

Subject: Staff countdown to holiday break

Date: Friday, December 14, 2018 at 7:15:33 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: NAESP's Principal Insights

To: ccoutts@reverek12.org

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Subject: The Best Albums and Songs of the Year

Date: Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at 1:01:36 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: The New Yorker

To: jpowell@reverek12.org

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2018 in Review

The Ten Best Albums of 2018

Though 2018's popular music felt, at times, like an apt reflection of a year in which communication turned fraught and unsteady, the charts proffered some moments of extraordinary ingenuity and verve.

By Amanda Petrusich

2018 in Review

Our Favorite Songs of 2018

Hua Hsu, Carrie Battan, and Doreen St. Félix share some of the tracks they loved most this year.

By The New Yorker

Our Columnists

Trump, Pelosi, and Schumer's Oval Office Spat Is an Argument for More Public Debate

For all the talk about rancor and division in contemporary American politics, direct public confrontations between major figures of the two parties are actually quite rare.

By Osita Nwanevu

Claire McCaskill.

The New Yorker Interview

Before She Leaves the Senate, Claire McCaskill Gives an Exit Interview

After twelve years of service, McCaskill is one of the most outspoken members of the Senate—and it's a lot easier to be outspoken after you've lost.

By The New Yorker

PAID POST

MILKMAN—winner of the 2018 Man Booker Prize now available in the US

A young woman navigates the sectarian and gendered violence within her rumor-filled community. With wicked humor and ferocious originality, Anna Burns has created an unforgettable novel.

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Jamal Khashoggi

Our Columnists

Honoring Jamal Khashoggi and the Guardians of the Truth

Time magazine has lauded journalists who risked their lives taking on despots and dysfunctional politicians. It's telling that half of them were murdered.

By Robin Wright

Annals of Technology

Should We Be Worried About Computerized Facial Recognition?

The technology could revolutionize policing, medicine, even agriculture—but its applications can easily be weaponized.

By David Owen

Philip Johnson

Dept. of Design

Philip Johnson, the Man Who Made Architecture Amoral

A clear-eyed new biography asks us to contemplate why the impresario of twentieth-century architecture descended into such a morass of far-right politics—and how he managed to climb back to the top.

By Nikil Saval

Mark Fisher

Page-Turner

Mark Fisher's "K-Punk" and the Futures That Have Never Arrived

Fisher feared that we were losing our ability to conceptualize a tomorrow that was radically different from our present.

By Hua Hsu

On This Day

Man walking down a path next to a tree

Books

An Unsimple Heart

The only two things sacred to the revered French author Gustave Flaubert, who was born a hundred and ninety-seven years ago today, were impiety and perfection.

By Judith Thurman

Humor from The New Yorker

Shouts & Murmurs

“The Rules” Versus My Rules if I Wrote a Dating How-To Book

Always End Phone Calls First
versus Any Person Under Forty
Who Calls Another Person Is a
Murderer, and more.

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Daily Cartoon

Wednesday, December 12th

By Navied Mahdavian



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The actress on challenging comedy's sexism, fighting cancer, and becoming the star of her own show.

By Ariel Levy

Illustration of Michael Bennett

The Sporting Scene

Michael Bennett's Political Football

The Philadelphia Eagles' defensive end wants N.F.L. players to be a force for social change.

By Louisa Thomas

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A Reporter at Large

Kelly Slater's Shock Wave

The best surfer in history made a machine that creates perfect conditions on demand. Will his invention democratize surfing or despoil it?

By William Finnegan

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Coal for Christmas at the U.N. Climate Conference

As negotiators from around the world gathered in Poland to discuss how to lower carbon emissions, the Trump Administration unveiled two schemes promoting fossil fuels.

By Elizabeth Kolbert

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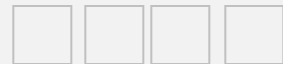
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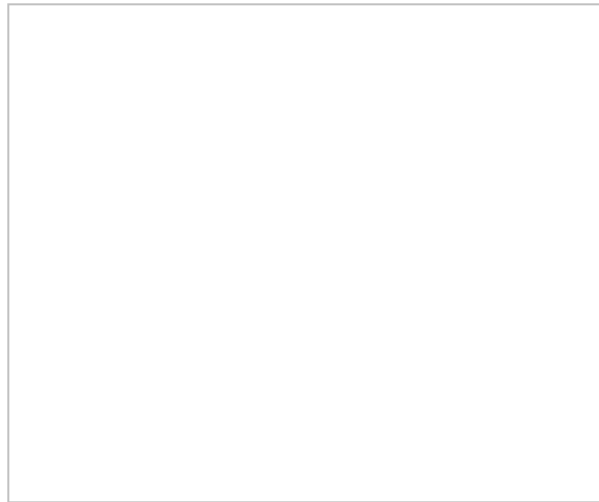
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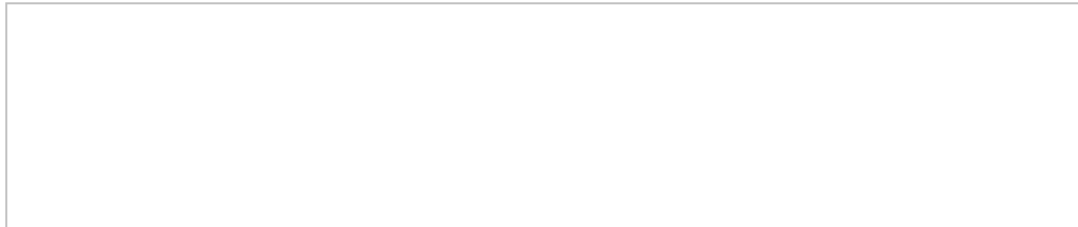
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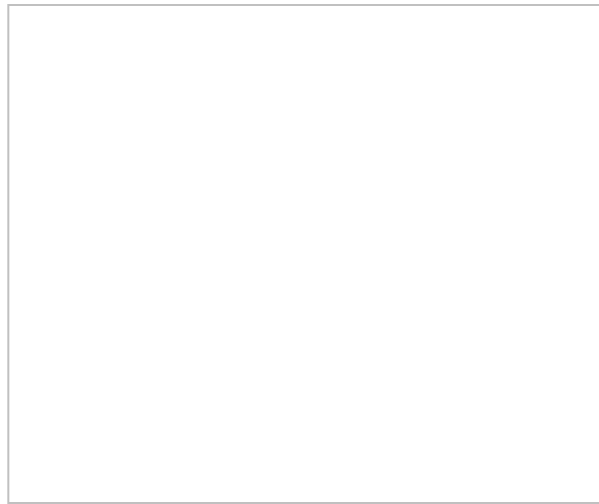
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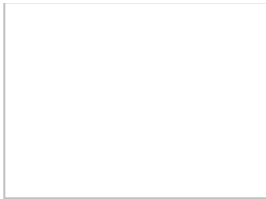
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[Campaign gets parents to read, sing with children](#)



(Christof Stache/AFP/Getty Images)



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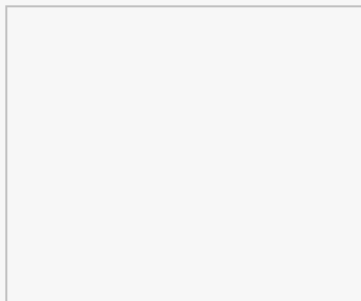
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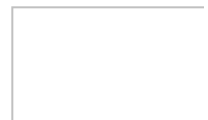
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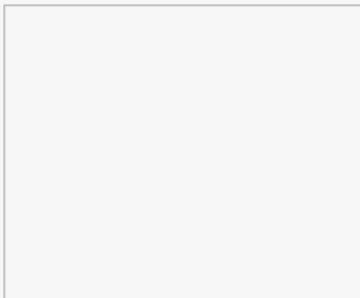
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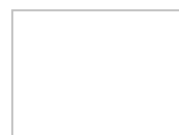


How to use PBL for assessment

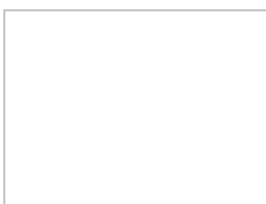
Can project-based learning give us a better picture of student mastery? Yes, says New York teacher Lesa Wang. [Download this white paper](#) to see how Wang uses PBL to identify mastery and learning gaps, plus help students build design learning skills, defend their ideas and find creative solutions to problems.

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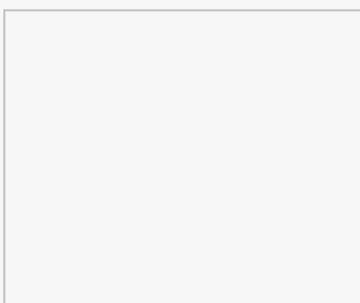
District brings coding platform to middle schools



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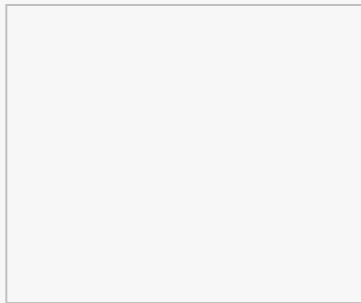
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Is education research funding paying off?

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E-cigarette maker warned on advertising

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FACULTY LOUNGE

Report: Poor vaccination rates tied to rising measles prevalence

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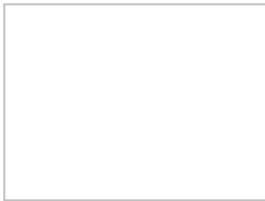
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(Christof Stache/AFP/Getty Images)

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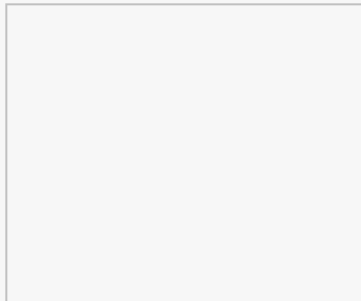
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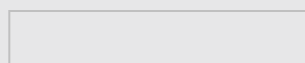


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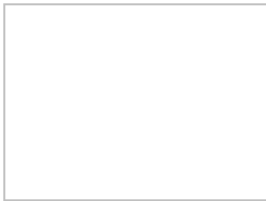
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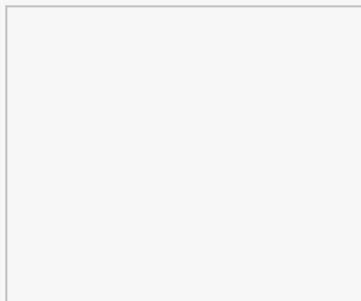
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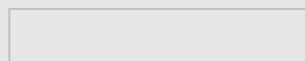


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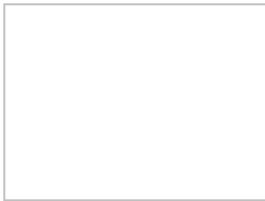
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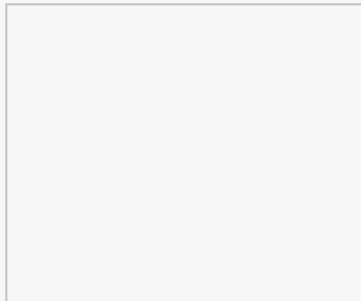
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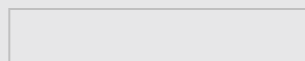


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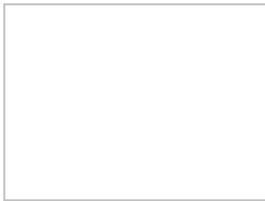
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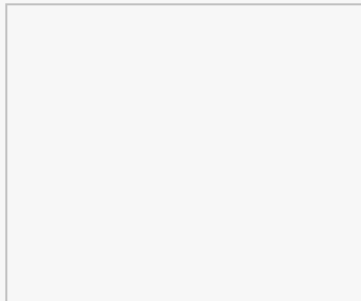
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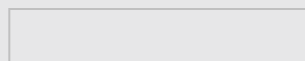


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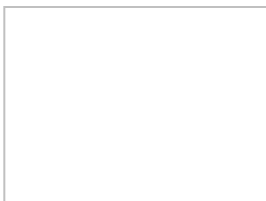
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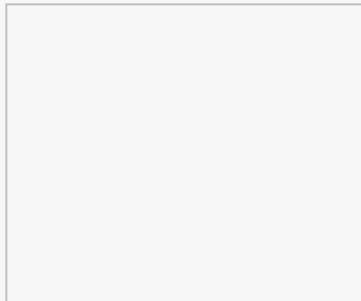
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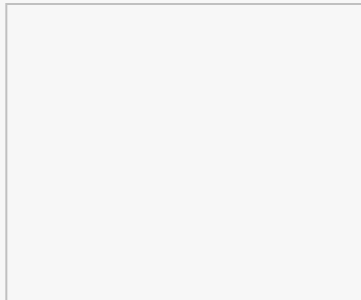
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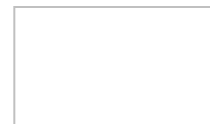
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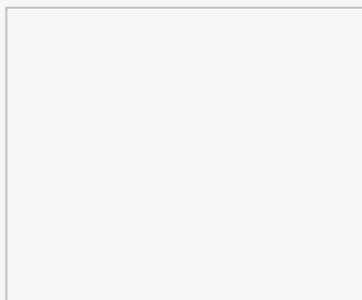
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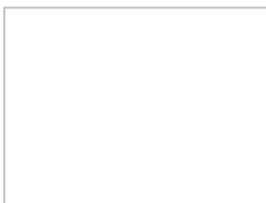
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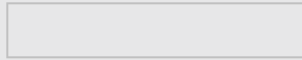


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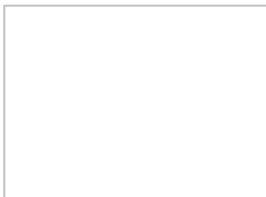
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(Christof Stache/AFP/Getty Images)



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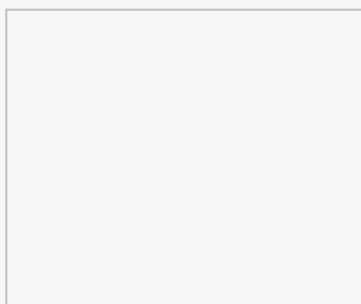
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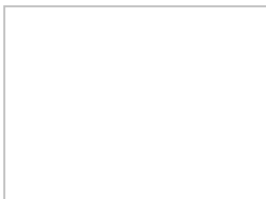
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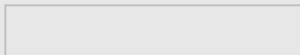


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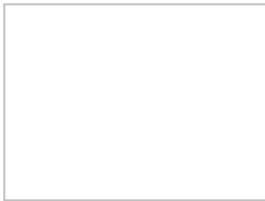
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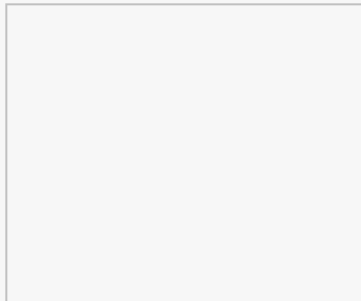
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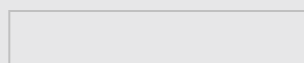


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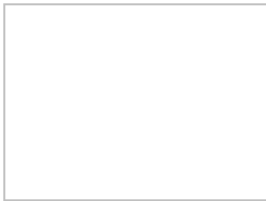
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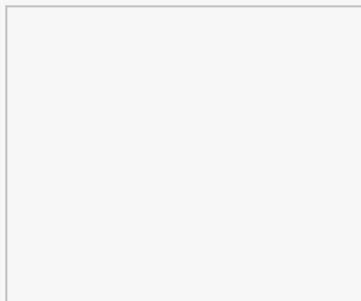
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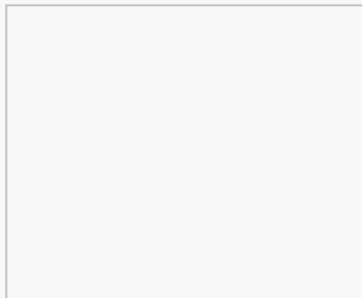
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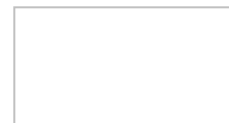


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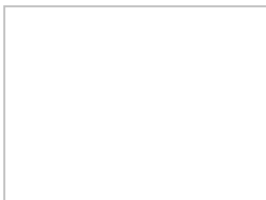
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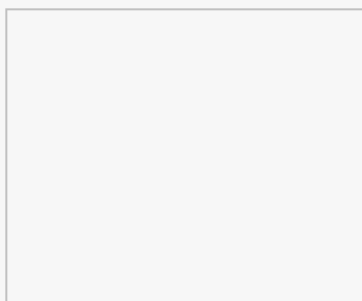
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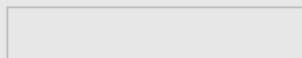


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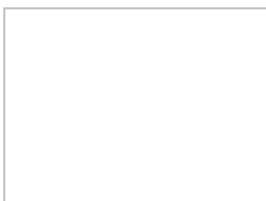
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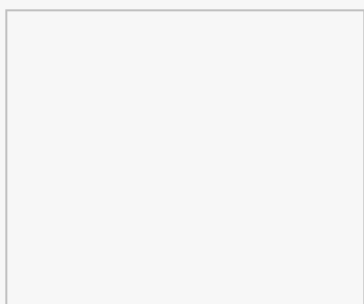
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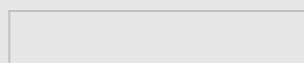


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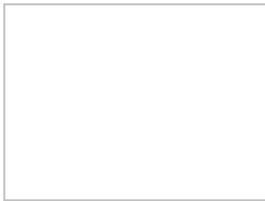
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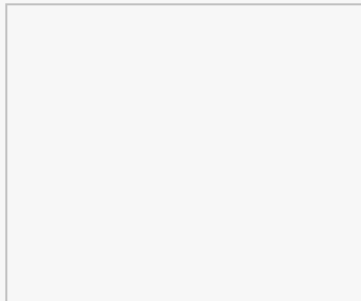
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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

N.C. district sees teacher-leaders as key

A North Carolina school district is expanding Public Impact's "Opportunity Culture" model from just a handful of schools to its whole system. The model includes hiring teacher-leaders in all schools, who are paid more and teach classes while helping to coach their peers.

[The Hechinger Report](#) (11/29)



Other News

- **Should teachers consider their brand?**

Edutopia online (11/29)

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

District brings coding platform to middle schools



(Pixabay)

A Texas school district is using the software program GameSalad to bring coding lessons to all its middle-schoolers in various science, technology, engineering and math classes. The software is designed to gradually build users' knowledge from simple coding commands to advanced programming languages as they create video games.

[The Brownsville Herald \(Texas\)](#) (11/27)



MANAGING BUDGETS

Is education research funding paying off?

The Institute of Education Sciences has been getting teacher and administrator feedback on educational research and found that there may be a disconnect between studies completed and the practical implementation of their recommendations in schools. David Griffith, senior director of advocacy and government relations for ASCD, says, "We say we want teachers to use research and evidence, but then we want you to think outside the box and try new things and be brave to fail -- but you better be using stuff that has been proven to be effective."

[Education Week \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (11/27), [EdSurge](#) (11/28)



POLICY WATCH

Student facial-recognition security in question

Twenty-five school districts in New York state intend to spend state technology funds on high-tech security. One district's plans to adopt facial-recognition software, however, has drawn criticism from civil liberties groups and is prompting the state to ask the district to re-evaluate its decision.

[EdScoop](#) (11/27)



E-cigarette maker warned on advertising

Electric Lotus, a California-based manufacturer and retailer of e-cigarette liquids with nicotine, has received a letter from the FDA warning it against advertising its products in ways that could make them look like food for children. The company labels and advertises many of its products using cartoon characters.

[Reuters](#) (11/29)



FACULTY LOUNGE

Report: Poor vaccination rates tied to rising measles prevalence

The number of reported measles cases around the world rose by 31% from 2016 to 2017, affecting more than 6.7 million individuals, most of whom were young children, with the increase attributed, in part, to inadequate vaccine coverage, according to a report from the CDC and the World Health Organization in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. "Without urgent efforts to increase vaccination coverage and identify populations with unacceptable levels of under-, or unimmunized children, we risk losing decades of progress in protecting children and communities against this devastating, but entirely preventable disease," said Dr. Soumya Swaminathan of the WHO.

[NBC News](#) (11/29), [TIME online](#) (11/29)



NEW FROM ASCD

Is My School a Better School Because I Lead It?

In this latest installment to his series of best-selling self-reflection guides, celebrated educator, author and motivational speaker Baruti Kafele offers school leaders 35 thought-provoking questions to ponder from one fundamental overarching query: "Is my school a better school because I lead it?"

