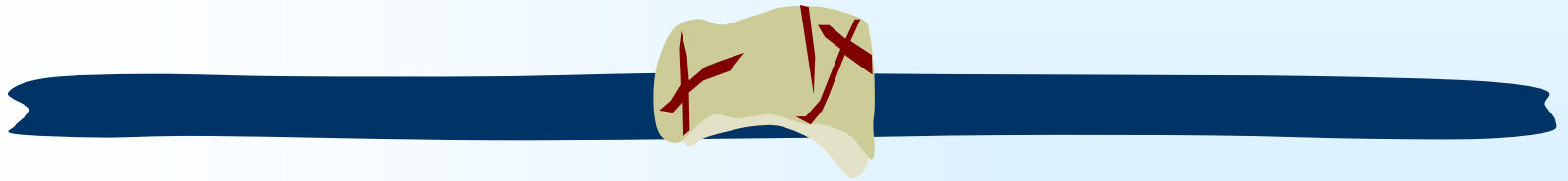


Reflections on a Half-Century of School Reform



Zdeslav Hrepic
Columbus State University

Center on Education Policy (CEP) -- January 2012 Report

Reflections on a Half-Century of School Reform:

Why Have We Fallen Short and Where Do We Go From Here?

By Jack Jennings, President and CEO, Center on Education Policy

Barak Obama summarizes the situation in US education in his 2011 State of the Union address:

- ◆ *Over the next 10 years, nearly half of all new jobs will require education that goes beyond a high school education.*
- ◆ *And yet, as many as **a quarter of our students aren't even finishing high school.** The quality of our **math and science education lags behind many other nations.** America has fallen to **ninth in the proportion of young people with a college degree.***
- ◆ *And so the question is whether all of us—as citizens, and as parents—are willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to succeed.*

Nation at Risk Report – 1983

Indicators of Risk

- **International comparisons** of student achievement, completed a decade ago, reveal that on 19 academic tests American students were never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, were last seven times.
- Some **23 million American adults are functionally illiterate** by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.
- About **13 percent of all 17-year-olds** in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy **among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent.**
- Average **achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago** when Sputnik was launched.
- Over half the population of **gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school.**
- The College Board's **Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrate a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980.** Average verbal scores fell over 50 points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly 40 points.
- Both the **number and proportion of students demonstrating superior achievement on the SATs** (i.e., those with scores of 650 or higher) have also dramatically **declined.**

Nation at Risk Report – 1983

Indicators of Risk

- **Many 17-year-olds do not possess the "higher order" intellectual skills we should expect of them.** Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and **only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps.**
- There was a **steady decline in science achievement** scores of U.S. 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments of science in 1969, 1973, and 1977.
- Between 1975 and 1980, **remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72 percent** and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions.
- Average tested achievement of students graduating from college is also lower.
- Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on **costly remedial education and training programs** in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation.

History and Impact of Three Major Reform Movements

- ◆ Over the past 50 years, the US school reforms have been dominated by three major movements:
- ◆ **Equity-based reform**
- ◆ **School choice**
- ◆ **Standards-based reform**

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Why have our efforts fallen short? Over the past fifty years, U.S. school reform has been dominated by three major movements, aimed at promoting equity, increasing school choice, and using academic standards to leverage improvement. While all three have changed schooling in notable ways, none has brought about the needed level of general improvements because they mostly sought to improve education from the outside rather than the inside.

Waller - Overview of Education in US

The Context of School Control

ZdesLAV Hrepic

- ◆ No mention of education in constitution
- ◆ 50 States – 50 Ed School Systems
- ◆ Local School Boards – Really in Charge
- ◆ Education is a local affair: 180 School Boards in GA
- ◆ Federal Government – Control backed by Funds
- ◆ All states propose they are the best
- ◆ However - No accountability wanted
- ◆ In Georgia: Rural vs Atlanta



Equity-based reforms

School Reforms in 1960s

The Societal Context

- ◆ **Global competition awareness**
 - Post Sputnik ('57)
 - High (~20%) functional illiteracy among adults.
- ◆ **Social inequity and social unrest**
 - Civil Rights Movement (The Civil Rights Act in 1964 – eliminating officially-sanctioned race-based discrimination).
 - Women Rights Movement
 - Vietnam War

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ◆ Jan 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson urges Congressional action to improve education opportunities for America's children.
- ◆ as a part of Johnson's "War on Poverty"
- ◆ Wary of popular fears regarding increased federal involvement in local schools, the Johnson administration advocated giving local districts great leeway to use the new funds, which were to be first distributed as grants to each state.

- ◆ April 1965 – Congress passed ESEA Has been the most far-reaching federal legislation affecting education ever passed by the United States Congress.
- ◆ Emphasizes equal access to education
- ◆ Aims to shorten the achievement gaps between students by providing each child with fair and equal opportunities to achieve an exceptional education.
- ◆ Establishes standards and loose accountability.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ◆ Originally authorized through 1965;
- ◆ Reauthorized every five years since its enactment. “Sunset Provision”
- ◆ The reauthorization of ESEA by President George W. Bush was known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).
- ◆ In 2015 Obama reauthorizes it under the name of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act)

Sections of the original 1965 Act [edit]

- Title I—Financial Assistance To Local Educational Agencies For The Education Of Children Of Low-Income Families
- Title II—School Library Resources, Textbooks, and other Instructional Materials
- Title III—Supplementary Educational Centers and Services
- Title IV—Educational Research And Training
- Title V—Grants To Strengthen State Departments Of Education
- Title VI—General Provisions

New Titles Created by Early Amendments to 1965 Law

1966 amendments (Public Law 89-750)

- Title VI – Aid to Handicapped Children (1965 title VI becomes Title VII)^[4]

1967 amendments (Public Law 90-247)

- Title VII – Bilingual Education Programs (1966 title VII becomes Title VIII)

The Elementary and Secondary School Act had at least **three major consequences for future legislative action**.

