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"LEAVE NO SUPERINTENDENT BEHIND: URBAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AS SEEN FROM THE TRENCHES: IS THE NATIONAL DEBATE ADDRESSING THE REAL ISSUES?"

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MATT MILLER: Our format for today is straightforward. I'm going to invite each of our panelists to speak for up to 12 or 15 minutes, to share their views on where the urban education agenda is, and where their own districts are, from their perspective. That will leave ample time for a discussion that I'll moderate, to bring out issues that they've raised, and plenty of time for Q and A .

The one thing I tee it up with, in setting perhaps some tone for our discussion today, is at least my experience in following Superintendent Romer on an off for so many months, and having, perhaps, the luxury of a writer, and not feeling the same burden day to day of trying to move the icebergs -- is feeling constantly preoccupied with the sense that the magnitude of the challenges that face urban school superintendents, on so many dimensions, raises the question of whether the national debate and the whole way we discuss the problems of urban districts and urban schoolchildren, is really equal to the magnitude of the challenges that they face. And if not, what do we do to broaden the boundaries of discussion, both nationally and in our communities, and make it safe for politicians to think bigger about some of the solutions that may need to be on the table.

So we'll hear from Roy Romer first, the superintendent from Los Angeles, who was three term governor of Colorado, and a distinguished public servant you all know. Then, from Harold Levy from New York City, the chancellor of New York City schools. Their lengthy and impressive bios are all in your materials. Then, from David Hornbeck who, until recently, was the superintendent of the Philadelphia school system, and who's now doing some important writing on school reform and the role of faith-based communities in these efforts.

And finally, from Eugene Hickok, who is our distinguished new undersecretary of education for the Bush Administration, and who, in his prior life, was for many years the secretary of education in the state of Pennsylvania. We'll start with Roy Romer, and welcome to all of you.

ROY ROMER: I'm really pleased to be here. I'm pleased to be here with my two colleagues. Dave, down here on the end, was my first mentor. When Bill Clinton asked me to chair the National Goals Panel, Dave Hornbeck was the first guy I got a hold of. And I said, Dave, tell me who it is in America I should talk to about this job. So that goes way back. Harold Levy is my current mentor, and I've got a steep learning curve.

Now look, this conversation is tremendously important. I'm like anybody who's out running a school district: I got my head burrowed into doing that job. When you asked me to come in the last 24 to 48 hours, I've been getting into the details of these two education bills. And wow, has it got my attention. And I don't want to talk about the bill first; we're going to have a good bit of dialogue. I want to describe to you what I'm trying to do in L.A. and how this bill does or doesn't help me get that job done.

First, let me say, there are more students in this district than there were in the State of Colorado; there are more students in this district than in 27 individual states. I mean, do you understand the size of this thing?

I've got 75,000 employees, a $9 billion budget; it's a Fortune 500 company. And the politics are very much more intent than I ever had when I was chairman of the National Democratic Party. I mean, it really is a very fascinating political scene.

But let me tell you, having been governor of Colorado for 12 years, I have never used my intellect as hard as I have in this job. This takes more intellectual energy than being governor. Because the problems are tougher, they really are tougher. Now, when I got there, I immediately began to say, like in real estate, three things are important: location, location, location. In education, three things are important: it is instruction, it's instruction, it's instruction. And in one sentence: we have got to improve the level of instruction if we are to solve it.

And so, if you can't draw a direct line from your job description to improving classroom instruction, I want to talk to you about your job. And ever since I hit LA -- and I'm not an educator, but I have that orientation -- is that we can continue to manage around the edge; you know, you can worry about all kinds of issues. And that's normally what occupies a superintendent's mind; it's normally what occupies a principal's mind. But it is the improvement of instruction that's going to make or break us. And I want to spend most of my 12 to 15 minutes talking about that, and then during the question period, let's look at what this bill does to the assist it or not.

Now, let me tell you what I'm doing. In the first year we were there -- well, this started with Ray Cortines before I got there -- we began to really focus upon reading, phonics; we adopted a very prescriptive program, Open Court, K-1, 2. And it works. And we put 250 coaches in the field, because 25 percent of our teaching personnel are not credentialed: they're emergency certificates. So we need to take our curriculum, first our standards, and then get a curriculum that is rigorous. Open Court is a good one, but we obviously need to bring that teaching capacity up, and so we put 250 coaches in the field.

When I got there, this next year, we're going to put 900 coaches in the field, escalating from 250 to 900, half of them in literature, reading and writing, and half in math. This is a massive change, in terms of personnel, in resource allocation, the whole function of that district. But why did I choose to do that? It is, look, if this is the real issue, you've got to bring everybody's attention to it. And it's kind of like jumping off a cliff of Acapulco: you could either hit the rock or the water.

We're committed to the journey. We don't know yet how it's going to turn out. Because to even take 850 coaches, one to thirty in literature and one to forty in math, and to identify them, because you can't hire them from somebody else -- you've got to take them out of your system -- to identify them, to train them, to manage them, to change the budget of that system to absorb that, that's a massive, massive commitment -- first one. Secondly, again on phonics, in the last two months, I've spent $47 million on buying Waterford (sp). It's an interactive, computer-based, phonics-based, diagnostic learning system, which is kind of a supercharger to put on open court.

We're committing half of our schools to that. That's a big bite. So you understand where I'm going? We are after a rigorous curriculum. Third point: we just adopted a policy in our board, that every eighth grader will take Algebra. We had two ways to do it, two semester or four semester. We had a great debate with our board. Everybody can't do that in the eighth grade; they're not prepared for it. It's kind of like coming in too quick, therefore you've got to have a bypass of 10 percent. And we said, okay, we'll allow it for one year. Four to three vote, big debate, because some members of the board said, no, we want it for a longer period of time. So do you understand? We're really coming at it with a rigorous expectation of our district.

Now, I understand this is going the right direction strategically, but whether we make it or not depends upon the quality with which we do this. I called my good friend Tony Alvarado; I said, give me advice. And he says, Roy, it's worse to have a bad coach than to have no coach at all. So be very thoughtful about how you're doing this and how you implement it.

But I just know -- I go to work every day -- the first thing I want to find out is, how are we doing on that? Are we really focusing upon changing classroom practice? Now, that's kind of like sending a group of rangers right into the classroom. But you've got to back up and say, how do you change the culture of this whole system? And it begins with a belief. Most American education in the last 100 years hasn't believed that all children can learn. We organized ourselves on the basis of, sort them out, and let those who can go.

I really believe all children can learn. Not everybody in that system believes that. So there's a cultural change that we need to go through. And so, we started from the top down to begin to educate all of us, beginning with the board, the superintendent, everybody in the central office. I have 11 sub-districts, everybody at that level. And I went to the best I could find, and that was Lauren Resnick in the Institute for Learning at Pittsburgh. We're supplementing that with others who are good around the country.

But man, we're reading basic stuff. I mean, the new school board that was elected, the book I sent to them had seven papers, Elmore, Resnick, and others. We feel if we don't understand, ask what we're really after; we're never going to get there. So here is a district that is saying, classroom instruction has got to be improved. We're going to put the mechanical things in play, namely, getting the people directed to that way.

But let's just take our coaches. You know, we're beginning to train 450 math coaches. First, is content. They don't have the content. You know, we begin with something basic as that. But all of you know in this room, that just content is not enough. It's the pedagogical practice in a classroom that really makes a difference. And so, we're doing a lot of learning walks; we're doing a lot of reflection, teacher by teacher, about what really is good instruction. Because if you can't define what good instruction is, you can't manage to ward it.

So to wrap this up, I try to say to every principal, 850 of them that work for us, I want 50 percent of your time spent on instruction. And they come back to me and say, look, do you understand what you've already asked me to do? Look at the compliance -- already got to go through; look at the stuff you've asked me to do as a district, the state had asked me to do, and the federal government. Now, that's real. I said to them, I'll get half of that off your plate, so you can really do what you're supposed to do, and that's be an instructional leader. I made that commitment.

ROMER: Wow. I mean, you are trying to micromanage at a federal level on accountability, in ways in which, if you're not careful, the unintended consequence of your action is you're going to turn us all into accountability monitors.

And then, I come back and started reading these bills**.** Wow. I mean, you are trying to micromanage at a federal level on accountability, in ways in which, if you're not careful, the unintended consequence of your action is you're going to turn us all into accountability monitors. And let me give you one sentence. You can't hold people accountable for something they don't know how to do. And there are a tremendous number of people in this system who don't know yet how to do a good job of teaching, and who don't know yet how to do, as a principal or an administrator, how to manage toward good instruction.

Now, I just know that. Therefore, you can tell what we're doing is a practical matter. We're putting all of the resources we can break loose into improving capacity to teach better and to be a better manager. And we're not going to get there easy. And we are changing people, we're changing organizations; we're doing all of those other things. But I just want to say that I like the general intention of this bill. We need more federal money. It's a crime in this country you take so much money out of the federal income tax and put it back here, and send so little back to education, and send so much to defense and social security. You know, that's a crime.

So you need to get much more of the federal budget into that, but be very thoughtful about how you do it. And in my last two minutes, let me say, you've got to begin with standards, you've got to have good, authentic assessments, and there has to be accountability. But be careful about how proscriptive you're trying to get. And I'll just illustrate it with this bill in LA. Public school choice -- I have 722,000 students and I'm short 180,000 seats. I mean, every high school in LA, in four years, will be on multiple track, year round session. There is no option of public school choice there; there just isn't.

ROMER: We're after all that. Before you wrote the bill -- don't give us a bill that begins to tie us like the Lilliputians tied Gulliver.

So be careful, when you write a bill like this, and what are the consequences. And I would not try to offer any substitute for it, but there needs to be some rationality about a place like LA right now, which is absolutely already after every objective in that bill. We are after hard curriculum, we are after phonics based reading, we are after rigorous math; we are after improving the professional development of teachers. We're after all that. Before you wrote the bill -- don't give us a bill that begins to tie us like the Lilliputians tied Gulliver.

Conclusion. I think that there is something very good that we've got the national debate focused upon: we've got to improve education across the board. You're only given seven percent of your federal budget; if you pass the Senate version of this, you'll be up to nine or something. I don't think that gives you license to go in and to micromanage the degree you have.

Final comment: be careful of the unintended consequences. If you get this too proscriptive, you'll have people out there gaming the system. First of all, they will lower the definition of what's proficient. And that's just crucial. One last idea. In terms of making some benchmark of an individual state, to some standard other than the state, that's really necessary, the NAEP is one good way to go. If that's too national for some people, I'd like to throw out the idea of having four quadrants, not geographic, but four consolidations, associations of states, 12 each, 13 each, in which they get together and adopt a common approach to assessment.

When I was governor of Colorado and did fourth grade math, it was dumb to do it alone: I should have done it with 12 other states. It would have been cheaper. I could have benchmarked against them, and I would have an excuse to tell my constituents, yeah, this is how good is good enough, because we all got together and defined it. I've got a lot more to say; we'll do it in the dialogue. Thank you.

MATT MILLER: Thank you very much, Superintendent Romer. We'll hear now from Harold Levy from New York.

HAROLD LEVY: If I'm his mentor, the pupil has surpassed the student. Roy Romer is wonderful. And Roy Romer is wonderful, in part, because he comes at things in a very pragmatic view, and what you just heard are conclusions that we did not crib off each other. And we come at this in very different ways, but I've got to tell you, there's not one word I disagree with.

I'm going to do this a little differently, and you'll see how we wind up in the same place. What I'd like to do is talk to you a little bit about New York City, its size, and then talk a little bit about the kind of analytics, and accountability, and transparency that we put in place. Because the approach, I think, ultimately, is very much the same, but the game is a little different. Comparably sized institutions: we have 1,100,000 children. I like to say 1 in 53 children in America is in my charge daily. I say that here with a little bit of trepidation and humility because I think between the three of us, in one fashion or another, we've got about five or six percent of the population of public school, and indeed of schoolchildren.

The New York City school system has 1,100 buildings, it has a $12 billion budget, it has 80,000 teachers; 16 percent are uncertified. I heard Roy say 25 percent are roughly in the same boat. That is a national problem of enormous proportions. We don't have the teachers. It's a great thing to say, we're going to have smaller class size. It would be real nice if we had teachers who could do it. Teacher quality -- is, in my judgment, the issue of the day.

Roy talks about instruction, and have you focused on instruction. Well, that is the other side of the same coin. I mean, think of what teaching is. It is an enormously insular function. If you go into a classroom and you close the door, who's in there -- 30 kids, 25 kids. And if the teacher doesn't know their stuff, if the teacher doesn't have deep pedagogical knowledge and deep subject matter knowledge, the kids will smell it. And then, it's too late. I mean, how many of us haven't tortured a substitute? Well, that's what goes on in a lot of these classrooms. The game hasn't changed any.

LEVY: If the teacher doesn't know their stuff, if the teacher doesn't have deep pedagogical knowledge and deep subject matter knowledge, the kids will smell it. And then, it's too late. I mean, how many of us haven't tortured a substitute? Well, that's what goes on in a lot of these classrooms. The game hasn't changed any.

The kinds of things that these institutions do, these boards of education, are quite phenomenal. In New York City, we serve 818,000 meals daily. We are the largest social service agency in the city. I have more busses than the Metropolitan Transit Authority. Seventy-five percent of the kids are eligible for free lunch. It puts a different perspective on what we think we are asking for when we say public education.

Let me try and target it more specifically. This summer, one-third of our children are in summer school -- one-third. Roughly, 300,000 were sent promotion in doubt letters; roughly 72,000 in grades three through eight were told, if you don't go to summer school, you'll be left back -- no more social promotion, and the summer school is the safety net. Last year, we had a program of about 62,000. 5,500 children who were in the summer school last year did not get promoted and are on the list again to be in the mandatory part of our summer school this year. The consequence would mean, if they fail again, they will be left back a second time.

We already have 440 children who have been left back at least twice. Now, 440 in a system of 1,100,000, draw your own conclusions. Nonetheless, that is the tip of the iceberg. There are unintended consequences of these policies.

We've also done a number of other things in order to improve recruitment. Last year, we had 325 teaching fellows. The point of teaching fellows is to bring in people from other walks of life to come be teachers. This year, we've upped it to about 1,200. I can go through statistical issues; it doesn't really make the point. Let me try it a different way.

A school's chancellor in New York City has a life expectancy of two, two and a half years. I've been at this for 18 months. I can only tell you, it doesn't feel like it's half over, but that is probably the reality. How does one hold a system of this magnitude accountable, while keeping track of the subtleties within the districts and system wide? Accountability and transparency have been top priorities since I became chancellor. Over the past months, we've devised a group of metrics about the schools and about the districts, and they are updated throughout the year. The metrics include, the annual standardized test scores, the monthly administrative performance indicators -- things like student attendance. I get to see student attendance on a daily basis by school, highly correlated with school success. I also get to see things like teacher certification rates; which way are they going, using the data to drive accountability.

Let me try going through some of these slides that I've got with us. I've got three to look at: district performance indicator profiles, annual school reports, and data on spreadsheets. As we develop this system of metrics and make it available, we're also developing something we call Smart Map. And I'll show you those as well. Let's see if the process works.

What I've done -- and this is up on the website for those of you who are interested, feel free to come and take a look -- this is all of the City of New York, and we are divided into 32 districts. For each of the 32 districts, there is a performance indicator. And what these performance indicators are about is all the data that touches on how they're doing. So for instance, the two maps that you see here indicate the results of our district performance on state mandated, English language arts tests. We give tests in three, four, five, and seven; and, in fact, the state gives tests in the other grades as well. So the total is, we have standardized tests in every grade.

The map on the right indicates the change in the percent of students meeting standards from 2000 and 2001. The dark areas indicate where there actually was an increase in the number of children meeting standards. And the map on the left indicates the percent of students meeting standards in 2000. Note that the districts in northern Manhattan and the Bronx in Brooklyn are not doing well. And you can see how they break out. The red areas on the left are not doing well, and the parallels on the right.

In the next slide, context is important. We want to ensure that we're looking at all the factors that affect student achievement and performance. So remembering that we said that it was the Bronx, and central Brooklyn, and northern Manhattan that showed lower scores or a fewer students meeting standards, these maps illustrate that essentially that's the same in these areas, our hardest to staff districts. We have a high percentage of children eligible for free lunch, and a high percentage of uncertified teachers. Uncertified teachers are indicated in red.

We can take this information and review it with a superintendent to understand what's going on in their particular district, so we can appropriately hold them accountable. We used this tool in our discussion with a superintendent from -- this particular one -- from one of the lower performing districts. For example, after reviewing the district in the citywide context, we would then look at the performance of the schools within the district. Here, we see the variation of the schools in the percent of students meeting standards. We could use this to talk to the superintendent, for example, about what's going in the El Malik Shabaz School, where only 20 percent of the students are meeting standards -- and that's actually a three percent decrease from the previous year.

Now, if you add that in to the kind of metrics we're using to figure out by grade by district, and by school by district, you can actually begin to pinpoint, with some precision, where the problem is, who is working it, who's not working it; who's got a strategy that seems to be working and try and scale that up? And who's not able to do it? And you can back out the other kinds of intangibles, things like experienced teachers; things like, not simply high percentage of certified, but also then, the question of, where do they go to school? What kind of grades do they get? What kind of experience have they had? Have they been part of one of these programs that purportedly work well in a particular district? Some do, some don't.

Our experience has been that in different districts, different programs work very well, and you can have the same program that won't work very well, from district to district. I mean, the parallel example for what Roy's doing is Success for All. We use Success for All broadly in a number of schools, and it brings them up off the bottom. And you get it to about 20, 25 percent, you can look for that kind of a bump in reading movement. But if you put Success for All in a school that's reading 50 percent on grade, you get almost no movement at all. So, you know, how do you contour it, how do you pick and choose?

But if the system is accountable, and I say to you that we do it by grade, by school, by scale of score, by the percentile improvements, comparing like-schools, taking into account socio-economics, Title One eligible, limited English proficient, you see patterns. You can begin to manage your resources, but you also recognize that you can't do it on a shoestring.

If the system is accountable, I say, then the politicians and the policymakers also have to be held accountable. We simply cannot raise the bar and raise the stakes without an appropriate increase in resources. In New York, we have the toughest standards, rigorous annual testing. We have been revamping our curriculum. We've done reading and English; we're now focusing on math. We've ended social promotion, but with all the standards and reforms, there's a need for adequate resources.

LEVY: As the national debate continues to focus on tough standards and accountability, we simply cannot lose sight of the fact that we need to balance the need for appropriate and adequate resources to ensure that our schools and our children are able to meet those standards. Now, I say this with some humility. I've watched the debate in Washington with a fair degree of bemusement. We test in every grade. We close schools that are consistent failures. We have principal performance bonuses. We permit children to transfer out of failing schools …

What success we've had, however, is correlated much more with other things, such as high quality, certified teachers. Give me a good teacher any day. Good student attendance.

I'll give you one example of something we've tried that I think works, and I put it to you as a suggestion, in the way my colleague did. We have something called the Chancellor's District. It's an example of how resources can make a difference. We're talking about an additional million-dollar investment in each school, and that gives them additional professional development and other resources to turn failing schools around. It has also meant that we put in stronger administrators in each of those schools. They are very, very rigorously watched, and we've been ruthless in moving people out who can't move those schools up.

We've had a degree of success. This past year, we were able to take nine schools out of the Chancellor's District's list, and about 13 schools came off the state's schools under registration review. By no means am I saying that these schools are now the best of the best, but they're no longer the worst of the worst.

As the national debate continues to focus on tough standards and accountability, we simply cannot lose sight of the fact that we need to balance the need for appropriate and adequate resources to ensure that our schools and our children are able to meet those standards. Now, I say this with some humility. I've watched the debate in Washington with a fair degree of bemusement. We test in every grade. We close schools that are consistent failures. We have principal performance bonuses. We permit children to transfer out of failing schools. We don't have quite the problem in space that Roy does, but within reason, they can transfer out.

What success we've had, however, is correlated much more with other things, such as high quality, certified teachers. Give me a good teacher any day. Good student attendance. What I found last year in our summer program, we put kids who were in this failing level into a summer program, we said, you have to go to summer school, you get five weeks. And in grades three through eight, we picked up reading grades between 35 and 45 percent, all across the grades.

LEVY: I agree with Roy, that if we take our eye off the ball on instruction, on teacher quality, then all we're going to do is generate a lot of numbers. And the unintended consequence will be a great bunch of data portraying a plane in descent.

Now, I wish I had a program that could do that during the year. It was absolutely drive. All that was focused on was reading, and reading went up, surprise, surprise. And these were kids that supposedly couldn't do it. The problem is that you can't focus that ruthlessly during the year, because we have to teach a few other things. But imagine if you had that kind of intensity. And that's why we're doing weekend programs, after school programs, before school programs, why we're getting the community based organizations involved in wrap around programs.

Success is also correlated not only with high quality and certified teachers, not only with good student attendance, but also with an orderly environment, a system where there are enough school buildings that you can have small class size, particularly in the early grades. And I would say, perhaps most importantly, parents who parent. When Congress gives us the resources to address those issues, I think great things are possible. And I remind you that public education is 92 percent of America. The private education is the exception.

What we need to do is recognize that the 92 percent, we can analyze it until we're blue in the face. But I agree with Roy, that if we take our eye off the ball on instruction, on teacher quality, then all we're going to do is generate a lot of numbers. And the unintended consequence will be a great bunch of data portraying a plane in descent. Thank you.

MATT MILLER: We'll hear now from David Hornbeck.

DAVID HORNBECK: As the former superintendent of the Philadelphia school system, I represent the small districts of the United States. [Laughter.] We only have 200,000, 215,000 youngsters in Philadelphia. But the fundamental characteristics that we face are, again, with the exception of quite the degree of space problem that Roy has, are very much the same.

I would like to frame what I have to say in three contexts. First of all, and perhaps the most important point, as we think about what goes on operationally in each of these systems across the nation, and the way in which one analyzes the federal legislation, the issues that we face in public education are not education issues, in my judgment. The fact is that they are issues of will, they are issues of resolve, they are issues of politics; it is not the absence of knowledge about how to succeed. We have the know how.

To educate 95 percent of the children of America, including those with whom we have historically failed -- those who are poor, kids of color, kids whose first language is not English, disabled children -- we have the know how to bring those youngsters' level of achievement up to a level that we would be satisfied with if our own children achieved that level of success. And I would argue that that's the standard that we ought to be using, as superintendents, as policymakers, and board members, as elected officials. What standard would we expect for our own children or, in my case, my kids being grown now, the joy of my life these days, my two grandkids, a four-year-old who will enter a Philadelphia public school in September, and an 18-month old who has three and a half more years before he gets to that kindergarten level.

HORNBECK: The issues that we face in public education are not education issues, in my judgment. The fact is that they are issues of will, they are issues of resolve, they are issues of politics; it is not the absence of knowledge about how to succeed. We have the know how.

Is that our standard, or is our standard one where we will be satisfied if relatively affluent, white kids, largely male, at the end of the day, and who speak English as their native language, succeed at levels that ensure that we get something for our children, but the other kids have to fend for themselves. And much of these issues that we're talking about revolve around issues of poverty, and language, and disability, and race. And until one uncovers that set of facts in our life together, in the cultural character of this nation, we won't get where we need to go in order to provide the actual operational implementation of the stuff we know that if we do it, will, in fact, work.

So let me move to the second part of what I want to say. If any school district in America does the following things, within one student generation, kids will, in fact, achieve at a level that I, at least, would be satisfied for my granddaughter Holly, against which I measure so much of what I think these days. First of all, you have to make a commitment to the proposition that Roy laid out about all children, but not in a rhetorical, pabulum sense that's part of superintendent speeches and introductory resolutions to board resolutions, but as an operational standard.

If you think about the standards driven movement in America, use the standard of the policy I'm recommending to the board, the budget I'm adopting as a board, the lesson plan that I'm going to use in my class today; the professional development program that I, as a principal, am about to implement in my school; the amount of time that I'm going to give to literacy training in contrast to math, or to social studies, or science, or one of the other programs, does this decision, does this act that I'm about to engage in contribute to or detract from the proposition that all kids are going to achieve at those high levels?

HORNBECK: There are 20,000 kids in Philadelphia who are eligible for Head Start, by virtue of income standards, who do not have any access to pre-K, because there is no pre-K for them. And then, we wonder, when they get to be five-years-old and go into kindergarten, why is it that they're two years behind their peers across the five county, southeastern Pennsylvania area when, in fact, every kid that has the means, by the time he's two or three years old, is in some kind of organized, educational, socialization experience?

If we make our decisions based on that standard, we will make, in the Congress, in the United States Department of Education, in the Departments of Education in the 50 states, in the superintendents offices of all of the school districts that are members of the council of great city schools, we will make very different decisions, then characterize the decisions that are reflected in our practice across the United States, over the last decade.

Second proposition: establish high standards, high expectations; couple those with good tests, get rid of the norm tests, use criteria tests, abandon the use of multiple choice tests, embrace performance based tests, tests that are, in fact, worth teaching to, if you will. And then, couple that with an accountability system in which you hold educators, from the superintendent to the principal, to the teacher, accountable for the achievement results of children in teams of educators, attach rewards and penalties to those, based at least in part on the performance of children.

Third, organize schools into smaller units, and push power down the bureaucratic pipeline, out of the offices of the superintendent, into schools, where, in fact, an important measure of the accountability is going to take place. Fourth -- and these aren't in order, you'll find out when I get to the tenth one -- improve the quality of teaching, use coaches, use instructional strategies for which there is research evidence that, if implemented faithfully, children's achievement does, in fact, go up.

And place the most experienced, talented, and quality teachers in the schools, in the classrooms where the children are who need them the most, in contrast to the practice all across America, in which opportunity is too often given for the most experienced, the highest quality teachers, to move to what is perceived to be the easiest schools.

HORNBECK: The power that's required to change these massive institutions grows out of the synergy of the parts working together, moving whole systems, turning that proverbial Queen Mary around.

Fifth, guarantee quality, early childhood programs for all three and four-year-olds, and full day kindergarten for all five-year-olds. We will not achieve in this nation for all kids, especially those with whom we've historically failed, a high degree of achievement unless or until at least every poor child in this country is afforded the opportunity of a quality, developmentally appropriate, pre-kindergarten program.

There are 20,000 kids in Philadelphia who are eligible for Head Start, by virtue of income standards, who do not have any access to pre-K, because there is no pre-K for them. And then, we wonder, when they get to be five-years-old and go into kindergarten, why is it that they're two years behind their peers across the five county, southeastern Pennsylvania area when, in fact, every kid that has the means, by the time he's two or three years old, is in some kind of organized, educational, socialization experience?

My granddaughter went to school when she was two. She will enter kindergarten at age five in September with three years under her belt. You ought not to have to be the granddaughter of a former superintendent of schools to have that kind of an opportunity. It ought to be, as day follows night, a right that is guaranteed to every child in America, that they will get the kind of chance that is reflected in that opportunity.

Sixth, we must ensure non-academic services and supports that meet the safety, health, nurturing needs of every child. Seventy-five percent of New York's kids are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Eighty percent of my kids were eligible for free and reduced price lunch. There has to be support for those. We need state of the art facilities, technology and instructional materials. We need to create a climate that results in parent, corporate, and other community engagement of schools. We need adequate funds equitably distributed. And perhaps most importantly of all, and most left behind in most places, the tenth thing -- you need the simultaneous implementation of the first nine.

Systems change involves changing systems, not pieces of systems. The power that's required to change these massive institutions grows out of the synergy of the parts working together, moving whole systems, turning that proverbial Queen Mary around; in my case, in the middle of the Schuylkill River or the Hudson River, or whatever. Any school district that does that set of things, within one student generation, will achieve a level of success with students, of which one would be proud for one's own children and grandchildren.

HORNBECK: I think we're right on the edge of a pat on the back that's not deserved until we get to the appropriation piece of this. And we're right on the edge of sticking it to a lot of kids and a lot of school districts, without having stepped up to the plate and provided the resources.

That fairly simple template of components can then be used to look at things like federal legislation. I'm encouraged by the accountability provisions, in fact, of the federal legislative package. It reflects, in many ways, the accountability provisions in the State of Texas, which I happen to think are among the best in the United States, for one particular reason, and that is the disaggregation of data into race and language, and so on. We've got to quit masking the disaggregated failure of American public education, and the people who support it, by looking at averages.

Thus, we ought to be looking much more to the House version than the Senate version of the accountability provisions. But there are some real difficulties in it also, some of the things that Roy and Harold mentioned about the technical aspects of a single standard. I think Roy's view of bringing states together is an important one. But the big problem, in my judgment, is I think we're on the edge of doing another one of these raise the bar and don't provide kids, and principals, and others the kind of support that they need.

We even look at the Senate version, where it's an increase of some $16 billion. But I remind you, that's in the authorized level, not the appropriations. And now, we read in the newspaper how even the president is looking around and saying, where did all my money go? Did I really give it all away in that tax give back? I can't even do some of these other things I want, never mind add to the appropriation for public education. So I think we're right on the edge of a pat on the back that's not deserved until we get to the appropriation piece of this. And we're right on the edge of sticking it to a lot of kids and a lot of school districts, without having stepped up to the plate and provided the resources.

HORNBECK: The fact is that there's very little in this bill, in terms of new money or the way it's organized, that will contribute significantly to this issue, which my colleagues have characterized as the most important issue in America, that is, quality teaching. And that has to receive an important piece.

So the issue is not authorization; it's not the extra billion or whatever it was that the president proposed, or the extra six that the House has proposed, or the extra 16 that the Senate has proposed. It is, instead, what the intent is about appropriations, and the kind of support that comes along with it.

There's a lot of other things in the bill that require attention. I want to just make two other quick comments, and then I'll reserve others for the question and answer. One is, I was terribly disappointed to see professional development and reduced class size collapsed in the same thing. That's no way to pay attention to the quality of teaching -- and the total dismissal of the 100,000 teachers. The fact is that there's very little in this bill, in terms of new money or the way it's organized, that will contribute significantly to this issue, which my colleagues have characterized as the most important issue in America, that is, quality teaching. And that has to receive an important piece.

Head Start is not technically a piece of this, but it goes to pre-K, and at least some characterizations of the recommendations on that count see a reduction of 2,500 slots in Head Start, not a continuing commitment to full funding. And finally, just to comment on something that hasn't been mentioned, it's the block grant, the flexibility. I would argue that ed-flex has plenty of flexibility in it when it is attached to the secretary of education's ability, on a case by case basis, to give waivers.

HORNBECK: If you look at the fundamental relationship between the state and the big cities of this country, you will see a pattern, a history of decades of what I characterize as mistreatment of the big cities. The principle way that any big city in America has reached the conscience of its state officials, over the course of the last 35 years, is through a lawsuit. And to give the power to decide what to do with block grant money to people who are only moved by lawsuits in that process is, I would argue, a misguided way of organizing one's life.

What worries me about the block grant are two things. One is, the history of block grants in this country is a history, not of flexibility, but of reduced appropriations. It's an opportunity to, in fact, collapse and then take. So that's problem number one. Problem number two is that the states, in my judgment, as I read history, and as I've participated in history, have a pretty lousy record of paying attention to big cities in the country. And I say that as one who spent 12 years as a chief state school officer of the State of Maryland, spending four additional years as the executive deputy secretary of education in Pennsylvania.

So I come not as a whining, urban superintendent castigating chief state school officers, because I was one for 16 years. But if you look at the fundamental relationship between the state and the big cities of this country, you will see a pattern, a history of decades of what I characterize as mistreatment of the big cities. The principle way that any big city in America has reached the conscience of its state officials, over the course of the last 35 years, is through a lawsuit. And to give the power to decide what to do with block grant money to people who are only moved by lawsuits in that process is, I would argue, a misguided way of organizing one's life.

I go back to the point I began with. We can do this job; this is not a big mystery. The fact is that we have to create in this country the will, and the resolve, and the politics to make it happen, not just for our own kids, but for the kids who are, in fact, an increasing proportion of this nation. Thank you all very much.

MATT MILLER: Thanks, David. We'll hear now from Undersecretary Gene Hickok.

GENE HICKOK: Thank you. First of all, good morning. Thank you for being here. Most importantly, let me say, one of the reasons I'm glad I'm here is to get a chance to listen. I'm brand new at this job, although, as was mentioned, I was secretary of education in Pennsylvania for six years -- one of those lawsuits that we had to contend with, obviously.

And I have to say at the outset that I'm a bit humbled to be here, because, obviously, I have not had a record as a superintendent of a major school district. Running a state system is different from running a school district. And I think if anything, what you're just heard are three outstanding presentations by three outstanding leaders. And that's not meant to be empty rhetoric: it's true -- if you listen to the enthusiasm, the dynamism, the commitment.

HICKOK: Change and improvement in education takes time. One of the great challenges I think this administration has, as we begin this national conversation about improving education is, we raise everyone's expectations of what can be accomplished, but then, how do we convince people that that accomplishment will not happen overnight?

I'll go back to what I think David Hornbeck said. This is a people business. This is about will, this is about guts, and you have to have a combination of both to begin to tackle a major city school district, let alone to be successful. It's also a matter of time. I think each one of our previous speakers talked about the iceberg, or turning around the Queen Mary, or whatever the fact is. Change and improvement in education takes time. One of the great challenges I think this administration has, as we begin this national conversation about improving education is, we raise everyone's expectations of what can be accomplished, but then, how do we convince people that that accomplishment will not happen overnight?

That's part of the political problem any administration faces, whether it's a superintendent in New York, who has an expectancy of two and a half years, or a president who's got four years to get something done. The fact is, these things will take time. I wanted to address a few things that the three superintendents brought out, and as they relate to the legislation.

The first thing I would point out is that we do have the great good fortune of having, as a secretary of education, someone who was a major city superintendent -- a major city superintendent who also was able to accomplish quite a bit. And if you look at the legislation as originally introduced by the president, it reflects not just the Texas experience, it also reflects the Houston experience. We're not going to go over the record in Houston unless you want me to, but the fact is, by using standards and assessments, and a systemic kind of approach to all of that, as you pointed out, David, not just pieces, but the entire thing, plus a sense of will, major things happened.

So if anything, those of you who are involved in urban education change and improvement have someone in charge at the Department of Education who at least has the experience that you have and can relate to. I think the most important thing about the legislation, and much of what I heard from the superintendents is exactly what we want to hear, and that is the importance of accountability, and performance, and data. One of our concerns is micromanagement.

If you look at the two pieces of legislation that are in the House and the Senate, as we prepare to go to conference, the fact is, we've got a lot of work to do to make sure we don't micromanage. We are painfully aware; certainly, I am painfully aware, having sat in a state for so long, of the limited role, both in terms of policy and in terms of funding of the federal government in education. We can debate it in depth, the future funding, but the fact is, what we're trying to accomplish with this legislation is a culture shift in the national understanding of what education needs to be.

That's what Washington can do, working with superintendents, working with governors -- a national conversation on what education needs to look like. And a lot of it needs to focus around standards, and assessments, and accountability. High standards developed by the states, tests at the state level that are based on those standards -- I agree completely -- not norm referenced; criterion referenced tests. That's what the legislation calls for. And then, ways to report performance so you cannot hide behind the averages. That's why the disaggregated data is so very important.

And the real reason all of this is important, not just to have tests, to have tests and accountability systems, because we now say we have accountability systems, but what can you do with the information? One of our big concerns is, unlike the three superintendents who just spoke, most of America, most of American education doesn't do this the way the president proposes. And once it's in place -- and we think we will get legislation passed -- once it's in place, within a couple of years, the amount of information that's available will be tremendous. The challenge is, how do we make sure it's used to improve instruction; that it's used to improve performance?

I can take you to states that have lots of information on testing and do nothing with it. It's stunning. They keep it in files. Parents get test scores, but the state, the superintendent, they do nothing, in an attempt to use the test scores to drive change. That's what this is all about. Secretary -- says all the time, testing is to drive instruction; testing is to drive curriculum; testing is not about merely testing students. There's a purpose behind it. That's what this debate, this discussion is all about.

Disaggregated data -- critical. Making sure the information's accessible to everybody. More than once, I've heard people say -- I know Governor Romer just said it -- I am not an educator. Well, frankly, education is everybody's business. Not all of us are educators, but all of us have something at stake in the quality of the education system. And I argue, the president argues, the secretary argues that information must be made available to everyone, not just educators, in a way that is understandable to everyone. Again, to get back to a point made by all three of our speakers.

That's what this is all about: information available so that we can find out what works and build on it, find out what doesn't work and finally do something about it. And that's why the president proposes rewards and sanctions. There was talk about a national standard, NAEP. That's a debatable issue within the House and the Senate right now, two very different versions of the legislation. As proposed by the president, we think it's very important that there be some kind of a national benchmark so states can look at their standards and their performance based upon some national indicator, so it's less likely to game the system; so it's less likely that a state will under-perform based upon lower standards, and then say they're doing so well. That will be a focal point of some contention in the conference, we're pretty sure.

The importance of good research. The fact is, we do know what works in a lot of areas. But I'll be the first to say -- and we've said this publicly many times -- the quality of research coming from the federal Department of Education has not been what it needs to be. I've found it from my seat in Pennsylvania, to be very undependable, somewhat slipshod and very anecdotal. So, one thing we are going to do is reorganize to make sure, as the president pointed out in No Child Left Behind, that educational research is of the best quality, as it should be, so that it can be used to improve education.

But having said that, we do know that certain things work. And so, what we need to do is make sure that that information is made available and that it is used in the school districts, and again, as a matter of the legislation.

A couple of other things. It does seem to me that flexibility is very important. The President proposed four pillars: accountability, flexibility, greater options, and better research. It does seem to us that it is important that we provide ways to give states more room to maneuver with regard to federal authority and federal funds. And getting to David's comment about the states versus the cities, if you look at the proposal from the Senate, there's talk about seven states and 25 school districts. Those 25 school districts, I would assume, could very easily be those cities. And I would argue, that's one reason we're in favor of it.

Trying to find ways to recognize, for example, in Pennsylvania, that Philadelphia is a very different place from the rest of Pennsylvania. We would like to expand the number of states; we would like to expand the flexibility; we would like to have greater options and greater choice. If you could join us in that conversation with the House and the Senate, maybe we could accomplish that and get back to the original ideas behind the legislation.

HICKOK: As you listened to David Hornbeck, who I've watched for more than six years, talk about these ten components that he would put in place, he could not put those in place in Philadelphia. He could talk about them, but he couldn't put them in place …

the fact is that the relationship between the superintendent, and the building principals, and the teachers, is all governed by a series of contracts and negotiations that sometimes make it very difficult to accomplish the very things that we're talking about here today. And this legislation can't address that…

It is just wrong that seniority is the single most important factor in so many contracts. As David pointed out, in so many contracts, the teachers with the most seniority, the most experienced and, in many cases, the most successful, get a chance to decide where they want to teach. And the newer teachers, the less experienced teachers, the ones who need the time to develop and have mentors, often end up in the schools that are the lowest performing. You need your best instructors where the best instruction is needed.

I do have a comment about teacher quality. There is, in the legislation, funding and changed programs for professional development. But teacher quality is more than just professional development. One of our big concerns is how we prepare teachers in this country. It's both teacher supply and demand and teacher preparation. There should be greater opportunities for different ways to enter this most important profession. There needs to be a greater emphasis in teacher preparation on content and discipline.

That's not to say pedagogy doesn't matter; of course, it matters. But in a standards driven environment, you need to have teachers who know content. That's critical, and that varies all across the states. In some states, you major in a discipline and then get a teaching credential. In others states, the only way you can become a teacher is to go through a teacher education program and, in some cases, you may not even step foot in a math department to become a teacher of high school math. You do it all at the education school.

There is no single formula, but there is a real problem with teacher quality. And we talk about certified teachers, and the fact is, if certification isn't more than just a minimal threshold to enter the profession, then certification isn't good enough. When we make the distinction between certification and qualification, we need qualified instructors if instruction's going to matter. And that is an argument that we will continue to put forth both in this legislation and also to higher education, as we continue this national conversation about the future of teaching and learning.

Class size. I can tell you that our argument on class size is that that should be decided at the state level; that it is not the silver bullet that people think it is; and that our legislation, as originally perceived, gave the flexibility at the state level to make those kinds of decisions. In Pennsylvania, where I was for six years, when we asked superintendents from 501 school districts, during the class size debate, the 100,000 new teachers, whether they would take the money for the new teachers or use the money for other things that they could, more than 50 percent of the superintendents said they'd rather use it for other things.

Because, while it might get them a year of a part time new instructor, because the money wasn't that much, the fact is, they had other, more urgent needs. I think we have a hard time sitting up here, best deciding how to govern at the state and local level. And that gets back to the concern all of our superintendents have and we have about unintended consequences. That's a very big concern for us. That's one reason this conference committee's going to be so important.

Our focus has been on accountability standards and assessments. And I think everyone here agrees on the importance of that. And then, what happens after you have that in place? But the more you look at the legislation, and it's pretty scary stuff, the way it gets into the details and unintended consequences, we have to be very wary of that, and do something about it.
There was something that was just touched upon, I think, by David Hornbeck, that this legislation doesn't address -- I don't think it can. But I think it's an issue that really lies at the heart of a lot of our problems in education, and that is governance and leadership. As you listened to David Hornbeck, who I've watched for more than six years, talk about these ten components that he would put in place, he could not put those in place in Philadelphia. He could talk about them, but he couldn't put them in place.

And that's because, in Philadelphia, and I assume in New York, and in Los Angeles, and in Houston, Texas, and all over this great nation, the fact is that the relationship between the superintendent, and the building principals, and the teachers, is all governed by a series of contracts and negotiations that sometimes make it very difficult to accomplish the very things that we're talking about here today. And this legislation can't address that.

But if we're going to experience the kind of change we need to experience, we need to be honest enough to recognize we need to think differently about that as well. It is just wrong that seniority is the single most important factor in so many contracts. As David pointed out, in so many contracts, the teachers with the most seniority, the most experienced and, in many cases, the most successful, get a chance to decide where they want to teach. And the newer teachers, the less experienced teachers, the ones who need the time to develop and have mentors, often end up in the schools that are the lowest performing.

You need your best instructors where the best instruction is needed. Now, that is a method that satisfies teachers-- and certainly, that's important -- but the purpose of teaching is for students to learn. The purpose of all of this is student achievement. And until we're willing to grapple with that fundamental fact, I think all of our intentions will be undermined. And that's not anti-union, it's pro-student. I read in yesterday's Education Week about a teacher, a teacher of the year from Pennsylvania, an award winning teacher who tried very hard to be assigned to one of the lowest performing schools in the district. That was her desire.

There was an opening, the principal wanted to hire her, she wanted to go where she felt she was needed. She was not allowed to do it. Now, we're hearing mixed stories -- if you read the stories, it's pretty compelling. Some say it's the contract, some say she made a mistake on the application, but the fact is, that shouldn't be allowed to happen if at all possible. And there's not much that Washington can do about that, except talk about it. And we plan to talk about it.

My last point, and then I would rather engage in the conversation as well. I think the most important thing we can do after this legislation becomes public policy, after we work with the states and the superintendents to implement it, and take our lead from them on that implementation, is to make sure that the only way we're going to improve education is to continue to talk about it in straightforward, direct ways. Washington can help lead that conversation. When Washington talks about standards and assessments, it makes it easier for a superintendent anywhere to make that argument.

It makes it easier for a governor or a state secretary to make that argument, because now it is becoming, well, that's the way we're going to do business. But the implications are that within a few years, some very tough news will be in a lot of places. We'll find out where the achievement gaps are. We will be staring at data and numbers that will be so compelling, something will have to be done. And that's what this is really all about, is setting up a system so that, in the end, it is impossible to ignore a problem. And then, we have to do something about it.

Thank you.

MATT MILLER: Thanks very much, Eugene. Obviously, there's tons of issues we can discuss out of all this. Let me start with the question of teacher quality. Because if I'm hearing our superintendents right, teacher quality is maybe the biggest issue on which everything else hinges. And I guess my question is -- and people can jump into this -- in places like New York, if you've got suburbs like Scarsdale that will pay somebody with a master's degree, in five years, $60,000, they can make a lot more there than they can in New York City.

And we've got similar problems in all the big urban districts. Two million teachers is the big number that's being talked about that we need to recruit in the next decade, many of them who are going to be needed in the toughest urban areas. What would we do if we were really serious about trying to address the teacher quality issue, and how does that compare to what we're talking about today?

HAROLD LEVY: Why don't I try a shot at it since you mentioned New York. What would we do? Let me first tell you what we are doing, and then tell where we don't measure up. One, we've engaged in an ad campaign across the country, and indeed, importing teachers from other countries. And we have used the various visa provisions ruthlessly to bring people in. We used to get 150 Austrian math teachers coming in; this year, we're going to have 800 foreign teachers coming in for the purpose of filling our hard to staff needs.

LEVY: We all talk a good game about the need to give teachers the respect that they deserve. Let me suggest that we're not paying them close to what they need, and we're not attracting people into teaching who ought to be there… In 1970, in New York City, a starting teacher and a starting lawyer in one of the white shoe firms, the big firms, had a difference in salary of about $1,000 or $2,000. Today, it's in excess of a $120,000 difference… A starting lawyer and a starting teacher, both of whom got roughly the same grades, both of whom could have done one another's jobs … what are we saying as a society?

We are not producing enough math and science teachers; certainly not enough math/science bilingual teachers. And the category of special ed bilingual in New York is -- New York State is producing almost none, and nationally, we are producing very few. So if we were serious, we would direct our resources much more domestically toward shifting that flow. Vartan Gregorian had a wonderful piece in the op ed page of the New York Times last Friday or Saturday, which I thought set it out quite neatly. We all talk a good game about the need to give teachers the respect that they deserve. Let me suggest that we're not paying them close to what they need, and we're not attracting people into teaching who ought to be there.

LEVY: Now, these emergency certifications, temporary certifications, waivers, are so clearly a stopgap. We have made a judgment in urban centers not to build enough schools and not to pay enough for the teachers, and ultimately, not to train enough people to be teachers.

So one is, attract the right people in and get them trained up. Another piece of that is the kind of things that Roy and I were talking about in professional development. We need to make professional development uniformly available, and particularly in the first year or two of teaching, because that's when mentoring really makes a difference. Our problem is as much getting in the right people as retaining them. Because the issue is, after four or five years, they burnout. And that's because we put them in lousy conditions, don't support them, and say have a nice time.

I guess the third thing I would say on that is, even if all the teacher colleges were performing at the highest level, and all the right people were going in -- because the right people are not going into teaching -- and even if we were paying them enough, we still have the problem that we need to attract people from other walks of life. Now, these emergency certifications, temporary certifications, waivers, are so clearly a stopgap. We have made a judgment in urban centers not to build enough schools and not to pay enough for the teachers, and ultimately, not to train enough people to be teachers.

So if we were serious, we would attract people from other walks, we would pay them up, we would train them in a different way. In 1970, in New York City, a starting teacher and a starting lawyer in one of the white shoe firms, the big firms, had a difference in salary of about $1,000 or $2,000. Today, it's in excess of a $120,000 difference. Now, what surprise is a starting lawyer and a starting teacher, both of whom got roughly the same grades, both of whom could have done one another's jobs, what are we saying as a society? The laws of supply and demand, Adam Smith's rules were not repealed when it came to public education. Not tough for me to see what we need to do.

ROY ROMER: This is where I'd rather spend all of our time, and that is, what is the quality of instruction that occurs? And teacher quality is a word that doesn't quite get there for me. It's kind of like you innately have a quality. No, it's whether or not you have the skill to do it. Now, I just want to take this business -- standards is the right approach, assessment's the right approach, but it doesn't mean diddley until you walk into a fourth grade classroom on reading and writing.

When you walk in there, you need to have standards identifiable to that student. That student, if he's going to organize his own educational pattern, has got to understand three questions. One, what is the purpose of the task that I'm on? Why am I doing this? What skill am I acquiring? Let's say the assignment is to write a letter to make an argument for something. The student needs to know, what is the purpose of it? Secondly, the student needs to know how good is good enough? What is the standard that I am expected to reach?

ROMER: We have a whole lot of credentialed teachers that I don't believe are yet focused upon what good instruction is.

The third question is, what do I have to do to my own work to move from where I am to where I need to be? Now, if a student can answer those three questions concretely, then you begin to have the atmosphere in the class where a teacher then begins to add quality to instruction. Now, let me illustrate this. It doesn't really get us there just to talk abstractly about standards. You have to show it in student work; it's got to be on the blackboard, on the walls, in the halls of the school.

And a student, when you walk in and sit down to him, needs to be able to go to the board and say, you know, look, this is the rubric; there's a four, a three, a two, and a one. And I know what it is to mean a four. It means I've got to indent properly, I need to capitalize, I need to punctuate, I need to have my lead sentence begin this way. You know, a student can say that's a four. Now, here's a three, here's a two. Now, my work is a two. I know what I've got to do to move from a two to a four.

Why do I get that concrete? Look, we have a whole lot of credentialed teachers that I don't believe are yet focused upon what good instruction is. And if we're really going to get at it, we need to bring teachers together collectively, and to reflect upon their work. Jim Stigler did some really good work in the learning gap and the teaching about how teachers in the Japanese culture collectively really prepare for good instruction. They spend a lot of time preparing one lesson plan.

ROMER: And I've got to tell you, there's a world of difference between this abstraction and what happens in the classroom, and we've got to close that gap.

We're not there in a our culture. We don't yet believe that it makes a difference. And the reason I push this so hard, this bill has provisions that if you fail, what we're going to do is we're going to have an outside provider come in, and we're going to give you 50,000 to plan, and we're going to hire some professional development. We've been doing this time after time, and it doesn't do diddley -- it doesn't, because we're really not getting at the core. A lot of this professional development is packaged in a way in which you pull them out of the classroom, and it doesn't open the door, which Harold Levy said that we need to open.

So in summary, what I want to say to you is, I was a governor, I used to sit and make all these policy decisions. I chaired the National Goals Council. I was on the board of NAEP. And I've got to tell you, there's a world of difference between this abstraction and what happens in the classroom, and we've got to close that gap. And it takes extreme focus and intelligence to walk into a classroom and say, learning is occurring here because I can identify it.

Now, if you get a teacher that knows that and a principal that knows that, and a school system that is managing toward that end, then you're going to improve instruction. But do you understand? There's a real difference between that world and the language in this bill, and we've got to try to close that gap.

DAVID HORNBECK: There are two alterations in the system that I think are necessary to accomplish the objectives that both Harold and Roy addressed. One is in the certification system and one is in the compensation system. The state departments of education govern certification in the 50 states. Nearly all of them continue to use the accumulation of courses and credits, together with taking the national test that ETS puts out in certain ways, as the basis for that.

That's in stark contrast to the way in which we envision using standards for students. In the student world, we talk about what kids need to know and be able to do, as measured by performance assessments, in order to be promoted or to be graduated, or whatever. We don't talk about that as it relates to teachers very often, or superintendents or principals, for that matter. And I would argue that one of the changes that needs to happen in state departments of education is a radical shift away from courses and credits, and to an establishment of standards reflecting what teachers need to know and be able to do in order to result in higher achievement by kids.

The second thing is related. Compensation systems for educators across America are based on basically how long you live and how many degrees you have. And neither, in my experience anyhow, is correlated to whether or not you can teach, or whether or not, in fact, having taught, your kids know anything. So I would argue that we need to radically alter the nature of the compensation systems that we use in school districts to begin to move toward the kinds of things that Cincinnati has struggled with. And as I understand it, their teachers' union has now rejected it, but they negotiated it at one point. And a piece of the contract was negotiated in Philadelphia last October, where you begin to move to a system in which what you know and are able to do after two years, after five years, after ten years, results in big changes in your compensation. And secondly, your compensation is affected by whether or not, as a team of teachers, you have succeeded in your children knowing how to read better or know more math, or know more science.

HORNBECK: Compensation systems for educators across America are based on basically how long you live and how many degrees you have. And neither, in my experience anyhow, is correlated to whether or not you can teach, or whether or not, in fact, having taught, your kids know anything.

Those two changes in the system, certification and in compensation, I think are necessary undercurrents to operationally make some of these other things in professional development and college of education preparation actually work.

MATT MILLER: Let me pick up on that for one second -- if Harold Levy's right, and I assume that you other folks agree, that changing the career choices and inclinations of the brightest young people is essential to addressing the teacher quality issue in the next decade let's say, and beyond, then the compensation issue, which is a union issue, is central. I asked Sandy Feldman about this one time, "you know, everyone will say, yes, let's pay teachers more. People who are watching the public purse will rightly say, well, across the board raises for everybody don't make sense, because then you're subsidizing a lot of current mediocrity that you wouldn't want to give the difference to. What would it take for you to be open to differentials that apply to every other facet in the private sector, and would make for sound financial management?"

And she says, "look, give us all a 30 percent increase, and then we'll talk about differentials." Now, at least that's a position. But how, institutionally, if this is the biggest issue, and there's this lock step pay tradition, how do we get out of that in time?

DAVID HORNBECK: I think that to make the kinds of radical changes that are required, quite frankly, it's going to take legislative action at a level of government above the level that you're trying to change. I think that it's going to take, for example, state legislative action of the kind that was taken in 1990 in Kentucky, where there was sweeping, comprehensive educational change and the first introduction of accountability, in which pay and rewards and penalties were based on student achievement.

The individual school districts of Kentucky would never have pulled that off in any major kind of way. It's the reason that I think it's used, if they get it right, from a technical point of view, that it's okay for the feds to get involved in the kind of accountability system that is being designed, particularly in the House, but only if it's coupled, again, with the opportunity feature to it. I will not open my mouth and say accountability without simultaneously pointing to a full-scale pre-K and the rest of these things.

So I think that it's going to take leadership at the state and or the national level to set the frame and, in effect, change, alter, radically alter the nature of the debate. It's not going to happen inside of the individual contract negotiations with individual school districts.

HAROLD LEVY: Well, I guess I want to raise a caution as we go down this road, and I speak as somebody who has, thank you very much, profited nicely by the idea of having differential pay. Two cautions, before we charge down this road. One, my read of the situation is that we currently have teaching as a relatively unattractive profession, given the professions -- and the hierarchy in public agenda did one of these polls -- it's reasonably clear that of the great professions, teaching today ranks toward the low end.

LEVY: There was a time, for instance, where teaching had a restricted labor pool, and most women had a choice of, do I want to be a teacher, or a nurse, or a secretary, and so, there was an artificial labor constraint which upped the quality.

There was a time, for instance, where teaching had a restricted labor pool, and most women had a choice of, do I want to be a teacher, or a nurse, or a secretary, and so, there was an artificial labor constraint which upped the quality. Today, we don't have that to the same degree, and so you have the awkward problem of having a broader opportunity base, resulting in arguably lower quality. So one issue I would put on the table is, you don't want to make the profession more unattractive, and you have to go very carefully, I think, into the issue of, how do you structure a compensation program. Which is not to say not to do it, but is rather to say there's a great danger here that you fall and lost more than you gain.

Two, I'd say you have to structure carefully because you don't -- and obviously, I've been giving this a fair amount of thought, because we're in the midst of this very issue in New York -- two, you don't want to deter the good teachers from taking on the hard kids, because you can easily structure the program so that you wind up pushing away the very teachers you want to induce. And third, the relative amount of money that you have to put into induce people to, as it were, do the right thing, may be quite a bit more than anyone suspects.

We have so-called ETS schools, extended time schools, where, for 15 percent more, you are induced to teach in some of the most difficult schools, the lowest performing schools. And the idea was, we'd get more teachers with experience and capacity. And we've had some success, but it's quite clear to me that to move the ones you really want to move, you need to do even more than that. And that tells you the scope of the problem.

LEVY: The relative amount of money that you have to put into induce people to, as it were, do the right thing, may be quite a bit more than anyone suspects.

Sandy Feldman's, you know, more than half right. You begin to hit that slope of marginal utility, where you make the choice pretty high up the chain. We're not paying the teachers enough yet to move them on this, so it's a real conundrum. How do you get the right people in the right place? How do you make sure that you're rewarding the good ones, and how do you not injure the system in the process? Roy.

GENE HICKOK: Just a couple of observations. One is, if you're going to treat the profession as a profession, in terms of compensation and the other accoutrements of a true profession, then it has to be a profession that doesn't ignore the laws of supply and demand. I mean, that's one of the problems. It is all based, as others have said, it's all based upon seniority and tenure; there's no match between compensation and performance. And they are all very tough issues, for the reasons you just mentioned, Chancellor Levy.

HICKOK: Most parents have no idea that many, if not most, of the high school math teachers in this country didn't major in mathematics.

But the fact is that at least now, for the first time in a lot of places, this conversation is taking place. Secondly, you need to make sure that the people who pay the bills, the parents and the taxpayers, understand the dynamics of the system. Most parents have no idea that many, if not most, of the high school math teachers in this country didn't major in mathematics. They don't know that; they're learning that. Most of them have no idea of how compensation is determined. Most of them have confidence that somehow, when my child goes to school, the teacher teaches and the child learns.

So we need to really reacquaint people with public education. We have to educate them about the dynamics of the process. In addition, I think we need to find ways to draw a connection between performance in all the indicators -- student performance, teacher performance, school performance, and resource allocation. Pennsylvania and Michigan are two states that right now -- I think Pennsylvania in the next couple of weeks -- will have online a performance evaluation system in every school district as a function of spending. It's being done by Standard and Poor's.

Now, people are nervous about that because Standard and Poor's isn't in the education business. It's not; it's in the business business. But the fact is, they've got all this data from all these different resources, all these different indicators, and what they're going to do is not rate schools or rank schools, but just simply put on the web how well the school's performing on all these indicators and how much money it spends.

I will submit, without drawing any judgment, I will submit that that kind of conversation, that kind of data availability will really lead to the kind of changes we're hoping for, because then again, we begin to ask questions about, well, why, if, in this school district, where the average per pupil spending is this, and the performance and all these different indicators are here, when over here we're spending twice as much or half as much, and we have this whole different picture?

Then we start asking the right questions. And part of the question is, what's the quality of the profession of teaching, and what can we do about it?

ROY ROMER: The reason I am so attracted to this conversation this morning is, it's a kind of a vocational journey that I made. I was in public policy, and politics, and legislation, and I decided I ought to go back and walk my talk, and see whether the world is as I thought it was. Let me tell you, there's a real world out there that many in policymaking don't yet understand. Let me identify a part of that.

I understand every politician on the Hill is not about to write a bill that says, we're not going to get all children to proficiency level. Begin with that in this bill. This bill says, in 10 years or 12 years, the two bills, we're going to get everybody to proficient. That's not the real world; that's just not the real world. Can we absorb that? No matter how much I believe all children can learn, if you set a standard that you -- I chaired the National Goals Panel that had a goal that we're going to become first in the world, you know, in math and science. Guys, let's get down to reality.

The first wrong we've got here is it is a delusion to feel that you're going to get every child to proficient. Now, can we admit that? We ought to try; we ought not give up on anybody; we ought to disaggregate all the data. But when you put on a system something, the people who want it know they're not going to get all children to that, so what are they going to do with that law? They're simply going to define proficient at a lower level.

Why don't we be more realistic with them and say, in terms of NAEP, this is what proficient really ought to be. It ought to be a tough standard; let's keep it tough. But I've got to tell you, with the kids I've got in LA, I am breaking my back to try to get everybody to believe that they all can learn. But I would be a fool to represent that all are going to be proficient at a certain date. You always are going to have a margin that is not. Now, therefore, think about what you do to the system when you bring that down on their heads.

ROMER: I was in public policy, and politics, and legislation, and I decided I ought to go back and walk my talk, and see whether the world is as I thought it was. Let me tell you, there's a real world out there that many in policymaking don't yet understand … I understand every politician on the Hill is not about to write a bill that says, we're not going to get all children to proficiency level. This bill says, in 10 years or 12 years, the two bills, we're going to get everybody to proficient. That's just not the real world. Can we absorb that?

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Second, tests. If I understand the tests here, it is reading and math, but it is not writing. Now, folks, if you get so high standards on reading tests, I'm going back into this fourth grade class, and look at the pressure on this administration on this teacher, hey, do you understand we're going to be reorganized next year if you don't get your reading? Knock off all that stuff. You've got this time, then, on writing essays. You don't have time to grade them, just work on the kind of questions that they're going to put in the Stanford Nine, the API, which we use in California, on reading. Do you want that to happen? No.

So can we all take a deep breath and think seriously about what we're doing in a micromanaged federal law, with great intentions. We do need to be accountable, but when you get it proscribed to where you're going to require not only everybody to be proficient, but you're going to categorize it by de-aggregating the Asian population in California. Now, some of our highest performers are Asian. And so, you're going to take those kids and divide them into ten years, and say, okay, what's the word, AYP? You've got to do this AYP for every disaggregated Asian in every school in California?

Folks, you've got me spending time keeping statistics in such a micromanaged way that my principal is not going to be an instructional leader. My point is, can't we get at this business of being accountable without getting so wrapped up in the political ethics that, man, I am the most accountable politician in the world, and you can tell by how much micromanagement I've got in a bill, and there's my name.

ROMER: Folks, you've got me spending time keeping statistics in such a micromanaged way that my principal is not going to be an instructional leader. My point is, can't we get at this business of being accountable without getting so wrapped up in the political ethics that, man, I am the most accountable politician in the world, and you can tell by how much micromanagement I've got in a bill.

I'm for disaggregation, but mark my point; it's how far you carry it. This bill, as I read it in the House, says you disaggregate it, you're guaranteed that everybody's going to be proficient in ten years, and you arrive at a formula that, hey, you make certain progress toward it each of the ten years, category by category, and if you fail in any one category, boom, you reorganize the school. Excuse me, that's going too far.

HAROLD LEVY: I would only make the observation that information does not necessarily set you free. In New York, data availability was one of the things I came in for, I came in with, and I was absolutely determined to do, because the board had a bad reputation of its data because it was inaccurate, it was late, and it often didn't fit together; one side didn't match the other. It is now abundantly clear -- and we've got it all up on our website -- what the dollars per student are, what the grades school by school are, what the grades district by grade are, district by school -- every way, shape and form.

And everybody knows, in New York State, that New York City gets less money per student than the state average or, indeed, than many of the other urban centers. Ad everybody knows that our reading scores and our math scores are not as good. I haven't yet received the check that's going to cure that. I mean, the idea that simply putting it out there will inevitably lead to the result that I think we all agree is needed, isn't all that obvious. The system is not adequately efficient to do it. We need to do something more. And I agree with, Roy. You can easily get tied down in the process.

GENE HICKOK: Just real briefly on the test scene in the two bills. There are some concerns we have with the language of the House, because the way it is currently structured, it does get awfully difficult to figure out how in the world you're going to have success. And the point is, you're not really trying to create a system that is punitive; you're trying to create a system which, one, holds out the possibility of improving achievement, and then understanding whether or not it's taking place; and then, dealing with a failure to improve achievement.

And so, one of our concerns with the conference discussion is, how do we accomplish that? You don't want to define adequately yearly progress, the AYP issue, you don't want to define it in such a way that, one, it's too difficult to figure out what it means -- accountability can't work to understand -- and secondly, by definition, you doom everyone to failure, even successful kids. And so, that part of this conversation with the House and the Senate will be critical for the very reasons you just pointed out.

MATT MILLER: Let's go to your questions now.

MATTHEW CLAVELL: My name is Matthew Clavell; I'm an intern at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. I used to be a teacher in New York City in the Bronx, so this is more of a question, I guess, for Howard Levy than for anyone else. My question is, I guess there's a lot of talk about professional development. I think that in a lot of urban districts, what really needs to be done is to train teachers in issues of classroom management. And by that I mean getting teachers to learn how to control the classroom, where you might have fights, you might have kids with serious, behavioral-emotional problems. And really, I think that's not a very popular issue, but it really, really needs to be done, maybe even more than teaching teachers how to educate kids on reading and math. Because if they can't control the class, maybe they can't get to the part about reading adequately. And maybe that's a first step for, especially, beginning teachers.

HAROLD LEVY: I think that Dave Hornbeck answered that question inferentially before, and that is, you've got to do all things at the same time. You're right, classroom management skills are critical, maintaining a safe and orderly environment in our classrooms is a critical issue. And quid pro quo of any kind of learning is the child has to feel safe. And getting teachers to have the classroom management skills falls in a whole bunch of different buckets. One is in the teacher colleges, where we've got to have more practicum and more opportunity for them to see what urban classrooms are like.

It also falls in the bucket -- one thing we haven't really talked about is the principals. We're having a terrible aging out of principals, and they're the instructional leaders, and they're the ones who are going to have to ensure, among other things, a certain tone in the school. And classroom management skills are critical. I wouldn't say that it has to be done instead of or first, because there's such a thing as Roman peace, and that doesn't get us anywhere either. You know, have your army go in and make a desert. What you need is a teacher who has classroom skills, a teacher who's supported by the other teachers, and a teacher who has the tools in their backpack to pull out as the child demonstrates different kinds of problems.

CARLA REEVE: I'm Carla Reeve with Education Week. There was a lot of talk of resources here today. Do you see any way to get more resources for urban districts other than lawsuits, possibly, in the future?

DAVID HORNBECK I think that there will continue to be the need for lawsuits. But I confess, I've come to the conclusion, after watching this for 35 years now, of two things. One is that people in positions of power got there, at least in part, by learning to accommodate the status quo. And by definition, the radical change that is required in the way we practice education and the way we fund education is not going to happen purely at the initiative of people inside the system.

HORNBECK: I've come to the conclusion, after watching this for 35 years now, of two things. One is that people in positions of power got there, at least in part, by learning to accommodate the status quo. And by definition, the radical change that is required in the way we practice education and the way we fund education is not going to happen purely at the initiative of people inside the system. That leads me to the conclusion that one of the additional ingredients is the development of a very significant grass roots expression of this concern about public education that is afoot in the land.

That leads me to the conclusion that one of the additional ingredients is the development of a very significant grass roots expression of this concern about public education that is afoot in the land. And there is very little of that going on, in which the priority are kids with whom we've historically failed. There is some of that going on at the other extreme, but in terms of youngsters who are poor and populate our cities, and frankly, poor kids concentrated in rural and suburban areas also, I think it's going to take this broad grass roots movement.

Second point. Several months ago, there was a great documentary on PBS about six non-violent movements in the 20th century. Gandhi was quoted in one of those segments as observing that Great Britain dominated Indians not because of their greater armed might, but because Indians gave Great Britain permission to dominate them. I think, in many ways, sometimes affirmatively, sometimes through decision by indecision, we have given, those of us who have been in positions of power, permission to impose on our systems unequal educational systems, both in terms of money and other kinds of resources.

And the only people who can alter that permission are the people themselves. And as a consequence, I think that we will see emerge, over the course of the next two, three, four years, public education as the next great civil rights issue of this country. Because it lies right at the center of creating opportunity for kids who, day in and day out, month in and month out, get left out. And one of the things that's going to compel it is one little piece of what I said, and that is that those who are left out historically are a growing proportion of the population.

When my granddaughter is 34 years old, in that year, in 2030, if present trend lines continue, that will be the first year that minority children will be the majority of children in this country. And if we don't get our act together in a way that responds to that compelling set of facts, and have that come out of the citizens of the nation, then the country, I think, is in real trouble.

ROY ROMER: I know we're running out of time, but there's something gnawing on me here, and it is the falseness that we think we can pull this out by passing a bill with the kind of accountability and expectation in this bill, and be debating a movement of $18 billion to $22, or to $33 billion. Let me just tell you, the budget for LA School District is $9 billion. Now look, I'm in a district in which we are short, in a normal two-semester system, 180,000 seats. Just the overwhelming economics of bringing that district into the kind of performance that we all want to have.

Let me give you another one: school size. I mean, we all know it correlates in high school; the smaller the high school, the better the performance. In LA, it costs an average of one to three million an acre for a piece of ground, you know, just to start. We're building 85 new schools in the next five years, and yet, we're going to be further crowded at the end, because the population is going up. But the sizes of those schools are very much too large. So you see, this is one of the more interesting things about this job, is that it has got so many barriers that say, you can't make it. That's why you wrote the article, and said the union rules are part of it.

I believe you can make it. But let me say about this bill, this bill is toying with the problem, with the amount of money they're talking about. They're toying with the problem. And for us to toy with it and come down hard with all this, hey, we've finally got money on the table, we got the accountability; what are you complaining about Harold Levy, Roy Romer? You know, quit whining. I've just got to tell you that this is so far off the mark that I just do not want the politicians in this country -- and I say that with a good word, because I'm one of them -- to feel, man, we have solved the problem. Look at the accountability we've put in this bill, and look, we increased the budget maybe 2 million, 3 billion what it is. Folks, it isn't going to make it. And let's not kid ourselves, we need to do more.

ROMER: It is the falseness that we think we can pull this out by passing a bill with the kind of accountability and expectation in this bill, and be debating a movement of $18 billion to $22, or to $33 billion … the budget for LA School District is $9 billion and I'm in a district in which we are short, in a normal two-semester system, 180,000 seats … the overwhelming economics of bringing that district into the kind of performance that we all want to have … this bill is toying with the problem, with the amount of money they're talking about.

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MATT MILLER: I'm afraid we could talk about this much longer, but I'm afraid we're going to have to end it, because the room is being used for other purposes. Let me give our panelists a last, almost a McLaughlin Group style fashion. If you want to leave, as Roy just did, a couple of parting shots on what you think the most important things are that people need to be taking away about these issues. Why don't we start with Harold, then David, and then Eugene.

HAROLD LEVY: Let me say just a few quick things. One, we haven't talked about special ed. And I think it's important that IDEA become a mandatory program, not subject to annual appropriations, because I think that could free up a significant amount of money. Two, I agree with Roy, and one place where this bill is silent is facilities. We need to do a lot more to get money into the urban communities to build buildings. We are overcrowded; every urban school district is overcrowded, and there's just not either the political will or capital to put the buildings right.

Three, one comment that our new assistant secretary made on quality research, I want to just underscore. I think that is valuable, and I think the quality of the research needs to be improved. It is an indirect criticism, perhaps, of the institutions of higher education. My experience has been that the business schools have taken a walk on urban education and education institutions generally, and deferred to the ed administration schools, which, on the whole, are a bit of backwater, and don't have the same kind of subtly of understanding. And I think that's an error.

And to the extent that this bill does move in the direction, and that there has been indication from the administration that they're going to push in that direction, I think that's very valuable. I want to make my final point to underscore something Roy said. This bill does not solve the problem. It is a small contribution. And I don't know who said it first, the federal government is six or seven percent of our budget. You know, if we're in a good year and we're lucky, we get Title One money, maybe it's a little more.

It's important money; it's money that allows us to do what creative things we can do. But we've just voted a $1.6 trillion tax cut, and we're talking about, at best, a $30 billion contribution to public education. I put it to you that the importance that we, as a society, attribute to public education is a function of the resources of the social capital we're prepared to invest in it. And the numbers I've just suggested to you are not heartening. People have to, as Roy says, face the barriers.

DAVID HORNBECK: Three quick points. The one both of my colleagues have made. To do accountability without opportunity not only won't work, it's just plain wrong. And secondly, you cannot do a cherry pick in this thing. The fact is that instruction is the name of the game. Quality teaching is the important feature, but that won't take unless it's done inside of a framework of standards, and adequate resources, and professional development, and good certification, and all the other things that we've talked about.

Third observation, I'm glad all of you came today. I would like to see a good deal more of what I understand sometimes is referred to as civic journalism going on in its coverage of education. I had the opportunity to watch the Herald Leader and the Courier Journal in Kentucky in 1999 and 1990 play a major role in seeing past the most comprehensive, sweeping piece of education in Kentucky history, and some would argue in the history of the United States.

It was a very different way of doing its journalism than it has been my experience in a variety of states it's done. And so, I would simply encourage you to continue your learning curve about these issues, so that you can contribute to, while maintaining your integrity as journalists.

GENE HICKOK: Just real briefly, first of all, I listened, took a lot of notes, and part of my responsibility is to see what I can do to shake the conversation in the House and the Senate to reflect some of the concerns you've raised. And I mean that sincerely. Secondly, this is just the first conversation with No

Child Left Behind. This administration's commitment to education, I think, is quite obvious. And a lot of our goal is, as we start this national debate, to make sure we begin to ask the right questions.

And I think if you listen to the debates in Congress, if you listen to what's been said up here today, for the first time, we're talking about things at a national level that have not been talked about before. It will not be a perfect law, but I can guarantee you it will be a fundamental shift in priorities, and it will move beyond toying with the system, and lead to further changes down the road at the state, and the local, and the federal level. The most important things is to start that as soon as possible.

MATT MILLER: I want to thank and ask all of you to thank our distinguished panel for a very stimulating and constructive discussion.

Thank you all for attending.

[END OF EVENT.]