

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION  
A DISCUSSION WITH SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN

Washington, D.C.  
Monday, May 11, 2009

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## PROCEEDINGS

MR. WHITEHURST: Good morning and welcome. I'm Russ Whitehurst, the director of the Brown Center on Education Policy and a senior fellow here at Brookings. The Brown Center was established in 1992. It conducts research and provides policy recommendations on topics in American education.

We are extraordinarily pleased today to host U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. I expect that virtually everyone in the audience is familiar with Secretary Duncan's biography, so I will touch on it only lightly. He graduated from Harvard in 1987, played pro basketball in Australia, ran the nonprofit Ariel Education Initiative in Chicago, and served as chief executive officer of the Chicago Public Schools from 2001 to 2008. That's a long tenure in modern times for the superintendent of an urban school district.

In his position as head of the Chicago schools, he carried out an assertive reform agenda that included, for example, closing down underperforming schools and expanding charter schools. At the same time, he managed to stay in the good graces of powerful constituencies that might have been expected to battle for the status quo. Apropos of his ability to lead change without generating heated antagonism, the latest edition of *The Economist* notes that, "It is hard to find anybody with a bad word to say about Arne Duncan." In January he became the ninth person to serve as Secretary of Education since the U.S. Department of Education was established in 1979.

What is it that Secretary Duncan brings to office that makes him unique with respect to his predecessors? He isn't the first secretary to come to office well liked, or to have been a former school superintendent with a reputation as a reformer, or to have a close personal relationship with the man in the Oval Office, or to be part of an administration in which education is a top priority, or even to have a degree from Harvard.

He might have the best jump shot, but Rod Paige is a tall man and an excellent athlete. I for one would pay to see that game of one-on-one.

The one thing that is clearly distinctive about Secretary Duncan is that he has a lot of discretionary funds at his proposal to drive his and the President's education agenda. Prior secretaries of education presided over largely formula-funded federal education programs wherein state and local education agencies received their apportionment of federal funds based on population and demographics. At best they had a few million dollars annually to dole out for reforms they favored. In contrast, Secretary Duncan has billions to work with as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Among the most important buckets of money over which the secretary has considerable latitude is \$4.3 billion in Race to the Top funds for state-level reform, \$650 million in an Innovation Fund to advance local-level reforms, and \$3 billion in a School Improvement Fund to provide intensive support for schools that aren't making the grade under No Child Left Behind.

Secretary Duncan has graciously agreed to talk with us about how he intends to use these billions as a lever for reform. After Secretary Duncan speaks, I'll moderate a question-and-answer with him. Please stay for the panel discussion that will follow. Secretary Duncan?

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Good morning, and thank you, Russ, so much for the kind introduction and for all of your leadership and hard work on these issues.

I really appreciate the opportunity here to talk this morning about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. I think if I had a dollar for every time I've said those words over the past few months, I would have had enough money to keep my department's attaché office open in Paris. Many of you may not know that's actually the job I wanted. I applied for that and got rejected. And the fancy, the fancy apartment and the \$20,000 travel budget sounded pretty good. Actually, in all honesty I didn't know the office existed when I started. We're going to have lots of tough decisions to make, but,

frankly, closing that office was one of the easiest decisions. It's actually not even that much money. It's about \$600,000 in a federal government that, as you know, that spends trillions. But the decision we think sends a very important signal that every single dollar matters and we must stay focused on reforming our schools here at home, not in Paris.

Fortunately, we have the resources to do that, and the Recovery Act, as Russ said, we're investing over a \$100 billion in our schools. Part of that money will be spent to save teachers' jobs or to make up for state and local budget shortfalls. But the law also lays out a plan for reforming and pushing strong reform in our schools. We must improve the quality of standards and assessments so that students are leaving our schools ready to succeed in college and prepare to contribute in the workforce. We must build data systems that measure growth, link student achievement to teacher quality, and tell us whether students are on track to graduate ready for college. We must recruit and train the best teachers to be in our nation's classrooms, particularly where they are needed most in communities, whether it's intercity urban or rural areas that all too often have been underserved for decades. And we must turn around the lowest performing schools, the ones that we know aren't doing the jobs, the ones that we now call "dropout factories."

The Recovery Act gives us \$5 billion to give to states that are leading the charge on these issues. We hope other states will follow their lead; that's why we're calling that fund the "Race to the Top Fund." With Race to the Top, there's real money on the table for states and districts that are creatively and aggressively driving reform. The successful districts will use every available dollar to raise standards dramatically, improve teacher quality, and turn around struggling schools. But the Recovery Act makes another investment in reform, one that all too often, I think, has been overlooked. We will also be providing \$3 billion to the Title I School Improvement Program. That's on top of the \$545 million already appropriated for school improvement in FY09. And now

we have proposed another \$1.5 billion in FY2010 budget, a total of \$5 billion over two years, as big as the Race to the Top Fund itself. We're making a big bet on this reform. And I want to be clear. We will not be investing in the status quo. We must use as much of this money as possible to push real and lasting reform.

We are challenging educators to think boldly and take action to change the lives of our students right away. We want districts to hire change agents for schools and give them the tools they need to fix them. We want districts expanding the school year and the school day so that students who are behind have the opportunity they desperately need to catch up. We want to give the best teachers incentives to work in the toughest schools, and we want to reward them when they succeed. When a school is chronically underperforming, despite additional supports and other strategies, you have a moral obligation to consider bolder action whether it's changing the leadership, hiring a new staff, or turning around schools and handing them over to charter operators. We want to know which states have done this, and if not, why not? Our students have one chance, one chance, to get a quality education.

The successful districts will be using every available dollar to raise standards, improve teacher quality, and turn around those struggling schools. Sometimes the prospect of turning around schools might seem a little bit daunting, but if we set realistic and doable goals, that job is absolutely possible. Think about this for a minute. We have about 100,000 schools here in America. If we turn around just the bottom 1 percent, the bottom 1,000 schools per year for the next five years, we could really move the needle, lift the bottom, and change the lives of tens of millions of underserved children. As we commit to turning around schools each year, we must also stay the course with them and use what we learn each year to inform the next generation of turnarounds. This is a manageable goal, and we have neither time nor money to waste.

In the coming months I'll be traveling around the country to listen and to learn from people. I started last week in West Virginia, and I'll be in Michigan and Vermont this week. I'll go to rural and suburban and urban America. I'll talk to parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Basically, I want to launch a national conversation on public education before we sit down and rewrite the No Child Left Behind law. I need your help as well to turn good ideas into successful strategies to meet our toughest educational challenges. We have an opportunity before us to lay the foundation for a generation of education reform. We have an opportunity to replace almost a third of the teaching workforce in this country in the next few years as the baby boomer generation retires, and we bring as many as a million new teachers into our schools around the country. And we have an opportunity to finally make good on the promise of Brown vs. Board of Education. But it requires courage. It requires real courage to take the political heat that comes of real change. It requires honesty to admit our failures and to shift our dollars to the things that will make a difference for our children and make a difference now. And it requires us to hold each other accountable, both for what we do and for what we say. So I look forward to the conversation with you. Thanks so much for having me this morning.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, before we open up the floor for questions, if you don't mind I'll ask you one.

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Sure.

