? Are they moving within the district but, say,

in and out of the private sector, or in and out of the home, or are they moving to another district? We have got to collect the data on this before we can design the kinds of supports that will be in place on this issue.

I cannot speak to this because I am not a psychologist, but this issue of what is the difference between resilience and regression—we absolutely have to get some study done on that. There are, in fact, lots of studies done, but we need to educate ourselves and think about how we could use the knowledge that comes out of psychology. Then, think about what the school factors are because it is true, by and large, that we are not going to be able to do anything about the family or the societal factors. But again, what this emergent research shows is there are some things schools can do.

The research from Rochester, the story about a simple intervention with the subsidized housing people shows an elegant part of a solution. Did it solve the whole problem? No. But it began to address one part of it. So, once we have educated ourselves about this set of issues and we have collected the data, so we really know who is coming and going out of our schools and where are they coming and going from, then we can begin to think about the variety of ways that we can address the problems. I agree with you that there will not be one way to do it.

**Participant #23:** Something interesting has come out of Connecticut over the years that I have been there. I am with the state department of education. To begin with, our mobility factor for kids in bilingual education programs is about 20 to 25%. A lot of that is kids moving from Connecticut, back and forth, to Puerto Rico.

**Kate Nolan:** So you are talking about in and out of the state?

**Participant #23:** Right. Within the district all of the other things show up. But interestingly—I get it from parents, from teachers, from bilingual directors, and from kids—the reason is that bilingual programs (and

I think to a large extent (ESL programs) have been programs that welcome the kids, make them feel comfortable, are nurturing, and will keep them in school or within the particular program. The fear very often is that the parents do not want the kids to leave the program when it comes time to exit, and there are probably a lot of reasons for that. But I think that one of them is that they feel in leaving the program they are going to go into a more hostile environment, and they are uncomfortable with that.

**Kate Nolan:** Absolutely. That is one finding on which the research and the anecdotes converge. Those schools and districts that have purposefully set up ways to welcome families who are mobile and ways to work with them to reduce mobility get better outcomes for the students.

**Participant #23:** Newcomers' centers, for instance, and reception centers have more money to deal with it.

**Kate Nolan:** And there are qualities about how those operate. Some things work better than others, and it is different depending on the population. What will work for a Puerto Rican family may not work for a Hmong family. We cannot think of students, especially those who come from other countries, as a monolithic group. The cultural responses that work within one culture are different from another. We need to disaggregate among Asian cultures, and also among Latino cultures because we like to think the whole Mexican–Puerto Rican thing is all the same. There are varieties of ways to be Latino.

I want to put one more thing out there. Another interesting piece of data emerging is that when families move from one school to another, the new school often looks a lot like the old school in terms of size, programs that are available, the demographics of the students, and the learning outcomes of the school. So, we get these parents who say, "I will take my kid elsewhere because it will be better over there," and they actually end up choosing a school very much like

the school they just left. What we make of that will be an interesting thing.

**Participant #24:** Is there any research on how the student does once he or she changes?

**Kate Nolan:** I do not know. In fact, I have to say that the research in this area is still very limited. There is not enough work that has been done to tell us about this group of students. They do not have advocacy groups for them. For example, when you talk about bilingual issues, bilinguals are always talking about curriculum and support within a school. Very seldom do we also talk about the issue of mobility with bilingual students. So the data available on mobility are actually quite slim. How many individual students see their performance actually go up? Collectively, students who move tend to do worse than their counterparts in terms of graduation rates and performance on standardized tests. If you look at a student who has moved three or four times, or a collection of students who have moved three or four times, and you look at the same demographics for students who have stayed stable, performance is lower and dropouts are higher. But of an individual student, I cannot give you that.

**Participant #25:** Do you have data on school performance based on percentage of kids who are enrolled?

**Kate Nolan:** Yes, and it is dismal, by and large, with a few exceptions. Again, I would point you to CRESPAR because they are the people who have done much of the work on this. There are also, by the way, lots of ERIC digests on students and mobility. If you are interested in doing some quick reading on this, you go to the ERIC site and you type in "mobile students." You are going to get a lot of hits. But it is CRESPAR that has done most of the work on this, and they are at Johns Hopkins.

**Participant #26:** Did this study break out the school-related causes to include either socioeconomic or white flight?

**Kate Nolan:** No.

**Participant #26:** Because I would think that there would be people who would say, “I do not like that school. There is something wrong with that school.” But really what they are leaving is the fact that that school has a socioeconomic complexion.

**Kate Nolan:** A drawback to this study is that it focuses so much on urban students, that at this point the percentage of white students reflected in the mobility factors is only about 15%. Therefore they are not showing up in the radar screen in terms of those other decisions.

**Participant #26:** They may also have socioeconomic reasons among the same race?

**Kate Nolan:** Yes.

**Participant #26:** They choose, among the same race, to go to a school that they perceive to have a more affluent group.

**Kate Nolan:** Yes. If we go back to the data—school-related causes that account for leaving and being attracted to a better school—because the numbers of students who are of high socioeconomic class and/or white represented in that are so small, the study does not address the question of how that affects the rest of the data. The numbers are just small. So, if you are in a district in which you think that is happening, that is, that a lot of middle- or upper-class students of any race are opting out of your school because of white flight or any other set of reasons, that would be a way that you would have to look at the data locally. But this study does not address that, and again, it is because the numbers of students who are mobile are so small among upper-income and especially upper-income white kids. The numbers are just too small to make generalizations about.

**Participant #27:** Did the study address another issue that just came to mind when the gentleman was talking about a bilingual program being welcoming and tending to keep the children? I have a situation

like that in my district. I had created a new commercial school for middle school students, and they come from all over. They love it; they do not want to leave. But the regulations say that they can only stay there for one year.

**Kate Nolan:** When I hear that, what I think is, “How do we then address the regulations that say you have got to move them, but create a similar kind of experience once they are in the mainstream?” For me, that is a problem of needing to extend this experience of a small, limited program into the mainstream as well.

**Participant #27:** The other thing that is happening in a number of overcrowded districts in New York City is that we have a pre-K program and, because of a lack of space, the children who are entitled to pre-K programs do not necessarily attend their own schools. They attend schools where there is room. In some cases they do not even attend the public schools. They attend the non-public school for the pre-K program. This creates massive mobility. It is foisted upon the children by the system. What I have been hearing so far is mobility that is generated primarily by the family themselves. But here is the system generating it.

**Kate Nolan:** It is the daycare question as well that comes up in this same thing. That brings us to the fact that schools cannot operate in a vacuum. We have to be partnering with social service agencies, as many of you are. We have to be partnering with churches to solve the problem that there isn't enough space where there needs to be space for the kids. There are spaces over here and not over there. We have got to solve that problem because until we do, we are going to continue to have students who—both in terms of their emotional well-being and their academic well-being—cannot succeed in school.

One of the things that I would love to see, for example, in the state of Rhode Island would be something as simple as full-day kindergarten paid for statewide, as opposed to it being optional. It happens in some places and not in others. It is a huge issue in

early childhood education. Schools cannot solve this problem without working in partnership with their communities. Now that sounds glib, right? Work with your communities. In fact we really have not become systemic about thinking how we serve families. What happens is that the rest of society dumps all of this on schools, and we are supposed to solve it in isolation. It cannot happen. Schools cannot do it in isolation. The whole system of daycare has to be addressed—both for kids who are in those K-5 years and for kids for whom before and after school is part of the problem. Families will make decisions about which schools their kids are in based on “Can I get them there and pick them up after school? Are they fed?” Those kinds of things figure in long before they can think about “how is their English and math?” Those are the things that are going to affect how families make their decisions.

**Guy DiBiasio:** I have got to believe that there is a lot of unproductive time that goes into getting kids up to snuff for my classroom. Therefore, even that mobility—even though you pointed out it does not create the same set of problems that other types of mobility create—still has an impact on student performance.

**Kate Nolan:** Having taught second grade for a number of years, I realized that what kids knew and were able to do at the end of my second grade was different from the second grade across the hall, let alone across the district. So what you bring me into actually deals with the Pentagon schools, which a few people have mentioned, and it is actually quite an interesting case study.

One of the first things the Pentagon schools did about 10 or 15 years ago when they acknowledged what they had known for a long time, was that they decided to do something about the fact that they have a highly mobile population. Children can be in Guam this month and Berlin next month. These are children many of whom qualified for free and reduced lunch because we do not pay our rank and file service people enough money. They are living in poverty, by and

large. Most of them are in families in which the parents have no college and many have GEDs. So the high school experience was somewhat compromised. One of the first things they recognized was that a common set of standards is absolutely essential.

**Phil Zarlengo:** Are there any systematic research efforts to identify outlying systems or schools that are unusually successful with mobility? Obviously you are talking about the Pentagon schools, but are those efforts underway and, if so, are their results beginning to emerge?

**Kate Nolan:** Just beginning to emerge. As I said, I would keep sending you to CRESPAR because I think that they are doing the leading work on this. But there is also some work being done at WestEd on students and mobility. CRESPAR has always had their hand in this issue of mobility a little bit, but part of their next 5- to 10-year research plan is addressing this. What I am beginning to hear, Phil, is that this needs to be a research effort of the LAB. Maybe this is something that collectively we need to take on. There is not a huge amount of work, and that means that we have to keep watching for the research as it comes out. But I am also pushing you to do some action research in our sites because this is where you are going to find out who our mobile students are. When they leave 10 years later, what is the story they tell about why they succeeded? What were the parts that helped them? What was in their way? What did we do about it? That is eminently doable at a district or a school level.

**Participant #28:** I just have a couple of questions going back to the piece that you talked about regarding the academic and emotional needs. Has there been any separation of that in any of the studies or considerations, specifically the correlation between mobility and special education needs and perhaps programs and offerings in school districts?

**Kate Nolan:** The answer to that first bit is—not to my knowledge. There is no information except that there is a disproportionately high placement of mobile kids

in special education services—disproportionate to other students who have the same demographic background but have not moved. So we control for mobility. What you are seeing is that there is higher placement in special education.

**Participant #28:** So, you are saying that a correlation could be pretty positive on that being one of the major areas of concern?

**Kate Nolan:** All I can see right now is a correlation. I do not think I know enough at this point to be able to talk about the cause. I think my own guess, if I had to give you a guess, would be that it has more to do with the fact that kids who are mobile sit quietly in class and do not participate and do not perform. Teachers who do not really understand the issues of mobile kids look at that and say, “There is a learning problem here,” and do a referral. Frankly, they do not know what else to do. So if I had to guess, I would say that it is the typical emotional and social responses of kids who are mobile that prompt referral to special education. We do not really know how to deal with this issue. But I cannot back that up with data.

**Participant #28:** The second piece, just out of curiosity, is time at school. Any mention about possible lost time in school due to this segment of the population?

**Kate Nolan:** Yes. Students who are out of school and mobile do worse than students who are in school and mobile. So there is actually a factor for kids who are gone for two months and not in school during that time—there is a correlation. Something that has not been looked at is what about those students who are going to other countries, are in fact in school when they are in those other countries and in school when they come back? Nobody seems to know what is going on with them, so I cannot speak to that.

**Participant #28:** The research that you have been citing, has it been primarily of school districts that have 50,000 or larger?

**Kate Nolan:** Yes. Most of it is in larger school districts, because the problem of trying to look across districts

is, how do you collect the data? Most of us in a district—especially a smaller district, but even with larger districts—do not know where our kids go when they leave us. Or we know for the first 6 months, but then after that we lose track of them. So, the information systems that will allow us to look across districts do not exist. They would have to be built.

**Participant #29:** Several months ago there was an article in *The New York Times* about this issue of the success of the Pentagon schools and the mobility of the students. One of the points that they really focused on, which is interesting, is the employer requiring the employees to take an active role in the school. This is another part where we need to collaborate and broker.

**Kate Nolan:** That is a sore point in the story, actually. What he is referring to here is that the Pentagon schools, because they are run by the Army, say, “You will be a parent who is involved in the school.” That is part of the job. No one gets to opt out of involvement with their kids in the school. There were real pros and cons. There were some parents who reported that this was a good thing, even though they resisted it initially. There are some parents who are always going to be involved. Then there are some who resisted, but the requirement got them involved. And there are some who say, “I do not care. How dare my employer tell me what I have to do in my private life.” The Army is a special situation around here. But you are right; that is a sticking point for us. Because, again, what we have heard just in terms of the anecdotes here is how important families’ support and involvement is to the success of mobile kids. If we know that and if we know that we cannot require it, how do we cultivate it? That has to be our next strategy.

**Participant #30:** I did not see the article on the Pentagon schools, but I find it very interesting because if you look at the military, a very miniscule number of children of military people go to Pentagon schools.

**Kate Nolan:** Yes, it typically is the poorest kids.

**Participant #30:** The vast, vast majority goes to public schools to which the Pentagon has totally abandoned these children. They have no concern about those children at all; they just send them to public school. They do not support the public schools, even though they inject, every 3 years and sometimes in 2 years, another wave of children back into the school. They can talk about the Pentagon schools, but I would like to see the numbers. I think you would probably be talking about less than 10% of the military children.

**Kate Nolan:** Yes. I think you are probably right. So, in a place like Newport, for example, at the Sullivan School where they had a lot of kids who were involved with the military, they are pulled out of school. Could we do something with the military like the Rochester Public Schools did with public housing, which was to say only do comings and goings in public housing and rent renewals at the beginning of the school year and the end of the school year? What if we began to look at the military as a large, local employer in places where that is true? What if we said, “With the exception of a war, you cannot just pick up families and move them indiscriminately when you have service members who have children in our public schools. We need to find a way for you to keep them there at least for the length of a school year.” That is a natural partnership to think about.

**Participant #31:** I worked for 10 years in that situation, but the vast majority of my children were from the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard made an effort to get their people involved in the school because they had children constantly coming in from Massachusetts and from Kodiak, Alaska. Lots of times there would be a wave in January and there would be another wave in March. We worked very hard to try to do something about that not happening as often.

**Kate Nolan:** So, again, when you think about your local context, if you are in a site in which that is an issue, you must engage that employer and say, “This is problematic for the health and well-being of the

children for whom you are responsible.” It is part of the reaching out that we can do. Let me quickly take you through what the *Education Week* article and some other research about the Pentagon schools looks at.

The role of standards cannot be stressed enough. My experience working with many districts is that even within districts we still have not gotten the standards right. We are still at the point where what it takes for a kid to really complete my second grade is different from what it takes for a kid to complete another second grade. And things certainly look different when kids are leaving elementary school at those big transition points into middle school or into high school. We still do not have a common set of achievement standards that we imagine kids should meet. Now, I am not saying that we can do what the Pentagon did where they just basically standardized their curriculum across the board. I am not even saying that is necessarily the right way to go. But there are a few core things that we could be doing. Especially if you are a district and you know that there is a nearby district that is the major source for the comings and goings of students. You are getting lots of theirs, and they are getting lots of yours. A natural place to start is having a conversation about some core things that you could standardize, something simple. You all know that within Rhode Island there is this 25-book standard, right? If a kid could at least come with the reading log for the 25 books that he has read over the past few years, and you would know that about this child as a reader, the receiving teachers would be able to work with those children more easily.

A few core math standards—I am not saying that you have to get the whole system aligned. But if there were a few core things that a student could come with, and that we could use some technology to communicate about, we would go far in addressing at least the academic needs of students. Typically, in small districts and large, those migration patterns back and forth across districts—you know where you are getting kids from. It tends to be a small set of districts that you are

working with. So, that collaboration, intentional planning together, is important such that when I get a kid from Hudson Falls High School, I know something about Hudson Falls and what they have required. At least at that level of collaboration we can start to do, in a couple of subjects, small bits of it. Do not worry about the whole, big system. This is at least something that we can do.

Use of technology to communicate—I was actually on the phone with my sister, who is a first-grade teacher, talking about this issue last night. She talked about how it would be great if there were some way for her to be able to use e-mail setups or something with the other teacher in order to have a conversation about a kid that is being placed in her classroom. Simple ways to hook up the two teachers. She actually does this, because my sister is a saint and a hero. She has actually done it with her kids who go back and forth from the Dominican Republic. She calls the Dominican Republic and hunts down if they have a teacher down there.

Now, I am not saying anybody needs to be that heroic. Nonetheless, she is right about the need for us to be intentionally designing ways for teachers across schools and districts to communicate together about mobile kids. And again, you are not going to get 100%. But that 30, 40, 50% of your kids that are going back and forth between a small set of districts, we are going to at least address the needs that those kids have. Remember the mantra from Eleanor Roosevelt: We are going to do what we can where we are with what we have. Understand the big global problem, and then start to chip away at the small bits of it that we can actually do something about.

We have heard over and over again this need for sensitivity to family needs, and the Pentagon schools, despite the fact that they are not sensitive outside of this small number, have built in this way of welcoming kids who are coming into a school that is about family involvement. The kids get to do writing and

tell stories about where they have been. For military kids, they all can share that; it is a common experience. In many cases, what they discover is that there are other kids in that classroom who have attended schools that they have attended.

So there are things we can do that give better support to families. And there is an indication that this reduces mobility. We certainly have to have the belief that these students can learn. That means educating ourselves about why they are silent, for example, or why they tend to be more aggressive than kids who do not move a lot. There are a lot of typical acting-out behaviors or shutting-down behaviors that are true of mobile kids, and we have to understand them as being a result of this. The Pentagon had a readiness to refashion the schools. They also had an easy way to do it because it is the Army. You just say, “Do it,” and it has to happen. But we also know that can get in the way sometimes when you have a long tradition and a status quo. They have to get some credit for being ready to refashion their schools.

All right, here is the set of lessons that I am taking away from this. There are two things that we need to do. One is reduce mobility. The schools that seem to be doing this show us what the lessons are for reducing mobility. One is becoming family centered, centered in ways that address the special needs of these families. If that means having daycare on site, that is something that we have to think about providing. If that means hiring family advocates who can actually work closely with the families, that is something that we have to think about doing.

We also need to educate families about the effects of mobility. In many cases parents actually do not know, or other caregivers do not know, just how devastating mobility can be to their kids. Having, as part of family-centered education, policies that allow us to learn about families and to teach these families just how devastating this mobility can be. Relaxing residency red tape would be another way. If a family

does have to move, for a set of reasons, across districts or within a district to a different feeder pattern, is there any way that we can continue to allow that kid to attend the same school? How do we relax that red tape—across districts in particular—at least for the completion of a school year in the cases where that makes sense? In some cases it requires so much transportation for the kid that you are talking about an extra hour of traveling every day. That does not necessarily make sense. But can we work cooperatively across the districts where we are doing a lot of the sharing to relax residency red tape at least in the short term? Then we can develop those regional relationships among schools that share students such that you have got your teachers and networks studying student work together and understanding the standards that are coming out of a variety of places.

One of the great things that happened when Sarah and Hannah switched schools was the receiving school, it turned out, was using the same math series as the sending school. The fact that it was a unified math series just made our lives so much easier. Here we have teachers who had the same professional development using the same materials, and I did not have to explain what unified math was like. That was a beautiful thing. Now we can also look at that by having their teachers engaged in regional networks where they are regularly collaborating together, studying student work in relation to standards, and talking together about the standards in their own classrooms.

Now, reducing the negative effects of mobility. The first thing is you have to be collecting the data and use it to plan. You have got to have real data and not just anecdotes, although anecdotes are important. You have got to have real data about where our students are coming from and where they go. How many of our students are moving multiple times? When they go back to the Dominican Republic, are they in school or are they not in school? You have got to know this about your mobile students. Then you have to build

some structures to communicate about student work and achievement. Back to this regional sharing of student work. Some of your schools, if you are in Rhode Island, are part of the Working Wonders Network, which has elementary school teachers collaborating together about student work and analyzing their assignments. There is a network of math teachers doing the same thing. There are networks of teachers in virtually every one of your states. The southern Maine partnership is like this—where teachers are doing this work together. Have a look at how many of our teachers are sharing work with teachers in those schools and districts with which we share students. How much of that is going on? Because if they are in a network but the network does not include those other teachers, you are not going to get the better benefits of it for mobile students.

Targeting support resources. When you talk with teachers about receiving kids into their classrooms, there are two things that teachers point to as especially helpful at that moment. The first is a set of careful, slow conversations ahead of time about who the child is and how it makes sense to bring the child into this school. A case in point: In a school that I was working with recently—doing other kinds of work, but it was an interesting phenomenon—there were three classrooms of first grade. Two had 22 students and one had 21 students. A new student comes along, so what does the principal do? Three groups of 22. Looks good, right? Before this got enacted, the teacher of the 21-member class managed to say that we had to have a conversation about this. She had three special needs students in her classroom. Hers was the only classroom in which kids with special needs were welcomed, including one kid who had pretty severe autistic problems. And this was January or February of the school year. The class had really gotten good at supporting little Becky, and Becky was part of a working classroom now. And one of the things that we know about autistic children is that they do not deal well with change. Whenever you bring a new student into a classroom, it is just like having a new baby in a

family. You think, “OK, I have got five kids. What can one more do?” It always makes everything topsy-turvy. Relationships are upset. Everything about how the classroom works is upset. It does not make sense to put the new kid in the classroom with the child who has autism if you have an option to do something else.

Over and over again teachers tell stories like this where administrative decisions get made without a careful conversation. That is also professionally responsible on the part of the teacher. This is not a teacher who is just saying, “I do not want a new kid.” There is actually good reasoning behind why the kid should be placed elsewhere. So, that is the first thing. The second thing is if you can even get an aide for a week the first week that kid or those children are in your classroom—not permanent resources, but just somebody to be with that kid for the first week—it makes the transition that much better. Especially if there are language issues, someone who can share that language with the kid can make a big difference. The idea of being flexible with aides in a way that allows us to target them especially to be right at the elbow of those kids who have needs right at that moment is important. Developing, cultivating strong welcoming and relationship practice. We have talked about that.

I am going to end with the thing that is my one trick. Standards, standards, standards. We have heard over and over again how much of a problem it is that we do not have articulation, even within districts or across districts, of what kids are supposed to know and be able to do. We can do all of this great work about their emotional needs, but if we have not addressed the fact that we have such disjointed curricular delivery our kids are still going to be compromised in terms of their achievement.

**Participant #32:** With your background in international standards is this problem unique to our country, or are there nations that have clear standards and curriculums? Is it less of a problem?

**Kate Nolan:** In some places, yes, it is less of a problem. But the one that comes right to my mind is

France. We think of France as a place that is pretty monolithic, but they have had huge influxes of people from northern Africa and eastern Europe in the past 10 to 15 years. So, they have a large immigrant population and a large non-French speaking population living in poverty. And they have all the mobility issues that come with that stuff. It does appear, but the international research—which, if you are interested in that, comes out of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD—when they look at mobility issues for students, shows that a strongly dictated curriculum appears to help. Am I advocating for that? I do not know. I think that there is a lesson that comes out of that. It makes sense that if I am over in this school and I move over here and they are doing the same thing, I am going to hit the ground running as opposed to not. That just makes sense to me. I am not sure that the only way is a strongly dictated state or national curriculum. I do not think that is the only way to do it.

I actually think there is a lot more to be gained by bringing teachers together to study work and putting teachers in communication about what the kids know and are able to do. But there are people that would say that strong curriculum that dictates where you are and what you do next would be the solution to it. I am not convinced of that and I think that is problematic for so many other reasons that this is a case where the needs of the general population and the needs of the mobile kids are in conflict.

**Participant #33:** A group that recognized mobility about 30 years ago was international schools. As the world became multinational there were groups of people who were sent around the world. I spent most of my career in international education at the United Nations. They developed collaboration between the international schools, and the international baccalaureate was a program that came out of that. Then they set a middle-level baccalaureate program so you could create common standards. You went to school in New York for a year, you went to Hong Kong for a year,

and then you went somewhere else for a year. There was a standard curriculum, and then you would have accessed and entered into your national education systems. That has proved to be phenomenally successful because it has been recognized by the French baccalaureate, the German, and so on with English. You could look at that, and the data they have collected over the last 30 years are about those kids involved in that. It does not matter how mobile their parents are—I mean extremely mobile. These kids succeed because the curriculum is standardized regardless of the country or school that they are going to.

**Kate Nolan:** Of course within the U.S., Advanced Placement courses accomplish the same thing. My daughter Hannah, for example. We are moving her yet again, now from Milwaukee to Chicago, and she is going to be a senior. She is really going to have her whole high school career ruined. But one of the things that is easy is that she has taken a number of AP courses already and the receiving school has already looked at that and said, “We know what calculus A-B is so you will just take calculus B-C.” It makes that move very easy. Now again, I am not saying AP for everybody, or am I? That might be a way to do it.

**Participant #34:** I think it is poor. I was particularly frustrated after having spent most of my career in New York State. On the same day, the same minute, the same week, they take a Regents exam and they should know exactly what the curriculum is about. Yet in my own schools in Rhode Island, in a single school, one third-grade teacher is doing something different than another. I do think it does bring in some serious issues.

**Kate Nolan:** I think so, too. Now I do not think that AP mandates everybody is on the same page, same day. For my dollar, the best AP teachers are the most creative teachers who take that AP curriculum and that professional development, know who their kids are, and make it work together. But there are critics of that who say, “It is lock step; it works around the

teacher.” I do not see that. What I see among teachers is that they all want to be AP teachers because there is some benefit that comes to that program.

**Participant #34:** It does not necessarily have to be lock step. If you look at magnet school themes and things of that nature, you still acquire and meet standards and the mobility situation is eased as a result of having had that.

**Kate Nolan:** Something to think about is, what might it look like if Providence and Central Falls think about some core units of study that they can share and develop such that if I am a sixth-grade teacher in Providence and I am getting some kids from sixth grade in Central Falls, I at least know a few of the things that they have done over there. I do not see what the downside to that is—that kind of co-development of good curriculum. So I offer you that as a way to begin to think about chipping away at the problem. Collect data, the role of standards, and the emotional support for families.

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## REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS OF CHILDREN IN MOTION

### Isidra Albino

I consider of paramount importance the emphasis of the institute on student mobility and its impact on the whole child. This holistic view is consistent with our revisited mission of education. This is geared at propitiating and facilitating the student's integral development—his or her mental, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual development. We are forging a student who will become a positive and productive citizen. This demands study programs, systems, projects, curricula and so forth, framed with a cognitive-humanistic educational philosophy and a holistic view of the student as a thinking, feeling human being in development.

We have examined the causes of migration such as social problems, poverty, families on the go for improving life conditions, and the modern-society urge for new starts, among others. We have talked about the effects of migration on the students' behavioral changes, on school enrollment policies and school organizations, curricular content and instructional practices, and so forth. We have read many demographic studies that describe migrant student population and how it has grown significantly with the aggravation of the circulatory migration (i.e., the flow and re-flow of students). The overall picture, as portrayed by Pamela from Boston, Abel from Kenya, and Carlos (now Charles) from Puerto Rico, presents many commonalties, differences, and myths that must be the subject of study and reflection by educators and leaders.

The purpose of my speech is to present a humanistic perspective for addressing our reflections on students in motion, thus focusing on the whole child. I will

also present, very briefly, qualitative research that I had the opportunity to do using an ethnographic methodology in the observation of return migrant students' (RMS) coping behavior in the English and Spanish classrooms versus non-return migrant students (NMS) in high school in Puerto Rico. The study aims at coding and analyzing some of the transactions that the RMS experienced in their transition period from one school environment to another. Of course, the problem that has surged—and that I know is the main concern for all of us—is what happens when the transition period is interrupted in one of its different stages of adaptation because the student moves to another school. Such is the example of Pamela. At 17 years old she had attended 10 schools and lived in eight foster homes. The perspective that I will describe is based on the person-in-environment system as defined by the organism-development theory. This was created by Heinz Werner and expanded by Seymour Wapner, social scientists and psychologists.

Although originally this theoretical framework focused on the organism, it shifted recently to the person as the main component. They realized that the highest level organization in the functioning of the system is the person. Person is defined as an acculturated human being who operates in a world governed by collective rules and is directed toward long-term values and norms which are achieved by conceptual systems, language, logic, science, and so forth (Wapner, 1983). Later, other scholars and researchers used this system with their reflections and gave their insights and recommendations for dealing with problems encountered on migratory transitions and other transitions that are part of the life cycle.

