

ED Blog Essay Contents:

Accountability – p 1

Chartered Public Schools – p 2

Common Core Standards – p 2

The Current 51 US School Systems Make it Unnecessarily Difficult – p 4

Differentiated Instruction Challenges – p 4

The Education Media – p 4

Epistemology: Information dissemination, profusion, suppression, and misuse – p 6

Evidence, Real and Imagined – p 9

Federal Education Policymaking – p 11

Governance – p 12

Heroic Assumptions Underlying our 51 School Systems – p 13

Higher Education – p 13

Instruction Challenges and Strategies – p 13

Intellectual Prisoners of the Status Quo and Separate Realities – p 15

International Comparisons – p 15

One-Dimension Fallacies – p 17

Political Process Issues – p 17

Price-lessness Forces Central Planning vs. Decentralized Planning – p 19

School Choice Expansion – p 20

Testing Policy – p 22

Think Tanks and Federally-Funded Research – p 25

Transformational Reform Arguments – p 28

Valued School System Outcomes – p 29

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.

[Campbell's Law is like the Soup](#): Campbell's Law is like Campbell's Soup: Ubiquitous and Innocuous. You became familiar with Campbell's Law when only a few days old and by age two had mastered it.

[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.

[Try Trying](#): Educator testing scandals have lit up the news wires recently and some call the cheating unprecedented. It is not unprecedented; journalists simply paid little attention to the issue before now.

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.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS:

[Setting Academic Performance Standards: MCAS vs. PARCC](#): PARCC performance standards will end up somewhere below the current average for all the participating states.

[How PARCC's False Rigor Stunts the Academic Growth of All Students](#): The authors call on the Commonwealth to phase out Common Core and PARCC, and to base a revised MCAS on Massachusetts' pre-Common Core curriculum frameworks.

[Drilling Through the Core: Chapter 6](#): Now in one volume, get the research on Common Core's quality, legality and cost that laid the groundwork for the ongoing national debate about how best to achieve higher academic standards.

[The Revenge of K-12: How Common Core and the New SAT Lower College Standards in the U.S.:](#)

However, the greatest harm to higher education may accrue from the alignment of the SAT to Common Core's high school standards, converting the SAT from an adaptable test predictive of college work to an inflexible retrospective test aligned to and locking in a low level of mathematics. This means that future SAT scores will be less informative to college admission counselors than they now are, and that the SAT will lose its role in locating students with high STEM potential in high schools with weak mathematics and science instruction.

['One size fits all' national tests not deeper or more rigorous:](#) With Common Core, we now have four, roughly equivalent college admission tests, serving none of their intended purposes well.

[Common Core's Language Arts:](#) As should be apparent to anyone exposed to Common Core, PARCC, and SBAC publications and presentations, most are neither dull nor boring, and they eschew precise, obscure words. But neither are they neutral or objective.

[The Gates Effect: Common Core Has Powerful Ally Keeping Unpopular Program Alive](#) (Independent Voter Network): Nine years on, however, Gates shows no reluctance to continue pushing on Common Core, despite massive unanticipated resistance from [grassroots parents groups](#) and the [few political groups](#) that have not accepted money to promote it.

[Nation's Report Card: Common Core delivering education stagnation](#) (Independent Voter Network): Thus far, the grand promises made for the allegedly "higher quality," "more rigorous" (and certainly [hugely expensive](#)) Common Core standards and tests have yet to be observed, at least in NAEP results. That did not stop the state superintendents invited to speak at the [April 10 data release](#) from attributing score increases in their states to their Common Core adoption. Apparently, the few superintendents invited to speak came only from states with rising scores.

[Some Common Core Salespersons' Salaries: DC Edu-Blob-ulants:](#) Linked are copies of Form 990s for Marc Tucker's National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE), Checker Finn's Fordham Foundation and Fordham Institute, and Bob Wise's Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE). Each pays himself and at least one other well.

[More Common Core salespersons' salaries:](#) Here, I review Form 990s for three more Common Core-connected organizations—Achieve, The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and PARCC, Inc.

["Organizationally orchestrated propaganda" at ETS:](#) With their "research" on the Common Core test opt-out movement, ETS blew away any credible pretense that it conducts objective research where its profits are threatened. Opt-out leaders are portrayed by ETS as simpleminded, misinformed, parents of poor students, ...you name it. And, of course, they are protesting against "innovative, rigorous, high quality" tests they are too dumb to appreciate.

[Education Next, the Fordham Institute, and Common Core:](#) In years of observing the behavior of staff at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Institute I haven't noticed much of the "open-mindedness and humility" claimed on its website. More common has been a proclivity to suppress dissent, shun or

ridicule those who disagree, and promote their in-group as the only legitimate spokespersons for “education reform” along a wide range of education policy issues.

[Common Core Collaborators: Six Organizational Portraits](#): Historical, financial and media analyses of the organization that spawned the Common Core Initiative, the two copyright holders, two of the paid proselytizers, and the delivery vehicle, where the reputed CC "architect" now runs things.

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.

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.

