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ALBERT SHANKER

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Thank you. It is a pleasure to be here. I would like to start by spending a few minutes on some of the achievement scores so that we can get a picture of where we are and what the public/private school difference is. If we look at this first one, these are results on math scores that came out last year, but we would find very much the same distribution in reading, writing, and other fields. These are twelfth-graders that are about to graduate. About 20-25% of the kids have dropped out, so these are the successful youngsters. If you will notice, we have gone back to basics to solve that. 100% of the kids who are graduating can go third-grade-level work, so they can add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers. When you get to fifth-grade-level work, 91% of them are able to do that. By the way, these grade levels are a little iffy in terms of how they were arrived at, but they will serve as approximations. But only 46% are graduating with the ability to do seventh-grade work and only 5% can do advanced work, which is the kind of work associated with graduating from high school and entering college in other industrial countries. If you want to compare that with a country like Germany, 30% of the entire cohort in Germany go on to college and pass an examination that would be more rigorous than what is represented by the 5%. So this is 5% of 75% who are still in school, whereas with the Germans it is 30% of the entire cohort. The French is about 24%.

Okay, let's look at the next one. Now you would expect that

there would be large differences between public and private schools, and here are the differences. They are there. There is some advantage, as you see. As far as the bottom one, they are identical. At the third- and fifth-grade rungs there is a private school advantage, not huge, but it is there. And the last one is a little blip due to... If you were to straighten those numbers out and account for the fact that a large... Twice the percentage of public school kids drop out as kids do in private schools. You would find that those two numbers are equal, that those reaching the advanced stage are the same in both.

All right, let's look at the next one. Well, you might ask yourself the question, suppose we were able to push every kid in public school over to private school and suppose that there were no effects of parents, of community, of violent and disruptive kids, or of any of the other things that might make a difference. If there were no other differences, what you would get is a slight increase in achievement. Now this makes the point that John Child made a few minutes ago. That is, if I were to give you the students in different tracts, you would certainly see tremendous differences, but this shows that whether you are in a bureaucratic school of a private school, if you take the same courses, by and large you get the same results. Now, that's the kind of thing your grandmother might have told you, that if you don't take algebra you are unlikely to do the algebra work on an examination, and if you do it probably doesn't make any difference if you are in a public or private school. These little differences there are not very

significant.

Let's go on to the next one. Well, we get a lot of stuff saying that there are not huge differences between the kids in one bunch of schools and the other, and _____ works, and that's just not so. This is level of parental education of these students, and if you look at the top and bottom, you will see some very significant differences. You will see that the bottom are mothers and fathers of children who are graduating public school--25 and 31% of the public school kids' mothers and fathers have graduated college, whereas with the mothers and fathers of private school children it is 36 and 47. A vase difference, so that we know that graduating college makes a tremendous difference in terms of level of income and all sorts of other things. If you look at the first one, those are high school dropouts. So, if you are an elementary school kid, you are twice as likely to have a parent who is a high school dropout as if you are a youngster in a public school. Now these are tremendous effects, so that notice you get a very little difference in achievement on the previous comparison, and here you get rather large differences in terms of where these kids are coming from.

All right, now we are going to take a look at a very interesting chart, and that is what happens if you take all the kids in private school and all the kids in public school and compare them on the basis of who their parents are; that is, compare all the public school kids whose parents are college graduates with all the private school kids from college graduates,

and so forth. All right, let's take a look at that. There is practically no difference. If you pick the right parents, you are going to get the scores. By the way, this is on a 350 point scale. You see that there are some very small differences when you get down to the...that is, if you rescue your kid from a very touch ghetto school and spend the money to send him to a parochial school, you are going to get on average a few points there, but 3, 4, or 5 points on a 350-point scale--not a huge difference.