Wapner, et al. (1969) assert that migration entails adaptation to radical changes in the environment not only in the physical and sociocultural aspect but also in the interpersonal relationships. The migrants' behavior during the transition from one setting to another is of great significance in the study of their perceptions of people and customs, as well as for their

expectations of life. The transition they experience is critical because of the many changes involved. The migrants' whole selves—their cognitive, affective, and evaluative abilities—are part of the experience.

If the unit of analysis is an adolescent migrant student, the transition becomes complex and demands careful attention when analyzing the situation. This is so because of the nature of the person, the subject of the study. The adolescent migrants are not only adapting to the new environment, they are also experiencing all the rigors of development: physical growth, crisis of identity (Erikson, 1968), and others. Their psychological functioning is shaken. They are totally immersed in the migratory process. In order to cope with the demands of their everyday lives, they seek ways of dealing with the alterations which are characteristic of their migratory experiences.

Pacheco, Lucca, and Wapner (1984), in their study of Puerto Rican migrant adolescents, found that the process of migration becomes a critical transition, particularly for the young. The study showed that the transition has sociocultural and interpersonal effects that could either help or hinder the child's overall personal development.

Basic to this issue of transition is the fact that the migrant students' integral development is influenced by the integration between their natures as persons—their genetic inheritance—and by their experiences and actions in the environment—nurture. This nature-nurture interaction shapes the migrants' responses to and construal of their new environment. Their degree of adaptation depends on how well they construe their new environment.

The challenges faced by the social scientists in recognizing the need to bring together the person and the environment as a holistic unit of analysis has strengthened the need to use the organism development system from the perspective of the person. This theoretical perspective—dynamic, interactionistic, and holistic in its aims and goals and grounded on the

concept of development—is concerned with the importance of knowing about the nature of the person-in-environment transactions. Cognitive processes such as perceiving, imagining, and thinking are identified as determinants of development.

The migratory experience of adolescents in its developmental perspective is studied through the way or ways in which they organize their experiences. The transition occurs in successive stages, from the encounter with the new setting until they gradually get involved in the cultural reality in which they live. The problem in these stages is that, due to the circulatory migration, they have to move before they reach their adaptation [and] thus [before] being able to benefit from the experiences at the new setting.

Pacheco, Lucca, and Wapner (1984) show, in their findings the successive stages through which the progressive development is attained. These phases include giving up in the face of stressful events and accepting the demands of the new environment—for example, by accepting the prevalent style of interpersonal relationships, clothing, and customs which prevail in the environment; a critical sense directed towards the new environment, where the migrant student's generally opt to isolate themselves from the host community; and resisting the demands of the new environment in keeping with personal beliefs and goals. They integrate according to their own definition of the world.

The study corroborated in its findings the shift from the stage of differentiation to one of differentiation and hierarchical organization. It also accounted for the notion of dynamic equilibration (Piaget, 1952) and is exemplary of the orthogenetic principle in function, in its formal, organizational definition of development.

This group concluded that transitions depend, to a great extent, on the character of the agent. Cultural contexts in which transitions occur vary in time and place. There are cultural forces imposed by the environment. Interpreting and explaining the orthoge-

netic principle was a main problem in their analysis.

Based on our study of this theoretical framework we can conclude some basic assumptions:

- Attitudes are very important because these represent the migrant student's perceptions and his or her ability to sense meaning. Dispositions, thoughts, feelings, and also actions are organized during his or her transitional period.
- The migration experience is an everyday life event. The person-in-environment developmental approach focuses on everyday life.
- The migrant student construes and reconstrues his or her world while experiencing the environment. This depends on his or her nature, previous experiences, and expectations. Personality and character traits play an important role.
- The migrant student lives in more than one scene—such as the school, the home, the church, the recreational center, and so forth. He or she builds a definition of each situation and this may not be congruent to expectations.
- There is a sense of direction in the process.
- There is order in the developmental process.

We can conclude that the migratory experience constitutes one of the many transitions a human being undergoes in his or her everyday life. This transition is critical because of the struggle for adaptation to a changing reality. There is a perturbation in life that causes disequilibrium, and the person has to move toward equilibrium through a series of stages. His or her whole self is immersed and involved in the transactions with the environment.

The person-in-environment transactions system provides the overall background, both from its conceptual and from its empirical framework for the analysis of the migration phenomenon. It suggests the close relationship between the migrant student and the school culture in coping with teachers, classmates, rules, opportunities, prejudices, flexibility, empowerment, and so forth.

Let's see the conceptual framework in a study with return migrant students (RMS). In Puerto Rico, our experience in the study of the migration phenomenon has been mostly demographic or descriptions of this population—causes, effects, etc.—as it has been also in the United States. Very few studies have been performed at the classroom level; the ones on record are mostly based on teachers' opinions and do not come from the students' perspectives. The study that I will summarize is an attempt to examine and analyze the RMS problems as a result of a change from a school in New York to a different classroom environment in a school in Puerto Rico. The person-in-environment approach was used as the conceptual framework.

The problem of adjustment in the students' coping behavior in language classrooms was observed in four categories with 77 descriptors or actions. The behavior observed could be aggressive, inappropriate, integrative, or uninvolved. The return migrant students' classroom coping behavior was also compared to non-migrant students (NMS) in the same language classrooms. Classroom coping behavior is the construct that was studied; therefore, this was the unit of analysis.

Language classes were chosen for the study because, first of all, language is central to all other classes. In this particular case, the problem stemmed from students' lack of communicative competence in Spanish and their knowledge of English vis-à-vis a group of students who shared their Puerto Rican roots but had an opposite sociolinguistic situation.

Classroom interaction requires communication. If the students have communicative competence with teachers and peers, their coping with the classroom environment is facilitated. The person-in-environment system is, in itself, a humanistic approach, and as such it is a two-way street; feelings are recognized in the learning process and information is available as well.

Emmer & Peck (1971) provide systems for observing classroom behavior. Of the four systems described, the

Coping Analysis Schedule for Educational Settings (CASES) was chosen for the study. This system codes students' behavior including negativity, attention getting, passive aggression, self-directed activities, cooperative behavior, and others. Behaviors included in the CASES system were classified in four categories: aggressive, negative-inappropriate, integrative, and uninvolved. This allowed for intergroup behavior correlations. The RMS' and NMS' classroom coping behavior in their English and Spanish classes was coded using behavior indicators and then classified as aggressive, inappropriate, integrative, or uninvolved, accordingly. The study described and compared only coping behavior in the classroom environment. It did not include other factors inherent to such environments, such as teachers, curriculum, and so forth.

The behavior of four RMS and four NMS was observed—all of them in the same classroom. Twelve classes were videotaped. Four raters, all of them educators with experience in research, were trained, and the coding of their observations was measured as reliable with statistical tests: Kendal's *W*. for coefficient of concordance and Spearman's average for coefficient of correlation.

The students' aggressive coping behavior was observed in the following indicators:

- Direct attack
- Grabbing
- Pushing
- Hitting
- Pulling
- Kicking
- Name calling
- Destroying property
- Smashing, tearing, and breaking

The students' inappropriate behavior was observed in the following indicators:

- **Negative (inappropriate) attention-getting behavior:** annoying, bothering, whining, loud

talking (unnecessarily), attention getting, aversive noise making, belittling, criticizing

- **Manipulating, controlling, and directing others:** bossing, commanding, enforcing rules, conniving, wheedling
- **Resisting:** delaying, passive aggressive behavior, pretending to conform, conforming to the letter but not the spirit, defensive checking

The students' integrative coping behavior was observed in the following indicators:

- **Self-directed activity:** productive working; reading, writing, and constructing with interest; self-directed dramatic play (with high involvement)
- **Paying close attention:** thinking; pondering; listening attentively; watching carefully; concentrating on a story being told, a film being watched, a record played; reflecting
- **Integrative sharing and helping:** contributing ideas, interests, materials; helping; responding by showing feelings (laughing, smiling, etc.) in audience situations; initiating conversation
- **Integrative social interaction:** mutual give and take, cooperative behavior, integrative social behavior, studying or working together
- **Integrative seeking and receipt of support, assistance, and information:** asking teachers or significant peers for help, support, sympathy, affection, etc.; accepting help; receiving assistance

The students' uninvolved behavior was observed in the following indicators:

- **Following directions passively and submissively:** doing assigned work without enthusiasm or great interest; submitting to requests; answering direct questions; waiting for instructions as directed
- **Observing passively:** visual wandering with short fixations; watching others work; checking on noises or movements; checking on activities of adults or peers
- **Responding to internal stimuli:** daydreaming, sleeping, rocking or fidgeting (not in transaction with external stimuli)

- **Physical withdrawal or passive avoidance:** moving away; hiding; avoiding transactions by moving away or around; physical wandering; avoiding involvement in activities

Once the reliability between the raters was established, the next step was to determine differences or similarities between the RMS and NMS in the English and Spanish classes. The presence or absence of the expected and observed behavior was recorded for each return migrant and non-migrant student. Scores were computed for individual students and analyzed for intergroup relationships.

**Findings:** None of the four raters who observed and coded the students' behavior reported the presence of aggressive behavior in any of the indicators. Therefore this category was eliminated from the analysis. There are instances of aggressive behavior in our schools in Puerto Rico, but not inside the classroom. This occurs in the yard or other places. Negative behavior was confirmed. Significant differences were shown between the two variables, RMS and NMS.

The RMS behaved more inappropriately than the NMS. Reasons for this were that they may have wanted to exhibit their knowledge of English (Laguerre, 1982), or they may have decided not to pay attention because the class was not to their level of knowledge.

**Inappropriate behavior:** The RMS pretended to conform to the teachers' class expectations, but most of the time they were doing something different from what they were told to do or belittling what the teacher was saying. They tried to manipulate, forcing their participation in the class and controlling the rest of the students. The RMS were conniving and fidgeting on many occasions during the classes. NMS' inappropriate behavior was more delaying, resisting passively, but never commanding nor enforcing rules.

The RMS and NMS were more integrative in the English than in the Spanish class. The two groups got involved in self-directed activities, like when they

answered exercises in their notebooks. They shared, and on some occasions the RMS helped the NMS with their written work. Furthermore, there was a lot of integrative social interaction, that is, mutual give and take, between the return migrant and the non-migrant students in both the English and the Spanish classes. The members of each group had significant peer help, support, and empathy among themselves, especially the return migrant group.

Both groups behaved similarly as far as the integrative behavior. But as far as uninvolved behavior was concerned, the RMS were almost as uninvolved as they were inappropriate. Although both the RMS and the NMS seemed to follow directions passively and submissively, doing the work with little enthusiasm, the non-migrants submitted more to requests and to answering questions. There was, very often, daydreaming among the RMS. They were not involved in the class activities. There was a lot of physical wandering around the classroom, fidgeting, and conniving among the return migrants.

Furthermore, an indicator of this behavior, which was coded very often, was physical withdrawal or passive avoidance. The passiveness more often was observed among the non-migrants than the return migrants. The latter were more active in coping with the situation, either integrating or acting in an inappropriate way.

**Some conclusions:** A point of analysis that could be used is that the return migrant students' lack of fluency in Spanish versus their fluency in English made a difference. In Spanish class, for example, they may have avoided interaction with their peers and teachers and adopted an uninvolved behavior.

Both groups, the RMS and the NMS, were not consistent in their classroom behavior. It was observed that sometimes they exhibited an integrative behavior, and at other times they exhibited an inappropriate or uninvolved behavior. In classes of 50 minutes they were integrative at the beginning and later became bored and behaved inappropriately or adopted a

submissive attitude. The same was observed in the Gannaway study (1976) in the English and mathematics classes. They were not consistent in their answers.

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*Dr. Albino has been a speaker at many conventions, statewide and nationwide, is co-author of the book *Perspectivas Pedagógicas*, and has edited and authored two articles in the journal *Bilingualism*, published by the Department of Education (1999). She has authored articles on education published in university quarterly journals. She has received more than 100 awards for excellence in performance and effective participation in professional endeavors.*

## BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

**Martin Huntley**

The question I am going to start with is this question, because this is the way the question is normally framed. (What I am going to be arguing later on is that I do not think that this is the right way to frame the question.) This is the way the issue is normally phrased: Who has access to technology? Where do they have that access?

The report that came out in July 1999 from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), ordered through the 'Net, defined the "digital divide". It pointed out the rapid rate with which information technologies have been penetrating society and, in particular, penetrating homes. In 1997, 36.6% of households had computers. In 1998, it went up to 42.1%. In 1997, households with Internet access were at 18.6%, and in 1998 it was up to 26.2%. You can be sure that by now, in 2000, the numbers are significantly higher.

But there is a problem that they point to in their report, though the data is slightly old now given the rapid rate at which change is happening. While the pace of penetration of computers and of Internet access is increasing, it is increasing faster in white, affluent, and middle-class populations and slower in black and Hispanic populations. From 1994 to 1998, the gap between white and black grew by 39.2%. The gap between white and Hispanic grew by 42.6%. That is in terms of computers in the home. In terms of Internet access in the home, there are two even greater gaps. The gap between white and black grew by 53.3%, and the gap between white and Hispanic grew by 56%. Work, of course, being a prime location for Internet access for many categories of workers—although not all—and then libraries, community

centers, and other contexts in the public sector that might provide access. With the black and Hispanic populations, one third is as likely to have Internet access from home as compared with Asian Pacific Islanders, who are two fifths as likely to have Internet access in the home as white populations.

Now, the claim made in that report, and this was a quote from the report, was that the "digital divide" has turned into a "racial ravine". But it is also clear from the report that this is not really just an issue about race. They do disaggregate some of the numbers, and it is fairly striking that while you would expect income status to be a primary determiner, when you equalize income there is still a significant difference between penetration of these technologies in white populations as compared or contrasted with black and Hispanic populations. So that itself is an interesting issue to ponder. Why would that be? Why is it not just a matter of income status? Because, of course, there are costs. We may come back to that later.

But they also point out that, independent of any consideration of income, rural Americans have less Internet access than those in urban areas. You are more than twice as likely to find Internet access in urban areas than in rural areas. They come to this conclusion. Groups with lower access rates at work or home are much more likely to use the Internet in a public place—and they specifically cite schools, libraries, and community centers. They also note—and they did not do a very thorough analysis of what folks are doing with access when they have it—that those in low-income strata are more likely to use the Internet for life-skill or life-survivor needs (i.e., job searching, taking courses, improving job skills). We will come back to that a little later.

Schools are one arena where there is a kind of equalizing effect. Equalizing effect, though, in what? That is really what I want to get at. This particular study has really defined a lot of the public debate about the digital divide. It really focuses on a very minimalist notion of access: being able to get to a computer and

being able to get Internet access through that computer. Part of what I want to move towards is the idea that this notion is actually a pretty trivial notion of access and that there is a deeper notion of access that we need to be much more concerned about.

So let us take a look at a different report. Earlier this year, in February 2000, the National Center for Education Statistics talked about the increasing penetration of computers into schools, pointing out that from 1994 to 1999 the percentage of public schools connected to the Internet has grown from 35% to 95% in terms of connectivity reaching classrooms in schools—what they call instructional rooms. So it may not just be a classroom but media centers, classrooms, and other spaces where instruction takes place. Growth is more dramatic yet from 1994 to 1999; it has expanded from 3% to 63%. We are talking here about connected computers. We are not just talking about computers that have been installed for many years and used as stand-alone machines. We are talking about computers connected in networks, and in particular, connected into networks that in turn connect you to the Internet. It is this connectivity, this linkage to worldwide resources, that offers potentially the most transforming tool for the educational setting.

In terms of 95% of schools being connected to the Internet, it is hardly surprising that when the percentage is so high, there is little difference between the level of connectedness—elementary versus secondary, high-income versus low-income, rural versus urban. One might conjecture that already we are beginning to see the effect of E-rate discounts in helping to level the playing field to some degree, at least in terms of schools being connected to the Internet. But again, there are some issues.

There are significant differences in the type of Internet connectivity that you find in schools. In this particular, very short, fact-finding statistical analysis, they just looked at low-poverty versus high-poverty. High-poverty essentially is schools with more than 71% of

students receiving free or reduced lunch, and the lowest poverty are those with 3% or so. And they have levels inbetween. They found that the significant differences between low-poverty schools and high-poverty schools are with respect to the kind of connectivity the schools have. What they are distinguishing here is between relatively high bandwidth connectivity like T-1 lines, cable modem speed access, DSL access, perhaps ISDN access. This is contrasted with dial-up modem access, which tends to be a single-point access, perhaps in a media center. In low-poverty schools, 72% report having relatively high bandwidth access, where just 50% reported relatively high bandwidth access for the high-poverty schools. This is very significant because as soon as you start talking about Internet access being made available to all classrooms, you have to have high bandwidth connection from the school in order to support that distributed access throughout an entire school. Also, as you talk more and more about the kind of content that is made available through Internet access being increasingly multimedia rich, there, too, you absolutely need high bandwidth connections.

Second issue: When they distinguish between the schools that are connected to the Internet as compared to classrooms that are connected to the Internet, there is a big difference. In the low-poverty schools, 62 to 74% of classrooms have Internet access. Again, that might not mean every computer in the classroom, if there is more than one. It may mean the teacher's computer in the classroom, but having some Internet access in the classroom—62 to 74%. In high-poverty schools, the figure is 39%. And in fact, from 1998 to 1999 there was no change with respect to the number of classrooms in high-poverty schools getting connected, whereas in that same period with the low-poverty schools there was significant growth in the number of classrooms that were connected. That actually suggests some limitation to date, at least, in the utilization of E-rate discounts which do extend to connecting classrooms or providing connectivity in

classrooms. I suspect what it means is that, particularly in the larger urban centers, it is so much harder to mobilize; it takes more time to be able to get through all of the paperwork of figuring out what you need, finding your E-rate discount claims, and then actually getting work done. I expect that to change fairly soon.

But this is very significant in light of several recent studies about how technology is being used by teachers in schools. One of them is called *The Teaching, Learning, and Computing 1998 National Survey*. There is a lot of detail in that study, but one of the things that they make very clear is that technologies that are distributed in classrooms are being used much more effectively than technologies clustered in labs. This is both when you start talking about the technology used as a tool for teacher professional development and communication, and for when you are talking about teachers using technology as a tool with students.

A totally different kind of study done in West Virginia, a 10-year study of deployment of a basic-skills, technology-enabled curriculum, also makes a similar claim. In statewide deployment, where they allowed some latitude in the way the technology was deployed from school to school, they encountered greater success when the technology was distributed through classrooms and not clustered in labs. This is particularly striking if those claims hold up over time.

There are significant differences, too, in the ratio of students to computers with Internet access. The actual study talks about the ratio of students to computers and distinguishes that from the ratio of students to computers with Internet access. There is a big difference between low-poverty schools and high-poverty schools, between small schools and medium-to-large schools, and—interestingly—between rural schools and urban schools. Remember, in terms of general access from the NTIA study, there is about twice as much access in the urban area or overall than there is in rural areas. In the schools, however, there seems to be greater compensation to date. The ratio of computers with connectivity is a better ratio than that in

other schools. But, of course, that also probably correlates too with the small schools versus medium and large schools. So exactly what is going on could be debated.

That is all about getting a doorway into the world of information. But it does not say much more than that. It does not say anything about what is happening with those folks who are able to get through that doorway. What are they doing? What they are able to do? I want to argue that really we need to broaden the notion of access here. We need to be talking more, thinking about a sort of deeper notion of access than just having the key to the door, as it were. That is a prerequisite, for sure, but that prerequisite is by no means sufficient for the potential to become real.

I want to spend a little time with another study that came out a couple of months ago from a group called the Children's Partnership. It is called *Online Content: The Low-Income and Underserved Americans—The Digital Divide's New Frontier*. This study argues that there is a huge barrier that has not even been talked about yet, and that is a barrier with respect to the content. What it is you get to when you get through that doorway? What is there for folks that might meet their needs? What they argue is that for at least 20% of the population there are what they call "content-related barriers" that stand between people and the benefits offered by the Internet. They further argue that these barriers are taking a heavy toll on the underserved and are actually standing in the way of low-income and underserved populations being able to use the resources of the Internet to improve their situation.

They have four main categories of what they call content barriers. Over 7 or 8 months, they interviewed clients in low-income housing settings, in community center settings, and libraries. They interviewed folks who manage computer technology centers, libraries, and so forth. The single biggest problem that was expressed was that when they do get online, whether it is in the library or in the commu-

nity center, they cannot find what they need. What they need, as they expressed it in these focus groups, is the practical, everyday survival information—local information. Housing opportunities: “I need to move. Can I find any information about where I might look for a place to live?” Or, “I need a job. And I do not need a high-tech job. I am not ready for that. I do not have the skill preparation for that.” Lots of high-tech jobs are on the monster.coms and so forth. But for local non-technology jobs there is very little information made available. “I need health care services when I cannot afford health care. Where do I look?” That was the single biggest barrier that was expressed. “Why should I go through this doorway to access these resources if the kinds of resources I need are not to be found there?”

Second: literacy barriers. For all the multimedia promise of the Internet, it is still the case that it is text-dense. And it is not text, by and large, written for a fourth-grade reading level. So the literacy skills needed to access information on the Internet are literacy skills that a significant percentage of the low-income and underserved population lacks.

A couple of others: language barriers. Eighty-seven percent of the documents on the Internet are in English. Thirty-two million Americans or so have some language other than English as their primary language. Arguably they are disenfranchised from access to these resources. And the last thing that they claimed is that there is a lack of Internet content that is culturally aware, that reflects cultural interest and cultural sensitivities—in particular, a lack of content provided by ethnic or linguistic communities for themselves.

If there is all this richness out there; and if you are able to get over the barrier of not having the key to the door by being able to go to community technology centers, libraries, or whatever; and when you get there you still cannot avail yourself; and you are not empowered by what you find there; then you might as

well not go. This is one of the claims that they made in the report—that access really is a much bigger and broader issue than just having access to hardware and connections. Access means having certain skills. It means being able to find some content—and I am going to come back to this in a moment—that is relevant, being able to navigate to that content and navigate through that content, being able to interpret it and make sense of it, and being able to make effective use of it. The information that may be out there is of no value if it cannot be accessed and used and if it is not relevant.

I think this goes further. In here I am pushing a little further beyond the kinds of claims that were being made in that online content report. The online content report, for the most part, still takes the view that the person accessing resources on the ‘Net is basically acting as a consumer of stuff that is out there. And of course, a lot of what we do is finding stuff that others have put there for us, consuming it, and using it. Clearly, a large part of the point being made in that report was that when you are going to be a consumer, you need to find stuff that you value and that you need; otherwise you will quickly sign off. Find and interpret information, use that information to improve your situation. It is part of being able to use the environment effectively as a consumer. I would push it further. I would argue that you are not really empowered as an Internet citizen, if you will, unless you can also produce, unless you can also build, unless you can also create information for others. So it is not just a matter of being a consumer. It is being able to put stuff out there for others.

Now this could be as simple as having an e-mail account and communicating with your relatives by e-mail. So I do not necessarily mean this to be heavy-duty building of complicated, fancy Web sites. It could be as simple as becoming an active contributor to the communications revolution and using it. But it could also be creating information that is of value to others. In fact, where the online content report does

talk a little bit about producing and building, they are doing it by talking about kids from low-income settings who are being channeled to become the creators of content that does begin to meet the needs of their own community: kids in communities in Brooklyn, for example, who are part of a Brooklyn Library base network and who actually hold together local information of the type identified as missing, shape it, and make it available to their communities; kids who work within a community, within, say, an ethnic community to put up Web sites that address issues of cultural identity for their communities. That is not the main focus of the report, but they begin to talk about it.

The issue in the digital divide, as I see it, that is most important is not really the issue of ‘having a key to the door.’ The rate at which computing technologies and Internet access are becoming available is so rapid that this problem, I think, will go away. There will still be leaders; there will be segments of the population that are slower to come along. But I think that issue will go away. What will not necessarily go away—at least not by itself, not with current policy funding initiatives—is that E-rate discounts only address connectivity issues. E-rate discount issues do not address the acquisition of hardware. Most important of all, E-rate discount issues do not address professional development and technical support issues. It is those people who can—and do—use and create resources in cyberspace that are empowered by the online information environment. Those who cannot or do not are cut off.

So, what are we talking about when we talk about populations at risk? These studies focus on low-income groups, they focus on ethnic and linguistic minorities, they talk about rural citizens—although there, too, while rural areas lag behind, if the issue is just one of time you would expect rural areas to catch up. Most rural areas now have telephones. Most rural areas have a decent TV signal—not all, but most. So you would expect that to be a catch-up game. But let

us not also forget physically and cognitively disabled people. We are spending a lot of time at the LAB right now because come August we will be subject to new federal guidelines under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which mandates that online information resources be made equally accessible to folks with disabilities, including blindness, deafness, and so forth. We have been taking a look at our Web sites and we have been seeing lots of ways in which our Web sites are not well-constructed for use by blind users, in particular. We are addressing that issue. The Internet content-providing community as a whole needs to take seriously the needs of that particular segment of the population. That is not income-specific. There are high- and low-income groups across the disabled population. They will be cut out and they will not be able to take full advantage of the Internet.

I would say a huge population that is at risk—and I think the most relevant population for us here—is that of children who manage to get through their school career without being challenged to develop what I would call digital literacy skills. They are not challenged to develop those skills and they start their life behind in the workforce. So what are schools doing about this?

As I said before, I think the hardware and connectivity landscape is changing rapidly, particularly in schools. The growth rate has been dramatic over the last 5 years. Clearly, one factor in that, at least in terms of connectivity issues, has been E-rate discounts. But it is also the level of federal funding of one kind or another. The E-rate discounts in particular have targeted high-needs schools and districts by design. So, there is some leveling of the playing field happening on that front. The really serious problem, though, is that teacher adoption and effective use of these technologies are lagging, advancing much more slowly. Furthermore, they are advancing slowest in those populations most at-risk of lacking digital literacy. I think that is a serious problem.

Another study from the National Center for Education Statistics came out in April of this year (2000). This study is talking not about Internet use and availability in schools per se; this one is talking about teacher use of computers and the Internet in public schools. They find significant differences between low-poverty and high-poverty schools in the ways in which computers and Internet access are being used by teachers with the students. In low-poverty schools, there is a greater use of computer productivity tools, simulations, research using the Internet, production of multimedia projects, reports—tools that empower kids with new creative skills. High-poverty schools are much greater users, by contrast, of computers for practice drills.

I think it was either last year or the year before, there was a lot of press for a while for a report by Harold Winglinski that came out of the ETS (Educational Testing Service). It is about math and technology skills, where he analyzed the surveys that were done in conjunction with the NAEP tests, looking at fourth graders and eighth graders. It made a number of claims and, actually, I believe that for all the fancy statistics, the threads on which these claims are made are really much too slim to support them. I have reservations about the base on which the claims are made. But one of the particular claims that they made was that at the eighth-grade level, black students actually had more time on computers in schools, but almost all their time was spent on lower-level, 'drill-and-kill' type skill development and very little time was spent on use of productivity tools; more empowering problem solving; and high-level thinking, skill-development tools. That is borne out by a number of other studies.

There is, as I can see it, a serious digital divide issue for schools. We talk about uses of computers and the Internet by teachers for their own professional development. In low-poverty schools as compared to high-poverty schools, you get much greater use of things like creation of instructional materials using the

computer and using resources brought off of the Internet; gathering information from the Internet for creative lessons; use of computers for administrative record keeping; use of computers for communication with colleagues where, at least as I see it, that is a critical professional development need; and colleagues talking to, learning from each other, and being able to use e-mail as one more tool—not the only one—but one more tool to do it.

I mentioned before a study where reports are still coming out based on data collected in 1998 by Becker & Anderson at the University of California–Irvine for *Teaching, Learning, and Computing: 1998, A National Survey of Schools and Teachers*. That was a very big survey of 4,000 teachers and administrators nationwide. It was a 19-page instrument. The findings coming out of it all focused on how teachers are using technology and, in particular, how they are using the Internet. The findings are fascinating, and I would recommend it to you. They are beginning, as they do further analysis, to come to some of the same conclusions as the National Center for Education Statistics Report on Teacher Use, which indicates that there are significant differences in the ways that these technologies are being used between high-poverty and low-poverty settings.