EDUCATION MEDIA:

[Have the Gates Foundation and its Allies Purchased US Education Journalism?](#): Just within the past twenty years, Gates+ money has incubated several new education-only media outlets, such as

Chalkbeat, *EdReports*, *EdSurge*, *Education Next*, *Ed Post*, *FutureEd*, and *The 74*. Gates + money has also substantially boosted the efforts of preexisting education-only media organizations, such as *EdSource*, *Education Week*, the Education Writers Association, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and the *Hechinger Report*. All told, this accounts for almost all large-audience, US, K–12-education-only print media outlets, other than those tied to the traditional public education establishment.

[US Education Journalists Source Research Expertise](#) (slide show): Nationally-known US education journalists have become publicists for the vested interests, thereby compounding the problem of information suppression and skewed policy-making.

[Career Paths of the Permanent Education Press](#) (Appendix 7 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies the chapter, "The Permanent Education Press" in the book *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Media Expertise Source Counts](#) (Appendix 8 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies the chapter, "The Permanent Education Press" in the book *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Expert Sources of Journalists Barnum and Barshay](#) (Appendix 10 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies the chapter, "The Permanent Education Press" in the book *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[The Education Writers Association: Then and Now](#) (Appendix 11 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies the chapter, "The Permanent Education Press" in the book *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[US Education Journalists Source Research Expertise](#) (slides): Insidious trends: pay-to-play coverage; bias toward elite celebrities and cloying self-promoters; explainer journalism; "go to" source relationships; pack journalism; narrowing Overton Windows; almost complete neglect of conflict-of-interest declarations and other ethics code elements; passive acceptance of dismissive reviews and citation cartels.

[Kamenetz, A. \(2015\). *The Test: Why our schools are obsessed with standardized testing—but you don't have to be*. New York: Public Affairs. Book Review, by Richard P. Phelps: "...completely one-sided, unworthy of an established journalist."](#)

[The Education Writers Association casts its narrowing gaze on Boston, May 1-3](#): Over the past several years, EWA has provided speaking and writing platforms for 102 avowed Common Core advocates, 7 avowed Common Core opponents, 12 who are mostly in favor, and one who is mostly opposed. Randomly select an EWA Common Core "expert" from the EWA website, and the odds exceed ten to one the person will be an advocate and, more than likely, a paid promoter.

[The elitist strain in US education journalism](#): The individuals and groups Politico's *Morning Edition* deems worthy of mention are well-funded and politically well-connected—those who can 'pay to play.' They tend to be individuals and organizations that donate funds to support education news outlets. They tend also to be organizations with their own public relations personnel. Finally, overwhelmingly they are individuals and organizations that have accepted money from the Gates' and other foundations to promote Common Core.

[Back to school means education news stories ...for a while](#): The late professor and congressman Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously asserted, 'Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.' Within the flatland of US education journalism, the assertion may not hold. The more narrowly journalists source information, the more opportunity they grant those sources to customize facts to benefit themselves and the two parties' leadership.

[The Hechinger Report on college admission testing](#): Like most education-focused news outlets, the *Hechinger Report* claims that it 'provides in-depth, fact-based, unbiased reporting.' Yet, somehow, it usually ends up dishing the same old formulaic propaganda supportive of education insiders.

[The High Price of the Education Writers Association's News](#): EWA's income from contributions dwarfs that from membership dues by a ratio of about 150 to one (Internal Revenue Service, 2015–2019). Its contributors overwhelmingly supported Common Core. As of 2019, EWA's five 'Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees' all enjoyed six-figure salaries.

[What I learned at the ResearchED \(US\) Media Panel](#): Unfortunately, most nationally focused education journalists source their research stories from these two censorial groups and ignore the vast majority of available research and information. Moreover, journalists aid the information suppression whenever they print claims that a study they are covering is the first ever done on a topic (i.e., a firstness claim) or there exists no other research on the topic (i.e., a dismissive review). During the panel session, I accused education journalists of covering only those sources with money (and PR staff) behind them.

[Keeping Journalists in the Dark: 'Citation Cartels' Limit Public Knowledge](#): The public relies on journalists to learn about and share academic research. Public knowledge is undermined, however, when academics try to influence what research journalists cover or limit the "acceptable debate" about an issue. This influence can be achieved through "citation cartels," where sympathetic researchers cite and reference one another and ignore or dismiss the high-quality research of others that reach different conclusions. Citation cartels belittle research they disagree with, rather than refute it."

[Are US Education Journalists Objective, or Players in the Game?](#): Massive bodies of evidence and theory are ignored by US education journalists simply because they rely on small, homogenous, and unrepresentative groups to represent vast, heterogeneous realms of evidence and opinion. US education policy formation is rife with fraud, censorship, and information suppression. Journalists in other fields tend to be very interested in such things. Not our education journalists.

EPISTEMOLOGY: INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, PROFUSION, SUPPRESSION, AND MISUSE:

[What a Database of More than a Thousand Dismissive Reviews Can Tell Us](#): Some articles lead with a dismissive review. "This is the first study of X" may be the first sentence in the abstract. Some individual articles contain a dozen or more. Claiming an absence of research on a topic comprises the entire substance of some articles, without any evidence of said absence, or of having looked for it. Some highly successful scholars have employed dismissive reviews throughout their careers.

[How citation cartels give 'strategic scholars' an advantage: A simple model](#): Career-strategic scholars do not cite the work of those outside their group, unless they must because that other work is so well

known their slight would be widely noticed. Debates are generally avoided with those outside one's cartel. Given the contrasting dynamics, over time the work of career-strategic scholars will attract more attention, produce better scholarly metrics which, in turn, leads to better employment outcomes and higher status.