All right, let's take a look at the next one. Now this is something that is different, because one of the things that you would be led to believe from the _____ is that public school can't change, bureaucratic...all that Democratic control, and so forth. But here is an indication that something that happened. This is in reading. And this is black students, and this is longitudinal. We start with 1971 and go to 1988, and you will notice that there are very large increases in the... Just look at that intermediate, only... By the way, a much larger percentage of black students is staying in school, so you are actually now testing a group of kids many of whom would have dropped out 20 years ago who are now being measured. You would expect the scores to go down, but here you see very, very dramatic increases going from 82 to 97% in bare basics and from 40 to 76% in the intermediate, and even from 8 to 26, still overall very small, and there is a big disparity between the black scores and the white student scores. But, nevertheless, even though the bureaucracies are still there and they are still operating, there is change going

on and there is improvement going on. That shouldn't really happen in a bureaucratic setup. These kids are still in public school.

All right, that's the end of the picture show. I want to make a couple of points on this. First, the academic achievement differences between public and private schools in the United States are extremely small. If you compare them with the difference between American students in general and those in all other OECD countries, we are talking about a difference of a centimeter as against a mile. I think the second thing we ought to note is that all of the schools of our economic competitors are bureaucratically controlled, much more bureaucratically controlled than ours. You have national systems, you have national curriculums, you have national standards for entry into college. You have got a lot more bureaucratic control in those systems than you do here. You also, by the way, have a lot more tracking. Now it is true that in the United States we tend to track for failure. That is, those kids that we view as being slow, we put them in a slow group, we don't give them anything, and then we are surprised they haven't learned anything. But it isn't tracking, because obviously the most tracked country in the world probably is Germany. We are all looking at the success of their system. Not only the top track, but their middle tract and their bottom track, as well. So it's the way that we do it.

Now, I think that the results that come out of the new study might very well have led to a different set of conclusions, because I think that what we have here is a study of public school averages

and private school averages. What this does not deal with are concentrations of kids in given schools; because we don't deal with averages, we deal with... That is, suppose you were at an intercity school and suppose you had a school where practically all of your kids come half the time. That may have something to do with the school, but it may also have something to do with the conditions that we talked about this morning of those communities and those families. Trying to put kids into algebra or precalculus courses in those schools might prove a little different, the concentrations of such youngsters. I guess the bottom line there is...what is not accounted for in the Chubb and most of them basically, and this is what all the reviewers in book one said, and book two looks like it is the same--that is, it does not account for the effects of selection. It is not the parents who select the private school; sure they do, they apply--but it's the private school who selects the youngster. And on the data that are there, there are screening differences that explain some of the important differences in outcomes, and the outcomes are not necessarily a result of the differences between private and public schools, but it may be a result of the students that these private schools admit. Why do Catholic schools do better on sophomore tests? Because low-achieving students are not admitted in the first place. Why is discipline less of a problem? Because trouble-makers are not allowed in, or if they are in, they are kicked out. The toughest kids as a public school teacher were the kids who were kicked out of private schools. We couldn't kick them out, we had

to take them. Why are there communal characteristics in Catholic schools? Because religion and past family affiliation are important factors in admitting students. There is poll data where principal... ...so that if you select youngsters, you are going to get certain results. There is one other item in this new report that is rather important. This compares kids between the eighth grade and tenth grade. Between the eighth grade and tenth grade, all the kids leave the school that they are in, some middle school or eighth-grade elementary school, and move to a high school. Lots of kids move from public to private schools, or the other way, during that period of time. There is nothing in John Chubb's paper which takes that into account--not the one here, at any rate. Now it turns out that almost no public school kids leave public school to go to Catholic schools or other private schools--very few, 2 or 3%. But 35% of the kids in Catholic school move over to public school after they leave elementary school. And the U.S. Government--as a matter of fact, the same database that John Chubb uses as 6__ ____ database--shows who those kids are who leave Catholic schools and move to public schools. They are all concentrated in the lower two cortiles(?) of socioeconomic status. Now the reason for that is that: One, they are screening out for youngsters who are making it academically, and, secondly, high schools cost a lot a more than elementary schools do, so a lot of these youngsters can't afford to stay. I think these all affect those results.