Before I wrap up I am going to put my stuff on the line. As I look around at what is being done that is most effective in trying to address the needs of low-income and underserved populations, I have to say I find less going on in schools and more going on in the after-school context. Not everywhere, not universally, but there are lots of intriguing examples, such as public libraries, some of which have very interrelated programs, like the Brooklyn Public Library. Other examples include community technology centers, which are growing—technology centers in communities, managed by folks in those communities, to meet the needs of folks in those communities—and community networking projects of various kinds, sometimes affiliated with a public library, sometimes

affiliated with a community technology center, sometimes supported in some entirely independent way as a community network project for an entire community (like in Boulder, Colorado) trying to address all the needs of various segments in that community. That paper on online content has lots of examples. Many of the examples are more suggestive than anything else. They tend to reach, at this stage, relatively small percentages of the populations that need to be reached. But, there is movement and things are happening.

I am going to end with a recommendation. The recommendation is that you look to more partnerships with libraries, community centers of various kinds, and community technology centers. There is support for this. The Twenty-first Century Community Learning Centers initiative is one project looking to extend the schools' reach into the after-school environment, creating more linkages between school-based, technology-enhanced resources and community resources and services. I found in my own experience that I learn by doing. I learned technology; I have never had a formal course in technology of any kind. I learn by doing. Doing takes time. You need to have the opportunity to put in that time with the appropriate people around you.

You use people to get nuggets of information, and when you get stuck, to get unstuck. That is how you learn. This means providing more ways to give kids opportunities to explore, to experiment, and to play around—not necessarily in service of a regimented curriculum, although these tools definitely have their place there, too. Finding more ways to encourage that free-form exploration, I think, is critical. Each school could, I think, do a much better job of partnering with outside school resources to allow for that kind of learning through play, learning through exploration.

## Discussion With Martin Huntley

**Participant question:** Martin, you mentioned your list of those most at risk in terms of technology, and your final end was students who we have not challenged with respect to digital literacy. You did not add, as well, students that we have not sufficiently challenged with traditional literacy, and that there is a connection between the two [groups]. We have not found ways to connect technology in our approaches in service of helping children master traditional literacy skills. It seems that ought to be something we should pay attention to in terms of how we proceed.

**Martin Huntley:** I agree. It is more than something we should pay attention to. There are lots of stories that get told about why technology should be in schools. My view is that the technologies should be in schools because they provide powerful new tools for the skills we have been trying to teach all along—the basic skills. I mean, technology providing new kinds of instructional tools for the stuff that we have always needed kids to become expert in. In fact, you get all of these debates. Does technology belong in the elementary schools? Most of the things that you see in the press these days tend to be on the backlash side of the whole technology-and-schools push. Lots of questions are being raised. The questions tend to get raised on the premises that I regard as rough.

The purpose of technology in school is not to teach kids about technology, at least as I view it. That is not the primary purpose. Certainly at the secondary level it becomes a byproduct; [but] it is not the primary purpose. We still have a huge amount to learn about how to harness these tools to provide more effective learning environments.

**Participant question:** Are there any international surveys that compare what we have done with other developed nations' use and availability of computers in schools?

**Martin Huntley:** I am not aware of anything that is as comprehensive as the kind of thing that was done by

the NTIA and that *Falling Through the Net* report, which is not about schools, per se, but about the whole nation. There is some information out there. I cannot immediately bring any particular thing to mind. I would mention just as a follow-up to what Kate Nolan was talking about yesterday—Kate talked about the Pentagon schools. The point she made was that they are finding that technology as a communication tool is a powerful tool. One thing that she did not mention is that it is particularly used in the Pentagon schools as a communication tool for students. Those students who are mobile, who are being moved from one base to another base, get e-mail accounts. They get the [opportunity], they get the training to develop Web pages. They use [their accounts] as a tool for social continuity. So the kid moves from one base to another base and leaves behind friends and classmates, but they are still there on the Web. The kid is still in connection with them; they are still linked. I would just mention that in passing because it relates directly to your themes yesterday. There are ways to use technology for kids, not just by schools as institutions to track—that is also a part of the story—but for kids who can remain better connected to friends and classmates with more online connectivity.

**Participant statement:** Just to add to that, every year the Department of Defense is a worldwide sponsor [of programs] in which different kids in different places throughout the world get together over the Internet and actually do a performance together.

**Martin Huntley:** That actually was initiated when I was working at BBN; it was initiated by the group that I was working with, colleagues of mine who were working with defense-dependent schools. The first time it happened, they did it live with [former] Vice President Gore when he was down at the conference in Florida. It is not just music because the fascinating problems they have to deal with come when you have got all of these instruments with different methods of

connectivity. There are these time delays. They have to do the mathematics of solving the problem of how you compensate for those time delays so that these different instruments in diverse locations across the world would actually come in together and be synchronized. So it was not just a music initiative, it was a math and science initiative.

**Isidra Albino:** Since you are such an expert, are you planning to have distance learning activities that we can organize, say, for superintendents?

**Martin Huntley:** The question is, can we in some way extend this conversation with distance learning activities of one kind or another? Certainly the information that I have presented here is on the Web. But that is not the same as your continuing to interact with each other around it. It certainly is something we could consider if the interest is there. My one note of caution is that I am very aware of how busy you all are and I am also very aware of how we have tried some initiatives like this. It all sounds great when you are in a context like this in Newport, Rhode Island. But, you get back to the daily bustle of your busy administrative lives, and it becomes a question of how you participate. That is a challenge, I think. But we all need enhanced learning opportunities at whatever level we are at, and I do think that the online environment provides a lot of possibilities.

**Participant question:** I have a question and I am not really sure how to phrase this, but am I correct in thinking that the Internet is commercially based, started by people who somehow saw it as a potential to make money?

**Martin Huntley:** No. In fact, the company I worked with was one of the primary companies behind the formation of the Internet, which was originally built with government money as the so-called ARPANet. It was a defense network. Subsequently the NSF, the National Science Foundation, stepped in and began to develop it initially as a publicly funded network to connect to universities and research centers.

**Brenda Menard:** Martin may be referring to DARPA, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. [The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is the central research and development organization for the Department of Defense (DOD). DARPA commissions advanced research for the DOD. It was founded in response to the surprise Sputnik launch in 1958 and fathered the Internet somewhere along the way (<http://www.darpa.mil/sbir/>)] For many years, as the Internet grew, contracts were put out to private vendors to manage certain pieces of this environment, but the funding was primarily National Science Foundation funding. National Science Foundation funding went away, in large measure, either 6 or 7 years ago because it was the idea of the government providing the seed money to get this going. The intent was to get it going as something that would not be dependent on any particular private vendor. I mean the notion of a Microsoft becoming the Internet was totally abhorrent to both those in the government and those outside the government who put the Internet together.

It is the case now that what you have got as the Internet is primarily privately funded and supported. There are still networking initiatives funded by the government—what is called Internet II, for example. It is sort of a ‘next generation’ Internet that is primarily funded by the government. But you have this very complicated—some say precarious—sort of a partnership among many, many private enterprises. The premise behind it, though, is that the system is so highly distributed that it would be very, very difficult for it to become dependent on any particular entity so that suddenly we all became captive in the way that we are, say, by the airlines when it comes to airline fares.

**Participant question:** I guess that leads to my question. If it is the way that you now describe it, and that is the way that I understand it, where is the clout to make the people who are supporting the Internet address all of these inequities that you are showing us?

**Martin Huntley:** One of the arguments in the online content paper is that it is in the interests of business to try to address these needs. Again, one can hate this or one can love it. But the way in which the Internet is becoming commercialized as a shopping network, for example—I mean, there is a vast market out there. Low-income people do have money to spend, and there is money to be made. Part of the argument is a self-serving argument. We all need—all segments of society need—to treat this as a serious problem, not always treating it in a philanthropic spirit. In fact, thinking in terms of their own interest, their own profit motives, there is money to be made by continuing to support it.

Another argument is in a paper from the government called *Digital Work Force* which talks about the issue in terms of how the digital industry needs to provide ways to build out its workforce. It needs to find ways to channel folks who otherwise do not get the opportunity into professions that require these skills.

**Participant question:** That is the only clout?

**Martin Huntley:** No, that is not the only clout. In fact, under the Clinton administration there has been a lot of funding for technology and it is mostly trying to target low-income, underserved populations. Whether that clout would remain under a different administration, of course, remains to be seen. But there has been significant funding.

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*Testbed, a national collaboration of over 100 organizations, representing 300 schools, at a time when Internet access for schools was in its infancy. He also served as director of technology for the New American Schools' Co-NECT project in the early years of this very successful school reform design.*

*Dr. Huntley has a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Minnesota and was previously director of the South Coast Educational Collaborative's Computer Technology Center, a cross-district teacher training and support resource for K-12 teachers in southeastern Massachusetts. In his eight years in this position, he developed extensive experience working with teachers and with school district administrators as a trainer and consultant, advising on all phases of technology implementation in K-12 schools. As past president of Massachusetts' Computer Using Educators (MassCUE), he has served on many statewide committees, advocating for support for making technology tools available to all teachers and students. He has also been very active in grassroots efforts in Massachusetts to build a statewide telecommunications network for the K-12 environment.*

## APPENDIX

### Breakout Group #1

Children are most vulnerable to the negative impact of mobility. Mobility is yet another risk factor for already vulnerable children.

*Four groups met following the Thursday morning (May 25) keynote to develop a response from the superintendents' perspective. Each group was led by a superintendent facilitator and reporter, assisted by an Education Alliance staff member who took notes. The notes from the four sessions were then combined into a single summary report. Dr. Patrick Proctor, superintendent of the Windham public schools in Willimantic, Conn., presented the following summary at the Friday morning (May 26) concluding session.*

#### **Overall Framework: Local imperative**

1. Define data needs, define and differentiate mobile populations
2. Gather and analyze data, understand data
3. Respond to data with action plans and strategies

#### **Emergent Responses to Needs of Mobile Children**

1. Information/Education/Communications
  - informing policymakers [about] high-stakes testing
  - informing and sensitizing district staff
2. Establishment of Student Support Systems
  - flexible attendance and transportation policies
  - welcoming, orientation activities
  - entry and exit processes
  - viewing mobile students as positive resources
  - positive and supportive learning environments for sharing and learning; strength in diversity

3. Modification of Organizational Structures That Negatively Impact Mobile Students
  - espouse, act on philosophy of keeping kids longer in same place
  - reduce grade-level transitions
  - create classroom structures and programs that keep kids longer [looping, multi-age]
  - differentiate responses between elementary, secondary levels
4. Establishment of System-Wide Curriculum Standards
  - clear, well-aligned standards
  - standards consistently implemented
5. Establishment of Professional Development Activities for Staff Based on Needs of Mobile Children
  - managing mobile classroom
  - differentiating instruction
  - establishing attitudes and expectations
  - emphasizing knowledge of and sensitivity to children
6. Establishment of Strong Communications Vehicles between Sending and Receiving Entities
  - outreach initiatives
  - student information transfer systems
  - the potential of technology
  - procedures for proper placement, credit conversion, etc.
7. Creation of Student-Focused Assessment Systems That Yield Valid, Reliable, Usable, and Portable Data
  - placement, diagnosis, instruction, evaluation
  - need to inform high-stakes testing initiatives
8. Identification, Dissemination, and Replication of Successful Practices for Highly-Mobile Children
  - research agenda
  - action research at lower level
  - stepped-up focus for LAB at Brown

## Breakout Group #2

### ***Impact of Mobility on the Whole Child***

*Bruce Chattman, superintendent in South Burlington, Vt., presented a summary of the Thursday (May 25) afternoon breakout session that raised a series of questions and offered possible solutions.*

#### **How do we define success for mobile students and determine why some schools are more successful working with these students?**

There is clearly the need to do more research on the issue of student mobility. We need to hone in on the impact by identifying the reasons for mobility and which populations are most affected. We need to identify school districts and individual schools that have demonstrated success with students who are mobile, and we need to disseminate these models as best practices. Technology may be an untapped resource in this area. At the same time, we need to have consensus about a definition of the term “student mobility.”

#### **How can we hold schools and communities accountable?**

To hold schools and communities accountable, there needs to be a common understanding of the issue and subsequent issues arising from student mobility; and that is why a commonly understood definition is necessary.

#### **How can we identify and influence teacher attitudes, skills, and strategies so that they can be effective with mobile students?**

There is a need for substantial professional and staff development and training around this topic, focusing on best practices and identifying successful models.

#### **How can districts and schools modify their practices to accommodate mobile students?**

Districts and schools need to recognize and under-

stand the problem and commit time and money for professional development, training, and the implementation of support programs on behalf of mobile students.

#### **Should there be national standards, curriculum, and assessment? What should they look like?**

There needs to be a common core of learning for all students, with clear benchmarks. A better understanding of the mobility issue would help, and that is why we suggest that more research is required.

#### **With assessment, what are we measuring? Are high-stakes assessments adequately assessing mobile students? Can we disaggregate data to learn how mobility affects (or does not affect) children in motion?**

Again, the need to understand the issue is critical. Who are children in motion? Why are they mobile? To focus on their needs, we need to be able to disaggregate the data for a more purposeful use of assessments.

#### **How do we provide for a diversity of educational opportunities?**

School districts need to respond more positively. There needs to be a connection established between secondary schools and community colleges, colleges, and universities. We need to look at multi-age classrooms and year-round schooling and a more effective distribution of educational resources.

#### **Are curriculum and standards issues secondary to social adjustment issues?**

There is a need to focus on the whole child, and that means social adjustment issues are critical, as is understanding how best to connect mobile students to the high-stakes demands of curriculum and standards driven by education reform.

#### **Is it possible to raise the mobility issue to a public policy issue with corresponding resources being allocated?**

It is imperative to do so. If mobile students are to be

treated fairly, the public needs to understand the implications for district, school, and student achievement in high-stakes education reform. If it becomes a public policy issue, it may then be possible for school districts to gain local, state, and federal support for the necessary resources to address the myriad problems that arise from student mobility.

### Special Interest Group #1:

#### Issues in School–University Collaboration

**Convener: Jennifer Borman, higher education research and development specialist, The Education Alliance LAB at Brown**

*A special interest dinner was held May 25 during the 2000 Institute to discuss ways to strengthen and support collaboration between school districts and universities. Participants—both superintendents and university representatives—discussed issues where increased collaboration can make an appreciable difference, including teacher quality, teacher recruitment, and leadership preparation. They described several strong partnerships in the region and explored the factors that mattered in building ongoing school–university relationships. They identified priorities, articulated pressing regional needs, and agreed that further opportunities for dialogue and cooperation were essential. Below are some of the themes and issues that the participants raised.*

#### **Strong partnerships**

Several participants described strong and vibrant school–university compacts and collaboratives in their communities. In Connecticut, Vermont, and southern Massachusetts, for example, representatives from schools and universities have been able to forge and sustain relationships that strengthen teacher quality. Participants noted that it was crucial to include university leadership and arts and sciences faculty in addition to teacher education faculty. Title II and Title

VII grants have also been helpful in galvanizing partnerships. Business partners could also provide crucial support.

#### **Increasing teacher quality**

Participants identified several areas where increased school–university collaboration can strengthen teacher education. Specifically, participants felt that teacher education students need to spend significantly more time in schools and classrooms during their undergraduate programs. Many teacher education students need better skills and better understanding to work effectively with today’s K–12 students. They need to better understand urban students and language minority students in particular. New teachers also need significantly more preparation in teaching reading (K–12), using technology in the classroom, and overall classroom management.

Participants suggested several strategies to strengthen teacher education:

- Offer ongoing professional development to university faculty to help them stay in touch with K–12 standards, diverse students, and the current conditions in public schools.
- Encourage college faculty to spend significantly more time in K–12 schools and to be actively involved. Create the incentives and job descriptions that make this feasible.
- Bring K–12 teachers and university faculty together to co-plan teacher education courses.
- Create “joint appointments” for select K–12 teachers where they have both school-based and university-based responsibilities. Find ways to share salary and benefit costs between schools and universities for these exemplary teachers and teacher educators.
- Discover the logistical barriers to increasing K–12 teachers’ involvement in teacher education and uncover strategies to overcome the barriers. For example, consider issues like pension regulations that keep retired teachers from continuing their involvement.

- Create better mechanisms for identifying and rewarding cooperating teachers.

### **Teacher shortages and teacher recruitment**

Several superintendents expressed concern about teacher shortages in select subject areas. They wanted to work with universities to expand the pool of quality teacher candidates. How, for example, can more high school students be encouraged to consider teaching as a career? What can we do about the shortage of bilingual teachers? Could schools and universities come together to explore alternative routes to certification for bilingual and ESL teachers?

### **Leadership preparation**

Several participants wished to see increased school–university collaboration centered on quality leadership preparation. They felt, for example, that many principals might need stronger skills in evaluating teachers in light of standards-based reform. Several superintendents also expressed concern about the administrator shortages in the region and wanted to collaborate on expanding the pool of quality leaders in addition to quality teachers.

### **Continuing the conversation**

Participants were enthusiastic about creating new venues for increased communication. They wanted to avoid the “blame game” where schools and universities get stuck in describing each other’s shortcomings. Participants felt that continuing the process of identifying priority issues should be followed by regional problem solving. They wished for new opportunities to foster dialogue among deans, superintendents, and other representatives of schools and universities.

## Special Interest Group #2:

### Women in the Superintendency

*Convener: Charlene Heintz, director of professional development for educational leadership, The Education Alliance LAB at Brown*

*Twenty-four attendees participated in a stimulating discussion about the question: Do women superintendents leave their district for the same reasons men do? The group also shared insights on Sacred Dreams by Cryss Bruner. Mary Jo Kramer, superintendent of the Milford, Conn. public schools, led the discussion.*

The participants expressed concern about the pressure on the superintendency, especially from the perspective of how to maintain balance between what is “good news” versus what is “bad news”. They also expressed a need to network in order to hear from others and to keep things in perspective.

Some participants also raised the questions that came from personal discoveries on the job — “Where can what I have to offer make the most difference?”—and expressed an interest in exploring the challenges women face in the superintendency. Women superintendents were also interested in examining techniques in general and school planning work as an example. The participants produced the following questions about challenges female superintendents face:

- How can women reconcile their socialization to act as “female” with the need to assume non-traditional female roles as superintendents (i.e., being assertive)?
- How can we help younger women who aspire to the superintendency deal with this role conflict?
- How can a female leader be both strong and female?
- What differing expectations do the public, school boards, staff, and faculty have for male and female leaders?

- Sometimes we assume that because more women are gaining leadership positions, discrimination does not exist. Women are not immune to gender inequity that exists in the larger society. How can we respond to buried issues of discrimination within our job?
- How can a woman move up the ladder and still be effective as a mother, daughter, etc.?

The attendees agreed to send these questions on to the author (Bruner) and to invite her to participate in the next Newport Institute.

The discussion focused on next steps—establishing a periodic meeting schedule to explore further the issues being raised, with the goal of developing some written papers on the topic and the possibility of publication through the LAB at Brown or through the development of a women's journal.

It was agreed that the LAB would provide an electronic means of continuing the dialogue. Stephanie Feger, program planning specialist for educational technology at The Education Alliance LAB at Brown, was chosen to serve as moderator and Mignonne Pollard, senior equity specialist at the Equity Assistance Center, offered to serve as a critical friend.

Much work was accomplished, and it was agreed that topics raised would be pursued in depth at further regional gatherings to be convened by Charlene Heintz.

# Leadership Institute 2001

# INTRODUCTION

On May 2, 3, and 4, 2001, the Northeast Superintendents' Leadership Council held its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Superintendents' Leadership Institute in Newport, Rhode Island at the Newport Harbor Hotel and Marina.

In focusing on the theme "Collaborative Leadership: Constructing Leadership for Change," the format of last year's institute was modified to encourage more interaction between presenters and participants, and a panel discussion with the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory's research partners was added.

Mary Ann Lachat of the Center for Resource Management (CRM) and M. Christine Dwyer of RMC Research Corporation, both of Portsmouth, N.H., and Amy Burke of Jobs for the Future in Boston, Mass. presented a panel on "Learnings About Collaborative Leadership" derived from their work in the region.

This section of the journal includes a report on that panel as well as summaries of the presentations by opening keynote speaker Gerald Bracey of Alexandria, Va. on "The Condition of Public Education: Why the Critics are Wrong"; Harvard Professor Richard Elmore on "Leadership of Instructional Improvement"; and Warren Simmons, Director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, on working with districts to implement successful reform. A panel of superintendents' responses to Richard Elmore's presentation are included in this section, as well.

The topics and content of the institute were well received by the superintendents. Follow-up work during the past year included a partnership between the NESLC and the Connecticut Center for School Change to support a series of study group sessions between Connecticut affiliate members and Richard Elmore. These sessions focused on continuing the dialogue about instructional improvement. Rhode Island affiliate members also engaged in follow-up work with CRM on data-driven decision making.

We at the Education Alliance and the LAB at Brown are truly appreciative of the support of regional superintendents over the years, and we will continue to direct our efforts toward the needs that you identify as the keys to strengthening school improvement for *all* children.

John R. Correiro, Director

Collaborative Leadership/Superintendents' Leadership Initiatives

The Education Alliance at Brown University

## THE CONDITION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION: WHY THE CRITICS ARE WRONG

Dr. Gerald W. Bracey

What I really want to do in the time allotted is try and set some context. It is interesting to me how sayings drift politically from one side or the other. One of the sayings that the right seems to favor is: “If you don’t know where you are going or you don’t care where you are going, it does not matter what road you take.” I was thinking about that today, and it seems to me that what I want to do for you tonight is – based on sort of “if you don’t know where you are, it is hard to know what road to take” – I want to set some context in terms of two things: where we are in public education today, in terms of what people are saying about us and then in terms of what we are asking kids to do; and then show you the two different sets of test scores and where we are in terms of how trends have looked over time, how trends look in this country on domestic data, and then how we stack up against kids in other countries.

Let’s start with what people are saying about us in various ways. One of my favorite sources is Bill Bennett: “I must say that I am alarmed and worried about the reaction of parents with the new standards rubric. They are retreating. A recent survey showed that when parents are choosing a school for their child, high test scores are one of the least important factors in their decision. The most important factor in their decision is the child’s happiness. Armed with public opinion, we can wear down the unions. When the parents go soft, we are done.” Imagine that, caring about their kids’ happiness. How dare they.

“Despite a tripling of real, per-person spending, the nation’s public schools have woefully underperformed.” When you see a word like ‘woe-

fully,’ you have a hint that you are not reading an objective analysis of the data. “For decades now student scores and national standardized tests have barely budged from the depths to which they had plummeted by the early ’70s.” This is Jay Greene, who is getting lots of press these days through the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. He started out with Paul Peterson at Harvard, another one of my favorite people.

Peterson once referred to himself and other voucher advocates as “Jedi warriors attacking the death star,” by which he meant public education in general and the NEA in particular. Here is a recent one [from Peterson], April 18, 2001: “The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores of fourth graders came out last week, and the news is abysmal. For 8 years, reading skills have been virtually static, and details are devastating.” I refer to this as Pete’s Bleat.

Mr. Bennett returns to say, “...the longer American kids stay in school the dumber they get relative to their European peers.” That is very popular today, and not only from people like Bennett. In his State of the Union Address in 1991, [Bill] Clinton said something very, very similar, although somewhat more gentle. I will have a fair amount to say about that when we start talking about the international comparisons.

But, once again, Bennett: “Overall, nearly half of all high school graduates have not mastered seventh-grade arithmetic.” I have made it a practice—and I would encourage you, too—anytime you see something where you question the conclusion, ask the person about the source. So I called Bennett and said, “Where did you get this?” He said, “I got it from the Book of Knowledge.” He wrote *The Book of Virtues*, but he is very casual about a couple of them – namely, honesty and truth. This particular book of knowledge is not your friendly type of childhood encyclopedia, but a book written by Michael Moe, who recently left Merrill-Lynch to start his own firm. Michael Moe is

one of the most enthusiastic supporters and advocates of the education industry. So I called Moe's office.

There I found that this quote is "an interpretation of NAEP's mathematics data."

I got to tell you, there is no way in hell you can get from any NAEP mathematics data to that conclusion. First of all, he does not define 'master'. I do not think there is a consensus on what constitutes seventh-grade arithmetic, and we do not test high school graduates. We do not even test high school seniors. High school seniors, on tests other than the SAT, would make pretty designs on the answer sheet or would refuse to fill out the thing at all.

I have one more here:

A large majority of students show that they have virtually no knowledge of elementary aspects of American history. They could not identify such names as Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, or Theodore Roosevelt. Most of our students do not have the faintest notion of what this country looks like. St. Louis is placed in the Pacific Ocean, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, the Atlantic Ocean, Ohio River, St. Lawrence River, and almost everywhere else.

(The New York Times, 1943)

Devastating. It sounds like the media reports on the most recent geography and history surveys, but this came from a survey commissioned by *The New York Times* through Columbia University. *The Times* was quite upset about it; put it on the front page of a Sunday edition right next to its other matrix headline of the day [speaker shows 1943 paper with headline "Patton Attacks" next to education story]. "Ignorance of U.S. history shown by college freshman," April 4, 1943. In 1943 the high school graduation rate was about 45%, and maybe 15% of those [went] on to college. So, we are talking about not only a group of ignoramuses, but an elite group of ignoramuses—the top 7% of kids in the country. I cannot imagine you

would see the same results today although people have tried to generate it.

Here is one: "The facts of the school crisis are all out and in plain sight and pretty dreadful to look at." And [later] it says, "It is hard to deny that American schools, which were supposed to reflect one of history's noblest dreams and to cultivate the nation's youthful minds, have degenerated into a system for coddling and entertaining the mediocre." You can just imagine the author toying with another sentence that would follow this one that would begin, "We are threatened by a rising tide of mediocrity..." But that was in *A Nation At Risk* (1983). This quote was 25 years earlier in *Life* magazine, March 24, 1958.

At the top in red letters is "Crisis in Education," and you see a very stern-looking Alexei Kutzkov staring out at you from Moscow and the easy smile of Stephen Lapekas in Chicago. This is *Life's* first of a five-part series coming from, of course, the crisis created by Sputnik in 1957. Inside you see Kutzkov doing complicated experiments in physics and chemistry and reading aloud from *Sister Carrie* in his English class. You see Stephen walking his girl home hand-in-hand and dancing in preparation for the class musical. In one of the few academic pictures in here, he is shown retreating from a geometry problem on the blackboard, and the text reads, "Steve amused the class with wisecracks about his ineptitude." You come away knowing that the Russians will bury us unless we reform our schools really, really fast.

About 5 years ago I thought it would be interesting to find these guys. I found Lapekas by accident, and he did not want to talk about this. I do not know what happened, but he just will not talk about it. I do know, from other sources, he became an air force pilot. He is currently a commercial pilot, so he did not do too badly in spite of his lousy education. The Russian Embassy, other than the D.C. area, was not terribly cooperative about finding Kutzkov. So I enlisted the aide of Anne Garrells, who was, at the time, the NPR Moscow correspondent and thought it

was an interesting task. But she got back to me several months later and said, despite all of her efforts and those of her staff, she was unable to find any evidence that Kutzkov had ever existed and suggested that *Life* magazine might have made it all up. Which, in my experience, was possible. But I am convinced that Kutzkov actually does exist. I haven't been able to find him.

In researching one book, I looked at about 100 years of criticism of public schools— and it has always been there ever since public schools started. I came across, in fact, one article claiming that public schools were really harmful to you because New England had this vast system of public schools, and they had a much higher rate of insanity than the south, which was where I was from. But what I found was that you really start to see the criticism growing in intensity and frequency right after WWII. There were several reasons for that, but I think the main one is that for the first time then schools were seen as necessary, integral to national defense. We had the Cold War, the races with the Russians, and it was an extremely intense time as those of us who spent some of our school days ducking and covering can attest.

