

Roundtable News, April 1, 2016

Greetings! As the Roundtable continues to grow, we welcome our new members and look forward to seeing everyone at our meetings in San Francisco and Washington, D. C. later this year. In the meantime, here's a round up of developments in education:

- Dynamics of Opportunity in the United States
- Three Questions Principals Should Be Asking
- Disastrous Budget Impasse in Pennsylvania Ends
- Ouch! Fastest Growing Jobs in US Pay Low Wages
- The Pinata Theory of School Reform
- Acting Out? Or Just Exuberant?
- Who's Raking in the Big Bucks in "Charter World"?
- ADHD from a Child's Perspective
- Semi Annual Meetings
- New Members

Dynamics of Opportunity in the United States

Henry Braun, the Boisi Professor Education at the Lynch School, Boston College, provided the Roundtable with a *tour de force* presentation on the shortcomings of value added assessment in 2010. He will join us again in San Francisco in July, along with his colleague, Irwin Kirsch, Director of the Center for Global Assessment at Educational Testing Service (ETS) to discuss their groundbreaking new research on the dynamics of opportunity in the United States. Others on the program include Paul Reville, former Massachusetts state superintendent, Michael Kirst, president of the California State Board of Education, and Hydra Mendoza, director of the San Francisco mayor's Office of Children, Families, and Youth.



Henry Braun

Dynamics of opportunity? Sounds pretty heavy. But these two distinguished scholars have taken a collection of impressive and complex contributions from North American researchers and boiled them down to something we can all grasp. The gist of their message is that opportunity for some young people involves advantage piled on top of advantage, while for others disadvantage compounded by disadvantage is the norm. To make the material even more accessible they've provided a free downloadable e-book, [Choosing our Future](#), that includes video segments and animated graphics.

Talking in the Hallway: Three Questions for Principals

In a memorable quote at a 2013 Roundtable meeting in Chicago, Gene Hall of the University of Nevada at Las Vegas urged educational leaders not to be embarrassed by what he called "one-legged interviews" -- quick meetings with staff, principals, or teachers when you're on the fly with one foot out the door.



Glass (l) chats with Roundtable members Paul Ash, Margaret Hayes, & Diana Bourisaw

Mitch Center, assistant superintendent of Newark Public Schools (NJ) extends the idea to students. It's hard to know if you're making an impact on kids, but in [a recent article in Edutopia](#), Center offers a way for administrators to connect with students in a simple way: talk to them in the hallway.

Talking in the hallway? It may sound flip but Center suggests three questions to engage students in their own learning: **"What are you reading?"** This question dives a bit deeper than pleasantries about the weather, and helps reinforce a school reading culture. **"I'm thinking about doing ___. What do you think?"** And finally, **"If you were me, what would you change?"** Soliciting student input on policy directions may sound scary, says Center. At first, "you'll hear about longer weekends and less homework." But in the end, student insights can elevate the conversation, while reminding everyone whose voices matter most.

Budget Impasse in Pennsylvania Ends

In Pennsylvania, a disastrous deadlock over school funding has ended, at least for now. [Education Week reports that Pennsylvania legislators reached a](#)



compromise on the state budget with Governor Tom Wolf after months of stalemate, but not before putting many Pennsylvania districts deeply in the red. **Districts have already borrowed in excess of \$1 billion to stay afloat.** Additionally, as this budget year draws to a close, schools that are just finding out about their budgets for this

year are being asked to provide budgets for next year by June 30th. Is this any way to run a railroad? Unhappily in too many states, while politicians pay lip service to how important children are to our future, they engage in this sort of fiscal brinkmanship with our schools.

Fastest Growing Jobs: Want Fries With That?

A depressing new report from the National Employment Law Project confirms Bureau of Labor Statistics data on likely job growth over the next two decades: the fastest growing job sectors in America are those paying the lowest wages.

Service jobs, retail sales, day laborers, and fast food: "These are jobs that aren't going anywhere," says one of the study co-authors, Irene Tung. Direct service jobs can't be outsourced. Despite the popular perception that these low wage jobs are filled by teenagers, the report found that around 46 percent of workers earning less than \$15 an hour are **over** the age of 35. The lowest paid workers are also disproportionately women, and African American. This latest report confirms earlier data pointed out by the Roundtable from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics: while high paying, high-tech jobs are among the fastest growing employment sectors, they are growing from a small base. The largest **number** of new jobs will be in these relatively low-wage sectors.



The "Pinata Theory" of School Reform

Roland Chevalier, the longtime school superintendent of St. Martin's Parish, Louisiana who is now with the Schlechty Center, once described the theory undergirding school reform in the United States as the "Pinata Theory" - i.e., if we keep beating the schools, good things will fall out of them.

In one district in India, Chevalier's insight has gone from theory to action. **Former Montgomery County, Md. Superintendent Joshua Starr notes an interesting story from India,**

where district education officer Manoj Mishra is fighting truancy with some unorthodox methods: he's chasing teachers with a pistol and a stick.



Mishra speaks to a school principal. Photo by Kuni Takahashi for the New York Times

That's right: in Uttar Pradesh, Mumbai's most populous school district, teacher absences are a big problem: up to 46% of teachers are absent in some schools. Mr. Mishra's "pistol and stick" methods have turned the district around, and made him something of a local hero: the [New York Times](#) reports that older people touch his feet as a sign of respect, while young women seek selfies with this celebrity.

At first blush, it's far-fetched to think such an approach would ever see the light of day in the United States, but then memories stir of how Joe Louis Clark was lionized by the media and Hollywood for patrolling the hallways of Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey with a baseball bat. Perhaps it's not so far-fetched after all. The parallels with India are instructive. In both nations, managers seem to feel they can beat better performance out of schools instead of dealing with underlying dysfunctions.

Acting Out? Or Just Exuberant?

Some troubling research on teachers' perceptions of "disruptive behavior" reveals that when it comes to evaluating "problem" students, perceptions may depend not only on the race of the student, but the race of the teacher.

As reported by the Brookings Institute, researcher Adam Wright used data



from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study to follow the experience of more than 20,000 grade schoolers, and track how often the students were reported to argue, fight, get angry, or generally disrupt class activities. Because Wright was able to track individual students through different classes, it was possible to observe and

compare how the exact same student was perceived by different teachers.

The results are deeply disturbing. Black and white teachers gave very different evaluations of the behavior of African American students in particular, and there was a clear correlation between the race of the teacher and how they "read" the behavior of students. Wright also showed that black students matched with black teachers were less likely to face suspension in later grades.

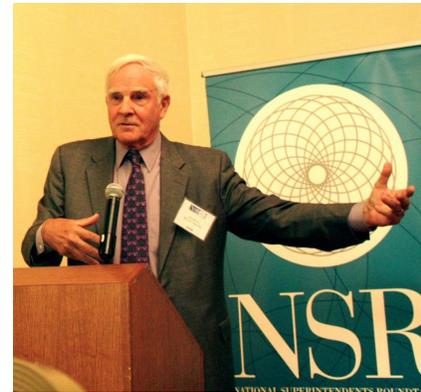
Disruptive behavior, or youthful exuberance? Much of it is in the eye of the beholder. But one thing is clear: being matched with African American teachers can matter a lot for young black men and women.

Who's Raking in the Big Bucks in "Charter World"?

Roundtable guest speaker and former PBS Newshour reporter John Merrow runs the numbers: Charter school leaders have written themselves some pretty sweet contracts.

Start with Chicago, says Merrow. The public school leader of a system with 392,000 students is paid \$250,000, or 64 cents a child. One of city's leading charter networks, the Noble Network of Charter Schools, paid its CEO and founder Michael Milkie a salary of \$209,520 and a bonus of \$20,000. NNCS, which received the Broad Prize last year, enrolls 11,000 students, meaning that Mr. Milkie is paid \$21.00 per student.

That's small beer compared to what Merrow found in New York. New York City School Chancellor Carmen Farina presides over a school system with over one million students, which puts her compensation of \$227,727 at about 20 cents a child. Meanwhile, Eva Moskowitz earns twice as much for overseeing the controversial Success Academies charter chain. With an enrollment of 11,000, that means she is being paid a little over \$51 per student. To say the same thing another way, Moskowitz is paid 128 times more per student than Chancellor Farina. Where can we sign up?



John Merrow

ADHD: A Child's Perspective

A reminder that students aren't just "problems" to be solved: they're, well... kids. This beautiful, powerful animated short by Swedish filmmaker Erik Rosenlund, "**Falling Letters**," is a touching glimpse into the daily struggles of children with ADHD, and shows how understanding parents, guardians, teachers and other caregivers can make all the difference.



"Falling Letters" by Erik Rosenlund

Roundtable's Semi-Annual Meetings for 2016

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 McMorran, Easton-Redding, Connecticut
- Mark Miller, Dillonville, Ohio
- Thomas Parker, Ecorse, Michigan
- Alan Peterson, Merced, California
- Elizabeth Polito, Woodside, California
- John Ramirez, Salinas, California
- Theresa Rouse, Joliet PSD-86, Illinois (new assignment)
- Sarah Shubel, East Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Kathleen Smith, Brockton, Massachusetts
- Matthew Wendt, Oswego, Illinois
- Nikki Woodson, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Paul Zinni, Avon, Massachusetts

Welcome!

Sponsored by:

Apex Learning Curriculum

Proven to Increase Learning Gains

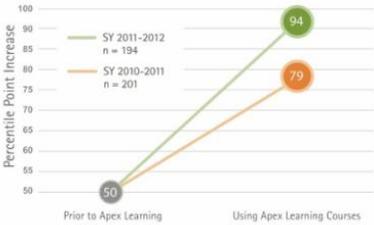


A two year, independent study in Dorchester School District Two in South Carolina shows Apex Learning Comprehensive Courses are proven to increase student achievement on the South Carolina High School Assessment Program (HSAP).

What can your students achieve with Apex Learning?

www.apexlearning.com

Achievement Gains of Average Performing Student



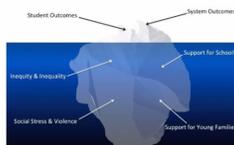
Year	Percentile Point Increase
Prior to Apex Learning	50
Using Apex Learning Courses (SY 2010-2011)	79
Using Apex Learning Courses (SY 2011-2012)	94

Copyright © 2015 Apex Learning Inc. Apex Learning®, the Apex Learning logo are registered trademarks of Apex Learning Inc.



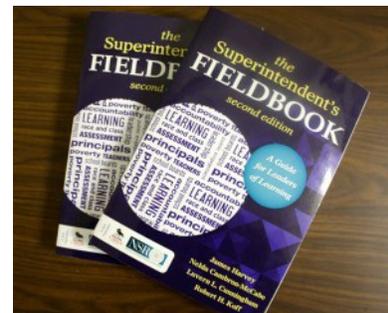
Interested in the Roundtable?
 Now offering 50% discount on annual membership. [Learn More!](#)

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



January 2015

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



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

Like us on **Facebook** 

Follow us on **twitter**