Now I would like to talk about Mike Cruz's venture, which I

think is a terrific one for a number of reasons. First of all, if we are ever going to improve conditions for most kids in this country, it is going to be through public schools. Let's face it--people who pay to have their kids go to private schools are paying not to have certain kids sit next to their kids--that's why they are paying. And these schools are not going to take the most difficult youngsters, or youngsters even with moderate difficulties. That's what people are paying to get away from. An any private school that doesn't take care of that problem is not going to stay in business very long, once it becomes a totally different type of school with a concentration of problem youngsters. I think, secondly, you have here the building of a very important coalition with the business community as a major partner. I think that is extremely hopeful, especially praiseworthy in terms of the special problems faced by this community. Third, it does not give you the single magic bullet approach. A few years ago it was merit pay, then it was longer school day, then it was longer school year, then it was back to basics, and now it's all you have to do is have a market system. Just remember that none of the other countries that are beating the pants off of us educationally have market systems. None of them. So that doesn't prove that a market system won't work, but it does show that we're going to have a big gamble in terms of moving over from one system to another with absolutely no evidence that it works. What you have in Mike Cruz's approach here is essentially systemic reform. The notion of what makes other systems work

around the world is not that they are doing one thing right, but they are doing a whole bunch of things that all tend to push in the same direction. Now what are some of these things that are missing from both... By the way, why is it that private school youngsters in this country who have such socioeconomic status advantages, as you saw here, and who are in schools where there is no collective bargaining, no government bureaucracy, where they can kick out the problems, where they can do all those things--why is it that only 4% of those kids are learning high school mathematics? I mean, the kids in public school, some of them have an excuse; but the kids in private school have no excuse at all. Well, I think we need to look in another direction, and Mike Cruz does. It is not a question of whether you've got a school board or whether you've got a private school board. I think it is rather clear. One is that other countries have a curriculum, so they know what they want their kids to learn. We don't have one. So every teacher essentially... As a matter of fact, our big bureaucracy is such a bureaucracy that generally the curriculum is a big fat book which says, "Select from these items the things that you are interested in and the youngsters are interested in, and if you don't find what you want here, you can change it." Well, if each teacher at each grade level is not necessarily doing anything that is connected with other grades, and if you have no vision as to where you are going so that you assign responsibility at each of the levels, you are not going to get there. And that is true of public schools and it is true of private schools. Secondly, the achievement of

youngsters is largely going to be due to how much work they put in. You don't get to write unless you write often and somebody reads what you have written and somebody marks it, and you rewrite it and redraft it. That is a lot of work, and not all of it is interesting. And that is true of learning a foreign language and it is true of learning how to read when you are first learning how to read. It is true of almost everything. Now why do people work? People work because they want to get... Well, one is they love it, okay? Some of us at times do something that we love to do, and so we work hard because it is intrinsically interesting. That is great. And it would be nice to run schools in such a way that everything that youngsters do will be intrinsically interesting. I doubt it. I have never met a youngster who first opened Shakespeare and said, "Boy, I can't wait to get into this!" So that is unlikely. The reason most people work is very simple. They want something that they cannot get without working, and they know that the unpleasant work is connected to something that they want. Now that is what is missing in the United States. In Germany, in France, in Japan, in every other OECD country you know that if you don't reach that advanced level that 4 to 5% of our kids reach, there is no college in the country or university that is going to take you. That's it. And that's why you turn off the TV set and you don't look at the comic books and you don't do all the other things that are available to kids over there. It is very simple. You want that. That's the standard, and you have to come home and work to achieve it. Now when kids in private schools find

out that they can get into 95% of the colleges and universities without doing any work, most of them say, "The heck with it! Why work?" And they turn on their parents and say, "What's bugging you, Mom? The school doesn't care, the university doesn't care." Your authority to do anything with your own child is undermined by the failure of society to set standards. In other countries, if you don't want to go to college, getting certain grades in school, getting certain certificates, means that you have a good chance of working for the German equivalent of a big American company. Not true in the United States. Most employers don't look at your grades, most of them don't look at your transcripts, most of them don't hire 18-year-olds or 19-year-olds or 20 or 21-year-olds. So that when you have two kids leaving school, one of whom has been a pretty good student and has learned a lot and the other hasn't done a thing, the chances are they will both get lousy jobs. Because good employers don't want kids fresh out of school. Let them kick around a while and see what they are like. So what is missing from both kids in private and public schools? One, if we don't know where we are going, we are not going to get there, if we don't define what kids need to know. Once you define that, you can base your teacher training on that; you can develop textbooks that are related to that; you develop assessments, as Mike talked about. It is an entire system. And what you have seen on the charts that I showed you is not that we have two systems, one that is bureaucratic and government-controlled, and the other is a market system, and the other one is a lot better. The other one is

marginally better, and all of the differences in the marginally better system are easily attributed to the differences in the students that they take in, both their socioeconomic status and their selection process within socioeconomic status, that they reject difficult-to-educate kids and keep those who are easier to educate.