- First, it signaled the switch **from general federal aid to education towards categorical aid**, and the tying of federal aid to national policy concerns such as poverty, defense or economic growth.
- Second, it **addressed the religious conflict** by linking federal aid to educational programs directly benefiting poor children in parochial schools, and not the institutions in which they enrolled.
- Third, the **reliance on state departments of education to administer federal funds** (promoted to avoid criticisms of federal control) resulted in an expansion of state bureaucracies and larger involvement of state governments in educational decision-making.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elementary_and_Secondary_Education_Act

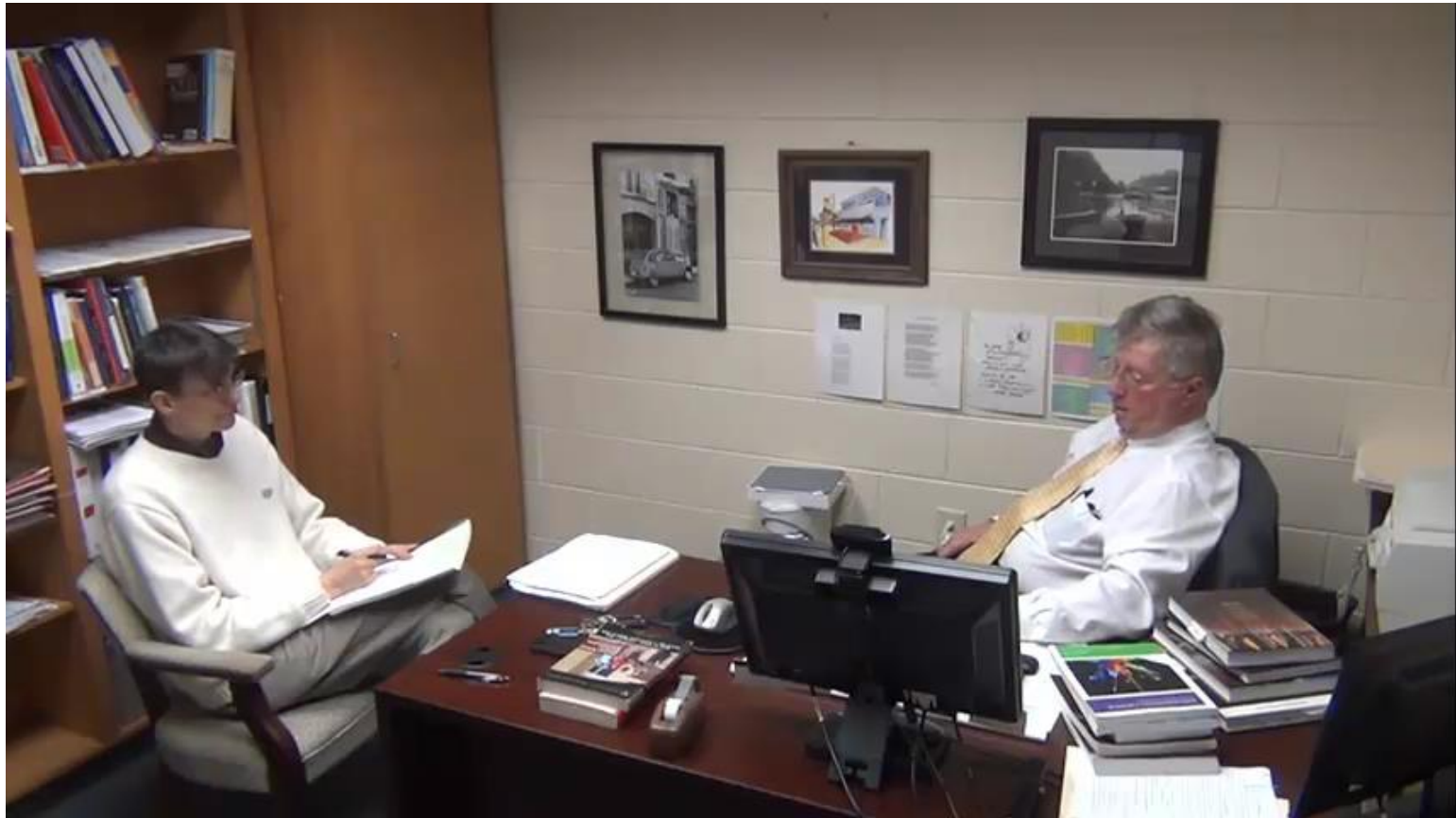
<http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/programs/education/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-of-1965/>

