



IEL's Cross-Boundary Leaders for Education and Equity Symposium

September 30, 2014

>> Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to start in about five minutes. The red line is backed up. We want to give people a few more minutes to get here, then we'll get going. Thanks very much for being here.

Good morning. If I can ask everyone to take their seats, please. Thank you.

Good morning. My name is Marty minor, privileged to be the President of the Institute for Educational Leadership on this the anniversary year of IEL's 50 years of growing leaders for public education. 50 years is a long time, even for folks who have been around a little bit. And as I reflect on what the institute has been doing over these many years, I'm most proud of the fact that we have sustained a focus on leadership and that we've always paid attention to issues of equity and justice in our world.

You know, IEL was founded in 1964. We were part of the new federal efforts that brought federal government into efforts to improve the lives of disadvantaged children. We began at the time that President Johnson created the War on Poverty, and the nation first really seriously turned its attention to the challenges of educating all of our children. While we made progress over the years, indeed I do believe that progress comes in slow and steady and grinding steps, in 2014, we seem to face a host of other challenges. A demographics shift in the country that is truly extraordinary. Jerry Weast, who you will hear from, from Montgomery County, said he

talked to his demographer who told him less than 35% of the children at Montgomery County Public Schools are not Hispanic white students. Even if you take account of the large number of private school students going to Montgomery County, that is an extraordinary shift in the number of children of color. Indeed, at the same time, the number of children in poverty in our country. Prove we've had this enormous demographic shift. We've had this isolation of public schools from our other governmental institutions. We've had distancing of people from public schools in ways that we don't think are productive. We've seen the inability of institutions to work more closely together. As we've thought about the 50th anniversary, we wanted to refocus on the challenges of leadership, the challenges of leadership for excellence and challenges of leadership for equity. So was birthed the idea of trying to articulate 10 lessons that come from our experience, and to do this symposium where we would bring together people who could focus on three crucial questions that are now driving IEL's work. You'll see on the program it is three pillars, and we now talk about our work in the context of those pillars.

Our mission is about equipping leaders to work across boundaries, because we see the problems in our society as particularly complex and demanding the support and engagement of leaders from multiple sectors.

Some of you may have read an article, I would recommend it to all of you, about strategic philanthropy, which appeared in the Stanford social innovation review about a month ago, in which the author talks about simple problems and complicated problems

and complex problems. And they suggested that getting a good teacher in the classroom was only a complicated problem. Raising student achievement, on the other hand, was a complex problem. Because it not only involved what happened in the classroom, it involved all the dimensions of children's lives and how that influences what goes on. That has been at the core of IEL's work over the past 50 years, and will continue to be at the heart of our work as we go forward.

A few thanks to various people. I want to recognize my predecessors here.

Michael is here, former President of the institute. Would you just stand up.

[Applause]

Dave, my immediate predecessor could not be here this morning. We also want to remember Sam Halpern, the President of the institute from 1974-1981. Most of you know him well for his work at the American youth policy forum. Betsy Grant is the Executive Director of AYPF, is here this morning. Thank you, Betsy.

[Applause]

We lost Sam last spring, but we don't want to lose the legacy of his work, particularly his work around the forgotten half. How many of you in the room have read "The forgotten half"? That's about 1/3. So what we have done, this was one of the most important reports in the late 1980s. Hillary Clinton was on that commission, if not one of the co-chairs, as I recall, with Doc Howe. How many remember Doc Howe? History is important here, my friends. All of you should go and look at the forgotten half, because now the forgotten half seems perhaps to be forgotten again. So we want to

honor Sam. We're going to be honoring Sam on an ongoing basis, the AYPF, the first lecture as part of our Washington policy seminar in April. All of you will be invited.

Hillary Pennington, Vice President for Education at the foundation will be the first lecturer.

I also want to thank our sponsors, American Express, let me get this list correct, so I don't make any mistakes. I want to thank American Express, the Charles Stuart Mott foundation, JP Morgan Chase, Lumina, Kellogg Kresky memorial fund and many friends of IEL like all of you here today for the support that made these events possible.

I also want to thank the members of our board who have been helpful in conceiving and conceptualizing this series of 50th anniversary celebrations. Led by buzz Bartlett. Are you here this morning? Not yet. Buzz Bartlett is on that committee. Lisa nutter is here. From Philadelphia. Who is a member of our board. And served on that committee. Along with Jerry Weast, who is one of our moderators this morning. And John Narrow who could not be in attendance. Did I miss an IEL board member in the room? I don't want to be embarrassed. Thank you. And thanks to all of our board. The board at IEL, led by Decker Anstrom, former CEO of the weather channel, has been a really strong part of the efforts at the institute. We not only celebrate 50 years, that's a nice thing to do, but more importantly to figure out what the next 50 years looks like. And that's really the challenge that we face going forward.

So one more thought before I bring up the first panel. You know, in my own work over the years, in thinking about leadership across boundaries, I've always gone back to the work of John Gardner. John Gardner, I won't embarrass everybody by asking who knows John Gardner.

[Laughter]

But John Gardner was a breed of man of whom there aren't very many left in this town. We used to call people like John Gardner liberal Republicans. He was the secretary of HEW in the Nixon administration. He was the founder of Common Cause and a man of extraordinary talent. Gardner talked about how leadership needed to cross boundaries. What he said was, with all these multiple colliding systems we have, leaders don't control the resources they need to get the results they want.

So Robert Gates, the defense secretary, once said, we have to do defense, diplomacy and development all together if we're going to solve the world's problems. Here at home, as Gardner suggested, we need to figure out how to grow leaders who can work across these institutional boundaries, trying [unclear] people over whom – [unclear] people over whom they have no control. Really, that is a characteristic of that. Hopefully, you think about that theme as you listen to our panels this morning, which focus on three key questions that are IEL's pillars. How do we grow the leaders we need for public education, not just in, but for? How do we more deeply engage families in the work of our public schools and in the education of their children? And

how do we re-engage disconnected youth for whom our systems have not done the right job and who face particularly extraordinary challenges?

So with that, I'm going to ask Jerry Weast and our first group to come up and Jerry will lead a conversation about the challenges we face in getting the right leaders in place for public education. Thank you for doing this, Jerry.

>> Jerry Weast: Thank you, Marty.

[Applause]

Let's give Marty a big hand.

[Applause]

My job is to wake you up this morning. I've got the panel do that that. We're going to talk about leadership and equality and many other things. Before I do, look at your brochure, you can see the panel they've got stellar background, they're wonderful, great bios. I'm going to introduce them as my friends. Jose Torres has been a superintendent for a long time. He's now running a real focused program in math and science for the entire state of Illinois. Before that, he was running the second largest district in Illinois outside of Chicago, 46. He's got great experience both here in Maryland and in Illinois, and now in math and science fields. We're happy to have him.

Next is one of my really, really great superintendents. Mary Ronan is out of Cincinnati, and if you want to talk about engagement, she knows how engagement really works. The collective impact movement started in her neighborhood and she

has that, but she has also moved outstanding performance, she's got great growth in her number of kids who graduate, and go on to do really good things. Mary is a very experienced superintendent.

Somebody that was a superintendent but is for years working with Panasonic foundation, he has a very broad view of not only the role of the superintendent but a principal, but also a broad view of what's going on in America with Panasonic Foundation, Larry Leverett. I hope Larry speaks out, because Larry is really --

[Laughter]

Yeah, if he doesn't, I'm going to get him to speak out.

[Laughter]

What he has to say is very pure and very truthful.

Andrew Lachlan has been working as a superintendent in Connecticut for a number of years, but comes from the New York City programs. If you've ever heard of district 2 in New York, it was a storied place where actually the people could go work and run that district and run it to really new heights. Andrew is a very big part of that, and he can talk about that both from his experience in working with leaders now, but also from his District 2 experience.

You know what people want when they work for an employer? Gallup put that question to the millions of people all over the world. Gallup is a great organization, just down here on 9th street. Boil down to four things. They wanted to work with an employer they could trust. They don't trust their employer, they don't really give it their

all. They show up, go home. It's more of a job. If they trust, they invest and become engaged.

They want stability. They don't like a butterfly with hiccups.

[Laughter]

They want stability. Those are two big things that I see that we need to talk about today in education.

They also want compassion. Do you really understand my work? You really understand my work?

Then the last, they want hope. If I give you all this work, will it really make a difference? Or is this just going for meaningless tasks?

You see, in my 35 years as superintendent, I never did see anybody that was a child celebrate test day from the state.

[Laughter]

They celebrated graduation if they were prepared and inspired. They're ready to go on and learn and be engaged.

Principals, when we do surveys of principals, they want to see those things from their central office of superintendent.

When you talk to teachers, probably the number one reason I got from teachers when they moved or wanted to move or wanted to leave, over 35 years, is their principal. Their principal. They didn't mind working with children who were poor. They didn't mind working in less than desirable buildings. But if they didn't feel like

they had a principal who they could trust and knew and understood, they wanted out of there.

So we're going to talk about quantity and quality leadership. We're going to talk about the demographics. I come from the south, and we can't be fixin to get ready, because the demographics are changed in America, and we're just now waking up to it a little bit, but it's been going on a long time, and we can no longer leave children of color off the bus. And we can no longer not have people of color leading schools. And leading districts.

So we're going to have to do a better job in our pipeline, both in quantity and quality. I'll start with Andrew. Talk to me a little bit about that. Any one of the things that I have put out there.

>> Andrew Lachman: Well, I think that -- thank you, Jerry. I think it's important to recognize that the issues are both on the pipeline in terms of who comes into this profession, and the issue of ensuring that the people who are in leadership positions have the skills, the mindset, the talent and the tools to be able to ensure, one, that their principals are doing what they need to do in order to achieve student achievement and close achievement gaps and that they created structures and opportunities for all of the people, both adults and children, to be in learning settings in our school systems.

>> Jerry Weast: Very good. Mary, you're a practicing superintendent. What kind of pressures do you have? We're not going to talk about boards today. We're going to

talk about the pressures that you have in your community. How about the technology and all the people who follow you on Twitter and --

>> Mary Ronan: Speaking of technology, I'm trying to get the mic.

>> Jerry Weast: All right. You go!

[Laughter]

Why do you think we're having a shortage? We've talked to state superintendents, we've talked to people who do the screening, the headhunters. There's a shortage, there's a shortage in the pipeline of candidates, especially for quality candidates and quality positions.

>> Mary Ronan: Yes, Jerry, we certainly have seen that in the Midwest. We definitely have a shortage of candidates. A lot of it is demographics. A lot of principals are becoming older. There's the state politics. Pension plans were under attack. A lot of people ran out the door before the changes came in, which really drove principals out. Then the whole pipeline. When you're hit with budget cuts, the first thing, you really can't cut teachers, you cut assistant principals, therefore you're cutting off your supply line. Which isn't smart, but that's exactly what happens.

Then the principals you have with the accountability system, if you don't do test scores every three years, as a superintendent I'm under pressure from the board, we'll get rid of the principal. When I get rid of them, they're scooped up by some other district, on oftentimes I replace them with a principal who has less or fewer skills than

the person I took out. But that's really the churn we're experiencing, driven by the accountability system.

>> Jerry Weast: Very good. You were practicing up until a few weeks ago, Jose.

What do you think about this whole issue? Then talk a little bit about how you think we might get a little more diversity in the pipeline.

>> Jose Torres: Thanks, Jerry. Good morning, everyone.

>> Good morning!

>> Jose Torres: I was mindful of John Gardner's quote, he said that Jesus came to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

[Laughter]

So I hope to do a little of both for you this morning. I think from a practicing perspective, I probably didn't practice hard enough or well enough, but the challenges are very real, and part of it is that the goals that people have for our school district vary from employers who want skilled workers, to colleges who want students without remediation, to community colleges who want kids with remediation, because they pay money and they don't get credits. So that's a policy directive.

When I went to community college, I probably needed remediation. I was a second language speaker. I failed English, and I failed mathematics right around here, Prince George's County community college. Had I been in a remediation course, not taking credit, I would have passed the course but not been remediated.

When I had to take the course again, because I was paying for it, I passed it the second time. So there are some policy implications.

The fact is that we have to graduate more students and then we've got to create an equal playing platform. So in recruiting Latino administrators we've got to do more than just create an application that is equal to others. They're coming from a different background. They're coming from a behind 50 yards before they get to the starting lineup, to the starting line. So we've got to do something different. Equity does not mean equal. So we've got to be able to create a pipeline that is by design different. So an example, when I was in U-46, we did some parent training, and I actually created a Hispanic leadership parent institute and African-American parent leadership institute. And I had a lot of criticism. Because what I was doing, I was training Hispanic parents to get involved and engage, first about information about the district, second around mobilization skills. And the white parents said, Well, what about us? Why don't we have a white parent leadership institute?

I said you're looking at it. The Board of Education is all white.

[Laughter]

The parents leadership, the citizens Advisory Committee, they're all white. So when they all change, then I'll have a white parent leadership institute. People don't want to hear that.

>> Jerry Weast: Well said. One of my favorite quotes is equal treatment is the most unequal treatment you can give. I think we've got to think about this meaning of equity

and do a little bit of differentiation. People tell me things are getting better, but I don't see any differentiated resources, differentiated class sizes, targeted programs like Jose talked about, where you go out and deliberately find people and train them and bring them up.

Jose, how many school superintendents Latino do you have in your organization?

>> Jose Torres: We have the association of Latino administrators and superintendents. Then we have -- I don't even know. I'll tell you, in Illinois we have 869 school districts, and they have one fewer superintendent. They might be down to two.

>> Jerry Weast: Do you know, Larry?

>> Larry Leverett: Yeah, AASA, American association of superintendents association, in 2012 conducted a status check on the superintendents. They found a couple things. One, celebrating increase in the number of women, female superintendents over the past decade. But they also found that out of 1800 respondents, 2% of the respondents to this survey were African-American and 2% in the survey respondents were Latino, out of 1800 superintendents.

