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ACCOUNTABILITY:

[Another Lesson in Political Accountability](#): Theory and fact argue for low or negative expectations from political accountability of government agencies including school districts and departments of education.

[Mindless Fallacies About Accountability](#): Incredible willingness to assert that accountability to political authority is the only kind. Instead, accountability to government officials is the weakest kind.

[Political Accountability Problems, NYC](#): A specific New York example.

[Private Standards](#): The usefulness of private [subjective] assessments of school performance.

[School Choice and Accountability – Separate Realities 1](#): Accountability effects through school choice.

[Top-Down vs. Bottom-up Accountability](#): An example of how bottom-up accountability works.

CHARTERED PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

[Charter-Driven Reform](#): How charter law can foster improved school system performance.

[Charter Scandal Doomsday](#): Why we should expect chartering to yield some scandalous behavior, and why such scandals are an existential threat to school choice expansion efforts.

[Conversion to Charter Isn't Enough](#): Converting a traditional public school to a chartered public school may not change/improve it much. Such conversions may not yield much school system improvement.

[Dangerous Charter Malaise](#): It is dangerous – threatens school system improvement efforts – to ignore the many alleged chartering-related scandals.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION CHALLENGES:

[Differentiation of Instruction Delusion](#): The evolved, implicit public school system business plan assumes a lot more differentiated instruction than the vast majority of teachers can manage.

[Differentiation Re-Visited](#): More on the differentiation of instruction delusion.

[Let the Differentiation Wars be Public](#): That unrealistic differentiation of instruction expectations devastatingly undermine the rationale for public school system practices needs much more attention.

[Differentiated Instruction and the One-Dimensional Ability Fallacy](#): Failure to see that most children have strengths and weaknesses – they are not uniformly brilliant or not – is a really big deal.

EVIDENCE: REAL and IMAGINED:

[Beware of Evidence – It May be from the Current System](#): A lot of research-based assertions of what does/doesn't work arise from how the current system operates; may not be true of different systems.

[Adventures – Blog](#): Examples of dubious claims about the performance of policy reforms.

[Apples and Oranges Dangerous Nonsense](#): Many absurd claims arise from ridiculous comparisons.

[Competition vs. Rivalry](#): Having a potential rival doesn't assure the effects of genuine competition.

[Beware of Misuse of Test Scores](#): Before you ascribe meaning to test results, be sure you're aware of all of the test-related conditions that may have affected those results.

[Beware of Test Scores Masquerading as Data](#): More on the potential for misleading testing results.

[Elasticities vs. Coefficients](#): How to not misuse elasticity information, such as how private school use varies with out-of-pocket tuition cost.

[Fixed Costs Fallacy](#): That some public school system costs are sometimes not affected by enrollment decline is not very often, nearly the important issue it is often alleged to be.

[Lessons from Reform Context](#): Intellectual prisoners of the status quo often forget that the context of proposed reforms is likely central to their effects; their effectiveness.

[Marginal Cost Discussion](#): One more/less student often costs/saves much more/less than the average cost per student.

[NAGAYT](#): For every state studied, the best traditional public schools are very often still not very good.

[NOLA Challenges I](#): Some of the rest of the story for the recent changes in New Orleans.

[NOLA Challenges II](#): More of the rest of the story for the recent changes in New Orleans.

[Nomads Call for Increased Uniformity](#): Frequent movers often frequently, mistakenly assert that they'd benefit from increased traditional public school system (TPS) uniformity.

[NYC Description Re-Affirms Key Fallacies](#): New York City examples illustrate important ED fallacies.

[Persistence of Failing Schools](#): True in general, and true for specific schools. Turnarounds are rare.

[Priceless Economists](#): Many education economists have forgotten that an economist should be a purveyor of price theory, not just a statistician with an advanced degree in economics.

[School Grading Revisited](#): Such grading asserts the one-dimensionality or something that needs to be multi-dimensional, and often is – not often enough.

[Schooling is NOT a Public Good](#): Schooling is a merit/demerit good; isn't non-rival and non-exclusive.

[Small Effects of 'Obvious Solutions' Reaffirmed](#): In public school systems, policy reforms that should have noteworthy effects often have little or no impact. They've repeatedly disappointed.

[The Sad Truth About the Rising Value of College Degrees](#): A key cause has been poor K-12 results.

[The Separate Realities Smoking Gun](#): Many analysts imagine market conditions that are not present.