1965 – History Leading to NCLB

Initial Condition: No Accountability

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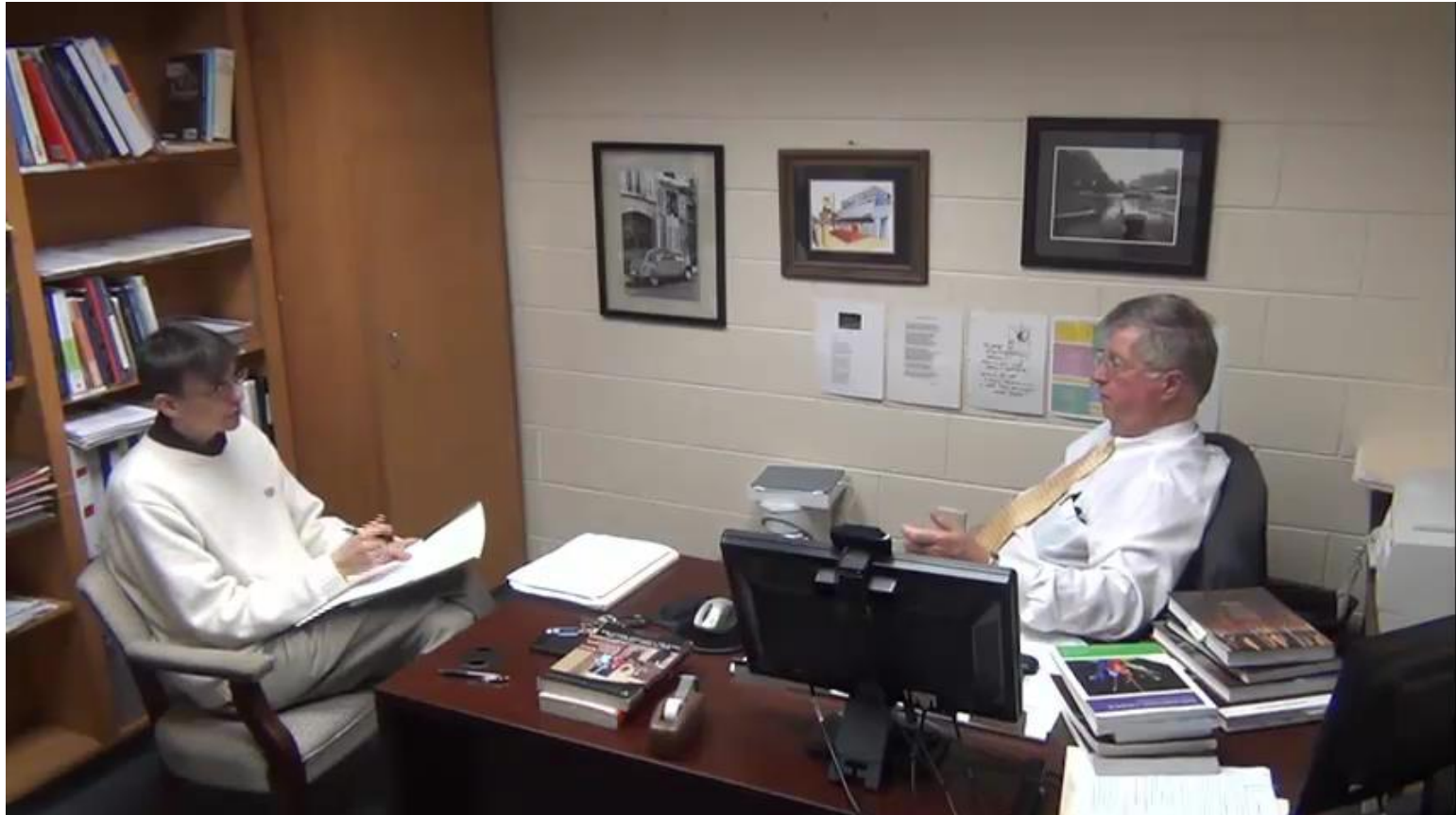
- ◆ Johnson and Coleman



Double Checking - No accountability?

ZdesLav Hrepic

- ◆ Double Checking



1966 - Coleman Report

- ◆ **Coleman Report** An influential and controversial study, published by the US Government in 1966, under the title Equality of Educational Opportunity.
- ◆ innovative premises that equality of opportunity should be assessed by equality of outcome rather than equality of input.
 - The researchers collected data, on the educational resources available to different groups
 - And also on students' achievements (as measured by, for example, test scores).
- ◆ The co-authored report was based on an extensive survey of educational opportunity (the national sample included almost 650,000 students and teachers in more than 3,000 schools), was mandated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and was directed by the sociologist James Coleman.

Coleman Report

- ◆ The most important research findings of the study were twofold.
- ◆ **First, it showed that variations in school quality** (as indexed by the usual measures such as per pupil expenditure, size of school library, and so on) **showed little association with levels of educational attainment,** when students of comparable social backgrounds were compared across schools.
- ◆ **(Differences in students' family backgrounds, by comparison, showed a substantial association with achievement.)**
- ◆ (This challenged a major plank of Lyndon Johnson's vision for the Great Society; namely, that increased spending on education could rectify social deficits.)

Coleman Report

- ◆ **Second**, a student's **educational attainment** was not only related to his or her own family background, but **also (less strongly) to the backgrounds of the other students in the school.**
- ◆ The later finding was used to set in motion large scale social engineering: opportunities could best be equalized via strategies of desegregation of schools (for example by busing).
- ◆ **All but one of the major findings generated by Coleman withstood subsequent examination by an army of social scientists.**
- ◆ A series of Subsequent reanalysis showed that a coding error had produced **greater evidence of peer effects in schools than was actually the case, a particularly unfortunate mistake, since this finding was often cited as evidence to support policies of forced integration and busing as the most effective way of ending racial segregation and raising Black educational achievement.**

Coleman Report

- ◆ The report was a focus of controversy both among academic researchers and in the political arena for many years. **It was widely misinterpreted as an argument that ‘schools don't matter, only families matter’.**
- ◆ Ironically, some of Coleman's subsequent work was designed to identify those **characteristics of schools which did matter**, so that the impact of school relative to that of family could be increased.
- ◆ For example, later research (reported in High School Achievement, 1982, and The Impact of Communities, 1987) suggested that, after controlling for background and other effects, pupils **in private Catholic schools** did better than others, because of the **higher academic demands and disciplinary standards** set in these schools, and because of the **kinds of families and communities to which the children belonged**. This second set of factors was discussed by Coleman under the heading of social capital.

