



## Roundtable News, April 29, 2016

Greetings!,

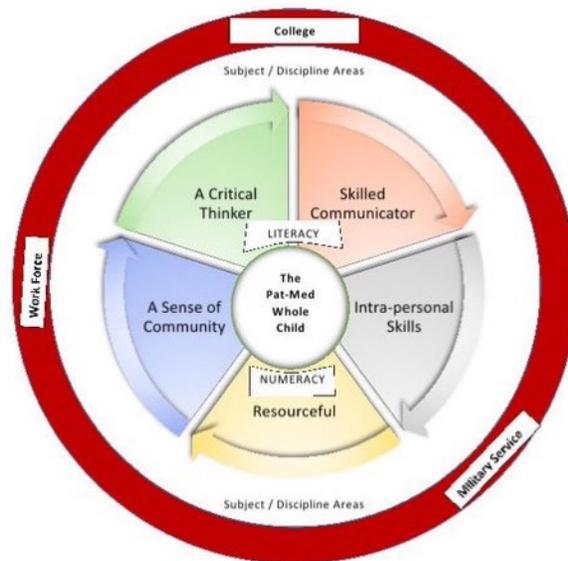
As the Roundtable continues to grow, we welcome our new members and look forward to seeing everyone at our meetings in San Francisco and Washington, D. C. later this year. In the meantime, here's a round up of developments in education:

- Benefits of the Whole Child Approach
- Technical Education: Still A Route to the Middle Class
- Getting a Grip on NAEP
- Privatizing English Publicly Funded Schools: A "Land Grab"
- Jobs in the "Gig Economy"
- More States Climb on the Voucher Bandwagon
- Life for the Deeply Poor
- Under Common Core, Fiction is "Gone With the Wind"
- A Superintendent's Manifesto

### Benefits of the "Whole Child" Approach

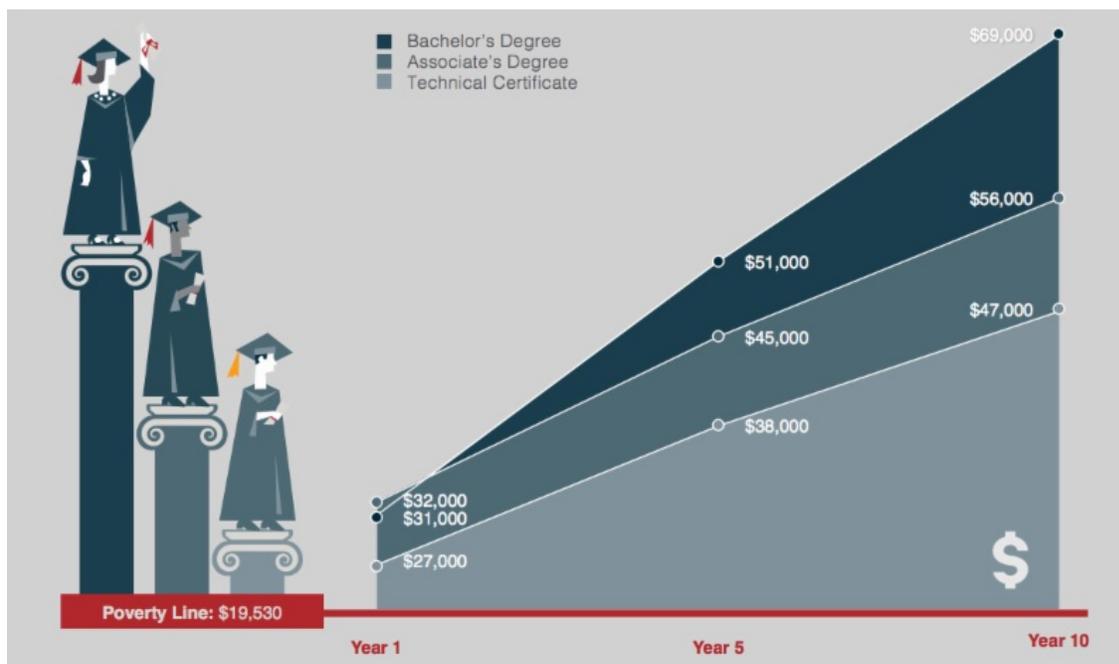
It's pretty safe to say that no one wants graduates who are proficient at filling in bubbles in standardized tests but unable to function in the real world.

**Superintendent Michael Hynes of Patchogue-Meford** advocates a "Whole Child" approach to teaching that focuses on the social, emotional and academic growth of the student, and promises to prepare graduates with the interpersonal, academic and critical thinking skills they'll need to succeed at something other than state assessments. In an atmosphere where "teaching to the test" is receiving increasing pushback, Hynes' approach is a breath of fresh air.



## Technical Education: Still A Route to the Middle Class

For decades now, education reformers have focused on college preparation to close the gap between working class and middle class Americans. The bachelor's degree, the thinking goes, is a ticket to the middle class for lower income kids.



Writing for the [Brookings Institution](#), Michael Petrilli argues that the "bachelor's degree or bust" approach is a failed strategy. He calls for reinvigorating technical education options that enroll only 19 percent of high school students today.

Others are reaching similar conclusions. A [recent New York Times article](#) co-authored by the provost of the University of Massachusetts notes that there are 600,000 high-paying technical jobs in the U.S. awaiting qualified applicants.

Meanwhile, college graduates are moving in with their parents to make ends meet.

## Getting a Grip on NAEP

The handwringing about the NAEP results released this week was perfectly predictable, says executive director James Harvey, in a column in the Hechinger Report. The results, he said in would be "followed by weeping and gnashing of teeth on a biblical scale."

However, he went on, "while the results reveal plenty to worry about, anxiety about the findings [should focus on the inequities they reveal](#), not trivial score differences from year to year." NAEP results he said, should come with a giant sign: "Caution: Fog of Numbers Ahead." And while comments about the results signal a five-alarm fire, we need to "get a grip on the whole picture before we rev up the fire trucks and send them to the wrong address."



## Privatization of English Publicly Funded Schools

We've seen some unpopular top-down decisions that affect local school districts, but not many invite comparisons to the Reign of the Tudors. [As the Guardian reports](#), a recent proposal from the Conservative government would turn every local school in England into an academy, funded by the central government but overseen by private trusts, not local councils. Under the proposal, when schools become academies, all school land will be transferred directly to the government, which will lease the land back to academy trusts.

[Critics are calling the government's demands a "land grab,"](#) and comparing it



"Whitfield School, Est. 1757. It's worth fighting for." Photograph: Mark Pinder for the Guardian

to the dissolution of monasteries under Henry VIII. In the House of Commons, even back-bench [conservatives call this plan a bad idea](#), putting them on the side of the teachers' union.

To local councils, which have often invested heavily in the local land, the forced

reorganization is an overreach. In some districts, the assessed value of the land holdings is worth upwards of a billion dollars.

# Jobs in the "Gig Economy"

As reported in the [New York Times](#), The nature of the American workforce is undergoing a profound shift. According to the [Rand-Princeton Contingent Work Survey](#), the proportion of workers who report "alternative work arrangements" -- those who work for temporary agencies, as independent contractors, or on-call workers, as opposed to those in traditional jobs -- jumped to 15.8 percent in 2015, up from 10.1 percent in 2005.

As the labor market becomes tighter and tighter, this raises troubling questions about the future of conventional employment and the "social insurance" that goes along with it. Health insurance, once the biggest perk of conventional employment, can now be had on the open market. But what about workman's compensation, unemployment benefits, and retirement plans? In the "gig economy," the novelty of calling a car from our phones may come at the cost of greater social insecurity for young people entering the workforce.



## More States Climb on Voucher Bandwagon

**Legislators like to call them scholarships**, but, like a rose, a voucher by any other name is still a voucher. Maryland and South Dakota have joined 16 states that contribute money to private schools, which detractors fear will siphon money away from already-straitened public school programs.



Storey County superintendent Rob Slaby describes Nevada's voucher program to Roundtable

**In South Dakota, state Senate Bill 159 allows insurance companies to make tax-deductible contributions** of up to 2 million for an "educational scholarship" fund for low income students. And the Washington Post reports that, after a 10-year fight against controversial tax credits, **Maryland lawmakers have agreed to a state-funded private school scholarship**

**program.**

Despite convincing **evidence that private schools, including those funded by vouchers, are overwhelmingly white** and contribute to segregation, proponents of school vouchers claim these funds provide choice for students.

## Life for the Deeply Poor

"Extreme poverty is intergenerational, experts say, bequeathed without ceremony from mother to child like a sack of rocks." Brandy Price, who grew up as one of six children in North Philadelphia, inherited that sack, and talks about what life is like for the deeply poor at [Philly.com](http://Philly.com).

In Philadelphia, 186,000 people live in deep poverty, 12.3 percent of the population. Deep poverty for a family of four is \$12,000 or less annually. A 26-year-old single mother, Brandy is so poor, she once hung a picture of a tree on the wall for Christmas. Yet with the help and encouragement of two understanding mentors, she finished her high school diploma online, using a cell phone to complete the work since she did not have a computer. Now, with her diploma in hand, she has hope and determination for a better future.



Brandy Price plays with her son, Quran, 2, and her nephew Khaliff Young, 5.

## Under Common Core, Fiction is "Gone With the Wind"

The days of fiction-heavy curricula may be *Gone With the Wind*, according to the latest [Brown Center Report from the Brookings Institution](#). Fourth grade teachers report that they are placing much less emphasis on fiction for their curricula than they were even four years ago.



In a 2011 Brown Center study, 63 percent of fourth grade teachers said they emphasized fiction to a great extent, whereas only 38 percent emphasized nonfiction: a 25 percent gap. This gap shrank to just eight percentage points in 2015. The changing focus appears to correlate with Common Core standards, as states that were considered "strong implementers" of CCSS were more likely to emphasize nonfiction in the curriculum.

The Brown Center's yearly in depth-analysis of three trends shaping the U.S. education policy debate is authored by Nonresident Senior Fellow Tom Loveless. A summary of its other key findings can be found [here](#).

## A Superintendent's Presidential Campaign Platform

Inspired by the campaign promises of some of our 2016 Presidential candidates, Roundtable superintendent Martha Bruckner of Council Bluffs,

Iowa, writes, "Listening to some presidential candidates makes me wonder if school superintendents could do similar things. Just announce what you will do. No plan or work needed!"



Martha Bruckner

In that spirit, here's Martha's campaign platform:

- All children will be loved.
- No families will live in poverty.
- All children will start school on an equal basis, economically and socially, and will be ready (eager) to learn.
- All children will read by third grade, and will love reading.
- Every child will love middle school and will use those adolescent years to discover his or her best future self.
- No students will ever purposefully bully others, and if a student unintentionally hurts another student, classmates will help minimize the hurt and inform the misguided bully.
- All students will graduate from high school after a successful 3, 4, or 5 years...whatever is most appropriate for their learning needs and styles.
- Student assessment will be fair, multi-faceted, timely, informative, and will help educators discover how to best help each individual child.
- Funding for schools will be sufficient.
- Every teacher and school leader will be caring, talented, successful, and appropriately rewarded.
- Every child will be safe, healthy, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Martha has our endorsement! Make America great again - Bruckner 2016!

## 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
- David Hicks, Sherman, Texas
- Laura Kagy, Attica, Ohio
- Salah Khelfaoui, Lowell, Massachusetts
- John Kopicki, Altoona, Pennsylvania (new assignment)
- Robert Kravitz, Englewood, New Jersey
- Tim Mains, Jamestown, New York
- 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
- Rick Stout, Jacksonville, North Carolina
- Julie Vitale, Romoland, California
- 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](http://www.apexlearning.com)



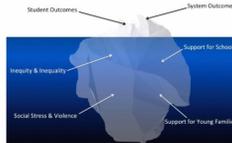
Copyright © 2015 Apex Learning Inc. Apex Learning®, the Apex Learning logo are registered trademarks of Apex Learning Inc.



**Interested in the Roundtable?**

Now offering 50% discount on annual membership. [Learn More!](#)

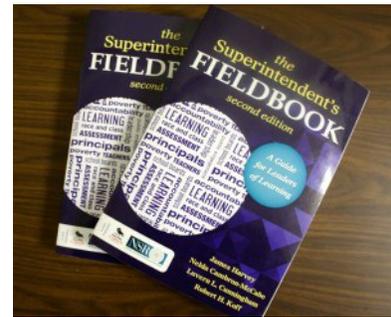
## School Performance in Context: Indicators of School Inputs and Outputs in Nine Similar Nations



January 2015

The Heritage Foundation NSIC

**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