Then Sputnik went up in 1957, and that did not start the criticism; that really just confirmed to the critics that they had been right all along. Later on, schools never really recovered from Sputnik, but there has been a series of events that keeps that kind of image going. You had *36 Children* by Herb Kohl and in 1967, Jonathan Kozal's first book *Death at an Early Age*. You had this devastating film by Fred Wiseman, a high school documentary, Jim Herman's *The Way It's Supposed To Be*, and Chuck Silberman coming along in 1970 with *Crisis in the Classroom*, in which he says early on that 168 out of 176 studies looking at tests administered at two different points in time show a favoring of more recent times. So people have been gaining on test scores, but he still calls it *Crisis in the Classroom*. Then there was the report, *On Further Examination*, which was put together by the ETS and

the College Board to look at the decline in SAT scores. Ever since then, with the SAT, every trivial change has been a major event—at least when they go down. And then *A Nation At Risk* kind of started the modern sequence, the current sequence in 1983.

Because of the disinformation that I have seen around here, I decided to start something in addition to putting out the annual Bracey Report. I was trying to take advantage of the real-time power of the Net. So you can sign up for the Education Disinformation Detection and Reporting Agency. I have archived 20 articles there. I put out eight periodic blasts—most of which I do not archive. But you have to sign up in order to get those in there and to get the communications among the respondents, some of which are quiet heated.

So that is one set of contextual circumstances. Another is represented by what it is that we are really asking our kids to do these days. When this cartoon first came out, I thought it was pretty funny. It's Sally Worth, and we get it in the dailies in Virginia.

Hillary says here: *My teacher said that we might need a little help on our geography project. [Mom]: What is your project? [Hillary]: We get two choices. The first is construct a working model of the Panama Canal. [Mom]: You are kidding. What is the second choice, make a relief map of the Andes? [Hillary]: How did you know? And Ted joins in with: What happened to the good old days? My fourth-grade geography project was to list North Carolina's natural resources.*

I did that myself for Virginia and then later for China and for something called Assyria. And we are asking the impossible of kids. Here is a fifth-grade social studies objective from the Virginia Standards of Learning Program, which most people refer to as SOL:

The student will analyze the regional development of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of

physical characteristics and historical evolution from 1000 to the present.

There are universities where the faculty collectively does not ask for that. I do not have an overhead for this because it was too long:

Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic and social structures of early civilization of Ancient Greece with emphasis on the location and physical setting as they supported the rise to civilization; the connections between geography and the development of city-states including patterns of trading commerce; the transition of tyranny to oligarchy to early democratic patterns of government and the significance of citizenship; the differences between Athenian or direct democracy and representative democracy; and the significance of Greek mythology in the everyday life of people in Ancient Greece and its influence on modern literature and language. [Also] the similarities and differences between life in Athens and Sparta; the rise of Alexander the Great in the north; and the spread of Greek culture and the cultural contributions in the areas of art, science, architecture, language, government and philosophy.

That is a sixth-grade standard from South Dakota.

A friend of mine, Bob Marzano, out in Aurora, Colorado at the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Lab asked in all seriousness, “How long would it take to learn the standards promulgated by subject area specialists?” He figured the brightest kids could handle it with an additional 9 years of high school. It is because we are asking such amazing things that, at least in Virginia where you must take algebra in order to graduate from high school, we are seeing results like this [speaker shows statistics for Virginia algebra 1 tests].

These are high schools in Richmond City. Spring 2000 was the third administration of these algebra 1 tests, and we have pass rates at [these] schools well below 10%. This represents—this 5.8% and 4.6%—considerable improvement over the initial [figures]. I keep telling the State Board of Education and the legislature, “I just hope you guys are building enough prisons to accommodate all of the students you are going to throw out on the street.”

Now I want to spend the rest of the time showing you some test scores, but before I do that—some caveats about test scores, one coming from Bob Linn from the *Educational Researcher*, March 2000. Bob is, without a doubt, the most respected psychometrician in the country today, and he is the one who spent his entire career of about 35 years in the field of testing. He says, “Boy, I wish I could say that it has really improved education and student learning—by trying to change education through testing. Unfortunately that is not my conclusion.” His conclusion is that when high stakes are attached to purposes, the unintended negative affects of high-stakes accountability uses often outweigh the intended positive effects. If I disagree with Bob on this it would only be that I might substitute ‘always’ for his use of ‘often’.

The National Academy of Education, back in 1987, had its own set of warnings that many of the things that we really value are extremely difficult to measure. What happens when you start putting emphasis on tests is, there is a shift towards valuing what we can measure and devaluing what we cannot or what is hard. The Virginia Board of Education, under considerable pressure to have something other than the SOL test determine who graduates, who gets promoted, and what schools get accredited, decided, “Yes, OK, we will let in some alternatives.” What alternatives did they let in? The SATs, AP tests, IV tests, and College Board achievement tests. More tests. What about teacher recommendations, course records, and things like that? Oh, that is too subjective.

I wrote a little article that I have not sent anywhere yet called “The Incredible Shrinking Test,” which is basically pointing out that when you look at what tests do later in life, they do not do very much at all. They do not correlate with wages. They do not correlate with job success. They do not correlate with recognition. They do not really correlate with—and even the SAT does not predict—college grades very well. Only 20% of what goes into deciding who makes dean’s list and who gets clobbered with academic probation is measured by the SAT; 80% comes from other stuff. That is from the ETS’s own statistics, not my analysis. In this little article, I made up a list of things that standardized tests do not measure:

1. Creativity
2. Critical thinking
3. Motivation
4. Ambition
5. Persistence/perseverance
6. Attitude
7. Reliability
8. Politeness
9. Enthusiasm
10. Civic-mindedness
11. Self-awareness
12. Self-discipline
13. Empathy
14. Leadership

When you think about these qualities, it is pretty obvious why standardized tests do not correlate with job success or life success or anything else in particular.

Having said all those terrible things about tests, we will spend the rest of the time looking at test scores. This is a set of trends—third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade—from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills from 1960 to 1998. We did have a test score decline. We ought to admit that and not have to be defensive about it. It started around 1965 and ended around 1975, ’76, or ’77, depending on the grade.

The decade between 1965 and 1975—does everybody remember that decade? I mean, other than in flashbacks? A lot of people don’t. The word is, if you remember the ’60s then you were not there. It was an incredible decade that began with the Watts Riots, Vietnam, Watergate, Students for a Democratic Society, Black Panthers, the assassinations of King and Malcolm X and Robert F. Kennedy, and all kinds of things going on. It is not surprising that maybe people were not paying so much attention to factoring equations. The same thing shows up—and it is also a matter of basic skills—in the high schools as well.

It is interesting now that in the most recent renorming of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills 2000, the scores are down a little bit. [Overhead shows dips in scores for each grade of three tenths of a point or less around 1998]. H.D. Hoover at the University of Iowa, who does all of this—I said to him, “What do you attribute it to?” Maybe it was changing demographics, which I think really is a lot of it. But he says, “Jerry, do you think that all of the standard stuff has actually improved education?” It is interesting to know, or at least we should point out, that here is the standardization that they start with [in 1956]. And 5.2—this is going to be in October of the school year—5.2 is grade level; it is grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. So, 5.2, 6.2, 7.2 – that is grade level. Even with some decline, the scores in the 2000 standardization are well above, except for eighth grade, which is one month above grade level. We were talking in the hall about kids getting smarter. Maybe that is true.

I mentioned *A Nation at Risk* earlier, a book that I used to vaguely dislike and now that I know it thoroughly, I call it “the little blue book of propaganda.” The opening assessment of, “We are a nation at risk. We are threatened with the rising tide of mediocrity. If an unfriendly foreign power had imposed their schools on us we might well have considered it an act of war.” Strong stuff. Then they list about 13 reasons why we are a nation at risk. These two [concerning standardized test scores and science achievement] are of

interest to me because I cannot find any data one way or another. I have talked to some of the commissioners; I have talked to some of the staff. No one remembers or knows where this stuff came from. We already talked about standardized test scores. [The science achievement one reads:] “There was a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments of science.”

Well, in a recent book called *Bail Me Out! Handling Difficult Data & Tough Questions about Public Schools* which came out [in 2000], the first third is called “Principles of Data Interpretation or How Not to Get Statistically Snookered.” One of the things that I warn about is, beware of statements that look general at first but, in fact, are heavily qualified. This statement is heavily qualified by the fact that it applies only to science and only to 17-year-olds. You might ask, as I did, “Why did they pick on science and why 17-year-olds?” Well, an answer might be gleaned from the next few overheads. Here is the steady decline in science for 17-year-olds. You do not see it quite so much in 9-year-olds or 13-year-olds. You do not see it anywhere in mathematics in any of the three ages, and you do not see it anywhere in reading. The Commission had nine NAEP trends to look at—three different ages by three different subjects. One of those could support crisis rhetoric, and that is the one they chose to use.

Ted Bell is actually quite candid in his book, *The Thirteenth Man: A Reagan Cabinet Memoir*, about what it was like to be Secretary of Education with a president who wanted to do away with the Department of Education. He says that the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which produced *A Nation at Risk*, was not there to do an objective assessment of the schools. It was there to document all of the terrible things [schools] did and [the things it] heard; and they did that.

Actually NAEP scores have been rising. Here is the math. One of the things you might notice here is that there is no result for Asians. Asians, until 1996, were

not a large enough group to have a reliable estimate in the NAEP sampling procedure. But the overall score is up seven points. It is up eight points for white kids; it is up 14 points for black kids; and it is up 14 points for Hispanic kids. How can the overall average only be up seven points when all of these are up? Well the answer is the changing demographics of the United States. What has happened is that the scores for blacks and Hispanics—this is true on a lot of tests—have been going up faster than for whites. Blacks and Hispanics are still scoring lower than whites, but they are now a much larger proportion of the population. So when you add more of these low-but-improving scores into the pot, you attenuate the averages—the overall averages anyway.

*A Nation at Risk* also put out one of the goofiest theories of economic health that you could imagine but people bought it widely: “If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system.” They tightly yoked what happens in the global marketplace to the economic health of the country and to what goes on in K-12 schools, especially as reflected in standardized tests. That theory became very popular when the nation slid into recession. But then by late 1993, early 1994 you began to see headlines like this: “America’s Economy Back on Top” (*The New York Times*, February 27, 1994), “Now it is Japan’s Turn to Play Catch-up” (*The New York Times*, November 21, 1993), and “America cranks it up” (*U.S. News and World Report*, March 28, 1994).

From that opening article in *The New York Times*, it begins, “A 3% economic growth rate, a gain of 2 million jobs in the past year, and the inflation rate reminiscent of the 1960s make America the envy of the industrialized world.” This is being written in 1994. Keep in mind that this is a *New York Times* reporter raving about a 3% economic growth. They had this going along with about 2% and then a

number of articles saying, “Hey, 2% is about as good as you can expect in this kind of economy.”

Now for Japan. “The Land of the Rising Sun is becoming the Land of the Sinking Sun,” worries Bill Safire (*The New York Times*, March 15, 2001). “Second decade of trouble,” (George Will, *The Washington Post*, March 24, 2001). They have been in their worst economic slump since WWII for over a decade now. They have a new prime minister; maybe he will do something about it. “Boasts aside, Japan loses its momentum” (*The Washington Post*, February 6, 2001). Japanese kids score among the highest in the world on tests. But it does not seem to do the economy much good.

When the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) data came out—which I will be talking about later—the TIMSS final-year data where our kids appeared to do so poorly, my phone rang off with reporters calling to say, “If our kids are so dumb how can the economy be so good?” It could be so good because our kids are not so dumb. But mostly it is because the economy depends on many things other than schools, like decisions by the President and Congress and other nations and all kinds of things like that.

It is not just ideologs and politicians who have been putting forth this view of American schools as awful. Educators do it. I confess to having done it before I learned. How many of you are aware of the list of the biggest problems in schools in the '40s and the biggest problems in the '80s? How many of you believe those lists? Well, in 1986 when I did a job with Cherry Creek Schools in Colorado, the day I walked into my office I noticed a little green sheet of paper with those two lists on them attributed to the Stockton Police Department in California. I did not think too much about it, which was too bad because if I had, I would have gone through a sequence that said “Well, that is not a problem here in Cherry Creek.” It is not a problem in the small Colorado districts. The biggest

problems in the '40s were (1) breaking in line, (2) talking out of turn and not raising your hand, (3) chewing gum in class. The biggest problems in the 1980s were (1) violence, (2) gangs, (3) teenage pregnancy, (4) drugs, and (5) alcohol.

Fortunately one of your people here in New England, Barry O’Neill at Yale, had more curiosity about this than I did. Barry started tracking down where these lists came from. What he found was that they had been endorsed or taken as revealed truth by people on the right, people in the middle, and people on the left. They had been variously attributed to the Congressional Research Service, to CBS News, and to a number of other places. But Barry found that these lists had actually been constructed by a single man, a guy named Pete Cullen Davis in Forth Worth (Texas). Davis had gone through some kind of an epiphany. He had been acquitted of murdering his wife’s lover and became a born-again Christian. As a part of his new self, he went through hammering away and destroying his multimillion-dollar collection of sculpture and launching a crusade against the public schools. When Barry found him, he asked Davis, “When you were doing this research, what methodology did you use to decide what the problems were?” Davis said, “How do I know what the problems were in the '40s? I was there. How do I know what they are in the '80s? I read the paper.” But, virtually everybody believed these lists, including me for a while.

In 1993, noticing that *A Nation at Risk* was coming up on its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Education Week* decided to do a multipart series on what’s happened in this decade since this report came out. In the opening essay, jointly written—I guess jointly written because nobody signed it—the editor said, “Not much.” “The proportion of American youngsters performing at high levels remains infinitesimally small. In the past 10 years, for instance, the number and proportion of those scoring at or above 650 on the verbal or math section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test has actually

declined.” In a box in the margins near the text, they put these numbers out:

	<u>Verbal</u>	<u>Math</u>
1982	29,921 (3%)	70,352 (7%)
1992	22,734 (2%)	58,662 (6%)

It looks like the numbers and the proportions that are in parentheses there have declined for both tests. But something about those numbers looked nutty to me. So I went to a collection of documents called Profiles of College-Bound Seniors, which the College Board puts out each year. What I found was the 1982 results are completely accurate, the 1992 results are accurate as far as they go, but if you remember looking at the table in the profiles that present SAT data, it is presented in 40-point intervals. You see everybody who scored 200 to 240 and then 250 to 290 and 300 to 340 and so forth, up to 800. The 1992 data are only for kids who scored between 650 and 690, totally ignoring everybody who scores 700 or higher. When those are added in the picture looks a little different:

	<u>Verbal</u>	<u>Math</u>
1982	29,921 (3%)	70,352 (7%)
1992	22,734 (2%)	58,662 (6%)
1992 (actual)	32,903 (3%)	104,401 (10%)
1993 (actual)	35,156 (3%)	110,009 (11%)

You have stability in the verbal. But you have growth from 7% to 10% on the mathematics. I put that statistic in my only successful Op Ed submission to *The Washington Post*. Dennis Doyle saw it there and in a Heritage Foundation publication (*American Heritage*, November, 1997). Then he said, “Bracey does not tell the reader who is driving the SAT scores up—mostly Asian and Asian American kids.” In my world, if you make an assertion like that and do not have any data to back it up, you have at best invented a hypoth-

esis. Then he did not test his hypothesis. So I tested it for him.

I got the data from the College Board by ethnicity. This is the growth from 1981 to 1995, which is when I did this analysis first. Between that period you had a growth from 7% to 12.4% (SAT Math), which is like a 75 % increase. He is right—it is mostly Asian kids who are driving this upward trend. If I take the Asian kids out of the sample, this 74.6% should disappear or become very small. It does not. It does drop because, in fact, Asian kids do score considerably higher on the SAT Math than any other ethnic group. But you have a 57% increase that’s attributable to black, white, Hispanic, and Native Americans. And, just for the record, the SAT Math proportion of high scores has gone up virtually every year since 1981. Last year it came in at 13.2, and even the verbal, which I predicted at one point would continue to decline, and its proportion of high scores has been inching back up from its nadir of 2.9% in 1983. Maybe it is all those e-mails [kids are sending] on the Internet.

Let me shift gears now. Those are the domestic trends—SAT scores, NAEP scores, and standardized test scores. Some people would say everything you have seen is irrelevant. Al Shanker once, commenting on my work, said, “I do not care if my 1995 car drives a little bit better than my 1975 car. What I care is, does it drive as well as those German and Japanese models parked across the street?” So for a lot of people now, the currency of the realm is not domestic test score trends but how our kids stack up against kids in other countries.

The study that everybody has been reporting on and talking about since the day it first started coming out in 1996 is the TIMSS, which stands for Third International Math and Science Study. Here are the fourth-grade data. Twenty-six countries, and American kids rank 10<sup>th</sup> (63% correct) among the 26 in mathematics. In science American students rank fourth (66%). Fourth out of 26—not bad. In the eighth grade, we now have 41 countries, and we are slightly below

average in math. The international average is 55%; we came in at 53% correct. In science we are a little bit above average with 58% correct versus an international average of 56%. So some of the decline that makes kids get dumber the longer they stay in school has occurred between grade 4 and grade 8.

I think this decline is real, relative to kids in other countries. I think that for two reasons. I say I think that; I cannot prove it. Before I go on to talk to you about that though, let me point out one thing about some of these international comparatives. Look how close the countries are. There are some really low scores from developing countries, a couple of not really high scores, but I think there are something like 24 or 26 countries within + or – 6 points of the United States. If our eighth graders had managed to get 5% more correct, they would have been up here in fifth place. There are times when tiny differences in scores have such practical outcomes, like in the Olympics. But I do not think that applies to multiple-choice tests for 13-year-olds.

Here is one reason why I think there is a decline. Our textbooks are about three times as thick as those in other countries. I have seen any number of cartoons lately about kids falling down and they cannot get up because their backpacks weigh too much. In fact, I closed [a] report with a couple of stories about that. It included a warning for pediatricians about what this is doing to kids' spines. But our teachers try to teach a whole lot more topics than those in, say, Germany and Japan—and it would hold up for other countries. As a consequence, I think, a lot of times the coverage is shallow and does not stick with the kids. So you have to repeat it. The other reason why I think it is real is that other countries tend to treat the middle years as the beginning of the more intense study of high school. They introduce a lot of the new material. Japanese kids get a lot of algebra in seventh grade and lots of plain geometry in eighth grade. We tend to, in most schools, treat the middle years as a review to get kids ready to go on to the more intense study of high school.

The U.S. Department of Education asked the Educational Testing Service to make a link between the TIMSS eighth-grade data and our national assessment state-by-state data. About 40 states participated in the state-by-state comparison. When you do that, you find that some states did quite well. Only 6 of 41 countries scored higher than Minnesota. A whole bunch scored the same and a whole bunch scored the lower. That pattern holds for Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, Montana, Maine, and I think that is it. Connecticut and Massachusetts are not far behind this—and Vermont too. Proving once again, Daniel Moynihan's assertion that high test scores in this country are correlated with proximity to Canada.

Here is Minnesota's profile for science. Only one nation, Singapore, has a significantly higher science score than the kids in Minnesota. That is as good as it gets. At the state level, this is as bad as it gets: Only three countries scored lower Mississippi. Two countries scored the same, 36 countries score higher. I said that is the worst at the state level; it is not the worst, though. Here is a profile for Washington, D.C. Only South Africa scores lower than D.C. Columbia and Kuwait score the same. I do not know what the situation is in Columbia. In Kuwait they are so rich they do not care. It is true; they do not bother to get educated because they have got it made.

One of the other things the ETS researcher did was to say, "Let's throw all of the scores from all 41 countries into one pot and we will treat all of those scores as if this was just one nation. Then let's find the average for all of these 41 countries taken together. Let's find the high scores of the top 10%, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for these 41 countries taken together. Let's see how our states stack up when we do that." Well, in math even our high-scoring states only have maybe 6% of kids scoring as high as the top 10% of the 41 countries. But they have well over half, over 60%, scoring above average. Of course at the bottom, the results are miserable.

Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maine, getting in the act here in science, have as many as 20% of the kids scoring as well as the top 10% in those 41 countries taken together. And we have as many as 75% of the kids above average.

Now the TIMSS-R results have just come out, and I have not had time to dig into them too much. “R” stands for repeat, which is not really very accurate, but what I am going to show you now are the TIMSS-R results for some countries that participated in both the 1995 and 1999 test and some other groups that did likewise. You see a similar picture in that Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan all did very well. Next was Naperville, IL, the highest scoring U.S. district; followed closely by the First in the World Consortium, which is about 20 Chicago suburban districts; followed closely by Belgium and the Netherlands and Montgomery County, Maryland, which is outside of D.C. This is very interesting because there was an article in the paper the other day criticizing the Montgomery County math program and saying the kids are not learning anything. But they look pretty good going up against all of these other countries. Then, at the bottom, we find Chicago, and at the very bottom Miami-Dade – 50<sup>th</sup>. Rochester, New York – I was a little surprised at that, but I do not know anything about Rochester.

In science, the kids in Naperville scored higher than Singapore here. We do better in science than we do in mathematics, but I am not completely sure why. I think it is partly because we emphasize science a little bit more, and as somebody over at the U.S. Department of Education said, “We live in a much more scientific-oriented culture than most other countries.” The Michigan Invitational, which is not a basketball tournament but a group of 12 districts that are probably very much like the First in the World Consortium, has a whole bunch of high-scoring kids. I do not have the data with me, but I happened to be sitting next to the principal of Fairfield High School (Conn.), and he showed me his data. They partici-

pated in the first TIMSS at the final-year level [seniors]. They scored at least as high as the highest scoring country in math literacy, science literacy, advanced mathematics, and they outscored the entire world in physics, which I thought was very interesting because the countries with the highest scores in physics were the kids in Norway and Sweden. The kids that they tested had taken three years of physics. The kids in Fairfield, one third of them had two years of physics and the other two thirds had only taken one.

I am going to show you three more overheads and call it quits. This one is kind of scary because it is [open] to racist interpretations. I wish these data were in terms of poverty or income or something, but they are not. The U.S. Department of Education released TIMSS-R results by ethnicity. What I did was create an overhead that answers the question: “How would American kids rank if the TIMSS sample had been made up only of one ethnic group instead of all three – actually four?” (But again Asian kids are too small to generate a separate score as a sample.) What you have here are 38 countries in the TIMSS-R. White kids rank 13<sup>th</sup> in math and 6<sup>th</sup> in science. Black kids rank 31<sup>st</sup> in both, and Hispanic kids rank 29<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. It is the same kind of reasoning that led Don Hirsch—E.D. Hirsch Jr.—to title [an article] in the latest *Education Week* that came in yesterday, “The latest dismal NAEP scores.” (I am not sure if this was his title.) But it is not about dismal NAEP scores, it is about the gap between rich and poor kids, black and white, which, as he points out, is not news. We have known this for decades.

Finally, a reading study released in 1992 got absolutely no attention because the Reagan and Bush administrations had adopted a strategy of never seeing anything good about public schools. American kids came in second. Our nine-year-olds were second in the world only to Finland, a highly homogeneous country with huge taxes and tiny worries about teaching Finnish as a second language. Where I live, in Fairfax County,

Virginia, we have 105 languages. Our 14-year-olds actually came in eighth—and only Finland had a significantly higher score. Interestingly enough, the *American School Boards Journal's* headline over the story was, “Good News! Our 9-year-olds read well. Bad News: Our 14-year-olds don't.” We have this incredible, neurotic need both to believe the worst about our schools and to put the most negative possible spin on it—even coming out of our educational periodicals on occasion. *Education Week* is just dreadful about his.

I do not want to be seen as a Pollyanna. I have been called that; I have been called Chicken Little in reverse and a messenger of complacency. There are lots of things that you can attack in American public schools. I would just like it to be based on some real problems and not on these hypothetical and mythical problems having to do with test scores falling, which they haven't been, and our kids showing terribly against other countries, which they don't.

### Additional information

**William J. Bennett** served as former President Reagan's chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities and Secretary of Education.

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**Al Shanker** is the president of the American Federation of Teachers

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*His latest book, published in June of 2001, is called The War on America's Public Schools. In addition, in 2001 Bracey published articles in The Washington Post, The American Prospect, USA Today, Educational Researcher, Education Week, The American School Boards Journal, School Business Affairs, and Phi Delta Kappan.*

*Dr. Bracey's extraordinary background in educational research and writing on key issues of contemporary importance places him in a unique position to address superintendents on the critical questions of leadership for education reform.*

## LAB RESEARCH PARTNER PANEL

**Mary Ann Lachat, Center for Resource Management**

**Christine Dwyer, RMC Research Corporation**

**Amy Burke, Jobs for the Future**

### Introduction

We have three people with us who represent the LAB's research partners and are engaged in exciting research initiatives. These are research initiatives in progress. What is unique about this presentation is that not only will you have the opportunity to learn about research initiatives that are in progress and directly relevant to your work in your school systems, but you will also have the opportunity to interact with the researchers themselves in the breakout sessions and influence the research as it progresses.

### Mary Ann Lachat

This morning I am going to talk about the aspect of leadership functions and collaborative inquiry in school districts that is tied to the issue of using data more effectively in terms of the school reform process. I think, certainly over the last several years, the focus on student results and the emphasis on using data to support reform have significantly increased. I can also say that, [although] we are making progress, we are still a long way from having the capacity to use data effectively in ways that really have an impact on instructional improvement. And there are a lot of reasons for that. I am going to comment on those this morning in terms of some of the [knowledge] we are gaining from what it really takes to build that capacity in school districts as well as the skills and the processes

that have to be tied to the collaborative leadership that is necessary to sustain effective data use.

Before I share some of those [findings], I just want to set the stage a little bit by talking about a few observations made both by groups and by researchers who have really focused on this issue. More than a decade ago, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement's state accountability study group came to the conclusion that better data systems for effective use in school districts were absolutely essential for improving low-achieving schools and also for encouraging high-performing schools. Ruth Johnson, for years, has examined all of the issues [surrounding] data use to support equity. She made the case that data offers tremendous potential to school districts that are really trying to build their [ability] to more equitably educate all students. She also made the case that a data-driven inquiry process is one of the most effective tools for achieving change in those schools that we really consider farthest from today's standards of excellence.

Here in our region, Nancy Love at the Regional Alliance for Mathematics and Science Education at TERC has written extensively about the necessity for leadership around effective data use in the reform process. She has made the point, "How can classrooms be alive with inquiry if schools are not?" One of the things we certainly know is that there is a lot to understand about how to analyze and use available information wisely and productively. What we have learned from decades of school improvement efforts is that focusing on the process of change rather than focusing on results does not lead to any kind of significant impact on student achievement. Actually, C.D. Glickman (1992) really summed it up. He said, "Unfortunately, site-based innovations mean nothing if a school cannot determine if the efforts had an effect on students. Most schools move from innovation to innovation, and they define success as the implementation of the latest innovation." He said, "To be blunt, this is nonsense. What difference does any

innovation make if the school cannot determine effects on kids?” Having said that, we all know it is not that easy. We focused on this for years at CRM, in terms of our work on program evaluation, and really looked at some of the research and development questions about what it takes to build up capacity. First of all, everyone today is telling school leaders disaggregate, disaggregate, disaggregate. We all know that if you do not break down data in meaningful ways to look at specific groups of students, aggregate measures are not going to help you that much. They are too sweeping. They will show you broad trends over time.

What is not recognized as much is that if you do not have the information or database capacity to link your data, you cannot disaggregate. Your problem is not that you do not have data; you have lots of data. You have your student information systems. Maybe you designed it yourself. It might be Esirius or Nordex. You also have all of this test data coming in. You have data from test program files, maybe using Terra Nova, Stanford 9, whatever. You might have survey data on your kids. But unless you can link information—unless our school leaders can link information about student characteristics, the programs, and instructional practices they have been exposed to—and multiple indicators of success, you cannot use data effectively.