[Dismissive Literature Reviews Reduce Understanding—so why do academics keep making them?](#)

How many times have you read an article that confidently states there are few other studies in this area? And how confident are you that this is the case? Richard Phelps argues outside of the sciences there is rarely a lack of pre-existing literature, but claiming so is a rhetorical move to give priority to one's own research.

[Worse than Plagiarism: False Firstness Claims and Dismissive Literature Reviews:](#) A plagiarist misrepresents just two documents—his/her own and the one pilfered. With dismissive literature reviews, a scholar may dismiss from the collective working memory hundreds or thousands of studies.

[Appendices for The Malfunction of US Education Policy:](#) Links to each appendix, one through 11, and the reference list.

[The Enablers](#) (Appendix 1 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies several chapters in the book, *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Sources of citations in C.C. Ross's Measurement in Today's Schools:](#) Appendix 2 of the book, *The Malfunction of US Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Research Literatures Dismissed by Celebrity Scholars or Journalists](#) (Appendix 3 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies several chapters in the forthcoming book, *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Comparing Two Literature Searches for Testing Effects](#) (Appendix 5 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies several chapters in the forthcoming book, *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Subtractive Scholarship:](#) With each public remark a scholar may add to society's collective working memory or subtract from it. Their addition is the new research they present in a journal article or conference presentation. The subtraction, when it occurs, is typically found in the scholar's portrayal of previous research on the topic.

[The Successful Degradation of Evidence on Educational Testing in the United States](#)

Capsule Summary: History of Federal Educational Testing Policy in the USA
(1890–1950) Psychologists develop and study educational testing
(1920–1980) Education schools diverge from origins in Psychology
(1970+) Ed school professors suppress positive research on testing
(2000–2003) Ed testing becomes high profile issue; Economists interested
(2001+) Economists believe Ed school professors; ignore Psych research.”

[Peer Review, a Tamished "Gold Standard"](#): We may forget that citation and publication numbers are not supposed to be ends in themselves but, rather, just proxies for adding useful and accurate information to society's store of knowledge. Society might be better served by fewer scholarly journals publishing fewer articles that have been much more widely and thoroughly vetted.

[Dismissive reviews: A cancer on the body of knowledge](#): The root of the problem: Many editors do not review literature reviews for accuracy. As a result, an author can write anything about earlier work on a topic — including misrepresentations of the work of rivals. One finds these unsupported declarations in top-ranked journals with the most exacting standards for the quality of a new article's analysis. These journals may apply rigorous scrutiny to each new piece of research, while passing without checking literature reviews dismissing a world's and centuries' worth of past research.

[101 terms for denigrating others' research](#): Hundreds of terms stand ready for dismissing entire research literatures.

[Down the Memory Hole: Evidence on Educational Testing](#): What happens to the research evidence in a scientific field when the professionals in that field do not like it?

[Dismissive reviews in education policy research: A list](#): Included are the statements—the dismissive reviews—of some prominent education policy researchers. Most are inaccurate; it is possible that all of them are. Certainly, all are misleading.

[Dismissive Reviews, Citation Cartels, and the Replication Crisis](#) (slide show): In 2005, a medical school professor published this article in one of the most popular science journals. He exaggerated his claims. He did not actually prove anything, as his calculations were based mostly on assumptions and not actual data. But sometimes it takes dramatic claims to get people to pay attention to a problem.

[Interview with Jim Zellmer of Schoolinfosystem.org](#): Weekly from Madison, Wisconsin, Jim Zellmer emails a selection of links to fifty or so education-related news stories, essays, blog posts, and other relevant sources.

[Dismissive Reviews: Academe's Memory Hole](#): Literature reviews take time, offer no professional reward, and impede self-promotion.

[Worse Than Plagiarism: Firstness Claims and Dismissive Reviews](#) (slide show): Misrepresent the work of one person, by plagiarizing, and your career could be ruined; misrepresent the work of hundreds or thousands in a dismissive review? ...the risk is nil and the rewards potentially large.

[A Decade in the Paranoid World of US Education Research, Part 1: The Scoldings](#): Yet, the society of education research professionals also wants the public to believe that they can be trusted as arbiters of truth in education policy, even though, for some, truth ranks among the least of their interests. Outing truth requires free inquiry, open debate, vigorous discussion, and conflict, all anathema to those professionals more concerned with their personal career trajectories, the superficial appearance of decorum, or the preservation of appealing myths.

[To Save the Research Literature, Get Rid of the Literature Review](#): The literature review is a staple of the scholarly article. It allows authors to summarize previous work in the field and highlight what makes their own contribution an original or novel one. But when those previous studies are misrepresented by

an author, or even dismissed altogether amid claims of a “paucity of research”, isn’t the knowledge base in fact degraded rather than preserved? Richard P. Phelps argues that, given the difficulty of verifying an author’s claims during peer review, it is best that journals drop the requirement for a literature review in scholarly articles.

Test Basher Speak: Testing opponents take common, ordinary words and give them alternate definitions. Then, they use those words in the public domain, leaving the public to think they are using the common, ordinary definition, when they are not. “Rote Recall,” for example, is used to describe the response to any test item with a multiple-choice response format, no matter how complex the question or complicated the process required to get from the question to the correct answer.

