

Roundtable News, February 17, 2016

Greetings!, The Roundtable continues to grow and we have 2016 meetings scheduled in San Francisco and Washington, D. C. In other news:

- Low-income kids are behind even before school starts
- 29% of all kids who aced AP physics or calculus were American
- We need multi-generational approaches to tackle child poverty
- Prominent journalist calls for a Charter Hall of Shame
- White House proposes to spend billions on child hunger and on coding
- Schools put the nation at risk? Get a grip
- Fancy that: The NCAA created the Common Core years ago
- US Education Department threatens funds over opting-out
- Artist on autism spectrum draws New York skyline from memory

Low-income kids start kindergarten behind the curve

Low-income kids begin school with disadvantages. That's the conclusion of a new paper from Emma García of the Economic Policy Institute. García's analysis, [Inequalities at the Starting Gate](#), finds that children from low-income families start school with significant gaps in both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. She assessed several different groupings of children and found that socioeconomic status was the most significant factor in determining the skill level of incoming students. García found that income even explained racial disparities in skill levels, evidence pointing to the lower overall socioeconomic status of racial minorities. She concludes that changes in education policy, alone, won't close the gap: "Interventions need to include wider economic and social policies to tackle the socioeconomic disadvantages that constrict opportunities before children even reach the school starting gate."



American students ace AP Physics and Calculus

Four American public school students produced perfect Advanced Placement



scores in calculus and physics. Jimmy Qin, a high school student in Sanford, FL, **received every possible point on the AP physics exam**, while **Nick Porter**, from Kent, WA, and two Californians, **Cedrick Argueta** of Los Angeles and **Matthew Cheung** of Davis, achieved perfect scores on the AP calculus

exam. Of the 14 perfect scores worldwide for these tests, 4 went to students in American public schools.

Two-generation plans needed to tackle child poverty

Despite the claim that "poverty is just an excuse," 50 years of research links poverty to student achievement. Now a **new think tank report** suggests that instead of advancing silver-bullet solutions to tackle poverty, policymakers need to understand this as a two-generation challenge.



Poverty in Rural South

The Washington State Budget & Policy Center estimates that the economic cost of children living in poverty in the Evergreen State is \$11.7 billion. Dealing with these enormous costs will require multi-generational plans that focus on the economic success of families, the authors argue. Successful campaigns "are doing this by coordinating across five key domains - high-

quality early childhood education; post-secondary education and career pathways; asset-building; health & well-being; and social capital."

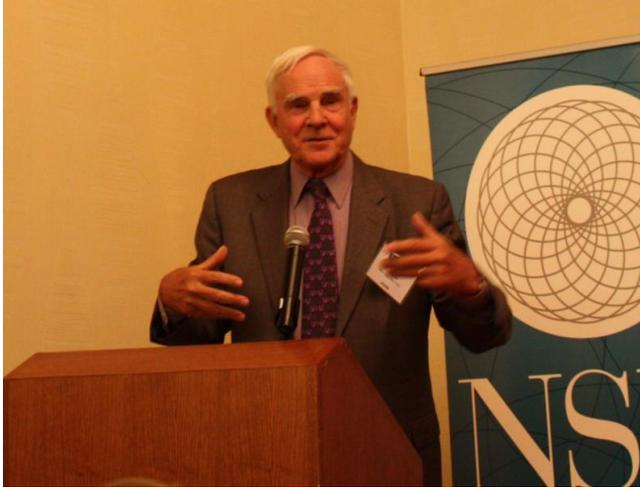
These challenges are likely to be even more severe for African-American families. When UN human rights experts examined African-American life, they seemed genuinely shocked by what they came across. In a **troubling preliminary February report** to the media, The UN Working Group on People of African Descent points to progress in a number of areas but remains "extremely concerned about the



the human rights situation of African Americans." Issues of concern include mass incarceration, unemployment, race-based school discipline, a school-to-prison pipeline, and community disinvestment.

Are charter operators accountable?

Evidence is accumulating that charter school behavior needs monitoring.



John Merrow meets with Roundtable in 2015

Prize-winning PBS journalist John Merrow provides chapter and verse on recent charter school scandals, proposing that the charter world should imitate professional licensing practice with quick crackdowns on licensees' bad behavior. He also **argues** that charter management organizations should be more aggressive in policing "bad apples" and calls for a Charter Hall of Shame.

Meanwhile, a **new working paper** from the prestigious National Bureau of Economic Research finds evidence of segregation in North Carolina charter schools, concluding that charters in the state "are increasingly serving the interests of relatively able white students in racially imbalanced schools." To combat these problems, a non-profit known as In the Public Interest proposes a **Charter School Accountability Agenda**. ITPI would require, among other things, regular audits of charter school programs and analysis to ensure that individual charters will not negatively impact local neighborhood schools.

White House promotes new initiatives

President Obama seems to have the bit in his teeth as he heads for the finish line. He has proposed a **\$12 billion program** over 10 years to address hunger among children. The money will fund a Summer Electronic Benefits Program to provide supplemental food budgets for children who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs, in an attempt to alleviate child hunger when school is not in session. The program will allow states to verify eligibility for the new program through the use of Medicaid data. Five states will be approved to begin demonstrating the program in the upcoming school year.

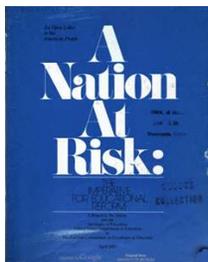


On another front, the president has got behind the new emphasis on "coding," proposing a **\$4 billion program** to fund computer science education in the schools. The Computer Science for All Initiative will provide the money to states that propose 5-year plans to increase computer science in classrooms and will distribute an additional \$100 million directly to schools to aid with programs.

Want to get ahead of the game? **Red Cloud**, among others, is already in the field with coding programs.

Schools put nation at risk? Get a grip.

It's long been claimed that low student achievement puts the nation at risk -

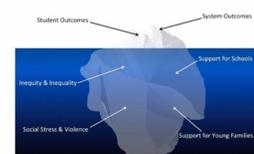


and even causes inequality. That sounds plausible, but there's not a lot of evidence to back it up. In 2011, **George Washington University researcher** Iris Rotberg pointed to the lack of connection between international test scores and judgments about national competitiveness. There are questions about the validity of international assessments, she noted, going on to say, "We draw conclusions from the international studies that are not supported either by the findings of these studies or by research more generally."

Now a 2015 **dissertation** by David Meyer of Northwest Nazarene University concludes that "student performance on international assessments appears to bear no relationship to the competitiveness of the United States." While Meyer's statistical analysis shows that, for all countries, student performance is modestly correlated with economic competitiveness, the correlation does not exist among the 18 most competitive nations, including the United States. It's likely that turning an illiterate population into a literate one gives a nation a competitiveness boost, but going from fifteenth to first on international assessments means little.

Citing the *Iceberg Effect* report from the Roundtable and the Horace Mann League, Meyer recommends that "Education dollars and initiatives should be diverted away from accountability initiatives for high-stakes exam outcomes toward addressing poverty, equitable school funding, social stress and violence, support for young families, and support for students of immigrant families."

School Performance in Context:
Indicators of School Inputs and Outputs in
Nine Similar Nations



January 2015

The Horace Mann League

NSRF

NCAA course requirements: real Common Core



Read and discuss among yourselves. Unannounced and out of sight of the school policy community, the NCAA effectively defines the nation's common curriculum, says a **recent analysis**. In translating college admissions requirements into the required high school course sequence for aspiring college athletes, the NCAA has succeeded where the U.S. Department

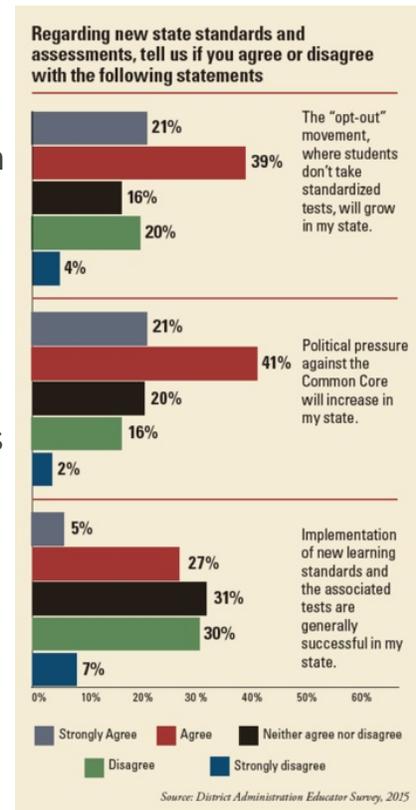
of Education has feared to tread: it has defined an acceptable, reasonably rigorous high school course of study.

Not everyone is entirely happy with the result. The University of Pennsylvania's James Lytle, who wrote the article, notes that "it could be reasonably argued that NCAA policies are the single largest barrier to re-imagining secondary schooling in the United States." In support of this argument, he notes that even schools that provide a wide variety of innovative and proven education alternatives may not meet the eligibility requirements, to the disadvantage of their student athletes.

Secretary of Education threatens states on opt outs

Congress may have tried to clip the wings of the residents of 400 Maryland Avenue, but the occupants haven't got out of the business of telling states what to do. In December the US Department of Education **sent a letter** to every state's education department reminding them that the recently-enacted Every Student Succeeds Act requires 95% participation in accountability tests and threatening to withhold federal funds in the event the threshold is not met. The letter also provided helpful suggestions on how state education departments could sanction local districts for low participation rates.

Meanwhile, a **District Administration survey** reports that about 40% of superintendents expect the number of opt-outs to grow in 2016, along with increased opposition to the Common Core.



Artist on autism spectrum draws NY skyline from memory

People with disabilities need to be thought of as "differently abled." This stunning rendition of the New York City skyline was developed, from memory,

in ink, by English artist Stephen Wiltshire after a 20-minute helicopter ride over the city.



Roundtable's 2016 Semi-Annual Meetings

Getting Organized to Help Kids -- The Roundtable's "Iceberg effect" report indicates that the U.S. has the largest proportion of low-income children in the developed world. They live with remarkably high levels of stress and little support for families. This July 15-17 meeting will gather near Union Square to foster greater collaboration with units of general purpose local government.



School Governance -- October 7 -9 will find the Roundtable in Washington, D.C., to examine school governance. What do superintendents, boards, and unions need to do to get their act together to improve outcomes for students? The meeting will be held near the national capital's historic Rock Creek Park.



New Members

We are pleased to note several new members who have joined the Roundtable for 2016. They include:

- Jeffrey Baier, Los Altos, California
- Yvonne Caamal Canul, Lansing, Michigan
- Charles Dumais, Woodbridge, Connecticut

- John D. Ewald, Caroline County, Maryland
- Mary Kay Going, Moreland, California
- Laura Kagy, Attica, Ohio
- Salah Khelfaoui, Lowell, Massachusetts
- John Kopicki, Altoona, Pennsylvania (new assignment)
- Tammy Mangus, Monticello, New York
- Ralph Marino, Jr., Hewlett-Woodmere, New York (new assignment)
- Thomas McMorrان, Easton-Redding, Connecticut
- Thomas Parker, Ecorse, Michigan
- Alan Peterson, Merced, California
- Elizabeth Polito, Woodside, California
- Kathleen Smith, Brockton, Massachusetts
- John Ramirez, Salinas, California
- Nikki Woodson, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Paul Zinni, Avon, Massachusetts

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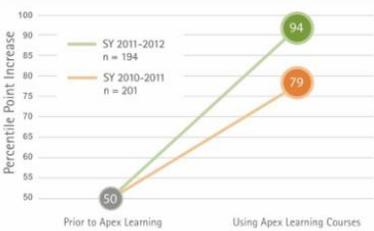


A two year, independent study in Dorchester School District Two in South Carolina shows Apex Learning Comprehensive Courses are proven to increase student achievement on the South Carolina High School Assessment Program (HSAP).

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Achievement Gains of Average Performing Student



Study Year	Prior to Apex Learning	Using Apex Learning Courses
SY 2011-2012 (n = 194)	50	94
SY 2010-2011 (n = 201)	50	79

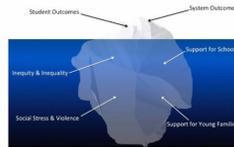
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School Performance in Context: Indicators of School Inputs and Outputs in Nine Similar Nations



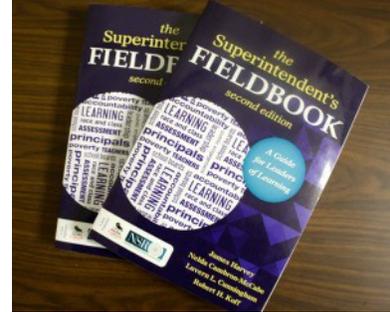
January 2015

The National Blue Ribbon



Iceberg Effect Report

Free downloads or purchase copies [here](#).



Best selling volume from the Roundtable. Order *Superintendent's Fieldbook* **from Corwin Press.**

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