We addressed this issue in our work with schools many years ago. We actually worked with a software development firm in Boston that had done information systems for Harvard and MIT. We worked with them to develop a database system that would bring together all of the types of information that school districts have in order to create a fully integrated database that provides virtually unlimited capacity to disaggregate data and yield data profiles in formats that were understandable. We are using that particular system in our work with schools, all of our research projects, and with the LAB. We are particularly excited that it is a core component of a Breaking

Ranks model for high school reform that is being developed as a collaborative initiative of the Education Alliance, NASSP, and CRN. I want to share some of the [ideas] about the leadership development that we are trying to produce in schools by building this database capacity.

First I want to say, with all of our schools—and we are working with all the high schools in Providence, Yonkers, New Haven, Malden, North Redding—a lot of different high schools. We are creating that data capacity for all those schools. But you know something? That is just the first step. Data does not change schools; people do. So while people need to be armed with good data, the important thing is that they need help. They need leadership skills in analyzing data and need the opportunity to have constructive dialogue around the implications of the data.

So, in the Breaking Ranks project at the LAB, and through other projects with the Alliance, we are looking at providing support to school leadership teams in all of those high schools—collaborative leadership teams—to really look at analyzing data and to develop ownership in those teams in terms of what the implications are. We are not telling them what we are seeing in the data, we are helping them develop the guiding questions to look at it. So, the Breaking Ranks research is really focusing on: What does it take to create a culture of effective data use in schools? What are the essential leadership functions? And, what kind of leadership development supports that process?

I am going to share some of the issues that these leadership teams are focusing on because I think that they illustrate the kinds of skills that [team members] are developing. All of these groups are focusing on how specific groups of students are performing on multiple assessments over time. What we are seeing in some of these high schools is that they are starting to break into learning communities or academies. Leadership teams are able to look at how students who are exposed to certain kinds of instructional practices

in those learning communities are performing. They are looking at how students who enrolled in specific course offerings are performing on assessments. They are looking more in depth at equity issues in terms of gender and race/ethnicity and going beyond just the sweeping overall results—really looking at sub-skill areas on both their own assessments and external assessments. What are the achievement gaps telling us specifically about our instruction? They are looking at course-taking patterns in terms of access to higher level courses for a number of different groups.

We are also starting to build the capacity with school leaders to follow a specific cohort of students over time. When you get assessment results, you can see trends. You can see how different tenth grades or different eighth grades or different fourth grades did on certain assessments over time. But they are different kids. So what we are trying to do is to build the program-evaluation capacity in these particular schools so they are not so dependent upon people like me. They are really gaining these kinds of collaborative leadership skills through their dialogue.

You know the questions that I have described are not the important thing; it is what they lead to. It is the next set of questions. It is what people do with that data. It is always interesting when you first present a leadership team with some data. They kind of glaze over and think, “Uh-oh, data. Am I going to be able to understand this?” We have seen that change over the year. For example, one of the principals from Providence went and presented with us with NASSP, and she told the group at that national conference, “You know, a year ago I would have thought it would have been a joke to be invited to present with the team from the LAB and the Alliance at this conference,” she said, “because I was a data doubter. I figured that was not going to have any kind of impact on my school.” She has become a tremendously effective user of data in working with her staff.

One of the things we are also seeing with the other principals in Providence is that they are starting to say,

“We have wonderful data now on our current population of students but we need to know about our incoming students.” For example in Providence, in all of the high schools, they could have an incoming freshman class from five different middle schools. So, they cannot even look at the overall data from these middle schools to know anything about the literacy skills, attendance patterns, or performance of these kids. Because they had already coded these kids to the high schools they are going to attend, we basically produced a study for all of these principals that shows them the characteristics of their incoming class, the multiple middle schools they are coming from, their attendance patterns, their performance all the way back to seventh grade. That is powerful data for these particular leadership teams.

Every one of our high schools has this notion that a lot of their kids do not really have access to some of the higher level courses. But one of the leadership teams said, “We want a disaggregated profile of all their course-taking patterns and their grade-performance patterns by gender and by ethnicity.” That leadership team, once they had it, believe me, had quite a story—and it was data based; it was not assumption or notion based. That leadership team really used it to engage other people in discussions about the need to address that equity issue [concerning] access to quality learning for all students.

In one of the urban high schools we worked with, the principal and the leadership team asked us how they could really investigate the whole question of how attendance was impacting test scores because there was a lot of pressure on this school to improve. The school staff was saying, “It is not an instructional problem, it is an attendance problem. It is the kids who are not coming to school [who] are bringing down our test scores.” So, we disaggregated the data in that school by the kids who had very high attendance, those who were there most of the time, and the kids who had poor attendance. Obviously the kids who had poor attendance were failing. But the kids who were there

most of the time, the majority of them—whether you looked at access to high-level courses, grades, or performance on state assessments or also the Stanford 9—those kids were not performing either. That helped that leadership team, which was going through a reform process in the school, to really move the discussion forward. They had an attendance problem and they had an instructional problem. But it also helped people to not be defensive and to be engaged [in discussing] such things as teacher expectations for students and the need to create smaller learning communities that perhaps would have an impact both on attendance and on learning.

In developing leadership for the use of data in schools, it is important to know that is not just about test results. It is about using data as a stimulus to have substantive discussions about the quality of instruction provided to students. What we have learned is that there are [four] things that are really essential. The first is having the commitment and the leadership in the school to support a data-driven decision making process. The second is having an understanding of the essential questions that really get at equity, accountability, and instructional improvement issues. The third is you have got to have the capacity to disaggregate data to address these questions. The fourth is you [need] to have the structure and the time for people to have collaborative discussions about what the data means for quality learning and program improvement in their schools.

### Christine Dwyer

What I am going to talk about are some of the research activities that we have done over the last 4 years and highlight where those are in products for people who are interested in pursuing those. But then I will also show where that is going in the next cycle of the LAB. As research partners of the LAB each of us has had an area of work over the last cycle and an area of work that we have been assigned for the next cycle.

In the breakout session that I am going to do, I am going to talk a little bit about one of the ones from the last cycle but largely about where we are going in the next cycle. So let me just give you a little bit of an overview of that.

Where we have been: The work of RMC in the last LAB [cycle], which was actually about a 4-year period, was to look at the influence of different roles and structures on reforms that were related to achievement. We have turned a number of the small studies that we did into sets of principles and practical tools. Those are all available from the LAB, and I will highlight a few of those. I think we feel the RMC niche is the research-into-practice niche—creating procedural knowledge, the how-to activities. What you will find in a number of our products is that what we have learned has been turned into something that a district or a school might use.

These are the areas that we worked in over the last cycle, and you will see the various role groups or levels and structures that affect classroom instruction and are not classroom instruction:

1. Students
2. Parent-community
3. State education agencies
4. School-level factors
5. Public engagement

I will start with the school level. We did this series of studies that was related to learning about the capacities and beliefs that were required to make and sustain meaningful change. What did it take to turn around schools? We have looked at elementary, secondary, and we did a special focus for Massachusetts on early literacy or early grades' literacy activities. This book, *What It Takes: Ten Capacities for Initiating and Sustaining School Improvement*, is available from the LAB. It is based on the work with turnaround elementary schools. We worked in some depth with six schools in the region that, over an 8- to 10-year period, had gone from low-achieving situations to being medium

achieving or high achieving. These are all high-poverty, urban schools, and [we] identified 10 capacities that were particularly important in the early period of that turnaround. So that is the kind of thing that we were looking at in those schools. We did a similar thing with secondary schools and we did a similar thing with early reading.

We also spent our time with another role group, state education agencies, in looking at the strategies that were effective at the state level from practitioners' points of view—from the points of view of superintendents, principals, teachers and other community leaders. What strategies that states were using were effective for leading and supporting these complex standards-based reforms? That work is, I think, on the LAB Web site and is very succinctly presented in this paper called *Emerging Directions in SEA Leadership*. For that work, the states that we worked with were Vermont, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Students: We have a small group of RMC and LAB folks who are still working on this. This is probably the least mature work that is being done, and it concerns the elements of school experience that support a pro-academic identity development for subgroups of students that are often left out of the all-student equation. So, [we are talking about] students of color, new immigrants, students whose first language is not English, gay and lesbian students, and, in secondary situations, girls. We are working to understand the aspects of student identity development that are critical links into the school culture. We do not have a product on that; we have draft products. We worked with a few schools. We have had trouble finding a high school that is willing to seriously pilot the activities that have come out of that study with students other than the charter school or some of the schools that are more different in their instruction than typical public schools.

We were engaged with the LAB staff in some large public engagement activities to identify the kinds of

strategies that worked to involve the full school community in policy development—to engage parents, community members, teacher unions, other teachers, and administrators in crafting together important policies and clarifying their own perspectives on policies that exist.

Then, finally, we worked intensely with a few schools in the region to connect parent and community involvement to student achievement—echoing the theme that Mary Ann raised—to make the link between what has been done historically for parent and community involvement and achievement. I think that probably 10 years ago lots of folks were saying, “Well, any kind of parent involvement counts. Just do it. As long as there is parent involvement, the achievement will be better.” And those of you who were skeptics of that probably are still skeptics of that—that many of the parent involvement activities that were well-meaning are pretty far away from a link to student achievement. So, we tried to work intensely with the smaller number of schools that were interested in universal parent involvement; not just a few parents who were very interested in spending their time, but all parents, all teachers, and parent involvement that was more focused on academic achievement and high expectations for students.

That is kind of a circle of where we have been, what we have been doing for research activity. There are several documents that the LAB has, tools that come out of the parent involvement research. There are tools that come out of the early literacy research, and there are tools that come out of the elementary work and the state education work. Still to come are some of the other areas.

Where we are going with this: The RMC assignment in the next phase is related to two questions. In addition to talking about *Capacities for Reform*, these are the discussion areas that I'd like to have some input on in the breakout session. I can share with you the thinking of RMC staff and LAB staff about these

areas and then would be interested in your observations and recommendations for what we might be thinking about and looking at. First question: The best ways to guide and sustain reform in the lowest performing schools. The Department of Education is interested in having the labs focus on the lowest performing schools. Some of the states in our region, as you know, carve out special territory for the lowest performing schools, identify those schools, and really place their emphasis on that. That is one of the areas that we want to look at--the kinds of external help and the kinds of internal development that might make a difference with the lowest performing schools. So we will be looking at that. What I am talking about is, for example, in Connecticut, where 28 priority schools have been identified. Massachusetts has done a similar thing.

The engagement of different role groups is important because we are interested in this collaborative leadership. We are interested in all roles and structures. What is the role of the full community in working with lowest performing schools? What about this model business? What is the appropriateness of models? This easy solution that has been promoted over the last few years – adopt a model. What happens when a low-performing school adopts a model? Or what kind of model is effective for a low-performing school? What indicators of progress are meaningful to lowest performing schools and their school boards? [All of] which might be different than the kinds of things that Mary Anne was talking about. What is the role of the state department in this, the states plucking the schools out and identifying them as low performing? And especially, what is the role of the district when the state does that? It is a very complex mix of roles and structures. So we are going to be working closely with the state of Connecticut and hopefully engage some other states as well in the first question.

Then the second question is more on target about strategies that support collaboration among leaders of different groups. We are talking about something here

that is a little bit different than what Richard Elmore will talk to you about this afternoon. It is built on the same general framework, but here we are talking about actually working together--not everybody cooperating but actually collaborating. What does that require in terms of a definition of leadership? What does collaboration mean in that sense? And how again do you focus on achievement--because the end goal is not collaboration, the end goal is improved achievement. Those are the two research areas of our focus over the next couple of years.

Let me, as the last thing that I share, talk about a few findings from the past 4 years that bear on those issues just to give you a sense of some of the topics that we might talk about. I just pulled out some of the findings that were relevant particularly to leadership that you might be most interested in. One of the capacities that we found in those elementary turnaround schools was this actual ability of school leadership--not always the positional leader, not always the principal, but leaders who could actually increase the amount of energy that was available for school change by the way that they increased the quantity, the quality, and the nature of the interactions that were planned among staff, community, and parents. In these six schools, as you know if you have worked with schools that have been identified as low performing, there is not a lot of energy. People are “burned out”--that is the description that is usually used at the schools. So they are in a “burned out” situation and then they are asked to make substantial changes. The things we saw in these six turnaround schools were some capacities, some strategies, some skills that literally increased their energy with the activities that people put forth.

In our secondary work we found a different set of capacities, and I pulled one up that we found very interesting. In the different communities, [we saw] how essential it was that the leaders in those communities, in order to navigate this political environment of the secondary school, really have a good handle on

what that community or subgroups in that community defined as 'school success'. In affluent communities that is as much of a problem, if not more of a problem, as it is in poor communities. So, how leaders could recognize the ways to help different constituencies craft messages about what they valued, and how to craft the messages in language so they could communicate about school success. Not unlike at the elementary school, we found at the secondary school that what the community thinks school success is [creates] a real boundary to what that school can look like, what structures it can use, how it can operate—and probably more of a boundary in the affluent communities than some of the poorer communities.

I picked several findings from the state education ones because I knew you would be more interested in that. The first one, and you see this in every state, is an equity issue. Coming off the standards-based reform movement, equivalent demands and equal opportunities do not overcome existing differences and capacities among school districts. It is a kind of a no-brainer, except I think every state in our region probably went into the standards reform movement without thinking about this. So, simply by telling everybody that you have to have the same things—you all have to have standards, you all have to participate—but not doing anything about the existing differences and capacities among the school districts, we are seeing real exacerbating differences in school district capacities at this stage of the standards movement. That is something that we saw over and over again in the states.

The second area: I think because of the standards movement, there is this sense of state setting the agenda, giving the content, telling people what they wanted to change but not building consensus among state boards, among state education divisions and policymakers about how that change occurs. They have very different perspectives on what that change will look like as it is starting to get implemented and they did not have the kind of conversation at the

beginning about not only what they want but how that will happen.

The third area: We had middle managers from all the state agencies together in November to reflect on some of the issues. A message that came out of that, and that we heard strongly in most states, is that practitioners—and there I mean administrators and teacher leaders—want to look to state education agencies for help in implementing, not just monitoring and evaluating, reform agenda. In someone's words, they want [state agencies] to move beyond the illusion of support to provide real support. I think, from a state education-agency perspective, there is a question: Do they really want us to do that or not? The message is clearly coming back from those who are piloting these efforts that, "We want you in there as a partner. We do not want you there as the monitor/evaluator without also being a partner for support."

And here are some findings from the other work that is relevant to these leadership areas. I have already alluded to the first one: What we found missing from school and district parent involvement programs. No linkage between the parent activity and academic expectations. No attention to building relationships between teachers and parents—all teachers and no parents. Sometimes the resource center concept or the identification of a home/school coordinator has actually worked against the building of relationships with the classroom teacher and parents—making it someone else's job as opposed to the dialogue about the progress of students. Lacking, also, are schools' thinking about connections to families through community networks and social representatives. From some of our other work that we have done, we found, particularly the middle school, one of the best ways for parent involvement is not direct school-to-parent but school through Boys and Girls Club, school through Urban League, school through other networks in the community, churches, that parents are engaged in. This is particularly effective in the middle and high school level. And then the final one goes

without saying: A lack of a cohesive perspective on what the point is of family community activities. Why are we doing this?

Finally, we must help students, in some schools, by finding ways to alter systems and practices to link developing student identities—who I am as a person, a young African American female, how I am developing as a person—and the pro-academic part of it. There are some ways that schools can alter their practices to link that identity to the school experience. That certainly has the potential to increase the likelihood of school success. It is an area in which we are doing more work, but that is the area where we found it most difficult to really find school partners to do that work with.

So that is a summary of the kinds of findings that we have had from some of the work, and you can see where it leads to thinking about what is going to be most effective with the lowest performing schools and what you should not do. It also leads to thinking about what might work to bring about true collaboration among leaders of different role groups in the urban areas.

### Amy Burke

I'm here to tell you about a relatively new project that Jobs for the Future is embarking on in collaboration with the LAB and several other organizations, including the American Association of Community Colleges and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, as well as others with which we are hoping to establish relationships.

The project is called Leadership at the Intersections. I am going to tell you what we mean by that and also provide some background and context for the genesis of the project idea, what we were thinking about. Later, I am really excited about talking to a relatively captive audience of leaders who will be able to shape the project. We are just getting started on the research end. What we will be doing as part of the research is

speaking with leaders. This is a wonderful opportunity for me to do so in a different setting before we embark on formal interviews.

By 'Leadership at the Intersections' we are referring to the need for coordinated and collaborative communication between leaders at different levels of education, namely, secondary and postsecondary levels but also those in the business and industry communities and the community at large. This is urgent and important for many reasons, mostly because postsecondary education is now a necessity for an ever-larger number of Americans—our youth—if they ever want to be able to enter into not just a career but a career with potential for advancement into family-supporting jobs. Traditionally, high school was an end point for many of our young people. That is no longer the case, or, I should say, unfortunately it is still the case, but it is no longer, from a policy perspective, acceptable because there are no longer family-supporting jobs available for young people without at least some postsecondary education. Our goal needs to be to prepare all our youngsters not only for completion of high school but for a successful transition into postsecondary programs and, ultimately, into family-supporting careers.

I want to provide a little context for the urgency of this, the need for such collaboration efforts and for facilitating a much smoother transition into family-supporting careers through a gateway from secondary into postsecondary opportunities for more Americans. Many of us are aware of a lot of the statistics. But as much as I know of them, every time I read them I find them poignant. So, I wanted to highlight a little bit of what we know about how we are doing in terms of educating young people.

Currently, the United States ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in terms of high school completion rates. What that actually means is that 1 out of 20 students drops out every year. When we break that down by groups, the differences become even more stark. One out of 30

white students drops out; 1 in 20 African American students drops out, and 1 in 10 Latino students drops out of high school. This is all compounded, we know, by the income levels of families. Across all groups, children from lower income families are much more at risk of dropping out than children from affluent families. About two thirds of those who do earn high school diplomas go on to enter some type of postsecondary program. When you extend that out to 2 years after high school education, the number goes up to three fourths of students who are going on—which is promising. However, it is not good enough because what we know is that one half of all students who do show up in postsecondary education are not ready to take college-level courses. They need a lot of remediation.

More than one fourth of freshmen at 4-year colleges and almost half of those at 2-year colleges never make it into their sophomore year. Moreover, even at what are considered to be more selective 4-year institutions only about half of all freshmen go on to earn a bachelor's degree within 6 years, and fewer than 40% of African American and Latino students earn a degree as opposed to two thirds of white and Asian students.

Another promising bit of information that we know is that more students who start their educations at 2-year institutions do hope to go on to earn a bachelor's degree, which is good news. Unfortunately, a recent study has found that students—even above-average students whose parents have completed college—who start their postsecondary education at a 2-year school are actually 38% less likely to acquire a Bachelor of Arts degree in 5 years than those that start at 4-year institutions. Students from families with incomes in the top quartile are roughly seven times more likely than students in the bottom quartile to earn a bachelor's degree by the time they reach the age of 24. African Americans are about half as likely as white students to earn a bachelor's degree by the age of 29, and Latinos are about a third as likely as whites to do so.

In the past it wasn't so important to move all our students into postsecondary education, and not just in but through postsecondary programs, because the manufacturing sector, for example, provided many good family-supporting jobs to those with just a high school degree or, sometimes, those without such a degree. Now, with the new economy demanding higher skill levels from more and more people, that is just not the case. We have to do better.

It is easy to see, just from those statistics, that we are heading straight down a road to greater levels of inequality. For those of us concerned not just with education but with the health of our democracy as a whole, we can see that we are heading down a dangerous road. But I don't want to paint a bleak picture because there is much we can do to change this.

I just want to say a bit more about the intersection of education and employment and what I've spoken about in terms of the need for higher skills. According to the American Management Association, about 40% of employers actually test employees for literacy and mathematical skills. Failure rates on these tests have actually increased from 18.9% in 1996 to 35.5% in 1998. Just in that 2-year time period, the research has concluded that this gap, this decrease in scores, was due to the growing need for better and higher levels of skills among employees. And this is changing rapidly in our increasingly global and information-based economy.

What's also troubling is that, at the same time, the number of companies providing remedial or developmental programs or training for their employees actually declined from 24% in 1993 to 14.5% in 1999. Jobs in the new economy demand that students—young people—have postsecondary education. Seventy percent of the 30 fastest growing jobs will soon require an education beyond high school. Forty percent of all new jobs will soon require at least an associate's degree. To put it bluntly, we clearly need to get more kids through postsecondary education if they

will have any chance of achieving—not just getting a job but a job that leads them into a career with the promise of providing them with the ability to support a family.

As we all know, these trends are amplified among racial and ethnic minorities, which makes the need to develop strategies for addressing needs of traditionally underserved populations of youth even more important. At the same time the need for reform looms so large, there are many challenges that leaders face, not the least of which is simply a shortage of people and high turnover at many levels of secondary and postsecondary education. An American Association of Community Colleges survey revealed that about 40% of community college presidents plan to retire in the period between 1998 and 2008.

While there are many good efforts underway to improve leadership at the different levels of education—whether it is middle, secondary or postsecondary—very little is being done at the intersections of these sectors. That is where we feel the need is so important.

I just want to read you a quote from a report you may have seen, *The Lost Opportunity of Senior Year: Finding a Better Way*, which was issued not too long ago by the National Commission on High School Senior Year. As they put it:

If we go along as we have been, about half of our people, perhaps two thirds, will flourish... The other one third to one half of our people are more likely to flounder. Poorly educated, worried about their place in a rapidly changing world, they may look upon the complexities of an interdependent world as threatening and the demands of citizenship a burden. Lacking knowledge and skills, they will struggle to get by in dead-end, high-turnover jobs. The key difference between the

two groups will be the level and quality of education available to them.

*National Commission on  
High School Senior Year  
(2001, January)*

The choices the nation faces about its future are that stark and direct. The goal of our project is to create a framework for stronger and more formal linkages among leaders at these different levels and to broaden that out—not just to leaders at the secondary and postsecondary levels but to leaders in the business community and at the community level. Another strategy is to build teams of regional leaders so that we can bring people together to discuss the needs of their particular local communities, which is very important in terms of particular economic needs and workforce development strategies. This is key to actually creating pathways that bring young people into career-development tracks where we know there is a need and there is going to be a future need in the region in which they live.

The organizing principle behind the project is that there is a need for three things: good leadership at the secondary level, good leadership at the postsecondary level, and good leadership at the intersection of the two. Our initial research has found there is a shocking lack of coordination at different levels. This is true at the top levels, when talking about secondary to postsecondary, but also as you work your way down and across the educational continuum. The many different sectors of the educational continuum often are acting in isolation, which leaves us all in a greater degree of darkness than is necessary. Elementary school teachers and leaders are not talking to middle school teachers and leaders. So, it is not surprising, and yet, somehow it is. We find that only 37% of middle school teachers think it is very important to prepare their students for high school college prep classes. Yet, that is where it begins. If we don't have students showing up at high schools able to take

college prep classes, we are not going to get those kids [through and out of high school] with the ability to move into [postsecondary programs] without needing a lot of remediation.

Somehow, we assume, as parents, as teachers, as students, as member of the public, as elected officials, that the educational continuum is actually a continuum and that there is some cohesion to the process. It is troubling to find out that this is not true. Now, for some students, this is not going to deter them from success at the different levels of school or from moving into [postsecondary programs and fulfilling jobs]. But, unfortunately, for students at risk of dropping out, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, and other dangers, this is posing a greater barrier to success and detracting from the life opportunities these young people are going to have.

Once again, as the commission explained, “A related problem is that postsecondary education and K-12 systems operate independent of each other, each with its own governance and finance mechanisms; its own politics, goals, and objectives; and even institutional culture.

Current governance structures impede meaningful collaboration between K-12 and higher education. In many states, leaders of the two systems rarely, if ever, meet...and may even have incentives not to do so because their interests in such matters as public funding often conflict.”

This speaks to the need for collaboration and coordination on not just an effective K-12 system but a real K-16 system. Without such a system, elementary and middle school and secondary school standards are developed without input from the postsecondary world. Yet, we know we need to get our young people into postsecondary programs in order for them to have a shot at a successful and meaningful life.

In addition, in this era of high-stakes tests, we see these tests being developed that are going to limit the number of students who can even graduate from high

school. And, we see these developing without any input from the postsecondary world. This really ought to be the point of high school graduation—getting kids out of high school with diplomas that indicate that they are prepared for college-level courses. Yet, we develop these assessment tests without [addressing the needs] of a postsecondary program.

This is why we believe the need for this type of leadership at the intersection is important. We can facilitate the benefits of this leadership once we get going in terms of the research mode, which will include a lot of interviews with leaders at the local and regional levels. Broadly defined, the region encompasses the LAB’s region—namely, the Northeast, the islands and Puerto Rico.

The outlook is not a completely bleak one. As the commission ended this report about the lack of opportunities in senior year, there is much to be positive about:

This is not about the failure of American schools, but about possibilities for a brighter, more productive high school senior year...National life and the economy are changing much faster than our schools...The nation faces a deeply troubling future unless we transform the lost opportunity of senior year into an integral part of students’ preparation for life, citizenship, work, and further education.

*National Commission on  
High School Senior Year  
(2001, January)*

We know a lot more than before about what young people need, and our knowledge of how to help them and how to educate them better is increasing all the time. It is imperative to get this message out among folks in the policy world and to revamp the educational process. We need to create a true continuum that links high school with the postsecondary world. We can no longer keep those separate. A high school

degree is no longer an end point; it is just the beginning. It is a transition point for young people into the opportunities and education they need to lead successful lives.

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## LEADERSHIP OF INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

### Professor Richard Elmore

I confess to being a little intimidated by following Gerald Bracey because I am associated with a point of view that is often considered to be at odds with his. I don't think it really is, but I found myself thinking as I was driving down here, "Well, if they really like Gerald Bracey, they are probably not going to like me."

I have been called Dr. Doom by people. What I am going to say to you is probably going to stir up quite a lot of interest and controversy. I am also going to take you at warp speed through about 13 weeks of content of the instructional improvement course I teach in alternate springs. What you are going to get is the main argument from the research and from my own work about the nature of instructional improvement, but none of the readings and none of the paper writings; also none of the Harvard credit.

Let me preface my remarks by saying that the issue of instructional leadership or instructional improvement as the work of educational administrators is present in the descriptions of the roles of principals and superintendents in America from the beginning of organized and centralized administration of public schools at the turn of the century. It is a continuous piece of the rhetoric [within] educational administration literally from the beginning of the organized form of public education that we currently know. As Larry Cuban, a historian at Stanford, has demonstrated, a parallel finding is that the behavior of educational administrators has always been substantially at odds with the rhetoric of instructional leadership. That is, when you actually study what principals and superintendents do,

there is no relationship, typically, between what they say the job is about and what it is actually about.

Now, lest you think that this is peculiar pathology of public education, I would suggest to you that it is actually a fairly common finding in the literature on management. In business schools and schools of public policy and administration over the last 50 years or so, they have been doing pretty steady survey research and ethnographic work on the work of managers, public and private. And the findings are quite similar. In fact, if you take the profile of work that a school principal, for example, expresses as the ideal allocation of their time and the actual allocation of their time, there is a huge disparity; and this disparity looks roughly like the profile of just about any middle manager in any organization, public or private—that is, the profile of the ideal way that they would spend their time and the actual way they spend their time.

Surprisingly there is not much difference between the public and the private sector. If you take middle managers in private corporations, it is hard to find statistical differences in the disparity between how they think they should allocate their time and how they do as opposed to or compared with public sector managers. This is a fairly common and endemic problem with one enormous exception, which is that if you create an index of performance and if you sort middle managers by the performance of their organizations—so private sector measure of performance would be profitability and revenue growth over time; public sector measure of performance would be some output measure or some measure of deficiency—if you sort out the high-performing organizations, there is a relatively high degree of closure between what managers think they are supposed to do and what they actually do.

That is the problem that I present you with. I will make the argument that we are in a situation in which the current generation of administrators, the people who are sitting in this room, actually have to invent

the solution to the problem of how to bring the rhetoric of educational administration into a closer alignment with the reality of educational administration. The quicker we acknowledge that in some fundamental sense we do not know how to do this stuff, and that we are going to have to work hard in the short term to invent the knowledge that is necessary to do it, the better off we are going to be. The stakes, actually, for public education are relatively high, as I will explain in a minute. We have lived in a world that I will call the 'attainment culture,' in which—and this is a stream from which Jerry Bracey drinks deeply—schools have been basically judged by how well they move kids through the various stages of education, by the proportion of kids high schools advance to college, and by the degree to which we actually supply the elite that is necessary to run the social institutions of the country.