A conversation with Baruti Kafele

In this episode of the ASCD Learn Teach Lead Radio podcast, Kafele discusses the series of challenging self-reflective questions his book asks of school leaders and explains how the answers provide a road map to better leadership and better schools.

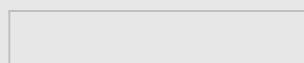


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Very early, I knew that the only object in life was to grow.

Margaret Fuller,
journalist



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Subject: Student facial-recognition security in question

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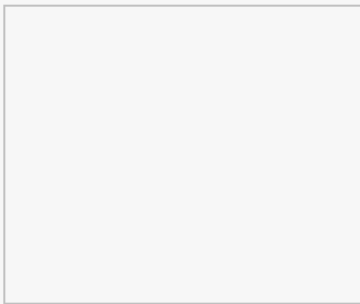
TOP NEWS

Student facial-recognition security in question

Twenty-five school districts in New York state intend to spend state technology funds on high-tech security. One district's plans to adopt facial-recognition software, however, has drawn criticism from civil liberties groups and is prompting the state to ask the district to re-evaluate its decision.

[EdScoop](#) (11/27)





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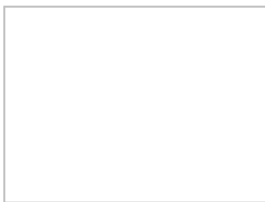
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ELEARNING



Teachers share top tools used for supporting SEL



(Pixabay)

Educators in this article share their go-to tools to support social and emotional learning, with links to online resources. Caroline Burkard, a sixth-grade math teacher in Massachusetts, says she uses an app to help students better understand emotions, while Tyler Shannon, a principal in Missouri, is implementing a program that focuses on empathy and takes an alternative approach to discipline.

[eSchool News](#) (11/28)



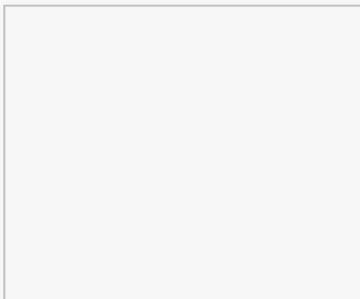
Other News

- **How schools can strengthen STEM systems**

SmartBrief/Education (11/29)

- **Opinion: Create synergy between AI, social studies**

Forbes (11/28)



"You'll find this book incredibly helpful." — Mike Flynn.

[Why Write in Math Class? K-5](#) by Linda Dacey helps you build on the success of math talk to get a window into students' thinking and help them construct, explore, represent, refine, connect, and reflect on mathematical ideas. [Preview the entire book!](#)

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SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

District may replace subs with digital centers

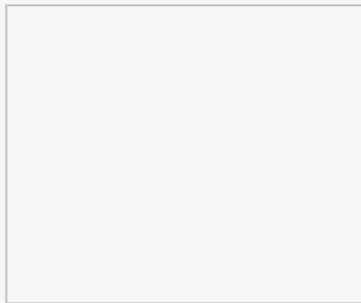


(Pixabay)



A New Hampshire school district is considering eliminating the use of substitute teachers in high school. Instead, independent digital learning centers overseen by certified teachers, where students could engage in on learning as well as group and independent work, would take the place of substitutes.

[Union Leader \(Manchester, N.H.\)](#) (11/28)



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MANAGING BUDGETS

Teacher in Colo. seeks PD to support LGBTQ students

A Colorado educator is holding an online fundraiser to help bring a teacher-training program design to help her peers better support students who identify as LGBTQ. Kelly Cook, who launched the fundraiser after attending the Queer Endeavor program, says the training changed her life and taught her to use strategies that are more active -- and less reactive.

[The Tribune \(Greeley, Colo.\)](#) (11/27)



SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Fewer admissions officers check student social media

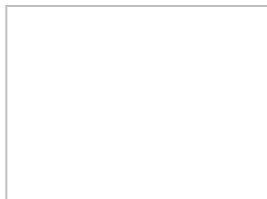
Only a quarter of college and university admissions officers visited the social media sites of prospective students this year, down from 40% in 2015, according to a survey from Kaplan Test Prep. More than half of officers told researchers they don't bother to check social media because more students are using sites such as Snapchat where content is posted only for a limited time.

[Adweek \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (11/27)



LAST BYTE

Lawsuit: R.I.'s education undermines US Constitution



(Pixabay)



A class-action lawsuit filed in federal court in Rhode Island Wednesday on behalf of 14 plaintiffs claims the state's education system runs afoul of the US Constitution because it is not preparing students for citizenship. The US Constitution does not mandate education, but plaintiffs contend it supports students' rights to learn basic skills necessary to becoming effective citizens.

[The Atlantic online](#) (11/28)



I learned compassion from being discriminated against. Everything bad that's ever happened to me has taught me compassion.

Ellen DeGeneres,
comedian, producer and TV host



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Subject: Daily digest for Diane Ravitch's blog, on November 29, 2018

Date: Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 1:26:48 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Diane Ravitch's blog

To: dcherry@reverek12.org

New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Trump Administration Warning On Climate Change

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Trump administration released an ominous report on climate change in the middle of the Thanksgiving weekend, on a Friday at 2 pm. It hoped to bury the consensus of 17 federal agencies. But the facts won't stay buried, no matter how much politicians try.

The Washington Post published an editorial, summarizing the report's ominous warnings.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/our-climate-reality-will-catch-up-to-us-no-matter-how-hard-trump-tries-to-bury-the-evidence/2018/11/26/9250d57c-f1c1-11e8-80d0-f7e1948d55f4_story.html

IF YOU did not hear about the major new federal climate change report, the Trump administration will be pleased. The report was released the day after Thanksgiving — when many people were distracted — probably because it contradicts practically everything President Trump has said and done on global warming. The Fourth National Climate Assessment is yet another reminder that reality will catch up to the United States, no matter how much the president tries to ignore and deny it.

The world is heating up, and there are no “credible natural explanations for this amount of warming.” U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions have decreased a bit lately. But they need to go down much further and faster to avoid dire consequences.

Already, the nation is seeing “intensifying droughts, increasing heavy downpours, reducing snowpack,” as well as “declines in surface water quality.” Without a course change, increasingly depleted groundwater, rising seas and other effects will make it more difficult to farm and provide enough water for large cities.

Foodborne and waterborne diseases will spread. Disease-carrying ticks and mosquitoes will be more common. Extreme heat will cause more deaths. Wildfires and insect infestations will overwhelm U.S. forests. Sea ice will melt and coral reef ecosystems will dissolve. Power outages and fuel shortages will be more frequent. Roads and bridges will swamp. Pipelines will become unsafe. Waterside property will be increasingly unusable. Fisheries will dwindle.

“Even if significant emissions reductions occur, many of the effects from sea level rise over this century — and particularly through mid-century — are already locked in due to historical emissions,” the report explains, underscoring the necessity for coastal communities to prepare. On the horizon is “the potential need for millions of people and billions of dollars of coastal infrastructure to be relocated.”

Critics of acting on climate change often cite the possible economic costs. But not acting has costs, too. The experts expect “substantial net damage to the U.S. economy throughout this century,” finding that “with continued growth in emissions at historic rates, annual losses in some economic sectors are projected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the century — more than the current gross domestic product (GDP) of many U.S. states.”

And the damage will be long-lasting. “The climate change resulting from human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide will persist for decades to millennia. Self-reinforcing cycles within the climate system have the potential to accelerate human-induced change and even shift Earth’s climate system into new states that are very different from those experienced in the recent past,” the report notes.

The White House responded to the report by misrepresenting scientists’ work and promising “fuller information” in the next analysis. Cooking the next report will not change the facts. Mr. Trump and the Republican Party have been negligent stewards of the country’s irreplaceable resources. Future Americans will not forgive or forget what these “leaders” did to them. Playing games with report release schedules won’t change that.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 29, 2018 at 1:00 pm | Categories: [Environment](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leG>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Lisa Guisbond: Why Will the State Force the Public Schools of New Bedford to Spend \$25 Million to Expand a Second-Rate Charter School?

by [dianeravitch](#)

Lisa Guisbond, executive director of Citizens for Public Schools in Massachusetts, reports that the state of Massachusetts is [set to compel the public schools of New Bedford](#) to divert \$15 million to a low-performing charter school that wants to triple its enrollment.

Two years ago, the voters of Massachusetts decisively voted against a measure to lift the cap on charter schools. The elected officials of New Bedford do not want the charter in their small city to grow from 450 to nearly 1,200 students. As we have seen time and again, democracy is an impediment to the voracious charter industry. As we learned in an [earlier post](#), local leaders fear that the charter expansion will set back the progress that the New Bedford public schools have made in recent years. In this curious episode, the public schools are more successful than the charter that wants to expand.

She writes:

“The request by Alma del Mar charter school in New Bedford to add 1,188 seats to its current enrollment of 450 is mind-boggling. Such an expansion is exactly what voters in New Bedford and nearly every other community statewide said they opposed.

“Thanks to a vigorous grass-roots campaign, Massachusetts residents who cast ballots in 2016 had learned the basics of the charter school system: Privately run schools that have found ways to include some students and exclude others drain public funds away from schools that educate all children...

“While current Massachusetts charter regulations do allow for more charter school seats in New Bedford, the community has no appetite for what Alma del Mar is serving. The people elected to represent the views of the community—city councilors, school committee members, state representatives, and New Bedford’s mayor—have forcefully opposed this expansion as well as a smaller proposal from the Global Learning charter school to increase its enrollment by 100.

“It is easy to understand their opposition: Why shift \$15 million from schools that educate all children to private operations that do not perform as well as many of the public schools, and do not dazzle in any way?

“Claims that Alma del Mar, which enrolls students in kindergarten through grade 5, is somehow exceptional are dubious. Even the state’s own narrow accountability system finds Alma del Mar is not meeting targets, while more than half of the elementary schools in New Bedford are meeting theirs. New Bedford Public Schools have far more certified teachers in their classrooms; last year more than 94 percent of the teachers in New Bedford Public Schools were fully certified, compared with fewer than 63 percent of the teachers at Alma del Mar. Also last year, Alma del Mar sought to send some of its students to public schools for courses the charter school was unable to offer...

“The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, not the New Bedford community, will decide the fate of Alma del Mar’s expansion as well as the fate of all the students who would be forced to withstand the devastating repercussions of New Bedford losing so much state aid for public education.”

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Arthur Goldstein: Jeff Bezos Gets a Landing Pad for His Helicopter While My Students Are Packed in Like Sardines!

by [dianeravitch](#)

Arthur Goldstein is pretty damned angry at Mayor DeBlasio. The city just loaded billions of dollars of tax breaks onto Amazon and multibillionaire Jeff Bezos, even giving Amazon one of the Department of Education's buildings in Queens. [But Goldstein's students are crammed into crowded classrooms.](#)

Where are the city's priorities?

I'm shocked that the city has space to turn over to Amazon but can barely find any for schools. I suppose it's an extraordinary privilege to be able to provide Jeff Bezos a new helipad, while rolling out the red carpet for thousands of high-paid workers, who may or may not even live here. From my perspective, teaching 34 students in half a classroom, I'm not particularly concerned about where the world's richest man parks his business, let alone his helicopter.

I've been working at Francis Lewis High School in central Queens since 1993, and I can't recall a time when we've been so pressed for space. While I bemoan my half room, some of my colleagues are teaching in windowless converted book storage rooms. After years of complaints, admin found a way to air-condition them. Despite this, the air quality is still sub-standard, according to recent tests conducted by UFT....

It's all about priorities, and the city that so long claimed to place children first is failing spectacularly to do so. In three or four years our school will have an annex, but who's to say the DOE won't just dump another thousand kids on us so we're as overcrowded as ever?

There might be a time to lavish billions in subsidies on Jeff Bezos, but that time is most certainly not now. Our schools and our kids are more important, by far, than bragging

rights for Amazon.

Is this fair?

[dianeravitch](#) | November 29, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Bill de Blasio](#), [Billionaires](#), [Class size](#), [Funding](#), [New York City](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lf1>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



New York City: Schools in Long Island City Are Not Ready for the New Amazon Headquarters

by [dianeravitch](#)

Amazon recently announced that Long Island City in Queens, New York (a part of New York City) will be the site of one of its new headquarters. This will be an expensive "gift" to New York City, which has pledged huge tax breaks and incentives to woo Amazon. It will also create a burden on already strained public services, not only transportation, but public schools.

Leonie Haimson, Executive Director of Class Size Matters, and Sabina Omerhodzic, a Long Island City resident and a member of the Community Education Council in District 30, [warn that Long Island City is not ready. The public schools are already overcrowded.](#)

They write:

The plan to provide Amazon up to \$3 billion in city and state tax cuts and other subsidies to site one of their new headquarters in Long Island City leaves the children who are living there in the lurch. The booming community is already severely short on school seats, a problem that Amazon's move to the area will only exacerbate given recent trends, Department of Education projections, and the details of the Amazon deal that have been released.

The only zoned elementary school in Long Island City, PS 78, is already at 135% capacity, and more than 70 children who were zoned to the school were put on the waitlist for

kindergarten last spring, while classes for numerous pre-K kids are being housed in trailers.

There are plans for two small elementary schools of about 600 seats each to be created as part of a huge 5,000-housing unit Hunters Point South development, but these schools are likely to be immediately overcrowded the day they open. There are already three sections of kindergarten students attending class in an incubation site at a nearby pre-K center, waiting to attend the first elementary school, which will not be completed until 2021.

An already-planned middle school had been proposed to be built on city-owned land as part of a mixed-use 1,000-unit project, but this area is now to be incorporated into the Amazon development. Contrary to Mayor de Blasio's claims, the memorandum of understanding with Amazon includes no new school for the neighborhood. Instead, the MOU merely says that the company will pay for this middle school already in the city's capital plan – but moved to another location, as yet undetermined. As Chalkbeat NY explained, "The company agreed to house a 600-seat intermediate school on or near its Long Island City campus, replacing a school that had already been planned in a residential building nearby."

From 2006 to 2017, more than 20,000 residential units were built in Long Island City. A study found that 12,533 apartments in 41 separate developments were built in the community between 2010 and 2016 – not just the highest number in New York City, but more than any other neighborhood in the entire nation....

Another part of the deal includes Amazon making payments in lieu of taxes into an infrastructure fund that, starting 11 years after the deal, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) can spend on nearly any sort of use, "including but not limited to streets, sidewalks, utility relocations, environmental remediation, public open space, transportation, schools and signage," according to the MOU.

And to add the most grievous insult to injury, the city now plans to give Amazon a large DOE office building, one that community members have been fighting to convert into much-needed schools and a community center instead. A petition, now with more than 1,500 signatures, to the mayor and local elected officials was posted last year by the Long Island City Coalition.

This is not the first time the community's needs for schools have gone entirely ignored. In 2008, EDC re-zoned city-owned land for the Hunters Point South project without any plan to create a single new school, ignoring the thousand or so children who were likely to inhabit these new apartments. It took a concerted organizing effort of Long Island City parents and elected officials in 2015 for the city to agree to belatedly include two small schools in the plans.

We've seen this poor planning repeatedly, wherever new residential developments are springing up. The Amazon deal is but a particularly egregious example of how the city's policies are driven by the interests of the real estate industry and private corporations while the educational needs of our children are too often overlooked. As many education advocates, parents and community leaders have pointed out, the school planning process in New York City is broken, resulting in more than half a million students crammed into

overcrowded schools and classrooms, with the problem likely to get worse as the city's population continues to grow.

Read the whole thing to learn how poorly the city of New York has planned for the arrival of thousands of people who are employed by Amazon and expect to put their children into public schools.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 29, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Class size](#), [New York City](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leV>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Students at Wilder High School in Idaho: Learning on iPads is a Hoax!

by [dianeravitch](#)

Ivanka Trump and Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, visited Wilder Elementary School to learn about the future of workforce preparation, which of course involves selling iPads to children in a K-6 school!

However, they did not speak to [high school students in Wilder, Idaho](#), who are thoroughly disgusted with (de)personalized learning. Several protested the fraud that Wilder officials were selling to Ivanka and said they were not allowed to speak up.

So instead, they walked outside, stood in the cold for hours and told members of the local media they are concerned about Wilder's reliance on technology, worry about the district's low test scores and fear the education they are receiving in Wilder won't prepare them for college or life after high school.

Nadia, a Wilder sophomore, wanted to make sure the public heard both sides of the iPad story.

"We came out to tell you guys what's really going on with our school," Nadia said. "We are not really learning anything. The teachers are not allowed to teach anything. We are

learning on iPads all day and we have to wait at least a week or so to get a test unlocked. And a lot of kids have been falling behind and then they cover that up and say everyone's on target."

Thomas, a Wilder 11thgrader, agreed with Nadia.

"There are a lot of things going wrong at this school and every time we try to speak out about it we are shut down and kept quiet," he said.

Thomas and Nadia said they walked out of class once they realized the school was about to be locked down for the visit. They said they were unsure if they would be allowed to return to school.

Student achievement data shows that Wilder lags behind the state average in several academic indicators. This fall, the State Department of Education identified Wilder Middle School as one of the lowest-performing schools in Idaho. At Wilder Elementary, where Trump and Cook checked in Tuesday, just 26.7 percent of students scored "proficient" on math Idaho Standards Achievement Test in 2017-18. At Wilder High School, the go-on rate in 2017 was 25 percent, well below the state average of 45 percent, according to Idaho EdTrends.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 29, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Hoax](#), [Idaho](#), [Technology](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lft>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



A Trip to Finland?

by [dianeravitch](#)

Several readers of the blog have discussed visiting Finnish schools.

I offered to put them in touch with a knowledgeable person.

You can contact William Doyle, an author who has spent a year in Finland on a Fulbright

Fellowship. His own child attended Finnish schools.

He has kindly offered to communicate with anyone interested in planning a trip.

Write him at billdoyleus@gmail.com

[dianeravitch](#) | November 28, 2018 at 9:16 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lfv>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



California: Thurmond Says No New Charters Without New Funding

by [dianeravitch](#)

State Superintendent-elect Tony Thurmond urges a halt to new charters unless there was new funding provided for them. He recognized, as few charter advocates do, that opening charters without funding them harms existing public schools.

<https://www.politico.com/states/california/newsletters/politico-california-pro-preview/2018/11/20/thurmond-targets-charter-schools-137523>

The charter industry, which opposes any accountability, transparency, or regulation, spent nearly \$40 million trying to stop Thurmond.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 28, 2018 at 4:13 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Funding](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lfp>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Ivanka Trump, Instant Education Expert, Visits Idaho School

by [dianeravitch](#)

Ivanka Trump [visited the Wilder Elementary School in Wilder, Idaho](#), accompanied by Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, to tout technology in schools and Apple products.

Tim Cook is openly gay. I wonder if he asked Ivanka about the Trump administration's demonization of transgender students.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 28, 2018 at 3:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lfm>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Trump Accuses His Critics of Treason in a Tweet

by [dianeravitch](#)

Never before have we had a president who used Twitter to reveal the workings of his mind, his rages, resentments, bitterness.

Here is this [morning's illustrated Tweet](#), imagining his many enemies in prison, locked up, jailed for daring to cross him.

These are the dreams of a despot.

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Tennessee: New Governor Selects Voucher Advocate as Education Advisor

by [dianeravitch](#)

The newly elected Governor Of Tennessee, Bill Lee, [has selected the former director](#) of Betsy DeVos's Tennessee Federation for Children as his education Policy Advisor.

DeVos founded the American Federation for Children, which has numerous state affiliates.

The DeVos groups advocate for public funding of religious schools, homeschooling, cyberschooling, and anything other than public schooling.

If the people of Tennessee want to keep their public schools, they will have to persuade their state legislators to oppose the new Governor's education agenda.

The linked article in Chalkbeat says that students in voucher schools get lower test scores, which is true. It also says that kids who use vouchers have higher graduation rates, which is not true, because the dropout rate from voucher schools is very high, and the "graduation rate" does not include the large number that left and returned to public school. If it did, the voucher schools would have a far lower graduation rate than local public schools. The first such study, from Milwaukee, reported that 44% of the voucher students dropped out to return to public schools, but were not included in the denominator when the voucher schools' graduation rate was calculated. Only the survivors were counted.