[We Desperately Need Better Data](#): Existing data do not support several comparisons we should make.

[What is Different About the Schooling Industry](#): Where standard economic analysis does and does not fall short for the output, and key inputs, of K-12 school systems.

GOVERNANCE:

[Local Educators Seek New Takes on Governance](#): Many stakeholders want new systems, which they often describe as radically different, that don't greatly differ from existing decision-making processes.

[Review of Education Governance](#): How it actually works vs. the idealized decision-making process.

[Whole System Reform, Defined](#): System chiefs typically see 'whole system reform' as new programs that don't change existing decision-making processes, or outcomes, very much.

HEROIC ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING OUR 51 SCHOOL SYSTEMS:

[Heroic Assumptions](#): Many of key implicit assumptions of our 51 school systems are very unrealistic.

[Heroic Assumptions Revisited](#): More on the unrealistic nature of public school systems' key implicit underlying assumptions.

[Heroic Assumptions2](#): More on the 51 systems' key underlying unrealistic assumptions.

INSTRUCTION CHALLENGES and STRATEGIES:

[A Key Myth on the Roots of the Low Performance Problem](#): Incredibly, there is little recognition or attention to the key core reasons for widespread persistently poor school system performance.

[A Public School Common Core Context](#): School choice expansion is the answer to controversies about the adoption of Common Core Standards.

[A Principled Disagreement](#): More on disagreement about the Common Core Standards Initiative.

[Ability Grouping Done Right](#): The importance of ability grouping BY SUBJECT, which given the diversity and multi-dimensionality of children is very different from inadvisable one-dimensional TRACKING.

[Common Core Standards for Schooling Markets](#): We should have standards for declaring when school system conditions reasonably resemble the market conditions that dominate most of the US economy.

[Costly Dissonance on Teacher Effectiveness](#): We take for granted unnecessarily challenging teaching circumstances created by the evolved public school system business plan.

[De-Professionalized Teaching](#): Ongoing micro-management of public school teachers is devastating.

[Differentiation of Instruction Delusion](#): The evolved, implicit public school system business plan assumes a lot more differentiated instruction than the vast majority of teachers can manage.

[Dis-Connect on Student Engagement](#): Widespread student disengagement is widely *misperceived* as a problem of under-motivated students and inadequately trained teachers.

[Draw Great Teachers to High Need Schools](#): The widespread, nearly ubiquitous single salary schedule does the opposite.

[Dumbing Down to Guard Self-Esteem](#): A disastrous strategy for a non-existent problem.

[Exploiting a Passion for Athletics](#): Subject themes - an important source of student engagement – are viable only for schools of choice.

[Higher Standards, Improved Accountability](#): An utterly failed strategy based on symbolism.

[How to Improve Instruction](#): Eliminate rampant out-of-field teaching by ending single salary schedules.

[Impossibility of Politically Correct Useful Curricula](#): The political process has a terrible record on this.

[Need Better Teachers, Sure](#): The bigger problems are the unnecessarily challenging teaching conditions created by the politics of public school systems.

Persistent Failure to Address the Roots: Poor recognition of the roots of the public school systems' low performance problems is compounded by insufficient attention to them.

Specialized Schools – Sports Theme Example: A sports theme is an example of a way that a school of choice can increase the engagement and performance of the children excited by it; only them.

Teacher Effectiveness De Ja Vue: An example of the futility of more-of-the-same-harder.

Why Many Teachers Don't Like to Talk to Parents: It's sad and amazing that the system, by forcing the delivery of a uniform product to a diverse clientele, creates tension between essential collaborators.

INTELLECTUAL PRISONERS OF THE STATUS QUO and SEPARATE REALITIES:

Intellectual Prisoners of the Status Quo: Debilitating false imperatives arise from assuming the persistence of problematic school system conditions and practices.

Intellectual Prisoners of the Status Quo II: More on debilitating false imperatives arise from assuming the persistence of problematic school system conditions and practices.

School Choice and Accountability – Separate Realities 1: Frequently overlooked accountability effects through school choice expansion.

Separate Realities One: Longstanding public school system practices are sacred and not problematic vs. many such practices are severely problematic, and transformational reforms are urgently needed.

Separate Realities 2 (Intellectual Prisoners): Many school system chiefs' notion of "whole system reform" changes very little; leaves roots of the low performance problem intact.

Separate Realities 3: An alleged trade-off between freedom and justice points to misunderstandings.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS:

Another Version of the Best are not very Good: The top performing school systems aren't very good.