When I was asked to moderate this panel, I asked Mike Darby if it was appropriate for me to make a few comments with regard to some interests that I have in the whole field of education, and he indicated that that was acceptable. And so I would like to just take a few moments and after listening to the three really excellent presentations, I would like to give you some of my reaction to it.

First of all, I think we all agree that the United States as a country is probably as sophisticated as any country in the world, technically, socially, and otherwise. Certainly, when we looked at our education system, when we looked at the number of studies that have been made on how to improve education, we could literally paper this planet with studies on what needs to be done to improve education, studies conducted by all sorts of organizations. And so if we know what needs to be done, why don't we do it? Why do we continue to have more and more studies and more and more groups trying to determine what needs to be done, when, in fact, we are submerged in that kind of data. And speaking of data, you know, we can have all sorts of statistics up there, and you know as well as I that unless you really get into the depth of those statistics, you can almost prove anything you would like.

The real issue, it seems to me, is that we know what to do but we either don't or don't know how to get it done. I think the problem is implementation. And I think, from my perspective, we have a situation where we have our college system, which is comprised of both public institutions and private institutions, and

it is clearly ranked the top in the world. We have in our preschool area... A lot of the kids who go to preschool are actually going on subcontracts from the public system. They are going to preschool in private schools on vouchers from the public system. And we have this kindergarten through twelfth grade in the middle, which is literally a monopoly. Now to me, as a businessman, a monopoly means that regardless of what you do, the mental attitude of the people, the organization, is not one that is conducive to innovation, creativity, extra effort, and so forth. And I think that that is the basic problem--that as long as we continue to have a monopolistic system, a monolithic system, one that is run from the top down--no matter how many studies we do and how many different ideas we get for how to tinker at the top to fix this system, we will never create the kind of individual innovation, creativity, extra effort, that distinguishes one institution from another.

Let me give you an example. You know, today we look at a company--take General Motors or IBM. Fantastic companies! Thirty years ago IBM was clearly the most highly capitalized, had the greatest scientists and technicians, had everything that any computer company would want. If we had decided at that time, "Great! IBM is the best computer company there is. Let's have IBM do all the computer work for the Unites States." Look at what has happened over the last 30 years. Two guys up here in Northern California, Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard, started the Hewlett-Packard Company and totally blind-sided IBM in the scientific

computer area. Apple started the personal computer business, and IBM up until just recently was kicking and screaming that the personal computer wasn't going to go very far. Look at where the personal computer is today. Digital Equipment on the East Coast attacked IBM in the very area that was IBM's real strength, business computers, and successfully competed. I think you need that constant innovation, that striving for people to do things differently, better than they are being done, in order to drive the system to excellence. And that I believe is what is missing in the present system. We have a top-down, rule-driven system, where I agree with John Chubb--you can measure performance by, did the kids spend the appropriate amount of seat time in order to qualify for some bureaucratic rule? Do the classes run the 55 minutes that the teachers work, the number of hours in accordance with the union contract? And all of that. But the kids could graduate as gibbering idiots, and that is no measure. The kids are coming out, by Al Shanker's numbers here, with a third-grade education, and if you are lucky, you got a seventh-grade education, coming out of high school. Does anything happen? Has anybody been fired? Has any school been shut down and restructured, or what have you? I think that is the problem. I think we are missing that life-giving updraft of competition, drive, innovation where one school attempts to do a better job than an other, and then hopefully there is that impetus for the other schools to emulate the first one.