While we have been doing this and actually have been doing it with some success, our social contract has been changed rather dramatically. We are now getting less and less credit for doing what we have done reasonably well in the past and we are now being increasingly criticized for not doing what we have not done very well in the past. The underlying ground rules or social contract on which public education operates is shifting from an attainment system to a performance system. How many of you operate in state jurisdictions in which states are able to collect academic performance data on every single school in the state? How many of the people in this room have schools in their district that are considered to be at risk for failing to meet state standards? How many superintendents in this room have high schools that are considered by objective performance measures to be high performing? Do you know the mean performance measure for the lowest 25% of your kids in those schools?

The problem we are facing here is that while we were working away in essentially an attainment-oriented system, the rest of society was working away on

another model, a more performance-driven model. The social contract under which we previously worked has now been yanked out from underneath us. The solution to the problem of how to monitor the effectiveness of this sector has now been given over to state jurisdictions. The primary custodians of this point of view and of this system are elected officials, they are not professionals. We are headed down a road in which we are going to live indefinitely with a performance-based incentive system. I will say a few words about that.

I like to tell audiences, you can get the good version of performance-based accountability. You can get its evil twin. You do not get to choose whether to get it or not. This is the way our society works. It has come late to public education. In fact, public education is the last major sector of our society coming into this framework of social accountability. When I speak to opponents of performance-based accountability I am thought to be an advocate of it; when I speak to supporters of performance-based accountability I am thought to be a critic of it. For me, performance-based accountability is like the weather. It is the condition under which we will live our lives indefinitely.

The case that I want to make here this afternoon is that you are the swing generation of administrators who are going to create the solutions about how to live in a performance-based accountability system. And by doing what you do, you will shape the terms of your mandate under this performance-based system. So, if you do not like the way the accountability system works, you have to generate the credibility by doing your work well to gain the authority to change the system. People who are sponsoring this idea will not listen to people who have not done the work necessary to at least begin to produce the performance that the system wants.

There is a general drift in our society toward more performance-based accountability. The education sector comes to this relatively late. We are way behind

the power curve; the internal structure and operations of our organizations are not aligned with this purpose. We are, actually, beautifully organized to produce attainment. We are beautifully organized to move kids through the grade structure. We are beautifully organized to sort out that proportion of kids who we choose to advance to the next level of education. This has been our historic function. The problem is, this is not what society wants us to do anymore. What society wants us to do is to produce performance. Performance is something else. Here is the evolution of performance-based accountability. Typically what happens—and many of you are living this experience now—is that state legislators, governors, and a few state school officers discover performance. They learn about how to organize tests; they learn about standards; they learn about accountability. They administer tests. They immediately discover that there are some high-performing schools and there are some low-performing schools. At some point in this process, it occurs to people that there is some correlation between social class, income level, and ethnicity of the students and the level of the performance of the schools. Let's pause to appreciate the surprise and shock.

But the crack of the bat has occurred. The ball is in play. What is the first response of most educators in the trench to the revelation that performance varies a lot by school, by grade level, by ethnicity? Yes, displaced blame. They make very possible cases about, "If we had the resources we could do this job that you are asking us to do." This is like raw meat to the politicians. There is nothing that gets a politician salivating any more than a minor, if inadvertent, expression of weakness. They head straight for the jugular. They begin to say, "Oh, OK."

The other thing we do is we complain about the tests. Of course they are not fair; they do not measure what we are actually trying to do. We are creating an entire system that is organized around producing something that is really not what education is about. "OK," they

say. "Tell us what kind of a test you want. Choose any test you want." Well, it so happens that when we administer the new test we get roughly the same results we got with the old test. It is just a more sophisticated version of what we already knew in the first place. The point is that the authorizing environment and society are closing in on us as a sector. They want performance. They would actually accept a different measure of performance over the long term if they actually thought we knew what we were talking about. You have to understand that part of what the contract is about is performance. It really is not about any particular kind of performance.

In fact, legislators know even less than superintendents and principals about standardized testing. Your average state legislator doesn't have a huge investment in the Stanford 9 or the MCASS or whatever; they just want performance. But when the response of the sector is defensive and consists of displacing responsibility, this creates a problem of legitimacy in the sector. What that means is that the push is for more detailed data about school performance, tighter performance accountability systems, more scrutiny of your operations rather than less. Defensiveness, in other words, incites more political pressure. We have now in many jurisdictions maneuvered ourselves into a place where, by our own defensiveness, we have created some serious problems. I am a big critic of a lot of the performance-based accountability systems in this country.

I am on record as saying that the state of California has the worst state accountability system in the country. People ask me about Massachusetts. I say about Massachusetts that I haven't the faintest idea because we have not had the discussion about the technical characteristics of this system that would legitimize [it]. There are huge problems with these things, but what I want to convince you of is that the underlying problem here is the legitimacy of this sector. Our fundamental legitimacy is being challenged. It is being challenged, and the social contract

is being rewritten around performance-based accountability. We do not get to choose whether to do it or not. Over the long term we get to choose how to do it. And that is the discussion I want to engage you in. I also want to say that, in my estimation, having spent a lot of time sitting in classrooms, watching teachers teach; interviewing them about their teaching—how they teach what they teach, why they teach what they teach—speaking to principals about the nature of their work, how they deal with instructional issues in their schools, I am convinced that the only way out of this problem is a dramatic increase in the quality of instruction. I will bet you that dramatic increases in the quality of instruction will produce performance on just about any measure the system can throw at it.

A dirty little secret here, which I will show you in a minute, is that high-quality instruction produces performance on any outcome measure. I am going to give you Elmore's Law for low-performing schools. I will say this as many times as you need me to if you are taking notes. I will go back over it several times. Children are more likely to score well on tests that they can read than on those they can't. It applies at the low end; it applies at the high end. Some of the biggest critics of the MCASS in the state of Massachusetts are the high-end charter schools that specialize in reading instruction. What do you think their scores look like? They look very good; they look excellent. They are not teaching to the test. What are they doing? They are teaching kids how to think. If the test requires many thinking skills or any verbal expression at all, kids tend to do well. It is an entirely separate question whether using that test with this accountability system is the right way to do accountability. I am talking to you purely about the relationship between the quality of instruction and performance on any measure. I will show you why that is the case.

The corollary of this is that instructional models that try to respond to performance-based accountability by teaching the test typically do not produce performance

beyond a certain point. That is mastery of test items, not instructional. It is pretty clear from the data that that is the case.

I have gotten ahead of myself a little bit here. I want to put one more footnote in about the nature of the problem we are facing. There are two sides to the current reform; we

think they are contradictory. People in the political sphere do not. They are actually not contradictory. One side is performance-based—an increasingly tightly constructed performance-based accountability based on tests, standards, content standards, and performance standards. The other side is a seeming fascination with deregulation and privatization of choice. So, at the same time that states tend to be cranking down on performance-based accountability in the public schools, they seem to be releasing control, creating more opportunity for schools to exit and for the creation of charters. Twelve or 13 states now have completely deregulated the system of teaching and administrator certification. So our future is that it is going to be largely performance-based. There are going to be vendors of all kinds.

I am on the record as saying this is the best thing that has happened to education administration in the history of the country. But the point is that we are pursuing a performance-based accountability strategy on the one hand and we are pursuing and deregulating choice-based market strategy on the other hand. Here is your future. Here is how the two are consistent. As policymakers perceive the system of centrally organized public education to be unresponsive to performance-based accountability, they open up the spigot on the system and increasingly create what I call 'capitation grants' for people to escape. They are going to get you one way or the other.

Who are the first people to leave when there are choice-based incentives? I think it is quality-conscious consumers. The evidence is pretty clear. And people who perceive themselves to be stuck in low-quality

environments that are unresponsive to them. The brilliance of this strategy now is that it cuts across the income and social class structure of this country.

I find it sort of amusing that the papers are writing about Bush jettisoning his voucher proposal. It is the tip of the iceberg. In the next 5 or 6 years we are going to have a half a dozen different capitation-based systems for moving kids out of the centralized system. In addition to charters, we are going to have portability on special needs funds one way or the other. That giant sucking sound you hear—because you have large numbers of Title 1 eligible kids—is that large amount of Title 1 money traveling out of your budget at some point. It will be impossible to hold that end together in Congress. At some point we are going to get portability.

**Participant question:** Will there still be a high performance expectation as they go out?

**Richard Elmore:** That is a very good question. That is the question. Will there still be a high performance standard as kids move out of the system into these other options? The answer currently is “No”. Most states have completely botched this problem. In other words, they have created nominal accountability systems for those schools that are supposed to be the same as the regular public school. But, in fact, the enforcement mechanisms and the capacity at the state level to actually do the accountability is largely nonexistent. It is inverse to the number of alternatives they could create. So the states that have the weakest performance-based accountability systems for charters and for various choice-based plans are the states with the most trouble.

**Participant question:** Is it because they do not know how to do it or are not well positioned to do it? In other words, they have not created the framework with which to do it. Or is that just another subtle form of hostility in public education?

**Richard Elmore:** I think this is one of those areas in which I have something that sounds vaguely like a

conspiracy theory. The deal that virtually every state legislature cut on performance-based accountability was that they gave the right wing charters to get them in the tent and they gave the moderate-to-left wing performance-based accountability. Remember, performance-based accountability was sponsored by the progressive government and the progressive legislature and was sponsored largely as an equity issue. What happened when the legislature came to put these two things together was they just said to the conservatives, “You figure out what kind of accountability you want on the charters side. We will figure out what kind we want on the public side.” That was a disastrous strategic error because it means now that we have parallel accountability systems operating.

The case that I want to make to you today is that the centrally organized sector, the sector that you run, has a powerful comparative advantage in this new model. But in order to have it, you have to recognize that you have it and you have to start to use it. I’m going to give you the big secret. The big secret is ‘overhead’. You have overhead. If I am a single school in a competitive market, how much overhead can I generate to do the improvement activities I need to do to compete with you on the quality of instruction? I am one unit; I generate a tiny, tiny little bit of overhead. I realize you do not understand this; you are not necessarily aware of it. You have not actually done the numbers on it, but you are sitting on a pile of money that you can use as a huge competitive advantage to demonstrate high-quality instruction and performance. You have the competitive advantage and structure. The big question for me is, are you are going to use it? To do this requires certain fundamental changes in the way the organization works. So that is what gets us to instructional leadership.

**Participant question:** Would you elaborate a little bit on performance? If I take that concept to the local level, two things seem to be getting in the way. One has to do with performance and some citizens and local taxpayers [focusing] on maybe the win/loss score

of the football team. Then in another sense, if we move from attainment to performance-based, never mind performance on what, there is a large segment of the local community that is pretty tradition-bound. Then we fall into another trap of “what the hell are they doing now?” Would you speak a little about that?

**Richard Elmore:** This is, I think, a very real problem. You are the people who face this windshield. It is never pretty. But let me just describe the problem in my terms and see if it matches yours. You have a state accountability system or a set of expectations about performance that delivers one set of messages, and you have local constituencies and history and tradition and global moorings that describe another. The two are often not even vaguely consistent. You end up mediating those two environments. Here is what I would say about that. This is not a good position to be in. To fail to bring the kids in your schools into the global economy is a huge disservice to them. So the bind is, how do you create an environment in which people come to understand that there are expectations out there in the world that affect the way we do business? We are getting one version of those expectations through the state accountability system. We can also craft our own. We can also say what the world expects of us, on the outside, but it is important for us to have that conversation. This requires a kind of educational role from the leaders of the system, which is really difficult because you have to stimulate conversation about the world out there and its requirements and how that affects what we teach in school. This has happened two or three times in the history of public education.

One thing that people in this sector forget is that the high school graduation rate—completion rate—in this country did not pass 50% until well into the 1950's. So we had a big conversation somewhere in that period about the function of public education and the importance of completing high school. Now we consider an 85-90% completion rate to be a failure. But it was not that long ago that less than half

the kids were actually finishing high school. So, this is a continuing project where you bring the public into a broader understanding of the world out there.

**Participant statement:** Often the children who have done well under an attainment system will be exactly those children who will do well under the accountability system. The bigger problem, and I face it in my community area, is you have to prepare all children for the global economy. That is where you get the tension in the community. Because, often, the families of children of attainment—not that they do not care about the others—but that is not where their interests lie, to the extent that [other students'] attainment of achievement interferes with the children of attainment.

**Richard Elmore:** Typically, the beneficiaries of the attainment system are also the main beneficiaries of the performance system. However, it makes parents who are heavily invested in the attainment system extremely nervous to find out the proportion of kids in the graduating class at Scarsdale, for example, who actually know how to do algebra at the 9<sup>th</sup>- or 10<sup>th</sup>-grade level. It makes them so nervous that they probably, in many instances, would rather not know. The point I am making here is that, yes, there is a high degree of correlation between the kids who succeed in the attainment system and the kids who succeed in the performance system, but the business of undermining the authority, credibility, and legitimacy of this system applies to all kids. Also, there is the political problem. Let me just tell you, the reason I asked you about the lowest performing kids in your high-performing high schools is because the dirty little secret here is that when you start running performance-based assessments and accountability there is not a school in the pile that does not have a problem, and a pretty big one. It only takes about two generations of revisions and amendments to these performance-based accountability systems before they box you in. They quit measuring mean scores; they start measuring quartiles. So suddenly you go from looking

really good to looking not so good. They quit measuring mean performance and start measuring value added. Suddenly there are half a dozen elementary and middle schools in central Boston that look much better than a random draw of suburban schools in the rings around Boston. Why? Because instruction is adding more to the performance of the students in inner-city schools in Boston than instruction is adding to the performance of the kids in suburban schools. This is Elmore's Second Law, which is that some teaching is generally better than no teaching.

If you have high socioeconomic status schools—and believe me I have been in these schools, sat in these classrooms, in these allegedly high-end classrooms—there is an astonishingly small amount of teaching going on. I have never seen so many examples of time wasting and killing. I have never seen so much instructional time reel off the clock before the first idea is introduced. I have never seen so much substitution of human relations for learning. Social capital may be driving performance to some degree, but as we drift into a performance-based system, problems are going to start crop up everywhere. If Bill Sanders value-added thing pans out, I think we are actually, at some point, going to have some version of a value-added accountability system. The deck is going to get reshuffled and there are going to be a lot of high socioeconomic status, suburban schools that are going to be in big trouble with their local constituencies.

**Participant question:** Very quickly, I am stuck on the big pile of money that we are sitting on right now. You will enlighten us, won't you?

**Richard Elmore:** That always gets a response. It just took a little longer than usual. I will give it to you a little bit at a time. The next layer of this is that you have already spent it on people. You either need a strategy for getting rid of the people and capturing the money and spending it on something else, or you need a strategy for using the people differently. If you are running a charter school or a parochial school and you

are sitting there trying to figure out how you are going to fund one day of professional development, and you look across the street at the public system and you look at the float in that organization, you say to yourself, "I hope they do not figure it out. I hope they do not figure it out because if they do I am dead in the water."

The problem of instructional leadership falls into four bins. My case to you is that—and this is going to sound a little primitive—you cannot have a theory of instructional leadership unless you have a theory of instruction. If you asked people who work for you to tell you what they think instruction is, what do you think you would get back?

**Audience participant:** A curriculum.

**Audience participant:** A rubric.

**Audience participant:** Learning capacity of student.

**Audience participant:** Textbooks.

**Audience participant:** Engaging students in learning.

**Audience participant:** It depends on their curriculum ideology.

**Richard Elmore:** So it has something to do with the norms and values that are represented in the curriculum. Just a pause here, if you read the literature on organizations that have transformed themselves in response to this performance-based economy, one of the really strong common themes is that the first thing they developed was a theory of the business they are in. And they stick with it. I know that you do not like private sector examples, but when Xerox was going down the tubes, David Kearns was the CEO. He went out and bought five top-of-the-line, Japanese copy machines. He brought them back to Xerox, put them in a room, and had the marketing people, the engineers, the production people sit in the room while they took these things apart and looked at them to figure out what it was about these machines that was technically superior to what Xerox was building. Out

of that, they built a theory of the business— that is, that they built the theory of customer relations, they built the theory of production around reliability, and they shortened up cycle time on reengineering so that the engineers were talking much more closely to the production people. They cut the cycle time for new products first in half and then in half again. They created a theory of the business that had to do with the product they were producing.

My point about instruction is that if you ask people in your organizations what instruction means, you will probably get a lot of different answers. They will all make sense in some way because these are people who know something about their work. But getting a lot of different answers is symptomatic of an organization that does not know what it is doing collectively. So the first point of entry is to build up a culture around what we mean by instructional practice in this system so that people can begin to talk to each other in a common way. The second is that you have to solve the accountability problem. Those of you who have read my work know that I make a big deal out of the fact that this sector is atomized. The work is basically done by people who live most of their professional lives in total isolation from the rest of the organization. Kids cycle through; they stand or sit in their classrooms. There is little or no direct inspection of their work. There is little or no contact with other people who are doing the same things. There is little or no pressure to have a common set of shared expectations about the nature of the work.

In a performance-based accountability system, this is a formula for disaster because it means that no one can manage the enterprise so as to produce performance. Management and administration in an atomized system consist of what I call “rain dance.” You engage in symbolic activities that are designed to demonstrate to the public that you are trying to levitate the organization. No one goes face-to-face and says, “I just noticed that in that last book discussion in your classroom, which was incidentally a fabulous book

discussion, five students did not utter a word. Did you notice that?” “As a matter of fact, I didn’t.” “Well, let’s look at the videotape and I will show you.” Those conversations virtually never occur about practice.

So, teachers have—and there is abundant evidence for this—completely inaccurate and unrealistic conceptions of their own practice. They will actually tell you they are capable of doing things in classrooms that they are completely incapable of demonstrating. They will subscribe to philosophical tenets about teaching that are completely absent from their practice. Does this mean that they are incompetent teachers? No. Anyone in this room, including me, would have the same problem if we practiced in isolation all the time. No one ever watches us do our work and tells us what they see. So, part of the problem here is to develop an internal accountability structure around instruction that supports the improvement of quality.

**Participant statement:** If you were to ask any number of superintendents about a major obstacle that they faced in terms of reform or instructional improvement, it would be the protectionist status of the rank and file of teachers.

**Richard Elmore:** Right.

**Same participant:** In what I see of reform efforts, say, in major cities, I know some of the ways in which people who are not simply mediocre but really incompetent are protected. And, yes, there are things that can be done. I do not mean that. I think probably most of us here have tried to do things to move out that float of either people who are just mediocre or incompetent. But it still strikes me that all the discussion about reform in this country is just a tremendous unwillingness to take on that protectionist class. There is no real level of concern to buy in.

**Richard Elmore:** No sense of urgency.

**Same participant:** No sense of urgency at all.

**Richard Elmore:** I do not want to make this sound like the big pile of money answer. But improving

systems find this problem to be a lot less difficult at the middle of the process than they do at the front end. It looks pretty horrendous at the beginning. It looks pretty awful because what you see is a hard core of resistance to any kind of relaxation of the norms of privacy around teaching, any kind of direct scrutiny of practice; a lot of bureaucratic, contract-based pushback about principals visiting classrooms; a lot of static. What typically happens, however, as systems move in the direction of universalizing the norm of what I call “communities of practice,”— that is, people looking at each others work and having an external benchmark for their evaluations and statements about their work—is that you very quickly discover the proportion of those resisting teachers who are capable of moving their instructional practice and those who are not.

That sound of thumping feet you hear is people leaving the system. They do not want to practice in a system in which there are actual expectations about the quality of their work. I will talk to you later about the pipeline because in order to solve that problem, both for teachers and for principals, you have to have a pipeline of people coming into the system to replace the ones who are going out.

There is a massive shortage. My feeling about that is, thank the lord there is a massive shortage. We are overcertified for both teachers and principals. We have a massive reserve pool of people out there who are actually certified to do this work. Thank heaven they are not applying for the jobs. They are not qualified to do the work that has to be done. The biggest thing we can wish for is that [this] reserve army of people who are certified in principalship and people who are certified in teaching do not enter the labor force because the quality will go down like a rock. So we have got a personnel issue here.

You have to have a theory of improvement and you have to have a theory of capacity. These four pieces [instruction, improvement, accountability, and

capacity] have to fit together in some way. I am going to give you the quick version of what this stuff looks like. It really is interesting that the answers you gave me to the question of what is instructional practice exactly correspond to this model. It is teachers and students in interaction around content. That model tells you two or three things. It tells you that you have three points of entry for any instructional improvement problem. You can enter through content. You can enter it by improving the skill and knowledge of teachers. You can enter it as we almost never do—but actually some of the most interesting instructional improvement processes enter here—by actually improving the dispositions, understandings, and social skills of students toward learning. So, that is point number one. You have three points of entry.

Once you get people to think about instruction as the relationship between teacher and student around content, then they acclimate to the notion that there are a variety of different ways to work on this problem. Anytime you enter at one point you automatically have to consider the other two. So if you change content, you cannot simply change the textbook. You have to change the teacher’s skill set that goes with the textbook and you have to work on students’ relationships to teachers around the content. That is the second thing that the model tells you. The first is that you have three entry points. The second thing is any time you enter on one, you have to address the other two. The third thing it tells you is that improvement is fundamentally a problem of knowledge and skill—period, full stop. If you do not have an answer to the knowledge and skill problem, you are not in the improvement business. You are in the “rain dance” business. If you do not have an answer to the knowledge and skill problem of students and teachers—that is, if you do not have a strategy for improving the knowledge and skill of students and teachers in the presence of content—you do not have a strategy.

Most systems do not have a theory of instruction and do not have a theory of instructional improvement.

They have a lot of people who are predisposed to do the work, who have the knowledge and skill or the predisposition to get it; they just do not have a way to mobilize it. It is operating on three dimensions around a common goal. One dimension is the individual teachers' and principals' senses of that for which they are personally responsible. We call that responsibility. The second dimension is the shared norms, values, and expectations that people in the organization have about the nature of their collective work. We call that expectations. The third is literally the process by which people account for what they do—norms by which people explain to each other what they are doing and how they are doing it.

Out of our work, I think, we get three big lessons. One is, the degree of alignment or consistency among what people say they are responsible for as individuals, what they say to be their collective responsibility as a group in the school, and the processes they have inside the school for holding each other accountable. The degree of alignment—that is, the degree of intersection among these three things—produces what we call internal accountability, and that is a coherent school. That is lesson number one. So a school that is aligned is a school in which the values and norms that individual teachers express about their relationships with students, content, and their colleagues are heavily aligned with the collective expectations people express about the vision and mission of the school. And those two things are aligned with the processes by which the school works. That is point number one.

Point number two relates back to the standards and performance-based accountability discussion. As far as we can tell, there is no external accountability without internal accountability. If you do not have some degree of organizational alignment, the odds that you are going to succeed in any kind of performance-based accountability system are extremely low. Now, I have actually seen a high school in one of the highest per capita income communities in this country, in a small New England state not too far from here, that actually

is high performing without any internal accountability. It is the only school that I have seen that operates that way. I actually gave a workshop in this district, stood up in front of a group of people, and had a nice conversation with them. After it was all over, the people in the room said, “You know this is the first time we have ever all been in the same room at the same time to talk about the same thing.” That is the only example that I have ever found of a school that has no internal accountability and high external accountability, and it is all operated on social capital. If you did a value-added analysis—that is, what is the actual value that instruction adds to the performance at that school—the value added would be close to zero. That is a school that is being totally powered by social capital and by, I would imagine, a rather brisk tutorial economy. It is probably a good place to be a French tutor. The point here is alignment, and there is no external accountability without internal accountability.

Now the modal school does not look like this. For the modal school in our sample, there is virtually no alignment between individual responsibility and expectations. The circles barely overlap. What do you think the most common collective expectation is that everyone in an atomized school can agree on?

**Audience participant:** To be left alone.

**Richard Elmore:** Oh, that one for sure.

**Audience participant:** Covering the content.

**Richard Elmore:** Not even that. You would be shocked at how much disagreement there is on covering the content.

**Audience participant:** Discipline.

**Richard Elmore:** Order in the hallways. That is the one premise on which you can get everybody in an atomized school to agree. It is like national security. It is a public good. You keep the noise down in your room; I will keep the noise down in my room. Keep the halls clear, that way there will be no occasion for

direct inspection of instruction. We all subscribe to this basic norm of keeping the lid on. So the modal case is one in which there is very little intersection between personal responsibility and collective expectation and there is virtually no internal accountability.

What do principals in these schools do? You have to create an [awful] lot of work, focused out there, to fill up the time that would otherwise be filled by actually making a school work around instruction. These people are geniuses at doing this and [they are] overworked by the problems of discipline, transportation, athletics, scheduling, parent issues. If you actually do the numbers on these folks, the amount of time they spend focused on any instructional issue at all is a tiny, tiny part of their time—actually much smaller than they think it is.

That is the instruction issue; that is the accountability issue. I just want to talk to you a little bit about improvement and then get back to the issue of resources and the huge pile of money that you are sitting on. The pitch that I like to make to people is that if I could remove one word from the vocabulary of educational leaders it would be the word ‘change’ because the problem is not about change. This system has been frenetically involved in change, promiscuously involved in change, changing at the drop of a hat for a 100 years. The existing organizational structure of most schools and school systems consists of the layered sedimentation of the various responses the organization has made to change. So, if I could influence anything, I would switch the rhetoric from the rhetoric of change to the rhetoric of improvement. And I have a really simple and bone-headed definition of improvement.

On the vertical is performance. Remember you have got a measure of performance that is dictated to you, but you also have the capacity to create performance measures inside the organization. On the horizontal you have time. Improvement is getting the herd to go roughly northeast [diagonal line indicating performance increases as time increases]. It does mean that

you have to have some understanding of what you are trying to get by way of performance. You have to have some understanding that it is done over time and you have to have a strategy for increasing the knowledge of skilled people in the organization such that you produce performance.

The expectation of most accountability systems is this: Wherever you start, you are expected to go in a more-or-less linear fashion straight at some improvement goal and you are supposed to get there in a fixed period of time. The notion is that over time people will get better and better at understanding how to improve performance and they will make their internal operations work more clearly in the service of performance. The actual path looks more like this. [Overhead shows a curved line with initial improvement, performance dips and flat areas, and an eventual second upturn of improvement.]

Let me take a low-performing school to start with because we have a lot more evidence on low-performing schools and their paths of improvement than we do on high-performing schools. This zone here [initial improvement]—what I call the “take-off”—is, in most low-performing schools, the zone that is described by some teaching versus no teaching. That is, you can get a fairly substantial impact on performance on any external measure simply by saying, “We are going to teach reading 90 minutes a day.” It is shockingly insensitive to the kind of reading we teach. This is what we call the ‘low-hanging fruit’. If you do as we have done, and sit in a lot of classrooms, you understand how little real instruction there is actually going on. When you say, “Let’s teach reading 90 minutes a day,” and you create some kind of internal accountability where somebody actually shows up and says, “By my watch it is reading time, what is happening here,” and you do that with some kind of universality, you would be shocked by the amount of reading instruction that actually occurs.

Now, that is without bringing in any fancy instructional method. What often happens is, when you start

the process of actually improving instructional practice, performance goes flat. It does not go up like people expect. Sometimes it even goes down. The reason it does not go up is because people are consolidating the knowledge they had about the impact of actually teaching and they are learning new skills to do it better. Within a relatively short period of time the curve goes up again. In some senses, the biggest gains are the gains that are produced in the second stage where you actually take the instructional time that you had in the first place and put new instructional practice with it. People learn it deeply, and the performance starts to show.

**Participant question:** Did you get any sense of real time passage in terms of take-off, consolidation, and the second-stage learning?