1970's

Caring for education of children with disabilities

- ◆ 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act.
- ◆ The current version based on the Act from 1975:
- ◆ 2004 The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- ◆ Revolutionized the education of children with disabilities, which in 2001, was more than six million children.

The **Education for All Handicapped Children Act** of 1975 outlined six mandates that schools must follow with regards to educating special needs students:

1. Zero reject, including providing free and appropriate public education, or **FAPE**
2. Nondiscriminatory identification and evaluation of special education students
3. **Individualized educational program**, or **IEP**, to outline how each student would be educated
4. The **least restrictive environment**, which provided students the opportunity to be educated in the mainstream classroom if it met their need
5. Due process for families who feel their child's needs aren't being met
6. Parental participation in the process

Verdict 1: Equity-based reform

Major downside – fixing things on top of the older issues

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- ◆ “In sum, the equity programs of the 1960s and 1970s improved education for many students, especially when those efforts were backed up by civil rights guarantees.
- ◆ But they had two major shortcomings.
- ◆ First, their **impact was constrained because they became separate, add-on services funded with limited federal aid and placed on top of inequitably distributed state and local funding.**
- ◆ Second, **by their very nature, categorical funding and individual guarantees of civil rights were not designed to generally improve the broader educational system.**

Charter Schools – Public Schools of Choice

“A charter school is an independently run public school granted greater flexibility in its operations, in return for greater accountability for performance.

The "charter" establishing each school is a performance contract detailing the school's mission, program, students served, performance goals, and methods of assessment.”

2019 update: Invigorated by Trump

<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/05/22/529534031/president-trumps-budget-proposal-calls-for-deep-cuts-to-education>

<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/05/20/528464301/trump-gives-commencement-address-leaked-education-budget-has-big-cuts>

<http://www.thefader.com/2017/05/18/trump-education-budget-cuts-betsy-devos>

Charter Schools – Public Schools of Choice

*Jim Hull, Senior Policy Analyst,
Center for Public Education*

A: On average, nationally, students in 17 percent of charter schools performed significantly better than if they had attended their neighborhood traditional public school.

“ Overall, the majority of charter schools do no better or worse than traditional public schools ”

On the flip side, students in 37 percent of charter schools performed significantly worse, and students in the remaining 46 percent of charter schools did not perform significantly better or worse than if they had attended their neighborhood traditional public school. However, research also shows that students in charter high schools score higher on college entrance exams (e.g., the SAT or ACT) and are more likely to graduate high school and attend college than similar students in traditional public schools.

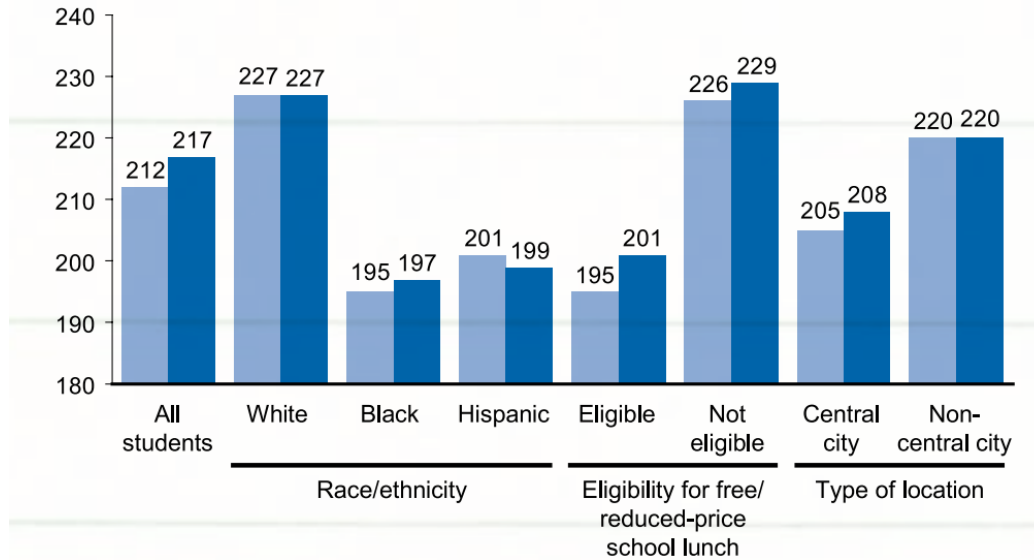
Yet the effectiveness of charter schools **varies greatly from state to state**. Why charter schools are more effective in some states and not in others is not definitive, but there are a few state policies that appear to impact charter school effectiveness. For one, allowing multiple authorizing agencies has a negative impact on charter school effectiveness. This might mean that some charter schools shop around for authorizers that require the least accountability. The other state policy that impacts charter school effectiveness is whether the state limits the number of charter schools with a cap. Research shows that states with a cap realize significantly lower academic growth for their charter schools than states without a cap. However, there are states with caps whose charter schools are more effective than charter schools in states without caps. So more research needs to be done to determine the full extent state policies have on charter school achievement.

Verdict 2: School choice

Exhibit 4: Charter schools and public schools

NAEP scores in reading, grade 4, 2003

■ Charter school students
■ Other public school students



Source: NCES, *America's Charter Schools: Results from the NAEP 2003 Pilot Study*; NCES, *A Closer Look at Charter Schools using Hierarchical Linear Modelling* (2006)

The choice movement shows no signs of slowing down, despite evidence that its promise of producing better education has not been realized. Parents may be pleased with their choice of school, but in general their children's achievement is no greater than if they had stayed in the regular public school. It is an interesting case of convictions trumping evidence.