When we talk about the comparisons of private and public

schools, I happen to be very familiar with a private school up in Oakland. This private school was formed by a group of teachers who left both the public and the parochial school system and started this school. Their entrance requirement is, as the principal of the school, Michelle Lewis, puts it, that the child be standing on the front doorstep. And so they are specifically geared toward catering to those kids that the public system--and, yes, even some of the private system--hang labels on as "learning disabled" and "disadvantaged," and all that sort of thing. These are the kids they specialize in. And I can tell you from personal experience, because I have followed two of those kids through for the last three years, the change is dramatic. On less than half the resources that go to kids in public schools, this school is making substantive change in those kids--not only academically, but morally, ethically, and every other way.

And so, my whole point is why do we choose, in the most important function we have, that of passing on an education to the next generation, why do we choose to operate that in the way that the failed socialist systems all around the world operate, whereas in every other facet of our economic and social life we encourage the spirit of enterprise and competition?

What I would like to do at this point is to open the meeting to questions, and maybe, with the remaining time, maybe what I would like to do is maybe give each of the panelists time for rebuttal, so why don't you plan on, say, three minutes each. John, do you want to go first?

Sure. Al Shanker has responded in the same way to our statistical analyses and newspaper ads over the past couple of years, and I think what you will have to do, because I don't have the time to go through any kind of details with you, if you are interested in the facts, if you are interested in the truth, then you will have to take a close look at the paper. The basic reality of Al's analysis is that he has picked one test at one grade level at one point in time and hung a case on this slender thread. If you look at other test scores, there is no comparison. If you look at SAT scores, the gap between public and private is 30 to 40 points. If you look at SAT scores in the 1980's, you find that public schools' scores went down by a dozen points, private schools' scores were constant, while the populations in those schools remained constant. If you get out of the test score game and you go over to things that really matter, because test scores are only an indirect measure of what we want, private school kids are three times more likely to get a bachelor's degree; poor children, African-American children from private schools, are more like to get a B.A. than white children are who attend public schools to get a B.A. I could go on and on with other measures of outcomes, but the reality is, there is no comparison. I agree with Al that private schools ought to be doing better, public schools ought to be doing better--they all ought to be doing better. But eventually you get back to the question of how are you going to stimulate improvement? I am in favor of national standards, I am sympathetic with national curriculum, I am sympathetic with

national tests. Whether you have a market system or a political system, you need measures of outcomes to drive change. But ultimately, you got to get back to the question of what is going to stimulate the schools at the local level to respond, and I am basically a believer in the bottom-up form of innovation and not the top-down form of innovation.

A few more specific points: Al is correct that if students take the same courses, then they will probably do very similarly in public and private schools. We find the same thing. The point that we are trying to make is that faced with kids that appear to be absolutely identical, the private schools are more insistent than the public schools that kids take a harder program of study. That is a school effect. The reality is that your probability of taking algebra in eighth grade or being in a college prep track is about 50% higher if you are in a typical private school than a public school, even if everything about the kids is the same. Now, if Al can somehow get public schools to inspire children to move in to these higher tracks, tougher programs--well, then you have part of the answer. The problem is that is now happening right now. Al also mentioned the technical term called "selection," which is to say you can't be sure that schools are making any kind of difference if the schools have any control over who is in them. Well, there is a lot to that criticism. We have tried to deal with it. But in the new work, what we are looking at is not the level of achievement in school, but the spread of achievement. And if you grant that every kid that goes to a private school, whether

they are a slow kid going to a private school or a fast kid going to a private school, has a special influence at home, a special boost that would raise their scores higher than you would expect (and I am willing to acknowledge that), it does not account for why these kids don't move further apart over time. If they are all getting the same boost, there should not be any difference in how they move. Selection has nothing to do with the effects of inequality within the schools. The thing, though, in this public/private debate that has most impressed me--and Al did not say anything about this, because, you know, you can get into all kinds of arcane arguments about statistics--but the thing that really impressed me is when I got beyond the test scores and got beyond the college placement rates and started looking at what is going on in these schools. If I told you--just forget about public and private for a minute--but if I told you I have two schools. Just call them school A and school B, all right? In school A, twice as many teachers believe that kids can really learn, regardless of their background. In school A, twice as many teachers strongly encourage kids to work up to their potential. In school A, teachers work an extra two hours a day after school with the kids. In school A, the teachers are absent about three times less often a semester. If I gave you these characteristics of A and B and then told you that the kids in school A were doing better, you would probably say, "Well, of course they are doing better; that's a better school." Well, that's the kind of differences that we observe when public and private schools are

dealing with exactly the same kids. It is not the test scores that overwhelm. It is when you look at the characteristics of the schools themselves. Forget about public and private--one just looks like it is a better school than the other. And it is only the public/private labels that set people off because of the implications. They are unable to acknowledge the obvious.