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



John Thompson: How a Democrat Won in a Gerrymandered Red, Red District in Oklahoma

by [dianeravitch](#)

John Thompson writes here about the surprising victory of Kendra Horn in a Congressional district that had been gerrymandered to remain permanently Republican. I thank John for telling me about Kendra Horn, who is a supporter of public education. On his recommendation and after a review of her website, I was happy to endorse her. When so many political races are decided by razor-thin margins, every endorsement counts. I would like to think that my endorsement caused a few pro-public education voters to pay attention to Kendra Horn. Thompson describes a meeting of the Oklahoma Conservative Political Action Committee, which is horrifying and fascinating in its openly expressed nativism and anti-Semitism, as well as its contempt for public schools and teachers. The feverish and overwrought fear of "socialism" in this very conservative state, whose legislature has long been a subsidiary of the oil and gas industry, is surprising.

John Thompson writes:

Julian Castro says that voters want authentic candidates. America may not need traditional politicians. But we need traditionally sane leaders.

Oklahoma's election of Kendra Horn to congress is more than one of the nation's "biggest lurch to the left in America's 2018 midterm election." It is also a case study in what it takes to turn a historic Republican district, made safer by extreme gerrymandering, into a sane Blue island in a sea of Trumpism. And its lessons are relevant across the nation.

As political scientist Mike Males says about Oklahoma County:

'The gerrymandered district combining once-Republican Oklahoma City with two reliably GOP rural counties, went for Donald Trump by 13 points in the 2016 presidential election. It handily elected Republicans to Congress since 1975, including two-term incumbent Steve Russell by margins topping 20 points.' Fivethirtyeight.com gave Republicans 6-in-7

odds of 2018 triumph.

On the other hand, the Oklahoma Conservative Political Action Committee (OCPAC) has a different view. Although it did not mention Diane Ravitch's endorsement of Horn, Oklahoma rightwingers have been blaming Jewish billionaires like George Kaiser and Mike Bloomberg. In a recent meeting caught on youtube, scorn was expressed about the "Jerusalem news media," prompting laughter.

Although they used questionable terminology, the conservative OCPAC started with a valid point. Oklahoma City has attracted large numbers of young professionals. The economic take-off (in a state that has mostly been stagnating,) has been a "magnet for liberals" from east and west coasts. According to one speaker, these "inplants" have prompted something that I have never seen, local television news' nonstop celebration of pop culture, millennial opinions, and the "feelings" of young people.

Other newcomers, immigrants, were said to be "good neighbors and workers." But they tell pollsters that they are "for the people" and that is "socialism." So immigrants are "not bad people necessarily" but they "don't make good citizens."

However, OCPAC says that Oklahoma has been producing homegrown socialists. For years, teachers have been "indoctrinating children, making leftists of our children." Their president said, "Government education is the bane of American civilization." In 2018, Oklahoma almost saw a "total takeover of state government by the education industry – teachers." Teachers supposedly registered Republican enmasse in a campaign to "take over" the party.

OCPAC also protests a "massive purge of conservatives" that is fed by dark money, but being implemented by local socialists. Not everyone at the meeting believed that teachers were leading this "massacre." Former Rep. Mike Reynolds said that educators are just "useful idiots" for trial lawyers who hope to repeal tort reform as they then run the state. Reynolds said that he was expressing opinions, not proven facts, but he believes this assault on conservatives is a part of the efforts of billionaires still angry that the University of Oklahoma returned stolen Nazi art, purchased by a rich Jew. The return was supposedly opposed by Kaiser and an unnamed billionaire.

Given these threats, it was explained that Republicans "can't leave Oklahoma County whole." It was argued that 2022 redistricting must incorporate voters from three congressional districts. As in the good old days, Democratic voters in Oklahoma City need to be dumped into districts bordering on Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado!

On the other hand, Males' analysis of Horn's victory casts doubt on whether gerrymandering will be enough to defeat Horn, a likable, warm, and diplomatic candidate who walked her district. He explains that between 2014 and 2018, "voter turnout in the district surged by 23 percent for Republicans and a volcanic 110 percent for Democrats, with every precinct showing substantially increased Democratic voting." He found that Russell won most of the city's "40 rural White precincts, hard-core Trump territory," but they became significantly more Democratic. He reports, "Of the 80,000 new voters, Democrats won two-thirds in rural areas, three-fourths in Oklahoma City, and 88 percent in the suburbs."

Yes, *Males* shows that millennial districts voted Democratic by margins exceeding 75 percent but he also found that “gated, guarded Gaillardia, 15 miles from downtown, overwhelmingly White and wealthy, tripled its vote for Democrats, while the district’s two arch-red rural counties doubled their Democratic votes.”

I wonder what the defeated congressman Steve Russell thinks about the older population in Gaillardia who voted for the personable Democrat who enjoys listening. Throughout his campaign, Russell couldn’t hide his contempt for those who disagree with him. After the election, he blamed his loss on Millennials and then said about that generation, “time and experience will engage this important population with the values that matter as they marry and raise families. I am optimistic about the potential of our country’s future but saddened by its self-indulgence and lack of respect for one another.”

When asked by NPR’s Robin Young about Russell’s rude words, which she called “a bit of a ‘dis’,” Horn brushed off his animosity and said that we won because we engaged all types of people of all ages, “we changed the way campaigns are run here.”

<https://www.thelostogle.com/2018/11/14/steve-russell-blames-campaign-loss-on-millennials/>

<http://www.wbur.org/npr/670077244/kendra-horn-oklahoma-5th-district>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



How the Teacher Revolt Promoted the Blue Wave

by [dianeravitch](#)

In the immediate aftermath of the midterm elections, first reports asserted that the teachers’ revolt fizzled at the ballot box. So many teachers ran for the state legislature, they said, and only three or four or five won. But consider, the teachers who entered

politics were novices, with no money, no experience, no name recognition. Congratulations to those who dared to enter the political arena! Don't give up!

The Guardian has a very [different take on the role of teachers in the recent election](#).

Midterms show educators have been swept into office in record numbers

A wave of pro-education energy, spurred by the April walkouts, led to election victories in Oklahoma, Arizona and Wisconsin

The Guardian writes:

A new wave of teachers' strikes could soon hit US schools, with educators in Chicago and Los Angeles considering walkouts. And after the midterm elections, they will have stronger allies.

Across the country, in Arizona, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, teachers made huge gains in the midterm elections – a movement that grew out of the #RedforEd campaign that saw teachers protesting across the country to reverse years of conservative cuts to public education.

Last April, thousands of teachers across the state of Oklahoma went on strike; making increased funding for education and a seat at the table in education a priority. Now, educators have been swept in record numbers into office in Oklahoma. Earlier this month, 16 educators were elected to the Oklahoma state house; bringing the total number of educators in the state legislature to 25.

The wave of pro-education energy helped Kendra Horn become the first Democrat to be elected from Oklahoma's fifth congressional district in 44 years and the first female Democratic representative to the House from Oklahoma.

Horn, 42, made education funding a central focus of her campaign and had many teachers going door-to-door on her behalf.

"We saw a greater involvement of teachers than ever before during this political process over the last six months when we moved from the walkout to the elections and teachers found their collective voice and they aren't going anywhere," said the Oklahoma Education Association vice-president, Katherine Bishop.

Carri Hicks, a fourth-grade teacher from Deer Valley in the suburbs of Oklahoma City, was one of those striking teachers elected to the state senate on 6 November; flipping a seat previously held by a Republican to the Democratic column.

Hicks said that she saw how the issue of education funding was able to win so many voters for the Democrats.

She said many voters had previously had trouble understanding the link between education cuts and the tax cuts the state gave to corporations and the oil and gas industry. That changed after the teachers' strike.

"I feel like the walkout really brought those inequities to light and people were much more willing to have that conversation because they understood the magnitude," said Hicks.

"You know, finally, having a united front and coming together shed light on some dark places in our public education system and was powerful."

In Arizona, where more than 70,000 teachers and their supporters marched on the state capitol in April, teachers made big gains at the ballot box; electing a former college educator, Kyrsten Sinema, as senator, defeating a ballot measure that would have expanded education vouchers in the state and making gains in the state legislature.

Teachers also helped elect 31-year-old school speech therapist Kathy Hoffman as Arizona state school superintendent, the first time in 25 years that a Democrat has held the office in Arizona.

Two years ago, after watching the Betsy DeVos confirmation as secretary of education, Hoffman, a member of the American Federation of Teachers, decided to run for Arizona schools superintendent. Hoffman used her network of teacher activists to defeat better-funded opponents, both Democratic and Republican.

Keep reading!

[dianeravitch](#) | November 28, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Education Reform](#), [Resistance](#), [Teachers](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leg>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Jan Resseger: Bruce Baker's New Book is a Must-Read! "Educational Inequality and School Finance: Why Money Matters for America's Students"

by [dianeravitch](#)

Most people, even educators, don't pay close attention to school finance because the aid formulas get arcane quickly and the eyes glaze over. But nothing is more important to providing good schooling than having the resources to take care of students, teachers, and facilities. In the past two decades, many states have ignored equitable school funding and have chosen to offer "school choice" instead of paying teachers a living wage. As we learned from the [widely circulated report of the Center for Budget and](#)

[Policy Priorities](#), a large number of states are spending less on their schools today than they did a decade ago. The states that have starved public schools of adequate funding are the same states that have provided choice. It's a sort of "Let them eat cake" response when people don't have bread.

Jan Resseger [recently reviewed Bruce Baker's book on school finance](#) and found it to be important and accessible to lay readers. Baker writes clearly and he knows school finance.

Rutgers University school finance professor, Bruce Baker's new book, [Educational Inequality and School Finance: Why Money Matters for America's Students](#), covers the basics—how school finance formulas are supposed to work to ensure that funding for schools is adequate, equitable, and stable.

Baker also carefully refutes some persistent myths—Eric Hanushek's claim that money doesn't really make a difference when it comes to raising student achievement, for example, and the contention that public schools' expenditures have skyrocketed over the decades while achievement as measured by test scores has remained flat.

Baker does an excellent job of demonstrating that far more will be needed for our society appropriately to support school districts segregated not only by race, but also by poverty. The final sections of the book are a little technical. They explain the construction of a more equitable system that would drive enough funding to come closer to what is really needed in school districts serving concentrations of children in poverty.

Baker's book is especially important for updating a discussion of basic school finance theory to account for today's realities. He shows, for example, how the Great Recession undermined adequate and equitable funding of public schools despite that states had formulas in place that were supposed to have protected children and their teachers: "The sharp economic downturn following the collapse of the housing market in 2007-08, and persisting through about 2011, provided state and federal elected officials a pulpit from which to argue that our public school systems must learn how to do more with less... Meanwhile, governors on both sides of the aisle, facing tight budgets and the end of federal aid that had been distributed to temporarily plug state budget holes, ramped up their rhetoric for even deeper cuts to education spending... Notably, the attack on public school funding was driven largely by preferences for conservative tax policies at a time when state budgets experienced unprecedented drops in income and sales tax revenue." (p. 4)

And for the first time in a school finance book, Baker explores the impact of two decades of charter school expansion on the funding of public schools. Although the conventional wisdom promoted by the corporate reformers has said that competition from independent charter school operators would introduce innovation and thereby stimulate academic improvement in public schools, not enough people have seriously considered the fiscal implications of slicing a fixed school funding pie into more pieces. Baker examines these fiscal implications of charter school expansion from many perspectives.

Charters are, first, one of those "false promises of cost-free solutions": "The theory of action guiding these remedies and elixirs is that public, government-run schooling can be forced to operate more productively and efficiently if it can be reshaped and reformed to

operate more like privately run, profit-driven corporations/businesses... Broadly, popular reforms have been built on the beliefs that the private sector is necessarily more efficient; that competition spurs innovation (and that there may be technological solutions to human capital costs); that data driven human capital policies can increase efficiency/productivity by improving the overall quality of the teacher workforce. One core element of such reform posits that US schools need market competition to spur innovation and that market competition should include government-operated schools, government-sanctioned (charter) privately operated schools, and private schools.... (T)here is little reason to believe that these magic elixirs will significantly change the productivity/efficiency equation or address issues of equity, adequacy, and equal opportunity.” (pp. 6-7)

Baker also speaks to the philosophical justification frequently offered to justify the rapid expansion of school choice—that justice can be defined by offering more choices for those who have few: “Liberty and equality are desirable policy outcomes. Thus, it would be convenient if policies simultaneously advanced both. But it’s never that simple. A large body of literature on political theory explains that liberty and equality are preferences that most often operate in tension with one another. While not mutually exclusive, they are certainly not one and the same. Preferences for and expansion of liberties often lead to greater inequality and division among members of society, whereas preferences for equality moderate those divisions. The only way expanded liberty can lead to greater equality is if available choices are substantively equal, conforming to a common set of societal standards. But if available choices are substantively equal, then why choose one over another. Systems of choice and competition rely on differentiation, inequality, and both winners and losers.” (p. 28)

Baker addresses Betsy DeVos’s contention that, “Choice in education is good politics because it’s good policy. It’s good policy because it comes from good parents who want better for their children. Families are on the front lines of this fight; let’s stand with them... This isn’t about school ‘systems.’ This is about individual students, parents, and families. Schools are at the service of students. Not the other way around.” Here is Baker’s answer: “The ‘money belongs to the child’ claim also falsely assumes that the only expenses associated with each individual’s education choices are the current annual expenses of educating that individual.... It ignores entirely marginal costs and economies of scale, foundational elements of origins of public institutions. We collect tax dollars and provide public goods and services because it allows us to do so at an efficient scale of operations... Public spending does not matter only to those using it here and now. These dollars don’t just belong to parents of children presently attending the schools, and the assets acquired with public funding... do not belong exclusively to those parents.” (p. 30)

Are charter schools more efficient at improving school achievement measured by test scores and are they fiscally efficient? “(A) close look at high-profile charters in New York City indicates that their success reflects their access to additional resources and a fairly traditional approach to leveraging them... For each of these major operators... the share of low-income (those who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch), English language learners, and children with disabilities is lower than for district schools, in some cases quite substantially. On average, these schools are serving far less needy and thus less costly student populations than are the district schools.” Baker provides details of major New York City charter networks’ expenditure patterns; what he finds is that the best-

funded allocate their instructional expenses in a similar way to traditional public schools: "Collectively, these figures tell a story of high-profile, well-funded CMOs in New York City leveraging their additional resources in three logical and rather traditional ways by hiring more staff per pupil... by paying their teachers more at any given level of experience and degree; and... by paying them more to work longer school hours, days, and years. In other words, they pay more people for more time." He concludes: "Researchers, policy makers, pundits, pontificators, and even self-proclaimed thought leaders have yet to conjure some new 'secret sauce' or technological innovation that will greatly improve equity, adequacy, and efficiency. Human resources matter, and equitable and adequate financial resources are necessary for hiring and retaining the teachers and other school staff necessary to achieve equal educational opportunity for all children." (pp. 68-79)

Resseger has more to say about Baker's analysis of the inadequacy of charter schools as a means to promote equity or even innovation (unless that you think that strict discipline and harsh punishment is innovative).

Based on her incisive review, I am ordering [Bruce Baker's book now](#). I hope you will do the same.

The name of the game in education is money, and we can't allow the Reformers to give us the Old Razzle-Dazzle to distract us from what matters most, the money to reduce class sizes, the money to pay teachers a professional salary, the money to have a robust arts program, the money to have up-to-date technology, the money to have a librarian, a school nurse, a social worker, and a psychologist. Money matters. Don't be fooled into thinking that choice is a substitute!

Those who say that "money doesn't matter" are always people who already have plenty of money. Bruce Baker explains why it does matter and why we must not be fooled anymore. Every child in this nation should get a good education and that requires money.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 28, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Equity](#), [Funding](#), [School Choice](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leT>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**





Chalkbeat: “Indiana’s War On Teachers Is Winning”

by [dianeravitch](#)

Indiana declared war on its public school teachers when Mitch Daniels was Governor. The war against teachers intensified under Go Ernie Mike Pence. Now districts across the state are experiencing teacher shortages.

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/in/2018/11/27/indianas-war-on-teachers-is-winning-heres-what-superintendents-say-is-causing-teacher-shortages/>

This is what Daniels, Pence, and the Legislature wanted. They drove down the cost of education. They placed their bets on school choice. They call it Reform. They are destroying the teaching profession and public education in the state. And they call it Reform.

In a survey this year, Indiana State University researchers asked Indiana school superintendents if they faced a teacher shortage — and how bad the problem was.

“It’s killing us,” one respondent wrote.

“This situation is getting worse each year,” another said. “Scares me!”

“Indiana’s war on teachers is winning,” a superintendent commented.

Out of the 220 districts that responded to the survey, 91 percent reported experiencing a teacher shortage, with most feeling the pinch in science, math, and special education.

Eighty-five percent of the surveyed districts applied for emergency permits for people who don’t have teaching licenses, or educators who are hired to teach subjects outside their licensure.

Superintendents overwhelmingly said it was difficult to find qualified job candidates, and many mentioned high teacher turnover rates. They often pointed to low pay as the cause, competing against other higher-paying districts or the private sector.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 28, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL:

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Beto O'Rourke on the Crisis at Our Southern Border

by [dianeravitch](#)

I received the following message from Beto O'Rourke. I'm on his mailing list because I contributed to his campaign for the Senate. He makes so much sense that I wonder why the Trump administration doesn't lead to him. I have to conclude that Trump wants the Crisis, as red meat to feed his base. He thrives on crisis and needs to look like he alone is holding back the brown hordes at the border.

Beto wrote:

It should tell us something about her home country that a mother is willing to travel 2,000 miles with her 4-month-old son to come here. Should tell us something about our country that we only respond to this desperate need once she is at our border. So far, in this administration, that response has included taking kids from their parents, locking them up in cages, and now tear gassing them at the border.

People are leaving violent countries where they fear for their lives. Without money, they are subsisting on hope for their kids, for themselves, that they can get to safety. After being denied the ability to lawfully petition for asylum for the last 10 days, they are desperate.

We choose how to respond to this challenge.

Let's do this the right way and follow our own laws. Allow asylum seekers to petition for asylum at our ports of entry. They must do so peacefully and follow our laws; but we must also ensure the capacity to effectively and timely process those claims (right now 5,000 waiting in Tijuana and only 40 to 100 are processed a day).

Those who have a credible fear of returning to their home country (as determined by a U.S. judge) will be able stay until their full asylum request has been determined. Those applicants ultimately granted asylum will then live in the U.S., make us a better country for being here, and those who are not granted asylum will be returned to their home country.

Longer term: work with the people of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to address underlying conditions that are causing them to flee in the first place. That means addressing effects of our failed past involvement in those countries (in their civil wars, drug trade and drug wars) and the institutional failings in those countries (rule of law).

It won't be easy and will involve a much greater investment of time, focus and resources. Or we can continue to ignore those countries and their people until they show up at our border.

- Beto

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Randi Responds to Betsy's Lies on FOX News

by [dianeravitch](#)

Oh, I can't wait until the House of Representatives begins to question Secretary DeVos about her reversal of civil rights protections, her reversal of federal protections for students with debt incurred at fraudulent for-profit colleges, and her continued efforts to destroy the federal role in protecting students, whether in K-12 or higher education. Instead of protecting those in need, she protects predators. She is a very grizzly Secretary of Education.

She appeared on FOX News [today for 10 minutes](#) and attacked public education and teachers' unions.

Randi Weingarten responded:

For Immediate Release

November 27, 2018

Contact:

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AFT's Weingarten Responds to Betsy DeVos' Lies on Fox News

WASHINGTON—AFT President Randi Weingarten issued the following statement after Education Secretary Betsy DeVos attacked teachers' unions today on the Fox Business Network:

"Betsy DeVos is showing her true colors. We are fighting for the safe and welcoming public schools that kids deserve, healthcare protections so people aren't one pre-existing condition away from bankruptcy, affordable college without life-burdening student debt,

and decent wages. Since she is against all of that, Betsy is attacking the unions that create a voice for teachers to advocate on these issues. As secretary of education, it is her sworn duty to help kids and their communities reach their full potential. Comments like these do the opposite, and she knows it."

[dianeravitch](#) | November 27, 2018 at 3:29 pm | Categories: [Betsy DeVos](#), [Civil Rights](#), [Student Financial Aid and Student Debt](#), [U.S. Department of Education](#), [Unions](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leZ>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Washington, D.C.: Who Should Control Access to Data About the Schools?

by [dianeravitch](#)

Thanks to Leonie Haimson, whose comment [brought this excellent article by Rachel Cohen to my attention](#).

[There is a political battle going on in D.C. about school data and who controls it.](#)

[Another article on the same subject was written by Ruth Wattenberg](#), a member of the D.C. State Board of Education, who argues that the Mayor must not be allowed to control the data.