MR. WHITEHURST: And I think it's a tough question. Yours is not the first administration to have lofty goals for education reform. President Clinton had Goals 2000. By the year 2000, the aspiration was that 90 percent of students would graduate from high school. The current graduation rate is about 75 percent, the same level it was at when the goals were established. President Bush had No Child Left Behind. It's still the law of the land with the aspiration that every child will be proficient by 2014. At the end of 2007, the latest for which we have information, only 33 percent of fourth graders

were proficient in reading. So it's easier to establish goals than it is to obtain those goals. And my question for you is how would you like to be graded towards the end of this four-year period? What should the American public look to to determine whether you've been doing a great job?

SECRETARY DUNCAN: I think we're pushing a very strong reform agenda in all four of those areas, and we need to see real progress in every single one of those. And so we need to be really thinking about these common, college-ready, career-ready, internationally benchmarked standards. And as people know, that used to be the third rail in the conversation a few years back. But there has been tremendous movement -- business community, the heads of both unions, the foundation community, philanthropic community -- everyone knows that's an idea whose time has come, so we have a chance to push that very, very hard. This idea of getting great teachers into communities that have been historically underserved is a huge one. Talent matters tremendously. I think we start to systemically get the best and brightest into the communities that need the most help.

Can we have real data systems? And it's amazing in education that we don't in too many places -- we can't really track student progress over time, we can't track student achievement back to their teachers, and we can't track teachers back to their schools of education. That would not be allowed to happen in any other industry. And somehow that's been allowed to happen in education. That can fundamentally change. And this idea of challenging the status quo on the, you know, again, take a bottom 1 percent of schools for our country every single year. I want to and need to be held accountable for progress in all four of those areas. I think the country feels the sense of urgency that I feel, that for all the progress, we have a long way to go. And as you said, maybe differently than other administrations in the past, we have real resources to put behind those states and those districts that are committed to fundamental reform.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. We'll now have questions from the floor. If you would raise your hand, I will call on you. When you get a microphone, identify yourself, and then ask the question of the Secretary. So, we have a question here in the middle, the gentleman in the middle. Please identify yourself.

QUESTIONER: My name is John Farden. I work for Save the Children, and we run education programs in rural America. And my question is you've talked a lot about extending the school day and doing it specifically through public-private partnerships. And can you talk a little more about that, and then also where, like, how is that going to be funded? Are there specific ways that are dedicated funds for that type of innovation?

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Sure. I appreciate the question. This is one of my favorite topics that usually the adults like and usually when I do this with a bunch of students, I get booted. So I think this is mostly adults. Please don't throw any shoes at me on this one.

I just fundamentally think, and again, we all know this, that our education system is based upon the agrarian economy. And most of our kids today aren't working in the fields anymore. And our children, I'm convinced, are at a competitive disadvantage. Our children are competing for jobs against children in India and China today and those children are going to school 25-30 percent more than us. And if we want to give our children a chance to compete in an international economy, we have to fundamentally change how we do business. That means a few different things. Let me take a minute and walk it through. I think the school day itself needs to be longer. I think teachers need more time to think and to plan and to work together and to understand the data. But I also think to your point that it's not just the school day and the teacher time. We need to really be bringing the nonprofit community and others into our schools. I think our schools should be open 12, 13, 14 hours a day, six, seven days a week, 11, 12 months out of the year with a wide variety of programs for our students and for their



families. And the school buildings don't belong to me. They don't belong to the superintendent, the school boards. They don't belong to the unions. Our school buildings belong to the community, to the taxpayers. In every neighborhood -- rich, poor, rural, urban -- we have school buildings. Every school building has classrooms. They almost all have computer labs. They have libraries. They have gyms. Some have pools; these are wonderful, wonderful physical resources that are shut down for far too many hours each day. And the more our schools truly become the centers of community life, the better our students are going to do. So back home in Chicago we had about 150 schools that were what we called community schools with this whole host of activities. We had schools where you had 100 to 150 parents come to school every day for their own education, not for their children, GED and ESL and family literacy nights. And when families are learning together, great things are going to happen with our children.

So it takes funding. This huge influx in Title I dollars; this is a perfect use of Title I dollars, if you really think very, very differently about time and bringing in nonprofits. And a lot of what we did, frankly, didn't take any money. We didn't charge rent. We didn't charge any nonprofits or anything, just opened up the buildings. We can run the school from 9:00 to 3:00 in the morning. Let the nonprofits run their school from 3:00 to 9:00 at night. So it takes a little creativity. It takes us not thinking we own the buildings. And it's interesting, when you really get into this, you start to get into debates around -- whose room is it, or who stocks the toilet paper, you know, who cleans the hallways -- those are real issues you have to work through, but again, with unprecedented resources on the table, time is one of the most important things we can buy with Title I dollars and thinking very differently about this in lots of different ways. I think we have huge benefits for children that historically have not gotten as much as they need.

MR. WHITEHURST: Here.

QUESTIONER: Good morning. Hi. Mary Ann McMullen with Service Employees International Union. As you know, we represent a lot of the low-age workers who are parents of the children on the low-end of the achievement gap. And every time we survey these, our members, they care very much about education. And then when we ask them what do they care most under that topic, it's safety because so many of the children are hurt or killed. I mean, as you know, I think Chicago were over 30 students this school year who have been killed. And I know this gets out of the realm of usual education, but I was wondering -- and I know you're very sensitive to this issue -- what you see as the role of the Department of Education in this basic safety issue?

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Yes, it's a great question. That was by far the toughest part of my job back in Chicago was dealing with the children and the families where kids were killed by only in the community. I go back to what I started before. Our schools are the safest places in the community. And the more we extend that time, the more we open it up, the more we keep children off the streets -- and we know those hours, from 3:00 to 6:00, 3:00 to 7:00, are times of high anxiety for parents. And the more our children are with us with adults who care about them in our schools, doing a wide variety of things, I think that's a step in the right direction. The real question as our schools become safer and safer, is how do you sort of spread that out into the community and ensure a safe passage and make sure students can get to and from school safely? And that takes some real creative partnerships with the community and local businesses to make sure students are getting there and walking, school buses, and parent patrols, and that kind of thing. So we want to do everything we can to make sure that our students are safe. Obviously, to me, that's just like the foundation, the building block. If children are scared, they can't think about algebra, trig, and AP chemistry, and going to college. It's impossible. They're just trying to survive. And so we have to all work together, whether it's their physical safety, whether it's their emotional well being, their social well being, make sure our children are fed. Make sure they have eye glasses to

see the blackboard. There's a series of things you have to do before you can really talk about academic rigor. And we have to think very creatively about what the school's role is, how we engage the community, so that passage from home to school is safe, the school buildings are open long, long hours for, again, working families, nonworking families, it doesn't matter. Make sure those children can get home safely; for when schools truly become the hearts of the community, I think it's a very important step in the right direction.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. The gentleman to your right, in back there.

JEROME DANCIS: I'm Jerome Dancis. I'm a retired mathematics professor. And from -- at the universities, math professors are seeing students show up knowing less arithmetic than they did five years ago and ten years ago and twenty years ago. And it's a natural consequence of the reform math movement that's been occurring in this country over the past twenty years. From my perspective, the biggest problem in education is that the middle school math teachers -- many of the middle school math teachers are not fluent in fractions, are not able to add fractions. You know, some can, some can't. And when No Child Left Behind is, you know, rewritten, perhaps the criteria for a highly qualified middle school math teacher would be that they can add fractions.