The dissolution of education knowledge: To paraphrase *A Nation at Risk*: if an authoritarian government had attempted to impose on U.S. education journalists the level of censorship they have voluntarily imposed upon themselves, it would have been viewed as a betrayal of our democracy, an unconstitutional act.

Censorship Has Many Fathers: ... there is a gross double standard in education research when it comes to tone, anyway. It seems to be perfectly acceptable in education research publications to imply all sorts of ignorance, incompetence, and ill motive to politicians, corporations, government officials, and the public. It is simply not OK to do the same with other education researchers, even if one does nothing more than quote them directly. Censorship has many fathers. Substantial educational improvement will not be possible unless and until it is OK to call censorship censorship and to call research fraud research fraud. So long as both get to parade as legitimate discourse and fact, the occasional lone voice of reason allowed will be inaudible above the cacophony produced by the numbers and power of the vested interests and is just wasting her breath.

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.

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.

Competition vs. Rivalry: Having a potential rival doesn’t assure the effects of genuine competition.

The Separate Realities Smoking Gun: Many analysts imagine market conditions that are not present.

[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.

[US Education's Dominant Research Method: Cherry Picking Evidence](#): Rather than allow all the research literature—the full expanse of all relevant evidence on a topic—to lead them to a research conclusion, some scholars reference only that part that supports their preferred conclusions. I call these scholars 'dismissive reviewers,' because they ignore or declare nonexistent (i.e., dismiss) relevant evidence. When a group of dismissive reviewers cooperate, they form a 'citation cartel'—citing only each other's research and dismissing all the rest.

[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.

FEDERAL EDUCATION POLICY-MAKING:

[Republicans Muster Narrow Expertise on NCLB Rewrite](#): Researchers who tell you 'listen only to us and do not talk to anyone else' are typically ruthlessly ambitious, but they are not shy.

[No Child Left Behind Renewal: Blinders on Education Policy](#): Two weeks ago, The Honorable Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) invited three allegedly independent education researchers to discuss possible revisions to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

[Close all USED-funded research centers: Evaluation of existing regulations: My two bits](#): My comments below in response to the USED request for comments on existing USED regulations.

[Latest grades for US education on the "Nation's Report Card"](#): Thus far, the grand promises made for the allegedly "higher quality," "more rigorous" (and certainly [hugely expensive](#)) Common Core standards and tests have yet to be observed, at least in NAEP results.

[There are Only Two Sides to US Education Policy \(Thanks to the Parties\)](#): There must be thousands of education researchers in the United States who feel as frustrated as I do. Not only is the vast majority of quality research and information on educational testing ignored by journalists and the small group of celebrity researchers they talk to, extraordinarily often it is declared nonexistent. As a result, the American public and the American politician are persistently misinformed, and their desires reliably unrepresented in policy discussions.

[Review of Raising the Grade: How High School Reform Can Save Our Youth and Our Nation, by Bob Wise](#): There's nothing wrong with arguing that more money and attention be devoted to America's high schools. Those arguments, however, characterize only the smaller part of Raising the Grade. The rest of the book often denigrates our country's most trustworthy education statisticians and labels our most challenged high schools en masse as "dropout factories."

[Does College Board deserve public subsidies?](#): At least four aspects of College Board's circumstances seem problematic: College Board enjoys monopolies in key markets and leverages those monopolies to support its competition in non-monopoly markets against competitors who enjoy no monopoly safe havens. # It retains a huge nest egg of investments that the current leadership of College Board did nothing to attain, much of it harbored in offshore tax havens, that it uses to support its competition in

non-monopoly markets against competitors who enjoy no similar advantage. # Its governance structure appears impregnable. The current leadership, and the current CEO, can do what they please with legacy monopolies and assets, with little possibility that the organization will hold them to account for their behavior. #College Board leadership pays itself large salaries that seem exorbitant considering both the organization's charity status and the profound mismanagement of the past several years.

[The Council of Chief State School Officers and National Governors Association: Whom do they serve?:](#) Given the predominance of contract and grant funding at both organizations, one wonders if they merit being classified as member associations any longer. If their staff does not provide their members an objectively neutral range of policy options and evidence, what are they doing? Perhaps, in lieu of helping their members serve their constituents, they busy themselves writing grant proposals to fetch the far larger funding amounts available from foundations and the federal government. And, if that is the case, CCSSO and NGA do not primarily serve their members. Rather, they primarily serve the federal government or wealthy foundations. They have been co-opted. Do CCSSO and NGA need to be as large and as wealthy as they have become ... not to serve their members?

[Forty Years of Polls](#) (slide show): The U.S. public has consistently favored standardized testing in the schools, preferably with consequences (or "stakes") riding on the results, ever since the first polls taken on the topic several decades ago. Depending on how the question is framed, those in favor of high-stakes standardized testing outnumber those opposed at ratios as high as twelve to one. Parents are stronger supporters of high-stakes testing than are nonparents, and that support does not budge when they consider the possibility of their own progeny failing. Results from different polls approaching the topic in different ways suggest that nearly all Americans would like to see high-stakes tests administered at least once at every grade level.