Some City Council members have proposed an independent research collaborative, housed in the D.C. Auditor General's Office, but the Mayor is opposed. She wants to maintain control.

Whoever has the data must be independent, nonpartisan, and trustworthy.

Cohen writes:

In the wake of a series of DC Public Schools scandals, Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh came forward with an idea: an independent research collaborative that would conduct studies on the city's public schools, including charters. This collaborative, outlined in draft legislation, would have an advisory board comprised of 16 education

stakeholders who would drive the research agenda.

Cheh's concept has precedent. Other cities, like Chicago, San Diego, and Houston, have similar research collaboratives, commonly referred to as "research practice partnerships" or RPPs. Local education advocates and Cheh's colleagues on the Council have come out in strong support of her proposal.

But Cheh's plan also has detractors, and many of them are the appointees of Mayor Muriel Bowser. At a six-hour public hearing held on July 13, several officials tapped by Bowser spoke out against this so-called "Education Research Collaborative."

And at the same hearing, the public learned that the executive branch was exploring the launch of its own separate education research consortium with the Urban Institute, a national think tank located in D.C. The news sparked concerns that Bowser was seeking to undercut the Council's push for independent oversight.

At the core of all this politicking: Who gets access to data about D.C.'s public schools, and how do they get to use it?

Cheh's bill, introduced in April, has eight other co-sponsors, a Council supermajority which could override a potential veto from the mayor. The Council set aside \$500,000 in its most recent budget for the auditor to "incubate" this pilot research consortium. (That funding becomes available in October, when fiscal year 2019 begins.) It would be launched initially in the Office of the DC Auditor, an agency outside of the executive branch. Supporters say that after a few years they would look for a new home—be it a local think tank, university, or its own independent agency.

The chair of the education committee, At-Large Councilmember David Grosso, has not yet taken a position on the bill, but in May he tried to steer the dedicated \$500,000 to after-school programs instead. His effort failed 12-1.

The research collaborative was conceived of in response to the host of education scandals which emerged over the last year, including news that high school graduation rates were massively inflated and that the public schools chancellor knowingly violated a school choice policy he himself wrote. While local and national leaders have long looked to D.C.'s education reforms as a model for the nation, today many parents, community members, and even elected officials have voiced a lack of confidence in the gains reported by the school system, fearing information has become too politicized under mayoral control.

"I call the information that we get from our education agencies 'PR,'" says At-Large Councilmember Robert White. "It can be very difficult to get hold of unbiased data...."

"Our hope is to get accurate, reliable, credible data, and then to use this data in a research partnership to understand whether the policies we are pursuing are really working," says Cheh.

The Mayor's office is fighting the proposal to house the agency in the Auditor's office. She and her allies claim it would politicize the data and the research. Supporters of the proposal say that it would politicize the office if it is controlled by the Mayor.

The person in whom I have the greatest trust in D.C. is Mary Levy, who has been tracking D.C. data for many years and faithfully reporting what she finds without fear or favor. She opposes letting the mayor control the data.

Mary Levy, a longtime budget analyst for D.C. schools, is more blunt. "This idea is an infant in the cradle," she tells City Paper. "And if you don't put it in the auditor's office it's going to die in its cradle."

If the agency controlling the data and research is not trustworthy, the money will be wasted and the residents of the city will remain in the dark.

It is bizarre that D.C., which claimed to be "data-driven" after the onset of the Michelle Rhee era and mayoral control in 2007, continues not to have reliable and accurate data more than a decade later.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 27, 2018 at 3:21 pm | Categories: [Data](#), [District of Columbia](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leX>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



If You Shop at Amazon, Please Designate the Network for Public Education as Your Charity

by [dianeravitch](#)

I don't customarily recommend where you should shop. I hope you shop locally and keep local, independent merchants in business.

If you shop online at Amazon, please use using Amazon Smile. If you do, you can choose the Network for Public Education Fund as your favorite charity and we will receive a donation every time you shop. Here is the link that explains.

https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about/ref=smi_aas_redirect?ie=UTF8&%2AVersion%2A=1&%2Aentries%2A=0

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Washington, D.C.: Does Anyone Know if the Reports About Staff Turnover Are Accurate?

by [dianeravitch](#)

Valerie Jablow, D.C. parent, blogger, and activist, [read two reports on teacher and principal attrition and retention](#). One of them was prepared by the highly respected D.C. civil rights attorney Mary Levy, who has been tracking data in D.C. for many years. Levy looked at both public schools and charter schools.

One conclusion: staff turnover is startlingly high, especially in schools with the most disadvantaged students.

Overall, our public school teacher turnover rates dwarf national averages and have socioeconomic implications, such that the more at risk students a school has, the higher its teacher turnover. The data examined by Levy from the last 3 years alone show that fully a quarter of our public school teachers leave each year—a much higher rate than other jurisdictions. The result is that over half a decade, most of our publicly funded schools will see the majority of their teachers leave.

Our DC public school principal turnover is high as well, averaging about 25% annually. Although that is closer to the national average for principal turnover, in DC it is (like teacher turnover) also correlated with socioeconomics, such that schools with the most at risk students often have the most principal turnover.

Levy had to hand-calculate some of the data because data-collection is slipshod:

For one, we have this data on teacher turnover in DCPS only because Levy herself has spent years comparing staff rosters for individual DCPS schools and budgets and reported what she found. Consider, for a moment, the painful irony of Levy being commissioned to do a report on teacher attrition in DCPS through a painstaking process

of backing out data that the school system may already have in a better format—and, for all any of us knows, could provide in a much easier way.

For another, the charter school data on teacher turnover is suspect, as Levy discovered that a number of charter schools appeared to have confused teacher attrition with retention in their required annual reports.

Thus, whenever the reported teacher attrition rate in a charter school was higher than 50%, Levy painstakingly compared staff rosters from one year to the next in the same school. Roster comparisons were, however, inexact because different schools defined “teacher” in different ways, and the rosters themselves changed in form and format from year to year. (Not to mention that the attrition/retention confusion happened within LEAs—so each school had to be looked at separately.) Nonetheless, Levy recorded how many teachers appeared to stay and leave each year; used that to determine whether the reported high rate of attrition above 50% was accurate; and, if it was not accurate, flipped the percentage.

Imagine that! The schools reporting data often didn’t know the difference between *retention* and **attrition**! Are any of the data credible when the people responsible for reporting don’t know the meaning of basic terminology?

D.C. public schools have been controlled by the mayor and by “reformers” including Michelle Rhee and Kaya Henderson (now looking for a new chancellor since Antwan Wilson left) since 2007, and there is **no accurate data collection and analysis program**.

Foundations including Gates, Walton, and Broad have poured tens of millions into DCPS, and there is **no accurate collection and analysis program**.

Whenever D.C. makes a claim about graduation rates, test scores, teacher and principal attrition and retention, they are probably just guessing. Or boasting. They really don’t know.

If you want to learn more, you can attend this meeting:

This Wednesday November 28, from 6 pm-8 pm, the DC State Board of Education (SBOE) and teacher advocacy group EmpowerEd will hold a joint forum on staff retention in DC’s publicly funded schools. The forum will be held at Walker-Jones Education Campus, 1125 New Jersey Ave. NW. RSVP [here](#).

[dianeravitch](#) | November 27, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Data](#), [District of Columbia](#), [Education Reform](#), [Principals](#), [Teachers](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lea>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Mercedes Schneider: TFA Is Looking to Hire a New Lobbyist, with Experience

by [dianeravitch](#)

Teach for America is advertising for a lobbyist. They want someone with real experience, not like the five weeks of training they think is enough for teachers. I got an email today from a friend who found out why Kansas paid TFA \$270,000 to get three TFA recruits: the TFA lobbyist in Kansas sold a legislator on the idea. The legislator is embarrassed by all the publicity and is not likely to offer that bill again.

Mercedes Schneider [writes about TFA ad for a lobbyist](#). You can bet the lobbyist will be paid more than a TFA teacher.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 27, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Teach for America](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leu>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



California: Charter Billionaires Spent \$62 Million on State Races but Lost the Two Big Ones

by [dianeravitch](#)

The charter billionaires [spent about \\$62 million to push their single issue](#) in the state elections but lost the two big statewide races. They did better in legislative races, unfortunately, where it was easy to swamp their opponents.

Advocates for charter schools outspent almost everyone else trying to sway California elections in 2018.

Pro-charter groups helped break spending records trying to swing the race for Superintendent of Public Instruction, the most expensive down-ballot fight in California this year. They were also the top sources of outside spending in the race for governor — and even state Senate and Assembly races.

In total, charter school advocates made \$62 million in independent expenditures on this year's elections, according to a KPCC/LAist analysis of campaign finance data.

But most of that money was spent on losing efforts.

Last week, Marshall Tuck conceded the superintendent race to outgoing State Assemblyman Tony Thurmond. Pro-charter groups — most notably the advocacy group EdVoice — spent a total of \$34 million trying to elect Tuck.

They were up against significant opposition: the state's largest teachers unions and the California Democratic Party spent about \$20 million to support Thurmond.

The loss comes after a disappointing gubernatorial primary in June. The political wing of the California Charter Schools Association spent \$22 million trying to get former L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa into the general election for Governor. Villaraigosa didn't even come close.

They will now curry favor with Gov.-Elect Newsom.

Pro-charter groups fared somewhat better in state legislative races.

Combined, EdVoice and the California Charter Schools Association spent more than \$5.9 million on those races. CCSA Advocates was the largest single source of independent expenditures in state legislative races.

In a down-ballot state legislative race, an independent expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars "is a lot of money," Sonenshein [of Cal State L.A.] said.

In all, charter groups spent money trying to sway 17 state Assembly or Senate contests. In 13 races, charter school groups supported the winning candidate; eight of these winners were safe incumbents who held their seat by a double-digit margin.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 27, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Billionaires](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-leB>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Virginia: TFA Political Group Funds School Board Races in Alexandria School Board Race

by [dianeravitch](#)

This is getting ridiculous. We know that billionaires like Betsy DeVos, the Koch brothers, Reed Hastings, and Michael Bloomberg have been underwriting candidates for local and state school boards.

Now Teach for America's political action arm, called "Leaders in Education Fund," which is part of LEE (Leadership for Educational Equity), is also intervening to elect local school board candidates.

Got that? TFA created LEE, which is part of Leaders in Education Fund, which funds candidates.

(Who supports LEE and TFA? The same billionaires who support charter schools: the Waltons, Eli Broad, Bill Gates, etc. One of the Waltons is on the board of LEE.) Any candidate funded by Leaders in Education Fund is funded by the Waltons and the rest of the billionaire privatizers.

Debbie Truong in the Washington Post [writes about TFA intervention into a race in Alexandria, Virginia](#), where its preferred candidates spent ten times (10X) as much as the other candidates and won.

The winning candidates, both TFA alumni, insist that they are *not* planning to promote charters.

Why would TFA invest in local school boards? In Virginia, only school districts can authorize charter schools, and Virginia has only eight charter schools.

Why would TFA/LE/LEF/Waltons support candidates unless they intend to support TFA and charters?

Read the NPE/NPE Action report on the billionaires buying candidates for office, [Hijacked by Billionaires](#). Of course, the report only scratches the surface, because it does not capture the full list of billionaires supporting privatization, like Republican Bill Bloomfield in California and the Koch brothers. One of the billionaires listed in the report, Arthur Rock, subsidizes TFA alumni who work as staff in Congressional offices, supplying "free" staff who are looking out for the interests of TFA.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 27, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Billionaires](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Privatization](#), [Teach for America](#), [Virginia](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lej>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Please Retweet This Message to Benefit NPE at No Cost to You

by [dianeravitch](#)

Today is #GivingTuesday.

Please consider a gift to NPE.

<https://networkforpubliceducation.org/about-npe/donate/>

Here is a way you can give NPE \$10 without spending a cent of your own money. Just retweet the message below.

Beginning at 9:00 am EST today, Benevity, a workplace giving program, will give NPE \$10 for every retweet of its #BetheGood Video.

Here is all you need to do.

Visit @benevity on Twitter

[Tweets by benevity](#)

Look for the #GivingTuesday video tweet pinned to the top

Click the “retweet” icon

In the comment section, mention @Network4pubEd, the hashtag #BeTheGood, plus any note you’d like to include.

Here is an example of a comment:

.@Network4pubEd knows that public education is the pillar of democracy. Support NPE and #BeTheGood.

Make your tweet comment unique but be sure to include @Network4pubEd and the hashtag #BeTheGood.

We will receive a \$10 donation for every unique twitter handle that participates and follows the above directions. But don't wait. Only the first 10,000 unique tweets are eligible.

So grab that video tweet off @benevity and send off your tweet. Then post the above directions on Facebook. The contest lasts for 12 hours, or 10,000 tweets, whichever comes first.

And remember, until December 17, every donation you make to us here will be matched by an anonymous donor!

[dianeravitch](#) | November 27, 2018 at 8:50 am | Categories: [Network for Public Education](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ldJ>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



In Trump's America, We Shoot Tear Gas at Mothers and Babies in Diapers

by [dianeravitch](#)

What is happening on the southern border is appalling. Trump has given the order to the Border Patrol to use lethal force, if necessary.

At this moment, the Border Patrol is using tear gas against families, and [the news is full of photographs of mothers with their babies](#) in diapers fleeing from the tear gas.

Welcome to Trump's America!

FOX News calls this a "battle for the southern border." Really? A battle between a bunch of bedraggled migrant families and our military? Oh, and FOX forgot to mention the

federal report warning about a likely climate catastrophe in the not distant future. FOX was too obsessed with the "battle for the southern border" to give time to the climate change report from the Trump administration, which was strategically released on Friday at 2 pm in the midst of the Thanksgiving weekend in the hope that no one would notice it.

And another milestone in the era of MAGA: GM announced it is closing 5 of its American plants and laying off 10,000 workers. I wonder if they will get a Christmas bonus or even a card?

[dianeravitch](#) | November 26, 2018 at 2:30 pm | Categories: [Cruelty](#), [Economy](#), [Environment](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lep>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Paul Karrer: Gun Control Is Not That Hard

by [dianeravitch](#)

Paul Karrer teaches fifth-graders in a high-poverty school in southern California.

He is a gun owner who believes in gun control.

[It is not hard to do, he says.](#)

Guns can be controlled and be consistent with the Second Amendment. Read his essay to learn how.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 26, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Guns](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ldg>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



John Thompson: Can We Save Our Schools from the Corporate Giants?

by [dianeravitch](#)

John Thompson of Oklahoma attended the NPE Conference in Indianapolis and [learned a lot about how](#) allies in other cities and states are resisting the Corporate Goliaths invading public schools.

He writes:

“Previously, I overestimated how much of Goliath’s failure was due to the arrogance of power. Today’s Silicon Valley Robber Barons’ hubris can match that of their 19th century counterparts, but their control of data makes them uniquely dangerous. As the latest NPE presentations enlightened me on what is working for us Davids as we successfully resist Goliath, I was mostly struck by the evidence that he only continues to exist for the purposes of privatization, profits, and the monetization of data.

“Fortunately, the 2018 NPE conference was extremely positive, so I can move beyond my errors to a post which provides an overview of a) what I learned and b) some ideas on future messaging.”

Thompson attended many workshops and all the keynotes and he weaves together a coherent narrative, answering the question:

“Why do they [the Corporate Goliaths] keep infusing money into charters?

“The answer, it is now clear, is that they are monetizing data. Pearson testing company thinks it knows more about the children they test than their parents do. As Leonie Haimson has shown, Goliath has bought 400 identifiable data points on students. And Summit Learning says it will follow your child through her entire life.

“Pasi Sahlberg’s presentation on GERM, the Global Education Reform Movement, showed graphically how the corporate reform assault undermined schools around the world. He then described counter-attacks against GERM in New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Liberia, Scotland, Chile, and elsewhere. Educators have a duty to reclaim our professional autonomy. But we also must be willing to state some hard truths.

“Sahlberg says that people want to believe that the kids are “alright.” But, globally, they face a threat that must be explicitly addressed. The well-being of students is declining as screen time increases. Students and teachers must push back against the Goliath which

profits from more eyes being glued to digital devices.

“Susan Ochshorn and Denisha Jones brought this dangerous trend closer to home. They condemned children being placed in front of keyboards before they are ready. And this may be the narrative that will really take off. Silicon Valley elites don’t put their 4-year-olds in online courses.

“During the previous generation, Goliath used charters that increased segregation to supposedly undo the damage done by segregation, but most voters didn’t send their children to the high-poverty schools that were targeted. So, many people didn’t understand why those corporate reforms were doomed to fail. Surely the broader public will grasp the absurdity of placing 70 students and 2 teachers in “personalized” learning to address toxic stress that is made worse by premature exposure to too many hours in front of keyboards.

“Helen Gym’s account of victories in Philadelphia is also encouraging. Goliath won when they rushed implementation of policies without an open discussion of their theories. After the Reformers got so overconfident they consulted parents, they lost. In other words, to know Goliath’s agenda is to understand that they grasp very little about what students need and parents want.”

[dianeravitch](#) | November 26, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [For-Profit](#), [Network for Public Education](#), [Networkfor Public Education Action Fund](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ldE>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



A Big Reward for Writing this Blog

by [dianeravitch](#)

Several weeks ago, I told the [story of Arnold and Carol Hillman](#), who retired as educators in Pennsylvania and moved to South Carolina. Instead of living a life of relaxation and leisure, they threw themselves into volunteer work on behalf of rural schools and created clubs and activities for high school students in a nearby school. I named them to the

honor roll of the Blog for their many acts of goodness.

I recently received this email from Arnold.

Diane,

Many wonderful things have happened as a result of your posting of our story on your blog. The most important one was that the chairperson of the House Education Committee called us to talk about what we are doing and how we could help her with rural schools.

We spent a couple of hours with her. She is the majority chair, a former school board member and someone who has traveled around the state to see firsthand what is happening. We can only say thank you.

Arnold and Carol Hillman

I wrote back, and Arnold sent me a photograph of the group of young men he sponsors, called the Jasper Gentlemen. They were wearing matching red blazers and were very handsome.

I asked how he paid for the blazers, and he wrote:

We have gotten donations from friends in PA and local organizations. We pay for any residual cost. We also can only meet with the Gents and the Diamonds and Pearls (young ladies) during lunchtime. We probably bribe them with pizza, Subway and wings. Carol and I pay for the food during the year. We meet with the groups about 3 times a month. We also arrange for an etiquette luncheon. We hire a woman from Georgia who does a great job. We pay for that with donations and sometimes ourselves.

We also take the youngsters to various colleges. Sometimes the colleges pay for lunch. Oft times, the kids pay for a fast food meal. If they don't have the dough, either the teachers or Carol and I pay. We also give a \$2000 dollar scholarship to a graduating senior. We are happy to do all of this "stuff."

Note to Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Jeff Bezos: Goodness is its own reward. Learn from the Hillmans.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 26, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Education Reform](#), [Love](#), [South Carolina](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-kQ7>

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Paymon Rouhanifard: I Was Wrong About Standardized Testing and Accountability

by [dianeravitch](#)

Paymon Rouhanifard was in charge of Joel Klein's "Office of Portfolio Management" in New York City. He was appointed as superintendent of schools in Camden, New Jersey, by Chris Christie. He arrived in Camden as a "devout believer" in testing, data-based decision making, and accountability. Before he stepped down last June he had a change of mind. He began to see that the schools had turned testing into both means and end, and that testing had crowded out the arts, science, foreign languages, and Global Studies. His reflections are fascinating, as he shows the capacity to examine his beliefs and change them.

[Here is the speech he delivered at MIT a few weeks ago.](#)

I urge you to read it.

He is a reformed reformer. I question his view that we need to have standardized tests for chemistry, physics, and the arts. He thinks that may be the only way to balance the curriculum and restore what has been sacrificed to the gods of testing, but I don't agree.

There is much good sense here. I admire anyone who is willing to do the hard work of rethinking their views. It is not easy. Unlike me, he doesn't seem to have alienated his friends in the Reform movement. Many of them are also beginning to be disenchanted with standardized testing.

I certainly applaud his conclusion that any reform should be gauged by the measure of "would I do this to my own children?"

[dianeravitch](#) | November 26, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Education Industry](#), [New Jersey](#), [Standardized Testing](#), [Testing](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ldk>

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Massachusetts: Block Charter Expansion!

by [dianeravitch](#)

In 2016, Massachusetts voters decisively rejected a referendum to expand the charter sector. State officials don't care. They are ignoring local resistance and going full speed ahead, as Citizens for Public Schools reports.