Inside Finland: A specific example of a low-performing former top performer.

PISA Results: The top performers aren't much better than the slipping "Nation at Risk" US systems.

South Korea #1 in 2012: Another specific example of a low-performing former top performer.

ONE DIMENSION FALLACIES:

Ability Grouping is not Tracking: Tracking is bad because it assumes one-dimensional student ability. Ability grouping by subject is an essential reform.

Differentiated Instruction and the One-Dimensional Ability Fallacy: Failure to see that most children have strengths and weaknesses – they are not uniformly brilliant or not – is a really big deal.

One-Dimensional School Grading: Dashboard information is much more helpful than assigning a letter grade to a multi-faceted traditional public school.

One-Dimensional Thinking Run Amok: It is often dangerously misleading to assert good/bad students/teachers/schools; good at what/good for whom diversity are key issues in a multi-dimensional world.

Problems with Grading Schools: A hazardous exercise of questionable value.

Revolutionizing Assessment for a One-Dimensional World: It's a proposal written for a non-existent one-dimensional, one-size-can-fit-all world.

Simple Proof of Multi-Dimensionality: It's amazing that most of us recognize that we have strengths and weaknesses - our own multi-dimensionality – but there is widespread failure to recognize that multi-dimensionality is a critical aspect of teachers, administrators, schools, and schoolchildren.

POLITICAL PROCESS ISSUES:

TPS Epitomize the Way Democracy Does Work: There are common, dangerously misleading tendencies to idealize political process outcomes.

Political Control is the Central Problem: Why political action, much of it well-intended is the root cause of many, probably the vast majority of reasons for persistent low performance problems.

Another Lesson in Political Accountability: Useful accountability thru a political process is often absent.

Every 50 Years: Every fifty years people with power succumb to pressure to extend to all privileges they have long enjoyed. Universal school choice on a level playing field is overdue.

Horse Story: A well-traveled parable that likens school system failure – and more of the same harder futile reform attempts - to trying to ride a dead horse.

[Innovation Suppressed by the Inevitable Politics](#): The appearance of fairness is an often devastating political imperative.

[Inside NOLA](#): The changes made in New Orleans after Katrina were helpful, but not a national model.

[Language Policy for EdReform Discussions](#): Loose language can sink reform causes.

[Leadership Symbolism Over Substance](#): Beware of weak claims; legislation that yields a talking point, but avoids the politically-difficult, needed substantive change.

[Many Children Left Behind Not Just by ...](#): Formally designated failed schools – fit no one – are sadly abundant, but the key problem is that one size does not fit all.

[More Hope Triumphant Over Experience](#): A story of a new superintendent getting a standing ovation for promising more-of-the-same-harder; things that seem helpful, but fail in our current systems.

[Open vs Expand](#): Additional choices are helpful, but openness (low entry barriers) is transformational.

[Over-Extended Electorate](#): Nearly all of us are expected to wisely vote on a lot, which creates a lot of dangerous imaginary political accountability. Political control of schooling is greatly affected.

[Parent Trigger](#): A low-value, costly process [closing, converting bad schools] whose time has come.

[Perfect is the Enemy of the Good](#): As premium scholar Thomas Sowell repeatedly argues, there are no perfect solutions to any problem, just a change in the mix of pros and cons (tradeoffs).

[Philanthropists, Answer the Bell](#): An important element of an open education system is means-tested, charity funding for tuition copayment assistance; when tuition is more than per-pupil choice funding.

[Please Depersonalize School System Failure](#): Funding and governance policies largely common to all 51 US K-12 school systems make it hard to be successful.

[Politics Run Amok](#): An example of colorblind behavior that is officially dubbed ‘racist.’

[Problems with Grading Schools](#): A hazardous exercise of questionable value.

Proper Perspective – Realistic Expectations: Avoid hype; small choice expansions yield small effects.

Right and Wrong Way: For better outcomes, use improved incentives, not performance pressure.

Some Key Translations of Blob Speak: Secretary of Education Bill Bennet dubbed the education establishment 'the blob' (horror movie metaphor). Here are some explanatory examples.

The Blob in Action: More on how multiple ED establishment veto points prevent meaningful reform.

The Blob and Incentives: The context of reform initiatives are everything, which is often overlooked.

Sustaining a Limited Government Republic: To keep a functional republic, we need much improved literacy, numeracy, economic literacy, and civics education.

