

Funding

- Need appropriate funding
- Increase Base Salary.
- \$ for textbooks
- \$ for technology - we are preparing students for jobs not yet created ... odds are technology will play an impt. role.

- time for students - Add hrs.

Pay for Performance

- P4P does not show tchrs you care. Studies show teachers longevity is directly tied to teacher satisfaction.

As an administrator I don't want a tchr who only performs b/c they will get a bonus. I want the teacher who will give 100% day in + day out. I will support those teachers w/ PD, resources, technology + support

P.D.

Idaho stinks at P.D. I have been in Idaho 3 years and have seen very little quality PD.

I always feel like the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. Schedules often overlap.

Eval- no PD of any quality has been offered to Admin or tchrs. We need quality PD regarding evaluations. If we are required to follow a State pgm we should be getting the training to make it highly effective.

Common Core- we need quality PD on the funds to do it ourselves.

Comparing to Idaho to other Countries... Frankly if I want my child educated like a student in China I'll move to China.

But I've chosen to raise
my children in public
schools where children
are valued as individuals.

I feel that Idaho has
given up on public school.
We see it w/ legislation
supporting tax incentives
to help funnel more \$
to private schools. We
have given tax breaks to
big business. What did
we see this year that
supports public education
and our students...
very little.

~~\$1000~~ ~~\$200~~ ~~\$100~~ ~~\$50~~ ~~\$25~~

①

Perhaps the Idaho State Board of Education Task Force could contract Karen Fogle to film the course for parents of initially the CSD School District that would be the Property of the Idaho State Board of Education

After that experiment has resounding success

with parents paying a fee \$20 for the film/seminar to be shown at each School in the School District

(Money put in local ^{each} School fund where Seminar is taught)

After implementation State wide

Then could be marketed

to some exclusivity

Shown to parents at each respective School - not a

②

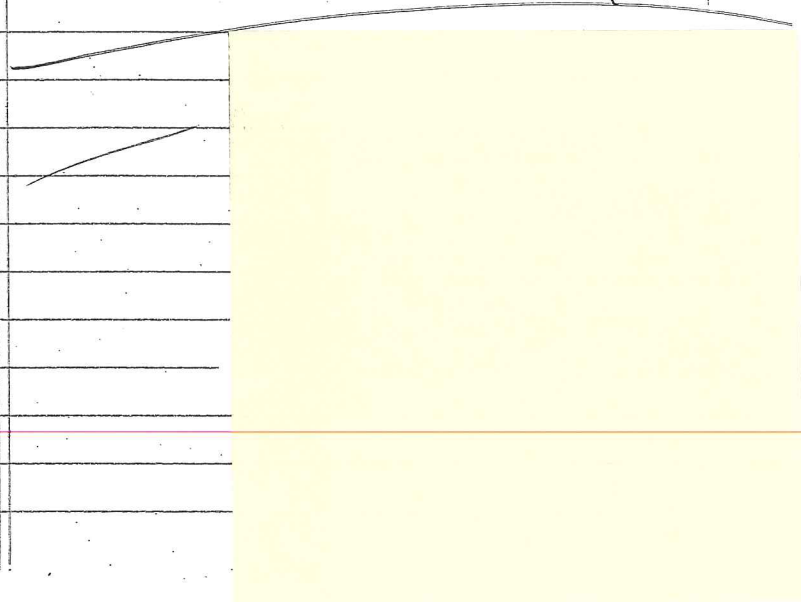
on-line class, not computer file

\$\$\$ for Idaho State

Board of Education

from each School District
that applies

Nationwide \$\$\$



Constitutional requirement (3)
for uniform, common sense
course of instructions

www.KarenFogle.com Trained as
has operated Chrysellis School for 36 yrs Teacher

Force

Task

The

Thank

Suggestion: Most parents are
programmed to believe
that schools are responsible
for their children's education

! Turn on the lightbulb
of current and future
CDA School District parents

by Contracting for Karen Fogle
to film the seminar
that she taught that I took
in 1985 thru Pacific Lutheran
University

Home Based Education Course ^{start}
market it to School Districts T/O the ^{country}
The School District could
offer for a \$20 fee the
course over the weekend ^{available}
in each school through

④

closed circuit TV

The info never gets stale
and can be repeated each
new school year

Synergy among Parents

(The money collected could
be placed in a Special Fund)

www.spalding.org

Writing Road To Reading for grades
K-12

\$60 is the cost for each ^{Grade} Level
Teacher's Daily School Yr
Curriculum Guide

can be used each new school
yr

The only ^{additional} cost is each new
school yr the students
get a Notebook for that yr's level

⑤
When my 10y/10 granddaughter
was 3½
I taught her 44 phonemes
ah a aw c d b

I homeschooled my daughter
and placed her in 1st grade
Jan 1989

After 1 wk the teacher was
amazed that my daughter
Elizabeth was reading

Then my life fell apart....

After 5 yrs of my ex-husband's
custody
and Public School Education
getting A's & B's

my daughter in 6th grade
was Standardized assessed
as only reading at the 3½ grade
level! →

CdA Press

Time To Evolve

U of Idaho, Moscow

Confucious Institute

Link Asia on Idaho Public TV

Chinese Elementary Education
lacks

creativity
and

imagination

I already
e-mailed
them

Pacific Rim

Perhaps the Confucious
Institute

should also show
up @ CdA

As I am out of the state and I am unable to attend the meeting, I am going to provide you with a few selected references and comments which, if you will use them, will give you critical frames of references as you pursue your task. These references are experience and solidly research based, and also provide best practice models that need to be considered and visited.

How Children Succeed by Paul Tough, copyright 2012

Schools Cannot Do it Alone by Jamie Vollmer, copyright 2010

Preparing for Idaho's Future---An Action Plan for Education in the 21st Century

This was an action plan developed in 1991 by the Idaho Education Project which was initiated and funded by twenty five Idaho companies. I was a consultant to this project and I can tell you it had broad based involvement, was thoroughly documented and much of it is totally applicable to the work of your task force. There is no need to rediscover the wheel.

I will also mention that I recently had an orientation and tour of the Compass Academy in Idaho Falls. Although it is new, The New Tech Network with which it is affiliated is not and is worth looking at. It is a best practices model and I believe would be effective in meeting the needs of a wide range of students, but not all.

The Kipp Academy and other best practices models addressed in the Paul Tough book provide other best practices models that have proven effective in addressing wide ranges of need.

I hope you will recommend establishing and providing needed support for demonstration model programs in Idaho schools and the visitation of models of best practices programs elsewhere.

Finally, there needs to be a clear delineation of roles between the State Board, the State Dept. of Education, the Legislature and the Public Schools. A dictatorial, top down, non-collaborative model is dysfunctional and in fact destructive. There needs to be a great deal more local flexibility and control. I am sure the comment will be made that it is well defined in statute; however I believe it is widely subject to interpretation and in dire need of review if we want our schools to function effectively.

There needs to be more respect shown for the public schools, and particularly teachers as professionals, by agencies at the state level! Constructive criticism is not demonstration of a lack of respect, but continuing attacks in a non-constructive manner are totally inappropriate and counter productive.

There absolutely should be a commission established on the initiation of early childhood education programs.

Thanks for the opportunity to respond. Best wishes and good luck with a very difficult task!

April 25, 2013

To the members of the Governor's Education Task Force:

I would like to speak to you this evening about education funding in Idaho. The 5 education bills passed by the Idaho Legislature this session and signed by Governor Otter were revived from Proposition 1 which was rejected by 57 percent of Idaho voters in November. These bills showed blatant disregard for the voices and votes of Idaho citizens and a healthy dose of disrespect for Idaho teachers. They did nothing to focus on finding a solution to consistent, long-term equitable funding of public education in Idaho. Instead of looking for ways to increase education funding, some legislators and the Idaho School Boards Association found the most negative, destructive ways to cut school budgets across the state, namely by allowing school boards and districts to cut staff, salaries, and school days at will. This insures that teachers and students will bear the brunt of these education cuts. Also, the burden of adequate funding for public education will once again fall on local school districts who will need to try to pass bond levies to make up for the lack of state funding. This is a guaranteed formula for inequity for smaller, more rural districts without a tax base or population to support passing bond levies.

According to Rep. Shirley Ringo from Moscow, as she stated in the April 20th edition of *The Spokesman-Review*, Idaho public schools are set to receive \$138.7 million less next year in state funding than they did in 2009, even as school enrollment and costs have grown. I personally see the public schools budget as having a huge pothole dug in it since 2009, and we have to fill in the hole that was created before we can smooth it over and move ahead. Rep. Ringo said: "We might quit cutting taxes until we can live up to our funding responsibilities," and continued, "I think the solutions are kind of plain as day. We're just not making those choices."

To me that's what it really comes down to, the choices we make as citizens, legislators, taxpayers, and as a state. If we're spending \$138.7 million less on public schools this year than we did 4 years ago, where are our priorities? Classroom sizes continue to increase which leads to decreased learning and less individual attention for students. I shake my head every time a legislator says teachers are consistently getting raises every year since this doesn't show an understanding of how educators' salary schedules are funded. Only new and beginning teachers have received any kind of a minimal salary raise in the last four years, and everyone else's career and credit steps for raises have been frozen. Teachers' salaries have been decreased by furlough days, and those teachers at the upper end of the salary schedule haven't seen any kind of a raise for years. I'm sure we've all heard the comment that you can't improve education by throwing money at it. Yet teachers spend their own money, and thousands of it, taking required continuing education courses and improving their skills as teachers by earning advanced degrees. We are investing our own money in Idaho's public school system; why isn't our state government?