The push for charter school expansion in Massachusetts continues, despite the clear message sent by voters in 2016, when 62% said no to Question 2 and charter school expansion.

It's time to speak out, this time against charter expansion proposals in New Bedford and Haverhill. Contact the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) by December 3 (the deadline for public comment) at charterschools@doe.mass.edu.

New Bedford's Alma del Mar charter school is asking to expand by 1,188 seats, and Global Learning seeks 100 additional seats. This would cost New Bedford Public schools roughly \$15 million a year, beyond the \$14 million the district already loses to charter schools.

CPS Board Member and New Bedford School Committee member Joshua Amaral described the stakes for his community in a Commonwealth Magazine article titled "Ignore the charter school think tank crowd." Amaral writes, "To put it simply, the district cannot afford a single additional charter seat, let alone a doubling of its charter enrollment."

In Haverhill, the national Wildflower chain has applied to open a 240-seat Montessori charter school. The district already loses more than \$3 million a year to a Montessori charter school and, like New Bedford, cannot afford to lose more.

New Bedford and Haverhill students, teachers and families need investments in democratically accountable schools that serve all children, not millions of dollars diverted to charter expansion

[dianeravitch](#) | November 25, 2018 at 4:36 pm | Categories: [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-le8>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Betsy DeVos Will Be in the Hot Seat as Five House Committees Prepare to Grill Her

by [dianeravitch](#)

We saw at her confirmation hearing two years ago how ill-prepared Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos is when questioned persistently about her views and actions. We saw a repeat performance when she was questioned by Lesley Stahl on “60 Minutes.” This is a person who is unaccustomed to being held accountable.

Now, at least five [committees in the new Democratic-controlled House of Representatives](#) intend to question her about her many controversial efforts to protect for-profit colleges, not students; to roll back protections for transgender students; to put the burden of proof on rape victims, not their alleged assailants; and many more of her policies intended to weaken civil rights protections and the duty of government to defend the weak and vulnerable, not the ruthless and powerful.

For two years, Democrats watched with fury as Education Secretary Betsy DeVos sought to dismantle nearly every significant Obama administration education policy.

Now, they’re gearing up to fight back. Lots of them.

As many as five Democratic-led House committees next year could take on DeVos over a range of issues such as her rollback of regulations aimed at predatory for-profit colleges, the stalled processing of student loan forgiveness and a rewrite of campus sexual assault policies.

“Betsy DeVos has brought a special mix of incompetence and malevolence to Washington — and that’s rocket fuel for every committee in a new Congress that will finally provide oversight,” said Seth Frotman, who resigned as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s top student loan official earlier in protest of Trump administration policies likely to be examined by Democrats.

Even in a Republican-controlled Congress, DeVos had a strained relationship at times with some committees. Her main priorities, such as expanding school choice, were largely ignored as lawmakers hashed out government funding bills. Now she will have to answer to House Democrats wielding gavels, several of whom have long worked on education issues and have been among her most vocal critics.

She came to her job expecting Congress to allow her to shift \$20 Billion from Title I to Vouchers. That never happened. Her only funding victory was an increase in funding for

charter schools, which now get \$450 million, which they certainly don't need, since they are the plaything of the billionaires.

Many committees are waiting to interview her, including the House Education Committee, chaired by Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia; the Appropriations subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut; and the Financial Services Committee, chaired by Rep. Maxine Waters of California.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 25, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Betsy DeVos](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Civil Rights](#), [Democrats](#), [Education Reform](#), [For-Profit](#), [Fraud](#), [Higher Education](#), [Students](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lDx>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



A Washington Post Discussion about Education

by [dianeravitch](#)

I will be in Washington, D.C., on Thursday for a “discussion” about education. I put the scare quotes around discussion because the schedule is jam-packed, and there won't be enough time for any in-depth discussion of anything. But hope springs eternal.

A few things on the program of interest.

What will Rahm Emanuel say about Chicago? Will he boast about the historic day in 2013 when he closed 50 public schools in a single day, displacing thousands of African-American children?

What will Arne Duncan tell us about how federal policy can reform the schools, after seven years of trying?

I understand this two-hour event will be live-streamed and available online.

WASHINGTON POST LIVE

Education in America

November 29, 2018
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Washington Post Live Center

4:00 p.m.
Opening Remarks

Kris Coratti,
Vice President
of Communications and Events, The Washington Post

4:05 p.m.
Educating in America's Urban Cores: A View from Chicago
A case-study of the opportunities and challenges facing the city of Chicago's public school system -- from funding to demographics to violence in schools.

Rahm Emanuel,
Mayor, Chicago
@ChicagosMayor

Janice K. Jackson, EdD,
CEO, Chicago Public Schools @janicejackson

Moderated by
Jonathan Capehart,
Opinion Writer,
The Washington Post @CapehartJ

4:30 p.m.
The View from the
Ground: Tackling the Challenges of K-12 Schools
Educators and prominent
activists on the front lines of America's K-12 classrooms offer perspectives on the social, academic, safety and resource challenges facing students and teachers, including the aftermath of this year's nationwide teacher strikes. Speakers will also discuss how access to technology affects student learning.

Lori Alhadeff,
Member, School
Board of Broward County, Florida @lorialhadeff

Geoffrey Canada,
President, Harlem
Children's Zone

Mandy Manning,
2018 National Teacher of the Year, Joel E. Ferris High School, Spokane, Washington
@MandyRheaWrites

Randi Weingarten,
President, American

Federation of Teachers @rweingarten

Moderated by
Nick Anderson,
National Education
Policy Reporter, The Washington Post @wpnick

4:55 p.m.

The Case for Social and Emotional Learning

The majority of students and young adults report that their schools are not excelling at developing their social and emotional learning (SEL) skills. This session will highlight the importance of SEL, direct from the viewpoints of today's youth.

John Bridgeland,
Founder and CEO, Civic Enterprises

Interviewed
by Victoria Dinges,
Senior Vice President, Allstate Insurance Company

Content
by Allstate Insurance Company

5:10 p.m.

Education 360:

Defining the Debates

National education leaders debate the most pressing issues facing the U.S. education system, including school choice, standardized testing and federal, state and local funding for public schools. These experts will also discuss how well K-12 institutions are preparing students for higher education and the jobs of the future.

Bridget Terry Long,
PhD, Dean, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University @bterrylong

Robert Pondiscio,
Senior Fellow and
Vice President for External Affairs, Thomas B. Fordham Institute @rpondiscio

Diane Ravitch, PhD,
Professor, New
York University and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education (1991-1993)
@DianeRavitch

Moderated by
Valerie Strauss,
Education Reporter,
The Washington Post
@valeriestrauss

5:35 p.m.

The National Landscape:

Evaluating Federal and State Education Reform Efforts

Where do Washington and

the states go from here on education reform? Former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and former Michigan Gov. John Engler discuss the role of the federal and state governments in crafting education policy and look ahead to what's next on the agenda for the nation.

Arne Duncan,

Managing Partner, Emerson Collective and Former U.S. Secretary of Education (2009-2015) @arneduncan

John Engler,

President,

Michigan State

University and Former Republican Governor of Michigan (1991-2003) @MSUPresEngler

Moderated by

Christine Emba,

Opinion Columnist

and Editor, The Washington Post @ChristineEmba

[dianeravitch](#) | November 25, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Chicago](#), [Common Core](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Duncan, Arne](#), [Education Industry](#), [Emanuel, Rahm](#), [Every Student Succeeds Act](#), [NCLB \(No Child Left Behind\)](#), [Privatization](#), [Race to the Top](#), [Testing](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-le6>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Peter Goodman: Is the Ed Reform "Movement" Moving into the Dustbin of History?

by [dianeravitch](#)

Peter Goodman, who blogs as "Ed in the Apple," usually writes knowledgeably about education politics in New York City and State.

[In this interesting post](#), he asks the Question of the Day/Hour/Month/Year: Is Ed Reform dying?

Reformers are turning against testing; parents are catching on to the Charter School Hustle.

What next? Can Reformers save a dying brand?

[dianeravitch](#) | November 25, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Privatization](#), [Testing](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ldi>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Peter Greene to Mike Petrilli: A Not So Fond Farewell to "Reform"

by [dianeravitch](#)

Mike Petrilli, president of the Thomas B. Fordham think tank in D.C., penned a piece suggesting that Ed Reform was over, that it had reached a stalemate with its enemies, but that whatever it had done was here to stay. He called it "The End of Education Policy," a very cheering thought. Now it's time to zero in on practice, he wrote. I was happy to see an admission that Ed Reform had run out of gas, but I had no idea how he imagined that he or any of the other reformers would have a role in improving "practice," unless he meant doubling down on the Common Core.

Peter Greene made [sense of all this, as he always does](#).

He begins:

From time to time Mike Petrilli (Fordham Institute) grabs himself a big declaration and goes to town. Last week, the declaration was "We have reached the end of education policy."

He frames this up with references to Francis Fukuyama's book about the end of history,

and I don't know that he really ever sticks the landing on creating parallels between Fukuyama's idea (which he acknowledges turned out to be wrong) and his thoughts about ed policy, but it establishes an idea about the scale he's shooting for-- something more sweeping and grandiose than if he'd compared ed policy to video game arcades or no-strings-attached sex.

His thesis?

We are now at the End of Education Policy, in the same way that we were at the End of History back in 1989. Our own Cold War pitted reformers against traditional education groups; we have fought each other to a draw, and reached something approaching homeostasis. Resistance to education reform has not collapsed like the Soviet Union did. Far from it. But there have been major changes that are now institutionalized and won't be easily undone, at least for the next decade.

Okay. Well, first I'd argue that he has it backwards. It was reformers who championed centralized top-down planning and the erasure of local governance, often accomplished with raw power and blunt force, so if somebody has to be the Soviet Union in this analogy, I think they fit the bill.

He ticks off the gains of the reformist movement. Charters are now fact of the landscape in many cities. Tax credit scholarships, a form of sideways voucher, are also established. He admits that the growth of these programs has slowed; he does not admit that these reform programs reach a tiny percentage of all US students.

One data point surprised me-- one fifth of all new teachers are coming from alternative certification programs, which is really bad news for the teaching profession and for students. We'll have to talk about this.

Testing, he says, in claiming a dubious victory, is less hated than it used to be, maybe? He makes some specious claims here about the underlying standards being stronger and the tests being more sophisticated and rigorous-- none of that is true. He says that teacher evaluation systems have been "mostly defanged," citing ESSA, but from where most teachers sit, there's still plenty of fang right where it's been. "School accountability systems," he claims, are now less about accountability and more about transparency. No-- test centered accountability continues to serve no useful purpose while warping and damaging educational programs across America.

The era of broad policy initiatives out of DC is over, says Petrilli. Hallelujah, says I. Only policy wonks would think it's a great thing if state and federal bureaucrats crank out new policy initiatives every year. Every one of them eats up time and effort to implement that could be better spent actually educating students. The teaching profession is saturated with initiative fatigue, the exhaustion and cynicism that comes when high-powered educational amateurs stop in every year or two to tell you that they know have a great new way for you to do your job that will totally Fix Everything. One does not have to spend many years in the classroom to weary of the unending waves of bullshit. It would be awesome if those waves actually stopped for a while.

Petrilli's claim is that they have, and that now is a time for tinkering with actual education practices, but his list sucks. "To implement the higher standards with fidelity" No. No no

no no NO no no, and hell no. "With fidelity" is reform talk for "by squashing every ounce of individual initiative, thought, and professional judgment out of classroom teachers. "With fidelity" means "subordinating the professional judgment of trained educators to the unproven amateur-hour baloney of the Common Core writers." "Improve teacher preparation and development" is a great goal, except that I don't think that means "train teachers to do better test prep and go through their days with fidelity." Then we have "To strengthen charter school oversight and quality," which seems like a great idea, though "strengthen" assumes that there is anything there to strengthen in the first place, which in some states is simply not so (looking at you, train wreck Florida). Charters need to be reigned in-- way in-- and if that means that many operators will simply leave the charter school business, well, I can live with that. Work on the whole Career and Technical Education thing, a goal that I have a hard time getting excited about because in my corner of the world, we've been doing it well for fifty years. If you think CTE is a brand new thing, you are too ill-informed to be allowed anywhere near CTE policy.

That's where he starts.

Now who will take the lead in changing practice, Greene asks. Not Petrilli. Not Bill Gates. Not Zuckerberg.

Greene writes:

It's all on you.

That's okay. As Jose Luis Vilson often says, we got this. Even if nobody is going to help us get it, we will still get it, because we have to, and because that's why, mostly, we signed up for the gig.

Practice is where the action has always been. Education reformsters have tried to create a title of education reformers for themselves, but the real education reform, the real growth and change and experimentation and analysis of how to make things work better-- that work has been going on every single day (including summers, thank you) since public schools opened their doors. Whether bureaucrats and legislators and thinky tank wonks or rich guys with too much time on their hands have been cranking out giant plans or just twiddling idly while waiting for their next brainstorm, teachers have been honing and perfecting their practice, growing and rising and advancing every single day of their career, doing everything they can think of to insure that this year's students get a better shot than last year's. Just one more reason that the whole "schools haven't changed in 100 years" is both insulting and ignorant.

So thinky tanks and reformists and wealthy dilettantes and government bureaucrats can continue fiddling and analyzing their fiddlings as they search for the next great Big New Thing in policy. In the meantime, teachers have work to do.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 25, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Common Core](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Privatization](#), [Teachers and Teaching](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ldm>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Carol Burris: Indiana's Scandalous Voucher Program

by [dianeravitch](#)

Carol Burris describes [in this post how](#) Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels and Governor Mike Pence created the most expansive voucher program in the nation.

"Last year, the taxpayers of Indiana paid out \$146.1 million to voucher schools, with most of it going to families who would have sent their children to private school anyway."

The program was launched by Governor Daniels in 2011.

Indiana's 2011 voucher program began literally with a kiss when then Gov. Mitch Daniels picked up the bill and brought it to his lips. Daniels and his allies did more than just begin the nation's largest voucher program. As the bill made its way through the statehouse, a \$1,000 tax deduction for homeschoolers and private school families was also added. This allowed private school parents and homeschoolers to deduct costs above tuition, such as school supplies.

Daniels also expanded the already existing Scholarship Tax Credit Program that gives tax credits to companies and individuals who make donations to "scholarship" organizations that, in turn, provide vouchers. Those taking the credit get 50 percent of what they donate back.

The passage of the voucher bills and tax write-offs were hailed then by Betsy DeVos, then a school choice advocate and now U.S. education secretary, who said, "We thank Governor Daniels and the Indiana Legislature for working so hard to make widespread school choice a reality across the state."

Since 2011, the political action committees (PACs) of the American Federation for Children, which she co-founded, have contributed \$1,040,540 to Republican pro-voucher Hoosiers and PACs. DeVos family members, including Betsy and her husband Dick, have personally contributed \$1,525,000 to Indiana candidates or PACs since the voucher law was put in place. Their prior contributions (1998 to 2010) in that state totaled only \$62,000.

The passage of the voucher bill was also praised by Robert Enlow, president and chief executive officer of the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, which changed its name in 2016 to EdChoice. The chairman of the EdChoice board is the CEO of Overstock.com., Patrick M. Byrne. A Utah resident, Byrne contributed \$465,000 to Indiana candidates and PACs beginning with Mitch Daniels's campaign. He and his family financed over \$4 million of the \$5 million raised by Families for Choice, a PAC formed to support vouchers in a 2007 Utah referendum. Upon realizing that vouchers were rejected by 62 percent of voters, Byrne referred to the referendum as a "statewide IQ test that Utah voters failed..."

Pence, as governor, did everything he could to expand school choice. He grew the number of charter schools by creating a \$50 million, low-interest loan program for technology and transportation as well as a \$500 per student charter increase, which the legislature had scaled back from his original \$1,500 ask.

The greatest growth, however, was in the state's voucher program. Pence, who describes his religious beliefs as evangelical, removed the cap on the number of students who could qualify for a voucher to a private school, increased the limits on qualifying family income, and removed Daniel's stipulation that the student had to try the public school first.

No longer was money being saved as a small number of students transferred from public to private schools. Now middle-income families already using private schools were having their tuition paid for, at least partially, by the state.

Nearly all of the 300-plus Indiana private schools that receive vouchers are religious schools. Although they may not discriminate in admissions based race, color, national origin or disability, they can require attendance in a designated church, mosque or synagogue and they may select students based on other factors such as test scores, discipline records and the lifestyle of their parents...

Voucher schools with grades of 'D' or 'F' for two years in a row are prohibited from taking on new voucher students until they raise performance. This law cost private schools with poor test scores considerable funding. To keep the voucher money flowing, last summer the legislature passed a new law that allows voucher schools to appeal to the State Board of Education, whose members are appointed by the governor. As soon as the law was passed, four religious schools applied for a waiver and all four were approved to take on new voucher students despite their failing grades.

The Indiana voucher program has also been an escape hatch for failing charter schools. The Padua Academy, a charter school in Indianapolis, had two years of consecutive failing ratings. Instead of shutting down, Padua became St. Anthony's Catholic School. The same principal who led the failing charter stayed on as the leader of the replacement voucher school, which received \$1.2 million in tax dollars.

Failing charters flipping to voucher schools is not limited to Padua. Imagine Schools is the largest charter management corporation in the United States. Imagine was founded and operated by Dennis Bakke, the former CEO of an energy company, AES, which merged with the Indianapolis Power and Light Company (IPALCO) in 2001. That merger would quickly become a disaster for IPALCO stockholders and workers. Stock price plummeted and many lost their jobs and their retirement savings.

When Bakke was ousted from AES in 2002 after its stock crashed, he moved into the charter management business. Imagine quickly expanded and became notorious for the real estate deals of its subsidiary company, SchoolHouse Finance. SchoolHouse Finance buys properties, often selling them for twice or three times the purchase to a buyer, and then leases them back from the buyer in order to then lease them to Imagine charter schools at exorbitant rates. Investigations of Imagine Charters in Ohio and Florida found charters paying leases that amounted, in some cases, to half of the schools' revenue from tax dollars. Imagine was fined \$1 million by Missouri for self-dealing.

We are reminded yet again that the allocation of public money without strict accountability is an invitation to commit fraud and self-dealing.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 25, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Indiana](#), [Pence](#), [Privatization](#), [School Choice](#), [Vouchers](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lcD>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Mississippi Senator Who Made “Public Hanging” Remark Attended Segregation Academy

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Jackson Free-Press (Mississippi) [reported that Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith attended an all-white segregation academy in her high school years.](#)

The story was [picked up by Huffington Post.](#)

It's important to remember that segregation academies were created as the first statewide examples of school choice. Their purpose was to allow white students to avoid being forced by federal courts to go to school with black students after the Brown vs, Board of Education decision in 1954.

Senator Hyde-Smith's alma mater, Lawrence County Academy, “was established in 1970, one year after the U.S. Supreme Court ordered Mississippi to desegregate its schools. For 15 years after desegregation became law of the land, Mississippi dragged its feet on

integrating black and white students.”

It was part of the school choice movement across the South whose purpose was to avoid and defeat desegregation.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 24, 2018 at 8:26 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Mississippi](#), [Racism](#), [Segregation](#), [Racial Isolation and Integration](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lIdZ>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Who Paid the Acting Attorney General's Salary?

by [dianeravitch](#)

This appeared today in the Washington Post?

We don't know who was paying Matthew Whitaker, and that's a problem

By Ray Madoff

Ray Madoff is a law professor at Boston College and the director of the Boston College Law School Forum on Philanthropy and the Public Good.

Someone was paying acting attorney general Matthew G. Whitaker, and we don't know who it was.

As The Post reported earlier this week, Whitaker — who was chosen in 2014 to lead a mysterious charity with undisclosed funders — received more than \$1.2 million over the course of three years before he joined the Justice Department.

We don't know who funded this charity, called the Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust, or why they chose to do it. But what we do know is that the way it reportedly operated under Whitaker's leadership raises questions as to whether the organization acted as a conservative political campaign operation. We also know that those who funded the organization were able to do so entirely anonymously while writing off their donations on their taxes, all thanks to an increasingly popular charitable vehicle called the

donor-advised fund.

This should not be allowed.

By design, charities are not supposed to be mysterious. Because the federal government heavily subsidizes these organizations through generous tax benefits to both donors and the organizations, they are subject to broad disclosure requirements to ensure that they are fulfilling a recognized charitable purpose. These include listing their largest donors on their annual tax returns.