Standards-Based Reforms

- ◆ 1983 – Nation at Risk
- ◆ 1989 – National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – Writes Math Standards
- ◆ George H.W. Bush Administration adopted that approach for other subject areas and proposed the adoption of national academic education standards and national tests to measure how well students were learning, but this effort was not successful
- ◆ 1994 Clinton: Goals 2000;
 - Clinton’s Policy Promotes State-defined standards
- ◆ 2002 Bush – NCLB
- ◆ 2015 Obama – ESSA
- ◆ 2020 Trump (?)

Nation at Risk

Findings

We conclude that declines in educational performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself is often conducted. The findings that follow, culled from a much more extensive list, reflect four important aspects of the educational process: [content](#), [expectations](#), [time](#), and [teaching](#).

Recommendations

A: Content – More Rigor

- ♦ **We recommend** that State and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened and that, at a minimum, all students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundations in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their 4 years of high school: (a) 4 years of English; (b) 3 years of mathematics; (c) 3 years of science; (d) 3 years of social studies; and (e) one-half year of computer science. For the college-bound, 2 years of foreign language in high school are strongly recommended in addition to those taken earlier.

B: Higher Standards and Expectations

- ♦ **We recommend** that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their requirements for admission. This will help students do their best educationally with challenging materials in an environment that supports learning and authentic accomplishment.

C: Time

- ♦ **We recommend** that significantly more time be devoted to learning the New Basics. This will require more effective use of the existing school day, a longer school day, or a lengthened school year.

D: Teaching

- ♦ **This recommendation** consists of seven parts. Each is intended to improve the preparation of teachers or to make teaching a more rewarding and respected profession. Each of the seven stands on its own and should not be considered solely as an implementing recommendation.
 1. Persons preparing to teach should be required to meet high educational standards, to demonstrate an aptitude for teaching, and to demonstrate competence in an academic discipline.
 2. Salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based.
 3. 11-month contract for teachers. This would ensure time for curriculum and professional development,
 4. develop career ladders for teachers that distinguish among the beginning instructor, the experienced teacher, and the master teacher.
 5. Substantial nonschool personnel resources should be employed to help solve the immediate problem of the shortage of mathematics and science teachers.
 6. Incentives, such as grants and loans, should be made available to attract outstanding students to the teaching profession, particularly in those areas of critical shortage.
 7. Master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs and in supervising teachers during their probationary years.

E: Leadership and Fiscal Support

- ♦ **We recommend** that citizens across the Nation hold educators and elected officials responsible for providing the leadership necessary to achieve these reforms, and that citizens provide the fiscal support and stability required to bring about the reforms we propose.

The Educate America Act, or Goals 2000, A federal law set in 1994

Set eight nationwide educational goals to be met by the year 2000.

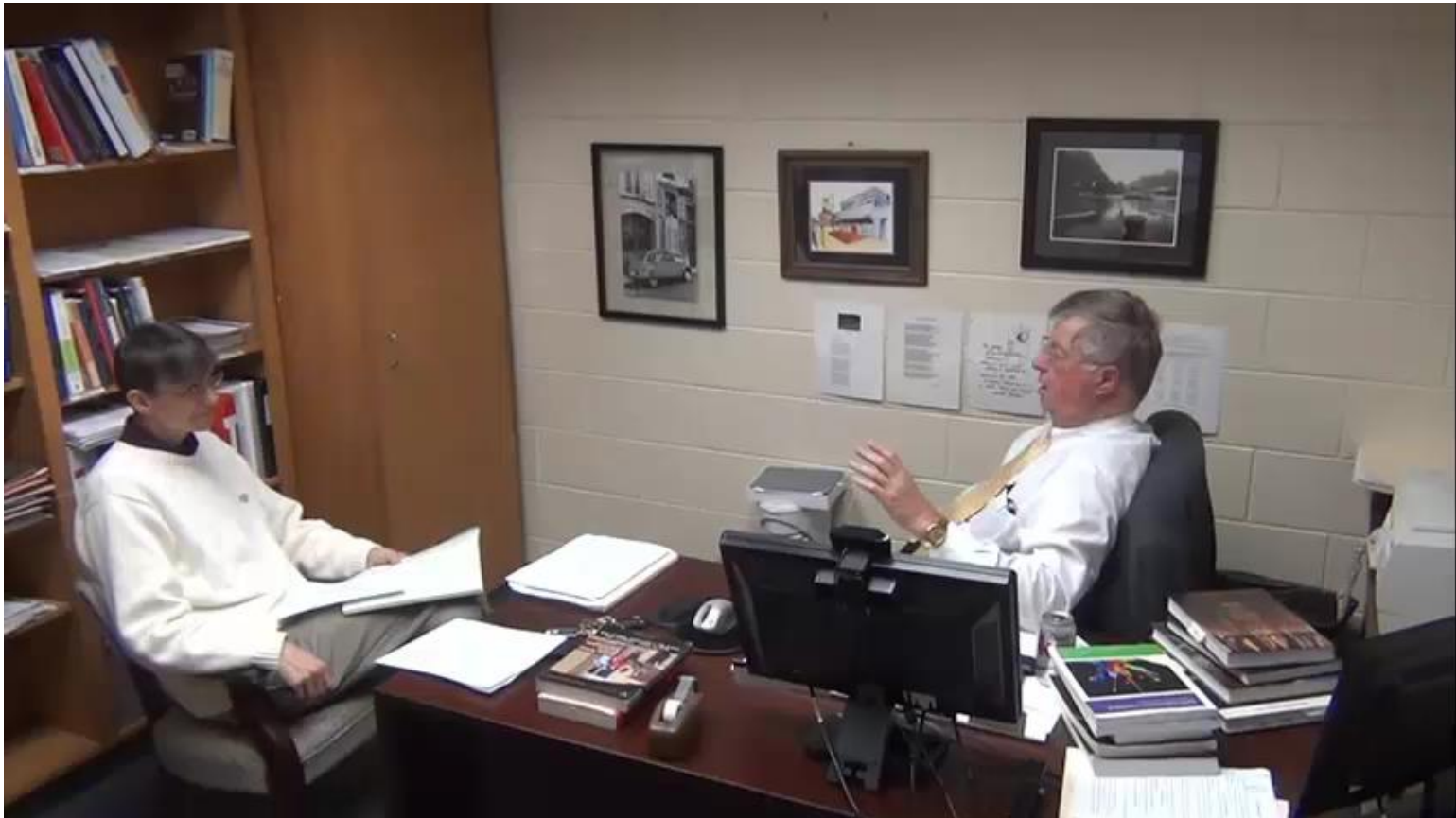
1. Every child will start school ready to learn.
2. High school graduation rate will be at least 90%.
3. Schools will help students learn to use their minds well.
4. Teachers will have professional development opportunities.
5. U.S. students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics.
6. Every adult American will be literate.
7. Schools will provide an environment conducive to learning.
8. Schools will partner with parents to provide to the whole child.