If we want to innovate and improve education, our state needs to invest money into public schools. Legislators have shifted the funding burden to local school districts by not wanting to be the "bad guy" for raising taxes since they think it is an unpopular thing to do, but it may be the right thing to do. I always teach my students that what is right is not always popular, and what is popular is not always

right. Shaving \$1.4 million dollars off the top of the public schools' budget to fund a Charter Schools' facility fund may have been a popular thing for legislators to do for Charter School advocates, but it was not the right thing to do for public schools. ~~An alternate source of money should have been used for the Charter School Facility fund rather than diminishing an already anemic public schools' budget.~~ And ~~where~~ where are the state's priorities when it comes to funding professional development to implement the Idaho Core Standards in math and reading next year? If the state truly values schools implementing these Common Core standards statewide, it should provide funding for professional development courses for credit for teachers as was provided to implement the state Reading and Math Initiatives. Right now teachers are feeling stressed, overburdened, and overwhelmed with the expectation to begin teaching Common Core curriculum next year with little training and resources. What we need is respect, support, and the funding to help us feel valued and provide the best education possible for our students. I hope this Education Task Force can help our state legislators and Governor Otter make good choices next year for funding the future of education in Idaho. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Good evening. My name is _____ and I am a former nurse, K-12 teacher, and community leader. I will summarize my viewpoints that are based on a number of years of study of economics, psychology, and over 10 years experience as a classroom teacher.

My main point is build one strong public school system in Idaho that provides transportation to all choice schooling. And model it after systems of public education like Iceland and Finland that we already know are successful economically in the world. Let's aim for world class instead of lower class. I won't have time to delineate some of the specifics of these models and how we might adapt them to Idaho's needs. I will give you some links to more information. And I know Mr. Luna, superintendent of public instruction, has pointed out in his public speeches, and I have learned from my own research that Finland's model has strong positive outcomes for their students as well as their region's economy. But they require greater requirements in teacher's educational background, as well as better pay for these highly trained professionals. And when I refer to a strong public school model, I refer to excellent magnet schools as well as charter schools that exist within the same walls as the public system with free transportation to all choice public schools. Students should not have to be segregated on the basis of finding personal transport to schools of their choice. All students should be able to participate according to their abilities in any public school. This allows free access to student's ability to meet their highest aspirations. It is also very economical because it puts our entire budget for education into one excellent system that every student

has access to. (Granted very rural areas need to solve these problems of access more creatively.)

Let me give you some specific examples to illustrate how a strong public education can benefit students in Idaho. There are many more than these examples, it just helps to have a story to understand my point that one strong system that all have easy access to is superior.

1. A friend of mine, Jess Kuhn is a graduate of Post Falls High School, a public school from a somewhat rural, and blue collar working community in Northern Idaho. She was able to attend the University of Washington, also a publicly funded school, and excelled there. After she graduated from the U of W, and did some practical education as well, she competed and won the Charles B. Rangel Fellowship and is presently in her first year at the Fletcher Graduate School in Boston, Massachusetts, being prepared in the study of economics and a possible career in national or international affairs. When I asked her at a public meeting here, would she have been better prepared had she attended a private or special charter school in this area, she spoke with an "emphatic NO". Public school and learning to understand all kinds of people helped her so much in her ability in speaking, writing, and probably mathematics as well. She stated the students who had attended smaller more segregated schools who came to the University of Washington were not as prepared for the rigors of dealing with all the parameters you have to face with real life problems, no matter what field you are studying. In other words public school works because of superior teachers, students, and the fact that almost all jobs require dealing with and understanding people. No matter whether you aspire to be a teacher, a

doctor, a lawyer, a plumber, a builder, a mechanic, an electrician, or any occupation of the future, a superior public school can teach you to think and deal with all the varieties of people you will come into contact with in the real world...

2. Another example I have is from the COMMON CORE CURRICULUM. A curriculum I have learned is easy to support because it is also about TEACHING STUDENTS TO THINK in real life terms, with hands on learning, with a variety of intellects that increases retention. I will site a friend who has a master's degree in science and teaches in the public school system in Washington State. Her comments are about a BSCS curriculum that works well with Common Core Standards. She states: "This is my second year of teaching a research based science curriculum called BSCS that includes very effective hand-on lesson plans. Not only has this boosted our scores on the state End of Course test, but I can see a difference in student comprehension of difficult concepts. Research based curriculum has students learn by doing. They learn to be systems thinkers and use evidence to build understanding. Each lesson layers on more complexity. While they are learning the concepts and content of science, they are learning a far more important skill, they are learning to think. This is the skill that prepares them for the future."

In conclusion I would like to close with the statement "Build it and they will come." You need to build ONE REALLY SUPERIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, that has all the innovation of magnet and charter schools built right within the infrastructure of our present school system, and not socioeconomically segregated by ability to provide transportation or any other form of segregation. I understand as many of my teacher colleagues

do that some of our most innovative and creatively gifted students come from humble backgrounds. So like Finland and Iceland's model we need to capture all this talent into one superior system. In other words you don't cut corners like we have been doing in Idaho. Our funding used to be better at all levels. We need to have better public pre-school education available and all day kindergarten so that all the students benefit. If transportation is available U of I offers some of this type of program free of cost in our area. We just need to include all those students who need it who are from poorer families and give them those educational services that are needed. That investment in transportation may cost a little more, but the investment will be a smart one. The Finnish model also includes more free time for students to play or read independently within the school day. Possibly allowing more preparation time for those skilled professional teachers. We will be funding one excellent system, as Mr. Luna has himself referred to the excellent public school example of Finland. We can take also take the educational budget of k-12 out of where it is in the general fund and fund education a separate entity. This is how it was so much more equitably funded in the past. As of the close of the last legislature we are still not back up to 2009 levels of funding. We need to review our taxation system according to the ability of taxpayer's to invest, but I am sure this kind of assessment of educational funding is possible.

All these examples are models of how a real business works. They decide they must use the best professionals, pay them well, and give them the best tools to get the best product. Merit pay however has not been shown to be effective in businesses where caring professionals are the main ingredient such as teaching and medicine. We need to make this increased investment IN ONE SUPERIOR WORLD CLASS SYSTEM OF

EDUCATION because people will be so proud of Idaho if we invest in Idaho's youth. Because then not only can we call ourselves one of the most beautiful states. We will be assured that we are the best investors in PUBLIC EDUCATION. I predict PEOPLE WILL COME TO LIVE IN A STATE LIKE THAT and they will want to have their businesses in that city or state as well!

Thank you, I am available for questions or work on concepts at any time.

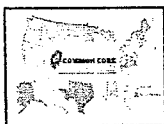
Links to investigate Finnish School System:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/feb/15/us-education-reform-lessons-from-finland>

[tp://www.businessinsider.com/finlands-education-system-best-in-world-2012-11?op=1](http://www.businessinsider.com/finlands-education-system-best-in-world-2012-11?op=1)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/c-m-rubin/the-global-search-for-edu_59_b_2564140.html

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/Why-Are-Finlands-Schools-Successful.html>



Common Core - A Trojan Horse for Education Reform

"Common Core State Standards Initiative" is the latest education program coming down from the federal government, preparing the way for the govt.'s "Race to the Top Assessments," which will take place in 2014, when all the computer software is in place to test the minds of the nation's children to see how well Common Core (CC) has been sufficiently taught. The test will be given online, as are most of the lessons preparing for it.

CC pretends to be a benign "State" program, State-written and controlled. It is touted as being "more rigorous" and will "better prepare students for college and the workplace." However, none of the above is true.

CC is really a deceptive Trojan Horse, a national program, written by a national cartel, supported by the federal government and the Federal Department of Education. It is imposing national standards and curriculum on all of the 46 States that have signed onto it. [Texas, Alaska, Nebraska, and Virginia have refused it. Minnesota has adopted part of it – only the math.] CC is not improving education standards but is dumbing them down. The following are facts and reasons why parents and educators should be concerned and reject Common Core in their States:

- **No Vote by Congress:** Since the federal government has "cart blanche" stimulus money, they did not go to Congress for permission or funding to come up with a new education program. They just went straight to the governors and enticed them with funding if they would sign on to Common Core.
- **No Vote by State Legislators:** Legislators have had no vote concerning Common Core either. They were bypassed in the decision to accept it into their States. If this truly is a State and local program why have they been left out?
- **No Vote or Voice of the People:** The majority of Americans know nothing about this program and have had no opportunity to voice an opinion on it.
- **Bribes and Enticements for the State Governors:** State governors and State education boards have signed onto Common Core because of promised grants and competitions to get those grants, but with strings attached. Governors had to apply and sign on the dotted line "sight unseen"—before ever seeing the curriculum or standards.
- **Waivers:** If states sign onto Common Core, they are rewarded by receiving waivers to get out of the rigid requirements and accountability of No Child Left Behind. (According to NCLB, all students in a State are to reach a certain proficiency level by the year 2014 which is almost impossible to achieve.)
- **Threats:** As more "incentives" for States to sign on to Common Core, the president stated in November of 2009 that "Title One Money" might be withheld. Title One money is a huge grant of money that goes to the States to help in the education of poor and needy children. It is a big part of every State's budget. Of course, in these difficult financial times, States desperately need their Title One money.
- **Enormous Cost to the States:** In spite of the grants that some governors are receiving, it is estimated that the over-all costs for the States to implement the program will be \$16 billion. It is mainly for the cost of the computers and software that is needed for the assessments. California who did not win the federal government grant is stuck with a bill for an estimated \$1.6 billion.
- **Nationalized Education is Contrary to States Rights and the U.S. Constitution:** A national education program, top-down, centrally controlled is not what our Founding Fathers ever wanted. They realized that by controlling all the information going into the minds of the people is how a despotic government and dictators take over a nation. Education then becomes indoctrination and propaganda. Our Founding Fathers purposely left the word education out of the Constitution; what was left out was to be left up to the States and to local and parental control.
- **Education Laws Against National Standards, Curriculum and Control:** 1) The Department of Education Organizational Act (1979), 2) The General Education Provisions Act and 3) The Elementary and Secondary Act (1965) and most recently amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. Each of these says the same thing that "The Federal Department of Education shall not be involved in developing, supervising or controlling instructional materials or curriculum."
- **Parents and Local School Boards are to be in Charge of Education:** Bill Evers, a Research Fellow of the Hoover Institute located at Stanford, stated the following about the importance of local control: *"The insight of competitive federalism is that the 51 State school boards are better than a single federal executive branch office, and 15,000 local school boards are better than either 51 State school boards or a single federal office."*