Final point: It is true that other countries have national systems, whereas we don't really have anything like a national system. Now it is easier, a heck of a lot easier, to have a national system if you are a relatively small, homogeneous country with tens of millions of people rather than hundreds of millions of people. The possibility of the United States creating a centralized system of education is probably not in the cards politically, and I sort of blanch at the idea of what kind of national system Washington might be able to construct, given our political institutions. But other countries, even with national systems, have a great deal of choice and a great deal of competition. Japan, in particular, which is often held up as the archetype bureaucratic system, has a very standardized system for K through 8. But what happens in high school? Competition, to see what high school you get into. That competition to get into school in Japan has a powerful effect on children when they are in middle school--it lights a fire under them. Choice makes an enormous difference in Japan. It is not through bureaucracy that Japan is successful.

I said that was my final point, but this is the last one:

Statistics aside, I think the reality is that Al and I don't disagree on some of the basic findings about what is important. I don't Al disagrees with me--I mean, he can speak for himself; but I don't think he disagrees with me about the importance within a school of leadership and professionalism. I mean, after all, he represents a teacher's union--they ought to believe in professionalism. He doesn't disagree about the importance of professionalism, leadership, high expectations for kids, a focus on academics; we agree on these things. He is hardly going to say, "Your statistics don't prove it, so I disagree, those things are unimportant." We agree. And even though I have far more disparaging remarks about the bureaucratic system than Al does, I think Al also would admit that the system does create problems, especially for teachers who want to have the discretion and want to be treated like professionals, but cannot at the bottom of bureaucracy. And I think that politics is a big problem. I'm not sure that Al really disagrees with that, either. So don't let the statistical debates get in the way of some of the fundamental points on which we agree.

Al, would you like to _____?

No, that's okay. I'm glad both agree with me.

That's a sign of a true politician.

Al, do you want to _____ while you're hot?

These test scores... Of course, what I had on there was one test, but there are now a number of them, and they show pretty much the same results. The only reason that earlier results of _____

were not released is that the sampling of private school youngsters they thought were too small, and therefore they didn't release them, but they are available. And if you go back and look at them, you will find that previous social studies exams, reading exams, writing exams, that the rather small differences are the same.

Secondly, on the differences in SAT scores: SAT scores are not a very good set of scores to use for this purpose, because lots of kids don't take SAT's because they go to colleges and universities that don't require them, and colleges that do require them are more likely to charge higher tuition. That is, those who take SAT's do not represent a sample, a fair sample of all the youngsters going on to college. They do represent some skewing in terms of socioeconomic status. That is not to say that you can't find out anything. It is true that there are actually fewer high scores today than there were 20 years ago, and that tells us something. But the same is true of the number of youngsters who end up getting bachelor's degrees. To some extent it has to do with what you know and are able to do, to some extent is has to do with how much support you have to keep you in school. So all these things are very difficult to pull apart. But I think all these bits and pieces and theories and connections and regressions and all that are very interesting, but I would not stake an awful lot, I would not overturn an entire system of public education in a country on the basis of these things, because it is very hard to distinguish cause, effect... I mean, look at all these companies that are now falling apart that were all mentioned as the

outstanding companies in this country. And all the books four years ago. If we had staked our lives on those analyses, we would be in a lot of trouble right now.

Well what it shows, Al, the ones that changed, the ones that are suffering are the ones that were not...

Yeah, but the ones that changed, changed for two or three years, and they may be... I mean, look at the Fortune 500, who has been every five or every ten years, and there is a substantial amount of change there. I agree that youngsters ought to be challenged more, and that to some extent private schools do it because they are just smaller schools. It would have been interesting to see small schools versus big schools. Public urban schools -- there are more private schools in suburbia than there are in urban area, in the cites. So you may be measuring, in a lot of these morale effects, you may be measuring people's feelings when they live in cities as against suburbia, and not private versus public. Private schools may be a lot smaller, they may not be able to differentiate. If you had larger private schools, you might have exactly the same parental pressure to "do something special for my kid now that you've got a bigger school." So these things are very, very difficult to desegregate.