The data going back to even 1990 points to 6% as the high point and steadily over the last decade there has been a decrease, and I believe around about 4% superintendents of color, male or female.

>> Jerry Weast: That's right, male or female, African-American or Latino. Let's see, what percentage of the kids coming to schools are African-American or Latino? What is that? Is that about -- it's going to get over 50%.

>> Over 51%.

>> Larry Leverett: An interesting thing about this question is that 50% of the African-American superintendents are in school districts that have more than 50% children of color. I don't know what that means, but it must mean something.

>> Jerry Weast: I think it means something. I'm not sure what it means or what the implications are, but we're going to have to do better, aren't we?

So let's talk about the pipeline. What do you see in the hope in the pipeline in, as far as programs, as far as targeting, as far as those kind of things? Anybody got any hope?

>> Mary Ronan: Jerry, we tried to grow, just because in Cincinnati in the past 3 1/2 years 30 of our 55 principals retired or left, which is just a huge number. Last year, it was only six. But the worst year was 13 left in one year. There is no way to find 13 qualified people. You really have to look to grow your own.

Plus, Cincinnati isn't really an exciting city like DC or New York, so you don't get people coming from all over the country to Cincinnati. So that's why we have been forced to really look at encouraging teachers to go back and get a master's degree in administration. We also have a high school for the teaching professions in the hopes of having some of our students go to college and then come back and work for us.

Otherwise, you aren't going to find those quality candidates or the minority candidates that you are looking for.

>> Jose Torres: I want to go back to the previous question, Jerry, and that was African-Americans and Hispanics sort of pegged into minority majority districts. It has to do with the pipeline, too, in that many of the districts are broken systems with high poverty, dysfunctional systems. So my first experience is in a highly dysfunctional system. I may not last. So I don't have opportunities to go to the Howard Counties and Fairfax and Montgomery Counties. I may have an opportunity to go to Baltimore City and DC. Some of the more challenging districts that have huge financial issues.

So it does create -- when I talk to my friends and they're looking at the pipeline, they say, Oh, OK, I can be a superintendent in that district, but not in that other district. So it does create a pipeline issue as well.

>> Jerry Weast: You brought up a very interesting thing. I've had occasion now to help 23 of the people who came through my former district become superintendents, and I wasn't aware that there are districts that won't hire African-Americans or Latinos. There's no sign out there that says that. But there's kind of an internal pipeline, isn't there, Jose? That you hear about?

>> Jose Torres: Absolutely.

>> Jerry Weast: They won't say it, but I found that with females too. It doesn't mean they won't hire. It's just they're less sensitive to that issue because they think they're reflecting the community. And I know that's a pejorative statement, but I'm old enough

now I can start saying a pejorative statement. You really do have to, and that's what Jose is talking about, the be intentional. That's what Larry is talking about, being intentional. If you want these, you have to differentiate also to go out and get them when they're teachers, if you're growing your own, help them through their college, create cohorts, bring the university closer to them, show some understanding, give them more than just a year's training before you throw them into the fire, give them good schools that are well to start with, don't put them in your toughest schools. Just like you would beginning teachers. Just like you would beginning teachers.

Andrew, policy?

>> Andrew Lachman: I want to pick up on Mary's notion and what you just said about tapping people and bringing them in. So part of that seems to me to be an issue of identifying the different route into the profession. So less focus on classroom and institutions of higher education and more focus on actually the real practice of educational leadership by doing, by having people in residencies, by actually making it possible for people to do the work and run the work the way that lawyers and doctors might do the work.

>> Jerry Weast: Let's go to Larry. Go!

>> Larry Leverett: I have benefited from programs that have been sensitive to the pipeline. In fact, two of those programs are sponsored or programs in the early days of the institution for educational leadership. I am a member of the educational policy fellowship program. 10, 15 years ago, I got into a network that didn't even begin to

look like this, but this network as a result of purposeful, intentional and deliberate action in recruiting, the diversity, the demographics of the network are slowly changing.

I came through Superintendents Prepared. Superintendents Prepared targeted people of color to work in urban districts. It was a program that had intent focused on recruiting black people and brown people early in their careers to consider and prepare them for the superintendency. I worked with Bob Peter at Harvard in the superintendent's program. The USB program, go online, check it out. Doctoral program, high quality, no alibis, no excuses -- alibis, no excuses. Targeted African-American, Latino, men and women. So if there is intentionality around creating the pipeline, we already know more than we need to know to disrupt the pipeline as it exists. Whether or not we change that will depend upon how we feel about the fact that we have not done so thus far.

>> Jerry Weast: Well said. Mary, I said some statements with regard to females and superintendency. We're gaining ground there. When I started 35 years ago, there weren't many females. I can remember in one of my shops, one of the females wanted to be superintendent, worked hard to be a superintendent. It was the same kind of thing "Well, you'll fit in this small district that has some problems." If you notice, we're targeting for urban. I want to target for suburban. I want to target for rural. I want to target for all of these folks. You shouldn't do what Jose is talking about, take

somebody, put them in a new job that has huge dysfunctionality to it. Mary, tell me about the hardships of breaking into the female superintendency.

>> Mary Ronan: When I was an administrator, there weren't even high school principals who were female. That's how long ago I came through the system. I was a high school assistant principal, but I kind of look around and thought, Shucks, there's 10 high schools, all with male principals. Ooh, 40 elementary schools with female principals. So I went the elementary route, because I into you that was the way to get ahead back then.

I never imagined myself as superintendent at that time. But one of the ways Ohio is trying to do a pipeline, just because they realize it's an issue, so the governor has put \$4 million aside for new leaders, for Ohio schools, and they're targeting Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati, the three big areas in the state. They're looking at recruiting mid-career individuals, which I thought was kind of interesting. They were looking at making them Board of Education members, Teach for America alumni, nonprofit, united way or Boys and Girls Club executive, in addition to your business executives and military folks, and we have to grow agree in the district to hire these people for internship, which is really like assistant principal, then they put them through 18 months of court work out of Ohio State. In 18 months, they have their license. That's how they're trying to increase the supply of principals in the three big cities in Ohio.

>> Jerry Weast: These are all good things. They're kind of random acts, though, aren't they? A little here, a little there? From people who have good intentions and some resources to do it. Because it takes resources. Because, if you're going to do the difficult situation, you've got to have resources to differentiate with. Where do people go now? How would you make this work? Larry?

>> Larry Leverett: I think we need to look at money. And where priorities are around the preparation of new leaders, not in the sense of new leaders but in terms of the assistance of leadership preparation.

I know a number of young men, African-American young men primarily, who are young in their careers, with families, with humongous student loans that strap them. And these are several of these young men are working their way through the system and slowly working their way through student loans.

When it comes to graduate school preparation, that's a huge barrier with a tab of \$60,000, \$65,000 to get through a two-year doctoral program in educational leadership, when you are already saddled.

You have to look at real financial incentives that open the pathway for people to have access to high-quality training that does not require to choose between them, their education and what their obligations are as family members.

>> Jerry Weast: Excellent. One of the things Mary said I want too go back to, and I want to hear from Andrew, Mary and Jose. I'll start with Mary first. She said, I had no idea I would be a superintendent. How many times have you heard that from teachers

who became principals? Somewhere along the way, somebody taps them.

Somebody sees that potential. Somebody helps them, mentors them, and moves them up. Is that correct, Mary?

>> Mary Ronan: Yes.

>> Jerry Weast: Yeah. That's what Larry is talking about. He's talking about he knows this group, but they have this barrier. So we've got to have a system that somehow finds the talent, somehow nurtures the talent and somehow supports the talent over a long enough period of time, and then we can't do like we do beginning teachers, put them in the toughest places. We've got to think about how we intentionally place them. And we're going to have to really work on that, because we can't have 1% or 2% of the leadership population supporting as role models 50% or 60% of the student population.

So tell me a little about what will we do differently when we get up out of our seat? What could we do differently to make that pipeline work? Jose, you're running a statewide organization now. Talk to me a little bit about that.

>> Jose Torres: Having been selected to be the President of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, I never would have thought I would have landed in that sweet spot. It is a really great organization, developing STEM talent among the highly gifted in Illinois, and also promoting STEM excellence in the state. And this is my third week in the job.

[Laughter]

Hopefully, you'll see the video maybe. In any case, it is not something that you aspire to be, because there were no role models there. There were a few teachers that are Latino. There's a couple of African-American teachers, and that's it.

In fact, I had a conversation with a teacher who just left. She was a chemistry, advanced chemistry teacher at the school, and every time -- when I met with her, what she told me was every time people met her they kept thinking she was going to teach Spanish.

The subtleness of discrimination and bias is everywhere. So I work for the national association of state boards of education and I happen to go to some of the circles that some of you go into. I would say I would find another person of color, say, hey, we're bringing color into this meeting. The fact is that when you inhabit the skin that we -- I know who I'm talking to, right? You guys know what I'm talking about. That is that you've got to be better, you've got to be more prepared, you always have to sort of prove yourself. So there's this sense that you've got to rise up and often you're the only person. So the system is getting the results that it's designed to get. The only way to get different results is to change the system. That means we've got to disrupt the power structures that are there. To do that, you have to have power and some money. You have to look at who's sitting on boards across the nation, who is sitting in CEO suites and so forth, and that's the system, and they're producing the results they're getting.

That may not give you a line-by-line, but when you talk about trust, people want trust, I equate trust with passion. So people want to be passionate about their work, and they've got to be able to -- some people will not take the risk that you need to take to disrupt the system, because you may be out of a job. And so you have to have enough confidence to say, You know what? I'm well prepared and if I'm not wanted here, I will be wanted somewhere else.

One last story, when I first started as superintendent in my school district, U-46, I was going into many classrooms. I go into a third grade classroom, this little girl looks up at me and said, a Latino girl, who are you? I'm like, I'm the superintendent. Third graders don't know what superintendent means.

[Laughter]

I learned that very early on. I said I'm the boss. You know who the principal is. I always ask, do you know who the principal is? Just in case. If they didn't know, I know I needed to destabilize the system.

[Laughter]

But she said yes. I said, well, I'm her boss, and I'm the boss of all the principals. She looked up at me and said, I want to be a superintendent!

[Laughter]

>> Andrew Lachman: I want to talk a little about Connecticut. There's a program intentionally finding people, giving them a two-month sabbatical at the end of the year,

before they actually take over a principalship, which they use as a community of practice to visit schools around the country, to see places that work, so they know that it can, in fact, happen. And basically to use that time to plan for taking over the school.

Then they go into a program where they are in the monthly community of practice, they have an executive coach who meets with them at least three or four times during the month. And basically is providing support to them to be more reflective practitioners and to be able to lead their school forward and close the achievement gap.

Then they leave that program after the year, and continue to get support for their leadership team and their work, because basically this is an ongoing adult learning that we're trying to foster, not a particular program and not any one "Here's your piece of paper, go do it."

>> Jerry Weast: Larry?

>> Larry Leverett: This assumption that we, upon granting a PhD or leadership or administration or field symposium prepares one for leadership of a complex organization or school district is archaic, that it just makes no sense. To graduate a person from school, whatever level, doctorate double, and then believe that that person can run for 20 or 30 years on whatever incidental knowledge he or she seeks to acquire voluntarily. It just is dumb.

[Laughter]

>> Jerry Weast: Well said.

[Laughter]

>> Larry Leverett: Andrew and I both have opportunities to work with in-service superintendents in professional learning communities that are organized to support the superintendency and the various challenges that superintendents are exposed to.

While we have, I in New Jersey have a restricted focus on equity and excellence as the purpose in theory of action for the New Jersey network of superintendents, which is now in its seventh year, and we've had 31 superintendents involved over those seven years, who are in classrooms, looking at instruction, talking with each other about instruction, bringing problems of practice, engaged in discussions of their theories of action, working through solutions, being exposed to high-performing superintendents, like Mary Ronan, who came there and talked to our districts, Jerry Weast and have real professional ongoing learning experiences that are multiple years in duration in a community in which there is high trust, high relationships and high support.

It matters what we do to support the superintendent leaders who are in very complex political jobs in which government structures are out of whack with reality and

superintendents do not have the power necessarily in their -- not power, authority in their role to do many of the things that are necessary as a cross-boundary leader.

Superintendents just don't lead schools. Real superintendents lead communities, across the sectors that touch upon the children and families they serve.

>> Jerry Weast: Very good. Mary?

>> Mary Ronan: I have to second what Larry said. When you hire principals, and you know -- hire 13 principals, you know early on they don't have the skills they need. We had to seek out professional development programs to support these individuals. We work with University of Virginia, the turnaround program. We work with our local university in Cincinnati to come up with an urban endorsement for our principals, because that was really important. We have a professional development in our district, because without those supports, as Larry said, these individuals who you have to hire because they were the best available, you've got to equip the skills to be successful, or you really have defeated the whole purpose. I have to say it is so, so important.

>> Jerry Weast: We're going to turn it over to you. I think the panel has done an excellent job trying to outline we need to improve the quantity and we need to be deliberate about that. We need to improve the quality. That means the support for all people. And we need to be more deliberate in how we are going about this, because the educational opportunity for our children means the educational opportunity for our country. And when you think about it, our country is dealing with some very complex

issue is, and we are a small country in a big world. We like to think of our 300 million people being big, but there's about 7 billion people in the world, and there's a whole lot of problems.

We can't just educate half of the children in the country. We have to educate all of the children, because even if we do, that's only 50-some million children, trying to help make a world and keep 800 strong.

In order to do that, there have to be leaders. Leaders have to be well qualified and we can't be fixing to get ready. We have got to start doing something.

IEL has embarked on that. We're talking about this, because the pipeline isn't so big, maybe they need to get back into the leadership training or getting into how to do some more help for that role.

Let's turn it over to you. Who's got a question? Yes?

>> I didn't hear you talk about school boards. I'm wondering, because of the conservative bent that's happening around school board elections and money coming in for conservative candidates, they are actually people that hire superintendents. How do you increase the pipeline in the school board area because that diversity is probably worse than it is in our own superintendent environment?

And then who would actually be crazy enough to run for a school board, and how do you prepare them to do that?

>> Jerry Weast: Anybody want to take that one?

>> Larry Leverett: As a former school board member?

>> Jerry Weast: Yes, go ahead.

>> Larry Leverett: Government is like a huge elephant in the room, Greg, that needs to be addressed. Superintendents' tenure, we're all concerned about how do we create stability, like Jerry said, as one of the things people are most in position through an organization. Yet, we have a government structure that micromanages, wants to be involved in patronage, wants to get its hands dirty in all areas of operation where they have absolutely no business.

As we talk about the development of superintendents, we also need to think about the development of boards, and helping them to grow from where they are to where they need to be. And even with that, we will not be able to preclude people entering the -- seeking election that are single interest candidates or funded by people like the Koch brothers. That's not going to happen.

Money is just a pervasive evil in this education environment, policy environment. If you've got money, and big money, you can get elected and you can come in, you can play nationally, you can play locally in school board elections, play wherever you want. Something has to be done somewhere to equalize the democratic access that this country is founded upon, so that the outcomes of government should not be driven by the will of those who have wealth.

[Applause]

>> Jerry Weast: One of the things I want to talk about is we have tried different government structures. We have tried appointing by governors. We've tried the mayoral. We've tried spinning off charters, having their own boards, different states have actually thought about vouchers and actually done it.

In all of the structures, the data is fair conclusive about which structure works better. In fact, the data really show that they're all equally --

[Laughter]

-- not as effective as we would like.

[Laughter]

I'll try to say that positively.

What I think I would like is where you have -- I want these folks to comment on it, where you have an excellent superintendent, somebody that actually does lead the community, a superintendent that actually understands the people who do the work are in the classrooms and support the classrooms, a superintendent that actually actively engages the parents, there's less of a problem with the Board of Education. That's why I think we need highly trained leaders who know how to run the complex organization.

Any feedback on that? Would you say that was true? Mary, you haven't had any trouble with your board, so Jose?

>> Mary Ronan: Well, Jerry, we have all of the above that you mention in Ohio. We have control of some of the large districts. We have charters. I have 40 charters

operating within my boundaries. We have vouchers for private and parochial schools, so I have 8500 children in charters, 3500 on vouchers.

Everything has been tried, and I think you're right, I think we're grappling with what is the appropriate structure to really make things work. In fact, at this point we're actually sponsoring two charter schools to try to regain some of our market share, and that's an interesting dynamic between the elected school board and the board that runs the charter that the union sponsored. That's an interesting dance among board members.

My board members think I'm keeping all of the principals locked up in a room somewhere, only letting the poor ones out, because they just don't understand that the supply isn't out there and you need money and resources once you hire someone to develop them. And I think that point is missed. They're always looking for that person from somewhere else who's going to come in and turn things around.

>> Jerry Weast: Well said. One other thing I want to make a comment on. We didn't really start making the kind of progress that we needed to with all of the children until we put race on the table. It is something that is not talked about in America. It's certainly a hot topic to talk about within the context of a complex organization. But you do have to talk about it. You can't just dance around it. Everybody needs a lot of preparation. We actually put our principals through a year or year and a half preparation about how to deal with it, and how to talk about it. The same thing with our leadership. So that is the potential if you want to get diversity on boards, you want

to get diversity in your program, you have to be intentional about it, just like your hiring is intentional, just like we spend more time, it seems like, choosing our cars. I noticed in the "USA Today" poll this morning, than we do choosing our doctors, about twice as much time. So we're very intentional about choosing which car we're going to drive, but not intentional on some of the stuff that really make a difference, like our 401-Ks and our doctors and things like that. We're going to have to get intentional about this diversity business.

Jose, you wanted to say something?

>> Jose Torres: I was going to say, I'm on the preparation that superintendents needed, so obviously how do you need a Board of Education this people who are very committed, as I was trying to figure out how do I propose to candidates that they should consider running. I said look, this is the proposal. You get to come on Monday, every other Monday night, and you don't make really key decisions. You don't get to run the district. That's my job. You get to approve the budget. You get to hire and evaluate the superintendent. You get to approve policies, and you get to sit and hear criticism, and you cannot respond, because if you go to respond that's a track.

Then when you go buy your milk at the grocery store, people will attack you. And for that, in our district and in Illinois, you get no money.

[Laughter]

So how about that? Would you like to run?

[Laughter]

So the people who are there, who do run, they're really getting their wings. They're really our saints. Some of them are doing it for pure motives, no self-interest. Some of them then, of course, are using it as a steppingstone. But the superintendent has to figure out how do you motivate, how do you lead, how do you stroke the board without spending 50% of your time so that you can actually run the organization as well.

>> Jerry Weast: Like the man with confidence. He had confidence in the training. What I'm worried about if we don't train well, they won't make those statements. He had a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities and worked through that.

Other questions? Go. Yes, over here.

>> Thank you. Executive Director for the national association for family school and community engagement. I appreciate the amount of time we spent on the professional development around educational leadership and also the importance of intentionalizing and embracing diversity in that leadership.

I'm curious if you could respond to how you have addressed particularly the superintendents, how you addressed building capacity around culturally responsive family engagement in your principals. Recent research indicates that generation-wide teachers' number one fear for leaving the profession, failing the profession is their lack of preparation to engage families. It's not really happening in higher education as it needs to, so professional development is essential. I'm curious in you could respond. Thank you.

>> Jerry Weast: Who would like that one?

>> Larry Leverett: It's an important area of significant need. I can tell you about work I've done around disconnected, developing culturally responsible approaches to parent engagement, family engagement, but reality is that that work is pretty isolated. And there is a systemic lack of understanding across types of communities, all types of communities, be they rural, urban or suburban, around the importance of cultural responsiveness in both instruction and engaging with families. That is an area, as you know, we don't do well.

Again, there's an abundance of knowledge, an abundance of research, clear evidence that engaging parents, engaging students in culturally responsive modalities changes the affiliation, increases the rate of engagement and builds a stronger connection and relationship that is necessary to either support change in a community or school, or to support a child's persistence in a teaching and learning environment. A lot of work needs to be done in that area.

>> Jerry Weast: When I look at school districts now, after being out three years and helping other superintendents, when I don't see a community engagement sitting on the cabinet level position or sitting in somebody's area of responsibility, or at least being there on your flow chart, then I start looking: What are you doing with parent academies? What are you doing with teaching parents? Or parents will do the -- poor parents will do the same as rich parents, once they learn how to work the system. Rich parents, I've noticed, don't put up with poor teaching. Poor parents, they get

angry, but they don't know how to work the system, so you have to teach them how to kick your butt, just like the rich parents do. Once they learn and know how to approach, the fear goes out of the situation. So it's intentional.

One of the ways you can judge your school district is where is the engagement happening and who's in charge of it and how close is it to the superintendent, and how intentional is it.

Other questions? We have a lot of them. Yes?

>> Good morning, I'm Lucy Getman, national school boards association. I'm just really glad to see that school boards and local governments are a part of this conversation. In fact, my boss Reggie Felton used to be your boss at Montgomery County school board.

>> Jerry Weast: He hired me.

>> I agree that how school boards function are vital to the success of school districts and communities, because, first of all, so much more as a location of political leadership, they so much better reflect our country in terms of over 40% of local school board members are women, 17% are African-American, 6% or 7% are Latino. That's not enough, not completely reflective of our country, but a lot closer than state legislature and Congress.

A little trivia question, anybody have a guess what percent of members of Congress were local school board members earlier in their career? 4%. Maybe if we

had more local school district perspective in Congress, we would get a little more of what we want coming in as well.

>> Jerry Weast: Question?

>> My question is --

[Laughter]

Oh, darn.

>> Jerry Weast: I like the advertisement.

>> What advise would you give to anybody and everybody in this room who maybe wanted to run a school board campaign, knowing that 3/4 of those campaigns cost \$1,000 or less?

>> Jerry Weast: Anybody? It's a good question. Go.

>> Jose Torres: As my board members used to say, there are no losers in board member elections. Because if you lose, you actually win.

[Laughter]

I think you just have to be clear understanding the role before you run, and understand that you're not going to be able to run the district, and there is really I think it's a really selfless act.

I understand there are some boards that get paid, but they don't get paid enough for what they would have to put up with. Again, what would be done, the way to support local schools is to have strong, effective school board members. Unless we

change the whole system. Because that is part of the system. With that, I'll leave it to you.

>> Jerry Weast: One of the best ways is to be as transparent as you possibly can, even in large, complex organizations. Embrace whoever runs. Bring them in. Show them the complexity of the organization. Help them to understand. Open your employees to talk to them. Don't just talk to them yourself, so they see different viewpoints. And get he them as much information as they can.

I think if they're not coming with the sword, with a single interest issue, which I think is a problem, most of them open up and become very reasonable people. They have to learn to work together.

Now, the single issue people, we're getting more and more of those, because there's what Larry was saying, they're getting endorsed and their campaigns are being paid for, and they're coming on with single notions. So we need to do more about that.

Other questions?

>> My question is fitting, I think, given that we're here at the NEA. I'd like to know what role you think unions can play in promoting leadership in education and in promoting diversity.

>> Jerry Weast: I'm going to answer my point on that. I think they're vital. If you didn't -- I've been in states that have right to work, and I've been in states that were highly unionized. That's the people doing the work in the field. You have to have some organization to communicate with them. Even when the reunion is not strong,

you need a strong association. Because you can't communicate with everybody all at once. It's good to have a representative type of organization. I've never feared the union, I've embraced the union. Andy?

>> Andrew Lachman: I second that. I think that you're closest to teaching and learning, and that's where the action is, and it's what make the most difference. So the union has a clear role in ensuring that the people who are in the profession actually have the skill and knowledge that they need, it needs to make sure that the people who are in the profession, who shouldn't be in the profession, are not in the profession, that they're going to be professionals. And it needs to have a commitment to ongoing professional learning.

>> Jerry Weast: I would make one caveat on my statement also. If they're single interest, like a single interest board member, then you have to really put up a fuss. That's not what I'm talking about. If they're only interested in wages and working conditions, then we've got an issue. If they're really interested in professional development and community, then the embrace comes. Even if they're not there, you got to help them get there, because they are the people who absolutely make the difference. We're the only organization in the country that doesn't listen to their employees. Pretty amazing.

>> I wanted to make sure. I'm asking do you think the union can play a role in promoting diversity? Do you see administrators being able to work to have the union help develop those new leaders?

>> Larry Leverett: Unions are key across the organization, across the challenges. Unions need to be at the table and partner in figuring this out. So the answer is yes, yes, and yes.

>> Mary Ronan: Definitely. If you're looking to grow administrators and looking at your teacher leaders, you want your teacher leaders to be a diverse group with the support of the unions. So definitely.

>> Jose Torres: I would add to that, just like all of us are looking at who's at the table, we need to look at who's at the table. So who is at the board level at the local union? Do they represent the students? Meaning demographically. If they're not, how do they promote that leadership in order to increase the diversity within their ranks?

>> Jerry Weast: So to sum up, and we've got to end, this panel has done a great job. Would you give them a hand?

[Applause]

We talked about four things when we kicked off. We've got to bring back trust, we've got to bring back stability, some compassion, and some hope of understanding the work and the complexity of the work.

In order to do that, we've got to be more intentional, to engage our community and, frankly, to engage our students. We've got to do more than just prepare them, we have to inspire them to go on, and that takes a fully engaged workforce. That doesn't happen by chance, and that's what this panel has pointed out.

They pointed out some things we can do when we get up out of our seat to be more intentional. If we do those things, and really do put race on the table and start talking about diversity and engagement, I think we will start to do a better job of supporting our children in the complex world that they're going to be dealing with when they take over, and that isn't going to be too long. It happens quicker than you think.

I think IEL can play a big role in that, if they choose to, and I think you and your different organizations can too. So let's all work together. Thank you!

[Applause]

>> The key is always organizing good photographs for us. We should absolutely let her do that. It's interesting the complexity is not something that the media does very well. We're going to be asking you to tweet. I hope you will tweet some of the complexity dimensions of what this panel talked about, because as we move to shorter and shorter and shorter sound bites, it's hard to capture the complexity of the challenges we face. And it's hard to be modest about the issues like race that this panel has put on the table.

So I hope you will keep those themes in mind as we go forward.

Also, because I missed this as I am want to do, we want -- please tweet. IEL's Twitter handle is IEL connects. The events hash hash tag is #IEL50. Please come up and use the microphones and help us to really push the lessons and the ideas out that are here.

Now we did have a question about family engagement. That's the second pillar in IEL's work. What's the public's role, including the role of families in public education? My colleague Kwesi Rollins, a member of the leadership team here at the institute will be moderating that panel. Kwesi, if you and your colleagues, Jitu, sue and Yolie come up, we'll move this along. Thank you.

Family Engagement in Education

>> Kwesi Rollins: So good morning.

>> Good morning.

>> Kwesi Rollins: Good morning, good morning, good morning. Good morning. My name is Kwesi Rollins, director of leadership programs at the Institute for Educational Leadership, and really happy to be leading a conversation around a critical issue. The opening question for this panel, state district and school leaders struggle with how to cultivate and sustain positive relationships with families that can improve outcomes. Are we making progress?

Actually, the quick answer is it depends who you talk to. In some ways we are. Over the years, we've gotten much better at this. We've learned a lot. No shortage of strategies. Everything from home visitation to academic parent teacher teams in terms of intensity. No shortage of frameworks. One of the older frameworks kind of

launched by Joyce Epstein was the six types of involvement, six types of parent involvement. That's probably, what, 25, 30 years ago?

We've got lots of frameworks, even this spring the US Department of Education released its framework in dual capacity building framework for family school partnerships, and laid it out very nicely in that document. Over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in a child's education. As supporters of learning, encouraged use of grit and determination, as models of lifelong learning and advocates of proper programming and placements for their child.

IEL and among many of our partners our working definition of family engagement is really one that was kind of launched officially by the national working group on family, school and community engagement, and that is that family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to engaging families in meaningful and culturally respective ways, and families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development. Family engagement should be continuous I do not see a child's life, spanning from cradle to career and beyond. Certainly, spanning from early head start programs to college prep. And family engagement should be carried out everywhere that children learn, at home, in pre-K programs, preschool programs and schools and after-school programs and think-based institutions and other community programs and activities.

That definition recognizes that family engagement needs to focus on activities that are linked to children's learning at home, at school and in the community.

So as we explore this question, I want to just kind of briefly introduce our three speakers, then they're going to take 5-7 minutes to kind of lay out their perspective on this issue, then we'll have a dialogue, a conversation.

Our first speaker is Yolie Flores. She's got over 25 years of leadership experience in program policy and advocacy work on behalf of the needs of children and families from cradle to career and beyond. Yolie has worked in the nonprofit sector, in city government and philanthropy. She's a past member of the Board of Education of the Los Angeles unified school district and currently a Senior Fellow in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Sue Swenson is Deputy Assistant Secretary US Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. She's active in the Minneapolis schools as well as in state and federal policy before being named a Joseph P. Kennedy fellow in the US Senate in 1996. She previously served as CEO of The Arc of the United States, as Executive Director of the Kennedy Foundation and also as a US commissioner for developmental disabilities in the Clinton Administration.

And lastly, Jitu Brown, from Chicago, former community schools coordinator, former educational organizer with the Kenwood open community organization in Chicago, now the National Director of jury for justice, alliance grassroots communities youth and parent-led organization in 36 cities. Is that the right number?

>> Jitu Brown: That's hopeful. More like 23.

>> Kwesi Rollins: 23 cities around the country. I'm thinking in the city.

>> Jitu Brown: Yes, sir.

>> Kwesi Rollins: Pushing back and demanding community led organizations. First we will hear from Yolie.

>> Yolie Flores: Good morning.

>> Good morning.

>>

>> Yolie Flores: Before I start I wanted to commend the first panel. I found it quite refreshing that I would come to a panel in Washington, DC that, from the get-go, puts race on the table. Unapologetically and very courageously. So it gave me, I think, a little bit more confidence that I could follow suit, which I would do anyway.

[Laughter]

But it's always helpful to have some company in the room. So thank you to the panel for that.

And actually, my remarks are really related to that, because when we ask the question are we making progress, the answer is it depends, and it begs the question for whom.

So I'll start with giving you sort of the good news. It's the progress that I think we are making, and that helps me breathe with a normal heartbeat when I think about this kind of progress.

So I think over the last decade or so we've seen the emergence of some very exciting work across the nation, in cities and states, and even here in Washington, DC. We've seen the emergence of great new curricula and models. The people that I have the opportunity to work with now in my role at the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, where my focus is on the role of parents, has led me to know the parent leadership training institute out of Connecticut, the work in California with parent institute for quality education, the work around the country with parent voices and parent ambassadors, that range from leadership development to organizing of parents to real skill building, to really understand how to navigate school systems and systems in general for children and their families.

We even are seeing, well, we have seen this actually, I think we started with some intentionality around parents with Head Start. So we're building on that, and I think the momentum is growing.

We see school districts today, including my own in Los Angeles, that have placed great technology. We have parent portals. We have texting to give parents information. There's much more technology in play to try to engage and inform and keep parents in the know.

In some places we're seeing great efforts to train teachers and school staff support on how to better work with and involve and engage parents. And some states we see parent engagement actually become a more systematic and intentional, and I use intentional actually very softly, engaging parents.

So again, one of my favorite leading states is Connecticut for the work that they're doing. The parent trust act, where there's almost a billion dollars available to bring parents to the work of community and for them to actually lead.

We see progress in philanthropy. Recently Kellogg and their family engagement parent leadership and family engagement RFP process drew over 1100 grantees, the largest ever on any initiative. And at the federal level, Kwesi, you mentioned the new framework, we've seen Secretary Duncan push for doubling the amount of title I dollars for parent engagement. We've seen evidence that the feds meant business when in Race to the Top, the early learning challenge grant, there was extensive language on family engagement.

So I think there is progress. But I get cranky --

[Laughter]

-- and my heartbeat increases dramatically when I really look at what is actually happening on the ground. And what is actually happening on the ground, especially for poor parents and parents of color, is frankly pathetic.

We see parents very disconnected from their school systems. We see that parents actually hear a lot of talk about parent engagement and parent involvement. But we don't see a real walking of the talk.

We see very few indications that schools are actually reaching some of the most disconnected parents. And I'll tell you a little story in the last minute of my opening, about a recent set of events in Los Angeles, to make a point.

We also see that schools are still focusing more on engaging families in school, participating in school site councils perhaps or encouraging them to be part of PTA, but we don't see them really extending themselves to encourage and engage families in the supporting and education of their children at home, and what that means, and equipping them with the skills and knowledge and supports that they need.

Families and teachers still, by and large, report each other as the problem. I experience this day in and day out as a school board member. I'm still recovering, by the way.

[Laughter]

And we continue to see a gap between what teachers want children to know when they arrive at school and what parents think children should know and be able to do. That gap is still enormous.

And at every school site I see way too few dollars dedicated to parent engagement. Even when you have as the floor 1% of Title I, hopefully at some point it will be 2%, most school districts, at least in California, will barely reach that amount.

And my other huge concern is that -- by the way, this is not on schools alone. Employers and business, speaking of really crossing the -- cutting across boundaries and helping us be leaders across systems for children and families, employers are no help, especially for families in low-income jobs.

I don't know how many of you read the Starbucks story in "The New York Times." About a mom, a single parent and her child, who never knew what time she

was going to be called in, what her schedule would be the next day. How can a parent structure their life with their child, make sure they're in school when they need to get to school or early education programs, when they have no idea, day by day, what their work life or work day will be like?

So it's on all of us, really, to figure out how to really honor the role of parents in the education of their children.

Am I out of time?

>> Kwesi Rollins: Yes.

>> Yolie Flores: I will come back and tell you the story, because it makes the point.

>> Kwesi Rollins: No, tell the story.

>> Yolie Flores: OK.

[Laughter]

So this incident actually this winter, winter 2014, earlier this year, led by united way wanted to get a sense how much progress was allied yune fied making. I had ushered a resolution while a school board member called parents as equal partners in the education of their children. It was groundbreaking. It was going to change the culture and behavior and the commitment of our school district for how it really engaged and shared power with parents.

So it was a lofty idea. On the board, commitment by superintendent. So fast forward four years. It's been four years since I left the board. It was the last thing I ushered through. It was the first and last. My colleagues at United Way led an efforts

to have parents go and visit schools, and they were going to visit schools and asked to see the school report card, which has been in place almost six years in Los Angeles. They were to ask for a tour of the school. They were to ask for information about the school's curriculum. And ask if they could come back and bring their spouse or family member to also visit the school.

68 schools were visited throughout the district. And here was the result: When I talk about low-income families, I'm really talking about black and brown families in LA. Parents from low-income families were less likely to get a copy of the school report card. At their school, staff actually had no idea what that was. Some parents had to point out, Oh, it's that document there on your counter.

Yet, our families in our more affluent areas were immediately given a copy of the scorecard and shared what the results were, what other information the parent needed.

Parents that visited in low-income communities of LA unified were more likely to be asked to provide ID, and adequate verification before any questions could be answered.

Across the district, actually this is across all families that participated, school staff were not able to answer the question about their school curriculum, but all of them asked, Could I follow up? There isn't anyone now to answer my question.

Only in higher income communities were parents followed up with. Not one parent from any of the low-income schools had anyone follow up with them.

Then when they asked for the school tours, majority of black and Latino families were told that tours were not available, and if they did want a tour they needed to come back with their ID. Now we have the best technology, I love the parent portal, it is in almost every elementary school, we have a parent leadership program for Latino immigrant parents. It is making progress.

What I see -- when I see what is actually happening every day in the relational aspect of what it means to engage parents, it's authentic partners in the education of their children. We have a long way to go in Los Angeles. We have a long way to go across the nation.

>> Kwesi Rollins: Thanks, Yolie. Sue?

>> Sue Swenson: Good morning, everybody.

>> Good morning.

>> Sue Swenson: When I was in Minneapolis, I have three sons, two of whom were always being recruited to the gifted programs, one of whom, in the middle, never walked the talk. My advocacy was about special education, which I learned was an equal opportunity minority. So the special education advisory councils include people who were wealthy, people in poverty, from all backgrounds. It was pointless to try to recruit as many of these people as possible.

I just want you to know that the people at my son's school called me the nice lady from hell.

[Laughter]

Because I was always -- is this on? I'm sorry. I'm getting a signal it's not.

>> It's a little hard to hear. So speak closer.

>> Sue Swenson: I will. I'm a little tall for the mic. Because the nice lady from hell, because I was never mean, I never sued them, I told them at the beginning of every meeting I will never sue you under this law, which was seen as a giving over of power. But I also never went away, and I never stopped asking for what I thought my son and other children both with and without disabilities needed in school.

What I learned very early was that my rights to an IEP and my rights to write an individualized plan for my son were not guaranteed. If I wanted inclusive experiences for him, which is what best practice shows is the only thing that works, I needed to make sure that the school was inclusive of the needs of all of the children in the school. And that meant a very different kind of work than what IDEA puts out in front of us.

So here I am now, in the federal agency that oversees IDEA. I worked at the Senate on reauthorization. I sometimes worry that the law is letting us think in compliance. I want to really underline that I think it's progress for us to learn this. In 1975, when the law was written, we thought if you give parents individual rights and due process rights, and they have to sign a contract before their child can come to school, it will be better for them.

What I've learned is your child with a disability is the only child who requires a contract to attend the school. And not only is it an individualized education program

for your child, but there's a placement committee. There are no other programs in education where a team of teachers decides whether the child shall be allowed that the school or not.

In Minneapolis what I learned is my African-American and Native American friends didn't want their children to be assessed for special education, because the risk of segregation came with it. This is a serious problem, and we are only now getting to the point where the civil rights data collection to be able to overlap and look at these data and understand what happens to children of color who are in special education and how is that different from majority children or wealthy children.

It's a really serious problem. So a couple of things. Alexis Tutochville said that the future of democracy depends on the education of mothers, because it's mothers who will educate children and tell them to question authority. Going back to Jerry Weast's point about you have to encourage people giving them enough information to kick butt.

This is something that is in compliance system terribly undervalued and underrated. It's very difficult to come up against a school district that spends more money on lawyers than it does on special education. And there are some.

Most lawyers are there to keep you out. So we need to go in in a different way and have different kind of partnership with the schools. I tried to do that. I tried to do it based on my knowledge that trust -- anybody know who Vince Covello is? Anybody know who Oprah Winfrey is?

[Laughter]

Vince was a journalist that Columbia University trained Oprah Winfrey in how to speak about issues, how to talk to people about issues. He has a simple calculus, which is trust equals caring plus credibility.

I tried to always go into everything I did, because I learned that when I worked in the field, I tried to go in and really figure out what does the teacher need? What caring can I provide? Or what information can I provide? Or which one is missing here that would allow her or him to make a decision to really get involved in educating my child, beyond the level of compliance that's offered by the law?

So if you go out for lunch today, you go into a lovely restaurant and you order your lunch, and the waiter comes to your table. He says what would you like for lunch? We have wonderful specials today. You say, I don't care what you bring me, it just better not have any bugs in it.

[Laughter]

That's compliance level advocacy. I cannot tell you how many times I have trained parents to say, No. Don't go in and demand compliance with IDEA. Your goal is to go in and demand what is the teacher going to do beyond compliance? I noticed with my children, when they were talking about Will or Eric, the school said, Oh, you're going to be so -- you're going to love what we're doing. We have this language program or that or this. It's really interesting. We have lots of AP courses.

With Charlie, they never said it, but the underlying message was what is the least we can do without being sued?

This is a profound problem when trying to engage parents in the trusting and caring in an incredible way in your schools.

If they see that on the face of person, it doesn't matter what their race is, it doesn't matter what their economic background is, they can all see that on the face of the IEP team.

OK. How can I teach your kid as little as possible? This is one of the reasons we have many school districts in the United States where 15% of the students with IEPs are able to read at a fourth grade level. 15% of the students with IEPs. And 12% of the students in school have IEPs. We're talking about a lot of kids with very, very poor outcomes.

Why are we talking about this when I'm supposed to be talking about progress? Because we know it now. We didn't used to know it, and that's progress.

Getting to the point where we have report cards and we have answers and we can begin to say, Here's what's wrong with the way we've been doing things, and here are some of the things we need to do differently.

I'm really glad Yolie mentioned our framework. I will not go into it. I encourage you to look it up online. It's brilliant and profound. Under IDEA we fund a new project called swift schools, which I think it's swiftschools.org. It is designed to encourage

schools to build trusting relationships with parents around issues of special education and English as a second language and Title I, and really bring those together.

We have parents in schools who are -- you can't sign away your IEP rights, because those are constitutional rights, but you can give up the IEP process. We have parents in swift schools that are stepping back and saying, You know what? I'm getting so much information, and I have so much trust, that I feel free to set down some of this legal, the big sword that I go in with, which is what I used to do when I went in all the time. Just say, Let them sue you under this law.

I also want to point to you, because is IEL, you've got to know the IEL guidelines, the transition guidelines. You've got to look at their work on families and engagement and how do we make sure that families have the support that they need.

I want to tell you a story. It's really important. Thomas Jefferson had a sister who was two years younger than he was. Her name was Elizabeth. He was very close to her. He was very close to her the whole time she grew up. When their mother died, he became responsible for caring for her at Monticello. Therefore, refused to be engaged in political activity for many years while he was caring for her. Refused to run for office before the nation was a nation, refused to get involved and wrote in his diary "I can't. I'm responsible for Elizabeth."

Elizabeth today would probably be called severely autistic. Then she was called imbecile. She spoke a few words, took a few steps, but wasn't responsible to care for herself. This is Thomas Jefferson. She died in 1774. There was an earthquake at

Monticello followed by a hurricane. She ran out into the storm and drowned in a local street. He, at that time, was able to step up and be engaged in public life.

I'm telling you this story because a lot of parents and children with disabilities, engagement is something they can't do unless you will support them to care for their children, to bring their children to the meeting, to have childcare at the meeting, to serve supper at the meeting. Five minutes of extra time to think about stuff just isn't on their schedule.

We owe these words "I believe" to a woman with disabilities. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. That sentiment was not written in some kind of puffy idealistic way. It was written by a man who understood that people come in all kinds of shapes and sizes.

I think we're still in American schools not in a place with students with disabilities where we realize that. We think their rights to be educated can be circumscribed by this little law we call IDEA. We don't understand that the real right to be educated comes from the heart and soul of the teacher and the leader who is willing to work beyond compliance. If you're not working beyond compliance, you're just a manager.

You have to reach out beyond and say, What is it we can do for these students with disabilities, so they can grow up, be employed, for their parents to understand that.

Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Kwesi Rollins: Jitu, take us home.

>> Jitu Brown: Good morning, everyone.

>> Good morning.

>> Jitu Brown: I'm grappling with the question, it's almost negative, but I think it's important. Maybe the best way I can share this is like this, when I was a little boy, I was a rabid Bears fan. Me and my father would watch Walter Payton. I just fell in love with football. I knew that I would play for the Bears one day.

[Laughter]

I played football in high school, college. I was pretty good. It felt like I was going to play in the NFL. Then went to an NFL camp, realized that that dream was going to die in camp.

[Laughter]

Which it did. But what came from that was I was in the music industry for a while, and moderately successful, and the record label had me go to a school in Chicago called Shakespeare, in 1991.

I go to school in Shakespeare, this school is on south side of Chicago. I'm in a room full of young guys. They're laying back like "Who is this guy?" We talked about the music industry, had a wonderful session. One of them looked at me said, You're

not coming back tomorrow. It hit me, this is what I'm supposed to do. I wanted to become a radio DJ, but realized working with young people is what I was supposed to do. It was weird, I dropped everything and started volunteering at a local community organization and learned how to do -- learned from a very skilled man how to work with schools in the community and how to do leadership development programs with young people. Because there was a need for our young people to be inspired.

I lived in a neighborhood where we didn't own anything in it. You go to the corner store, it is owned by somebody else. You go to the gas station, it's owned by somebody else. The community is Bronzeville, which is where Dr. Daniel Williams, the first man to perform successful surgery on a human heart, set up his hospital. It's where Dr. Martha burrows started the museum of black history. It's also where Sam Cook and Minny Ripton, civil rights leaders were. Where reverend Jesse Jackson set up rainbow push. It's where the oldest African-American led grassroots organization in the city is at. Where the first mayor of Chicago, Dr. Harold Washington, went to high school. Where Eddie Harris and Nat king Cole and Dinah Washington went to high school. It's a historic community, if you get my point.

Now in 1991, we didn't own anything in it, and I felt the schools was a way to begin to engage young people, to teach them they can be masters of their own community, not just customers. Because our schools were in pretty bad shape, I was with -- there was a group of us. They loved to see young African-American men that were positive that would come into the schools. The school opened its doors. We did

incredible work. We took young people to the Native American reservation in Maine. We took them to the United Nations to talk about some of the real issues impacting young people. They weren't just going to be on the bus, they were active participants. Then things began to change.

Paul Vallas became CEO of Chicago public schools, and they ushered in school probation. You started seeing the schools a lot less willing to have people in the community at the school, from 9:00 to 11:30 was reading block, then the curriculum was now, so the teachers didn't have the space to really teach. A lot of teachers have to use direct instruction. They weren't able to really utilize the art in which they were trained.

So then you began to hear about schools getting ready to close. And the district was even less willing to have community people in the school.

Now, the school that I sat on the local school council since 2003, because we opposed the closing of that school, if I go to the school Chicago public schools safety and security surrounds me. And this is the same school where I got a grant for \$75,000 to improve the library. We mentored students. I can go on.

I think that we've actually regressed in regards to districts engaging young people and systems engaging people in the community and parents and being open to community wisdom. Because what I learned was that it's community wisdom and academic expertise that go together to help make school improvements.

There are people in our community that have relationships with our students, that our teachers would never have. They have credibility with our students, but our teachers will never have.

I have just seen a lot over the past 10 to 15 years that has taught me we have a long way to go, because there's a perception of people in our communities, whether you're in Detroit or in Baltimore, whether you're in Los Angeles. Yolie was talking about Los Angeles. One of the most brilliant men I ever met was Alberto Guttano from the community coalition in Los Angeles, or inner city struggle, or Chicago local square neighborhood association. They created neighborhood schools. These Latino women on the north side of Chicago. New York started the student success program in Brooklyn. A student-led program, which increased the graduation rate by 67%. Three straight years at this school. District funded.

We have moved forward in regards to our capacity and our communities, to not just be mentors, to actually bring a level of expertise into our schools, to help inspire them. But I think that the districts, because in many urban districts, even rural ones too, you look in Mississippi, you look at Eudora, Mississippi, they're closing entire African-American school districts. They're shutting down school districts and moving young people past the white district right next to them, to the adjacent African-American school district 25 miles away from their homes. That's not progress to me. It's not progress when folks in New Orleans, during one of the worst natural disasters in our history, their voices aren't listened to, basically their city is used as a

gold rush for privatization. That shouldn't be OK with any of us. That's not an anti-charter school statement. The charter school, under the original intent, are needed. There's a charter school operated in Chicago, Urban Prep, urban prep does wonderful things in preparing, making sure young people get to college. They have other issues, like only 41% of their freshmen graduate. That's a problem. What happens is many people view educational profit develop really creative systems for selecting our young people, then kicking our young people out, and presenting it as progress.

Well, folks in our community are a little sharp. I think in Chicago you close 50 schools, then you see violence explode. Nobody has put 2 and 2 together to say if Johnny is 16 years old, he's sitting on the bus stop in the community that's not his, his life is in danger.

These are not small things. These are not like just anecdotes. These are realities in Los Angeles, in Oakland, in Detroit, in New Orleans, in Philadelphia, in Camden, New Jersey. I think what's problematic with that is that when you don't engage the people directly impacted, which you basically have are invader institutions in your community. When schools are supposed to be community institutions, they're supposed to be institutions that help stabilize neighborhoods. So in the African-American community historically everybody knew it's always been the church. Well, it's not the church anymore. If you go drive down a block, down a four-block radius in any black community in the United States, you're liable to see 15, 16

churches. The role of the churches is no longer sacred. That's telling you that from the ground. But schools are.

So I think that there are a lot of folks who are very lettered and director of talent for this and director of talent for that, but they're missing key elements of real leadership. One thing I learned in the community, I am with the Journey for Justice Alliance, but I'm with a grassroots organization that has always been about community organizing. We got about 800 members. A lot of our members are generational. They were not -- they came at 4, they're 26 years old, they have two children. Their children are now in day care. Our relationship is not based on the relationship, but based on love. We fought the privatization of schools in our community with a level of fury that's been important, it's been critical.

There are some things that I think are missing in the corporate education agenda or in the way that districts are moving. I want to mention them very quickly. Four key components of leadership that I was taught is, one, the ability to listen. That means not just endure, like folks may have to endure some school boards sometimes, but really to listen. To respect the voice and the wisdom of the people that you're dealing with. Some of the wisest people I met, one of the strongest women I work with Linda Brown, she died in 2006, Linda was parent coordinator in the elementary school. She was so dedicated she had a heart attack right there on the first floor of the school. Three days later she was back at school. I'm not making this up. Her response, whenever I call her, say, Miss Brown, we got this meeting, is you know how that goes.

It was anything for the kids. She lived it. So her courage and her consistency and her sense of really being honest about her love for children inspired me. It made me a better organizer. It made me more accountable. The ability to listen is missing in what we see through what's happening in the urban school districts today.

Also the ability to believe. I've worked with children in some of the poorest communities in the United States, and you look at a child with a uniform shirt that's dirty, they look you in your eye, you have to see beyond that. You have to be -- I remember a young lady Chaniqua Moore, fourth grade, I gave her a challenge to learn Maya Angelo's phenomenal woman. I didn't think she'd do it.

I went to see her the following Wednesday, I'm leaving, somebody is tugging on my pants leg. It's Chaniqua. I turned, she's about 28 now. Tells you how old I am. She turns me around, she goes into it. Not only does she do it, she does it with passion, with voice elevation. She's rocking this thing! And she became a poet. She became a poet. She wrote a book of poetry when she was in college.

To see our young people and see beyond the conditions that they're in. The conditions are not their fault. Our children inherit conditions, they don't create them. So I think to be able to really believe in the people in our communities is another thing.

Then to collaborate. Often, we talk about parent engagement, we're talking about parent buy-in. We're not talking about really engaging people in the dream, but buy in to my dream. People in our communities know that. They know. That's why you don't have sustained engagement. I want to mention again, I'm very proud to

come from an organization where we have sustained involvement from our members. We do that, because we generally respects each other. One thing my mother taught me a long time ago, she said never get a big head. You're one check away. That was an old school lesson that I internalized, that whatever my title is, it means nothing. What really means something is am I sincere. Am I sincere? Can people trust me? Will I be strong in the face of changing circumstances? I think that those are important qualities.

The last one is act. The Journey for Justice Alliance, we have pressured the US Department of Education around coming up with another option for struggling schools besides closing them, charter expansion, turnaround and charter restarts. People thoughts we were crazy, no way you can impact that policy. My thing is this, our only limitations are the ones we accept. If we want to make change, people that make change are a little crazy.

[Laughter]

You have to be crazy to believe you can do it.

I sit before you all today it as a regular guy, but I am a community organizer. And part of being a community organizer, just like being a teacher, you have to be able to look into the eyes of your students and dream, inspire them to dream.

I think there's capacity on the ground that can really help the process of engaging parents and bringing more expertise to the table. But I think we're moving backwards in regards to policy. I'm asking folks if you can look a the a report we did

called death by a thousand cuts on our website [www.j4j alliance.com](http://www.j4jalliance.com). Free download, so you can never say I didn't give you anything.

[Laughter]

Read that report. We get a few people from as far as Puerto Rico to Boston, Massachusetts, talking about what has been the impact of the policies that swept through your communities. Unanimously, people said they didn't listen to me. They told me what was best for my child, instead of asking what was best for my child.

I think that we can do a lot better. We can do a lot better. That's it.

[Applause]

>> Kwesi Rollins: I'm sure there are lots of questions, comments. Try to keep them brief. We don't have a lot of time left.

>> Jitu Brown: Be gentle. Because the Bears got blown out this weekend. I'm still mourning.

>> Kwesi Rollins: Questions?

>> Jitu, what are the dynamics that are allowing Mississippi to do what you were describing in terms of black districts being consolidated rather than black and white? I haven't heard about it on the news. I haven't read about it. Is this a big secret?

>> Jitu Brown: I don't know that it's a secret. I will just say that you have a school board that is not really listening to the voices of the people directly impacted. You have a state legislature pushing the expansion of charters. Being I think that to do

that, they want to clear up space, so they closed this entire school district and moved young people to an adjacent district. It's really no different than Chicago, the mechanism in Chicago is an appointed school board made up of -- not made up of -- none of the people on the school board have to live with the policies they set. We have to clean up that mess in our neighborhoods.

It's all connected to an agenda that devalues the voice of working in low income families, in most cases families of communities of color.

Last thing I will say, in Chicago there was a school called Lincoln. Made up of very progressive parents on the north side of Chicago, mainly a white school. The district tried to give them \$20 million. The parent said we don't want it. Give it to a south side school. They forced those parents to take the \$20 million investment. So I think another issue we have is our views on race affect many of the institutions that are supposedly delivering services to our communities. So there's a devaluing of children from particular communities. So that's why you do these things. If they don't work, that's OK. We're going to continue to experiment.

>> Kwesi Rollins: Question in the back?

>> Edmund horsily, NEA priority schools. Miss Flores, one of our members is a man name Jose Laura. He works in the LA school district. He's part of a group trying to get the school district to expand ethnic studies. My question is how does that in your mind connect to -- why is that so important in connecting that to the community, to the family engagement issue?

>> Yolie Flores: Well, it's both an issue about family engagement, but also an issue of honoring and respecting your students for who they are, where they come from, the language they speak, the conditions.

We forget that education is not just about the three Rs. Education is about who you become, and who you become has to be grounded in your own history.

I think when we cut that off and we see that in Arizona in particular, you're really making the statement about the society that you want the society that you don't want.

>> Kwesi Rollins: Another question? Anne?

>> Anne Henderson, Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Of course, everything you guys said was music to my ears. And in the previous panel and this one, I'm hearing a couple of themes. One of which is the huge importance of developing leadership. Not just school leaders. We can't just think if we have good school leaders, good superintendents and good school board members that's going to take care of it. We have to invest in parent and community leadership, we have to give all the people in our community that feeling, as you were saying, Jitu, about ownership of their schools. And ownership of what happens to their children, whatever their vulnerabilities are and whatever their backgrounds are.

I think that we are kind of coming to a moment where we could come together and agree on what some policies and investments must be to have that happen. I'd love to hear from all of you on the panel about what you think the most important investments in parent and community leadership need to be. Because right now, as

Jerry Weast was saying in another context, we're doing a lot of random acts, and it's not coming together.

>> Sue Swenson: In the disabilities world there's a program called partners in policy making that you might want to look at. It's been in place for 20 years plus. It's out of the Minnesota governor's developmental disabilities council. Every state has one of those councils, and every Department of Education is supposed to be sitting on those councils.

Partners is a nine-month, very intensive program to teach parents of children with developmental disabilities and young people with developmental disabilities together in leadership curriculum that teaches them, A., what is really best practice, which so often we're not told the truth about; B., how do I do the individual advocacy that I need to be able to do to get best practice for myself or my child; and C., how do I do systems advocacy to really move the needle for everyone?

It's an interesting model. It's a heavy investment. But I do think it's worth looking at.

>> Is it widely participated in?

>> Sue Swenson: Usually a state will have 30 trainees each year. One key reason to train parents together with young people is to help parents understand that the real goal is to get their child to the point where they stand on their own two feet. And that's a really important message, I think, in many parent leadership programs, but particularly disabilities, where parents tend to think sometimes that their duty is to find

a therapeutic program that will make the disability go away, rather than finding a way to facilitate the function of the child.

>> Jitu Brown: I think that it's very hard to develop genuine parent and community leadership in the environment that benefits if parents are not engaged. So corporate education movement lists as one of its prerequisite appointed school boards. When you look at the schools that replace public schools, they don't have active parent boards, they have governing boards with people on it but a couple parents.

I think that, one, educators should be the leaders of an education system, not business people. I think that's critical. I think there's a role for business, but it is not set in policy.

I've met with people, I've been on panels with people that were directors of schools that called themselves education entrepreneurs. I want to stand on this, because you can't talk about parent leadership in the urban environment unless you deal with this issue, right? I think that really we develop a proposal along with Annenberg and the National Education Association and the American federation of teachers called sustainable community schools, that save money, one, we don't believe that ESEA should be competitive, there shouldn't be winners and losers. I think the reauthorization of ESEA is important. But also that those resources need to go towards stabilizing communities. So we want sustainable community schools that focus on a strong focus on school culture, curriculum and staffing, a student-centered culture, that provide wraparound supports for every child.

I just put my son in a school on the north side of Chicago, that's a long story, but I put him in this school because the school in my neighborhood is absolutely destabilized. When I went to the school, it had 500 students, it had more paraprofessionals than teachers. At the neighborhood school, with the same amount of students in my neighborhood, only four teacher aides in the building.

Equity is an issue we're not dealing with. We need wraparound supports to help remove those obstacles from our young people. That's why community schools are so important. I was the resource coordinator at South Shore high school. We pulled the entire community -- polled the entire community, what do you want to see? One young man wanted a recording studio. We built one. Every child that walked in, I give them a newspaper article, you're going to write your rap about this, sing about gentrification, you're going to do a song about the economic crisis. Because they were in the recording studio, can you imagine a 19-year-old that dropped out of school, sitting there learning about similes, hyperboles and metaphors? It was responsive to the needs and desires of people in the community.

Finally, the schools have to be community institutions. If we're engaged in the school, if our input is respected, we will own the school success and own its struggles. If not, then again, you have alien institutions in your neighborhood.

>> Yolie Flores: Let me also take a shot at your question. I think that when you think about investment in parent leadership, for me it feels like you have to invest on two tracks here. Oftentimes we think of leadership development for parents, because we

need to teach them how to do something. And sure, we all benefit from learning and equipping ourselves with these skills. And there is a huge need for that investment. Parents all the time, especially when they're appointed to school site councils say to me, that I don't know what my job is. No one is training me. I don't know how to read this budget. I want to make a contribution. I know I have something to say, but we weren't investing in building their capacity to be amazing knock it out of the ballpark school site members, and that's what they wanted to be.

So there is a deep need for that investment across all levels of leadership. But I also think we need an investment of those whose attitudes we need to change about parents. And there is a lot of attitude changing that we need to make. Because school systems and people that work inside of them, unfortunately, do not want to share power, and they especially do not want to share power with poor people and black people and brown people. And that's just the truth. And until we invest in the kind of attitude change, I don't know how else to say it, enlightenment, skill building, empathy, just, yes, we need to do the disrupting, then I think we're not going to get -- we're not going to yield what we need to yield in our schools. It will continue to become a voice for some, and not a voice for all.

What we know is that when parents do not have a voice, when we do not really honor who they are as they are the customer, we are there to serve them, then we will continue to have a system that works for those parents, that is equipped, that has confidence, that has a sense of entitlement, and we honor that. We honor that at

school systems. When we see parents, I remember maybe this is why I have carried this for 25, 30 years in my career, when I was a third grade student my mother, who did not speak English, who didn't dress very well because she didn't have money, who did not have the confidence to ask questions, I remember the day she came into the office, I think I might have gotten in trouble for something, because I don't know why else she would have come, I remember the people behind the counter laughing at her. And ridiculing who she was, because of how she looked, because she didn't speak their language.

I would love to say that I wish those days were gone. But I saw that over and over again when I was a school board member. If we don't change those attitudes, I don't think we will see the kind of family and parent engagement that we know is crucial for our kids to succeed.

>> Kwesi Rollins: Time for one last question. And we have a lovely winner.

>> My name is Zabrina Epps, Prince George's County Public Schools board member. I also bring greetings from higher education, which is why I ran for Prince George's County Public Schools. Paragraph so lot's happened, and we have a lot of people on the board now, some are elected, some appointed. The reason I engage with parents every day, they e-mail me to tell me what the system is not doing for them.

There's always a line that says something to the effect of, you know, I can't believe this is what you want for my child. So I know my heart, and I know that that is

absolutely not what I want for their children. I want their children to have equity and academic excellence.

I'm dying to have a conversation about that in the year and a half that I've been serving. It's not happening. So I have decided that now that the oversight, the check and balance between governance and the CEO's desire to run the system how he seats fit, and close schools without consulting parents and put schools in schools without consulting parents, and that I would try to advocate for parents with their children, but I don't know how.

So I'm taking the step out on a limb and being courageous and asking for help. Teach me how to do that, because that's not in my training. And teach me how to make it better for the 130 or so children in Prince George's County.

[Applause]

>> Kwesi Rollins: Let's connect with us after this panel and here at IEL, we happen to be in Washington, DC, we are happy to help with that. There are other experts in the room like Anne Henderson, Vito and great many folks who have experience on the ground. I think actually that statement is a natural way to close out. We started with a leadership panel and we have somebody actually in governance and leadership who said "I need help." The truth is that that's the case all around the country. A lot of folks find themselves in positions of leadership and it really is almost accidental, unless they have a personal interest in this issue of engaging families and doing it

well. You can study up to the PhD level, the EdD level and never take a course on family engagement, parent involvement, unless that's an interest of yours. Yet, you can't wait for pre-service to get its act together. We don't have the luxury of doing that. We've got to have this examination of caring folks in positions of influence that push the envelope of parent leaders and advocates and community organizers that force us to do a better job, and we've got to collaborate.

I think Jitu, I can't remember all your four things, but they certainly are germane in terms of what we all need. Certainly all need to believe, we certainly all need to collaborate. We certainly all need to work more closely together on this critical issue. So I want to give one last round of applause to our panel.

[Applause]

I believe we're going to take a five-minute break. Is that right? Five-minute break.

Yes?

>> If you need a break, you're welcome to it.

[Break]

Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to start in a minute and a half, please. If you could please take your seats. Thank you.

So we're on to the third pillar of IEL's work, which is pathways into the workforce, into careers, into life, into citizenship.

I want to remind you before we introduce the panel, there are resources in the back of the room. Sue Swenson mentioned our guidepost to success, which has been

developed by the institute as part of a project we've been doing now for a dozen years with the did not of labor under the auspices of national collaborative workforce development for youth. Joan may talk more about that. We are the operator of the DC advocacy partners program in the District of Columbia. We graduated our third class. I think we have at least one person here who is a DC advocacy partner. I wanted to see that the institute's leadership work is at multiple levels. Yes, we're concerned about the superintendents and the principals. We're also concerned about families. We're also concerned about advocates as part of a more comprehensive cross-boundary approach we think is needed to grow the kind of leaders we need.

So to move to the conversation about disengaged and disconnected youth, I'm sorry that our colleague Curtis Richards had a longstanding commitment in Boston. Curtis is the other member of the IEL leadership team and runs our Center for Workforce Development. He could not be here today. But you're Senior Fellow, Joan Wills, who created the Center for Workforce Development at IEL, now almost 20 years ago, is with us to lead this session. Please welcome Joan Wills, who will introduce this panel.

[Applause]

>> Joan Wills: Thank you very much. I'm not going to tell you much about these people. Partly because I just met two of them over the phone a week ago. But you can read these interesting resumes.

One of the things, as I look at our resumes collectively, I think what you can think of us as is a panel focused on the -- all of us in the room, the structure of schools. This is an unusual panel in that we come from workforce development -- come from workforce development, community nonprofits, but all engaged in trying to improve the learning opportunities and learning engagement mechanisms for a really very large number of our youth in America.

Folks at IEL know that I am normally always busy editing what somebody else has written. And I realize that I had an opportunity and didn't focus enough, because the charge to this panel was to say folks, our young people are increasingly disengaged from society. What can leaders do to put disengaged and disconnected youth on the pathways to success?

I would have to challenge the word "increasingly" because I think it's been a long-term challenge, in terms of disengagement for too many parts of our population, so I would have to edit it to say too many young people are disengaged.

Now, why does that matter? I can recall believing that I was going to help fix the anti- -- the problems with poverty in the 1960s, when I first went to work, thinking that within five years the Economic Opportunity Act was going to, in fact, solve problems. I along with all the other people in America learned it's a little more difficult than that.

We're charged today to think about the terms "equity" and we're charged with the term -- to think about so what does it mean to create different types and competent leaders. That's what this panel is about, trying to think about what it is we can do that

builds upon the other parts of the development system for youth in the United States, the ones that are not as well resourced, in some ways, and what is it we need to do to think about how to build better community collaborative mechanisms across all of the different providers services in the community.

In the list of the 10 things leaders need to do, for me, at least, I think what we're going to be talking about is number 9. Leaders listen actively, and learn from everyone, from their peers, which was talked about this morning in the first panel, from people in their own field, and others. And in part, we're representing the others.

I've been involved in lots of different activities, even trying to come up with common language. I can remember when at risk was the term of the day. We didn't like that. So we then started talking about vulnerable, what does that mean?

Then we came up with the term, and I'm not putting anything negative about all this, it's just a part of our search. Then we came up with this conundrum. These are all true. Then we came up with the term "opportunity youth." To me, I still don't particularly like the use of the term, but I'm delighted and value the fact that people are now beginning to say opportunity for youth that are disconnected matter, and they matter as a part of public policy.

So what we're going to do today in this session is to take a look at lessons and practices on the ground, at the local level, practices that have been tapped at the state level and at the federal level, and then practices particularly as it relates to youth that

have been involved in the juvenile justice system. And they're going to talk very quickly about what it is they've done, what they think are the critical issues.

Then we'll try to get something in perspective about what it is we need to do to think about improving leaders across the systems, and what do we mean by that, or what are the ingredients of that.

So why don't we start at the local level.

>> Michael Gritton: Thank you, Joan. My name is Michael Gritton, Executive Director of KentuckianaWorks, which is a strange creature called a -- strange creature called a workforce investment board. I work for mayor Greg Fisher in Louisville and the six counties around it. We chose our name because we want to try to do labor market information and work at the regional level, because Indiana is across the river. We thought about a name, the only real other choice was IndiuckyWorks.

[Laughter]

Which doesn't work. You may not have heard of Kentuckiana, but I have. I'm honored to be here. IEL with 50 years of great work, I'm honored to be a partner in the future of that work.

I want to describe a couple things about disconnected work. A workforce board gets Workforce Investment Act money to target young people. We got a youth opportunity grant back at the beginning of the last decade and learned a lot about what it was like to work with kids in the empowerment zone. As that money went away, we tried to create programs for young people in Louisville and regional counties

that learned from that program, and it won't surprise you to find out that programs that work, at least in Louisville and I think around the country, that work for young people, have to be youth friendly, they have to connected those kids to a caring adult. You have to give them a chance to move academically as fast as they want to move, when they're ready to move. So my youth career center in Louisville is run by the adult education folks at Jefferson county public schools. I happen to have that in my neck of the woods. I am know dummy, so I figured that out right away.

I'm thrilled just this year, we received a sub-grant from IEL to do work with kids involved in the juvenile court system, who are in that 16-21-year-old category. Then we used the teachings from IEL to go write our own grant and lucked into that grant from the Department of Labor as well. So in the next three years, we're going to be working with 500 kids involved in the court system, mostly 16 to 19, and trying to help turn their life around. So we call the grant right turn and right turn 2. And we're doing the same thing exactly with those kids, we're trying to connect them to a caring adult in the program, writing to give them a chance to move forward educationally as fast as we can. Mayor Fisher is thrilled, because he talks about Louisville having a compassion agenda with our economic agenda. One of the goals is to make us the most compassionate city in the world. He's a big leader of our summer jobs program, another thing we do we workforce investment board of. He describes the program as if it has a mentoring program. We acknowledge, but not really. We want employers to mentor kids, but it's not a mentoring program. The awesome thing about the right turn

grant, we're recruiting 500 mentors. One person to mentor each of those 500 youth. My city can't be much different than anybody else's. I've got churches and synagogues that are actively looking for ways to plug in. I've got African-American fraternities and sororities at -- sororities at University of Louisville. Amazingly to us, a lot of people want to connect to these kids and guide them one by one.

Another thing to mention, a lot of times people hear workforce investment board and think those are the people that run the workforce act program, it's sad that I have to say I'm often the spear catcher for WIS on that. I'm happy to do that. We get money from four branches of the federal government. We were the first workforce board in the country to run that program. Ms. Nutter is here from Philly. We're always competing with Philly to be number one. Jenny and other great stuff going on in Philadelphia. We were the first it workforce board to run a college access center funded out of trio of grants from the Department of Education.

We're in the game of helping people trying to go back to school. We're in the game of trying to help people get off welfare and into a real job. We have a college access program working with kids in the Jefferson county public schools, trying to target them to graduate and move on. We're using the career centers to give people labor market information to move forward.

I don't think there's as much of a mystery about what works for disconnected youth as there may have been 10, 20 years ago, but I think what's something we're really going to have to confront is the political will to do what we know works. One of

the things that worries me, I find myself in panels or at conferences where I feel like I'm either preaching to the choir or part of the choir, and I want to figure out how to get the choir to be bigger. That's the challenge that I think we face in this work.

>> Joan Wills: Thank you very much. I also want to thank IEL and say happy birthday, IEL. I hope you have 50 more. I want to recognize Marty and thank him for his extraordinary leadership.

[Applause]

Recently, I was proud to be the assistant secretary in the office of career technical and adult education. I was responsible for career and technical education, adult education, correctional education. It's music to my ears to hear folks talk about the juvenile justice system and overseeing community colleges. I had the best portfolio in all of the Department of Education and most of the audience would agree, because we're working with youth in school and out of school and low scale adults. Prior to coming to the Department of Education, I was the President of Dorcas Place in Providence, Rhode Island. We served disconnected youths and helped prepare them for college and careers. When I arrived at the department, that's what we all talked about, preparing students for college and careers. I said to my colleagues, really, we're really talking about college, we're not really talking about career readiness. If we want all of our folks to fully participate, we have to strengthen our career education system as well.

We embarked on a plan to transform career and technical education and released a blueprint in 2012 that I'm very proud of to transform career and technical information. It was based on four important principles, as we discuss a system to serve disconnected youth.

We need to make sure that we have education and workforce system that is aligns and integrated and that we're preparing our students for the jobs that are going unfilled, the jobs of the future, and that are geared to the regional and local economies. So that we aren't -- we're preparing students to fill those jobs, preparing them to fill those well. Those sectors, high-demand, high-wage sectors, they're not to be determined by educators alone, but in partnership with the economic development systems and the workforce system and the local communities and district communities. It will not be dictated by the federal government.

Second, we need to have good collaboration, strong partnerships across systems. That's what I'm really thrilled we're talking about today on this panel. It's really cross-boundary leadership development, really breaking down silos. We need to make sure we have articulated career pathways from secondary education, adult education, into postsecondary education. But also includes the employer community again, so with are preparing our students for the jobs that are going unfilled, jobs of the future.

We need to have much stronger accountability systems, because we talk about equity this morning, and we're never going to close the equity gaps if we don't really design a system that is fair.

When I talk about career in technical education, people still think it's the old vocational system, the system that was for those kids who are not college material. It was a dumping ground. There's still, still today, despite the fact that there are hundreds of high quality career and technical education systems, there's still the stigma that career in technical education system is for those students, not really a system that will prepare students for college and careers in good jobs.

We have a stronger accountability system, we can prepare students for those jobs. That they're getting jobs in the field they're prepared for, that they are receiving industry recognized credentials and postsecondary certificates that enable students to be successful.

And that we're closing the equity gaps. Unfortunately, when I travel all around the country, I would still see examples of those dead-end tracks. I would still see examples of where we prepare students for jobs that no longer exist. A system that serves disconnected youth and low-skilled adults well, also has to focus on innovation in order to close the equity gaps, also to Michael's point, we have to accelerate student progress. We can't only be talking about remediation. We have to be talking about acceleration.

I think those are the four key components to any system that is preparing students for college and careers. And make no mistake about it, I'm not suggesting that we're not focusing on the postsecondary education, because you know the research as well as I do. 2/3 of the jobs by 2018 require some form of postsecondary education. But the system has to be rigorous, it has to be relevant, and in many cases it has to be hands on, because that's how we re-engage those students who in fact have been disengaged.

I also want to point out to the work we do in the department, that focused on career pathways as the organizing framework, and that's a system with multiple on and off stops for students as they acquire the credentials, the knowledge, strong academic programs, the technical skills valued by employers and the employability skills. But important and so much a part of that are support services, because our students very much need support in every transition along the system.

I'm looking forward to a robust discussion, and really believe in the power of a high quality career and technical education system that prepares all students for college and careers.

>> David Brown: Thank you. Good morning. Still morning. Good morning. I'm really excited to be invited to this event this morning, because it's been almost nine years since I've been actively and vigorously engaged in the workforce development system. I actually left the national youth employment coalition in 2005. In the past nine years I worked in juvenile justice system, although during that period I really tried to, and have

for many years, tried to improve bridges and collaboration between the juvenile justice system and the workforce development system.

Joan talked about her work in the 1960s. I'll date myself, my work in this career began in the early 1980s, the latter years of the comprehensive employment and training act. Since that time I've been promoting access to education for the most part, particularly youth involved in the juvenile and criminal justice system and youth who have a low reading skills.

I will say in terms particularly around serving the youth in the juvenile justice system there has been some progress in the past 15 years, in large part due to the investments made by the Department of Labor, particularly targeted towards this population and the emerging intention to youth development we starting to see in the juvenile justice system.

However, really since the federal workforce development programs, which they weren't called that back then, it was employment training, became performance driven under the job training partnership act in the early 1980s, part of the -- part of the youth have been underserved by many local workforce systems concerned in large parts about meeting federal performance measures. I know Philadelphia has been an exception. I would like to hear also, I think in many places those are more exceptions than the rule.

When I was in New York City in the early 1980s, many of you know Dorothy Stoneham who founded YouthBuild, in New York, she actually advocated in the city for

what she called the coalition for 10 million, to get the city to come up with dollars to actually provide services for the kids who weren't accessing job training programs because of the imposition of the performance measures on the JTPA. So kids who read below eighth grade could not get into a city funded JTPA or federally funded JTPA program, so she advocated for the city to come up with its own dollars to serve the population left out of the federally funded program intended to serve that population.

From that initial investment, youth build emerged. I ran one of the programs funded under that initiative working with kids who read below fifth grade level.

Not only has serving population discouraged business performance measures, but also the cost per participant guidelines often promulgated by the federal government also suggests longer term invests are not cost effective and encourage you to serve kids who can be served shorter term and get outcomes quickly.

When I left national youth employment coalition, I joined DC government to be deputy director of the department of youth rehabilitation services here. We were in the mayor's office trying to come up with a plan for addressing the needs of some of the most risky kids in the community, kids already involved in some crime or risk of being shot or victims or shooters.

In the course of the conversation with community-based providers, folks on the streets working with the kids, they acknowledged one of the biggest challenges was employment. In this case, looking for jobs and had jobs.

So the deputy mayor said, well, why isn't the department of employment service here? So they were invited to the next meeting to talk about how do you get kids to jobs? They explained who these kids were. They said oh, this isn't for those kids. We aren't for those, we're not supposed to serve those kids.

So when I was in DC, we got our own -- we were trying to build a system to serve all kids, but that wasn't going to happen. We built our own separate system for juvenile justice involved kids. We got a federal grant from the Department of Labor, which allowed us to provide a range of workforce educational services for the kids in our system. Which in that program became the most popular services and supports we provided to the kids and became very popular, both with case managers and with the kids, and ended up being after the federal grant ended, ended up being much of the program was continued with local dollars, out of DYIS. We hope that will be the results with the continued partnerships with other agencies in the city, but those kind of partnerships did not yet emerge. There was reluctance to work with this population.

And in my current capacity at the Casey foundation, we're seeking to reduce the reliance on out-of-home placements and expand alternatives to incarceration for the juvenile justice system involved youth.

Working with states and localities across the country. We're seeking to build the evidence that there are promising workforce educational programs serving this population. Any of you work in juvenile justice know there's a focus around evidence-based programs, but a narrow set of programs in that space that really focus

on more family engagement and involving families in positive involvement, not necessarily on skill development and education. We're trying to build evidence that there are other approaches that address the fuller range of youth needs that are also important, particularly around education and workforce development.

Is the problem is most of these systems don't have the resources to really effectively provide this full range of supports these kids need, toe so interest to think -- so they have to think about how to partner with the workforce development and educational system. There goes the challenge. How do those emerge?

I think there was mention, I'm not sure, there has been changes recently at the federal level, the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, which replaced the Workforce Investment Act. I was hopeful about that resulting in more services and outreach for out-of-school, disconnected and juvenile justice system involved youth. That didn't happen to the extent I would have hoped. I am hopeful we will see with this new act great opportunities for this population. First, the greater focus on serving disconnected youth, raising that percentage from 30% to 75% of the kids in the program with money spent in the program.

There's a greater appreciation that the longer term services, which is key element of serving the hard-to-serve populations. There's more progressive and development appropriate performance measures that include progress measures and recognizing relative gains made by participants to get credit for how much progress

they've made, not whether or not they've achieved a certain milestone that is acquired to get credit for a participant.

But like I said, I am hopeful opportunities will be advanced with this act.

However, I felt that way before.

[Laughter]

Hopefully this will be the time.

>> Joan Wills: I too have some hope. One of the reasons I reference earlier the need for the other voices is because one of the things that we have clearly learned, and I will mention the guideposts for success that was put together by us in terms of trying to sort through some kind of youth development driven system about what all youth need to first be successful in their life, within their families, and their work.

The harsh reality is that all that we've been talking about on this panel now is that we've not been very successful in terms of helping people prepare for the world of work. There's a variety of reasons. That is particularly true of very specific populations.

Let me cite three of them that I think have a lot to do with how we need to think about how to even identify equities and inequities in the systems. For example, we do know that disability youth are well overrepresented in the prison system and in the foster care system. Outrageously overrepresented. Just as there are problems in terms of statistics coming into schools, it's also true that our other systems have disability youth in them as well as those that are poor and the opportunity youth, etc.

So we need to understand how to use data better, then how to think about how to build better coalitions between those systems.

Now I want to ask in our short time, back to the panel, what is it you think could possibly happen, could be done at the community and state level to begin to encourage -- how do we remove the impediments to working across boundaries? What is it that we need to do to mitigate what we know in terms of like the performance measure issues that schools and organizations have?

And how is it that we can begin to come up with some recommendations, some metrics, some ideas about how to promote and ensure that the most vulnerable youth, in fact, receive the attention they need?

Because, by any count, whether we're just talking about school statistics or service statistics in any measurement, we do have a serious problem. So when we talk about equity, for me I think we need to at least try to think through how do we think about it across systems and that we have to understand deeply within those systems. Then how do we build it back up. And how do we have this all driven by the needs of youth themselves?

Any one of you want to start first on those little simple questions?

[Laughter]

>> Michael Gritton: Let me tick off a couple things I know. More things I don't know, Brenda and David can cover. Let's talk about performance. I mentioned

KentuckianaWorks runs a youth career center in Louisville run by our adult ed folks.

I'm proud of that. Since the grant went away, we started that in 2005, we help more than a thousand kids get GEDs in that program. We know we can help them.

What we also know is that if all we had in the program was federal money, from the minute that young person comes to the door we have to make a decision right then am I willing to bet on your outcome or not? Because I get measured on percentage of the kids I enroll in the federal program who meet a certain performance goal. Right?

Luckily for me, I had a fantastic mayor at the time, Jerry Abramson, now the lieutenant governor of Kentucky, and have a great mayor, Greg Fisher that I work with now, both of whom committed city resources to that youth career center. Now when you come to the door -- when you come to the door, I know you're reading and doing math below sixth grade level, typical thing we see in Louisville, but I don't turn you away, I turn you into a city kid, and you're in the mayor's program. If and when I get you close enough that I think you may be able to help me with federal performance, I may turn you into a federal kid, a WIA kid, but this way I don't have to turn you away.

The system truth is if all I have is federal money, you would face the same pressure I would, which is I've got to get more than half these kids to earn a credential like the GED and I would face the same pressure that I did and do, how am I getting half these kids reading and doing math below the sixth grade level to a GED? One of the easiest ways is to cream, skim who you think you can succeed with, set up hurdles

and barriers before I enroll them. All the tricks people do on the ground. If you were in my situation, I'm not sure what else you would do.

I want to talk about metrics for a minute, because I think metrics have the potential to be a tremendous catalyst and friend for us. Sue, the woman who spoke from Department of Education before us, was also talking about metrics and data and how they can be your friend. We're at a tremendous moment where if we can really demonstrate that we can make things happen in a way that we can measure and track and show business leaders and other people who are skeptical of government, I think that has the potential to change the conversation.

So we all are living in a world, let me tell you, the world from Kentucky, my dad is a former factory worker at Ford. I'm a blue-collar kid from Louisville. My dad is in the masons. My dad lives in still a working class part of Louisville. It used to be Democratic, now now mostly Republican. He calls me every week. He says let me tell you the latest thing they're telling me about Obama. Can you research this, tell me whether it's true? He's got some preposterous, outlandish claim. Nowhere where it came from, how to track it down.

There is a massive organization, set of organizations in this country dedicated to the proposition that government is the problem. They are looking for any specific example they can find of government people doing the wrong thing. They megaphone that, through FOX news, through talk radio, they megaphone it in any way they can to convince you, as normal citizen, I should not be paying these taxes, I knew this was

not a good idea, no way anybody in government can accomplish anything good. I'm going back to my little room and think I'm not going to have to do anything more.

I can't find the troops on the other side. Who are dedicated to the proposition of demonstrating when data shows we know what works here's how we know it works. Here's the data behind it. My sense is that's why data has the potential to be a friend, because I think if we can create metrics across some of these systems, start to demonstrate we know what works for disconnected youth, I'm absolutely confident, with this grant from IEL and the Department of Labor, I'm going to take many of these 500 kids court involved and turn their life around. We know how to do it. We know that the educational pathways they dropped out can't stop with the GED. I've got to get them into an industry recognized credential or community college program aligned with what my jobs are. We know how to do this. It right?

Until we have the data tracking system that can demonstrate we're doing it and they can meet whatever the test may be, until we organize some counter army prepared to tell that story over and over again, through mayors and through senators and through representatives who actually believe our collective action can make a difference, I don't know how I'm going to win. Right?

One other thing. The stimulus gave workforce board people like me money for the first time since WIA passed. When WIA passed, summer jobs money went away. Louisville got out of the summer jobs business. We didn't have a summer jobs program in Louisville for 15 years. When the stimulus in 2009 was going to give

workforce boards around the country money for summer jobs for the first time, the US conference of mayors workforce development council, which I happened to be the President of that year, put together a training session, pulled together folks from around the country to learn how to run good summer jobs programs. We relied on Los Angeles, and Boston, Baltimore and Kansas City. Four cities where they had not gotten out of the business.

At the time the Department of Labor was hoping we would be able to use that money to help 100,000 kids go to work. Partly because of that organization and partly because of fantastic work all around the country, we helped 330,000 kids go to work in the summer of 2009.

Everybody thought we were going to fail, and they were all waiting for the one story that they could find where somebody misused the the money, waste, fraud, abuse, all that silliness. When we succeeded nobody knows. Nobody heard it loud enough. Now, mayor nutter is one of the people at the conference of mayors who was chanting from the rooftops about summer jobs. But we've got to get more and more people to do that kind of stuff when it starts to work.

>> Joan Wills: We all agree with the message?

>> Yes.

[Applause]

>> Joan Wills: I absolutely believe in strong government. You wouldn't be surprised to know that.

>> Brenda Dann-Messier: We've got to have the effective partnerships. You're right. You've got to work with folks you don't agree with and break down the silos. One of the ways is with data, but also human interest stories. When I was at Dorcas Place, I had a robust civics education program, I brought every elected official, policymaker and employer to talk to the youth and adults we serve, and for them to be able to tell their story. I will never forget the time we had elected a governor who was from the corporate community. He had no idea how low the literacy and language levels were of the folks we served.

So I had a student introduce the governor. She was a high-school graduate reading at the fourth grade level. She told the governor that when she received her high school diploma, she knew she shouldn't accept it, because she couldn't read or write. They said oh, no, you were a good student, didn't cause trouble, the diploma is yours. She went to look for a job, couldn't find a job. She found a job, then quickly got fired because she didn't have the skill levels.

He was astounded! He didn't know there were high school graduates, never mind folks who didn't have a certification or high school diploma or equivalency who could not read or write. So he became a huge champion.

So it's also about partnership. It's about informing. It's about advocating. It's about forming really strong partnerships and really making sure folks understand,

because when you serve the hardest to serve as David mentioned, it takes time, results are very slow in coming. And it takes resources, and you have to really have an intensity and duration of the levels of services you offer folks, and we don't have the political will to do that. We want the quick fixes. We want to have the systems that show us or design the programs that show they're successful, but we've been leaving thousands, hundreds of thousands, 36 million low skilled adults in this nation, who are not being served, who cannot fully participate in our economy, because they don't have the education, they don't have the skills and they certainly don't have the work skills. Though, what's surprising around those statistics, 62% of them are currently working, but not able to go up on a career pathway and gain the employment that would provide them sustainable wages.

I believe you have to have strong partnerships, be strong advocates, but also provide incentive to really make sure folks are serving our most vulnerable.

>> David Brown: I think, first, I still am hopeful that there will be opportunities to retain the metrics and policy at the federal level that now enable some of the resources to more effectively serve this population. I do think in many states they've come up with creative ways to use state education dollars to support these programs that reach out to re-engage disconnected population. There's encouragement from some of the states where that's happened.

We've talked about the needing to -- aligning, reporting and requirements and performance measures across federal programs to go a long way toward simplifying

some of the barriers to kind of do this cross system collaboration, reducing the complexity, that just is so complex to do that discourage folks from pursuing this.

Allowing unified and consolidated plan will go a long way.

Incentivizing the system, incentivizing co-funding of programs or services serving the hardest-to-serve population. If you have pooled together resources, that there are additional resources to tap into or other ways to incentivize that collaboration, but it's not going to happen unless it's truly incentivized.

In that way, use education dollars for academic support, workforce dollars for job preparation and work experience and human dollars to bring those resources to enable the full range of supports to be in place, but tapping into those various funding streams.

>> Joan Wills: Simple ideas. Let's turn now to you and questions from the floor. Are there any? If not, we'll talk. Yes?

>> I'm Rob Hoekstra, former intern at education, retired school superintendent, then a retired entrepreneur. If I can ask you a hypothetical question. Assume a world where all things are possible. Secondly, assume a status in the United States that we have serious concerns about national security.

If we were as a nation able to institute a national service requirement for all citizens from 16 to 22, two years of some form of service to the nation, at the community, regional, state, national level, if that were possible, would it be a good

idea? And if so, why? Or not a good idea? And if so, why, in the context of the issues that you've been discussing.

>> Joan Wills: Anybody want to give an opinion?

>> Michael Gritton: I'll keep going first, if you want.

>> David Brown: I'll take a stab at that. There was hope that AmeriCorps would be that opportunity.

>> Joan Wills: I knew who would answer.

[Laughter]

>> David Brown: To be that national service to young people. I've always been an advocate of engaging young people in service to their community. It's part of them being valued and to be part of community, and that they should be seen as assets, that they have a role to play, a responsibility to give back to their communities, and that that was an important part of their own self-worth and development, and that giving them those kind of roles go a long way toward development. I remember when AmeriCorps was launched, a lot of the money went to disconnected youth.

AmeriCorps shifted the resources from the population. They said 1/3 should be college grads, 1/3 in college, 1/3 precollege. Considering only half the kids go to college, aren't going to college, what does that mean about the dropouts, who weren't going to college? They weren't even in the equation. Those kids almost got left out of that effort. The idea was around AmeriCorps about giving back, but another part was

giving skills. The civilian conservation corps was about giving them employment, but also it was about them contributing, but also getting something in return, not just a wage or skills. It goes a long way towards doing both, giving them a chance to contribute and value, but also to gain skills that could enable them to enter the job market and be more productive citizens.

>> Joan Wills: Another way to answer that, I doubt that you would find anybody in the room that would disagree where the value added of service. And I personally would agree with you.

The problem is Bill Clinton in this past week, when talking about the things that he regrets have not happened, the first thing I mentioned in fact was the lack of growth of AmeriCorps, which I found interesting, that it's not large enough. Part of it goes to what David's talking about, our laws have become so bureaucratic in the law itself, so they do percentages in the laws that starts driving things that we don't even get the answers to, in terms of what's going to be most effective. The laws of the 1930s were four pages long. The laws of today, I can't get through. So somehow, we've got to figure out how it is we can prove that we don't need, as Sue talked about, the monitoring mentality, because it is dangerous, it is hurting us, it is hurting creative people throughout all of the different systems. But how do we build, again, the trust? Then how do we give the competencies of leaders across these systems so that we can put some meat around the words "trust", "building relationships ""that leads to

engagement. We can tell a lot of personal stories, but we have to go far beyond that. I'm sorry. I've just had to say that.

Other questions?

>> Hi there. My question had to do with your experience with programs that incorporate remediation or bringing students with low basic skills up to the high school standard or the associate's standard within the framework of career and technical education. So both inside the K-12 system and beyond it, what's been your experience with those kind of programs?

>> Brenda Dann-Messier: My experience is that there's not enough of those programs that really pay attention to high quality and academic coursework, because you must provide more intensive academic supports.

What I've seen across the country are some very excellent career and technical education programs that are very high rigorous standards. What I'm worried about is that they're shutting out the middle students or the lowest skilled students, unless there's a targeted and deliberate and intentional focus on improving their academic skills.

So we've got to make sure that -- it's incredible to me. I went to one of the unbelievably high quality career and technical education STEM programs, and there was a wait list to get into the program. I was very troubled by that, because so many of those students who really could be served well by the system weren't able to participate.

On the other hand, I've seen lottery programs for high quality academic CTE programs that provide very intensive academic support as they enter the program and have been successful. A key strategy is -- key strategy is that you're not just doing the academic, but you integrated the workforce programs. It's a comprehensive approach. You've got to have the academic, high quality career and technical education skills valued by an employer, and have the employability skills and wraparound and the supportive services. There are very effective models out there. It takes a commitment and it takes a real push to make sure that the academics are as rigorous as they are in regular academic programs so that they're valued by the employer community.

>> David Brown: One thing of importance is that the academic preparation and workforce is concurrent. That they don't have to go through the remediation first to get the work readiness and employment opportunities.

>> As evidence-based practice.

>> David Brown: You lose kids in the practice. It should be concurrent.

>> I work with David. I remember those days of innovation. I am sorry you left.

You're on the philanthropic side of it. Michael, I was on the Kentucky community college foundation board.

Two questions. Once is why isn't business at the table more around these type of programs? I'll give an example. I visited a couple Job Corps. I went to Potomac Job Corps, I saw one program outstanding, was that Amtrak partnered with Job Corps, the students that finished the program automatically were eligible to work for Amtrak.

There was a pipeline into Amtrak through Job Corps. Then when I was in Kentucky, I saw that the business and industry folks were driving the coursework at the community college, because they said these are the jobs that we need.

Most of our young people in this "high risk environment" have no environment what the business and what the demand is for jobs, and even take programs that actually are dead end jobs. There are no jobs there.

I wonder if there could be a better connection, especially with higher issues around what the jobs are. I'm surprised there's no monster.com and career builder for this population. Because technology is now the way that you find jobs. I'm wondering is there any innovation, either through Casey that they can bring up or Michael is there any way from a state like Kentucky that you can do innovation with technology and with the employers so that young people know that if they finish, they got a job? And a living wage job.

>> Michael Gritton: The workforce investment boards are designed to have a majority of business people and business chair. If I'm doing the job right, we're hearing from local business leaders what they need in trying to translate that back in partnership with the community college, President and the superintendent and K-12, etc.

Hopefully we're doing that.

I've been in the job 12 years now, I'm starting to get a little perspective with time. Our best friend in serving disconnected youth is a tight labor market. So those people who are in the business, who schooled me, who were doing the job in the 1990s, said

there's nothing better than a 5% unemployment rate, because employers start to open the door to people that when the unemployment is 10% they're not that interested. I'm will also realizing again, I'm getting older the thing we went through in 2008 and 2009 was cataclysmic for almost every business leader in the country. So I think for many years they weren't hiring or weren't thinking very much about where their next people were coming from, they were just trying to survive.

Let me tell a little story about Louisville. We're lucky, my dad worked at a Ford plant, my uncle Danny worked at a general electric plan. We'd been lucky in the last five years because both companies made major investments in Louisville, \$500 million each or something like that. We've added 11,000 manufacturing jobs in the last three years. Jim Blankenship, head of GE, a fantastic leader said when we went through the numbers to try to figure out whether we could start making new appliances at GE Appliance Mart in Louisville, repatriate jobs from China and Mexico, we were expert at all of the numbers we had to run about transportation costs and labor costs and all of that sort of thing. When we made the decision to bring those products back to Louisville, he, Jim Blankenship, never bothered to call the school superintendent to say that was something they were doing or call the community college to give six months heads up. They started to look for people and had this idea that the system over here that nobody talked to was going to have ready for them what they needed.

To his great credit, he's organizing a group of manufacturing employers, including Ford and west port axle and others trying to send a more serious set of

signals to the K-12 system and community colleges about what they need and expecting us to responds.

These systems are pretty decent at responding to that if employers are engaged in it, but I think they're often examples where employers aren't engaged or aren't sure how to connect, and even at K-12 level we're only starting to organize career-themed high schools and embed industry recognized credentials into K-12 programs. So we're only in the early stages of giving business as more direct connect to those systems. It's another step beyond that to try to figure out how to help disconnected youth connect and ultimately earn those credentials. There's more work to do.

I'm encouraged as the unemployment rate goes down, the businesses grow, the conversation changed from what it was before.

>> David Brown: Also at Casey, though it's not part of our portfolio, the foundation is exploring demand driven strategies with youth populations to identify examples of demand driven efforts targeting this population. We'll hear more about that.

>> Joan Wills: I've gotten the high sign. I have one more comment about the question about the employers. Employers participate. What we don't have are good network and system support, in fact, for the employers.

One of the things that I anticipate happening as a result of the new legislation tied to career pathways, we're talking about tying some knots together that have never been tied together. Because now they've changed the operating rules that will be

sector driven and industry driven. That was the no the case in the old workforce development programs.

So therefore pieces, lots of little threads. The question is how do we pull those needles together through the eyes of different needles and turn it together so we've got a better system than we had in the past. Marty?

[Applause]

>> Thank you, Joan, David, Michael, Brenda.

I'm really smiling today because many organizations are doing seminars in Washington. When I observe what's coming, and we do some of this ourselves, it's about this thing you can do, this program, this practice, this strategy, and this is the answer.

I hope what we've done today is something different, is to challenge your thinking, to open your minds to different perspectives. We didn't have all of them in the room. I realize that. But this is the kind of thing that the institute has always done, is to convene people to think about challenging questions, whether it's in the early days of the Washington internships in education program, or the education policy fellowship program, which just kicked off its 51st year in Washington with 23 fellows. If any of you want to participate in that program or have your staff participate, Helen Malone, who put this event together, is now running that program. I want to thank Helen, by the way, for her extraordinary work in getting this done, along with Jen

Matsutani, a brand-new staff member.

[Applause]

And finally, as I was listening to all of the panelists today, I smiled for another reason.

That is that out of our networks we grew the 10 lessons, the 10 leadership lessons in the back of your program, and that you'll find at our website. The more I listened, the better I felt about what we said, because I think there's a lot of wisdom that we gathered from our community, to use the language of Jitu Brown this morning. A community that really represented people who see themselves as working at the grassroots level, and people who work in the policy environment, people who are administrators. We brought together all of that experience, and those lessons I hope people look at, I hope you will think about, I hope you will share, so that we can all go forward together to achieve the kind of equity and excellence that our children deserve and that is so important to our entire society.

Thank you much for coming and joining us. All of this will be, the video will be available shortly. We'll be doing some blogging about this. So please help us to share these ideas and this thinking across your very many networks.

Thank you so much, and take good care. We'll see you next year.

[Applause]