Different charities are subject to differing levels of disclosure depending on what type they are. Public charities — for instance, the Red Cross — are required to disclose their largest donors on their tax returns, but this information is only made available to the Internal Revenue Service and to states that request it. But private foundations — such as the Gates Foundation or any of the smaller foundations that wealthy individuals and families commonly create — are required to also make this information available to the public.

Donor-advised funds undermine these rules by obscuring the true source of funds. They operate like charitable checking accounts. Donors transfer cash or property to a donor-advised fund sponsoring organization and receive an immediate charitable deduction for their donation. Donors then “advise” the sponsoring organization to make a payment from their accounts to their chosen charities. Because a donation received from a donor-advised fund is reported as a donation from the sponsoring organization, and not from the individual who directed it, regulators and the public are left in the dark as to the true funders of charitable organizations.

This is the case in Whitaker’s organization. DonorsTrust, a supporter of conservative causes and a donor-advised fund sponsoring organization, reportedly channeled \$600,000 to Whitaker’s charity. DonorsTrust explicitly touts on its website its ability to provide anonymity to its donors. As a result, neither the public nor regulators know who was behind Whitaker’s paycheck.

Just this year, two federal appellate courts ruled in favor of state regulators requiring charities to disclose the identities of their large donors. While some donors might not like the idea of having their identities revealed, these courts recognized that this information is important for regulators to have so they can ensure charities are operating for public, and not private, purposes.

Because its funding comes from a donor-advised fund, Whitaker’s organization was able to also avoid public disclosure of its large donors. If it were categorized as a private foundation (instead of a public charity), it would have been required to report to the public — not just to regulators — the names of any donor who contributed more than \$5,000.

This is not what Congress intended in 1969, when it separated private foundations from public charities. It did so because lawmakers believed that charitable organizations funded by a small number of donors were more susceptible to engaging in self-dealing than organizations that received broad public support. The problem is that in defining what constitutes “public support,” Congress included not just significant funding from small donors, but also contributions from the government and other public charities. Since contributions made through a donor-advised fund are technically donations from

the fund's sponsoring organization (which itself is a public charity), a small number of donors can easily create a new public charity that avoids the public disclosure that would otherwise come with private foundation status.

Whitaker's organization is particularly concerning because of the prohibition against charitable organizations engaging in political activities. The Post reports that Whitaker, while serving as executive director of his charity, focused most of his media comments against Hillary Clinton during the 2016 campaign. His organization also targeted Democrats with ethics complaints. The identity of its funders could be relevant in evaluating the political nature of these activities. For example, if the funding had come from Donald Trump or another candidate, it could indicate that the true purpose of the organization was political in nature and that it should not qualify as a charity at all.

It is time for Congress to stop allowing donor-advised funds to make a mockery of our charity oversight rules. If purportedly charitable organizations want to benefit from generous tax breaks, we deserve to know who's really funding them.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 24, 2018 at 1:01 pm | Categories: [Dark Money](#), [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ldC>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Kentucky: Governor Calls for “Breaking the Back” of the Teachers’ Union

by [dianeravitch](#)

Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin is one of the most revolting figures in the Republican Party. He is a former hedge fund manager and current Tea Party shill.

He calls for “[breaking the back](#)” of the teachers union. He says the union is “suffocating” teachers and students.

Kentucky is a right to work state. Anyone who belongs to the Kentucky Education Association does so voluntarily.

How would he feel if someone suggested “breaking Bevin’s back”?

He really is a vile person.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 24, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#), [Kentucky](#), [Teachers Union](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ld9>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Steven Singer to Congress: Hire a Real Teacher as Staff, Not TFA (Link Added!)

by [dianeravitch](#)

Steven Singer [has written an urgent message to members of Congress:](#)

Stop hiring TFA as your education staff. Hire a real teacher.

TFA staff comes free to members of Congress, because a California tech billionaire pays for them.

It is a Trojan horse gift. They join your staff to advocate for TFA and its interests.

Hire a career educator to advise you.

His advice rings true for me personally. In 2010, I had a meeting with Iowa Senator Tom Hardin, who was chair of the Committee in charge of education. Richard Rothstein and I told him that NCLB was a disaster. He was shocked to hear this. His staff assured him that it was a great success. His staff was TFA.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 24, 2018 at 11:30 am | Categories: [Supporting public schools](#), [Teach for America](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lde>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Jeff Bryant: Voters Reject the Rightwing Push for School Privatization

by [dianeravitch](#)

Jeff Bryant [reviews the victories for public education in the last elections.](#)

The big victories were the overwhelming defeat of voucher legislation in Arizona and the Tony Thurmond's election over the charter lobby's candidate Marshall Tuck in the California race for state school superintendent, despite Tuck's more than 2-1 funding advantage.

And there were many more victories, especially in governors' races.

In gubernatorial races across the Midwest, Democrats ran and won with strong oppositional messages against school privatization.

In Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer won a governor's seat formerly occupied by Rick Snyder after campaigning to "end the [Betsy] DeVos agenda in Michigan," close for-profit charter schools in the state, and propose additional oversights for charters.

In Minnesota, Democratic challenger for an open governor's seat Tim Walz, a former public high school geography teacher and football coach, pledged to block any proposed voucher programs. He won decisively.

In Illinois, Democratic challenger J.B. Pritzker defeated incumbent Republican Governor Bruce Rauner, while pledging to end the state's education tax credit voucher program, which already diverts public tax dollars to pay for private school tuition for 5,600 students....

In what is perhaps the most startling of charter school turnarounds, midterm elections in New York took down a longstanding coalition of Republicans and Democrats in the state Senate who colluded with charter advocate Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo to expand these schools and keep them relatively regulation-free.

As New York City public school art teacher and citizen journalist Jake Jacobs reports for the Progressive, a faction of eight Democratic state senators calling themselves the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) had for years shared power and donors with

Senate Republicans to work with Governor Cuomo in maintaining a “favored status” for charter schools in the state.

In September primaries, six grassroots-backed Democratic candidates ousted IDC members, and then, in turn, handily beat their Republican opponents in November. Despite being vastly outspent by the Republicans, the insurgent Democrats pressed their cases to stop charter schools from taking over space in public school buildings and to block attempts to lift the cap on the numbers of charters that can operate in the state. Most supported a moratorium on new charter schools proposed by the NAACP.

Because of victories by these insurgent Democrats, who will insist on more scrutiny of charter schools, Jacobs foresees “a new landscape” in the state legislature “where evidence and research matter more than Albany’s rampant ‘pay-for-play’ arrangements” that have given charters the upper hand.

Similarly, in red states where teacher rebellions have begun to turn the tables on the school privatization industry, public school advocates are seeing a transformed political landscape where resistance is not only possible but winnable.

After midterm elections in Arizona, “we will have the most balanced state legislature since the 1980s,” says Beth Lewis, “with roughly half of the legislators having declared full support for fully funded public schools.”

[dianeravitch](#) | November 24, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Arizona](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Michigan](#), [New York](#), [Privatization](#), [Resistance](#)
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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Thrive Charter Schools in San Diego: Where the Founders Thrive, But Not Students

by [dianeravitch](#)

Tom Ultican has written several articles about the Destroy Public Education Movement; this installment examines a failing charter chain in San Diego that continues to rake in big

bucks.

The Thrive charter chain, he says, is a [masterpiece of marketing, but a failure at education.](#)

When the chain was launched, the San Diego Unified School District staff said it was not ready to open; the founders appealed and were rejected by the staff of the County Board of Education. The founders appealed to the State Board of Education, where its defective application was rubberstamped by Governor Jerry Brown's pro-Charter State Board.

Ultican says that charter schools are supposed to perform at least as well as similar public schools or show improvement over time.

Thrive charter schools did not meet either benchmark. But that did not deter funders or founders.

They were shameless and kept growing their failing charter chain. And the money kept rolling in, to expand the failure to more children.

"Once she obtained the charter authorization from the SBE, money came. The known list of 2014 donations: Buzz Woolley's Girard Foundation granted her \$108,000; Gate's Educause sent \$254,500; Charter School Growth Fund kicked in \$175,000 and the Broad Foundation delivered \$150,000 for a total of \$688,000. The next year, Broad gave another \$50,000 and the New Schools Venture Fund pitched in \$100,000. There is another \$144,000 promised from Educause.

"Destroy public education (DPE) careers pay well. Tax records reveal that Nicole's start up "non-profit" has been lucrative. Her pay: year one \$122,301; year two \$133,747 and year three \$142,541. Her husband holds a senior management position at the CCSA which means DPE money flows his way as well."

In 2017, the charter chain added another school, this one paid for by taxpayers, but with this addendum. The property belongs not to taxpayer who paid for it, but TO THE CHARTER OWNERS! How cool is that!

You will not be surprised to learn that the pro-privatization website "The 74," is wild about Thrive. Nor will you be surprised to discover that Thrive loves putting kids on computers and that one of its cheerleaders is Tom Vanderbilt Ark, a leading salesman for edtech.

Ultican reminds us that the Thrive charter chain calls itself "public schools," but it is a private contractor that runs lucrative but failing schools. All that keeps them going is this formula:

"Bad schools like TPS survive because they are good at marketing; have deep pocketed benefactors and political allies."

Thrive is not thriving.

Ultican says Thrive is evidence that California needs a moratorium on charter schools until lawmakers systematically root out fraud, self-dealing, waste, and abuse. That'll be the day.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 24, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Failure](#), [For-Profit](#), [Privatization](#), [San Diego](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbh>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



China Moving Ahead with “Social Credit” Rating System

by [dianeravitch](#)

Bloomberg News reports on China’s obliteration of privacy:

China’s plan to judge each of its 1.3 billion people based on their social behavior is moving a step closer to reality, with Beijing set to adopt a lifelong points program by 2021 that assigns personalized ratings for each resident.

The capital city will pool data from several departments to reward and punish some 22 million citizens based on their actions and reputations by the end of 2020, according to a plan posted on the Beijing municipal government’s website on Monday. Those with better so-called social credit will get “green channel” benefits while those who violate laws will find life more difficult.

The Beijing project will improve blacklist systems so that those deemed untrustworthy will be “unable to move even a single step,” according to the government’s plan. Xinhua reported on the proposal Tuesday, while the report posted on the municipal government’s website is dated July 18.

China has long experimented with systems that grade its citizens, rewarding good behavior with streamlined services while punishing bad actions with restrictions and penalties. Critics say such moves are fraught with risks and could lead to systems that reduce humans to little more than a report card.

Beijing’s efforts represent the most ambitious yet among more than a dozen cities that are

moving ahead with similar programs.

Hangzhou rolled out its personal credit system earlier this year, rewarding “pro-social behaviors” such as volunteer work and blood donations while punishing those who violate traffic laws and charge under-the-table fees. By the end of May, people with bad credit in China have been blocked from booking more than 11 million flights and 4 million high-speed train trips, according to the National Development and Reform Commission.

According to the Beijing government’s plan, different agencies will link databases to get a more detailed picture of every resident’s interactions across a swathe of services. The proposal calls for agencies including tourism bodies, business regulators and transit authorities to work together.

The tracking of individual behavior in China has become easier as economic life moves online, with apps such as Tencent’s WeChat and Ant Financial’s Alipay a central node for making payments, getting loans and organizing transport. Accounts are generally linked to mobile phone numbers, which in turn require government IDs.

The final version of China’s national social credit system remains uncertain. But as rules forcing social networks and internet providers to remove anonymity get increasingly enforced and facial recognition systems become more popular with policing bodies, authorities are likely to find everyone from internet dissenters to train-fare skippers easier to catch -- and punish -- than ever before.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 23, 2018 at 2:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ld7>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Larry Lee: My Suggestion for a Christmas Gift That Matters

by [dianeravitch](#)

Larry Lee, a member of the Montgomery, Alabama, School Board and a good friend, [has a valuable suggestion for your Christmas shopping list.](#)

Make a difference.

Teachers in states like Alabama and Georgia are asking for help.

He gives the link where you can help them.

Of course, their legislators should be funding their schools.

But they aren't.

Let's do what we can.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 23, 2018 at 1:00 pm | Categories: [Alabama](#), [Mississippi](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lcV>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Opioid Crisis: Sackler Family Members Are Targets of Mass Litigation and Criminal Investigations

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Sacklers of Connecticut are one of the richest families in America. Forbes recently put their collective wealth at \$14 billion. That money was created by Purdue Pharma, which created and marketed OxyContin. That drug has been responsible for thousands and thousands of deaths. The Sackler Family name is emblazoned on major museums and universities. Jonathan Sackler is a major funder ipof the Charter School Movement. He founded ConnCAN and 50CAN. His daughter Madeline Sackler made a movie about the miraculous Eva Moskowitz.

But now legal authorities are targeting the Sacklers for their role in the opioid crisis.

The [Guardian has the story here](#).

Members of the multibillionaire philanthropic Sackler family that owns the maker of prescription painkiller OxyContin are facing mass litigation and likely criminal investigation over the opioids crisis still ravaging America.

Some of the Sacklers wholly own Connecticut-based Purdue Pharma, the company that created and sells the legal narcotic OxyContin, a drug at the center of the opioid epidemic that now kills almost 200 people a day across the US.

Suffolk county on Long Island, New York, recently sued several family members personally over the overdose deaths and painkiller addiction blighting local communities. Now lawyers warn that action will be a catalyst for hundreds of other US cities, counties and states to follow suit.

At the same time, prosecutors in Connecticut and New York are understood to be considering criminal fraud and racketeering charges against leading family members over the way OxyContin has allegedly been dangerously overprescribed and deceptively marketed to doctors and the public over the years, legal sources told the Guardian last week.

"This is essentially a crime family ... drug dealers in nice suits and dresses," said Paul Hanly, a New York city lawyer who represents Suffolk county and is also a lead attorney in a huge civil action playing out in federal court in Cleveland, Ohio, involving opioid manufacturers and distributors.

"[Dopesick](#)" by Beth Macy tells the story of the opioid epidemic, the company that created it, and the toll it has taken on America. At least 200,000 people have died.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 23, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ld4>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Arizona: Online Charter Operator Pays Himself Another \$1.3 Million, Gives Teachers a 1% Raise

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Primavera online charter school in Arizona [is rewarding himself handsomely with taxpayers' money](#). Will Governor Doug Ducey or the legislature care or will regulate this

self-dealing?

The CEO of Primavera, whose multimillion-dollar payments to himself spurred calls for more oversight of Arizona charter schools, received another \$1.3 million from the online charter this past school year, records show.

Damian Creamer, the sole owner of the for-profit Primavera, also paid \$27.6 million from the school's state education funding to another company he owns, Strongmind. The payment was for curriculum, enrollment, technical support and other services.

Meanwhile, the school, which reported it had the third-worst dropout rate in Arizona, gave its 95 teachers a 1 percent pay raise last school year.

Primavera disclosed its spending for the period from July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018, in an independent audit required by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools.

Creamer did not respond to requests for comment.

The audits provide a snapshot of how lightly regulated charter operators use tax dollars. Charter schools are not subject to the same financial or governance oversight as traditional district public schools, and The Republic has found that some operators, like Creamer, have become charter school millionaires by operating the public schools.

After The Republic reported this year that Creamer had paid himself \$8.8 million despite operating a school with the state's third-highest dropout rate, Attorney General Mark Brnovich called for the law to be changed to allow his office to investigate charter schools more broadly.

Creamer has said the \$8.8 million payment was for tax purposes but has not provided documents to support that claim.

"When you see public money go to line the pockets of someone who is supposed to help students become a millionaire, I can't believe it's not a crime," Brnovich said at the time.

Since then, a Republican state senator and Gov. Doug Ducey have said they, too, will push to overhaul Arizona's charter-school laws to require more transparency and compliance with the same procurement and conflict-of-interest laws that govern district schools.

Brnovich has criticized Creamer because the online charter school owner uses education funds to buy services from related businesses he owns or controls. A related-party transaction or self-dealing is illegal for school districts but common among Arizona charter schools.

Basis Charter Schools Inc., for example, pays about \$10 million as an annual, no-bid management fee to a company controlled by its founders. American Leadership Academy founder Glenn Way made at least \$18.4 million building schools for ALA through no-bid contracts. And state lawmaker Eddie Farnsworth is poised to make at least \$11 million by selling his Benjamin Franklin schools to a non-profit company he created.

Brnovich's office recently obtained a fraud conviction against Daniel K. Hughes, president and CEO of Discovery Creemos Academy in Goodyear, after he abruptly shuttered his

charter school in January and defrauding taxpayers of at least \$2.5 million by inflating the school's enrollment.

Primavera still amassing cash

Primavera has accumulated so much money that it has set aside \$8.5 million for Creamer in stockholder's equity, records show. Creamer can take the money anytime.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 23, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Arizona](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [For-Profit](#), [Privatization](#), [Virtual Charter Schools](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lc7>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Jake Jacobs: Voters in New York Oust Charter Supporters from State Senate

by [dianeravitch](#)

Jake Jacobs [describes the dramatic ouster of fake Democrats from the State Senate](#) and a changed landscape in New York.

Until the last election, Governor Andrew Cuomo worked closely with an odd coalition of Republicans and fake Democrats in the State Senate to give charter schools whatever they wanted. Cuomo collected millions of dollars from hedge fund managers and Wall Street who love charter schools.

The so-called Independent Democratic Conference caucused with Republicans to assure Republican Control of the State Senate.

The new State Senators are anti-charter and anti-standardized testing.

Perhaps just as significant as the Ocasio-Cortez “earthquake” was the September 13th aftershock, where six other insurgent, grassroots-backed New York candidates won primaries in State Senate races against members of the former Independent Democratic Conference (IDC), a controversial group of eight breakaway lawmakers who shared power, perks—and donors—with senate Republicans for over seven years.

All six “No IDC” challengers handily beat their Republican opponents in the general election November 6, including Alessandra Biaggi, a former legal counsel in the Governor Andrew Cuomo administration who ran on the promise to “stop siphoning money to privately run charter schools” and a call to prevent charters from expanding in New York.

Despite being outspent, Biaggi defeated Jeff Klein, the ringleader of the IDC, who funneled upwards of \$700,000 in charter industry PAC money to IDC members. Working with Republicans, Klein repeatedly blocked funding for needy public schools while dramatically increasing per-pupil spending for charters. A thirteen year incumbent, Klein lost 54-46 percent, out-hustled by Biaggi who attended public schools in Pelham before hitting the Ivy league, and at thirty-two years old still owes over \$180,000 in student debt.

Defeating another IDC member awash in charter PAC money was progressive Robert Jackson, a longtime New York City Councilman who was an original lead plaintiff in the original 1993 Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit seeking increased funding for impoverished schools.

A fierce critic of school privatization, Jackson is eager to take on “groups such as StudentsFirst who push a non-transparent, corporate agenda that makes money off of children’s backs, strips schools and districts of resources, and undermines public education,” his chief of staff Johanna Garcia tells me in an email. In 2011, Jackson sued the city to stop charter school co-locations, or the takeover of space in public school buildings. He has also been a staunch supporter of the opt-out movement, championing legislation in the New York City Council to reduce standardized testing.

Likely to have a profound impact in Albany, Senator-elect Jackson’s position on standardized testing is resolute: “The sooner and farther away we move from standardized testing, the quicker we can focus on supporting learning environments that are responsive and include teaching critical thinking skills, small class sizes, arts and science programs, recess, and funding for resources, social services and enrichment opportunities.”

In Queens, another progressive Democrat to unseat a pro-charter IDC member is Jessica Ramos, a former aide to Mayor Bill de Blasio with a background as a labor organizer and immigration activist. Also a public school product, Ramos is a mom of two who “cannot wait to opt-out” when her oldest son enters third grade next year. Seeing the stress and waste of the testing regime, she “absolutely” backs legislation to eliminate state testing mandates.

Ramos opposes diverting funding from public schools to charters who she sees pushing out high need students in order to preserve their “brand.” Like Robert Jackson, Ramos supports the NAACP moratorium on new charter schools as well as the longtime fight for equitable public school funding.

Also in Queens, former New York City Comptroller John Liu defeated former IDC state senator Tony Avella, who in 2009, claimed to be adamantly anti-charter. But in 2014, Avella joined the IDC and voted for budgets that increased funding for charter co-locations and school choice. Senator-elect Liu wants to prevent the growth of charters and make them pay rent to the city, while also reducing the emphasis on standardized testing.

Cuomo won't be able to squash progressive legislation anymore. There's a new posse in Albany.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 23, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Cuomo](#), [Andrew](#), [Democrats](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [New York](#), [Privatization](#), [Standardized Testing](#)
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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Michael Hynes and William Doyle: What American Schools Can Learn from Finland

by [dianeravitch](#)

Michael Hynes, the progressive superintendent of the Patchogue-Medford school district on Long Island in New York, and William Doyle, an author who has lived in Finland, recently returned from a trip to that nation's schools and [wrote this article](#).