Now on the question of these two schools, one of which says they have teachers that say that are happier and better and more professional, and all of that. Well, there was a study done by the U.S. Government just a year ago, public school and private school

teachers, and they asked them all these questions. And what you find is that as the extent to which teachers feel they are autonomous, how well do they get along with the principal, do they feel that they are supported, etc., the results of public and private schools in this country are practically identical. There was only one major difference between public and private, and that is that private school teachers feel that they are much more underpaid than public school teachers do. And about 15% of all private school teachers, which is more than twice the number of public school teachers, quit each year, a tremendous turn-over in private schools, and where do they go? Most of them go to public schools. So they apparently going from situations where conditions are wonderful, which they love and which they are professionally devoted to, over to a system where it is worse, only for the money. Now, time and time again John Chubb came back to the same kids, and I'm saying that it is not the same kids. They may have some statistical characteristics--they may have some statistical characteristics that are the same--but a parent how lives in poverty and who will scrape together $800 to send a kid to school is a different parent. And a school that says, "We won't take you unless you have certain scores, and, furthermore, the first time you use a four-letter word in class you are out..." (and, by the way, I wish public schools would do that; I would hope the public schools would get the power and the right to do that).

Now, finally, on the whole question of centralized national

systems: You can have a good deal of centralization of standards without having any government centralization. For instance, at one time the kids worked very hard in this country. I was one of them. I would stay up nights with those old-fashioned pens until little bits of blood came out over here, writing long essays and practicing things. Why? Because I wanted to get into college. And it was the college admission standards, not a government bureaucracy, it was college admission standards that got kids to work very hard. Now Mr. Algrande points out to the finest higher ed system in the country. I say that that is nonsense. Do we have some of the finest schools in the world? We sure do. Five percent of our colleges and universities are very fine and are better than most schools around the world. Ninety-five percent of our colleges and universities are basically teaching kids their junior high school and high school education and calling it a college education. Now how can you say that that is the finest system? Now why are some of those colleges and universities, why is it that they don't pay very much attention to standards? Well, it is because there is a market, and in a market, what do you get paid for in this case? Do you get paid for educating students or do you get paid for attracting them and keeping them? Now that's two very different things. You can attract students by giving them high marks without having to work very hard. You could attract them by having a good football team. You can attract them by just having their friends there. I mean, a lot of surveys have been done in places that do have choice, and about 80% of the choice takes place

because of various nonacademic factors. By the way, I would be much happier about a choice system, the choice system that John Chubb talks about, if we really had a system's standards in this country. There are kids in both systems who would work very hard. But a system of choice... I mean, what you've got, I think the college system that you raised is an excellent example. The best college system in the world, that has a higher drop-out rate than our elementary and secondary schools...

Yeah, but you've got to measure both the input and the output. It's easy if you want to...

That's right, that's right. Let's measure the output. Take a look at the literacy studies done by the Department of Education and see what percentage of college graduates are able to read a bus schedule, who are able to figure out their change in a cafeteria. I agree with you: there is no output measurement in higher education in this country.

Okay. Let me just address two of those points. First of all, the private versus public school. I don't think it is constructive to get totally focused on that issue. I believe the private schools ought to be a lot better, can be a lot better. But in a free market environment, if all the private schools really have to do is be enough better than the standard, the public schools, in order to get people to come to them. So if we improve the public schools, I think the private schools will improve, as well. And one of the reasons that I talk about choice is that I believe that when you talk about parent involvement and pressure on the kids and

setting standards for the kids, and that sort of thing, I think if a parent has the opportunity to choose a school, there is more of a sense of ownership, there is more of a sense of participation. As we are today, some of these parents in the inner city, the poor parents, go face this bureaucracy, and it is clear--they have not the slightest ability to make any substantive change. It would be as though if you were shopping and there was only department store and you went in and you got mistreated, you can write letters to the president of the department store, and all the rest of that, but that isn't what you want to do--you want to go across the street to the other store. And so, without having that ability to influence the system or make any choice to go to an alternative system, people are trapped. They feel a sense of frustration, and therefore they don't participate. I think that to a large degree impacts it. On the college system, I think what has happened in our college institutions is that they have dropped to meet the market. I think kids coming out of high school nowadays don't have anywhere near the kind of education that a lot of you would classify as a twelfth-grade education. And so, there is a market out there for educating these kids. And I think the whole standard has dropped to a...