**Richard Elmore:** For these periods, in a system that has virtually no experience with large-scale improvement, they tend to operate on one- and two-year cycles. That is to say, you can do it [the initial improvement] just by opening school, and you get this performance effect [second rise] by the next testing period. This whole period here can take as long as it takes to get professional development mounted for all the teachers in a given grade level in given subject matter. A lot of systems, because they do not understand that they are sitting on a huge pile of money, say, “Oh, let’s see. Let’s do 10 teachers a year. We have 120 teachers. That is 12 years. We can do that.” It is the systems that say, “All the first- and second-grade teachers are going to do it in the summer before school opens. And there is going to be a literacy coordinator in every school, and the literacy coordinator is going to be in every classroom everyday,” that produce the second gradient in under a year. Everybody experiences the flattening out. Teachers feel as though they have lost their grip on the teaching of reading and they feel like they are not doing well before they feel like they are starting to do well.

Systems that have a lot of practice at this— and it is

unfair to use District 2 as an example because they have been at this for 12 years, but the last time they went through a major revision of their literacy program, they did it in 3 months. The development, the cycle time from the time they decided to change the literacy program in the lowest performing schools to the time they actually got the instruction in the classroom, was 3 months. That is because they have a very powerful infrastructure for delivering professional development, they have high internal accountability, they have principals who spend 80-90% of their time in classrooms, and they have a literacy coordinator in every school. They have the infrastructure to support that and they support that out of their base budget, which means that they do not do a lot of other things. So the short answer to your question is that it depends on how much practice you have had. Educators tend to do these things in annual cycles, and because we tend to do them in annual cycles and because we tend to bite off very small chunks in the initial stages, it takes a long time typically to get the first benefits.

**Participant question:** Isn’t that part of the problem? Because we cannot stop the assembly line, so to speak, for retraining and time becomes the major issue?

**Richard Elmore:** Yes, but it also has to do with peoples’ internal time clocks. In San Diego there are 150,000 students and something like 10,000 teachers. When they decided to drop the coin on literacy, they ran 5000 teachers through the first round of professional development in the summertime. They ran 5000 teachers the next time through, so there was a big overlap between the first and the second populations. Some of them were getting second-generation literacy training and so forth. Now, that was a system that was starting, in many schools, very close to ground zero. In two budget cycles, two years, they went from being kind of average to being the highest performing urban school district in the state of California. Now, the literacy coordinators, the instructional leaders, the superintendent, and the chancellor for instruction will tell you that literacy

instruction did not change that much, that the big changes in instruction and the big payoff in performance are still a year away. They got those gains simply by getting every single one of those 5000 teachers to focus on a specific piece of literacy instruction for a whole year with a group of students and by creating an internal accountability system. It depends on what your internal clock is and it depends on how ambitious you are. All that money came out of their core budget. They paid for it politically, but it all came out of their core budget.

**Participant question:** Would you comment on the role of peer coaching in this whole take-off?

**Richard Elmore:** I want to take your comment about peer coaching and extend it to a more general theme. The fundamental problem here is a knowledge and skill problem. The threshold you have to step across is just the understanding and acknowledgment of the fact that we, fundamentally, do not know how to do this. The learning curve is pretty steep on the front end, but every single one of you has the wherewithal among the people that you work with to figure out how to do this. Everybody has a nucleus of people who can put their energy in on this, and you have already bought a very large proportion of those people. They are in your base budget. The money that you are spending on this thing is money you have already spent. It is a matter of getting it focused and aimed at something. Having looked now at schools and school systems that have actually institutionalized this, it strikes me that they all have one thing in common: They all look at the knowledge and skill problem as a pipeline problem. This is a quiet revolution that is going on in school districts, and no one has written about it. It is very prominent in school districts that have undertaken large-scale improvement strategies. They are aggressively internalizing their human resource function. They are taking over the certification of principals—the school districts are—and they are taking over the certification, recruiting, and induction of teachers. They built up an internal

human resource development process that is focused typically on one or two content areas and they have created a nucleus of people in the system that they are grooming to have the expertise to run that process in the content areas.

Let me describe to you what this system looks like when it is fully developed. A brand new teacher comes in. That teacher comes from what I call a 'preferred provider,' which is to say these districts do not run open searches. If you get a job through an open search in a district like this, you know that you are not among the chosen. They are filling in a slot. They have set up a network of relationships with teacher-training programs. They largely do this by opening themselves up to close institutional relationships around teacher preparation—student teachers. Their lines of recruitment of novice teachers come into this system from preferred providers, and they put those teachers in closely supervised practice with more experienced teachers, typically focused on content in only one or two areas—typically only literacy and math. They build up the practice of those teachers over time. And because they have been careful in their recruitment, some of those teachers begin to take on the role of mentoring other teachers who are coming in.

Notice, by the way that you have inducted teachers and by the way that you have mentored them, you have created a pool of talent through professional development and mentoring which is available to the system. That all requires release time from instruction because most of the mentors are actually full-time teachers who are released for some period of the day. That requires a very sophisticated substitute and overstaffing arrangement to cover the times of teachers who are in a classroom mentoring other teachers.

Out of the professional developers who deliver this skill and knowledge to the teachers who are working, and out of the mentor pool, they create a pool fund from which they recruit candidates for principal certification. They run their own principal certifica-

tion programs in alliance with colleges and universities; typically half the instruction is run in the district and half is run at the institution. They create a pool of applicants for principalships that are vacated, which is, roughly over a 3-year cycle, twice as large as the number of vacancies. And they typically require people who sign on to that preparation program to sign a contract saying that they will take one of the first three principalships that they are offered.

Out of the core of experienced principals, they have mentors for the professional developers and mentors for teachers who are in preparation for the principalship. Out of that pool of experienced principals comes—*tah-dah*—your successor. Now what you get is cultural coherence; you get an entire cohort of people who have a common view of instruction. You get a series of preferred provider connections, so you stabilize the recruitment and hiring process. You get an array of leadership opportunities for people in the system that is larger than the number of formal leadership roles. You get distributed leadership and you always have a surplus of people who are qualified to do the work you want them to do.

This is happening in a number of school systems, and I would have to ask myself why it has not happened more frequently. Can you give me the answer to that question? Lack of stability in leadership.

**Participant statement:** What has happened is that another system was developed in the same way, and that has to be replaced.

**Richard Elmore:** You have to blow off the cartel, and 12 states have done that. So that grinding, metal-on-metal sound you hear in the state of Massachusetts is the Harvard Graduate School of Education rearranging its teacher certification and principal certification programs. We have actually done this in one annual cycle. Why? Because if we do not do it, we are not in the business anymore. We have gotten beat to the punch by a couple of institutions that were slightly more alert than we were to what was going on in the

environment. We are now actively competing with at least two other institutions, and we are actually having to say what value we can add to people who want to be teachers and principals. For me this is Valhalla, this is paradise, this is what I have been trying to do. I have been recommending blowing up the cartel for 10 years. The downside of this is another issue, but in the states that have deregulated certification this is now possible. You people can be in the teacher certification business and in the principal certification business. And the quicker you get into that business, either by yourselves or in consortia, the quicker you are going to stabilize your human resource issue.

I just want to leave you with one thought. Most high-performing organizations in most sectors of our society have already done this human resource strategy; they know how to do it. The question I want to leave you with is why the one sector in our society that is supposed to specialize in learning and human skill development has not done it. This is supposed to be our expertise. I think we have a lot to bring to this issue and I think, in many respects, this human resource investment strategy is the thing that is going to actually dominate the competition in the K-12 sector. It is the thing that is going to make it impossible for single firms like charters, because they simply won't be able to mount the level of investing in human resources to maintain quality. And it is the thing that is actually going to drive the performance-based accountability system because, sooner or later, the system will give the performance—the responsibility for redefining performance—back to the sector.

#### Comments from superintendent panel

**C. Patrick Proctor (Superintendent of Schools, Windham, Conn.):** It is hard to know how to respond to all of that—not just information—but the provocative set of ideas. I think several things intrigued me about what Dr. Elmore has presented to us. Number

one, I just simply accept his beginning set of assumptions in terms of where this society is heading and how we need to catch up with that or else face elimination through competition. I do not think it is now a matter of 'whether,' it is a matter of 'how' we do it. I also accept the premise that we do not know how at this point. I often tell my staff back in the Windham Public Schools that we are in the process of figuring things out; we have not yet. It does not mean that we cannot. But that is our job now and on into the future. In part, I have additional questions to pose to Dr. Elmore. I am intrigued by this notion of the deregulation of certification and I am wondering does that mean that you have to be operating in a state in which certification, in fact, has been deregulated? And if not, how does one do it? In other words, how does one end-run one's state department of education? I can tell you that in Connecticut I have not figured that out. It is one of the most difficult challenges we face in terms of recruiting and retaining the kind of staff that we need for our school district.

To me, the most compelling implications with respect to this, in addition to just knowing how to do it, are features of our system that relate primarily to how we use people—not just how we use them functionally, but what categories of people we maintain versus those that we no longer need. For example, right now I am in the process of converting a variety of paraprofessional positions to full-time, full-day kindergarten positions, and there is a huge uproar in my district among the teachers who have had full-time aids since time immemorial. It is not just an issue of how you use people differently in the same position, but rather what kinds of positions and roles are we looking at as we face this uncertain future?

A second area of major concern is how we configure time. Maybe, of all the areas where I have greatest concern given the way we are organized to deliver education to our children, how we use time seems to me among the most challenging in terms of altering those norms. I am not just talking about [extending]

time. Usually when the conversation about time comes up, you talk about extending the school year, extending the school day. Those are pretty traditional ways of responding to this. I am talking about how you use the time we now have available. I do not have much hope that Connecticut is going to go to a 220-day school year anytime soon. So I need to figure out—as a school leader, as a district leader—how to use the time we have more productively. This notion of, you can get an immediate response in terms of student achievement just by simply requiring it. A certain block of time is dedicated to reading or mathematics or whatever else you think is important. So, the notion of block scheduling, which is mostly applied to high school settings, for elementary schools? Some of you may be doing that already. Next year in my school district, math and reading will be blocked, two hours reading and an hour and one half for math in every single classroom in our system. That level of accountability as a first step, that seems to me to be critically important. Now what to do within that block, that becomes the next level of concern.

Let me conclude simply by saying, in terms of this whole area of human resource development, this whole challenge we have about human resource development and professional development for our staff, is huge. Not just in terms of what our teachers need under these configurations, but in terms of how we provide the time in order to make it happen. One last thing, and it is really a question for Dr. Elmore. We always think of small as being good. My district is one high school, one middle school, four elementary schools and a pre-K center. But as I listen to you, Dr. Elmore, I am thinking that part of what I have heard, in terms of the districts that are accomplishing these initiatives, is that there are real advantages to economies of scale in terms of these particular human resource development initiatives. I am wondering what implications there are for districts—which actually represent most of the districts across this nation—that are small in size and that may not have

the flexibility in terms of that kind of scale. How do we capitalize on the advantages of our size and eliminate the disadvantages of that under this new set of circumstances that we are facing?

Let me also say, I do like Dr. Bracey and I do respect his work. Dr. Bracey, for me, is saying he provides a no-blame, no-shame message. That makes me feel good. It is not our fault necessarily. What would be our fault—and this is where your message comes in—is if we do not read the handwriting on the wall for the future and respond to it. I reconcile your two messages in that way.

**Rick Lyon (Superintendent of Schools, Hamden, Maine):** I would like to pick up on the point that Patrick mentioned with respect to the utilization of time. I would like to focus, maybe, on that pool of money. I would like to think that we would challenge ourselves to look at the time as [this]: How are we going to commit the resources? How are we going to have our personnel work in different ways? If we acknowledge the fact that things need to change—we need to do things differently, better, more effectively, more efficiently—I would argue that one of the ways that we do that is, we have to give people the time to do it. That can be within the confines of the day or in the work year. There is no question that we can again assess the way in which we currently use the structure of the day. But, given the magnitude of the things that you presented us with today and certainly that we heard last evening, I would argue that, unequivocally, in order to move forward we are going to have to address the way we as professionals work within the confines of the day and within the confines of the year. That is basically my point. I think, as you certainly heard from Patrick, there are very intriguing components that [Dr. Elmore] brought up today, many of which I agree with and some that I would take exception to. But, nevertheless, I think my pitch would be for the time we need to look at as educators.

**Dr. James M. Halley (Superintendent of Schools, North Kingstown, R.I.):** In our administrative counsels we have a set of cards, and one of the cards has 'more money' on it, one has 'more time', one has on it 'more people,' one has 'we have already tried that field of work last time,' and we have a couple of more that I can not remember right now. But what we try to do is hold up those cards whenever anybody says those things. It is my opinion—and I think that I agree with a lot of what has been said here—that the problem in education is will. It is the ability, our will, to do something about it. You are correct; we have money. In terms of class size, we have a class size [ratio] of 12-to-1 if we use all of our teachers in the classroom in North Kingstown. We have gotten stuck in a pullout model that has basically built dependency not only for our students but also for our staff. So, as we have implemented special education, art, music, [physical education], and all the other types of things at the elementary level or at the secondary level and have gotten specialists in those areas, we have lessened the capacity of our staff to deal with educating the whole child. We have created a dependency within our staff, a dependency within our students.

We did it meaningfully. We did it with good intentions, but the result now is that we have people who think that they cannot teach students with special needs or with second language problems. They think that they cannot do it, so they are unable to do it. We spend \$200 per student in North Kingstown on staff development. We took that money out of staffing. That was not very popular the first year that we did it. It is becoming a lot more popular right now. We took materials and materials selection out of staffing, and we have an ongoing materials selection and review process. But you had to take money from someplace else because it was being spent on staffing. Those were not popular things to do but they are system-building things that build capacity and they are things that you have to do as a school system. We trained all of our teachers over a 3-year period in a [system] that breaks

down teaching into 12 parameters and defines what those parameters are. Every single teacher in our system has been trained in that, and every single principal has been trained in that. We use that as a basis for our evaluation system. We have common language for instruction. If you say 'clarity' everybody in the system knows what is meant by clarity. You need to do those kinds of things in order to create a culture within a school system for change.

I disagree with you in terms of this not being done because I think it is being done in a lot of places. I do not know that it is being mainstreamed within the literature, but the building of capacity, the building of common language—in many ways these are old ideas. I mean if you look back to the whole beginning of the improvement process and continuous improvement and stuff that actually began in the '50s and was kind of left aside, I think that those ideas were there. I think somehow, maybe as an organization or in totality, perhaps educators lost track of these processes, but I think that there are many places where they are being practiced and where schools are improving. Now I cannot say for certain that North Kingstown is where it should be. I do not think that we will ever be where we should be, but we are working towards a continuous improvement program. We are working towards that for staff, for teachers, for students, and we are emphasizing education. I think that it is well within our resources and our abilities to be able to do that. I think we all know how to do it. It is a matter of having the will to do it. And it does take a lot of work and a lot of 'bull-doggedness'.

**Richard Elmore:** I will be very brief. I just want to begin by observing that this conversation would not have had the same quality as recently as 5 or 6 years ago—the kinds of questions you raise, the kinds of practices you refer to. Let me just focus on the things that you said that I think are powerful. One is this idea that probably the largest source of resources in the existing system is how people use their time. When you manage that in terms of a coherent view of

instructional improvement, you get a big impact. Despite the fact that people often resist the redefinition of their work up front, they frequently take a powerful amount of motivation from being able to work at something they can be successful at. So, narrowing the scope of responsibility, focusing it, and making it possible to succeed are powerful motivators. That, in a sense, captures one of the largest resources.

The second biggest source of resources in this pile of money is existing positions that have no value added for instructional purposes. That is often fraught with huge political difficulties. Believe me, the longer I am at this, the more respect I have for the people who do this. Alan Berson and Tony Alvarado zeroed out 600 Title 1 aids in San Diego to produce somewhere on the order of \$8 million dollars in revenue for professional development and had to fight an incredible political battle. The teachers who had those aids in the classrooms swore that they were losing an important resource. The head of the paraprofessionals union said, "We lost our opportunity to demonstrate the instructional contribution of those people." She admitted that they had no real instructional value in the classroom. So, that is the second largest resource—cashing out positions that are present in the system because of decisions we have made in the past, but have no direct connection to instruction.

I think Jim said something that is powerful. [He] has been at this for a long time, but I think [he is] an outlaw. You said something really powerful that one would not have heard in a setting like this as recently as 5 or 6 years ago. "My staffing ratio is 12-to-1." That is a very, very powerful statement because, if you take that as your base—if you take the number of students, divide it by the number of teachers—that is your starting point. Every increment back from that has huge resource implications, and it is not all in just making more efficient use of teachers in the classroom. There is time in that ratio for mentoring, for recruitment of a cadre of professional developers internally. You've done this, Jim. I am just making it

explicit. Karen Hawley Miles, who is part of our research operation, has done these numbers on a dozen of our school systems. The common theme among those dozen systems—and this should make you feel good—is that they did not actually know what their staffing ratios were until she told them. They actually did not.

It is not productive to argue about the state of the art out there. It is pretty astonishing, things like this. But I think that is exactly what is required under the circumstances. You start with the pool of resources you have, and you look at what you've got, and then you back the improvement strategy out of that understanding. Each student you add and each reassignment you make has to have value added for the instructional process. That is a powerful way to think about your budget. I think it is also really powerful for the organization to understand that the way you think about professional development is \$200 per student.

**James M. Halley:** It should be more.

**Richard Elmore:** But it is a really powerful way to think about it, as a resource allocation problem. You took this money out of the staffing pattern of the overall budget and put it into professional development. Your per-student allocation is this amount, and you are allocating in this way. So, the organization begins to understand that this is a scarce resource that is being used to improve knowledge and skill. The reason I want to persevere on that is, I think that culturally we are not used to thinking about professional development as a function of the organization. We are also not used to thinking about it as lined up around instructional improvement strategy. We are used to thinking about it as a set of activities [in which] people engage. Calling the numbers in terms of the per-person weight encourages people to think about it as an activity that flows through the organizations and should accrue to students in the form of increased quality of instruction, learning, and ultimately performance. I just wanted to call attention to

those things that seem to be powerful examples of how to bring this kind of management practice to the problem.

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## CURRENT WORK OF THE ANNENBERG INSTITUTE

### Warren Simmons

Yesterday I was introduced in New York City as an expert. And I always say I am not an expert. I have had too many failures in my life to be considered an expert. Plus, it is a static notion, as if at some point you know everything you need to know and everything you know works. In fact, I consider myself a person who has expertise. For me, expertise means that from your successes and mistakes you make adaptations and you improve. I have been reinforced in that notion by a paper that I read recently by Charles Paine, who does a lot of ethnographic research in school reform in Chicago and is now at Duke University. In a particularly powerful line in that paper he says, “If school reformers were students, they would be labeled learning disabled.” In part, what he argues is that we often treat our models as sacrosanct rather than treating them in the way the engineers do—that is, as ideas, frameworks to be tested and modified based on experience. The current work of the Annenberg Institute, I think, represents the leadership team’s understanding of the successes and failures that we all have had over time, and how we now need to modify our approaches and strategies because we know that there will be more success, but we are still going to encounter problems along the way.

Let me give you a little bit of my background, at least in the last decade. I found myself working in the Prince George’s County public schools in Maryland where I was director of equity initiatives and equity assurance programs. I was working for superintendent John Murphy, which meant that I was responsible for the Black Male Achievement Initiative, multicultural education, the compensatory education program, Even Start, and Head Start. At that time, the commu-

nity, like many others in the country, was very concerned about the achievement gaps particularly between black males and other students. We implemented the Coleman School Development Program and many other programs, and did a district-wide, community study on black male achievement. It looked at the system’s role—not just the student’s role and not just the school’s role—and, probably, the kinds of gaps that we saw were prevalent for not only low-income black students but for middle-income [black students as well]. So I had experience working in the district-office level with the superintendent, school board members and principals, and parents and community groups.

After 3 years in Prince George’s County, I left to join the new standards project around 1993. Mark Tucker and Lauren Resnick, whose work you probably know, started a project that included 17 states and 6 school districts. Vermont was a member early on and I think Maine was a member of the new standards project early on. In those early, naive days I saw the standards movement as an opportunity to bring to the table the voices that had not been [heard] in the past to define what students should know and be able to do in math, science, English, language arts, and so forth. For me, the standards movement was an opportunity to get African American, Latino, and disadvantaged people to the table for the first time in our nation’s history in order to have a conversation about what students should know and be able to do and to apply that discussion not just to some groups of students but to all students.

There were two opportunities that I saw back in the early ’90s. One was that now everybody could get involved in defining what the goals and focuses of schooling should be within or across discipline areas. Two: Our society, for the first time, was going to apply a set of high standards not just to some students but also to all students. At least that was the rhetoric of the time. To back that rhetoric up, we were going to embed these standards and a variety of measures that

were going to be rich, performance based, and would inform policymakers and guide practitioners. So, in the early days of standards-based reform we had teachers from these 17 states and curriculum specialists from these 17 states working hard to define and develop standards, and then to develop tasks based on classroom practice that would be used to build the performance-based assessment system or multiple components of a performance-based assessment system, including a standardized, open-ended assessment and student portfolios.

One of the most important pieces of the standards project, I thought, was that back in 1994 the members involved, which included chief state school officers, governors, and union leaders, created and signed on to something called the Social Compact. It said that while we would hold schools accountable for leading these high standards through the developing assessment systems, we would not hold students accountable until we demonstrated or had evidence that schools they attended provided opportunities to learn and gave them the supports they needed to meet the standards if they worked hard enough. That was a moment when a tear came out of the corner of my eye, and people signed on to this. Now, 6 years later, what are we doing? We are holding the students accountable for meeting standards and we have put the issue of opportunity to learn aside for somebody to work on at some later point in time.

I then went to Philadelphia, which for me was the first time I experienced standards-based reform at the local level. I had spent three years talking to governors, chief state of school officers, CEO guys, a president here or there. I was just in the back of the room in a corner as opposed to at the table. But to be in the room was progress. So when I got to Philadelphia with David Hornbeck—he came as superintendent, and I came as director of the Philadelphia Education Fund—we said, “Let’s do standards-based reform at the district level.” We had been dealing with this primarily at the state level. So, achievement actually had 10

components: high expectations, performance-driven accountability, intensive professional development, decentralization, more technology instructional material, preparing children to come to school ready to learn, and four other things. But the tenth element was that you had to do all nine things simultaneously. You could not cherry-pick the list and decide to do only standards but no accountability, only decentralization with no standards, only professional development but no standards. The idea was that you had to do all nine things.

We got started. We actually had standards developed locally. We convened teams of teachers, principals, higher education representatives, parents, and community leaders, and we developed standards. We had local standard-writing teams. We took the standards that were drafted by those writing teams in seven different discipline areas and we submitted them to standards-review teams that were organized by the 22 clusters that were formed to build up the high school from the middle school and elementary schools. Again, the review teams were composed of principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders at the cluster level. They commented on the drafts. We revised the drafts and then we sent them to the board. The board held public hearings and community focus groups. They had a national advisory panel that came in and commented on our standards. During the first year people were very excited about this process and felt that the standards were honed.

Then, in the second year, we introduced what we called a professional responsibility system, which was an accountability system. From that point on, all the other elements of the reform—the eight other elements—disappeared from the conversation and people began describing children’s achievement in school reform in Philadelphia as testing and accountability. Little else received very much attention. It was a very important lesson for me. Early on, although only schools were being held accountable, the conversation included accountability for individual teachers. Even

though the accountability system really only applied to schools, the public language was that this was being done to teachers. In fact, very early on, leadership of the teachers' union argued that if you were going to hold teachers accountable—which we were not, we were holding schools accountable—you had to hold students accountable. So, to compromise with the teachers' union, we began to apply consequences to students within the third year of the reform. I am saying 'we' here because I was part of the team. There was lots of dissention and disagreement within the leadership.

Those experiences led me to where I am now at the Annenberg Institute. I have been here for two and a half years. This is our mission right now, basically—to generate, share, and act on knowledge that will improve schooling in America, the conditions, and the outcomes of school particularly in urban schools and schools serving disadvantaged students. The way in which we enact that mission actually comes from the lessons that the members of the team have learned over our respective careers in school reform. We now have four initiatives and, in talking about them, I will basically lay out the lessons that we and some of our partners have learned in school reform.

One of our initiatives is district redesign. We have a task force on the future of urban districts, and it is named School Communities That Work. The task force has a core group of 15 prominent people—Hugh Price from the Urban League; Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation; Rod Paige, who is now our Education Secretary; and other people like that. The core group's deliberations are informed by three design groups. One of the design groups is named Building Capacity. This is a group of six or seven people primarily focused on thinking about how you would design a district that would support curriculum development, professional development, and instructional tool technology at the school level. How would a district do that well, and do it in a way that is focused, aligned, and sustained over time?

And, it would produce improvements not just in a small set of schools but across a community of schools with the understanding that those schools have different needs. That design group is co-chaired by myself and Deanna Burney, who has done a lot of work with Dick Elmore. Ask yourselves the question, how would a district do its business differently if it was going to support quality teaching and learning across a community of schools, not just some? This community of schools would supposedly be working towards high standards, but understanding that kids have different starting points, different needs, and different characteristics.

The second design group is called Organizing, Governing, and Managing Schools, and is co-chaired by Don McAdams, who is a school board member in Houston and works at the University of Houston; and Paul Hill, who is at the University of Washington and has done a lot of work on charter schools and district-level reform. That group is asking itself, how would a district organize itself, manage information, and manage human resources in ways that would ensure that each school has high-quality staff, high-quality leadership, the information that it needs both in terms of dollars that it has in the budget and also in terms of student performance and teacher performance to make continuous improvements? How do you develop the management and information systems and the human resource systems at the district level that would give schools, in a decentralized manner, more control over their resources? At the same time they get the information, they need to be accountable to their community and to the governing authority at the local level, which is usually the school board.

The last design group is called Family Community Supports, and it is co-chaired by Mildred McLaughlin at Stanford University, Norm Fruchter of NYU, and Greg Hodge, who is a school board member in Oakland. That design group is trying to develop tools and models for how a district might work with its schools and community organizations and agencies to

ensure that students have supports for learning both inside and outside of schools—but supports that are aligned, not so separate and parallel and unrelated. You have, in many cases, kids getting tutoring outside of school that has very little relationship to the reading curriculum or the math curriculum that they are experiencing in school. They are working on technology outside of school in the neighborhood community center, but they cannot connect to the instructional reading program that's overlooking technology in their elementary or middle school. It is less efficient than it might be. So, that group is thinking about those issues.

This issue of the district has come up increasingly, in part, because of what I learned. But what lots of people are learning right now is that in the last decade of school reform we have acted in two fashions. One, there has been a group of reformers who have considered themselves the bottom-up, school-by-school people. They basically have models that describe how you change individual schools. I think we are all very familiar with those models. Some of them are represented in the old-order legislation. We started out with about 40 of them, and now there are 150 of them and growing. They are the typical ones: Talent Development, Success For All, Coalition of Essential Schools, Accelerated Schools, and The Coleman School Development Program.

Those kinds of models provide a set of principles, frameworks, components, and tools that enable you to change an individual school. Often what those model developers argue is that if you give schools these supports they can change themselves. Their implementation strategy is that if you have these schools work with them from their national offices, sending professional development personnel or a coach to a school two or three times a year with a model and some ideas, that is sufficient to create change. Each of these programs has evaluation data that show that some schools that do this do well. What they do not have is a lot of data that show that the schools that do

well continue to do so over time. You will find that, at any one time, they have a set of schools that are doing well. But if you come back to some of those schools 5 years later, they are no longer doing well. What all of those programs are beginning to discover is that they do not have the capacity to support reform as more and more schools start to ask for their services.

What I experienced of those models when I worked with them in town development in Philadelphia was that they began to deal with the implementation-infrastructure issue and began to think about what other kinds of supports—other than a model, framework, tools, and a coach from a national office—they needed to create locally to support change and take it to scale. They also began to think about the ways that they needed to interact with the district. For some of them, saying 'district' is a bad thing. It is like they are avoiding a plague. Many of these model developers, their notion of reform is, "Just do it at the school level, and get the district out of the way." Either get waivers from this entity, or eliminate it and give us charter schools. So, from the bottom-up perspective, people have argued that all you need is a plan to change an individual school, and the most people have thought about the district is that it is something to be avoided or eliminated. But how you work with the district to actually take reform to scale in a community of schools—these model developers have not spent a lot of time thinking about that recently. That is the bottom-up side. They want to get rid of you or get waived from your policies and practices.