They offer a twelve-step program for American schools, based on what they learned in Finland.

Here are three of the steps they recommend. To learn about the other nine, open the link.

They write:

We were stunned by what we observed: A society that selects and respects teachers like elite professionals; a world-class network of vocational and technical schools; a school system that reveres and protects childhood and encourages children to experience joy in learning — where teachers shower children with warmth and attention; where children are given numerous free-play breaks; where special-education students are supported; and where children thrive.

In Finland, we heard none of the clichés common in U.S. education reform circles, like “rigor,” “standards-based accountability,” “data-driven instruction,” “teacher evaluation through value-added measurement” or getting children “college- and career-ready”

starting in kindergarten.

Instead, Finnish educators and officials constantly stressed to us their missions of helping every child reach his or her full potential and supporting all children's well-being. "School should be a child's favorite place," said Heikki Happonen, an education professor at the University of Eastern Finland and an authority on creating warm, child-centered learning environments. His colleague Janne Pietarinen explained, "Well-being and learning are intertwined. You can't have one without the other."

In short, we glimpsed an inspiring vision of an alternative future for American education, a future that we believe that all of our children deserve right now.

How can the United States improve its schools? We can start by piloting and implementing these 12 global education best practices, many of which are working extremely well for Finland:

1) *Emphasize well-being. Make child and teacher well-being a top priority in all schools, as engines of learning and system efficiency.*

2) *Upgrade testing and other assessments. Explaining why he doesn't need standardized tests to evaluate his students, one Finnish teacher said: "I am assessing my students every second." Stop the standardized testing of children in grades 3-8, and "opt-up" to higher-quality assessments by classroom teachers. Eliminate the ranking and sorting of children based on standardized testing. Train students in self-assessment, and require only one comprehensive testing period to graduate from high school.*

3) *Invest resources fairly. Fund schools equitably on the basis of need. Provide small class sizes.*

[dianeravitch](#) | November 23, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Class size](#), [Education Reform](#), [Innovation](#), [International](#), [Play](#), [Testing](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbQ>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**





I Am Thankful for Those Who Defend an Independent Judiciary

by [dianeravitch](#)

Yesterday Chief Justice John Roberts [spoke up and defended the political independence](#) of the judiciary against Trump's bullying tactics. He thinks the only judges he can trust are those appointed by Republican presidents or, most especially, by himself. No doubt he calls them "my judges" and counts on their personal loyalty to him.

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. directed a rare and pointed shot at President Trump on Wednesday, defending the federal judiciary in the wake of Trump's criticism of an "Obama judge" who ruled against the administration's attempt to bar migrants who cross the border illegally from seeking asylum.

"We do not have Obama judges or Trump judges, Bush judges or Clinton judges," Roberts said in a statement released by the court's public information office. "What we have is an extraordinary group of dedicated judges doing their level best to do equal right to those appearing before them."

The Thanksgiving eve statement added: "That independent judiciary is something we should all be thankful for."

Supreme Court justices, and the chief in particular, hardly ever issue statements on news events. But it appeared Roberts was eager to counter Trump's criticism when asked to comment by the Associated Press. The statement did not mention the president.

CNN added [information](#) about how Trump has slammed Chief Justice Roberts in the past:

Roberts' comment came in response to an inquiry from The Associated Press. On Tuesday, Trump slammed the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals again, this time after a judge from the Northern District of California — where cases get appealed to the 9th Circuit — issued a temporary restraining order blocking the Trump administration from barring migrants who cross into the US illegally from seeking asylum.

"It's a disgrace when every case gets filed in the 9th Circuit," Trump said as part of a lengthy criticism of the court. "That's not law. Every case in the 9th Circuit we get beaten and then we end up having to go to the Supreme Court like the travel ban and we won. Every case, no matter where it is, they file is practically, for all intents and purposes, they file it in what's called the 9th Circuit. This was an Obama judge. I'll tell you what, it's not going to happen like this anymore."

Roberts, who then-President George W. Bush tapped to lead the Supreme Court, is the highest authority in the federal judiciary, and his remark was a rare direct response to the head of the Executive Branch.

Speaking at the University of Minnesota Law School in October, Roberts emphasized the Supreme Court's independence and differences from the other branches.

"I will not criticize the political branches," Roberts said. "We do that often enough in our

opinions. But what I would like to do, briefly, is emphasize how the judicial branch is — how it must be — very different."

Trump has been a frequent critic of the 9th Circuit, and just a few months into his presidency, he said he was considering breaking up the circuit that covers a slew of Western states and Guam.

Several of his most controversial policies have been held up by judges there, and the temporary block on his attempt to rewrite asylum rules marked the latest such instance.

In addition to his criticism of the 9th Circuit, Trump has previously attacked Roberts as well.

While he was a presidential candidate, Trump in 2016 called Roberts a "nightmare for conservatives" in an interview on ABC. He also said in the interview that "Justice Roberts could've killed Obamacare and should've, based on everything — should've killed it twice," a reference in part to Roberts casting the deciding vote in June 2012 to save President Barack Obama's signature legislative achievement, the Affordable Care Act. Roberts voted again in 2015 in favor of supporting Obamacare.

More concisely, Trump tweeted after Roberts' first vote in favor of Obamacare in 2012, "Congratulations to John Roberts for making Americans hate the Supreme Court because of his BS."

Trump tweeted a rebuke to Justice Roberts, attacking the federal judges of the 9th Circuit as "Obama judges" who thwart his will.

Our leader is a tyrant who would destroy the Constitution if he can.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 22, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Democracy](#), [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lcp>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



I Am Thankful for Freedom of the Press

by [dianeravitch](#)

Over the past three years, we have heard it said repeatedly by a politician named Trump that the free press is the “enemy of the people.” This is outrageous, and my blood runs cold whenever I hear this, especially when it is said by a man who sits in the White House, watching Fox News and tweeting. It is especially chilling to hear assaults on the media coming from a man who is a compulsive liar e.g., [Saudia Arabia is not the most important supplier of our oil supply, Canada is. Canada supplies 40% of our oil imports, Saudia Arabia supplies 9%.](#)

Freedom of the press is an integral element of democracy. The press keeps us informed and holds politicians accountable. Like them or not, agree with them or not, they deserve the support and protection to write, think, speak, and report without fear.

The petty tyrant temporarily in the White House expects adulation. His skin is too thin for the job. Harry S Truman memorably said, “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.” Presidents and public officials get criticized. That’s part of their job.

The phrase “Enemy of the People” [is known best as the title of a play by Henrik Ibsen.](#) The doctor in a small town discovers that the waters of the local spa are contaminated. He wants to tell the truth. He is warned by those in power that telling the truth will ruin the town’s economy. If he knows what is good for him, he will remain silent. By telling the truth, he is dangerous. He is “an enemy of the people.” I read the play in college, along with Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House,” a powerful play about feminism.

The phrase is best known in the 20th century for its usage in the Soviet Union, where Lenin labeled opponents as “enemies of the people.” How curious to see Trump adopting the language of Lenin and Stalin. Any coverage that he does not like he calls “fake news.” He wants his base to disbelieve whatever is reported, unless he tells them it is okay. He wants to be the arbiter of truth and fact. He has the instincts of a dictator.

Trump’s efforts to silence the press is about the most contemptible element of his war against the Constitution and our democracy. When I hear Trump’s mobs chanting “CNN Sucks,” it is disgusting.

I am thankful to journalists everywhere for reporting without fear or favor. We have to have their backs.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 22, 2018 at 10:30 am | Categories: [Democracy](#), [Education Reform](#), [Freedom of the Press](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lcw>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



A Thanksgiving Present for You: Laughter!

by [dianeravitch](#)

This is for you In case you missed it.

This is Julia Louis-Dreyfus [accepting the Mark Twain Prize](#). Some versions on the Internet are edited. [Try this one](#). Or this [one, where she refers to Christine Blasey Ford](#).

She is very funny!

I loved her reference to the old days, the “quaint, old-fashioned ‘rule of law’ era.”

[dianeravitch](#) | November 22, 2018 at 10:24 am | Categories: [Humor](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lcR>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



I Am Thankful for the Resilient Educators Teaching Children After the Fire in California

by [dianeravitch](#)

Educators from Paradise, California, are [planning to start school on Dec 3](#).

They will not let their students down.

I am thankful for the [school bus drivers who took students](#) away from the fire, through the fire, to safety.

I am thankful for these dedicated teachers, administrators and staff, who lost their homes but not their sense of mission. They are heroes.

Since early last week, administrators, teachers and staff have been working out of makeshift offices in the city of Chico. Their first order of business has been locating the families of the more than 3,500 Paradise Unified students to confirm that they survived the fire, find out if they lost their homes and get a sense of their plans going forward.

As of Wednesday, they'd reached nearly 90 percent of the district's students and none have been reported among the dead, said Butte County Superintendent Tim Taylor. But no one can be certain how many students will actually show up when classes resume, or where.

The students worrying officials the most are those who were already marginalized and living a transient existence, said Dena Kapsalis, principal of Honey Run Academy, a community day school that was destroyed in the fire.

"I am personally aware of dozens and dozens of students who are couch surfers, runaways or otherwise displaced," Kapsalis said. "Those kiddos are very, very hard to find."

Marc Kessler, a science teacher at the 600-student Paradise Intermediate School, said he and other teachers and administrators have been able to confirm that 90 percent of that school's students lost their homes. Families are living in hotels, trailers, tents, said Kessler, who also serves as president of the Paradise Teachers Association.

Kevin Moretti, president of the Chico Unified Teachers Association, described the effort as "organized chaos." As of now, he said, 150 students from Paradise have enrolled in Chico schools and are expected to start school when classes resume.

These and other displaced students are covered under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a 1987 federal law that, among other things, allows students who are homeless to enroll in school without having to show proof of residency or immunization records.

But Chico Unified can't handle everyone, not even close. So, Taylor and other officials have spent much of their time this week scouring Chico and the surrounding area for classroom space.

Taylor said Paradise Unified in the immediate term will be a "hopscotch" of classrooms housed in portables and vacant commercial buildings. He said they are close to securing two large vacated retail stores that can be converted into classrooms.

[HOW TO HELP THOSE WHO LOST THEIR HOMES.](#)

[dianeravitch](#) | November 22, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Administrators](#), [superintendents](#), [Courage](#), [Honor Roll](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lch>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Happy Thanksgiving!

by [dianeravitch](#)

Happy Thanksgiving!

Enjoy your day.

If you are not making dinner, go to a church or homeless shelter to volunteer to serve others. It will remind you of your blessings and good fortune. Former President Obama [helped prepare food bags](#) for those in need in Chicago (imagine Trump doing that, I can't).

The spirit of giving is contagious.

When I think of those to whom I am thankful, I Think first of family and loved ones.

I think of you, who take time from your day to read what I write.

I think of the teachers in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Colorado, North Carolina, and Arizona who taught the nation a lesson.

I think of all those who work tirelessly for others to make our communities better places to live.

Despite our woes, we have much to be thankful for.

Diane

[dianeravitch](#) | November 22, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbM>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Missouri: State Board Rehires State Commissioner Ousted by Disgraced Ex-Governor

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Missouri State Board of Education [rehired the State Commissioner ousted last year by disgraced ex-Governor Eric Greitens](#).

Margie Vandeven will resume the position from which she was unceremoniously dumped last year.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 21, 2018 at 1:00 pm | Categories: [Administrators, superintendents](#), [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lcf>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



How to Talk to Your Family About Privatization

by [dianeravitch](#)

Jeremy Mohler of “In the Public Interest” has advice for you. You should consider subscribing to its website, which keeps tabs on the privatization movement, which is attacking every part of the public sector in hopes of monetizing it.

Like anything involving extended family, Thanksgiving can turn into a combat zone at the first mention of privatization. Just the words “public-private partnership” can send grandma out the door for a cigarette. Is this the year your nephew drops “neoliberalism”

at the dinner table?

Here's some advice to calm the inevitable tension this time around.

You never want to jump right in to explaining that privatization is a key part of the neoliberal project to enrich corporations while attempting to solve nearly all social problems with private markets.

So, try saying stuff like:

Privatization goes hand-in-hand with cutting taxes for Wall Street and corporations.

Companies that contract with the government to provide things like water, trash pickup, and school janitorial services often argue that they're more efficient than the "bureaucratic" public sector. But evidence of this is mixed at best. For example, private water corporations charge 58 percent more than those that are publicly owned.

But all the talk about efficiency and cutting costs helps support the idea that the government is wasteful and taxes are bad. Meanwhile, contractors and private investors pocket gobs of our public money by lowering service quality, cutting jobs and wages, and sidestepping protections for the environment.

Tell grandpa that Wall Street needs to pay more in taxes, or his water rates might soon be going up.

Without private prison corporations, it would be much harder for Trump to fulfill his racist promises.

The two largest private prison corporations, CoreCivic and GEO Group, currently detain two-thirds of people arrested and held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, known as ICE.

Without help from these two publicly traded corporations—whose owners also receive a massive tax break because they call themselves real estate companies—the Trump administration would be scrambling for detention space for its immigration crackdown.

Charter schools are not a progressive policy—they are a form of privatization.

While some privately operated charter schools provide services like dual language programs not available in some public school districts, many simply replicate—and attempt to replace—traditional, neighborhood schools.

Meanwhile, billionaires, private investors, and real estate developers are spending cash nationwide supporting political candidates who want to increase the number of charter schools, take autonomy from teachers, and limit what the public can see about charter school spending.

Having too many charter schools actually hurts students in neighborhood schools. Last year, charter schools cost Oakland's school district \$57.3 million, helping force cuts at neighborhood schools to academic counselors, school supplies, and, even, toilet paper.

Stopping privatization fights inequality.

Water, transportation, education, and other public goods are the foundation of our neighborhoods, towns, and cities. Continuing to hand them over to corporations and private investors, the same people who continually lobby for lower taxes, will only make things worse for most of us.

Privatization has been particularly harmful to women and people of color, as nearly 60 percent of public sector jobs are held by women and one in five black workers are public workers.

As a key component of the conservative (and neoliberal) argument for “limited government,” privatization helps hide the fact that the government is in fact “big” when it comes to things like war-making, prisons, and controlling women’s bodies.

Good luck! And watch out for those public-private partnerships, they’re usually more private than they are public.

Thanks for reading,

*Jeremy Mohler
In the Public Interest*

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[dianeravitch](#) | November 21, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-laj>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



John Thompson: Goliath, King of the Zombies

by [dianeravitch](#)

John Thompson [here writes about his reaction](#) to the annual conference of the Network

for Public Education, where the implicit theme was that David is beating Goliath, but Goliath just keeps stumbling forward, crushing public schools and advancing privatization, with no evidence of success. I argued, in the opening address of the conference, that the Reformers are akin to Goliath, and that Goliath has failed and failed again but is so powerful that he continues to wreak destruction on communities. He is among the Walking Dead. He is, in fact, a zombie.

Thompson was a teacher in Oklahoma; he recently retired. He lives in the belly of the beast, a state where Goliathians control the legislature and the governorship. At least they don't pretend to be "progressives." They are DeVos-Trump extremists, with links to ALEC and the Koch brothers.

Thompson admits that he was slow in realizing that the Reformers are intent on undermining public schools and that they were acting in concert. But he is convinced now, not only that they are doing so, but that their promises have not been kept and that, in fact, they have failed wherever they set their sights.

He ends with this:

Knowing that Indianapolis is at the heart of the dying, but still dangerous corporate reform movement, I expected that Chalkbeat would choose its words carefully and make sure that its reporting didn't threaten its donations from Goliath. Chalkbeat Indianapolis didn't cover the NPE conference but Matt Barnum of Chalkbeat New York has been covering Indiana's Mind Trust and its successor, the City Fund. (Chalkbeat Indiana has since linked to WFYI Indianapolis's report on one of the city's 20 "innovation schools" which is receiving \$1.3 million in management fees.)

This leads to the biggest question that I brought to the NPE. We Oklahomans have failed to communicate with our state's edu-philanthropists on how their science-based, holistic early education and trauma-informed instruction programs and the Indianapolis Goliath are inherently incompatible. We know that the City Fund seems to have its eye on Deborah Gist's Tulsa Public schools. We could use some help from NPE conference participants in explaining to Tulsa philanthropists why their "portfolio model" is likely to undermine their contributions to high quality pre-k, just like it did in New Orleans.

As a lobbyist for Planned Parenthood and a board member for the ACLU/OK, I developed great respect for the Kaiser and Schusterman foundations and other Tulsa philanthropists. I still struggle to understand how those leaders could not see how their humane, evidence-based programs are threatened by Goliath's data-driven, reward and punish corporate reforms. But one of the first people I saw in Indianapolis was Tom Ultican, and he gave me information on the \$200,000 Schusterman donated to California privatizers such as Antonio Villaraigosa and Marshall Tuck. If nothing else, I would like to explain to the philanthropists why educators can't lower our guard and stop defending ourselves against their scorched earth tactics. I'd appreciate any help the NPE can provide in explaining why we will fight Goliath to the end.

Imagine that. Chalkbeat has an outpost in Indianapolis, but did not think it was worth its time to send a reporter to cover a conference of 500 educators from across the country that took place in Indianapolis! Is that media bias? Would their funders (Walton, Gates, etc.) have objected if they sent a reporter to write about a major event in their city?

[dianeravitch](#) | November 21, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Failure](#), [Indianapolis](#), [Lies](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lb3>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



D.C.: Parents Fight Bureaucracy to Try to Get a Public School in Their Neighborhood

by [dianeravitch](#)

Just in case you thought that Eve Ewing was writing about a one-off event in Chicago, when Rahm Emanuel's hand-picked board closed 50 public schools in one day, ignoring the pleas of parents, think again.

A similar battle is going on in the District of Columbia, where parents are pleading with the D.C. school officials to open a public school (doors open to all) where they closed a public school.

Valerie Jablow, a D.C. parent, [writes about this struggle and pins down](#) the shifty tactics of school officials, who offer dodges, double-talk, and shifting explanations to parents who want a public school.

The outcome, she suspects, is pre-determined.

The District of Columbia is still locked into the Michelle Rhee mindset and remains committed to replacing public schools with charter schools. After all, they have received millions from the Walton Foundation and other malanthropists NOT to change course and listen to residents.

This is what democracy does not look like, she writes, as officialdom finds myriad ways to evade public testimony by parents.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 21, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [District of Columbia](#), [Education Industry](#), [Parents](#), [Privatization](#), [Walton Foundation](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbE>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Mercedes Schneider: How Kansas Wasted Money on TFA

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Kansas State Department of Education has money to burn (but not on teachers' Salaries), so it burned \$270,000 to hire three inexperienced temporary teachers from TFA. The three will be gone in two years or so, meaning this was a very unwise expenditure.

Mercedes Schneider [explains the folly here](#).

The real winner in this bad deal is TFA and its recruiter.

Note to state education departments: Don't do stuff that makes you look foolish.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 21, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Education Reform](#), [Kansas](#), [Teach for America](#), [Teacher Pay](#), [Teacher Shortage](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbj>

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Please Give to the Network for Public Education on #Giving Tuesday

by [dianeravitch](#)

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Any size contribution.

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[dianeravitch](#) | November 21, 2018 at 8:52 am | Categories: [Network for Public Education](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lcd>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Eugene Robinson: Time for the Rats to Leave Trump's Sinking Ship

by [dianeravitch](#)

Eugene Robinson wrote this [opinion piece](#) in the Washington Post, where he is a regular columnist. Will the rats leave this sinking ship? Probably not. The pay is good. The only thing they risk is their reputation, but if they work in this administration, they have already abandoned their reputation and will be remembered for serving an ignorant, misguided, small-minded man. Probably some stay in hopes of saving the country from some of Trump's worst ideas (as suggested in Bob Woodward's book FEAR or in the anonymous op-ed by an insider who claimed that people like him or her were preventing worse things from happening). We now know there really was a blue wave. Democrats captured as many as 40 seats in the House of Representatives, and they have the power to hold hearings and investigate corruption and malfeasance. That should keep them very busy for the next two years. A new broom is desperately needed in 2020 to clean up the wreckage after this disastrous presidency.

Like a television show that has jumped the shark, President Trump's frantic act grows

more desperate and pathetic by the day.

Asked by Chris Wallace of “Fox News Sunday” to grade his presidency, Trump absurdly replied: “Look, I hate to do it, but I will do it, I would give myself an A-plus. Is that enough? Can I go higher than that?”