Goals not met but Significance: The first time Federal Government sets Goals for Schools

Waller 5a Reforms Gone bad GA HS Graduation test

ZdesLav Hrepic

- ◆ Math, Science, Social studies, Language arts – exit test for HS diplome.
“Treniranje strogoce” za politicke svrhe. In 2000. In 2014 – pulled back.



No Child Left Behind

- ◆ **"Annual Testing:** By the 2005-06 school year, states were required to begin testing students in grades 3-8 annually in reading and mathematics. By 2007-08, they had to tests students in science at least once in elementary, middle, and high school. The tests had to be aligned with state academic standards. A sample of 4th and 8th graders in each state also had to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress testing program in reading and math every other year to provide a point of comparison for state test results.
- ◆ **Academic Progress:** States were required to bring all students up to the "proficient" level on state tests by the 2013-14 school year. Individual schools had to meet state "adequate yearly progress" targets toward this goal (based on a formula spelled out in the law) for both their student populations as a whole and for certain demographic subgroups. If a school receiving federal Title I funding failed to meet the target two years in a row, it would be provided technical assistance and its students would be offered a choice of other public schools to attend. Students in schools that failed to make adequate progress three years in a row also were offered supplemental educational services, including private tutoring. For continued failures, a school would be subject to outside corrective measures, including possible governance changes.
- ◆ **Report Cards:** Starting with the 2002-03 school year, states were required to furnish annual report cards showing a range of information, including student-achievement data broken down by subgroup and information on the performance of school districts. Districts must provide similar report cards showing school-by-school data.
- ◆ **Teacher Qualifications:** By the end of the 2005-06 school year, every teacher in core content areas working in a public school had to be "highly qualified" in each subject he or she taught. Under the law, "highly qualified" generally meant that a teacher was certified and demonstrably proficient in his or her subject matter. Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, all new teachers hired with federal Title I money had to be "highly qualified." By the end of the 2005-06 school year, all school paraprofessionals hired with Title I money must have completed at least two years of college, obtained an associate's degree or higher, or passed an evaluation to demonstrate knowledge and teaching ability.
- ◆ **Funding Changes:** Through an alteration in the Title I funding formula, the No Child Left Behind Act was expected to better target resources to school districts with high concentrations of poor children. The law also included provisions intended to give states and districts greater flexibility in how they spent a portion of their federal allotments" ("Research Center: No Child Left Behind").

How was No Child Left Behind Received?

- ◆ Though initially very popular, No Child Left Behind quickly lost favor when the penalties it required began to be felt. While many in education wanted the changes required by NCLB to be demanding, the requirements may have been (and may still be) too high.
- ◆ **As U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan noted, this is causing "an overwhelming number of schools in the country [to] soon be labeled as 'failing,' eventually triggering impractical and ineffective sanctions" (Duncan, 2011). To avoid these types of sanctions, Duncan added that many states have been lowering their academic standards, instead of making them more rigorous. He also noted that many states have not been able to tailor education to their particular students, as they are instead trying to meet the broad, national standards.**

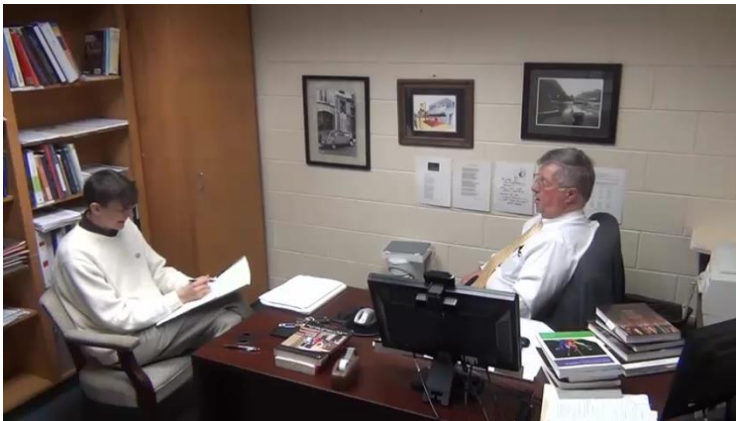
... Instead of helping educators reach the ambitious goals, many believe that NCLB not only sets unreasonably high expectations, but that it also impedes the progress towards meeting them. For that reason, there has been a growing push to reform NCLB, and soon.

How is No Child Left Behind Changing?