- **Increased Data Collection:** The Federal Department of Education, in December 2011, amended the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to exceed the agency's statutory authority and thus allows them to collect invasive data on our children. How does that improve education if student information is made available to marketers and snoopers? Why the obsession with data?
- **Math Standards Not Improved But Lowered:** Where the CC math has been tried, it is not any improvement or has actually lowered the test scores from prior programs. In Utah, it was no better; in Massachusetts, it lowered the scores. CC math postpones teaching algebra from the traditional 8th grade to 9th grade. How is that any improvement?
- **English Standards Cut Out Much Classical English Literature:** The CC language arts curriculum lowers the standards to only 50% classical literature from what was traditionally 80%. The other 50% is just informational text, such as reading a computer manual. Why is that so bad? Classical literature is the foundation of our nation. It teaches children to: "investigate their surroundings; to make wise decisions, to have empathy; it teaches them how to exercise their liberties." Anthony Esolen, a professor of Renaissance English Literature at Providence College in Rhode Island states:

What appalls me the most about the Common Core Standards is the cavalier contempt for great works of human art, thought and literary form...We are not programming machines; we are teaching children. We are not producing functionaries, factory like. We are to be forming the minds and hearts of men and women. Frankly, I do not wish to be governed by people whose minds and hearts have been stunted by a strictly utilitarian miss-education.

- **National Tests Tied to Common Core:** Common Core is preparing the States for a national assessment, which students can only do well on if they have the common core curriculum. Teachers are forced to teach to the test. Their salaries are dependent on how well the students do on the tests.
- **Teachers are Being Forced to Use CC Standards at Peril of their Jobs:** Teachers are concerned that they are being forced into a program that has not really been tried or tested at peril of losing their jobs. The reaction of teachers is as follows: "a maelstrom of pent-up resentment over being forced to do what's wrong for kids, and being afraid of losing gainful employment by speaking out."
- **Much Money to be Made for Text Books and E-Books:** Special interests and billions of dollars are driving the push to Common Core for people like Bill Gates and the Pearson book companies who will be making \$millions because of every child using and e-books for their learning. The e-learning market in the U.S. is expected to grow to \$6.8 billion by 2015, up from \$2.9 billion from 2010.
- **Common Means "Nothing Special":** Many believe Common Core is lowering the curriculum and standards to "common" as defined by Webster's Dictionary as meaning: "ordinary," "of little value," "lacking distinction" and "belonging equally to all the people." No mother wants her child to be regarded as common and ordinary, nothing special.
- **Who really wrote Common Core—a Cartel of "the Chiefs":** It consisted of members of: the CCSSO, Council of Chief State School Officers, the NGA, National Governor's Association, and a chief education policy group part of the NGA. These groups were joined by members of the federal government and a progressive group called Achieve, FTA, NEA, ACT and the College Board."
- **"Suggestion Box Input" from State Board Members:** That was the only influence that States had. CC was not States-written, or is a State's initiative.
- **CC is Really International, driven by UNESCO and Agenda 21:** This is how sustainable development will be pushed into every school and university.
- **What Can We Do?** Do your own research and gather more information. Form a coalition to help fight it. Speak out in school board meetings; write letters to the editor; contact your State legislators; give them information; contact your governor and State school board members. Let them know how opposed you are. To order the booklet *Common Core, A Trojan Horse for Education Reform* go to www.smallhelmpressassociates.org.

Check out the following websites: www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.org; www.missourieducationwatchdog.com; www.truthinamericaneducation.com/commoncore; www.eagleforum.org/educate; www.parentsacrossamerica.org; <http://whatisccommoncore.wordpress.com/author/christelswasey/>; www.americanprinciplesinaction.org.

I'm _____ and I represent Boise Branch of American Association of University Women. I'm also a former public school secondary teacher, and a former ten-year member of the House Education Committee.

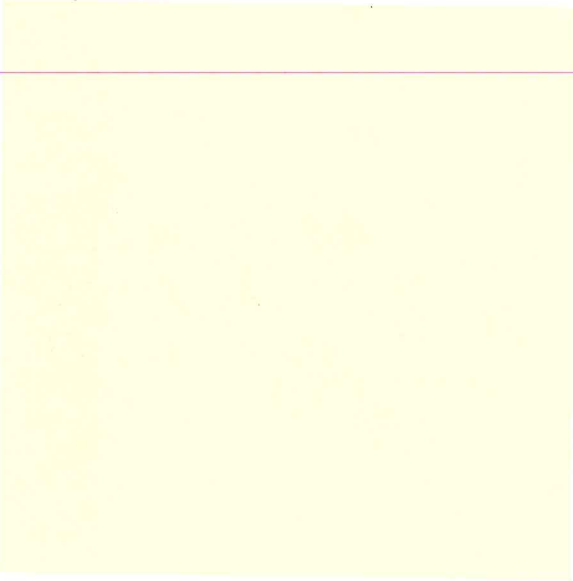
Thank you for your service to Idaho and its public education system, as you've traveled the state learning and listening.

AAUW believes that quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society and the key to economic prosperity and gender equality. We advocate equitable climates free of harassment and bullying, academic freedom, civic education, protection from censorship, bias-free education, and responsible funding for all levels of education, including early childhood education and programs for students with disabilities. We advocate increased access to higher education, especially for women in poverty. We promote equitable efforts to close the persistent achievement gap that disproportionately affects low-income children and students from minority communities.

These are lofty goals, but things to be considered, even in Idaho. In recent discussions with a friend who is a retired Idaho elementary teacher, she brought up that technology is an asset for education, but not a tool that replaces teachers. Drill and practice on computers is really good like practicing piano at home after the lesson. As a tool, she really liked best, keyboarding skills software skills, math games, and spelling words. Student accountability is paramount, Parents, as first teachers, need to train their children to respect education in all forms, as well as introduce them to reading.

The science, technology, engineering and math, now referred to as STEM curricula have to be introduced earlier and to both genders to encourage studying these fields, so needed in Idaho and the nation.

Adequate funding for education is so important. Our administrators and teachers know how to effectively use technology in the classrooms, without mandated directions from the state. Please recommend better funding for public education in Idaho. Thank you for your consideration.



What we need to do to improve education.

1. The problem is mainly infrastructure.
2. We need to stop disrespecting those who disagree and get onto the same team. We won't solve things by calling names; we solve things by working together.
3. It's going to cost money! We can't improve schools unless we are willing to pay for it. So far, we don't seem willing. A poll conducted in Sept. 2012 by Gallop and PDK, a nonpartisan educational research group, concluded that 65% of American would support increasing taxes to pay to improve struggling schools. The simple fact is that Idaho doesn't fund its schools appropriately. Sure, there are lots of reasons, but 50th in the nation is good reason to be ashamed. Every person in this room should think about that.
4. This isn't some hidden mystery. We already know what will improve schools; it's simply a matter of doing it.

Otherwise, we are probably all wasting our time here.

In 1963 or so, my father, _____ loaded up my brother and me into the family station wagon, and we went on a tour of Idaho. He called it "lights on for Idaho education." In the wake of the Soviet launch of Sputnik, the perception was that America's schools were failing and falling behind the Russians. We listened to parents in town after town, and they said the same thing that my parents felt. They cared about their kids, and wanted Idaho's schools to be second to none. Well, 50 years later and now our schools are second to last.

In 1965, Dad shocked Idaho when he proposed real and meaningful reforms. He consolidated districts that had grown too small, and passed a sales tax with the sole purpose of improving education. "Save our Schools" was the effective motto, and the voters of Idaho approved the tax. He advocated a progressive system in which professionals set their own standards and worried less about political affiliation than they did about teaching children. But what has happened? Almost immediately, we placed dozens of exemptions on the tax, and raided it for other things, all of them worthy at the time, no doubt. Then over the years cut other taxes, the most recent is the personal property tax, which will be lowered over time, but no one seems to know where all the money will come from to pay the bills. In 2006, the legislature also lowered property taxes, but replaced these lost revenues with a penny increase that left Idaho schools \$50 or \$60 million short every year. So every year, the state falls further behind, and we have the nerve to blame it on our children. The blame should rest squarely on us, ladies and gentlemen. The money once guaranteed schools is now building prisons and giving tax refunds to whomever lobbies best in the legislature. And education has become a partisan debate, shame on us. What, do we think that there is a republican or democrat way to teach a child?

The result is a system that cannot support itself. So bad is the state effort, in the years since the economic downturn, over 80 local districts have been forced to pass override levees, since the state can't or won't fund the necessary functions. Mr. Chairman, the sad truth is that we are back to the days before 1965, and maybe worse!

The infrastructure issue is easy to see. We have 115 traditional school districts. But now in order to give choices, we have created over 40 charter schools in addition, plus online, and home school options. But we don't have the money to adequately support the ones we have, much less a dozen or so new ones each and every year. Now, the charter and traditional schools are being forced to scrap like dogs over the every shrinking money that the state provides. Everyone loses.