The School System Transformation Dream Team: How to define and advocate politically feasible, productive transformational school system reform.

UK Near-Voucher Experience: Very instructive on the politics of universal school choice expansion.

Universally Free Subsidized Schooling: There are huge functional differences between a menu of schooling options in which all subsidized options charge no tuition and where a few charge a little.

Urgency Discovered in Fallacy: That public schools in affluent areas are still unacceptably low performing indicates the urgency of transformation school system reform. It is not a poverty problem.

Whole System Reform, Defined: System chiefs typically see 'whole system reform' as new programs that don't change existing decision-making processes, or outcomes, very much.

PRICE-LESSNESS FORCES CENTRAL PLANNING vs. DECENTRALIZED PLANNING:

Central Planning Approaches Have a Low Upside: Central plan optimization is the chore of a lot of education think tanks. Central planning fails in theory and in fact whenever/wherever it is used.

Decentralized Planning Works: The decentralized planning through enterprise motivated by price signals alternative to low-upside public school system central plan optimization has a good track record.

Draw Great Teachers to High Need Schools: The widespread, nearly ubiquitous single salary schedule does the opposite.

[Free Enterprise Route to Innovation](#): Product differentiation (school diversity), price formation and adjustment, free enterprise, and potential profit are the key to rapid progress through innovation,

[Maybe Central Planning at its Best](#): worth considering despite its still numerous heroic assumptions.

[Price-lessness In Action – Teacher Labor Markets](#): Because nearly every state bases teacher raises only on experience and additional credentials (a single salary schedule), there are shortages in tough schools, and in disciplines such as STEM and special ed. That yields much out-of-field teaching.

[Price Control is not an Equity-Efficiency Issue](#): Price-lessness is especially bad for the poorest families.

[Price-less Means The Government is Deciding What it Should Cost](#): Being out of sync with market forces yields devastating shortages, or wasteful surpluses.

[The Equity Implications of Price-lessness](#): Free-only subsidized schooling – justified by equity arguments – has been a disaster for the poor families that proponents say will benefit.

SCHOOL CHOICE EXPANSION:

[A New Selling Point](#): a lesser known argument in favor of universal school choice expansion.

[Benefits of Transformational Choice](#): reasons to avoid restriction-laden, low-income-targeted school choice expansion.

[Choice as a Right or Just Problem-Solving Tool](#): both

[Choice Benefits for Non-Choosers](#): Children that stay at their assigned traditional public school will benefit significantly from universal school choice expansion.

[CRPE's Making School Choice Work](#): That amazingly economic literacy pervades much school system reform discussion is a major problem.

[Do Not Means Test](#): There are many important to not limit school choice expansion to poor families.

[Environmentalists and School Choice](#): Use of attendance areas has major bad environmental effects.

[Measuring Choice and Competition](#): Sadly, typically done very poorly.

[Improved Integration Requires School Choice](#): Universal school choice expansion is the key to genuine socioeconomic and racial integration of schools and neighborhoods.

[Milwaukee Frightful Tale](#): A long-time dangerously misleading poster child for the effects of school choice expansion.

[More Imagined Competition Rhetoric](#): Painful, important examples of low basic economic literacy.

[Price Control is not an Equity-Efficiency Issue](#): Price-lessness is especially bad for the poorest families.

[Public School Choice is not Enough](#): They attempt uniformity, and we must harness entrepreneurship.

[Repeated Anti-Choice Nonsense](#): We need a dynamic menu of relentlessly improving schooling options because the noble aims of public school systems have not nearly been realized.

[The Blob and Resistance to School Choice](#): Watering down proposals does not reduce resistance.

[School Choice and Accountability – Separate Realities 1](#): Frequently overlooked accountability effects through school choice expansion.

[School Choice, Good for Dedicated Teachers](#): it improves the teachability of classrooms, increases specialization in areas of strength/interest, and makes teacher labor markets more competitive.

[School Choice Means Nondiscrimination](#): We should end the public funding discrimination against the children for whom the assigned school is a poor fit.

[Some Nearly Free vs. Only Free](#): There are huge functional differences between a menu of schooling options in which all subsidized options charge no tuition and where a few charge a little.

[The Key Reason School Choice Expansion is Important](#): Families need access to the best possible pedagogical fit for each child.

[Tuition Vouchers Obsolete](#): Education Savings Accounts and tuition tax credits are better ways to universally expand school choice to include private schools, homeschooling, and charter schools.