Then you have what is called the 'top-down' side; guys at the national level and state level and federal level. These guys have spent a lot of time thinking about developing standards and accountability and saying, "We will do standards and accountability and maybe give you some dollars for special development, and we will get out of your way as long as you are improving. If you are not improving we will come in and reconstitute you." The 'you' in that case is also the school. It is as though guys in state departments of education and

in the U.S. Department of Education believe that the answer for the failing school is for the state to come in and take an individual school over. What I have observed, and what they are increasingly observing, is that they do not think about districts either. So, the bottom-up people operate on schools and the top-down people operate on schools without a clear theory about the role of the district other than you are there, you are doing something.

I guess, implicitly, both the top-down people and the bottom-up people are not thinking about you and do not think you are particularly relevant to school improvements or school change. When I have worked in districts, I have been surprised with the amount of comfort with that at the district level. That is to say, I do not find people in districts doing a lot of vocal complaining about what the state says it can do, what the feds say it can do, or what model developers [say]. It is as if the district goes along with this blindly. I think what we all are beginning to see happening is that the public is beginning to lose patience with the brand of school reform that we have been engaged in, both the bottom-up side and the top-down side. That impatience is beginning to increase sympathy for nonpublic charter schools, voucher proposals, and disintegration of the public education system as we now know it.

Having faced and come to grips with that, bottom-up people and top-down people are now asking the question, what do we do with districts? In asking that question they have found that there is a remarkable vacuum of data. Ask yourself the question, has anyone done a study of high-performing districts? The answer to that question, right now, is that there are about three or four studies that get cited over and over again on what a high-performing district looks like. Elmore's study of District 2; the Data Center in Texas just did a study of high-performing districts in Texas; Jim Spillane out of Northwestern University has looked at some of the characteristics of high-performing districts. It is something that people have not

studied because it has not been explicitly in the conversation. People talk about professional development and, maybe, what a district should do. But overall people have not focused on what districts should be doing.

So we are now engaged in this work. Something called the Learning Alliance in Washington, D.C. is now engaged in this work. The Council of Chief State School Officers is beginning to embark on a district initiative and the Cross-City Campaign for Urban School Reform is beginning to do so as well. In fact, there were a lot of pioneering organizations that, 6 years ago, looked at the district—but in terms of redesigning them more than understanding what it is they currently do and how can they do it better. The question becomes, in this initiative, if you are engaged in standards-based reform, and if we know that most districts have a mix of schools—high performing, low performing, the mediocre middle—how do you organize your supports to get all schools working toward high standards but providing supports that are differentiated enough because you understand that some schools may need lots of direction and prescription? Some schools, because of their prior performance can be given a considerable amount of freedom and autonomy, and then there are some schools that can be given freedom about some things and have to be very prescriptive about other [things]. The notion of differentiation within an aligned, coherent approach is something districts are starting to grapple with.

I think we are confronting this around professional development. What is the district's role in that? Increasingly, we are confronting it now around curriculum, which almost disappeared in the standards movement. At the national and the state level, people decided early on that they couldn't talk about curriculum because that was local. All we can do is talk about standards, what students should know and should be able to do. But how they meet [those standards] should be totally up to the individual

school district because that is a local problem. Then you get to the school district, and they say, “We are decentralized. Each of our schools can develop their own curriculum.” OK. When you get to the school you say, “What is your curriculum?” They say, “I don’t know. Those guys up there have it.” So, curriculum has somehow disappeared off the face of the earth, and maybe we need to redefine what we mean by it and what its components are. We definitely need a better theory and design for curriculum and what it looks like in schools that have different needs, staff with different kinds of expertise, and different kinds of resources. How do we make the allocation and distribution of those more equitable over time but deal with the inequities at the present time? That is what this district task force is engaged in.

This other initiative, called Rethinking Accountability, is about our mea culpa for not recognizing that the standards-based reform to this point has mostly been a conversation involving governors, chief state school officers, guys in the state legislatures, CEOs, and some guys in Washington, D.C. I confess to you that in every meeting that I have been in on standards-based reform at those national education summits, those meetings mostly involved chief state school officers and governors. They come up with some designs without thinking about local reality. Maybe there are some school people in the room, but district level people, mayors, city council people, school board members, superintendents, and central office administrators are rarely at those meetings. Yet, they are now having to deal with these accountability systems and also provide the supports that these accountability systems sort of imply that the schools need. We think that has to change for the accountability movement to survive and get beyond simply labeling schools to providing supports for continuous improvement.

So, my colleagues are working with the Council of Chief State School Officers to create a national accountability network. It had its first meeting in December in Florida. We brought teams from five

states together in the first meeting. The teams included the chief state school officer from each state, a superintendent from a district in each state, and leaders of community-based organizations from that very same district. What we wanted to do was to bring together guys at the state level, people at the local level who ran schools – principals and superintendents—and also leaders of community-based organizations to have a conversation about the kind of information people at those levels needed to inform school improvement.

Right now we have accountability systems that serve the states’ needs, but I am not sure they serve the districts’ needs or the schools’ needs for information. That is why the state guys are very happy to rely on one standardized test. It serves their needs. But one single measure does not serve the needs of districts and certainly does not serve the needs of schools. If the school people and the district people are not in the conversation, you do not hear that. So we have a national accountability network that got launched in December and we are now working with the Council of Chief State School Officers to get that accountability network up and running and to invite ten additional state teams to join. We think that network will begin to talk about developing the kind of multiple measures needed not just to label schools successes and failures but to provide district-level leadership, community-level leadership, and school-level leadership with the kind of information and timelines they need to improve.

One of the lessons I took out of the Philadelphia experience was that most of the accountability systems have timelines for improvement that are political and arithmetic. That is to say, David Hornbeck will admit to you that when he was in Kentucky and they were developing their accountability system, somebody asked the question, “How much time should we give schools to improve?” The answer to that question in Kentucky was 20 years. Now, were they looking at a lot of research on school organizational development,

child development, high school and middle school? No. They said, “We know that we have got a lot of bad schools. If they do 5 years they are probably not going to get there, and we will be in trouble. Ten years and we might not get there and be in trouble. What do you think people are going to accept?” They came up with 20 years. In Philadelphia, we came up with 10 years. Was it based on research on organizational development and job development? No, it was basically a political decision that sounded good. Ten or twelve years is a student generation. What you are saying to your community is, for those kindergarteners who are entering this year, the school system is going to be fixed by the time they graduate. How about that? Do you buy that? In Kentucky they bought 20 years. We are not even going to fix it by the time the kindergartener leaves school.

The recognition now is that maybe we should look at research on organizational development of schools. How long does it take to deal with a school that is very dysfunctional, has a fractured faculty, a divided faculty? If you are trying to change that faculty by replacing people, how long does it take versus changing the school where the faculty members are together but maybe need to have their practice tweaked a bit? What kinds of supports can you introduce to accelerate that process? What is the nature of those supports and what is the relevant information you need to do that?

These new kinds of ideas and questions and issues are coming up now that we have had more experience with state accountability systems and now that people at the local level, who I think were as naive as people at the national level, understand the immense amount of work that you have to do to build an infrastructure at the school level and the community level to take this work forward. We also think this group will serve as a multivoice advocacy group that can respond with power and precision to the guys at the national level.

One of the advantages that the national people have over us in this room is that they can convene them-

selves on a fairly regular basis. It only takes invitations to about 200 people: 50 chiefs, 50 governors, some of their aides, a couple of CEOs, the president, the education secretary. Whenever they want to have a national meeting, they only send out 200 invitations and everybody is in the room. In response to that, I have often said, “Who do we convene at the local level to come up with our framework?” And how many of them are they? Think about mayors. How many mayors are there? Lots of them. County executives, school board members, superintendents; the local group is unwieldy and, as a result, rarely if ever gets convened.

So, education policymaking at the national level has really been led by this group of 200 or so folks who can convene themselves easily and are very comfortable and familiar with each other. Most of them are white males. There’s a minority here and there. And they have very good dialogue. We have been struggling—and the ‘we’ is lots of us—to think about how you can convene a vocal, representative group of the people at the local level. That is, in some ways, being addressed in this national accountability network, but it is also being addressed over here in what we now call community-based reform. We are entering a partnership with the National League of Cities to provide leadership development on education to mayors, city council people, and other city groups that now find themselves, through state legislation, increasingly being held accountable for schools.

Who do you get to run the schools? Harold Levy and Giuliani were going over that in New York. Roy Roamer and the mayor in Los Angeles. These mayors are increasingly arguing for themselves that they need to be in control of schools. Or, they’re being told by the state, “You guys are in charge. We are getting rid of the board. We are going to be an advisory board.” Now that they are getting their wish in some cases, they realize that they really have not had any infrastructure to support their thinking about education.

So, the National League of Cities has an initiative called the Youth Education and Families Institute, and they are developing a leadership program in youth education and family services to educate mayors and city council people about the role they might play in education reform. I think that if that gets off the ground and does well it will be a powerful counterpoint to the perspective governors and chief state school officers because it will have a group of people who are informed by local experience and local budget realities and who can respond in kind to the ideas generated by the national group.

A lot of our lessons about school reform at the Annenberg Institute are coming from our experiences and the work we do on behalf of the Annenberg Foundation in coordinating the Annenberg Challenge. The Annenberg Foundation is headed by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Annenberg. In 1993, Ambassador Annenberg gave a \$500 million gift to 18 communities to embark on, at that time, what was mostly school-based reform. It has transformed over time. That \$500 million, distributed across 18 communities, had a matching requirement. In most cases, it was a one-to-one match. The ambassador gave your community \$10 million, your community had to match it with \$10 million. In some cases, it was a one-to-two match. If you got \$10 million, you raised \$20 million. So that \$500 million generated another \$700 million. In fact, the Challenge is a 1.2 billion dollar initiative working on school reform in 18 communities. Some of the projects are coming to an end, some of them will be continuing. They involve work in Houston, Chicago, L.A., New York City, Chattanooga, the Bay area, Salt Lake City, and several Annenberg arts projects going on in Minneapolis and New York. Essentially, what the Challenge project directors have learned is that many of them started out as school-by-school people and ignored the district. What they have increasingly come to understand is that they have to figure out how to work with districts in order to support and sustain the changes that they

are trying to establish. They also have to deal with this business of infrastructure, particularly in higher education, because all of us, whether we are bottom-up people or school district people, realize that the teacher problem is not simply one of supply, but one of quality.

What we have all struggled with—I learned in Philadelphia—is that we develop these standards, we develop the new professional development system, but every year we kept hiring teachers who know nothing about our standards and our practices. Temple University, right down the block from the school system, was supplying Philadelphia with about 48% of its new teachers. One day we had a brilliant idea. If they are giving us 48% of our teachers, why don't we just give them our standards and say, "Could you kind of tweak your education department curriculum so that the teachers come out knowing something about our standards?" The dean of the School of Education was very enthusiastic about that idea. He took it to his faculty and they voted it down. They wanted to keep teaching those same courses with the same books and materials they have used for the last 20 years of their lives.

We also discovered, on the district side, that our own human resources department had a teacher assessment that had nothing to do with our standards. We were using our standards to inform curriculum and assessment, but our human resources guys were continuing to use a test that they developed about 10 years ago to assess the competency of new teachers. We realized, oops, we have not got our own house in order. Then we thought, at the district level, how do we evaluate teachers in our system? Somebody pulled up the teacher observation form that principals use. We looked at it and said, "Oops". That was not what we were about anymore. We realized, at a district level, we had been pointing the finger at the schools—change, change, change. And we had not changed ourselves, the way we rated teachers and principals, the way we assessed people who were applying for

positions. So, there was a lot of work that we had to do at the district infrastructure level to be consistent with our own policies and practices.

We realized that it is not the schools that are responsible for Temple University and other people; it is the district. We had to use whatever leverage we could to get Temple to change its practice. The higher education piece of this was a district level responsibility and a state responsibility, not necessarily an individual school responsibility—although to the extent that we do not play that role well, we continue to burden our schools with new teachers who know very little about our standards and thus we have to expend ever-increasing amounts of our own resources to basically retrain teachers at the school level and at the district level while all the higher education guys get the tuition dollars they need to get themselves tenure and do whatever else they do with their money.

This is the kind of work we are now doing. We have to figure out how to create the partnerships to work with mayors, city council people, county executives, and school board members because we do not have, in our organization, the resources to work with all of those groups. We seek partners who give us leverage in working with those groups that have aligned philosophies. That is why the National League of Cities is our route into mayors and city council people. That is why the Council of Chief State School Officers is our route into getting leverage to bring chiefs together with superintendents. We also have a district superintendents' initiative in the institute and continue to have a principals' initiative. A lot of our work with principals, teachers and superintendents comes from the Annenberg Challenge partnerships. We coordinate their cross-site meetings which focus on issues like literacy, accountability and leadership.

Finally, I think where this is all beginning to come to a head—state, district, school, community—is around the area of high school reform. If there is one thing that the bottom-up reformers agree on and the top-down reformers agree on and the in-between reform-

ers agree on, it is that whatever we have done, it has not worked much at all at the high school level. We managed to increase performance at elementary schools and increase some at middle school. The results at high school have been abysmal. What all of these groups are now realizing is that, given the demands of accountability systems to make improvements over 2- to 4-year periods of time, there is no way in that time frame we are going to take the abysmal performance of most high schools and turn it around significantly if we only concentrate on the school day and the school design itself. What we have to do is change the school and something about the learning environment and the community.

As a result, there is a lot of attention these days on high school reform that involves restructuring the high school and building and connecting supports for learning that exist in the community-to-school experiences. The Carnegie Corporation has funded something called Schools for a New Society. I think Providence has a grant, Worcester has a grant, Boston has a grant; they are working on school reform with nine other communities across the country. Increasingly, people who work in the area of youth development are now thinking about this issue. People who started off developing community schools, but realized they needed to know more about school practices, are coming together. It is an entry point and a bridge for linking school change with community and family change more effectively than we have in the past.

**Participant question/statement:** There is an emerging technology that allows for a greater discussion to take place in terms of a broader range of people, and that started out with the military community in terms of 'decision centers' and that type of thing. Now I understand that there is software that is putting that type of process online. That might be a way of bringing in broader conversation on a number of these issues and broader-based involvement.

**Warren Simmons:** Many of the people who have been doing work on leadership development have

looked at the military training centers as models, and I support that. But what I also understand is that, in places like Philadelphia, we have tried to do these high-tech solutions. We spent a lot of money in trying to retrofit what are essentially low-tech environments. We have wired all the schools in Philadelphia, but the buildings are so decrepit, so antiquated, that you do not get the cost to justify the benefit. And the people themselves have not been retrofitted and retrained. So one of the things that we are not confronting is that in urban districts let's just acknowledge that most of those places are chronically underfunded. Buildings and physical plants are 50 to 100 years old, and in that kind of environment your high tech solution is going to be very costly.

While we think about that, and maybe work toward that, what are some of the low-tech approaches? I think that people have been--Annenberg in the past and other places around the country--developing teacher networks. Linking local networks to state and national networks has been important. Developing protocols and rubrics that allow people in schools to look at student work against a set of standards and developing a technological means to share that work across curriculums is something that people are engaged in. But, increasingly, people are developing cross-disciplinary networks--that is, how do you keep your school leadership, superintendents, and central office staff connected to your civic leadership, the mayor's aide on education, the city council president's aide on education and the school board chair's advisor on education or assistant? How do you keep those people connected and on the same page so that you experience stable and coherent reform rather than reform that changes every 3 years when you get a new school board chair, a new mayor, a new city council person? Because that lack of stability is killing us and demoralizing people at the school level.

Every 3 years you get a new curriculum person and they have a new project that they are all for, or your Title 1 person is off on a new project. You have

school-to-career and all of these separate initiatives that do not get linked in peoples' minds and that are likely to change over time. They do change if you do not have a network of people in conversation that helps everyone develop a shared understanding of what these things mean. So leadership is important, and Elmore talked about distributive leadership. But on a practical side, what I have seen work best in many districts is the development of networks involving teacher leaders, principal leaders, and shared conversation, informed from time to time by regional and national expertise and supported by tools that come out of their own experience with most of them linking practices to standards.

**Participant question:** On that same point, in looking at those districts, have you found a new organization structure; for example, are many of the districts moving to a CEO and a COO?

**Warren Simmons:** What districts have done is change the organizational structure without changing the content or the nature of what they do, in most cases. I think that is a very superficial change. In essence, yes. The current thinking in education reform is that since people who know something about education have not been able to improve it, let's hire people who don't know anything about it and see what happens. I think underneath that, really the view is that this is an organizational management issue. Your job is mostly organizational management, tightening up the business end of it. So, they think, let's get some guys who know something about this because you guys do not know anything about this. So the CEOs, the military guys-- and generally they do come in and they tighten the management structure, organizational structure--but they have not been able to do much about practice. The increasing response to that is, let's hire a chief academic officer.

I think the new organizational structure at the top of these comes from the recognition that this is also a political problem, and you guys are bad politicians.

So, let's hire someone who has political credibility, a CEO or a general, and that person can also tighten up the management sides so people don't think we are wasting money. And also give them a chief academic officer, a chief financial officer. What that does not say is what the structure is on anything. With those three new people, and if you ask yourself what is the structure underneath, have they developed any new plans for that? For the most part they have not. I think Tony Alvarado has done a lot of thinking about that. He is reorganizing the district's central office in San Diego into something called the Institute for Learning that sort of models the work that he did in District 2 with Laura Resnick. Look underneath in lots of other places where you have had the General and the CEO. Look at Harold Levy in New York. He is still trying to figure out what the Board of Education in New York actually does. And Rudy Crew, one of his last remarks when he left as chancellor, as reported in the New York Times was, he did not figure out and could not figure out whether or not the Board of Education actually supported his agenda. Think about that.

In Philadelphia, I used to have a lot of arguments with David (Hornbeck) about what I was doing with my \$8 million in the Philadelphia Education Fund. We raised \$8 million in grants to help children achieve. There is a lot of evidence of what I am doing with my \$8 million. I said, "David, how come you never ask yourself what you are doing with your 1.2 billion dollars?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Is your 1.2 billion dollars—the budget of the school district of Philadelphia—is it organized to serve your agenda?" He said, "Of course it is." I said, "Well, show me." He argued and then finally one day he brought in his finance papers and said, "Let's look to see if the school budget is actually supporting children's achievement." What we discovered was, of course it wasn't.

What was the school district's budget development process? What is your budget development process? I

will tell you what most budget development processes are. You are going to get a 5% increase or a 10% cut. Finance guys send our some memoranda that says, "You are going get 5% more or 10% less." And every office does 5% more or 10% less, whatever the parameters are. They send that information back to you in some language that says that it is related to your strategic item, and that is your budget. I said, "David, that is your budget. The budget we are working on this year was actually developed a year before you came. So, you cannot tell me that this year's budget addresses your initiative, because it was developed last year before you were here."

That is one problem. Secondly, schools do school improvement planning. Is the school improvement planning related to the budget development process? Is it closely related in Philadelphia? No. The budget was turned in one month and the school improvement plan was turned in about two months later. So I said, "That's a nice little dream—that the school improvement planning process and the budget are related." I said to him, "Will you stop asking me about my \$8 million; it is important. But, what is more important is that you and your colleagues of the district will be able to demonstrate to yourselves that your 1.2 billion dollars is actually serving your own initiative."

Really, that is a lot of money. But most of that is invested in human resources. We only have 10% that is discretionary, but the rest of that is people. Whether it is or not, you have to demonstrate to me that for the salaries you are paying people, those people are actually doing things that are on that nine-point performance list. That just taught us, once again, that this thing called a system that you guys are all responsible for wrestling with constantly, is this enormous beast that, in many cases, is out of control. Some people think it is unknowable, so they ignore it and spend most of their time trying to change schools and trying to change communities and families. But, increasingly, people are saying to me, "You cannot do that any more." Or, "If we are going to do that, then

let us get rid of it entirely and go to a system of charter schools and vouchers.” I am arguing that before we go that route, let’s see if we can take the system, redesign it, and reorganize it. I think the steps to the CEO, the chief academic officer, and sort of structural changes may be important and bring new ideas to it, but they stop short at this point in addressing how you fundamentally change the layers of the central office that persist no matter who is in charge.

**Participant question:** I am part of a group of superintendents that over the last several years has been supported by the Annenberg Institute and worked with Mary Newman. It is a group of people who really focused on how to change the district as opposed to school-by-school [change]. When we met with you 2 years ago in Cambridge, you had indicated that this would not be the direction in which you saw the institute going. Based on some of the things that you said today, have you shifted your thinking on that?

**Warren Simmons:** I think what I said at that time was the group of superintendents and the places that they worked in were not aligned with the places that we worked in elsewhere. So there was a misalignment in the places, not necessarily in the nature of the work. We have Annenberg Challenge sites where we spend a lot of time and money working. So my thinking was that if we are going to work with superintendents, it would probably make more sense to work with superintendents at the Annenberg Challenge sites because those are the people we work most closely with and they were not represented in large numbers on the Annenberg Superintendents [group]. Our shift was not necessarily in the nature of the work but in the people and places that made more sense for us to be working with than in the past.

**Participant question:** But are you working with those superintendents in the same kind of national networking and sharing of ideas?

**Warren Simmons:** Yes. Many of them are involved in our district task force. Many of them are involved in

our work on a national accountability network, and some of them will be involved in our work with the National League of Cities on educating mayors and city council people as well.

**Participant question:** You were talking about districts really taking control of the reform of their individual schools on a differentiating basis depending on their achievement. And you were centering on the questions of changing curriculum. What are some of the ideas that have been put on the table? What has to happen in the district for that to happen?

**Warren Simmons:** Well, first of all, I am not saying that the district is taking control. What I am saying is the district is supporting. This is why people have problems with districts. They tend to see support as control. What are the ideas on the table? One of the initial ideas is that, while we use the term ‘district,’ we do not presume that the designs will create something called a district. In some communities it may be the district that carries out the functions. In other communities it may be a very scaled down central office that works with a local education fund and institute, a lab, and city agencies. So we are concentrating primarily on the issue of functions and tools, and then we are leaving it up to the individual sites to decide. The districts that have been most successful in Texas manage to have leaders of the faith community, civic leaders, business leaders, and organizations that represent those who advocate for taking this Texas data seriously and for building the supports in the community needed to improve schools. So local catalysts, outside of the superintendent and the school board, seem to be part of the infrastructure requirement in the districts that are succeeding.

Another infrastructure requirement in many of these districts is a local research capacity, a local, applied research. That is to say, what the Department of Education has supported, what states have supported, are these national research efforts that generate lots of interesting data. But it is not data about your schools,

your communities, and your kids. It is useful but not persuasive when you are making an argument locally. So, when you look at places like Chicago, even Philadelphia and Texas, what the state has done is actually build some research capacity. Chicago has the Chicago Research Consortium; Philadelphia had the Consortium of Policy Research in Education; Providence has the Providence Plan. A local entity that has credibility, collects data on your schools and your communities, and is seen as a credible voice. They can actually bring some evidence to the inevitable arguments that you have about reality.

David and I sat down and argued all the time about practice and about what was going on in the schools. All of us had our own anecdotes and the only way that we could get past our own anecdotes and our own experiences of the truth was to call in [someone] who had all this data—teacher surveys, student surveys, school observations—to say, “Here is what we are finding.” When we looked at that, there it was. We had to modify, but it helped break the arguments that we had based on our own separate experiences of reality.

So places that make progress seem to have this local research capacity. They get some of the data from the district central office, but the district central office is always leery of producing data that might make somebody look bad. Having an outside partner, who they could give the data to and who would come back and say this is what it is showing you, was better than having your district director of research come and make the superintendent look bad. So, a local research capacity was important.

A leadership development infrastructure, one that works with principals, teachers, and central office people, and is also connected to a leadership infrastructure that involves higher ed leaders, mayors, and city councilmen. In Worcester, I think, their high school reform effort has very good public engagement infrastructure and leadership infrastructure that is

advancing their effort. In Boston, if you look at the Boston Plan for Excellence, Jobs for the Future, the Boston Compact and other entities, they have a nice sort of leadership infrastructure that has the mayor and the school superintendent and community leaders moving in the same direction.

If I looked at Providence, I’d say that we are kind of fractured. We do not have a leadership team with the mayor, city council, and higher eds all moving in the same direction. Diana [Lam] has her Rekindling the Dream plan. Everybody else looks at that as Diana’s plan, not the community’s plan. So what people are beginning to identify are some of these infrastructure elements that seem to be characteristics of districts that are moving forward. Then the questions become centered around leadership, around public engagement, around research. Given your resources in your area, what makes sense for you to do to bring together organizations to fill these kinds of capacities?

Finally, I think one of the products that we are developing with the district and should be ready by September [2001] is the district-level equivalent of a school quality review. I think all of us are familiar with frameworks for reviewing school performance and school quality. Rhode Island has a framework that is very powerful. New York piloted one recently. What we are trying to develop now is a district equivalent of that. If you were going to ask yourself, what are the indicators that you would look at and collect data on that would give you a good sense of the quality of your district infrastructure and whether it was addressing your agenda and improving schools, what would you look at? What would you collect data on? I think what we believe is that it will be a combination of what you are already doing when you do school quality reviews, but you would have a mirror that would also reflect how the district does or does not support and respond to the conditions of all of your schools. So, we are now developing a set of indicators.

Most districts have done this, but it has usually been functions specific. The mayor says, “You are not

spending your money wisely.” So, you look at your information management system and your data system and you analyze that. But you do not look at your curriculum system, your professional development system, your Title 1 office, your school-to-career office to see if they are all supporting schools in the same way or whether or not they are pursuing separate aims. Jim Spillane has done some research in Michigan looking at districts’ central offices, and he says different offices pursued conceptually opposing agendas. You have one office promoting a basic skills approach to reading and you have another office supporting a constructivist approach to reading, and both of them are working in the same schools. Is that a coherent, aligned approach or is that creating tensions and conflicts and draining resources?

We have several colleagues—Jim Spillane, Andy Hargreaves, myself, Deanna Burney— working on a district assessment tool that we hope will be school centered. That is why we want to start with a sound framework for how you would understand school quality and then use that to think about what kinds of district functions you would analyze to assess the relationship between district functions and offices and their impact on school improvement. Of course curriculum and professional development would be the obvious ones. But the less obvious ones are how your human resource office is doing its business, how it is assigning people, the policies around teacher observation and rating, and the policies around principals and how you rate your central office staff themselves. Do you rate them in ways that have anything to do with how well they support schools? What is the evidence of that as opposed to testimonials in the past? So that is sort of where we are in that regard.

*Warren Simmons, a psychologist by training holds a bachelor’s degree from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota and a Ph.D. in psychology from Cornell University. His early work—with the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition (San Diego), the National Institute of Education, the Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences, Bank Street College of Education, and the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs—focused on applied research, training programs, and technical assistance in literary skills and learning strategies for low-income minority students, functionally illiterate youth, and adults and students with limited English proficiency.*

*From 1986 to 1993, Dr. Simmons directed programs addressing equity initiatives and implementation at American University’s Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, Prince George’s County (Maryland) Public Schools, and the National Center on Education and Economy. At NCEE, he was responsible for equity policies and research for the New Standards Project and also served as co-director of the National Alliance for Restructuring Education.*

*As a senior program associate and director of Baltimore relations at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in from 1993 to 1995, he oversaw the foundation’s Baltimore grant-making activities and designed and implemented an urban education reform initiative.*

*From 1995-1998, Dr. Simmons served as executive director of the Philadelphia Education Fund, a nonprofit organization collaborating with the school district, local businesses, higher education, national organizations, and the broader Philadelphia community to support public school reform in Philadelphia. He has also served as a senior associate at Achieve, Inc., which is charged with certifying standards produced by states and national organizations.*

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*Dr. Simmon's publications have addressed the interaction of culture, cognitive development, and achievement as well as literacy technologies and assessment.*



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