Is this what we want? A double system in which the wealthy, politically connected, and the elite have one system of schools with many choices, while everyone else gets stuck with whatever is left?

No, what the people of Idaho want is a system of schools that use the latest educational advances to teach their children in a neighborhood school that is safe, caring, and staffed by excellently prepared professionals who provide what is best for our most precious resource, our children.

The recent actions by the Idaho legislature to attack the teacher unions were unwise and divisive. I find it quite ironic, that the very people who will be leading the new efforts to reform are being disrespected, seeing their pay cut and their voices diminished. But yet, they are supposed to increase test scores and work all the harder, doing miracles, no doubt with less money, and more pressures. Gosh, no wonder they feel discouraged.

It's simple; really, you get what you pay for. You can't improve schools by cutting their budgets, laying off hundreds of teachers, cutting out training and preparation time, and not spending to keep the physical plants operating safely. Research is clear; this is how you improve schools.

1. Get the parents more involved. Not just the special interest groups that pack meetings with a single agenda, but all parents, including those who have to work two or three minimum wage jobs just to survive.
2. Make sure that teachers teach subjects that they are fully qualified to teach. For example, hundreds of Idaho math teachers don't have a math major degree in education. But instead of raising standards, Idaho has made it easier to people who have no educational credentials to teach, indeed, run the department.
3. Provide leadership. Effective principals make for effective schools. Effective teachers have higher achieving students.
4. Work together. Stop acting like the enemy. Stop putting down teachers, and start listening to them. They tried to warn you that the Luna laws were a bad idea, but you didn't listen. Stop advocating schemes hatched up by leaders who haven't spent a day actually teaching in a classroom or in some cases, haven't even earned a real educational degree.
5. Instead of running commercials lambasting the efforts of our children, do something about it. Our young people aren't "falling behind" or failing to complete college because they are too stupid, they quit because those colleges keep raising tuition, cutting scholarships and making it harder make ends meet. If the various interests REALLY want to help, maybe they should double or triple the scholarships available. If the State Board really wanted relieve the situation, they should order the colleges and universities to LOWER tuition, not raise it by 10% every year. If you want Idaho kids to "go on" give them the money they need to do it instead of forcing them to finish school thousands of dollars in debt. Indeed, it would be funny if they were so incredibly cruel to our young people. You get what you pay for; Idaho has cut what it spends on higher education over the years. Now it whines that the results aren't pretty.
6. Finally, let's own the problem. Hunting "witches" or scapegoats to place the blame isn't going to make the schools any better. We care, or we wouldn't be here tonight. So rather than trying to find the magic bullet, how about finding a source of funding and go about doing what is already proven to improve schools, instead of hatching new jingles. A little less ideology and a lot more work is what we need.

Taskforce for Improving Education
Testimony of
April 25, 2013

My name is

I want to share some basic facts about Idaho public school funding. But first I'd like to read Article 9, Section 1 of Idaho's Constitution. Don't worry, it's only one sentence. It reads:

The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it shall be the duty of the legislature of Idaho, to establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools.

Implicit in this duty is the requirement to provide the necessary funds to maintain the public school system. Recent evidence suggests this duty is not being met.

Not long ago, during the 1980s and the 1990s, Idaho funded its public school system at a level approximating 4.4% of total Idaho personal income. If personal income is a measure of our collective fiscal capacity, then allocating 4.4% of that capacity to public schools is a measure of our effort level. Idaho's effort level in funding public schools held remarkably steady over that two decade period.

Since 2000, Idaho has steadily reduced its effort level. In fact, the overall effort level has declined from 4.4% of Idaho personal income in 2000 to just 3.4% of Idaho personal income in the 2014 public school budget.

That one percentage point drop may not seem like much, but it represents a whopping 23% decline in the total dollars going to Idaho public schools from *all* sources.

In dollar terms, given that Idaho personal income is currently \$55 billion dollars, that one percentage point decline translates to \$550 million dollars. That's right, if Idaho today was making the same effort at funding public schools it did throughout the 80s and 90s, Idaho public schools would have \$550 million more in funding than they actually have today.

This magnitude of funding reduction has not been without consequences. In visits to school districts throughout Idaho I have heard numerous reports of the challenges districts have had in dealing with this sharp decline in funding. Frozen pay, furlough days, outdated textbooks, four day school weeks, no music classes, and increased user fees are all symptoms of the chronic underfunding that has apparently become the "new normal" for Idaho's public schools.

It wasn't always like this. In the 1980s when Idaho faced some of its most difficult economic challenges since WWII, Idaho adults fought for revenue increases that allowed Idaho to maintain its investments in the education of its children. But since 2000 Idaho adults (at least the ones in the legislature) have put a higher priority on cutting taxes than on investing in our children.

In the 1980s Idaho's legislature raised approximately \$500 million (in today's terms) in new revenue that enabled stable education funding. Since 2000 Idaho's legislature has cut revenues by an estimated \$345 million. If they follow through on verbal commitments to continue making more business personal property tax cuts they will, for all practical purposes, completely reverse the hard fought revenue gains of the 1980s.

The really sad thing is the mantra of "tax cuts above all" is supposed to give us economic prosperity. The reality is quite different. After raising Idahoans' taxes a half billion dollars in the early 1980s we had almost two decades of unparalleled economic prosperity. After a steady diet of tax cuts since 2000, we are fast approaching the bottom of the barrel nationally when it comes to our economic well-being.

You ask the question "What is an adequate level of funding for public schools?" Read and re-read Article 9 Section 1. It doesn't say barebones, it doesn't say minimal. It says general, uniform and thorough.

Set aside any moral or constitutional argument that we owe our children, ***all*** our children, a full, enriching educational experience. We undermine all our well-being when we fail to step up to the plate and commit the necessary resources to these critical investments in human capital.

TESTIMONY TO
THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION

April 25, 2013

Boise, Idaho

Good evening. My name is _____ I am a resident of Boise, the father of three children who have all graduated from Idaho public schools, and the grandfather of four, one of whom is currently a student in a Boise public school. While we regularly read criticisms of our nation's and state's public schools, I can report that I am extremely pleased with the quality of education our children received, and I believe the partnership between my wife and I as parents and the teachers who had our kids in their classrooms was the key to each of their personal and professional successes. In short, I'm a fan of our public schools. Teachers and other educators do an amazing job every day. I admire them, and I offer my heartfelt appreciation for their dedication and professionalism.

I also thank you for holding this hearing this evening. I appreciate the time each of you is devoting to this effort, and I believe the work you are doing has great potential. I wish you well.

While there are many areas that deserve thoughtful consideration regarding how best to improve our schools—chief among them the need for more adequate funding—a vitally important factor on which almost everyone agrees is the challenge of continuously improving teacher effectiveness. From my years of working closely with teachers, I learned many things; and one of the most important of those learnings is this—every teacher, every teacher, wants to be successful at her or his job. They all want their students to learn what they are supposed to learn, they all want to apply the exactly correct instructional strategy for every child every day, and they all get their greatest pleasure from seeing their students grow and thrive.

But teaching is tricky business. Each year there is a new group of kids who show up in your classroom. And each one of those is unique. Each has different abilities, learning styles, ambitions, and challenges. In short, each is a puzzle when it comes to how best to help her or him learn and grow.

In the system that exists today far too many teachers are left to figure out those puzzles on their own. Teachers can feel isolated and alone, with few ready resources to tap when there are special challenges. Among the 25 or 30 students in a class, teachers can pretty much be assured there are several who won't learn in the way the curricula has been designed. Others will be going through emotional changes or facing social challenges that dominate almost every thought. A few are so bright they're craving extras. And more than we wish will be hungry or sleepy or hurt.

New ways of teaching are emerging every day. Whether developed by other teachers, identified by researchers, or created by the availability of technology, ways of being successful with each and every challenge students bring into classrooms are evolving. And every teacher wants to know every one of those evolving strategies. And the more teachers know the more students will learn.

But, unfortunately, today, once one has graduated with a teaching degree and secured a job, the most common forums for teachers to continue to learn and grow themselves are available only through college courses—taken after school or in the summer—or via what most educators call “drive-by” in-service sessions. Those are usually half or full day events delivered by an expert brought in by the district or building administration.

What’s missing, however, is what many teachers report is their most important learning need—a system that provides opportunities for them to work on specific student learning challenges they are confronting in their classrooms right now. Student learning challenges that are specific and contemporaneous. Learnings they can implement tomorrow. Strategies that will change both student behavior and outcomes immediately. In short, ways to create student success based on what’s real in their lives every day, not in some theoretical classroom of the future.

So, here’s my proposition. Among the many important recommendations you will eventually devise and forward to policy-makers, educators, and other leaders, please consider the importance of advocating for the creation of a system that will include what some call “job-embedded” professional development.

What does that mean? It means restructuring the time teachers have during their work day and year so they are given the opportunity to observe the very best of their peers ply their craft. It means having the most successful teachers watch others who are teaching the same grades and subjects and offering instant feed-back. It means sharing common planning times among teachers with similar students so they can discuss, research, and solve challenges through case study approaches. It means teachers working together to improve their professional skills in a thoughtful, deliberative way. There is no shortage of research showing such an approach will make a world of difference in achieving our goals of success for every student.

Of course, instituting such an approach means changing the culture of the school day and year.

Currently we expect teachers to be in their classrooms every day, every hour. I believe a better model would anticipate they will be there almost every day, almost every hour; but sometimes they will be in other classrooms or in research discussions with colleagues. Their time will be spent differently, but the work they do when they are in their own classrooms will be even more effective.

How to begin? I suggest that among your final recommendations you include the creation of a Teacher Professional Development Initiative, one that will focus on the study of best practices in this important area, with the goal of developing a plan for integrating successful strategies for “job-embedded” professional development into Idaho’s schools. Such a goal, I believe, will be seen by teachers as recognition of the real challenges they face every day and a beacon of hope that the current system that fosters isolation and individuality will be replaced by one that honors research and collaboration.