And relatedly, there's a massive amount of money that's being spent across the country on professional development, and it's usually for pedagogy, it's rarely for content. And it would be really useful if a sizeable chunk of the professional development money could be reallocated toward teaching content.

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Thank you. Couple of great points, and as you well know, it's hard to teach what you don't know. And when you get to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, we see lots of students start to lose interest in math and science. And guess why? It's because they're taught by teachers that don't know math and science. And so it's hard to really instill a passion, a love of learning, when you're struggling with

the content yourself. And so, I agree, we can use a ton of these resources to send teachers back to school, to universities, to get the endorsements, to get the content, the knowledge they need to be able to teach. I also think more and more -- the more we can departmentalize in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade level to ensure that teachers get math and science, teachers who actually know the content, is a step in the right direction. But we have, again, what, you know, a lot of this money is one-time money so we haven't talked about, you know, the cliff. But a great, great use of one-time money is to get teachers the content knowledge they need that will stay with them forever. And there is a huge opportunity to do that in the next couple of years.

MR. WHITEHURST: Up here.

QUESTIONER: Doug Oliver. I'm an engineering professor. As you know, there's a shortage of math and science teachers. Yet at the same time, there's thousands of math -- early career math and science teachers that are being given the pink slip for next year. Is there enough money in the Recovery Fund to cover most of those math and science teachers that are receiving pink slips?

SECRETARY DUNCAN: And that's actually the second half or sort of the back half of the gentleman's earlier question, is do we have a math and science shortage of great teachers across the country? And we anticipate being able to save hundreds of thousands of teaching jobs around the country. There's a University of Washington study that talked about as many as 600,000 teachers being laid off. That would have been an absolutely devastating blow to education. We're at a point where we have to get better, not get worse. And while we can't save every job, we're going to save literally hundreds of thousands of teaching jobs. I was in New York not too long ago, and the Mayor and the Chancellor talked about 14,000 teachers they were going to lay off; that without the Recovery dollars -- with the Recovery dollars, they can keep them teaching. So we absolutely have to keep those teachers teaching. I would argue -- again, this is popular maybe with you and the other gentleman, maybe not some other

folks -- I think we need to pay math and science teachers more money. I think we've had a shortage of math and science teachers for 25, 30 years, for a couple of decades. Let's stop talking about it. Let's pay them more money. I think a big thing that would keep math and science teachers teaching is if they have the opportunity to do some professional development and keep learning, doing some research with universities in the summer, and keep their hand in that world, and so building those kinds of partnerships.

It's sort of what Russ talked about. We have these challenges that have been with us for a long time, and we haven't really fundamentally challenged the status quo. And I think one answer is that -- particularly in areas of critical need like math and science, foreign language, particularly in historically underserved communities -- I think we need to pay these teachers more money and get them this huge influx of resources. Pick a number, \$5,000, \$10,000, \$15,000, \$20,000. We can do this today. We can really do it. It's getting people to think differently and understand the magnitude of the possibilities ahead of us.

MR. WHITEHURST: The woman on the outside, green -- she promises not to ask a math and science question!

QUESTIONER: This is true! I'm Anya Malka from Pre-K Now Pew Center on the States. Secretary Duncan, it's great to hear to speak again. And today it isn't uncommon at all on early education and pre-kindergarten so if you could discuss how it fits into your goals of turning around the bottom 1 percent of the schools and bright teachers and getting bright teachers into communities as well as the data systems. Where is the role of early education and pre-kindergarten in that?

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Let me hit that on the higher ed side as well, which I haven't hit, and sort of talk about the comprehensive piece. I'll start on the backend. We talked about sort of the middle piece, the K-12, which is almost a \$70 billion investment. The higher ed side is over \$30 billion to increase access and opportunity and that at the end of the day is so critically important. And you didn't ask me

about my eight-year goals. And maybe that's being a little ambitious now, but ultimately, all of this is to what end? To what end is to get more students going to college and not just more students graduating from college. That's what this is all about. And if that number doesn't change long term, then we wouldn't have done our jobs. So that is critically important. So how do you get to that? That's the end of the journey. How do you get there? Exactly where you started, early childhood, \$5 billion on the table there. Two things that are really important to me: One is to dramatically increase access. You have lots of children in underserved communities that don't have a chance to go to a pre-school program. And I really worry about how the best kindergarten teachers in the world, how you have some children who come in reading fluently, and you have other children who don't know the front of the book from the back of the book. And how does the best teacher teach that wide, wide disparity and ability levels? Our children have to hit kindergarten with their literacy skills intact, their socialization skills intact. And you can make a case that the \$5 billion on the early childhood side may be the best investment we can make. You know, it won't turn around test scores tomorrow. It won't turn around, you know, college graduation rates for years, but it's absolutely the best thing to do. So two things: Dramatically improve access, but secondly and equally important is you have to really significantly improve quality. And if this is glorified babysitting, that's not getting us where we need to go. So just as we need to get more teachers knowing math and science, getting teachers the skills they need and the professional development and the endorsements from their early childhood side so that it's really, you know, quality teaching and learning going on there so our students hit kindergarten able to interact with their peers, ready to learn, ready to read. And if we do that well, that lays the foundation for everything else we're trying to do.

MR. WHITEHURST: We have time for one more question. I would ask you to remain seated when the Secretary leaves. There'll be a panel discussion that immediately follows. I'll take one from Jim Comus with his hand up.

QUESTIONER: Jim Comus from Knowledge Alliance and it's great to see both of you together on the stage, which leads to my question. In the stimulus package in other fields like in energy and in agriculture and defense, the R&D investment was huge in the stimulus package. For education, however, the stimulus package didn't put anything into research and development. And I'm wondering if you have a strategy or a thought about how to bring the innovation concept to the R&D enterprise and vice versa?

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Well, in the FY010 budget we have a significant boost for IES in there, which Russ would have, I'm sure, would have liked when he was there. I think actually so much of this money -- the \$4.35 billion for states and \$650 million invest in what works fund, the innovation fund -- so much of that is not just investing in R&D, but really putting money into those current practices that have proven an ability to drive student achievement. And for me, the huge opportunity is that we have more so today than ever before over the past five, ten, fifteen years, this huge amount of entrepreneurial leadership, innovation, creativity in schools and school districts around the country, nonprofits. We have a chance to really invest in and scale up what works. And so we need to continue to learn, but we have the best practices out there. The key for me is to take those things that are islands of excellence, pockets of excellence, and really take them to scale. And with significant resources to invest in those groups that have demonstrated, not talked about, but have the data to prove they have a demonstrated ability to drive student achievement, we can at unprecedented levels take those best practices to scale. So yes, we want to continue to invest in R&D, and yes, we want to continue to increase the role of IES and really give us real-time data on what's working, what's not. But where we know what's working now, I feel a real urgency not to just do more research, but to get those things helping more kids and do that quickly. And we have a chance to do that going forward.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY DUNCAN: Thanks for the great questions. Thanks for having me this morning.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you very much. Thank you for being here. I really appreciate it. Thank you again. Bye bye.

I ask the panel to join me on the stage please? Let me introduce the panel members to you. Immediately to my left is Mike Casserly. Mike is the CEO of the Council of the Great City Schools, the organization that represents about sixty of the largest urban school districts in America. Mike has been at his job a long time and understands probably better than most people in this room what the reality of the stimulus package is as it relates to local education efforts.