GOVERNANCE:

[A Myron Lieberman Bibliography](#)

[Myron Lieberman--Knowledgeable, forthright, independent, ...rare:](#) He declined to sign on to a cause or join a club unless he believed in the message or mission, an oddity in this age of "strategic partnerships" in which truth, accuracy, and conviction must be sublimated in the collective quest for power, influence, and celebrity.

[Educational morass forever:](#) It requires long seasoning in the bog for one to develop a taste for which education information is accurate, which is myth, and which is just plain dishonest.

[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.

[Until the US Department of Education Expires:](#) Useful roles for the DoED until the end to unsustainable federal fiscal practices force termination of DoED.

[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 the key implicit assumptions of our 51 K-12 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.

HIGHER EDUCATION:

[Are AP fee waiver subsidies beneficial? Sources for an answer](#); Bibliography.

[Are English Departments Really Dying?](#): A closer look at the numbers reveals a more subtle story.

[Challenging the Academic Publisher Oligopoly: Technological and political changes may liberate scientific research](#): The availability of electronic copies and so many workarounds to find them reduces publishers’ actual customer base to law-abiding academic libraries and those individuals who purchase individual articles at prices far above marginal cost. Once academic libraries can negotiate with academic publishers on equal terms, the academic publishing market will become entirely different.

[Are College Exit Exams a Valid Measure of Learning? It's Complicated](#): I recommend accepting that college education has, and should have, a wide variety of purposes and goals. That variety can only be validly judged with a corresponding variety of outcome measures.

INSTRUCTION CHALLENGES and STRATEGIES:

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

[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.

[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.

Starting school already behind: Some students start first grade already years behind some of their peers, and they never catch up. They need an extra year just for that.

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:

Among the Constructivists: "We are educating people to think for themselves." How do they know we are? How is it measured? Answer: we don't know.

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.

The Politicization of Education Research and the AERA: Like many science-related professional associations founded on the principles of unbiased research, nonpartisanship, and best practices, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) has become thoroughly politicized.

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.

Thoroughly Inadequate: The "School Funding Adequacy" Evasion: Funding adequacy studies are often used to precipitate lawsuits. However, Nevada's Constitution — unlike those in other states — contains no language that would support an "adequacy" justification. Moreover, by some measures, Nevada maintains the most equitably funded school system in the country, lending no support for a suit on "equal opportunity" grounds either.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS:

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

[Are US Students the Most Heavily Tested on Earth?](#): How should amount of testing be defined? On average, how many hours does a U.S. student spend on testing? How does this compare with testing time in other countries? How do the type and purpose of testing vary from U.S. to other countries?

[Benchmarking to the World's Best in Mathematics](#): This article describes the education quality control systems (for mathematics) used by those countries that performed best on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Enforced quality control measures are defined as “decision points”—where adherence to the curriculum and instruction system can be reinforced. Most decision points involve stakes for the student, teacher, or school. They involve potential consequences for failure to adhere to the system and to follow the program at a reasonable pace. Generally, countries with more decision points perform better on the TIMSS. When the number of decision points and TIMSS test scores are adjusted for country wealth, the relationship between the degree of (enforced) quality control and student achievement seems to be positive and exponential. Conclusion: The more (enforced) quality control measures employed in an education system, the greater is academic achievement.

Higher Education Intl Comparisons; a) [Int_IHigherEdFrontMatter.pdf](#); b) [Int_IHigherEdReport.pdf](#); c) [Int_IHigherEd_AppendixA.pdf](#); d) [Int_IHigherEd_AppendixB_Chapts1-2-1.pdf](#); e) [Int_IHigherEd_AppendixB_Chapts3-5-1.pdf](#); and f) [Int_IHigherEd_AppendixC.pdf](#)

[Inside Finland](#): A specific example of a low-performing former top performer.

[Large-scale educational testing in Chile: Some thoughts](#): The greatest danger posed by the dysfunctional PSU, I fear, is the bad reputation it gives all tests. Some in Chile have advocated eliminating the SIMCE, which, to my observation, is as well managed as the PSU is poorly managed. It would be a mistake to eliminate all testing because one is badly managed. We need assessments. It is easy to know what you are teaching; but, you can only know what students are learning if you assess.

[PISA Results](#): The top performers aren't much better than the slipping “Nation at Risk” US systems.

[Preparing Teachers Around the World](#): [The authors] surveyed the teaching policies of seven countries whose students performed as well or better than students from the United States in mathematics and science. ... One of the most striking findings is that students in the countries are more likely to have teachers who have training in the subject matter they teach.

[Synergies for better learning: an international perspective on evaluation and assessment](#): OECD [review essay] - An enormous expenditure of time, money, and effort to, essentially, get it all wrong.

[The OECD Encourages Spread of Failed US Education Programs](#): The OECD encourages world to adopt US education dogma and the program failure it has produced.

[The Rot Spreads Worldwide: OECD - Taken in and Taking Sides](#): The OECD encourages world to adopt US education dogma and the program failure it has produced.

[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.

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

Measuring Choice and Competition: Sadly, typically done very poorly.

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.

EDUCATIONAL TESTING POLICY:

[The Great AP Score Recalibration](#): The College Board's recent testing move may be a problem. Its monopoly power definitely is a problem.

[U.S. Colleges and Admission Testing: Required, Optional, or Blind?](#): The unanimous decision was foreordained through advance lobbying by the chair. It also betrayed a stark disconnect with the California public, which disapproves of ethnic preferences. Background research showed that just as many ethnic minorities would be admitted under a testing requirement, but they would be different people—academic overperformers rather than well-connected activists.