Teachers, we all know, are bright, dedicated professionals who want to succeed. I believe focusing a bit of time and some resources on creating a new and more effective way for them to learn and continue learning throughout their careers will ultimately be judged a most wise investment for them, for our state and local resources, and, ultimately, for the success of our children. Thank you.

Education Task Force

4/26/13

As a kindergarten teacher, I would like to express my support for ~~public~~ public pre-K, all day kindergarten, and including kindergarten as a required part of school.

I have students come to my class who have never even written their name. It is my job to make sure they learn every letter + sound by the April IRI test. Students can make it to that point in one school year but it takes a fast acting intervention team. If these struggling students had a 2 day per week public ^{early childhood program} ~~public school experience~~, they would avoid the need for intervention.

Our 1st grade classrooms expect students to be reading on the first day of school. Students in my class without a pre-K background are struggling to meet that goal. Their growth is steady but our short school day and the lack of early childhood experience limits the amount of progress the student can make.



Idaho students need strong reading skills to be successful in school and secure productive futures. From birth through third grade children are learning to read after third grade they read to learn. Research shows that the factors that impact reading skills are school readiness, chronic absenteeism, summer learning loss, and early childhood education.

The early years are the most important for establishing a foundation that will sustain learning gains. Three quarters of students who are poor readers in third grade remain poor readers in high school. In Idaho in 2012, 24% of third graders were not at benchmark according to the Spring Idaho Reading Indicator. The results in Idaho were even worse for minority students: 36% of Hispanic students and 88% of black students were not at benchmark. Idaho needs to be sure that every school district is providing accurate and effective diagnosis and evidence based interventions. Partnerships must be built with families and Idaho must improve the quality and access to early childhood education.

Idaho's students must read well to succeed in school and in life. If we fail to prepare our students adequately, we will face large economic costs. Each high school dropout costs our country an estimated \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes and productivity.

The US gross domestic product could have been \$1.3 to \$2.3 trillion dollars higher in 2008 if students had met the educational achievement levels of higher-performing nations between 1983 and 1998.

Currently, in Idaho only 32% of adults ages 25 to 34 have an associate's degree or higher. By 2018, it is projected that 61% of jobs in Idaho will require postsecondary education. We must focus on education, particularly preschool through third grade to establish a foundation for learning, so that Idaho's citizens will be prepared for the increasingly demanding job market and the future.



Statement of

April 25, 2013

At the heart of “Common Core,” and of all similar programs like CSCOPE, is **national control**.

These programs will require **nationally designed testing** of students at all grade levels. Moreover, nationally designed college qualifying exams will be based on the content of Common Core.

For K-12 schools to prepare their students to **pass** these college qualifying exams, **teachers will have to “teach to the content”** of Common Core.

Hence, the **practical result** of Common Core will be **national control over course content**. That is, over what our children learn.

Of course, the federal government will consult with business leaders about the number of workers they anticipate needing in various skills at various time points in the future, and schools will be “incentivized” to “channel” students into those skill sets based on their test scores.

Thus, schools will **steer** students so that ultimately schools will turn out the requisite number of workers at those identified time points in the future.

April 25, 2013

The purpose of all this is to provide a **nationally designed**, customized work force.

The purpose is NOT to allow individual children to discover for themselves what they love and find interesting.

It is **not** to allow them to develop their own hopes and dreams and to have the freedom to change directions as they grow up.

This centralized testing, and the entry of over 400 intimate data characteristics of each student into a national computer database;

--this channeling of each student;

will follow each child throughout life as intimately and pervasively as each child's DNA.

It will largely determine what each person can become in life

---determining the content of each person's life based on purported "national needs."

With Common Core, our children are to be transformed into "creatures of the Central State;" to be molded for

Statement of
April 25, 2013

Page 3 of 3

purposes defined by, and supportive of, the objectives of the Central State.

If **that** worldview is what you want to support and achieve, then by **all** means **implement** Common Core.

But if that is NOT what you envision for Idaho's children,

--then get out of Common Core and get out of it NOW.

I urge you to get Idaho children **out** of this **perverse, un-American** system.

Preface:

I would like to start by saying that I am a father of two wonderful children and am blessed to have the opportunity to be part of their walk through life like so many other people that are here. I am also an advocate of education and helping our children to discover the love of learning.

What we would like to bring up in this forum is that we are concerned about the Common Core Standards that have been implemented and are scheduled for full implementation in the 2013-2014 school year. We were not aware of the Common Core standards when they were implemented and what they consisted of and in the past month we have been researching very aggressively. These seems to be a very profound change in the education system and we are wondering why it is being framed as the new best thing. As far as we can tell the controversial elements of Prop's 1, 2 and 3 that were voted down last year are once again included in the implementation of these standards.

Concerns

College Ready and or Career ready

Throughout the text and information that we have read the terms, "College Ready" and or "Career Ready" have been stated many times. On the surface these terms do sound good to most. Personally these terms concern me. I believe that the small and medium business and entrepreneurship is the remedy to bringing our country out of its current economic status and making the United States more competitive in the world economy. Based on the information I have read there seems to be a tone of persuasion toward a certain pre determined career path under the guise of "career ready", which removes the individual's desires and interests. Personally I don't want

my children to even be thinking about a career when they are in fourth and fifth grade.

Unanswered questions

I attended the Education Forum at The College Of Idaho April 11th 2013
Cindy Johnson Vallivue District Office and Jodie Mills, Caldwell District Office

Example of unanswered questions.

At the forum the question was raised “Where is the proof that these standards are effective for the better”?

The answer “That’s a good question, I don’t know about the **(with quote sign’s: proof)** because we are just starting to implement them. What I can tell you is the high level of research on what skills and processes students need to have to be successful in the college and the work place. And so I think these were not done willy nilly there were such amazing experts that developed these, author’s, researchers so I feel very confident that they are very researched based and I guess we’ll find out when we implement them and make any adjustments that we need to as we go, but I guess I am very confident that they are built on high levels of research.

Rebuttal

What I took from that answer is that there is **no answer**, and that we are supposed to be ok with our children being part of an experiment. The term experts as well as the term success are debatable.

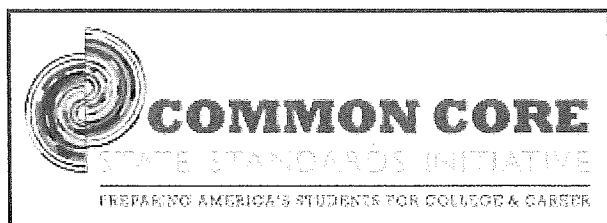
Federal Government overreach and conflict of interest

The overreaching by the Federal Government in education. This has been framed from multiple sources that it is state lead. When the reality is that we can see, is this is another unfunded mandate that was packaged with stimulus money that Idaho was in need of at the time when this contract was signed.

Also, looking into some of the other organizations that are participating in these standards there seems to be a lot of special interest groups involved which makes us ask how can our educators on the front line be biased or unbiased on these standards when everyone above them has been more or less bought and paid off in the form of grants?

Teachers leaving the field.

I have spoken with individuals either personally about their experiences with the new standards and we have heard of concerning situations of teachers deciding to retire as well as parents that are frustrated that their high performing student suddenly starts to fall way behind.



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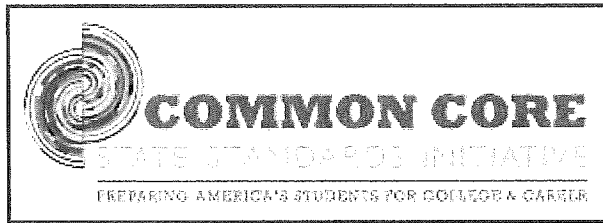
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Idaho Education Task Force Testimony – Boise, Idaho

April 25, 2013

Dear Idaho Education Task Force Members,

My name is Colleen Fellows, I'm a member of the Board of Governor's for the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children. I thank the Task Force for Improving Education for this opportunity to speak about the concerns and challenges of improving Idaho's education system.

This evening, I'd like to speak with you about a critical component necessary for success in our education system that has been overlooked in the discussion of Idaho's education reform: early childhood education. Idaho testing results have shown that nearly half of Idaho children are not ready for the challenges of

Kindergarten
and in some areas three out of four children are unprepared. Idaho must address the problems of school readiness and the education gap that leaves many students drastically behind grade level.

As such, quality early childhood education must be a component of Idaho's education reform to set the course for success from Pre-K through college. The early years are a time of remarkable brain growth in children and lay the foundation for subsequent learning and development. Quality early childhood education has the potential to give every child equal footing when they start school, improves third-grade reading scores, increases graduation rates, and reduces public spending on grade repetition and special education and helps overcome student achievement gaps facing Idaho's low income students.

The Idaho Department of Education shows that 44% of Idaho children do not perform at grade level when they enter Kindergarten and are not ready for the academic challenges there. In some areas of the state, 75% of children are not ready for Kindergarten when they enroll. Currently 37% of Idaho 1st-Graders are not ready for the academic challenges when enrolling in 1st-Grade. These numbers carry over to effect performance throughout a child's time in school. Without quality early childhood education programs, this achievement gap will certainly grow with the implementation of the Common Core with its rigorous curriculum that requires solid literacy, math and problem solving skills, therefore, the implementation of quality early childhood programs to assure school readiness and easy transition from Kindergarten to 1st-Grade must be addressed.