Marshall (Mike) Smith is a senior advisor to Secretary Duncan. He has held senior positions in two previous administrations, was former dean of the School of Education at Stanford University, is accomplished in so many ways that if I took time to describe them all, we wouldn't have time for the panel discussion.

Isabel (Belle) Sawhill is a senior fellow here at Brookings, served in the Clinton Administration, the Office of Management and Budget, where she was responsible for human resources, investments, about a third of the federal budget, and brings to all of her work a keen appreciation not only of human resource development, but of numbers and budgets and how those two things have to fit together.

Alan Berube is also a senior fellow here at Brookings and head of the research operation in the Metropolitan Studies Program. He served in the Clinton Administration with the Treasury Department and is very interested in metropolitan issues, particularly how education plays an important role in the revival of metropolitan areas.

So I will start our discussion by putting to the panelists a variant of the same question that I put to Secretary Duncan, which is what should the scorecard be after three or four years? And I mean this in a specific sense. So if we were to construct



a set of metrics for grading this administration, you know, what's important? What ought we to be measuring? What should the administration be accountable for in its agenda for reform? Would you like to start, Mike?

MR. CASSERLY: Sure, I'll take a stab at this. Let me preface my answer, though, by saying I'm a big fan of the stimulus package and think that it has enormous potential to do an awful lot of good in an awful lot of places. I'm not sure that I would diverge a whole lot from what the Secretary indicated would be his metrics of success. I think it would be terrific if we saw at the end of a two- or three-year period a sharp decline in the number of the lowest performing schools that had seen no improvement in academic performance. I think it would also be important if we were able to see a major increase in the number of state and local data bases that were able to track student performance, student by student, and to link that performance back to individual teachers so we could get a better gauge of the value that was added by each individual teacher to each child's learning experience. I also think it would be very important after a couple of years to see a sharp decline in the number of first-year teachers teaching in the lowest performing schools. So I'd start with those three.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. Thank you. Mike?

MR. SMITH: Well, first of all, I agree with everything that Arne said. These are short-term goals. He's talking -- he's now talking three or four years. We actually had a little discussion about this in the car, and the first three of those goals are really infrastructure goals; the data systems, the standards and assessments, the hard, hard work that needs to be done on our human capital and are on our social capital systems. Those are infrastructure changes. We can track those to some extent. The one outcome variable that might be possible is the one that Mike Casserly just mentioned. That is possibly some changes in that bottom 1 percent, in the bottom 2 percent of schools, some indication that they're moving, that test scores are rising. But also that there's more stability in the teaching staff, that there's a different climate in the

school, that there's also a different climate around the school because you desperately need that climate around the school in order to make the school work over time. So that could be -- those could be outcome variables.

We also are working -- and I don't think he mentioned this -- I think he didn't mention this because it's still a work in progress -- we're trying to figure out what our longer term goals are. What are the eight- and ten-year goals? Goals that will transcend perhaps even the President's administration if it goes eight years. And they have to be, we believe, in the areas of attainment, of high school attainment, of graduation rates, of the gap closing in graduation rates. I mean, that's the sum of all the efforts we put into it from the pre-school, from the work with mothers at homes all the way up through the elementary and secondary schools. And then it also has to be college going; it has to be two-year and four-year increases in the graduation rates from college. So those are the goals that we're really shooting for in the long run.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thanks. On the issue of the lowest performing schools, Secretary Duncan mentioned the lowest 1 percent and you alluded to that as well. There seems to be a strategic tension between the notion that we close those schools versus the possibility of the reform efforts that can occur within the existing building and existing leadership. Do you have a sense of the way the administration would like to see that play out?

MR. SMITH: You know, I think it's -- if you would define those bottom 1 percent by schools where the children are not achieving well at all, achieving badly, and the schools haven't moved at all in the last four or five years. And so you've got a stagnant situation. It's predictable that students in these schools will not succeed. Under those circumstances, it seems entirely reasonable to take away the faculty, to change the leadership, to put in new faculty, new leadership, to change the curriculum, to really work at it, spend a lot resources on making the inside of that school attractive and safe, and to then broaden it. I mean, so this is the point about the cultures. The culture inside the

school has to change. It has to change to a culture of optimism and, you know, aggressive work with the students to allow them to succeed. But the culture outside the school will also often has to change. The Boys and Girls Clubs need to be brought in. The parents need to be brought in. The police force and the medical system has to be brought to bear on this. It has to be an all-court press to use that basketball term. This is -- this -- we know these schools, folks. We've known these schools for 45 years. We looked at those lists of schools in the Carter Administration, and we tried to get Title I funds really working hard for them. But we haven't really done anything about it as a nation. We haven't focused enough.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. Belle, the question then to you, what do you think the administration ought to be graded on towards the end of its first term?

MS. SAWHILL: Well, I agree with everything that's been said -- I'm just getting too much of an echo -- especially what, you know, Mike Casserly said about that. But just to be a little bit careful or a little more provocative perhaps here, I think it's not realistic to think we're going to have a big impact on outcomes in a period of three years. And I want to remind all of us that one of the problems, I think, in the private sector has been the tendency to focus on quarterly earnings reports and to pick a strategy, a business strategy, that's tied to short-term results. And, of course, we have similar pressures in the political system with people having to be reelected, whether in Congress or in the administration. And I think education is so important and it's such a huge enterprise in our country, that unless we go for long-term reform here, we will not do what we need to do. So I'm all for having better data systems, better tracking of outcomes, higher standards, but I just want to be cautious about not doing the long-term reforms that are needed to get to where we should be as a country.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. Alan?

MR. BERUBE: Great. Well, I'll associate myself with the comments other panelists have made as well and preface what I am going to say by saying that a lot

of the work that we're doing in my program at Brookings is focused not just on the education portion of the stimulus package, but across many of the different domains that the package tries to cover, so transportation, housing, workforce, energy, economic development. And the basic story is it's sending a lot of money down the same old pipes, no real incentive necessarily to do things differently or more productively, alongside a few provisions that I think could encourage real meaningful reform, a real change of ways in doing business. And, you know, our partners at the local, state, and regional level most often focus on the problems of cities and inter-suburbs. They really want federal officials, like the Secretary of Education, like the other Cabinet secretaries, to be aggressive and crystal clear in their implementation to help them break through a lot of the issues they've been facing for years on these fronts. So on behalf of struggling urban school districts, that's things like alignment between K through 12 and post-secondary standards, teacher assignment policies, caps on the numbers of charter schools at the state level.

I think everybody in the audience is probably aware that about two-thirds of the stimulus dollars are basically out the door already, and they're out the door in exchange for "assurances" from states around the four areas that the Secretary was talking about. Assurances that they will make progress on standards and assessments, to make progress on the distribution of highly qualified teachers, make progress on data systems. And one quote I saw from a local leader I think was instructive not just for education, but for all of these areas, in that developing measurements of success for them is like a "seventh order issue." The first order issue is how to spend the money right now.