[With Friends Like These](#): Loose language can sink critical reform causes.

[Wrong Comparisons](#): It's a mistake to seek insight by comparing different parts of a broken system.

THE CURRENT 51 US SCHOOL SYSTEMS MAKE IT UNNECESSARILY DIFFICULT:

All 51 US Systems Make the Key ED Tasks Unnecessarily Difficult: The politics of governance and funding add much unnecessary difficulty to district superintendent, school principals, and teachers.

School District Superintendent: the world's most difficult unnecessary job.

School District Superintendent Churn: a dangerous, useless game of musical chairs.

Another Great Superintendent Moves On: High turnover for the world's most difficult unnecessary job.

Another Supt Bites the Dust: Another case of high turnover for a very difficult unnecessary job.

How to Improve Instruction: Eliminate rampant out-of-field teaching by ending single salary schedules.

TPS Principals: Also victims of the political imperative to offer a uniform product to diverse children.

TRANSFORMATIONAL REFORM ARGUMENTS:

Time to End Denial: The Blob and much of the public – because of miseducation and undereducation – are in denial of the terrible track record of central planning, including in K-12 school systems, globally.

A Promising Sign: Another long-time Democrat and teacher union activist recognizes the dangerous nonsense coming out of both major teacher union conventions.

A Teacher Union Confession: The Blob opposes professionalization of teaching.

Big Spending Increases – No Result: The Blob often asserts the need for increased funding; never noting the already high-level of per-pupil funding and the weak to zero connection between per-pupil funding and school system outcomes.

Another Money Doesn't Matter Story: The documented connections between per-pupil funding and public school system performance are weak to non-existent,

Decentralized Planning Works: The decentralized planning through enterprise motivated by price signals alternative to low-upside public school system central plan optimization has a good track record.

Do Not Means Test: There are many important reasons to not limit school choice expansion to poor families.

Futility of School Reform w/o Transformational School System Reform: Beneficial school reform has a very low upside without transformational school system governance and funding reform.

Lurking Dangers: many land mines out there

School System Improvement Anywhere is Helpful Everywhere: It doesn't require genuine competition.

Silly, Debilitating Public vs Private Comparisons: current private schools are probably poor examples of what new private schools will aim to do.

Slippery Slope Reform Lynchpin: Universal choice expansion with public-private copayment allowed.

Sources of Terrible Experience with Current Systems: many important books

Taking Flak for Being on Target: Resistance to open school system-based reform always arises with promises that ongoing more-of-the-same-harder will work this time, and nonspecific criticisms.

The Foolishness of the Fair Comparison Demand: Proponents of the governance and funding status quo often claim that public school systems would look more effective but for all the restrictions that encumber them. Yes, that is a key point. Aiming to make one size fit all is a major performance barrier.

The Public School Choice Transfer Problem: The political imperative to appear fair yields pursuit of uniformity, which means that nearly everyone prefers the same few top traditional public schools.

The Recurrent Tragedy of Lousy Experiment Disputes: There's a lot of dangerously distracting noise about the meaning of lousy alleged policy experiments.

VALUED SCHOOL SYSTEM OUTCOMES:

a) STEM; b) NAEP; c) PISA; d) Equity; e) Civics; and f) Skepticism.

Equity Math for a Transformed System: Past charitable funding would support a lot of children – more than now – if deployed as means-tested copayment assistance instead of grants to school operators.

NAEP Improvement Needed: as a no-consequences-for-students exam, it is highly questionable whether the NAEP results, especially for older children, reflect reasonable effort.

NAEP Trends: some of the NAEP scores are at all-time high, barely, and still at dismally low levels.

Nation at Risk Declarations: the list of formal declarations that our 51 low-performing K-12 school systems imperil our nation's safety, liberty, and prosperity.

Nation at Risk VI: In effect, there have been six school system-related "Nation at Risk" declarations.

Persistence of Failing Schools: True in general, and true for specific schools. Turnarounds are rare.

PISA Results: The top performers aren't much better than the slipping "Nation at Risk" US systems.

Segregation vs Stratification: Force matters in the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic stratification of schools and places.

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math are areas of especially poor K-12 school system performance.

STEM Stuff: Little home-grown talent, low math literacy and much likely mostly unengaging out-of-field K-12 teaching in the STEM fields.

The Importance of Fostering Skepticism: Amazingly, school system insiders (the Blob) discourage critical thinking, now, when we need it most.