Early intervention with quality early childhood programs can help improve outcomes for all children, especially low-income and at-risk children. Nearly half of children in Idaho are low income. This creates a significant educational achievement gap that compounds every year, negatively effecting outcomes and future success. The **P16 Caldwell Education Project** has determined that quality early childhood education can have dramatic positive effects on school readiness and success throughout K-12 and beyond. In the first year of the pilot project, the average reading score of preschoolers from their program that are now in kindergarten nearly doubled and they saw significant increases in communication and problem solving skills as well.

Furthermore, long-term reading proficiency increased dramatically with early literacy programs taught by trained early childhood educators. The **Idaho Early Literacy Project** found that children in classes with early childhood teachers trained in early literacy were four times more likely to finish “strong” on the **Get Ready to Read Assessment** than children who were taught by teachers without early childhood literacy training.

Idaho’s desire for an effective, innovative education policy must incorporate quality early childhood education programs into the overall education plan. Reform that incorporates quality early childhood programs is about making a long-term, not short-term, investment that will create an education program that assures that children enter school ready to learn and exit college ready to succeed in life.

Thank you for your time in listening to the concerns of Idahoans as we work together to improve education.

- **Use framework of Professional Learning Communities (emphasis on collaboration):** The teachers should be rated on 4 level steps: Level-1, Level-2, Level-3 and Level-4. Level-1 is the first 2 years of their career. Level-2 is experienced and improving, but not deemed meeting the high standards. Both Level-1 and Level-2 teachers are *not* tenured. Level-3, who are effective in the classroom at the minimum level. Level-4, are those teachers' efforts impact classrooms with other teachers in their schools, outside of their schools in the local school districts, or the entire state. Both Level-3 and Level-4 teachers would be tenured. When reduction in force takes place, the teachers would lose their position starting at the lowest level (e.g., Level-1) with the least amount of seniority.

- **Improve Administrator Effectiveness:** The best way for them to be effective is to hold regular meeting with the public to discuss the education issues and the progress that they are making. E-mail does not work, as they go unanswered. Suggested improvement in policies proposed by the administrators seldom gets discussed. They summarily ignore the public's input, or reject the suggestion without discussions. When discussing the problems with the public, they learn of the issues from the other side.

- **Improve Teacher Effectiveness:** Teachers are effective when they engage students. In mathematics, student engagement means the teacher asking them to solve reasonably complex questions on the black board. They ask provocative question when learning a topic. They plan their questions in advance, and prepare their lessons that may have multiple explanations. This way, they can get every student to grasp the materials. They have to assign homework assignments that reinforce lessons learned, and that integrates previously learned materials. Prevailing textbooks don't have clear exposition, logical sequences of topics or quality homework problems. This prevents from being effective.

- **Recruit and Retain Quality Teachers and Administrators:** Credible studies on the pay for performance exist. Their conclusions are that pay for performance does not work to achieve the desired results, but works marginally at the best. [See, National Research Council Report: *Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education* (2011).] It should be kept in mind that Idaho teachers were eager to collect their bonuses due to erosion of their salary starting in 2009. It was nothing to do with conviction in the pay-for-performance. Pay-for-performance presupposes that the teachers are not doing their best to educate the students, and bonus money provides incentives to become the best teacher. The personal experiences indicate that the teachers have reached their limits on how to be highly effective.

Teachers are effective when they learn how to teach effectively. They want to have professional development in other subjects. Create a new slot for master teacher, and make AP teachers in math, subject specific science and social studies teachers become the director of the entire program from the elementary school to the high school.

- **Align and Implement Idaho Core State Standards:** Common Core Standards for mathematics are not high enough. Use Singapore Math Textbooks, Ensure that the teachers engage students. Engagement methods is subject specific. Get mathematics professors to make concrete recommendations, such as the list of excellent math problems, identify the topics that students should learn that are excluded from the common core math standards, and the methods to teach various topics rigorously. Provide excellent curricular, such as *Singapore Math*, available in every principal's library. This provides easy access to the teachers to know about mathematics exercises that their students need.

• **Implement technology to support instruction:** The technology has limited role in classrooms. Computers (i.e., desktop, laptops and tableted) provide an access to information, which saves significant amount of time. Due to improved efficiency, the time is spent on identification and evaluation of information with click of a mouse. Power point slide shows allow teachers to transmit information with great deal of efficiency and clarity in details. Students need to do power point presentations to demonstrate that they can do library research, extract useful information and make presentation of the information they gathered.

However, computers cannot play a role in formal instructions, as online learning classes. Students learn by asking questions and listening to answers. This is one form of engagement, and it is realistic in traditional classroom. The online classroom instructions do not permit this to happen. Subsequent instructions are altered by the immediate feedback and the questions asked. Thus, online learning is defective. *Khan Academy* is an example of this. Engagement facilitates critical thinking by asking the right questions: Who is the first president of US? The popular answer is George Washington. The critical thinker may ask, who was the president of US when the US gained independence? President John Hanson. Shouldn't President Hanson be accorded this title? This type of engagements is needed, and the traditional classroom provides.

The best technology in mathematics is slates, not computers or calculators in elementary grades.

• **Singapore vs. Finland:** In Singapore, students take high stake standardized tests in grades 6, and 10. They are out of synchronization with the international testing, such as TIMSS, which are administered in grades 4 and 8. However, they are synchronized with PISA at grade 10. Thus, TIMSS has credibility.

Singapore education ranks very high in mathematics, science and reading for student tested in grades 4 & 8. In contrast Finland does not rank very high in mathematics education. Students in grade 4 and 8 include everyone in Singapore. Thus, the comparisons between the performance US and these countries are valid for grades 4 and 8. Students tested in 10th grade may be distorted in favor of Singapore. Their students take high stake exams known as General Certificate of Education in this grade. Thus, they are preparing for high stake exam for their future, and at the same time PISA is administered.

Note: In Finland, the first degree is equivalent to Master's degree. In the US, it is Bachelor's degree. US and Singapore's higher education is based on British model, while that in Finland's higher education is similar to Germany's model of higher education.

• **What is the basic amount of funding needed to adequately educate a student in Idaho?** The question is not about funding, but what are the pillars of strong education and successful learning that has delivered desired result: 200-205 days of school, continuous professional development, and traditional classroom.

ANOTHER VIEW OF IDAHO (AND U.S.) EDUCATION

We started to see, hear and read in the media that our students in the U.S. were not measuring up to those in other countries. Some **test scores** showed we were lagging. And soon testing and test scores become the most important thing in our schools. We must do more testing, it was said, to discover where and why our students were behind. Few if anyone looked at the test-score groups, ours and theirs. (Just an oversight I suppose. Or was it?) When you compare U.S. classrooms to those in other countries, major differences are found. Almost all other countries group their students starting in grade 1. In Singapore they have five groups, and in Germany they have three groups, one for the slower students, one for the average and one for the brightest. In the U.S. we have decided with our educational philosophy to keep all the students in the same classrooms as much as possible. So when comparing U.S. test scores to students in other countries, you are most likely comparing apples and oranges. One recent test score report in the media dealt with 15-year olds, and as usual our kids did not measure up. But in Germany the only students still in school at age 15 are the brightest and best—the college-bound. Only students who pass the 7th grade exams go on the high school in Germany. We did not get the full story. Why is that?

The **federal** Department of Education has jumped in with No Child Left Behind. Everyone student must be reading, etc. at grade level, it was said, and federal money was made available to deal with the crisis and commissions formed to study the issue. I guess classes must have changed since I was in school. As I recall my classrooms always had slow, average and better readers, math students, etc. Forgotten in all this is any mention of individual differences—not all of us have the same abilities, interests nor do we all mature at the same rate. Now the federal program is called Race To The Top, but it is based on the same ideas—getting everyone to the top, into college or at least reading at grade level. It is not going to happen, because people are not built that way. Is everyone running these programs ignorant of basic human psychology? Or is some thing else in play?

Last I did any research only about 25% of **jobs** require a 4-year **college** degree. Many require some vocational, technical or business education beyond high school found in junior colleges and vo-tech schools. For those going right to work, the jobs require just basic reading and math, problem solving skills, critical thinking and creativity (hopefully) still taught in most high schools. Most people include 2 and 4-year schools when they talk about college, but many people seem convinced the only way to success and happiness is with a 4-year college degree, and from the most expensive college. (When there is talk about college, one must ask what is included.) Have you had to call a plumber recently? They look successful and happy. But this is another matter. Or is it?

There has been much discuss of our “**Drop-out Problem.**” It is thought every student must graduate high school. That is not the case in most other countries. In Germany all but the brightest students drop-out, are actually forced out of schooling if they do pass the 7th grade exams. They go to work or into vocational-technical schools. All German education thru university is free.) Our philosophy of education espouses every student to stay in school until they have gone as far as they can and then drop-out, but most states have laws (which are not enforced generally) requiring students to remain

in school until age 16, like Idaho, and some say 18. And we provide other options, the GED for adults to get a high school diploma and no age limitations to attend any vo-tech, junior or 4-year college. In fact the average age of most college students in Idaho is around 30. Many do not go on to college right after high school. People can go as far as they want, whenever they want, graduate or drop-out. It is the American educational philosophy, but the federal programs and Idaho's No Child Left Behind runs counter to that philosophy. Do we want to change our education philosophy? Then we should debate that. But that is another matter. Or is it?

Our schools are not the only place where problems and controversy seem to exist. Look at **American politics**. Both presidential candidates in the last election raised more than one billion dollars. And Congress spends much of their time raising money for their next election. Do they really need to raise that much money? I am beginning to see a pattern here.

The **recession** is only the latest problem to impact American life and our schools. Wall Street, big business and the big banks freed themselves from the laws which were passed following the Crash of 1929 and the subsequent Depression, and we taxpayers had to bail them out following their failed efforts to make more money. I thought they were too big to fail. Did they not take U.S. history in high school? Something about failure to know history leads to reliving it. But that is not part of the school situation. Or is it?

We are becoming a nation of **haves and have nots**. The average pay of a larger company executive is now around \$6 million plus stock bonuses. But since 1980 middle-class wages have stagnated or gone down, and since the recession unemployment has skyrocketed. But that is another matter. Or is it?

Robert Gehrke summed up the situation for me in the **Idaho State Journal** (4-13-13). "Corporate and political greed are destroying our country and destroying the American dream. The rich have far outpaced the average citizen in income over the past 40 years. Those mainstay manufacturing jobs that fed the working man with a living wage have greatly diminished and are not longer in America but overseas. This has left most working class living in the central cities without work. Now, even college-educated families have both spouses working full time in the attempt to grab hold of the elusive American dream. Those working for wages have achieved little economic advancement because their wages have literally stagnated."

Now the **Supreme Court** has ruled that corporations are the same as individuals, although my understanding of the reasons behind incorporating is to remove individuals running a corporation from individual liability. So now there is even more money in play.

The **rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer**, because the poor have no lobby, no one fighting for them. In a country where money counts, there is a new Golden Rule: those with the gold make the rules. Recent studies show fewer seniors in poverty, but more children in poverty, again because children have no lobby.

In **my last years in the education profession** before I retired the amount of money available to teachers in American Falls each contract year barely covered our part of the health insurance cost increase. So I was essentially losing purchasing power to inflation—generally 2-3% per year. Most economists say the squeeze on the middle-class began around 1980, so I lost about 40% in purchasing power in the 16 years before I retired in 1996.

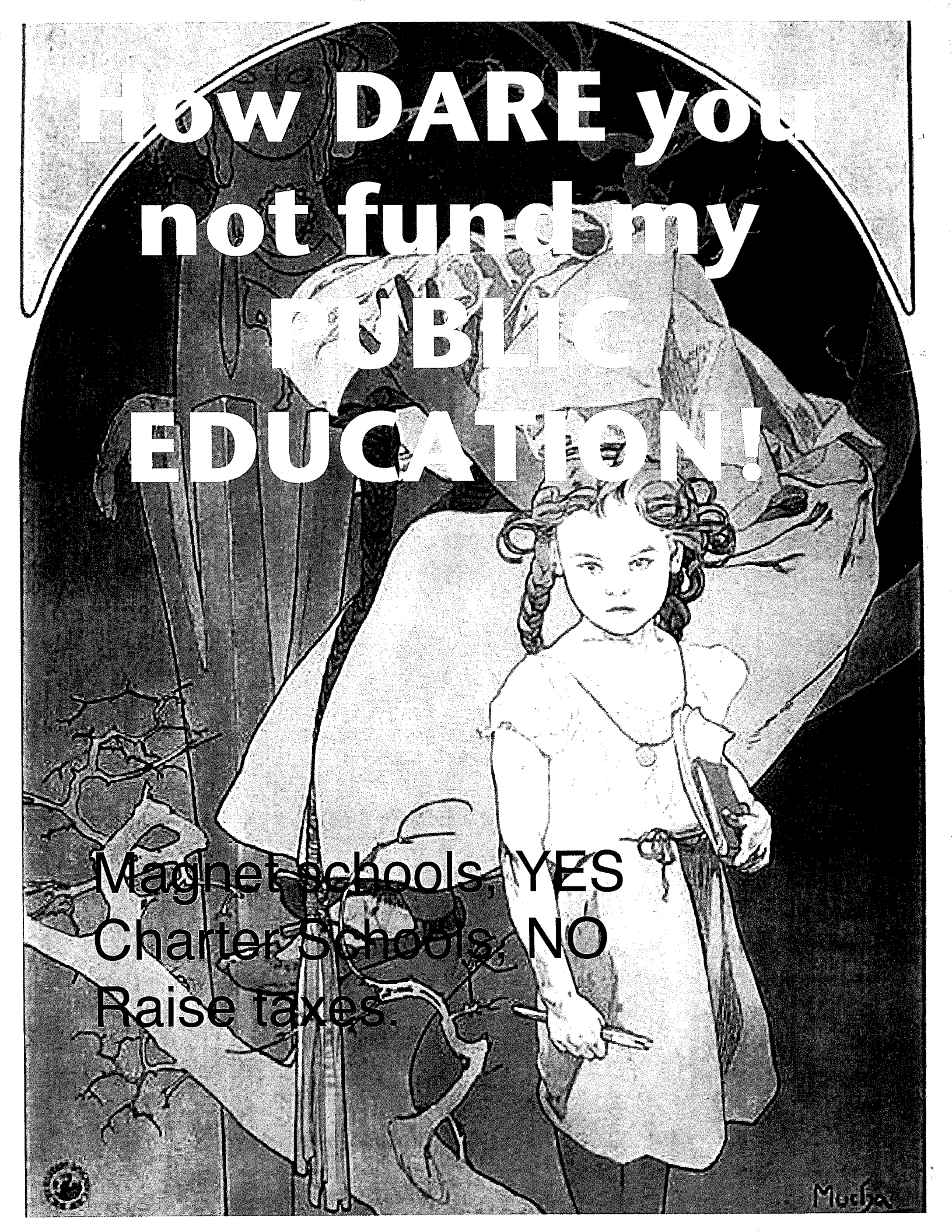
Although the **lack of money** has been a problem since about 1980, the biggest problem hit schools in Idaho in the recession. The impact has been more programs cut (But cutting programs in American Falls schools started much earlier), teachers and other staff laid-off or furloughed, and opportunities for students lost. (It should be noted that Utah did not cut public education in the recession.) The Idaho legislature and governor said everyone had to take a hit with the recession. It was the only fair thing to do. But was it fair when they made initiatives more difficult, following the public rejection of Propositions 1-2-3. It was not revenge, they said. (And they know what is best for us. They did not say that but...) The fact is the education lobbies, teachers, administrators, school boards and parents, effective as they are, cannot compete with big business lobbies and big money politics.

Now the **forces of big money** want to change our schools. They seem to think they know what is best for us. (And if they could make a little money in the process, that would be OK too, I suppose.) They say schools are failing (Just look at the test scores; but wait. Doesn't the U.S. consistently get more Nobel Prize winner than the rest of the world combined?), and they blame incompetent teachers who cannot be fired (overlooking the fact that 1/5 of all beginning teachers leave the profession in five years). They propose competition in schools, like in business; charter school where teachers don't have to be certified (and studies show that 37% are doing a good job), and giving vouchers to parents so they can put their children in private schools which teach their political, social or religious ideologies, not the real world in which their children will have to live.

I thought the major **functions of government** are providing K-12 public schools, supporting higher education, assisting with our health and welfare, disaster assistance, providing roads and infrastructure, fire and police protection, etc. Government assistance to business is a double edge sword. It can provide jobs for people, but it will also make the rich richer and more powerful. If government is not there to help all its citizens, who will? If it comes down to who has the biggest lobby, we are all in trouble.

We generate a **lost middle-class and wealth inequality** at risk to our future as a state and nation. One only has to look to Mexico to see what happens when the few wealthy run the country.

In church we hear that **materialism** is a sin. It will be our sin if we allow the forces of big money to take over this nation and our schools.



How DARE you not fund my PUBLIC EDUCATION!

Magnet schools, YES
Charter Schools, NO
Raise taxes.



Mucha

To Parent or Guardian

You are invited to confer with teachers about the welfare of your boy or girl in high school. It is important that you know what your boy or girl does and, when problems arise, assist the school and the student in solving these problems.

Report cards are issued at the end of each six weeks of school. We suggest that you discuss this report with your son or daughter each time it is received. If there are any particular difficulties not indicated on the card that we should know about, please confer with the student's teachers.

The signing of this card doesn't necessarily mean that you approve the grades received but merely that you have seen them.

Please sign below.

Sincerely yours,

Parent's Signature

3.

Grading System

A 96-100
B 88-95
C 77-87
D 70-76
F Below Passing

What affect has grade inflation
had on our public schools
and universities? The back
of this report card gives
some insight into the high
academic standards at

Idaho Falls High School
in 1958. The rare 4.0
Student was considered to
be a wiggard!!

Continued Importance of Liberal Education and the Liberal Arts

- The majority of employers agree that having **both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge** is most important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success. Few think that having field-specific knowledge and skills alone is what is most needed for individuals' career success.
- 80 percent of employers agree that, regardless of their major, **every college student should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences.**
- When read a description of a **21st century liberal education***, a large majority of employers recognize its importance; 74 percent would **recommend this kind of education to a young person they know** as the best way to prepare for success in today's global economy.

A Blended Model of Liberal and Applied Learning

- Across many areas tested, employers strongly endorse educational practices that involve students in active, effortful work—practices including collaborative problem-solving, internships, senior projects, and community engagements. Employers consistently rank outcomes and **practices that involve application of skills over acquisition of discrete bodies of knowledge.** Employers also strongly endorse practices that require students to demonstrate **both acquisition of knowledge and its application.**

E-portfolios and Partnerships to Ensure College Graduates' Successful Transition to the Workplace

- In addition to a resume or college transcript, more than **4 in 5 employers say an electronic portfolio would be useful to them** in ensuring that job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their company or organization.
- Business and non-profit leaders are highly **interested in partnering with colleges and universities** to provide more hands-on learning opportunities and to help college students successfully make the transition from college into the workplace.

**Definition of liberal education provided in this survey:* "This approach to a college education provides both broad knowledge in a variety of areas of study and knowledge in a specific major or field of interest. It also helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as intellectual and practical skills that span all areas of study, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

Methodology

From January 9 to 13, 2013, Hart Research Associates conducted an online survey among 318 employers whose organizations have at least 25 employees and report that 25% or more of their new hires hold either an associate degree from a two-year college or a Bachelor's degree from a four-year college. Respondents are executives at private sector and nonprofit organizations, including owners, CEOs, presidents, C-suite level executives, and vice presidents.

Source: *It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*. 2013. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities and Hart Research Associates.

For additional information, see www.aacu.org/leap/public_opinion_research or contact Debra Humphreys (humphreys@aacu.org).

The New York Times

Opinionator

APRIL 27, 2013, 6:15 PM

No Rich Child Left Behind

Here's a fact that may not surprise you: the children of the rich perform better in school, on average, than children from middle-class or poor families. Students growing up in richer families have better grades and higher standardized test scores, on average, than poorer students; they also have higher rates of participation in extracurricular activities and school leadership positions, higher graduation rates and higher rates of college enrollment and completion.

Whether you think it deeply unjust, lamentable but inevitable, or obvious and unproblematic, this is hardly news. It is true in most societies and has been true in the United States for at least as long as we have thought to ask the question and had sufficient data to verify the answer.

What is news is that in the United States over the last few decades these differences in educational success between high- and lower-income students have grown substantially.

One way to see this is to look at the scores of rich and poor students on standardized math and reading tests over the last 50 years. When I did this using information from a dozen large national studies conducted between 1960 and 2010, I found that the rich-poor gap in test scores is about 40 percent larger now than it was 30 years ago.

To make this trend concrete, consider two children, one from a family with income of \$165,000 and one from a family with income of \$15,000. These incomes are at the 90th and 10th percentiles of the income distribution nationally, meaning that 10 percent of children today grow up in families with incomes below \$15,000 and 10 percent grow up in families with incomes above \$165,000.

In the 1980s, on an 800-point SAT-type test scale, the average difference in test scores between two such children would have been about 90 points; today it is 125 points. This is almost twice as large as the 70-point test score gap between white and black children. Family income is now a better predictor of children's success in school than race.

The same pattern is evident in other, more tangible, measures of educational success, like college completion. In a study similar to mine, Martha J. Bailey and Susan M. Dynarski, economists at the University of Michigan, found that the proportion of students from upper-income families who earn a bachelor's degree has increased by 18 percentage points over a 20-year period, while the completion rate of poor students has grown by only 4 points.

In a more recent study, my graduate students and I found that 15 percent of high-income students from the high school class of 2004 enrolled in a highly selective college or university, while fewer than 5 percent of middle-income and 2 percent of low-income students did.

These widening disparities are not confined to academic outcomes: new research by the Harvard political scientist Robert D. Putnam and his colleagues shows that the rich-poor gaps in student participation in sports, extracurricular activities, volunteer work and church attendance have grown sharply as well.

In San Francisco this week, more than 14,000 educators and education scholars have gathered for the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. The theme this year is familiar: Can schools provide children a way out of poverty?

We are still talking about this despite decades of clucking about the crisis in American education and wave after wave of school reform. Whatever we've been doing in our schools, it hasn't reduced educational inequality between children from upper- and lower-income families.

Part of knowing what we should do about this is understanding how and why these educational disparities are growing. For the past few years, alongside other scholars, I have been digging into historical data to understand just that. The results of this research don't always match received wisdom or playground folklore.

The most potent development over the past three decades is that the test scores of children from high-income families have increased very rapidly. Before 1980, affluent students had little advantage over middle-class students in academic performance; most of the socioeconomic disparity in academics was between the middle class and the poor. But the rich now outperform the middle class by as much as the middle class outperform the poor. Just as the incomes of the affluent have grown much more rapidly than those of the middle class over the last few decades, so, too, have most of the gains in educational success accrued to the children of the rich.

Before we can figure out what's happening here, let's dispel a few myths.

The income gap in academic achievement is not growing because the test scores of poor students are dropping or because our schools are in decline. In fact, average test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the so-called Nation's Report Card, have been rising — substantially in math and very slowly in reading — since the 1970s. The average 9-year-old today has math skills equal to those her parents had at age 11, a two-year improvement in a single generation. The gains are not as large in reading and they are not as large for older students, but there is no evidence that average test scores have declined over the last three decades for any age or economic group.

The widening income disparity in academic achievement is not a result of widening racial gaps in achievement, either. The achievement gaps between blacks and whites, and Hispanic

and non-Hispanic whites have been narrowing slowly over the last two decades, trends that actually keep the yawning gap between higher- and lower-income students from getting even wider. If we look at the test scores of white students only, we find the same growing gap between high- and low-income children as we see in the population as a whole.

It may seem counterintuitive, but schools don't seem to produce much of the disparity in test scores between high- and low-income students. We know this because children from rich and poor families score very differently on school readiness tests when they enter kindergarten, and this gap grows by less than 10 percent between kindergarten and high school. There is some evidence that achievement gaps between high- and low-income students actually narrow during the nine-month school year, but they widen again in the summer months.

That isn't to say that there aren't important differences in quality between schools serving low- and high-income students — there certainly are — but they appear to do less to reinforce the trends than conventional wisdom would have us believe.

If not the usual suspects, what's going on? It boils down to this: The academic gap is widening because rich students are increasingly entering kindergarten much better prepared to succeed in school than middle-class students. This difference in preparation persists through elementary and high school.

My research suggests that one part of the explanation for this is rising income inequality. As you may have heard, the incomes of the rich have grown faster over the last 30 years than the incomes of the middle class and the poor. Money helps families provide cognitively stimulating experiences for their young children because it provides more stable home environments, more time for parents to read to their children, access to higher-quality child care and preschool and — in places like New York City, where 4-year-old children take tests to determine entry into gifted and talented programs — access to preschool test preparation tutors or the time to serve as tutors themselves.

But rising income inequality explains, at best, half of the increase in the rich-poor academic achievement gap. It's not just that the rich have more money than they used to, it's that they are using it differently. This is where things get really interesting.

High-income families are increasingly focusing their resources — their money, time and knowledge of what it takes to be successful in school — on their children's cognitive development and educational success. They are doing this because educational success is much more important than it used to be, even for the rich.

With a college degree insufficient to ensure a high-income job, or even a job as a barista, parents are now investing more time and money in their children's cognitive development from the earliest ages. It may seem self-evident that parents with more resources are able to invest more — more of both money and of what Mr. Putnam calls “Goodnight Moon” time — in their children's development. But even though middle-class and poor families are also

increasing the time and money they invest in their children, they are not doing so as quickly or as deeply as the rich.

The economists Richard J. Murnane and Greg J. Duncan report that from 1972 to 2006 high-income families increased the amount they spent on enrichment activities for their children by 150 percent, while the spending of low-income families grew by 57 percent over the same time period. Likewise, the amount of time parents spend with their children has grown twice as fast since 1975 among college-educated parents as it has among less-educated parents. The economists Garey Ramey and Valerie A. Ramey of the University of California, San Diego, call this escalation of early childhood investment “the rug rat race,” a phrase that nicely captures the growing perception that early childhood experiences are central to winning a lifelong educational and economic competition.

It’s not clear what we should do about all this. Partly that’s because much of our public conversation about education is focused on the wrong culprits: we blame failing schools and the behavior of the poor for trends that are really the result of deepening income inequality and the behavior of the rich.

We’re also slow to understand what’s happening, I think, because the nature of the problem — a growing educational gap between the rich and the middle class — is unfamiliar. After all, for much of the last 50 years our national conversation about educational inequality has focused almost exclusively on strategies for reducing inequalities between the educational successes of the poor and the middle class, and it has relied on programs aimed at the poor, like Head Start and Title I.

We’ve barely given a thought to what the rich were doing. With the exception of our continuing discussion about whether the rising costs of higher education are pricing the middle class out of college, we don’t have much practice talking about what economists call “upper-tail inequality” in education, much less success at reducing it.

Meanwhile, not only are the children of the rich doing better in school than even the children of the middle class, but the changing economy means that school success is increasingly necessary to future economic success, a worrisome mutual reinforcement of trends that is making our society more socially and economically immobile.

We need to start talking about this. Strangely, the rapid growth in the rich-poor educational gap provides a ray of hope: if the relationship between family income and educational success can change this rapidly, then it is not an immutable, inevitable pattern. What changed once can change again. Policy choices matter more than we have recently been taught to think.

So how can we move toward a society in which educational success is not so strongly linked to family background? Maybe we should take a lesson from the rich and invest much more heavily as a society in our children’s educational opportunities from the day they are born. Investments in early-childhood education pay very high societal dividends. That means

investing in developing high-quality child care and preschool that is available to poor and middle-class children. It also means recruiting and training a cadre of skilled preschool teachers and child care providers. These are not new ideas, but we have to stop talking about how expensive and difficult they are to implement and just get on with it.

But we need to do much more than expand and improve preschool and child care. There is a lot of discussion these days about investing in teachers and “improving teacher quality,” but improving the quality of our parenting and of our children’s earliest environments may be even more important. Let’s invest in parents so they can better invest in their children.

This means finding ways of helping parents become better teachers themselves. This might include strategies to support working families so that they can read to their children more often.. It also means expanding programs like the Nurse-Family Partnership that have proved to be effective at helping single parents educate their children; but we also need to pay for research to develop new resources for single parents.

It might also mean greater business and government support for maternity and paternity leave and day care so that the middle class and the poor can get some of the educational benefits that the early academic intervention of the rich provides their children. Fundamentally, it means rethinking our still-persistent notion that educational problems should be solved by schools alone.

The more we do to ensure that all children have similar cognitively stimulating early childhood experiences, the less we will have to worry about failing schools. This in turn will enable us to let our schools focus on teaching the skills — how to solve complex problems, how to think critically and how to collaborate — essential to a growing economy and a lively democracy.