[The US Test Mess](#): Most US states now administer a single test in high school to both retrospectively measure achievement and prospectively predict college success, thus reducing its validity for one or both purposes. Indeed, promoters of the Common Core Standards, paid by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and its allies, encouraged states to drop their own achievement testing programs, and rely instead on Common Core tests, which were designed for different purposes.

[Over- and Under-used Criticisms of Standardized Tests](#) (slide show): Overused - Time Lost from Learning; Teaching to the Test; Narrowing the Curriculum; Distorts Instruction. Underused: Choosing the Wrong Test Type; Lax Security; Threats to Privacy; Not Testing When Benefits are Clear.
[Standardized Testing: The Interplay of Achievement & Aptitude Testing](#) (slide show): Achievement tests are retrospective and based on narrow content coverage; Aptitude tests are predictive and based on wide content coverage.

[Test Frequency, Stakes, and Feedback in Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis](#): Summarizes the separate and joint contribution to student achievement of these three treatments and their interactions via multivariable meta-analytic techniques using a database of English-language studies spanning a century (1910–2010), comprising 149 studies, 509 effect size estimates.

[It's a myth: High stakes cause test score inflation](#) (slides): High stakes tests cause test score inflation (artificial score gains) only when level of security isn't considered. Add to the analysis test security – strict or lax – *et voila*, stakes don't matter. Lax security leads to test score inflation regardless of the stakes.

["Teaching to the Test" Family of Fallacies](#): The fallacies are partly responsible for promoting the ruinous practice of test preparation drilling on test format and administering practice tests as a substitute for genuine subject matter preparation and 'auditing' allegedly untrustworthy high-stakes test score trends with those from allegedly trustworthy low-stakes tests, despite an abundance of evidence that low-stakes test scores are far less reliable.

[What Causes Test-score Inflation? Comparing Two Theories](#): This debate is important because the public policy solutions in each case are very different.

[Teaching to the test: A very large red herring](#): Secret definitions. Secret locations. Secret tests. Such studies may stand forever because they are neither replicable nor falsifiable. More like religion than science; they require faith.

[David Coleman in Charge](#): Wayne Bishop recently made me aware of the unfortunately completely one-sided discussion of US mathematics education at the recent Aspen Ideas Festival, assembled by David Leonhardt is Washington Bureau Chief for the *New York Times*.

[Overtesting or Overcounting?](#): Why does a 1-minute-long Dibbles test count the same as an all-day test?

[Using middle schoolers for anti-testing advocacy?](#): A middle school in New York State encouraged its students to send me letters opposing school tests.

[Extended Comments on the Draft Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing](#): to the Management Committee, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, and American Educational Research Association, April 10, 2011, New Orleans, LA

[There's A Deeper Systemic Problem in the College Admissions Scandal No One Is Talking About](#): Why didn't the College Board know about the scam? Or did it?

[Not Just Another Varsity Blues Essay](#): Plenty is said about test security. School personnel may participate in training workshops. Test developers publish (often complicated and long) test administrator booklets with step-by-step instructions for maintaining security. Nonetheless, cheating investigations remain uncommon. Pinning responsibility for such investigations remains difficult. This seems to be by design.

[Characteristics of an Effective Testing System](#): Effective testing programs are multi-level and multi-targeted.

[Economic Perspectives on Testing \(slides\)](#): Why can't economists and psychologists just get along? # Overview of economic theory as it pertains to education & testing # Human capital theory and the economics of information # Supply & demand; benefits & costs; goods & bads # The cost of standardized testing (from society's point of view) # The benefits of standardized testing (information) # The benefits of standardized testing (motivation) # Optimal testing system structures # Optimal testing industry structures.

[On Test Security the GAO Could Do More](#): U.S. GAO Could Do More in Examining Educator Cheating on Tests. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), a research agency of the U.S. Congress, continues its foray into the field of standardized testing.

[A Critical Review of "Getting Tough? The Impact of High School Graduation Exams"](#): Most of the relevant information left out of "Getting Tough?"—specific values for other factors that tend to affect test performance or student achievement—was available from the three contemporary surveys, and the rest could have been obtained from a more detailed evidence-gathering effort.

[Why Standardized Tests?](#) (slide show): How can those outside a school or classroom judge the quality of a school, its instruction, or its students? Schools vary in quality. Courses vary in quality. Grade comparisons are not reliable. Standardized tests' most important feature is standardization.

[The Rot Festers: Another National Research Council Report on Testing](#): In research organizations that have been “captured” by vested interests, the scholars who receive the most attention, praise, and reward aren't those who conduct the most accurate or highest quality research, but those who produce results that best advance the interests of the group. Those who produce results that do not advance the interests of the group may be shunned and ostracized, even if their work is well-done and accurate.

[The School-Test Publisher Complex](#): The most important document in US education testing—the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*—will soon incorporate the conclusions of biased, irreparably flawed research that favors education's vested interests. School districts and taxpayers will be compelled to pay for the administration of more tests, perhaps twice as many in some areas. But those new tests will not be used for any of the proven benefits of testing, such as feedback or motivation. Their only purpose will be to “audit” other, already-existing tests.