- ◆ The Obama administration released a blueprint for reforming the No Child Left Behind Act on March 13, 2010, (View [here](#)).
- ◆ In an effort to push the reforms through, Arne Duncan released a **statement in 2011 that said that 82 percent of schools would be labeled "failing" that year. The numbers didn't turn out quite that high, but several states did see failure rates over 50 percent** ("Research Center: No Child Left Behind").
- ◆ Still, despite several efforts to push reform through Congress and the Senate, changes to NCLB has been slow. While members of both political parties seem to agree that change is necessary, specifics have not been put into place.

NCLB

- ◆ 2002 – NCLB – Title I funding conditioned by the Accountability



- ◆ Poorly Thought Out Accountability
- ◆ Student's abilities not taken into account
- ◆ Socio economics ignored
- ◆ Enormous testing pressure.
- ◆ In 2011, nearly half of U.S. schools did not meet their state targets for student proficiency.
- ◆ Cheating Incidents – The most well known in Atlanta

(Fed gov Police, Schools Suspects, Tests Spies, Testing Industry profits, Students (?))

Standards-based reform Benefits

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- ◆ The standards and testing movement has resulted in **clearer expectations for what should be learned in school**. For the first time in American history, every state has made public its academic standards in the crucial areas of English language arts and mathematics.
- ◆ Moreover, the problems that emerged from having different standards in each of the 50 states spurred the nation's governors and chief state school officers to **develop Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics**, which have now been adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia.
- ◆ The standards movement also has promoted **greater equity**. **The same academic expectations are set for all students in a state**, and far greater attention is being directed to narrowing the achievement gap between various groups of students.
- ◆ **Results on state tests are generally increasing although this is not matched with the same level of increase on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.**

Standards-based reform

Downsides

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- ◆ The major problem with standards-based reform is that it has become test-driven reform.
 - The accountability provisions in particular have created a culture in which **teachers' actions are motivated by the need to meet annual state targets** for the percentage of their students that must score proficient on state tests;
 - if too many students fall short, the school will fail to make **“adequate yearly progress,” or AYP.**
 - In the most egregious cases, such as in Atlanta, this has led to teachers **falsifying test results.**
 - In other cases, teachers have **set aside their regular lessons** during the weeks before the state test in order to spend the time **prepping students on material that is likely to be tested.**
 - In many cases, **it has meant a narrowing of the curriculum** to place greater emphasis on English language arts and mathematics, the two subjects that must be tested under NCLB.

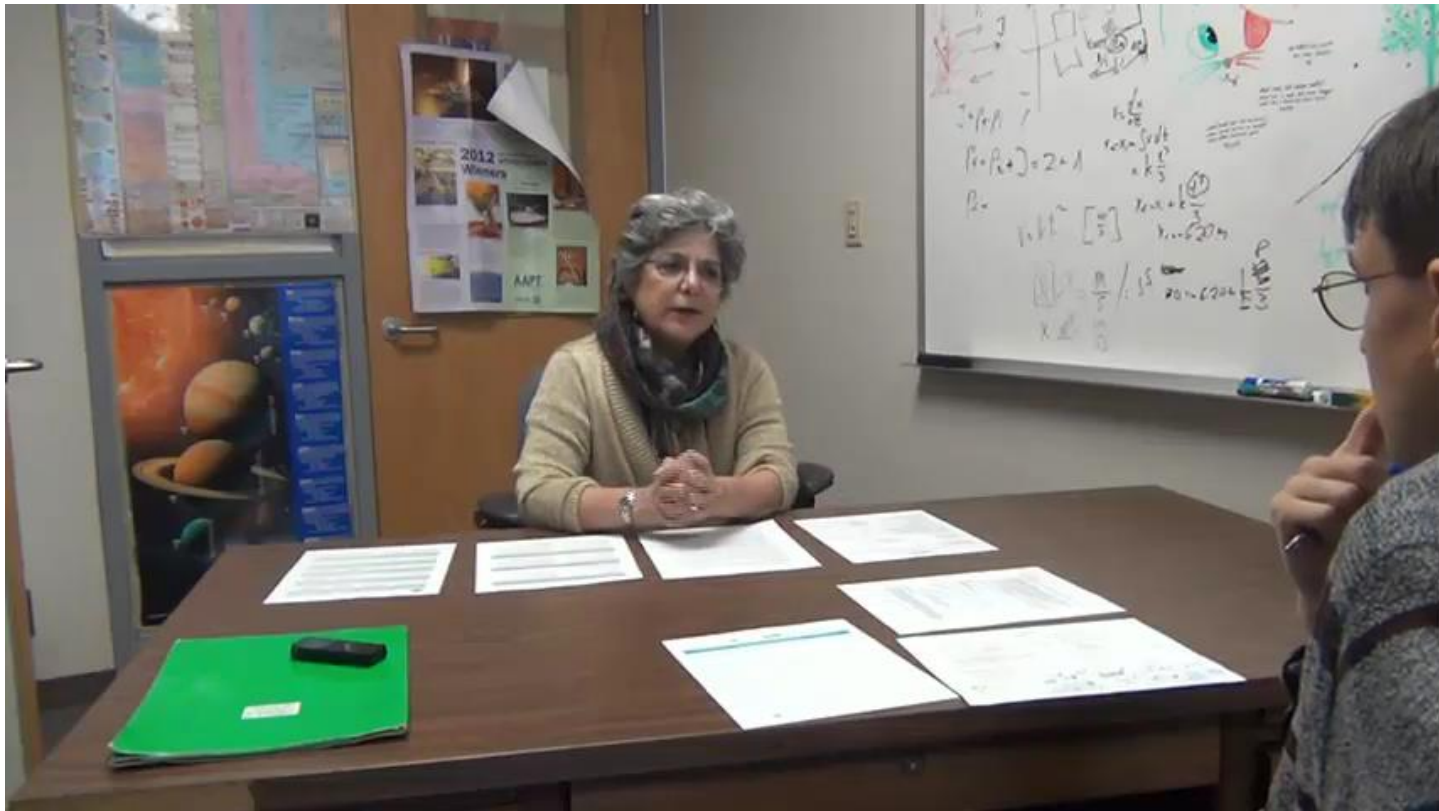
- ◆ Other aspects of NCLB are also troublesome.
 - Schools are equally labeled as failures whether just one group of students, such as students with **disabilities**, fails to meet achievement targets or their entire student body falls short.
 - By 2011, opposition to the law had become so intense that some relief from its provisions had to be provided. Since Congress had not reached agreement on changes, the Obama administration took action to **grant waivers** from some of the most troublesome provisions of the law.