So anyway, to answer Russ's question, then, I think it's instructive to look at a report that the Gates and the Brody Foundations collaborated on and put out last month that actually tries to answer this question, what should we look for by 2012 given the resources that the Department has at hand right now? And on this question of the bottom 1 percent, I thought it was instructive that they said that a meaningful outcome

would be the closure and the significant restructuring of 500 chronically underperforming schools nationwide, and then replacing them with higher performing schools, including charters, aggressive turnaround policies at the state and district level going forward. And that's -- it's a bit of a contrast with the numbers I think the Secretary was alluding to, which was 1 percent of all schools over the next several years, 5,000 schools. So I wonder what other panelists or maybe we'll get to this in Q&A might think about the difference between a goal of 500 schools and 5,000 schools at the bottom of the --

MR. WHITEHURST: Alan, if I could just react to your comment -- I mean, I do think it would be a mistake to view the seventh inning issue in the seventh inning. It's going to be extraordinarily important as states and localities are figuring out how to spend this money to have a sense of how they and the nation will be held accountable for the expenditure. And I think it is possible to construct a metrics that are quite consistent with the Secretary's and the President's goals that are things are worth measuring and that don't undermine the achievement of long-term goals. We've heard the President, for example, talk about the need to expand charter schools. One could imagine a number of states that would be the target to release their caps on charter schools so that there could be more. We've heard about increasing the quality of the teaching work force. One measure is clearly first time teachers in high need schools, but another might be the college qualifications of teachers entering the work force in terms of SAT scores when they started college, for example.

So my argument is that it's worthwhile to develop symmetrics that are consistent with long term goals, but also can be obtainable and can be marks against -- which people can measure their actions.

To change the topic a bit, I'd like to ask Mike, who represents so many of the urban school districts who are on the receiving end of this pipeline, you know, how much money is flowing through that pipeline, and what issues do you see in terms of the

way the money is likely to be received by schools and their ability to manage it, while addressing the issue that the Secretary alluded to, which is the cliff.

This is two year funding, and after two years, it's gone. So how do you manage this money in responsible ways, understanding that long term commitments are not possible?

MR. CASSERLY: Well, this is – I have to say this is a very tough management and administrative problem for a lot of local school districts across the country, urban and rural and suburban alike. Let me make one point of clarification here, and that is that the vast number of school districts at the local level have not actually seen a dime of this money.

There are only nine or so states that have their applications approved by the Department of Education at this point. And even within those nine, I don't believe that much of the money has actually gone down to the local level.

So for those of you who may be looking for how school districts are spending their money with the stimulus dollars approved by Congress, you're not going to be able to find it just yet because it doesn't exist at the local level.

There is a huge problem here in terms of using the funds. Part of it relates to the two year funding cliff that's been referred to, and that is, school districts have to spend their money within an approximately two year period, which means that they can't really form long term obligations, particularly in terms of personnel, and then find themselves in a position in a couple years of having to lay off a lot of those people. So what their major challenge is, is to come up with uses of funds in the short term that build long term capacity in their ability to meet some of the goals that have been referred to.

What would make that job considerably easier would be funds that were far more flexible. Most of the flexibility, however, in the education stimulus dollars, are found in two pots of money, one is the State Stabilization Fund, and the second is in an

arcane provision of IDEA that allows a school district to plant upwards of 50 percent of their increases in IDEA, and I won't get into the kind of Byzantine nature of all of those provisions.

But it's also very clear that, in a number of states, local school districts won't actually see a lot of the state stabilization money, and frankly, a lot of the big city school districts have given up on the possibility that they're likely to see large portions of the stabilization money. This is too bad on a couple of fronts. It's certainly bad on an economic and stimulus front, because they're not able to back fill a lot of their budget cuts. The second place where it's problematic is that a lot of school districts are then forced into a position of having to pursue kind of bold and innovative reforms inside of two very highly restrictive and regulated programs; one is Title One and the other is IDEA.

And Congress and the Administration so far have been fairly reluctant to open up the flexibility in either one of those two programs to kind of spur the innovation and bold reforms that I think all of us want to pursue.

SPEAKER: Well, let me turn to the other Mike, who has had a principal role in structuring the implementation of the stimulus bill, to ask if you have any reactions to Mike Casserly's comments?

MR. SMITH: A few, yeah. I mean I agree completely on the idea that you can use these funds to create capacity over the next two to three years. You can actually spend the money in three years as long as you've obligated it within two years. So you've got a three year window possible.

If there is a way of somehow invigorating the teaching force in your school, for example, bringing in coaches or working with them in certain ways, spending resources on that should have long term payoff in the future. So there's that kind of approach, and that can be done with technology easily and a variety of other strategies. But Mike's right, there is a – this is tricky, because the primary money you've got to use

for district-wide efforts is the stabilization money. You can't use Title One money for district-wide efforts typically.

So you can use the Title One money in the schools and a little bit of the IDEA money, as Mike had mentioned, but fundamentally you're limited to using the stabilization money for district-wide reform.

And just a little data to inform – if you go to [recovery.gov](http://recovery.gov), all of this information is up there, and there will be tons of information. I mean the transparency in this whole effort is going to be quite extraordinary.

For those people who like to look at school budgets, district budgets, state budgets in education, you're going to have a field day, because every quarter the reports are going to come in from the nature of the expenditures under the recovery act, and that will give us a view of how Title One funds, for example, or other funds are spent that we've never had before.

There's a variety of different organizations that are tracking using the data in [recovery.gov](http://recovery.gov), they're kind of tracking the progress, and these are the nine states that Mike mentioned that they're actually getting stabilization funds at this point. There have been a variety of others that have sent in proposals or applications, which haven't yet been approved, and we're in the process of working with them.

This is a complicated law, it's a complicated set of financial hoops that the states have to go through in order to get the money. But the Department, at this point, is moving very quickly, it's moving all of them within ten days or two weeks of their submission of the application.

But of the nine, the numbers for expended, or will be expended in '08 and '09 are California, 64 percent, Illinois, 62 percent, that's '08/'09, that's this year, 64 percent of their funds from stabilization. California got about six billion, I think. Illinois, 62 percent, Oregon, 83 percent, I'm just picking the high ones now.



On the other end of the track, you can spend it over three years, that is, you can spend it in 2010 and 2011. The expectation in California is, they'll have zero money left to spend in 2010/2011. Illinois is the same way. In Maine, it's three percent, Oregon, it's zero, Utah, zero. So the point that Mike is making that these monies are going to go out and be used, in most cases, at least in these nine states, in most cases for stabilization purposes. They'll be for picking up pink slips, they're going to be for helping ease their way over the next two years. It's going to be hard for them to do reforms. You will probably see reforms in other states, states that aren't in such bad economic straights, and you'll see reform of the sort that the Secretary was talking about when he used – when he said the \$5 billion or hopefully \$5 billion for the school improvement money.

That will allow money of the order of \$1,000 to \$1,500 a student to come into those schools, those most needy schools, over a period of three years. So you'll be able to invest really significant amounts in those schools to turn them around.

SPEAKER: Thank you. One of the issues that has been raised about the stimulus bill is that it's a lot of money, for education, about \$100 billion. Belle Sawhill spent a couple of years in the Office of Management and Budget, where they worry about those sorts of expenditures. And, Belle, I wonder if you think it's a good idea to have increased the Department of Education's budget that dramatically?