Why won't private schools in a choice system drop to meet the market?

They do.

Okay

They do, absolutely they do.

Is it my turn? Thank you. I thought Al wanted an answer.

No, he... What it boils down to... Well, this is an important point, because the question is, if you had a system where the government was supporting the choice that everyone makes, whether they are rich or poor, providing them with the wherewithal to make a choice, Al says why would things any better? And what the question really boils down to, unless you have some sort of a national system of tests and standards, which I favor--but still, without any system of national tests and standards, the question is, what kind of school will people prefer? Will they prefer a school that gets their kids into college, or one that doesn't get their kids into college? Will they prefer a school that has low test scores, or high test scores? Will they prefer a school that gets their kids their job, or doesn't get their kids a job? In a competitive system, the ones that do the things that parents want are the ones that stay in business. The only way you can conclude that things won't get better in an academic sense is if you have an extraordinarily dim view of parents; that is, if you believe they are either incapable or so undesiring of better outcomes that they will continue to choose the garbage that they are provided right now. There is no way, unless you have this view, that you could imagine them getting worse.

You know, that is a very unfair statement. Because if you use your own figures about what parents demand in suburban schools, public schools, and what they demand in urban schools, your own figures show that parents in both those places are not equally

knowledgeable or equally involved in the education of their children. Right out of your book, it's right there. Then you turn around and use your information to hit me over the head, that I don't think that those parents can make the same decisions. I think (inaudible - two talking at once)...poor people pay more and they buy inferior products throughout the market. And you put schools on the market, and they will be treated the same way in the schools that they are with other things.

May I ask the moderator for my three minutes. Because I think I can't...I'd like to wade in with something that is relevant to, again, the argument at statistical and market levels with the reality of Los Angeles, where, as this debate rages on with its imperfections, there are 635,000 kids in this school system, 35% (I believe, Jacqueline McCroskey, I'm right, who wrote our Social Services test for its draft) 35% live below the poverty line and over 100 different languages are spoken in the school district. What I am suggesting to you is that all of this is going to take herculean, hard work. I do take a vital political approach because in my lifetime, having been born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, I saw individuals who never believed that their life would change as being treated as chattel, who eventually insisted and demanded, from the bottom up, so that we got law and a structure and a rule of law that made some guarantees. I saw in my lifetime the fact that when you would walk into a room, 90% of the people routinely lit a cigarette about every minute and a half; and now when you walk into a room and someone ventures to light a match for

anything, they are literally hurled from that space. What I am suggesting to you is that we, with learned restructuring and the Los Angeles effort, are talking about what they are talking about, and that is the cultural change of a school system that is compliance- and rule-driven to one that is performance-based. How do you get there? By simply saying you have a choice, with, again, the debate that you have heard? No. We are suggesting that it does take the responsibility and citizen action to again reach a common vision. Because the political system understands the assertion of a common vision. I note in recent history Proposition 13, and most recently Term Limits. No one every believed that you would do anything about the bureaucracy in this state. You passed 13, and you sucked, I think to date about 40 billion dollars out of the government coffers, cumulatively. And you have seen an incredible diminution of people who work on the public payroll. In terms of Term Limits, people said you could never cut the bureaucracy of the Legislature. Well, go up right now--30% percent less people in those offices; 30%, documented. The point is that that is what we are trying to do, is from the ground-up pull everybody together who has been at odds over where we want our kids to be, and then insist that the public system respond. To me, in Western Democracy, it is the only way I literally know how to begin those baby steps so that we begin walking toward the real goal of the kinds of attainments that we talk about <u>all</u> of these masses of kids within our own school district.