[The \(secret\) document that drives standardized testing](#): Education insiders are currently writing in secret what is arguably the single most influential document in US education and psychology.

[The Effect of Testing on Student Achievement, 1910-2010](#): Article summarizes research on the effect of testing on student achievement as found in English-language sources, comprising several hundred studies conducted between 1910 and 2010.

[Educators Cheating on Tests Not New; Doing Something About It Would Be](#): The most fundamental issues in these school scandals are neither cheating, nor pressure, nor testing; they are power and control. Standardized test scores will be trustworthy if responsible external authorities control their administration. It is that simple. Leave control of testing, or ‘audit testing,’ to school administrators themselves, and wide-scale institutionalized cheating on educational tests will be with us forever.

[Teach to the Test?](#): Educational testing is problematic because test security is typically lax, often intentionally so.

[Extended Comments on the Draft Standards for Educational & Psychological Testing](#) (But, in particular, Draft Chapters 9, 12, & 13)

[A Review of Koretz, *Measuring Up*](#): Many testing researchers (unsurprisingly, not associated with CRESST) caution against the simplistic assumptions that any test will generalize to any other simply because they have the same subject field name or that one test can be used to benchmark trends in the scores of another. Ironically, despite himself, Koretz cannot help agreeing with them. Much of the space in *Measuring Up* is devoted to cautioning the reader against doing exactly what he does—making apples-to-oranges comparisons with scores or score trends from different tests.

[Defending Standardized Testing](#): Experts in educational testing weigh the validity of the most popular criticisms.

[The Source of Lake Wobegon](#): The source of test-score inflation is lax test security, not high-stakes.

[The Source of Lake Wobegon](#) (slide show): The source of test-score inflation is lax test security, not high-stakes.

[Kill the Messenger: The War on Standardized Testing](#): describes the debate, the players, their interests, and their positions.

[Demand for Standardized Testing](#): What does the American public think about standardized testing? Do Americans test too much? Does the public believe that tests are a good way to learn about how well students are doing and to encourage them to do better? What do students, teachers, and administrators think?

[L'effet de testing sur les résultats scolaires: 1910-2010](#)

[The Effect of Testing on Student Achievement: 1910-2010](#)

[The Role and Importance of Standardized Testing in the World of Teaching and Training](#): paper presented at the 15th Congress of the World Association for Educational Research, Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakesh, Morocco, June 3, 2008

THINK TANKS & FEDERALLY-FUNDED RESEARCH

[Against Federally Funded Education Research Centers](#): Federally funded education research centers retain too much arbitrary power, with too little oversight and too little recourse for those who may disagree. Peruse their publications, and the names of center members and close colleagues appear again and again and again. Others' research is either ignored or declared not to exist.

[The cork in the bottle](#): The education establishment doesn't need to censor and suppress most research pertinent to education reform; the think tank elite does it for them.

[Pack Funders and Strategic Partners: Some Examples](#) (Appendix 4 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies several chapters in the book, *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Some Bellwether-linked Organizations, Their Funder Lists, Their Board Members](#) (Appendix 6 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies the chapter, "A Dense Web of Common Core Confederates" in the book *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Michael Petrilli's Compliments and Expertise](#) (Appendix 9 in *The Malfunction of US Education Policy*): This appendix accompanies the chapter, "The Permanent Education Press" in the book *The Malfunction of U.S. Education Policy: Elite Misinformation, Disinformation, and Selfishness*.

[Fordham Institute's pretend research](#): Do not take this report seriously; those who produced it did not.

[Fordham report predictable, conflicted](#): PARCC continues to insult our intelligence.

[Education Next, the Fordham Institute, and Common Core](#): In years of observing the behavior of staff at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Institute I haven't noticed much of the 'open-mindedness and humility' claimed on its website. More common has been a proclivity to suppress dissent, shun or ridicule those who disagree, and promote their in-group as the only legitimate spokespersons for 'education reform' along a wide range of education policy issues.

[Censorship at Education Next](#): In response to their recent misleading articles about a fall 2015 Mathematica report that claims to (but does not) find predictive validity for the PARCC test with Massachusetts college students, I wrote the text below and submitted it to *EdNext* as a comment to the article. The publication neither published my comment nor provided any explanation.

[Dan Koretz's Big Con](#): He must realize that he is misleading the public. The fact that he has gotten away with the deception for a quarter century indicates the lowly depth to which US education research has fallen. He hasn't pulled it off by himself, though. There exist plenty of education researchers who know that Koretz's claims are bunk, and I sometimes hear from them in private. But those willing to speak out publicly and risk their careers by opposing popular education establishment dogma, remain few and far between.

[The Gauntlet: How think tanks and federally-funded centers misrepresent and suppress other education research](#): The aggressive, career-strategic behavior of researchers in federally funded centers and think tanks creates many problems, including a loss of useful information and bad public policies based on skewed information.

[The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Institute: Influence for Hire](#): Arguably, the Fordham organizations are the country's most influential in education reform. Moreover, they have spun (or, purchased, depending on your point of view) a large, elaborate web of institutional and individual partnerships. A 'common core' of people moves in, out, and across the groups. People inside the web know each other well, they share friends and enemies, and they owe each other favors. They are less likely to criticize others inside the network and, perhaps, more likely to criticize those outside the network.