MS. SAWHILL: Well, I think it puts a tremendous challenge on the Department and on other levels of the system to spend the money well. I mean there really is a risk that a lot of it is going to be spent unwisely. Some of that is just inevitable. You can't get money out there quickly in a recession and expect it all to be used well. So I sort of accept that, but I do worry about it, and I worry in particular about how you turn the spigot off at the end of this process.

And on the one hand, if a school system is using the money for reform and for long term goals, which I think are critically important, as I said earlier, then they're

going to particularly be inhibited by the fact that the money is maybe going to go away in a couple years and so that's going to prevent them from using it as much for reform as they, otherwise, might.

So there's a tension between the goal of getting the money out there quickly, getting it spent, saving jobs, and getting long term reform. It's just extremely tricky, and whether it's going to work out well in practice remains to be seen. I was interested what Mike Smith just said, because I don't know this area in the kind of granular detail that some of the other people up here do, but I was under the impression from looking at some data that the money has been quite slow to get out there, and that when you have a federal system and the money has to go first from the federal government to the state government, and then the state government has their own systems for getting the money out to local school districts, and then further down to the school level, it just takes a long time, and there's lots of slips between good intentions at the top and what actually happens in the classroom finally.

So, yes, I'm concerned about this, this is a lot of money. The amount for – in the stimulus bill for fiscal year '10 is, I think, \$56 billion, which is almost a doubling of the Department's budget, if I've read the numbers right, and that's just a lot to absorb in a very short period of time.

SPEAKER: I think one of the issues – one of the things I've heard about, and I wonder if any of the other panelists have heard these rumors, as well, is that there are plans afoot both at state and local levels to use this money for ways that help the budgets of those entities, but don't necessarily flow directly into education. For example, a state might fund its teacher benefit plan, therefore, offloading some financial obligations for the state budget. Or at the local level, a school district might choose to pay off its bonding obligations on school buildings. So are these just urban myths or do we see the beginnings of these sorts of actions at the state and local level?

MR. CASSERLY: Well, you certainly see it at the state level. Again, the local school districts really haven't receive any of the money yet, so while we've got potential to use the money in all kinds of screwy ways, we haven't really – don't have the opportunity yet because we haven't gotten it.

But there are numerous examples of individual states either cutting back their own expenditures in anticipation of the stimulus money that they're about to receive, or simply putting their K-12 expenditures on the percents that Michael just mentioned, into their pension systems, or to backfill their textbook accounts, or any number of other things, which is why I'm not necessarily always optimistic that the stabilization funds are going to make it down to the local level in quite the amounts that people had anticipated.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, I think one thing to watch on this point then is, I mean the Secretary has said that eligibility for the five billion in competitive money and perhaps, you know, there are additional funds that could go towards these purposes, but certainly the race to the top innovation fund will be predicated, in part, on how states and districts use the stabilization money, as well.

So it's a question about how big a cudgel, the five billion is, with respect to the 40 billion or so that's going out in the basic stabilization funds, but I think we – I think it doesn't hurt for the Secretary and the Administration to reiterate that we're watching how you're using these initial troches of funding if you want to be eligible for the competitive funding to come.

SPEAKER: You know, there's a huge amount of noise out there, a huge amount of posturing by governors and by state legislators, and you know, a whole variety of different people. Read the law. The law says all of the money that is dedicated to K-12 shall go down to the LEA's. And the law says that all the money that's dedicated to higher ed shall go to the IAG's. They're breaking the law under those conditions. That's crystal clear in all of our guidance, it's crystal clear in every communication we have with the governor who says, well, I want to use it for this, I want to use it for that, we come

right back to them and we say, you know, talk to your lawyers, you'll find that you cannot use these monies this way. I don't think you're going to see a lot of that – the stuff that people are using for showboating right now. You may see misallocation of the funds at the local level. You're talking about \$40 billion -- \$50 billion, and there's going to be some situations that are going to pop up in local newspapers and might hit the press.

Right now, I think what we're seeing is a struggle between situations such as in a big city that I know of, the union is arguing that the district superintendent has picked up perhaps 3,000, I'm not going to reference the city specifically, but perhaps 3,000 pink slips for teachers and others.

The union is arguing that he should use the money from the stabilization to cover all of those pink slips, or as many as he possibly can. He, and the school board argues back, that they need to spread this out over a couple of years, they may not be able to pick up all those pink slips. So these are the kinds of discussions that are happening right now, really critical discussions about how those school systems are going to try to stabilize themselves over time. The same line of argument can go in other school systems, where the conditions may not be as financially dire. In those situations, there's going to be discussions between the superintendent and the school board about where are we going to spend the stabilization money and how do we use them for reform purposes. We hear those discussions going on, as well.

So I'm not as pessimistic as Mike is about the money getting down. I think the money has to go down, we have to work with the districts about strategies so that we do take account of the cliff. There's a variety of guidance out on that right now, there will be more guidance on it later. We're hoping, and know actually that the great City Schools Group is putting out their own guidance about this, their own ideas, they're sharing ideas, the chiefs are doing the same thing.

So we've got a – there's a real momentum out there among school district superintendents and the chiefs and others to spend these monies well.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Well, I will invite you to ask any of us questions. The ground rules are the same as before, with the addition that if the question is directed to a particular panelists, please indicate to whom your question is directed. Right next to you.

MR. BECKENDORF: Yes, I'm Kurt Beckendorf, I'm a middle school science teacher, taught in four districts in two different states. Currently I'm serving a fellowship in – education. There's a lot of talk about improving teachers. In the four districts I've taught in, two were good and two were not so good. It wasn't so much the teachers, it was the administration and the school system. What is there to improve administrators?

SPEAKER: Is that directed to anyone in particular?

MR. BECKENDORF: No, it's not.

SPEAKER: Anyone; somebody jump in.

SPEAKER: You can use stabilization funds, you can use Title One funds, and you can use IDEA funds for professional development and for administration under certain restrictions and rules. I do know that a number of my cities are thinking about in particular using some of their Title One money to provide professional development and the like to principals and other administrators to help bolster their capacity to lead and serve their individual school. But the decision about doing that and how much of the money to devote to that purpose is really dependent on each individual school district.

SPEAKER: There's a shorthand that is unfortunate, it talks about improving teachers, as though they can be somehow, you know, changed organically. I think of it as improving teaching, and that covers a whole range of things. It covers all the human resource operations that work. It covers the attraction of the teaching job itself, the students, and how to get them into the system in their college days. It includes the

pre-service training in the colleges. It includes the whole process of getting a certification. It includes the process of being hired.

Just as an example, I give this talk before groups of teachers or principals and I ask them the question, when you were hired, or when people are hired in your school, did you have to send a video of your teaching or did you – were you asked to come and actually teach in that school that you're applying to and have other teachers around you watching you teach.

And, unfortunately, the number is in the 30 percent range that answers affirmatively to that question. There's no way in the world that you want to give a job to somebody which will probably turn out to be a lifetime job if they want it on the basis of a set of recommendations from people you don't know and situations you don't know and so on. There's all sorts of things to be changed in that kind of system, not all the way through the professional development system that you talked about.

Now, if you can think about improving teaching, there are really three parts to it. There is the part of training the teachers well, that's really important. A second really important part is the climate of the school and the functions of the school. It's the social capital of the school, it's how those teachers interact with each other, how they support each other, how they think about the principal, how they think about the nature of the curriculum and so on, that's as important as anything.

We know that the most powerful indicator of teachers that stay in very low income schools has to do with the social capital of the school. And the third part are, what are the things, what are the elements that actually support that teacher in the school itself apart from other individuals, how is the curriculum structured, how do they think about, you know, do you have technology when you want it, does it work when you want it to work and so on. Those are the things that support teaching. So it's really a triangle that you have to think about.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. SAWHILL: Can I say something about this last question?

SPEAKER: Yes, please.

MS. SAWHILL: I mean I think that no one would want to argue that the climate of the school and the training and all of that matter. On the other hand, I just want to emphasize that all of the research shows that it is the individual teacher that explains most of the variation in how children do in school, and we really need to pay attention to that.

And what I think is very good about what the Secretary said this morning and what the administration is trying to do is to link teacher effectiveness to gains in achievement, or to measure teacher effectiveness by tracking it back to what children are learning.

Now, that's controversial, it's complicated, it can't be done in an over simplified way, but I think it's new thinking, and I think the whole notion of providing incentives and higher rewards for effective teachers is very important, and I think opening up recruitment to non-traditional sources is also very important. And my reading of the current administration is, they understand all of those things, and I just want to commend them for that.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. TORNEY-PURTA: I'm Judith Torney-Purta, I'm a Professor of Human Development at the University of Maryland, and as you might guess, I'm going to ask you a question about the next level down from the teachers. We started with the states, the schools, the teachers, and I'm going to ask you something about the children.

Because it seems to me that many of the past efforts in educational policy may have failed in part because we failed to take that issue into account, and a lot of the variance in how the test scores look at the school level has to do with the children in the school.

And recently, I and my research team have been looking at the effects of moving school frequently on student's achievement, on their sense of belonging at

school, on the way and the kind of climate which they perceive in their school environment, and we find that both achievement measures and also sense of belonging and other sorts of measures are lower for – after you've controlled for a variety of other things, for students who have moved school two or three times, but in the – between about the fifth and the eighth grade. Now, some of the policies which have been in effect or I think are proposed for schools, especially school closings, school – redrawing of district boundaries, so that students have to change schools, seem to me to not attend to some of the issues which the Secretary referred to, like stress level among children and other aspects of schooling.

And I want to know if anybody is trying to track the effects at the student level of some of these policies which may look very good, transfer to a better school, better test scores, et cetera, when, as a matter of fact, there also is this other dimension.

SPEAKER: You do see a lot of that research going on not only in the university world, but you certainly see it in a lot of local school districts that have pretty good data, it's not comparable from place to place, but pretty good data on mobility, and all of that data across many of the cities show exactly what it is that you're describing and that is that mobility, repeated mobility, really has a very adverse effect on student achievement and sense of well being and sense of place and all of that stuff that contributes to academic performance. I don't know that what Secretary Duncan is describing really necessarily undercuts that – those findings at all. I think it's important that if a student is in a poorly performing school and is repeatedly performing over a very long period of time, that school probably close, and that student be allowed to go to another school, presumably a better school.

What many big city school districts are doing to try to mitigate this problem a little bit is to put in a more standardized curriculum across their schools so students who move from school to school are likely to see much of the same program at their new school as they saw at their old school.



Some of this we can control a little bit at the school district level, boundary changes and the like are one of those, but the curriculum is another, and the programs themselves are another way that a lot of these districts are trying to mitigate the problems that you're pointing out.

SPEAKER: Belle.

MS. SAWHILL: I very much agree with your general point, that we don't pay enough attention to the children themselves. After all, learning is a partnership between a child or a student and a teacher, and I think sometimes we think there are magic solutions that all we need to do is change the schools and the teachers and everything will take care of itself. I think that one of the things we haven't talked about enough is that we need expectations for students that don't deal just with academics, but also set higher expectations for behavior, as well.

And I think about some of the charter schools that are focusing on very orderly classrooms, student engagement, student attendance, longer time on task, and they're showing some success.

There's a charter school in the Harlem Children Zone that's getting quite a lot of attention. There's been some good research there suggesting that those children are making tremendous gains relative to a similar group of children who are not in such a school. And I think that this bears watching and more research and possibly taking this more to scale.

I like very much the idea that the Secretary has expressed, that we need to look at what's worked so far, including bold, new efforts particularly to deal with disadvantaged communities, and to both study them, but also try to take them to scale, but in a process that involves continuous learning as we go, because as you take things to scale, there's often a tendency for them to not get as good results. I'm very struck by the fact that you have big gaps even as early as kindergarten in what children know and can do. And so I very much like the idea of investing more in early childhood programs. I

think that's where we're going to get some of our biggest bang for the buck. And that has to do with, again, not just academic readiness, but also social readiness to learn.

SPEAKER: And I think we've had existence proofs for some time, that it's possible to educate well children from poor backgrounds. The challenge, and it will be – if it were easy, we would have already done it. The challenge is going to be to take those individual cases where something good has happened, figure out why something good happened there, and how it can be scaled. That's why I was so – so much want to applaud the Secretary's answer to the final question he got, is his willingness to not only scale what seems to be working, but invest in the research that's going to be necessary to figure out on a kind of ingredient basis, why is it that some schools seem to work so much better than others.

MR. CASSERLY: I'm going to put in a plug here so nobody viewing this thinks that either the Moderator of this panel or the last questioner, Jim Comus had something going here on research. Those of us at the local level also think that an enormous amount of new dollars ought to be put into research so we can better understand what works and what doesn't work.

This is not just good for the research community, which it is, of course, but it's good for local practitioners when the research really focuses on challenges that local school districts have.

SPEAKER: Here, the middle.

MR. JONES: I'm Brian Jones, a practicing lawyer in town. I was General Council of the Department during Secretary Page's tenure. And I think more relevant to my question, I also currently serve as Vice Chairman of the D.C. Charter School Board. And, Mike Casserly, a question for you, I wonder what your response is to the argument that's been made by some, certainly here in the District, and I know in other places around the country, that the growth of – the current growth of charter schools in places poses a threat to the reform of the traditional school system, in part, by making

budgeting decisions more difficult and the like because of the movement of students from the traditional system to the charter system. And then for you, Mike Smith, I'm just curious what your sense is of what the administration's thinking is about what, if any, role it has in engaging itself in kind of the state level discussion about capping charter schools and limiting their growth.

MR. CASSERLY: This is a little afield from the stimulus package, but I think a lot of our school districts understand that they are now in a competition of sorts. There was I think a long period of time when many of our school districts did not necessarily see it as a competition, nor did they necessarily act accordingly.

So I think a lot of big city school districts, the traditional school districts, who also do a lot of their own independent chartering, by the way, are now attending to this set of issues that charter schools either consciously or unwittingly have kind of put in front of their – put on their plate and are trying to respond to it.

MR. SMITH: First, an acknowledgement; my wife is a principal of a charter school in East Palo Alto. It's 100 percent in poverty and it's 100 percent minority. It is an extraordinarily wonderful challenge in many, many ways. And when I'm home in California, I see her perhaps about normally an hour and a half a day. Actually living here and going back, we actually make time for ourselves, so I get more time with her. On the capping, I think the capping, and this is, you know, I may be stepping a little outside of the administration's formal position on this, I think the capping or uncapping, to go along with that, you need a lot better oversight of the quality of some of those schools.

You know, we get these studies of the extraordinary charter management organizations and individual schools that really work very, very well. Then we've got other studies which give you an average of all the charter schools, and they compare them to all of the public schools that look the same as they do, and they're regular public schools, and they turn out to be roughly the same.

Not all organizations are actually as effective or as careful as you are, as your organization is in giving oversight to charter schools, and we need to heighten that, because there's an awful lot of poor charter schools out there, just as there's a fairly large number of poor regular public schools. We have to feel a responsibility for both groups. On the capping and uncapping, I think the Secretary has actually been pretty clear on this. He said this, that he hopes the caps come off in a number of different states, particularly where the caps are – where the numbers allowed are quite low.

SPEAKER: Over here, please.

MS. SAMUELS: As you can see from what I'm – my name is Cynthia Samuels, I have a parent and family and political blog. But I haven't heard any questions asked about technology, and I'm wondering, is that because it's so – I haven't been in that many schools in a couple of years, but where are we with that in how well it's used, and are the education teachers being trained better when they're in college to learn how to use it? Because for a lot of these kids who need such individualized learning, it can be a huge advantage if it's used properly.

SPEAKER: Well, I can respond a bit to that. The Institute of Education and Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education carried out a large scale study of leading technology products that are used in classrooms to boost reading and math scores found no difference in outcomes for students in classrooms randomly assigned to receive those products versus carry out business as usual. The developers of those products protested and they said that, well, if the teachers had only used and the students had only used these products for the number of hours intended, they would have worked much better. In fact, it was a study of normal conditions of use and technology in the school.

I think the nation has a frontier in front of it in understanding how to apply new technology to teaching and learning, but I think the results we have in hand suggest that it is a frontier we need to get to rather than a location at which we presently set. So

it's promise and potential, and I expect that some of the stimulus money at the local level, when it gets there, is likely to be used to invest in technology because the machines and the software remain after the stimulus funds are expended.

SPEAKER: It suggests a little bit different slant on this. My own instinct is that over the next eight to ten years, the biggest changes in the schools will come through technology. I think the – I actually think that the economic downturn is going to contribute to that in many ways. On another – from another body of data, if you look at courses, that is, full courses, often that are now used in many cases for credit recovery, which is often associated with small schools, students – they only give biology once every two years, and if a student flunks biology the first year and does not – won't have a chance to take it until senior year and they want to take chemistry later in the senior year, they take a credit recovery course, they take it with technology. These are pretty weak courses in many cases, but the results from them suggest that they are just as weak or as strong as the conventional teacher.

And so we have a long body of research over the last ten or 15 years which indicates that there's no significant difference between the – taking the course from a piece of technology, the full course, or taking it from the teacher itself.

Now, that's changing, in fact, it's tipping the other way, and what you're finding in the new technology, in the new courses that are being developed, are very, very high quality materials, with feedback loops in them that give – that allow for adaptive instruction, that is, a student is working through this course, they take a little assessment, find the course itself, the technology discovers that the student isn't doing so well, so it cycles it back through the material again, or it gives it another piece of material that may teach the concept in a different way. Just very quick, Carnegie Mellon University, and this is – we're working with freshman and sophomores, so they're very close to high schools, they did a study of a piece of technology like this, what they call a cognitive tutor, and

they compared random samples, just a classroom against another classroom, a random sample of students.

The sample of students who took only the technology were only given half the time, they were only given half the semester to take it, and so they took it under their own control, their own speed, they took exactly the same hour exams, exactly the same final exam as the other students, and they did better than the other students. Not only did they do better, they did it faster, obviously.

So we're challenging both the idea of a semester and the course load in a semester, as well as do you actually need a lecturer who's going to pace it for you.

SPEAKER: Alan.

MR. BERUBE: I just – it might also be useful to sort of broaden our notion of what technology means. And the two of you have talked about in classroom technologies, but I think the, you know, the frontier and the real challenge regards the deployment of technology throughout schooling and school systems, you know, not just around the data systems that the Secretary was talking about earlier, but also how districts use technology in sort of back office operations around hiring and contracting, so that they can actually assess the real cost of doing business, the outcomes that are generated from those investments, and you know, get to a more – more of a continuous improvement model that's, you know, based around those technology investments.

I think the statistics I've seen suggest that health care technology is about 4.5 percent of our spending goes to the technology and health care sector, it's about 1.8 percent in the education sector. So I think there are a lot of realms and education broadly defined where technology, not just purchases, you know, putting computers in classrooms are needed, but technology investments are really needed to change the way of doing business.

SPEAKER: I strongly agree. We have time for one more question. Hold on for the microphone, please.

MR. TRACHTENBERG: My name is Stephen Trachtenberg, I was the President of George Washington University for 20 years, and I'm concerned that there was very little conversation about the role of universities this morning, and wonder if the panelists are willing to comment on what they see the university contribution to some of these issues might be.

SPEAKER: Alan, I know you've been particularly interested in community colleges.

MR. BERUBE: Yeah, this may or may not answer President Trachtenberg's question, but we put out a paper last week around community colleges and the role of federal policy and stimulating better outcomes on behalf of their students. Community colleges, as some of you may know, enroll about 45 percent of U.S. undergraduates, but their performance is mixed, at best. Dropout rates average about 50 percent. Only a third of entering students earn a degree or a credential within six years of beginning community college studies.

So I'm not sure that there's a whole lot in the stimulus package necessarily that's going to drive change and greater support for those students and better outcomes. But one notable development is this access and completion incentive fund that's in the FY 2010 budget, and the administration is calling for \$2.5 billion in investment over five years really to partner to states, federal state partnerships that are very focused on increasing success rates, completion momentum towards a degree for low income students. And I think it's going to be particularly important that the administration send a strong signal to states that community colleges have to be a big part of the experimentation and the innovation that that fund is intended to stimulate, because they are capturing a disproportionate number of those low income first generation students, and I think they really have great potential to get us towards the President's goal of recapturing international leadership and higher educational attainment by year 2020.

SPEAKER: The administration actually has been quite active in the field of higher education, as you know, Steve. The fund that you're talking about that's in the fiscal year '10 budget, the proposal that direct lending absorb all of the loans out there. The movement of the money that is saved from the direct lending program to make the Pell Program mandatory and predictable for students is a big jump.

Simplification of the FAFSA would be wonderful if the deal could be worked out with the income tax folks. There's been this major move, on a more reform minded approach, there has been a lot of attention paid to community colleges. The new Under Secretary will be a president of a community college, Martha Canter. She's interested in two really major things; one is the problem in community colleges of students who don't test well enough to actually take courses for credit. While there are 42 percent of the – or 45 percent of the students in the country are going to community colleges, a huge percentage of them, some – between 40 and 50 percent of them are actually in courses that don't give any credit. And so it's a really great frustration for these students.

So we've been working a lot on that, we've been thinking a lot about actually technology approaches to helping that, so that they could work at home, as well as get these remedial courses at school. So I think you'll see quite a lot of activity in that kind of sector.

SPEAKER: And, Steve, your question seemed to been set up for all of us, it's a good opportunity for me to remind the audience that the next event sponsored here by the Brown Center at Brookings will be on student financial aid and what the administration and Congress ought to do in terms of making that more available. I appreciate very much your willingness to come out so early Monday morning and address with us one of the principal challenges that faces this country, which is to educate all of our students well. Thank you.

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