- ◆ **Clearly, standards-based reform has gone astray. Few would argue that it has broadly raised the quality of American schools.**

Iris Testing Industry

Zdeslav Hrepic

- ◆ Issues – Overtesting, low level testing, narrow testing, no funds for testing
- ◆ Testing What is Easy to Test
- ◆ Tying salary to performance – many issues but the last blow - cheating



Constant assessment - downside of NCLB

- ◆ Constant assessment - downside of NCLB
- ◆ Poverty affects schools: In spite of Coleman study – Policy makers wrongly assume no impact of socioeconomic
- ◆ Learned positive lesson: All students can learn at some rate



The Newest Education Law

ZdesLav Hrepic

- ◆ The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015,
- ◆ Some Good News
- ◆ Today, high school graduation rates are at all-time highs. Dropout rates are at historic lows. And more students are going to college than ever before.

Public High School Graduation Rates

(Last Updated: May 2018)

In school year 2015–16, the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) for public high school students was 84 percent, the highest it has been since the rate was first measured in 2010–11. In other words, more than four out of five students graduated with a regular high school diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest ACGR (91 percent), followed by White (88 percent), Hispanic (79 percent), Black (76 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (72 percent) students.

How does ESSA reverse the course of K-12 Key in the Headlines

- ◆ It “Restores Local Education Control.”
- ◆ It “continues a long federal retreat from American classrooms.”
- ◆ It “shifts power to states.”
- ◆ According to a *Wall Street Journal* editorial, it represents “the largest devolution of federal control to the states in a quarter-century.”
- ◆ The Every Student Succeeds Act, according to *The New York Times*, represents “the end of an era in which the federal government aggressively policed public school performance, and returning control to states and local districts.” But for all the breathless hype, the legislation seems unlikely to produce many changes that are actually visible on the ground.
- ◆ The Senate on Wednesday approved the Every Student Succeeds Act, the bill that will reauthorize the nation’s 50-year-old omnibus education law and make the “pretty-much-universally despised” No Child Left Behind obsolete.

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act)

ZdesLav Hrepic

- ◆ No consequences except or the bottom 5%
- ◆ Federal government can no longer require tests as part of teacher evaluation
- ◆ No federal imposing of academic standards on states
- ◆ Robert: We did not like to look at ourselves and realize we do not do a good job as it does not make us look good. So do not take tests,.



The Schools and the Three Reform Movements

Each of these three reform movements has left its mark on American education, but each has fallen short of its initial promise.

The most noteworthy shortcoming of these movements is that they mostly sought to influence what went on in the classroom—the heart of education—through *external* means. Greater equity was to be secured by adding on services. Choice was to be a market force sifting out bad schools. Test-driven accountability sought to use test results as a lever for change. The exception to that pattern is the academic standards portion of that last movement which sought to define better what should be taught.



For half a century, external remedies have been tried and are not sufficient. If American education is to see major improvement, it is time to concentrate on the core components of what happens in the classroom—who is teaching, what is being taught, and how those key elements are funded. Those are the hard issues, and we have approached them timidly. Now, we must confront them forcefully.

Of these three core components, the greatest progress has been made in influencing *what is being taught*. The standards movement has better defined the academic content that students should learn, despite the sidetracking into test-driven accountability, and the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics are being implemented by the adopting states.

If those common standards are to positively impact student achievement, they must be fully infused throughout the education system. Pre-service education of prospective teachers and professional development for current teachers must be aligned to the standards. High-quality curricula, textbooks, and lesson plans based on the standards need to be developed. The new common assessments aligned to these standards, currently being developed, need to be finished and used for improving education, not just for accountability like the current state tests.

The Schools and the Three Reform Movements

The second component of what happens in the classroom, improving the quality of *those who are teaching*, has been the focus of several reform efforts over the last half century, with some degree of success. For instance, teachers can voluntarily apply for and obtain national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards through a very demanding process intended to show that they are knowledgeable and effective. According to the Board, 3% of American educators now have this certification. Other groups, such as the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, have also sought to improve the quality of the teaching force, but all these efforts have not had the broad effect on America's classrooms that is needed.

Now is the time to treat teachers as true professionals and put a well-prepared and effective teacher in every classroom in America. To achieve this, we should elevate the image of the profession by making transparent the complexities of effective teaching and the skills and conditions necessary for teachers to teach effectively. This involves the following steps:

- Drawing teaching candidates from the top tiers of college students
- Closing colleges of education that consistently produce ineffective teachers
- Offering induction and mentoring for new teachers and professional development for all teachers in the subjects they teach
- Improving working conditions for teachers
- Substantially increasing teacher pay
- Removing ineffective teachers from the profession
- Using financial incentives and other inducements to attract the most effective teachers to the schools with the most challenging student populations
- Training principals to be instructional leaders