[Real Clear Propaganda: Bellwether's Education News Bias](#): During a period from 2014 to 2016, *RealClearEducation* was about as biased a news source as was humanly possible to construct. Its coverage of the Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI) in particular, ranged from blatant promotion to a variety of disingenuously framed news and opinion pieces featuring individuals and organizations receiving funds from Common Core's donor groups, without revealing their conflict of interest. Bellwether's behavior in managing a news outlet raises larger questions about the trustworthiness of information provided by education policy funders and recipients, the incestuous nature of the interlocking interests at both ends of the funding, and the almost total absence of the vast majority of the US population from some education policy discussions.

[The Organization Named Achieve: Cradle of Common Core Cronyism](#): Over time, however, the presence of governors and corporate CEOs in Achieve's management has fallen—from 12 on the board of directors in the period 1996–2000 to just 2 in 2017, an 83% decrease. Meanwhile, influence increased substantially from two other professional groups—the *status quo* vested interests in US education and the 'shadow bureaucracy' of foundations and the nonprofit advocacy organizations they fund. Achieve and its spinoff groups now lobby full time for the Common Core and its related curricula, instruction, and assessments. So, is Achieve now what it was intended to be twenty years ago when 86 governors and corporate CEOs created it? ...No.

[The Rot Festers: Another National Research Council Report on Testing](#): Education's vested interests captured the NRC's assessment research group a quarter-century ago; they have held on tight since.

[Missouri's Show-Me Institute, Where Liberty \(and Censorship?\) Come First](#): No nasty words. No personal attacks. Yet, somehow, someone at the ironically-named Show-Me Institute rationalized censoring this comment.

[Dropping the Ball on Dropouts](#): The widespread acceptance of the average freshman graduation rate by policymakers despite its abundant flaws raises some troubling questions. For example, does exaggerating a problem through semantic distortion help to solve the problem, or does it misdirect attention, misplace priorities, and obfuscate public policy? Further, should education policies be based on the work of those who attract the most publicity or those with the greatest expertise?

[A Review of Greene on Graduation Rates](#): The “Greene Method” of calculating school “graduation rates” and the Manhattan Institute (MI) criticisms of official graduation and completion statistics are outlined and scrutinized. The methodology fails to recognize the complexity of the issue and appears to ignore the considerable efforts that have been undertaken by education statisticians to remediate the problems inherent to these types of data. The Greene method for calculating completion ratios is simulated and found to have little to no reliability. It is recommended that anyone intent on reporting valid and reliable education indicators avoid use of the Greene Method.

[If Certain Education Theorists Trained Olympic Athletes](#): satire on certain education theories of curriculum and instruction.

[A Review of the National Research Council's Report on High-Stakes Testing](#): In radical egalitarian bliss, there will be no high-stakes tests, no academic standards enforced in any meaningful way, and no academic tracking. Academic progress in every school and for every student will be slowed to the preferred pace of the least-motivated student.

[The Ethereal World of Celebrity Education Research](#): a theory of information dissemination and belief formation.

[Think Tank Thoughtlessness](#): Personally, I don't believe that academic discipline myopia is a valid excuse for not knowing the research literature on a topic, particularly in a field that so obviously has been dominated by other academic disciplines for decades. If these policy wonks are successful, the likely outcome will be that when the NCLB Act starts fading into obscurity and the think tankers turn their attention to the newest hot topic, they will leave behind a public understanding of standardized testing poorer even than that which existed when they joined the issue a few years ago, which was highly skewed by vested interest censorship. But, for the few of them, curriculum vitae will be full to bursting with claims of alleged testing expertise and pioneering research work.

[The rigor of scientifically-based research with doctored data could be *mortis*](#): What will “scientific rigor” applied to education research tell us? Not much, probably, unless the celebrity researchers become willing to yank on their hip boots and wade in the murky morass of detail for some extended period. Probably, however, they would not be famous today if they had spent any substantial amount of career time in the patient, inglorious, and time-consuming task of sifting details for research fraud. It is worth noting that the most prominent and most highly paid Wall Street analysts were fooled by the crooks who assembled the financial box scores for them at Enron, Global Crossing, Kmart, Qwest, Pharmor, and WorldCom. It was the less famous, less well-paid, fastidious, green-eye-shaded Morlocks who discovered the frauds, after patiently sifting through the refuse.

[The Source of Lake Wobegon](#): John J. Cannell's late 1980's "Lake Wobegon" reports suggested widespread deliberate educator manipulation of norm-referenced standardized test (NRT) administrations and results, resulting in artificial test score gains. The Cannell studies have been referenced in education research since, but as evidence that high stakes (and not cheating or lax security) cause test score inflation. This article examines that research and Cannell's data for evidence that high stakes cause test score inflation. No such evidence is found. Indeed, the evidence indicates that, if anything, the absence of high stakes is associated with artificial test score gains. The variable most highly correlated with test score inflation is general performance on achievement tests, with traditionally low-performing states exhibiting more test score inflation—on low stakes norm-referenced tests—than traditionally high-performing states, regardless of whether or not a state also maintains a high-stakes testing program. The unsupported high-stakes-cause-test-score-inflation hypothesis seems to derive from the surreptitious substitution of an antiquated definition of the term "high stakes" and a few studies afflicted with left-out-variable bias. The source of test-score inflation is lax test security, regardless of the stakes of the assessment.

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 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.

[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.

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.