

## K-12 School System Reform - An IOPA Tier One Policy Issue

There are two reasons why this is **THE** top IOPA issue. 1) Inhouse Expertise; and 2) Global Importance.

- 1) IOPA Chief Merrifield and IOPA VP Phelps have several books and articles on different aspects of under-performing primary and secondary education systems (all schools, public and private), worldwide. IOPA Treasurer Gray has a PhD in Education Policy, and is a coauthor, with Merrifield, of [Unproductive School Choice Debates](#) (2023). VP Phelps just published [The Malfunction of US Education Policy](#). IOPA Development Director Milena Smolinskaya is a new education policy PhD.
- 2) Regarding the 51 (50 states plus DC) US K-12 school systems, there have been [periodic re-affirmations](#) of the formal [1983 'Nation at Risk' declaration](#). Since the world's best K-12 systems are only slightly higher performing than the existential threat-level US system, low-performing school systems are a global threat to freedom, equity, and prosperity.

### Research projects underway:

Book Review for Cara Fitzpatrick's *The Death of Public School*.

The Effect of Testing on Student Achievement, exhaustive data base and meta-analysis.

### Planned projects (comments and financial support would be greatly appreciated), including proposals:

Research yielding this Book: ***Political Control of K-12 Education***

Purpose: provide an objective basis for comparison of market control and political control of schooling personnel and content.

**Accountability Pilot Project:** Identify better ways to hold students and educators accountable for student outcomes and develop and implement ways to hold trusted information sources accountable for their claims and behaviors.

**The Confinement Project** – Most families' difficulty paying for schooling twice (taxes for the public system, plus tuition when the assigned school is a poor fit) confines them to the traditional public school (TPS) in their attendance area. The resulting confinement, often to a terribly low performing TPS is one of the last vestiges of formal systemic racism. Attendance area boundaries force households to compete for the housing near the better TPS, which concentrates the poorest children around the worst schools, yielding de facto segregation. That, and some other predictable outcomes of politicizing schooling policies, is responsible for the longstanding, [repeated](#) formal "[Nation at Risk](#)" designation for all 51 US school systems. IOPA aims to expose the effects of confinement by attendance area, and through IOPA's assessment process, assert policy reform choices.

### Important K-12 Reform Books, Articles, and Dimensions:

[From IOPA](#) – K-12 Publications - K-12 Blog Post Archive Forthcoming

Other - e-mail [IOPACHief@policytalk.org](mailto:IOPACHief@policytalk.org) to suggest additions. Also, [Reform Strategy Options](#).

See also items B, C, D, M, and Q in the [Why IOPA is Needed](#) Document.

### Tools:

- A) The [Nonpartisan Education Review](#) – a peer-reviewed academic journal
- B) The school choice fiscal notes calculator (coming here soon) exists because sloppy, disingenuous fiscal cost estimates (fiscal notes) often provided political cover for legislators to oppose school choice expansion. IOPA can create such fiscal notes, cheaply, on demand. Via ZOOM, we can determine what information the calculator requires, enter those numbers, and get important estimates immediately.

- C) Coming soon: a Private School Access Index (PSAI). We need the Index to sustain progress beyond the early universal eligibility adopter states in 2022 and 2023, and to build on the initial steps forward achieved by the early universal expansion adopters (Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin).