

***School/College Collaboration:  
Teaching At-Risk Youth***

*Conference Proceedings*

Council of Chief State School Officers

May 8-11, 1988

Baltimore, Maryland

Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Host: The Johns Hopkins University

*Edited by*  
Rebecca Yount and Nancy Magurn

---

## Paving the Road to Hell: How Our Assumptions Increase the Risks for At-Risk Youth

Albert Shanker  
President  
American Federation of Teachers

---

I want to share some thoughts with you tonight about my concerns and worries. Generally, when I finish talking about them, somebody comes over and says something like, "Gee, that was negative. If I were really down, I could retire." But I don't feel that way. Even though I talk about many problems, I'm not trying to suggest that they can't be overcome, although I think it will be very tough, very difficult to overcome them.

I want to start where I always start. Forgive me if you've been through this once or twice before, but I think most of us in public education in America ignore most of what's happening. We do it because there is always a dual role for teachers, principals, superintendents, and other education professionals. It's the same dual role I face as a union leader. As a union leader, you have to go out there and tell the whole world and your own troops how lousy things are and how much more they need in order to make things better. That's one of the main functions of the union leader. Another main function is that one day, after you haven't gotten that much—just something—you have to turn around and say, "This does it. Buy it. Accept it."

If you think of that role of a union leader as first painting a picture about how horrible things are and then trying to convince the troops to settle—we're all in that business. We're all in the business of going to the legislature and saying how terrible things are and how much we need, and then going out to the public and saying how great public education is.

Everybody at every level is in that situation of saying opposite things almost at the same time. So, please forgive me if I dwell on certain negative parts of this issue right now. I'm really with you and all the other people in education who have to

balance these two things: trying to do better and therefore dwelling on the negatives, while also trying to maintain support and prevent people from abandoning us. We're out there selling. I'm with you and all the others who are not here tonight who do this kind of juggling.

I want to start by saying what more and more people are saying. If you read the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and a lot of other reports, they indicate that our schools do a fairly decent job with about the top 20 percent of the students. They do not reach 80 or 85 percent of them. There was no golden age in the past where we reached 90 percent of them. In 1940, about 20 percent of the kids graduated high school and 80 percent dropped out. Nineteen fifty-three was the first year in which the majority of kids graduated from high school. The fact is that kids are now staying in school longer—they are learning more. So it is not that we were once in some golden age and have fallen from it. It's just that once our society didn't expect or need that much. There were no headlines in 1940 saying the dropout rate is huge because the 20 percent who graduated were the largest percentage of kids who had ever graduated from high school in any one year in the country. If there had been an article, people would have been very proud about it.

So it is not a question of comparing now with then. It is not a question of blaming. The fact is that neither the United States nor France nor England nor Germany nor any modern industrial country—and Japan is an exception in some respects, but not in others—has schools that reach the overwhelming majority of students.

### Who Is At Risk?

I have a little bit of a bone to pick with the whole question of at-risk students. The phrase

"at-risk" implies to the general public that we're doing very well for practically all of our students, but there are some kids who are at risk and they're mostly black and Hispanic and poor whites. It suggests that only a small number of kids are at risk and that it is only because of their disadvantaged background.

It is true that in a very real sense there are kids who are at very special risk. Read William Julius Wilson's book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, about how most kids move up, get jobs, and get going because some neighbor or an uncle, friend, or somebody motivates and helps them. Opportunity is not all due to getting good school marks or graduating from school. If you drop out of school in a working-class area where everybody or almost everybody is working, somebody there is going to say, "Hey, there's a job in this place. Why don't you go and apply. You'll start low, but you'll move up." We all hear stories about that. But if you're living in an area like our big cities where nobody around you is working and nobody is making money, or everybody is into crime, drugs, or prostitution, there is nobody to say to you, "Hey, there's something decent I can connect you to." There are no connections. These are kids who are really at risk.

But what I want to say is that most of our kids—middle-class kids—will get a job and make it because they've got some connections. They're going to learn and they're going to make it through a form of apprenticeships. They're going to make it through connections. And when they get a job, they're going to turn to the person next to them and ask: "How do you do this?" And someone will tell them. They'll end up making it; that's how most people make it. Most people do not come in with their degrees and sit down and apply the formal knowledge that they acquired.

We're all laughing because we know something about school knowledge, right? We know that it has very little to do with the outside world. We ought to think about that, whether it needs to be that way and whether it's good. But, that is the way.

Let me start with some very disturbing NAEP results. If you've got some new data that ought to make me feel more optimistic about this, please give it to me—I need the shot. But, the NAEP news is disturbing. One of the parts of the NAEP for 17-year-olds is to write a letter to a supermarket manager down the block. There are

20 other people applying for one opening; you're supposed to convince him that you should have the job. Spelling doesn't count, grammar doesn't count, as long as he can read the letter. The kid is supposed to give one or two reasons. For instance, "I used to work at my father's laundromat, so I know how important it is to get to work on time because you're counting on me. And, I know it's important not to make mistakes in giving change. I'm very careful about that and I do a good job." Things like that.

The percentage of graduates who can write a letter with grammatical and spelling errors, but with one or two reasons, is 20 percent. Twelve percent of the graduates can arrange six very common fractions like one-half, two-thirds, and three-fifths from smallest to largest. Now, the dropouts have dropped. These are the successful kids being addressed.

There's also a question involving a railroad schedule or bus timetable. You have to figure out what bus or train to catch if you want to get to a certain place on a certain day at a certain time. It's not really about whether you can read a timetable, but whether you can open up a world almanac and understand some numbers and charts. Can you understand graphs in *Newsweek* or *Time* magazine? Can you read a spread sheet? Can you take a combination of numbers and words and figure something out? The percentage of graduating seniors who were able to do that is 4.9 percent. If you take all blacks and Hispanics out of this sample, it's 5.9 percent for whites. Go though the NAEP materials for 17-year-olds. They are very interesting. They are very devastating.

So what does this mean? One theory is that God only made 4.9 percent of us smart enough to read a bus schedule. I don't buy that. I think it means that we have continued to maintain a traditional way of schooling that has been handed down to us for 100 or 200 years, and that it does not work for the majority of students. We have not engaged in a rethinking process in education in the same way that American businesses are compelled to rethink things because they are facing tough competition. In a sense, we are also facing new competition.

It didn't make any difference how well our schools did in 1950. There were the auto plants, the steel mills, and the mines. Any kid who dropped out could walk across the street and get

a better-paying job than a teacher. But that is not true any more. So, we now have to rethink things. Take another analogy: the cars American manufacturers are producing now are no worse than those they turned out in the 1950s. They're in fact better. It's just that the Japanese have put out cars that are even better than anything we're putting out. It's not that we're worse than we used to be. We're better than we were, but we're not better than something else which didn't exist before.

The same is true with education. It's not that we're worse than before, we're just not up to what the needs and challenges are today. There was no need to rethink things before. It didn't make much difference if only 20 or 30 or 40 percent graduated or knew something. Today it does mean something, and it makes a difference.

I want to share with you a story I read the other day in the *Wall Street Journal* dealing with Poland and its economy. I was in Poland. I marched in the first illegal demonstration three weeks ago. I had nothing to do with these strikes. I went there to hold hands with them and to express our support for them. When I came back I read a piece which was both humorous and extremely sad. I felt when I read it that I could say the same thing about school reform in the United States. The writer was a Polish economist who said that Poland was in a terrible state economically and has become a Third World country. He said that there were two basic ways of improving the Polish economy. There is a natural way and there is a miraculous way. The natural way, said this economist, is for a host of angels to descend and lift Poland into prosperity. The miraculous way would be for the Poles to do it themselves. Now I suggest to you that may be true of school reform.

As I see it, there are two aspects to school restructuring. The first is the obligation of any people who are involved in any endeavor that involves other people and is really the first hallmark of any profession. That hallmark is not an obligation to be successful or to win because you cannot guarantee in a complicated field that you're going to be able to succeed. The first hallmark of any complex occupation is not to hurt anyone—not to do any damage. But we do damage.

## The Learning Process

I just pulled something out of a book that was published in 1980. It's a handbook on a systematic approach to designing and conducting educational programs for adults. There is an article within the book with a chart, "Hierarchy of Retention." It says if you take a bunch of adults and use the following methods, you get the following results in terms of whether the people who go through them remember what it is that they're supposed to remember as a result of the educational process.

The first category is reading—reading articles and books. Ten percent of the people are able to retain what they are supposed to have gotten from reading an article or book. Next is hearing—listening to a lecture. Twenty percent of the people retain what they hear in a lecture. Next is seeing—watching pictures. Thirty percent of the people are able to retain what was presented by the pictures. The next is hearing and seeing at the same time—a movie, an exhibit, or demonstration. Fifty percent are able to remember what they saw in a movie or demonstration or exhibit.

Next is saying or writing—writing an essay or being in a group discussion where you constantly have to listen, give and take, and be alive all the time because it's going to go back and forth. There is 70 percent retention as a result of that process. Finally, doing—either a simulated exercise, role playing, or actually doing something or on-the-job training: 90 percent retention.

But, what do we do in schools? The first two methods: reading and hearing, with the least successful results, 10 and 20 percent retention. We do very little of the others. Is this a mystery? Was anybody surprised by this list? Does it conform to the way that you and I remember school and how these methods become part of us? Sure it does. There was nothing surprising there at all.

We say that everybody learns at his or her own rate. We all do. But, how are schools organized? Well, we all learn at our own rates, but you had better learn at the same rate that the teacher is speaking because she doesn't have a chance to talk to you all individually. That's the way school is organized. Does it have to be? We know that one-third of the kids are going to be bored because they know the material. One-third

of them are not going to understand what we're saying. Is there a different way of doing things?

### **Learning from Management**

I've been reading a lot of books on management. Every one of them will have a chapter on how you should never humiliate or insult your employees. Because if you do, you turn them off and they'll hate you and instead of working for you, they'll try to sabotage your operation. What do we do in school when we call on kids to answer questions? Not the kid who knows all the answers—he loves it. What about the 25 percent of the kids or 10 or 15 percent who are sitting there engaged in an unconstitutional act? They're praying that we'll not call on them. And when we do call on them, they never have the answers right.

What happens when you call on a kid in the morning and ask him something he doesn't know? And it happens again in the afternoon, and tomorrow afternoon? And every time we call on him and he doesn't know, what are we doing? We're humiliating that kid in front of all his peers. What does humiliation do to people? If you think humiliation is a good way to get people to learn something, I suggest that you think about why people don't want to take driving lessons from their husbands or wives. It's not that their husbands or wives are worse teachers than the ones in driving school; it's just that most people don't like to see people who know about them watching them as they make mistakes. We're all like that. When we get involved in situations where others who are close to us see us doing those things, we eventually say, "I'm not playing this game. Don't evaluate me on that; I'm not interested." And that's what kids do. We all know kids in the third or fourth grades who really dropped out in their own heads before they dropped out of school.

I became very interested some months ago in a book written by a British management expert named Charles Handy. He's done a few chapters in each book on schools. He did this very interesting little piece in which he said that school work is most like office work. He said if you were to think of all the things in the outside world, like being in an auto plant, a steel plant, the coal mines, being on a ship—of all the things you can think of, being in school is most like office work. You read reports, you listen to people, you create

reports, you're moving paper, you're using words and numbers—something like that.

Then he asked the question, suppose you were running an office—either an insurance office or bank or newspaper or state education department even—and suppose you hired people and you said, "Jack, here's your desk. Sit down over here. There's your supervisor who will tell you what to do. There are thirty other people sitting at desks who are doing the same work, but I don't want you to talk to them. And, after 45 minutes a bell is going to ring and we want you to move to the third floor, to a different office where you will have a different supervisor and be given different work to do and you'll have thirty other people sitting there, and we don't want you to talk to them either. And, that will happen every 45 minutes. You will move and will have to relate to a different boss and a different kind of work." Well, if you organized your department of education that way, you'd be out of a job in a couple of minutes.

It's very difficult to get adjusted to one supervisor, let alone one every 45 minutes. Even with one supervisor, we have unions. Each supervisor has a different style, a different set of expectations. The way most people get to learn their jobs is to turn to the people next to them and say, "Hey, how do you do this?" But you're not letting them talk to the people next to them. Handy says this is a crazy way to run any institution, including a school, because you're confusing students.

Now, the student is a worker. It's the student who is educating himself or herself. If education could be poured into the kids from the outside, all the kids I've ever taught would have learned everything I tried to teach them, because I was giving them all the same thing. The fact is that all education is self education. Therefore, the job of the teacher is not just to pour something in—it's like being a manager in a factory or some white-collar business, or like being the head of the department of education where you're trying to figure out how to get all the people working there on board and working together toward the objectives which you've all agreed to. That's not an easy thing to do.

This system of moving kids every 45 minutes would work very well if these kids were automobiles on an assembly line. If the teachers were putting a different part on each 45 minutes,

that would make sense. That's exactly why the model is like that—because we view the kids as being inanimate.

Let's engage in the same kind of thinking that the auto workers and General Motors are engaged in trying to build the Saturn—a car to compete with Japanese cars. Let us for a moment make believe. That is, face the reality that the American public will not forever be patient with us. They may be patient if we're trying to do new things and don't make it. They will not be patient with us if we keep doing something that doesn't work. We can face the American public and say, "You people are parents and you know how hard it is to deal with your kids. We're dealing with the same kids. We're trying to do different things, and we'll be honest when something doesn't work and will say so and that we're not going to try it again, but we are engaged in an honest search." The American people will accept that. They will not accept "everything is fine and we're doing the best we can" while everything stays the same as it was 50 and 100 years ago. That's where I'm coming from. Not that we have answers, but that the American people will not tolerate our continuing to sell them something that doesn't work. They will tolerate a search and an honest stance that we don't have all the answers.

What are some of the things that ought to be looked at? I want to share a few things with you before closing. First is an experience I had some months ago. I saw a school which has been in operation for 17 years. They have a structure in which people think about what happens to kids. I am not here to say that this is what every school in America (or even half or one-third of them) ought to be like. I'm saying that here is a school that is substantially different from 99.9 percent of the schools in the United States, has done a terrific job, and gotten very different results. Therefore we should think about it.

### A West German Example

This is a school in Cologne, West Germany. It's unlike most German schools. In the fourth grade in Germany you take an examination. If you're great you're told you're smart and you're going to the university. If you don't pass, you're told that you didn't make the gymnasium, but you're on the next track and you're going to the *realschule*. After the *realschule* you will attend a technical institute and you will get a job. If you're

the lowest on the exam, you're told you will go to the *hauptschule* and you'll get a kind of cooperative education program and you will be in the lowest status.

There are a number of schools in Germany that have tried to do something different. The one I saw tries and does do something different. It's comprehensive, which means it doesn't track the student this way. The students are kids from the lower two tracks who have been told that they didn't do well on the fourth-grade exam. They are told that this failure determines the rest of their lives, and that they are too dumb to go to college.

Here's another major way this school is different from others. First, suppose I am a new teacher arriving in September. I am not told, go to Room 305, your class is there. I'm told the kids are going to come in three days. Here are six other teachers who are your teammates. You sit down with those teachers. Here are the 120 or 130 kids you're going to have. It is your job, after looking at their records and thinking about them, to decide on how to divide them into classes. Notice it's the actual teachers who are going to teach them who will sit down and think about how to divide the kids. Not a computer, not an administrator, not a committee of teachers from the previous year—it's the teachers who are going to teach them who make that decision. That's empowerment—not taking some abstract power away from some school board. The power to make decisions about what will affect your job and your teaching—that is the empowerment.

Second, I am asked how will I work my time schedule during the day. There are no bells in this school. If you don't want to move the kids around every 45 minutes, you can have them a whole morning for German, a whole afternoon for mathematics, and then the next morning for science. If you think that's too much time, you can shorten the time, you can lengthen it, based on how bored the kids are or how interested, whether they are slower in one subject and faster in another. The school is not going to dictate this. Not you as an individual, but your team of teachers can sit down and say that our kids are behind in a subject and we need to lengthen the time.

So, the allocation of students, the allocation of time, and now, which teachers are responsible for each subject—that's your decision too. In other

words, all the important decisions are made by that team.

The second thing they're told is that they're never going to get a substitute teacher to come in, so they must organize themselves so that if anyone is absent, it's not a crisis. The reason for this is that the kids don't know the substitute and the substitute doesn't know the kids. So the kids are taught bad lessons when a substitute comes in. They are taught that they can run rings around an adult. They're taught that they can throw things and curse. They can do all sorts of destructive things. The school has already taken all of the money that would be used for substitute teachers and given you an extra teacher for your team. Now you organize yourselves in such a way that no matter who's absent, no outsiders need to come in because they're not going to do you any good.

The third thing you're told is that these kids are entering the fifth grade and will be graduating at age 19. Your team is going to be with the same kid from fifth grade through age 19. You're not going to be able to say that you got these kids from a lousy teacher who ruined them, and you're not going to be able to say that you can't wait until June to get rid of them and pass them on to somebody else. They are yours for half of your professional life. And when you look at yourself in the mirror, you will know that you're the person responsible for them. Anything you goof up early on you know you're going to have to live with, so you'd better ungoof it quickly.

As a secondary school teacher in America with five classes a day, you don't learn the names of your kids until almost Thanksgiving. Then you start packing up three weeks before the school year ends, after exams, because the records, the books have to be collected. But in Holweide, these are the same kids you're going to have next year and the year after that. You don't have to learn any new names or do any packing up. You'll actually gain about seven weeks of instructional time every year without adding a single day to the time of teachers or kids in the school.

The next thing that happens is that there is almost no lecturing in the classrooms. The kids sit at tables of five and the whole idea is to get kids to learn with their friends. No one is asked questions and humiliated. Like a ball team, they all help each other. If one is weaker than the other,

the stronger helps the weaker. It is not all factual knowledge to be spewed back on examinations. It is much broader.

To use an example from Ted Sizer, the first thing that each table gets is a creative challenge. For example, here is a map. See? Here's Cologne. When it's nine o'clock here, what time is it in London, and New York, and Chicago. Now, you all understand that—you can see the clocks on this map. Now, I want you to think about what I ask you (and I don't want you to look it up in a book). I want you to think about it and for each table to come up with an idea. Were there time zones when Jesus lived? When George Washington lived? When Abraham Lincoln lived? When do you think time zones came into effect and why weren't they in effect before that? And who wanted them? And who might have been against them at the time? And what would happen tomorrow if we didn't have 24 different time zones, but 12? And what would happen if we had two and what would happen if we abolished them tomorrow? Who would be for it and who would be against it? Don't look it up in a book. We're not interested in what actually happened. We want you to come up with some ideas, some hypotheses, some theories. In other words, it's not just facts and memorization. It's creativity and speculation. It's the kind of thing that stimulates a good chief executive officer in a business to think of a new product or a market or the effects on different groups. This is a broader notion of intelligence than what we cater to in our public schools.

You might think these are all blonde German children who salute the teachers when they walk in. A lot of these kids are Moroccans and Turks and Greeks and Portuguese. There are lots of poorer Germans in the school. This is an urban school. You'd recognize it to be one of your tougher schools. This school produces the same percentage of kids who pass the *arbeitur*—the examination to the universities—as the select schools do. It is a school of choice. No teacher has to work there and no parent has to send a kid there. But they're all lined up to come in because it's terrific.

Now, is this the only model? It is not. But it's a way of thinking about how you can make a few little changes in a place and get big effects. Do you have to keep all the kids together from fifth grade to age 19? No, you might have three-year blocks.

Do you sacrifice something? Is there some teacher who might say, "I'm really not good at teaching math from the fifth grade all the way to the age 19?" Sure. Are there trade-offs? There certainly are.

But the whole point is, not that this is what ought to happen but that this is something to think about. We should try to think about what kids need, what turns them off, and what turns them on. Can you use kids to help each other? Is there a way of not embarrassing them? Is there a way of stimulating thinking and creativity rather than just memory? Is there a way to get teachers to accept responsibility?

By the way, we talk about accountability for teachers. We've got all sorts of things like merit pay, mentors, and inspection processes. Can you think of a better accountability process than for me to know that I'm working with these other six teachers from grade five to age 19? Guess what I'm going to do if somebody's not working? Guess what the rest of us are going to do if somebody on that team botches up something? Can you think of any principal or superintendent who will do more than a bunch of people who realize that they've got to live with each other for a hell of a long time? If someone isn't working then everybody else has to do the work? Or that if someone does something rotten or destructive that the others are going to have to live with the consequences? It's powerful. It's something we need to think about.

### Strategies for Reform

I would like to conclude by talking about a proposal I made a couple of weeks ago at the National Press Club. I recognize that it's very difficult to bring about change. I know how difficult that is. I say the same things in our publications.

There have been waves of reform in this country before and we still we have pretty much the same schools. People are comfortable with what they have, or at least they are afraid of the unknown. I am afraid that if we stick with what we have we're going to be big losers, and there will be a huge public reaction: "We gave you money, we gave you attention, we gave you reform and look what we got. When it was over we got the same thing." We can ride it out, but we're not going to be home free. We're going to ride it out, and there will be a lot of resentment

and proposals for a lot of radical notions that move away from public education. That is what I'm very worried about.

I think it's almost impossible to turn a whole school system around. The only way most people know how to do that is to order a lot of people to do things, and when you do that, they don't like it and they organize. We can't do it in our organization. I don't think you can do it in your states and I don't think any superintendent can do it. I don't even know if a principal can do it in a school. It's unusual to be able to bring that sort of change about.

But suppose we were to try teams of six or ten or twelve or fifteen teachers in one school and two schools and five schools, etc. Suppose that we, as educators and chiefs, said, "Look, we're not abandoning the system we have right now because we don't really have a better one that we know about. Therefore, we're not going to say, 'everybody abandon this for something else' because we don't know that something else we try will be better. However, we know what we have now is not satisfactory. Everybody's somewhat unhappy with it. Therefore, we want to give an opportunity to people to try out new things. We want to set certain standards. We want to say that there will be cooperative learning in this system, recognition that people learn at their own rate, and a whole bunch of things. We would set certain standards, but we would allow teams of teachers, with the agreement of their principal, school boards, and local unions, to essentially set up schools within schools."

Notice that each of these grades in the Cologne school is a school within a school. They never really see anyone else. Those teachers stay with those kids. They do have a governance structure. Each team has somebody on a faculty senate and each team has somebody on a curriculum committee.

Now, I've been around long enough to know that even if you set up a school within a school, the other people within it are going to resent it. They're going to say, "If you're setting up something different, you must think we're doing something wrong. This is an implicit criticism of what we're doing." I don't know how to get around that. But I hope that you will think of ways to set up a structure that will, on a voluntary basis, allow parents, teachers, supervisors, and school systems to do things on a smaller basis. What I hope is that,



if something is going right within a school, you could win over some other people within that school. I know that if the school is down the road it will never be won over. If somebody tells me they've got a great school down the road, I'll say their parents are different, their kids are different, their teacher is different, and it will never work here. I know that one. I led it for many years and our whole industry is based on it.

But if it's right here in my school and you have a representative group of teachers—you can't have all the best teachers in the school—and a representative group of kids and it works, maybe we can win people over. I don't know if that's a be-all or end-all. I'm sure it isn't. But I am concerned that we bring about change. I hope that you will help this to happen and, more, that you will come up with some other ideas as to how to make some changes happen. We're not in a period of time where we can afford to just do what we've done before. The consequences will be very different.

My final word is this: I believe that you can't bring change about unless people think the angel of death is at the door. The auto industry didn't change until they were practically down and out. And they may be out—that is, the changes they're making may be too late. They're saying, "That's the way we're built. It's unfortunate, but that's the way we're built." We all hang on to all sorts of hopes that nothing bad will happen unless we're almost dead. So, I want to try to convince you that we're almost dead—as the parting pleasantries of the evening.

Just look at England for a moment. England is a very nice place and not a very radical society. I was over there a few years ago, and they'd been through about five months of the national firefighters' strike and nobody was concerned about it. I asked, "Aren't people dying every day?" And they said, "Well, they die even when the firefighters aren't on strike." It was that sort of thing—very British. They were not about to throw the firefighters' leaders in jail. They even allowed them to lock up their equipment so that no one could mess it up. So, the British are not about to go for radical solutions.

However, in the last year, they did go for radical solutions in education. If you haven't read about it, you should get into it very deeply because it's an indication that rather conservative societies that have had institutions lasting for 100 or 200 years can make very radical moves when they get to be unhappy.

Margaret Thatcher got an education reform law through which said the following: if 20 percent of the parents of children in any school sign a petition that they are unhappy with the way the school is being run, the Department of Education and Science, which is their federal Department of Education, conducts a secret ballot election by sending ballots home to the parents to ask whether or not they want that school removed from the jurisdiction of the local Board of Education. If a majority of those returning ballots vote that they want the school removed, the whole public school gets removed from the jurisdiction of the Board of Education, and the parents elect their own Board of Education for that one school. The public Board of Education has to send money to this group—the same money they would have spent if it were a public school. Those parents have a right to hire and fire anybody they want to run the school. But to make sure that those parents run it properly, the national government is now adopting a national curriculum—what all kids must learn—and a national examination system so that each year the parents can find out whether the school is doing the job or not. Well, that's their version of tax credits and vouchers. It can happen here.

I want to thank you for this opportunity. I know that you've been through a long day. I am very concerned with starting the process of change and reform, and I hope you are. It is very difficult. We have to realize and respect that the system that has remained the same for 100 or 200 years has served the needs of a lot of people, almost everybody in it. Yet we are the leaders, and we have to figure out a way of bringing about some productive change. I hope that together we can do some of that in the next few years.