Much closer to the mark is the assessment by Republican lawyer and operative George Conway, the husband of one of Trump’s closest White House aides, counselor Kellyanne Conway: “The administration is like a s---show in a dumpster fire.”

And it is all getting worse. The cravenness, incompetence, corruption, dysfunction, insanity — all of it.

Trump is anxious to award himself high marks because the nation, in no uncertain terms, just flunked him. A blue wave swept Democrats to take control of the House, with the party grabbing its biggest haul of GOP-held seats since the Watergate midterm following Richard M. Nixon’s resignation in 1974. Republican bastions such as Texas and Georgia became competitive for the first time in more than a generation. Orange County, Calif., the birthplace of Reagan-era conservatism, will be represented exclusively by Democrats when the new Congress convenes.

Trump made three campaign trips to Montana — a state he won in 2016 by 20 points — in an attempt to knock off Democratic incumbent Sen. Jon Tester, against whom Trump holds a personal grudge. (Tester led the successful fight against Trump’s bizarre attempt to install his personal physician as head of Veterans Affairs.) Nevertheless, Tester prevailed.

The U.S. isn’t a lawless country, so why are sitting presidents immune to prosecution? (Kate Woodsome, Breanna Muir, Adriana Usero/The Washington Post)

No wonder that multiple news reports describe the president as angry, frustrated and even less rational than usual. He has neglected his ceremonial duties, declining to join other world leaders at a ceremony in France commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I and failing to lay a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery for Veterans Day.

“I probably, you know, in retrospect I should have, and I did last year,” Trump told Wallace about going to Arlington. Fact check: He didn’t. On Veterans Day 2017, Trump was in Vietnam.

It is mystifying why Trump, at a moment when he should be licking his wounds, seems intent on alienating veterans and the military. In that same interview with Wallace, who generally managed to keep a straight face, Trump went out of his way to attack retired Adm. William H. McRaven, who oversaw the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

Back in August, McRaven had criticized Trump as a national embarrassment in a Post op-ed. A rational leader would have let it pass. Trump, who is anything but rational, called McRaven a “Hillary Clinton fan” and an “Obama backer” and implied that the former Navy SEAL was something of a slacker. “Wouldn’t it have been nice if we got Osama bin Laden a lot sooner than that, wouldn’t it have been nice?” Trump said.

Seriously, that is what the commander in chief thinks about one of the all-time greatest

triumphs of U.S. intelligence and special ops. Unbelievable. Sad.

Republicans who might be inclined to sign up for another season of Trump's fading reality show should pause and take stock. There should be no doubt, at this point, that the man is a giant loser who will drag the GOP down with him.

"I wasn't on the ballot," he whined to Wallace. But he spent weeks on the campaign trail, begging supporters to vote as if he were. At almost every stop, he said that a vote for the GOP candidate would be "a vote for me." The result? Millions more voted against Trump than for him. And this was just a warm-up for 2020.

Trump has already robbed the GOP of any coherent philosophy. The party that once supported the military now abuses it as a scapegoat. The party that once stood for fiscal responsibility now manages the nation's finances in a manner that drunken sailors would find imprudent. The party that once claimed to champion personal rectitude and Christian morality now winks at payoffs to paramours and porn stars. The party that once valued order now celebrates Sybaritic chaos.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 20, 2018 at 3:00 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lc1>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Texas: Voucher Supporters Lose Seats in Recent Elections

by [dianeravitch](#)

The prospects for vouchers just got dimmer in Texas. Parent organizations and Pastors for Texas Children are among the many groups that have stood strong against vouchers, and their hard work has stopped vouchers again and again. It was an uphill battle, because Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick (a former talk show host, the Rush Limbaugh of Texas) is a voucher fan, and he had a solid bloc of support in the State Senate. Each time the Senate passed a voucher bill, a bipartisan coalition killed it in the House, where rural Republicans joined with urban Democrats. Some key Republican leaders in the House are strong supporters of the public schools because of their own experience, either as

school leaders or parents or active community members.

[The recent election sent some voucher supporters in the Senate to defeat.](#) As a result, the voucher issue has lost steam. Beto O'Rourke lost his bid for the U.S. Senate, but his campaign energized campaigns at the state level.

This story appeared in the Austin Statesman:

The issue of private school vouchers — shifting public education dollars to private school tuition — once a priority of conservative state lawmakers from suburban districts, seems destined for the back burner during the coming legislative session.

At least a half-dozen more opponents to the idea were elected this month, amid widespread Democratic gains. In past sessions, Democrats and rural Republicans, concerned that a voucher system would erode traditional public schools, blocked all voucher measures in the House. Voucher bills have easily passed the GOP-dominated Senate.

Proponents call the idea “school choice” because it would give some students the option to leave poorly rated neighborhood public schools for private ones.

Meanwhile, the education focus at the Capitol has shifted to repairing a broken system of funding public schools. Last week, Dennis Bonnen, R-Angleton, the likely next speaker of the House, singled out school finance as the priority for the chamber, and Gov. Greg Abbott’s school finance plan was introduced at a meeting at the Capitol.

That’s left public school teachers and their advocates hopeful that the Legislature won’t have much appetite for a voucher bill.

“I like having the ability to choose when I’m making a purchase, but I don’t see education in that same light. The best opportunity for the population we have is in public education — a well-funded public education system — and if we want to get to the goals that we want to get to, that’s not going to happen by just handing kids a voucher and saying, ‘Good luck,’” said Michelle Smith with Austin-based public school advocacy group Raise Your Hand Texas.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 20, 2018 at 2:00 pm | Categories: [Texas](#), [Vouchers](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lc5>

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New Orleans: Five Charters Closed, Other Charters Approved, Parents Outraged

by [dianeravitch](#)

If you should read Eve Ewing's *Ghosts in the Schoolyard*, you will have the context for understanding the incessant disruption imposed on the students and parents of New Orleans. Parents were fearful that the [superintendent planned to close schools and scatter their children](#).

At a recent meeting, the superintendent [announced that he was closing five low-performing charter](#) schools and approving a new group of charters. The superintendent, Henderson Lewis Jr., stressed how difficult these decisions were.

"This month has been a test for myself, my staff, this board and our system as a whole," Lewis said. "It tested our courage, our consistency, and it tested humility."

Parents were furious. They did not praise the superintendent and his staff for their courage and humility.

Because these were action items, the public was finally allowed to speak, and the meeting became heated at times. However, when speakers veered off topic — to school closures, for example — they were asked to leave the podium.

At one point, as the board asked a woman to stop talking the crowd reacted in a chant: "Let her talk! Let her talk! Let her talk!"

At another moment, organizer Ashana Bigard spoke from the audience.

"You represent us, when did you ask us?" Bigard asked. "Did anybody sit in a meeting where we discussed these changes?"

A collective "no" was the response.

Several speakers and people in the audience called for the district to directly run its schools.

One woman specifically criticized the nearly all-charter district. "Y'all are passing out charters like you're Oprah or something. You get a charter. You get a charter. You get a charter."

Another speaker pleaded with the board: "After tonight, please don't close or charter any other school. If you've got a problem with administration, run the school don't close the school."

After the meeting, Bigard said she planned to help parents organize.

"We are organizing parents that want to come together to get real democracy and real

choice,” she said. “We’re going to start our recall campaign tomorrow.”

She said she was particularly concerned with the trauma students experience when they’re moved from school to school.

“They’re picking on special needs children and black and brown children,” she said. “They get the least when they’re supposed to get the most.”

Forty percent of the charter schools in New Orleans are rated D or F. All of them are overwhelmingly black.

The superintendent thinks that he can make all of them excellent schools if he keeps closing those with low grades.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 20, 2018 at 1:00 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Closing schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [New Orleans](#), [Parents](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbT>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Good News! Climate Change Deniers No Longer in Charge of Science Committee of House of Representatives!

by [dianeravitch](#)

Wired.com reports that the House Science Committee [will no longer be controlled by science know-nothings](#).

FOR THE PAST eight years, climate science has been under a sort of spell in the House of Representatives. Instead of trying to understand it better or even acknowledging some of the field’s current uncertainties, House Science Committee Chairman Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) used his position to harass federal climate scientists with subpoenas while holding hearings on “Making the EPA Great Again” or whether “global warming theories are alarmist” and researchers are pursuing a “personal agenda.”

But Smith retired this year and Democrats won control of the House on Tuesday. Now some on Capitol Hill say that the anti-climate science spell may be broken.

"Hopefully we will no longer see the science committee used as a messaging tool for the fossil fuel industry," says Rep. Bill Foster, an Illinois Democrat and science committee member. "I look forward to hearings with a balance of witnesses that reflect mainstream scientific hearings instead of a small group of industry players."

Foster, who was a particle physicist before being elected to Congress in 2008, said he also wants to see more appearances from cabinet members like Energy Secretary Rick Perry or EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler to explain both their budget and their rulemaking on environmental and science issues. Neither agency head was called before Smith's committee during his tenure, Foster says.

This is good news. The Trump administration is an embarrassment, but at least the House Science Committee will not be.

Good to have rationality and learning in one of the seats of power.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 20, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#), [Science](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l7c>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Jennifer Berkshire and Jack Schneider on School Closings in Boston

by [dianeravitch](#)

Jennifer Berkshire and Jack Schneider [talk here about school closings in Boston](#). Berkshire recently read sociologist Eve Ewing's phenomenal book about school closings in Chicago, so the podcast approaches the Boston events from the perspective of the victims. If, like me, you seldom listen to podcasts, [here is the transcript](#).

It is simply a matter of fact that corporate reformers never close schools in white communities, only in communities where parents are apparently powerless. The school closings serve the purposes of gentrification. The excuse is always "test scores," but the

effect is replacement of one group of people by another, more affluent group. It happened in Chicago, it will happen in Boston.

Boston plans to close schools serving some of the city's most vulnerable students, so they can be redistributed to other schools. As the exchanges in the program show, these students will suffer from the changes and the displacement.

I urge you to listen or read this segment

[dianeravitch](#) | November 20, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Boston](#), [Chicago](#), [Closing schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lb5>

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My Review of Eve L. Ewing's "Ghosts in the Schoolyard"

by [dianeravitch](#)

The best book about education this year was written by a woman who is [a poet, a playwright, a novelist, and soon to be the writer of a Marvel comic about "a black girl genius from Chicago."](#) Ewing has a doctorate in sociology from Harvard and is now on the faculty of the University of Chicago. In case you don't know all this, I am referring to Eve L. Ewing and her new book about school closings in Chicago. The title is [Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side](#).

Eve Ewing was a teacher in one of the 50 public schools that Rahm Emanuel closed in a single day. Her book will help to memorialize Rahm Emanuel's stigma as the only person in American history to close 50 public schools in one day.

Because she is a poet, the book is written beautifully. She has managed to overcome the burden of academic language, which can so often sound technical, bureaucratic, and dehumanizing. Her language goes to the heart of the experience of suffering at the hands of bureaucrats and technocrats.

She examines the school closings from the perspective of those who were its victims: students, families, communities.

The question at the heart of the book is this: Why do students and families fight to keep their schools open after the authorities declare they are “failing schools.”

She answers the question by listening to and recording the moving testimony of those who fought for the survival of their schools.

Ewing sketches the history of the Bronzeville community in Chicago, racially segregated by government action. What resulted was a community that was hemmed in but nonetheless developed strong traditions, ties, and communal bonds. One of those bonds was the one between families and schools.

She describes some of the schools that were closed, schools with long histories in the black community. Parents and students came out to testify in opposition to the closings. They spoke about why they loved their school, how their family members had proudly attended the school, only to be confronted by school officials who waved “data” and “facts” in their faces to justify closing their beloved school.

Ewing deftly contrasts the official pronouncements of Barbara Byrd-Bennett (now in prison for accepting kickbacks from vendors), who insisted that it was not “racist” to close the schools of Bronzeville with the emotional responses of the students and families, who saw racism in the decision.

Ewing writes powerfully about a concept she calls “institutional mourning.” Families experienced this mourning process as the city leaders killed the institutions that were part of their lives and their history. The school closings were “part of a broader pattern of disrespect for people of color in Chicago,” they were part of “a formula of destruction” intended to obliterate memory, history, and tradition. The act of closing schools was integral to gentrification. And indeed, Chicago has seen a mass exodus of a significant part of its black population, which may have been (likely was) the purpose of the school closings and the removal of black neighborhoods.

Institutional mourning, she writes, “is the social and emotional experience undergone by individuals and communities facing the loss of a shared institution they are affiliated with---such as a school, church, residence, neighborhood, or business district--especially when those individuals or communities occupy a socially marginalized status that amplifies their reliance on the institution or its significance in their lives.

Ewing asks:

“What do school closures, and their disproportionate clustering in communities like Bronzeville, tell us about a fundamental devaluation of African American children, their families, and black life in general? Is there room for democracy and real grassroots participation in a school system that has been run like an oligarchy?”

Byrd-Bennett spoke about a “utilization crisis” that required the closure of schools in Bronzeville and the dispersion of their students. Ewing offers a counterpoint, seeing the schools in the black community “as a bastion of community pride” and a long-running war over “the future of a city and who gets to claim it. There is the need to consider that losing the school represents another assault in a long line of racist attacks against a people, part of a history of levying harmful policies against them, blaming them for the

aftermath, then having the audacity to pretend none of it really happened. There is the way some of these policy decisions are camouflaged by pseudoscientific analysis that is both ethically and statistically questionable. There is our intensely segregated society to account for, in which those who attend the school experience a fundamentally different reality than those who have the power to steer its future. And finally, there is the intense emotional aftermath that follows school closure, which can have a profound, lasting effect on those who experience the closure even as it is rarely acknowledged with any seriousness by those who made the decision."

One bright spot in her book is the story of the successful resistance to the closing of the Walter H. Dyett high school in Bronzeville. She explains who Walter H. Dyett was, why the school was important, and why the community fought to keep the school named for him open. Dyett was a musician and a beloved high school music teacher; he taught in Bronzeville for 38 years. The school bearing his name may be the only one ever named for a teacher. A dozen community members, led by Jitu Brown of the Journey for Justice Alliance, conducted a hunger strike that lasted for 32 days. Only by risking their lives were they able to persuade the Chicago Mayor and his hand-picked Board to invest in the school instead of closing it.

Why do parents fight to save their schools, a fight they usually lose? She writes, "They fight because losing them [their schools] can mean losing their very world."

I have underlined and starred entire paragraphs. Certainly, the testimony of students at public hearings, which was very moving. Also Ewing's commentary, which is insightful.

At the hearing concerning the proposed (and certain) closing of the Mayo elementary school, students talked about the shame they felt.

One student, a third grader, testified:

My whole class started breaking out crying, so did my teacher. We walked through the halls in shame because we didn't want Mayo to close. When I'm in fourth grade, I was really thinking about going to the fiftieth year anniversary, but how can I when Mayo is closing?

The shame was on Rahm Emanuel and Barbara Byrd-Bennett, but the students somehow felt culpable for what was done to them.

Another student from Mayo said:

Every day I go to school, we sing the Mayo song, and we are proud to hear the song. We are proud to sing the song every...every day. All I want to know is, why close Mayo? This is one of the best schools we ever had.

The book reads like a novel.

Let me add that I have waited for this book for a long time, not knowing if it would ever be written. History told from the point of view of those who were acted on, rather than the point of view of those at the top of the pyramid. Whose story will be told and who will tell it? Eve Ewing has told it.

I found it difficult to put down.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 20, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Chicago](#), [Closing schools](#), [Emanuel, Rahm](#), [Racism](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lb9>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Jan Resseger: Is the Charter School Romance Winding Down?

by [dianeravitch](#)

Jan Resseger notes a few straws in the wind that suggest a [lessening of enthusiasm for charter schools](#).

First, she says, is the close race between Tony Thurmond and Marshall Tuck in California. The usual charter-loving billionaires poured millions into Tuck's campaign, who had twice as much money to spend as Thurmond. The polls predicted a romp for Tuck, given his name recognition (he ran for the same position four years ago, but especially his money in hand. Early returns showed Tuck winning. But then the results reversed, and Thurmond has been leading. Are Californians waking up to the threat posed by charter schools, where accountability is minimal?

Then there was the legislative elections in New York State. Governor Cuomo had a \$35 million campaign chest, largely from the Wall Street-Hedge Fund crowd who want to privatize everything. Cuomo rewards his donors. But woe to the charter industry, Republicans and fake Democrats were booted out of the State Senate, and the New Democrats want to improve public schools, not charter schools.

Important straws in the wind.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 20, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Billionaires](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l9Z>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Daniel Dale: How to Know When Trump Is Lying

by [dianeravitch](#)

Daniel Dale is a [reporter for the Toronto Star](#). This article appeared in the New Zealand Herald. He is obsessed with fact-checking Trump. During the 2016 campaign, Trump said, "No one respects women more than me." Recently he said, "No one is less racist than me." He is a master at projecting his own faults on others. The classic example occurred during one of the presidential debates when Hillary said, "We don't need a president who is a puppet of Putin," and he immediately said, "you are the puppet," and then they both again said, "you are the puppet," like children in a schoolyard. Recently in Paris, at a meeting of European leaders, a photographer snapped a photograph of Putin approaching Trump, and Trump was uncharacteristically beaming. He usually scowls. For Putin, an unusual big smile.

Dale writes:

I've made it my mission to fact-check every word Donald Trump utters as president. That means trying to watch every speech, read every transcript, decipher every tweet. I've accidentally established a reputation for using Twitter to point out that he's lying within seconds of him telling a lie.

People sometimes ask in response how I can blast out these corrections so quickly. But I have no special talent. My secret is that Trump tells the same lies over and over.

On his fifth day in office, Trump baselessly alleged widespread voter fraud. He did the same thing this past week. In his third month in office, Trump falsely claimed that the United States has a \$500 billion trade deficit with China. He has said the same thing more than 80 times since.

Listen to this president long enough, and you can almost sense when a lie is coming. If Trump tells a story in which an unnamed person calls him "sir," it's probably invented. If Trump claims he has set a record, he probably hasn't. If Trump cites any number at all, the real number is usually smaller.

Fact-checking Trump is kind of like fact-checking one of those talking dolls programmed to say the same phrases for eternity, except if none of those phrases were true. As any parent who owns a squealing Elmo can tell you, the phrases can get tiresome. I'm sure my Twitter followers get bored when I remind them that Trump wasn't the president who got the Veterans Choice health-care program passed (Barack Obama signed it into law in 2014), that U.S. Steel is not building six, seven, eight or nine new plants (it has recently invested in two existing plants) and that foreign governments don't force their unsavory citizens into the lottery for U.S. green cards (would-be immigrants enter of their own free will).

I keep saying that foreign governments don't do this, though, because Trump keeps saying they do. I believe that journalists need to be just as tireless in combating the president's lying as the president is in telling the lies, no matter how repetitive or pedantic it can sometimes make us seem.

I'm a Canadian reporter, the Washington bureau chief for the Toronto Star. I wasn't sent here to cover the honesty beat. I do most of the fact-checking on my own time, spending weekday nights and painful Sundays staring at rally transcripts in my pajamas.

My American colleagues have done wonderful investigative and explanatory journalism on Trump. But with some notable exceptions, like The Washington Post's terrific fact-checking team led by Glenn Kessler, I don't think U.S. media outlets have been persistent enough in fighting a daily battle for truth itself.

I began making a comprehensive list of Trump's false claims in September 2016, two years after a wild four years covering infamous Toronto Mayor Rob Ford . Having spent so much time contemplating a homegrown liar, it fast became clear to me that Trump's serial dishonesty was a central feature of his campaign. But his avalanche of deception was being treated as a sideshow to the real news rather than as the news itself — relegated to reporters' Twitter feeds rather than featured in the headlines where it belonged.

There has been some incremental improvement in the coverage. But I still see the same troubling failures two years later. Even the best of Trump's interviewers seldom challenge him when he lies to their faces — despite the fact that almost all of the lies have been fact-checked before.

Trump regularly makes 20 to 30 false claims in his rally speeches. But if you watched a network news segment, read an Associated Press article or glanced at the front page of the newspaper in the city that hosted him, you'd typically have no idea that he was so wholly inaccurate.

If a car salesman told you 36 untrue things in 75 minutes, that would probably be the first thing you told your friends about your trip to the dealership. It should have been the first thing we all told our readers about Trump's August rally in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

This issue is so urgent because Trump is getting worse and worse. In 2017, he averaged three false claims per day. In 2018, it is about nine per day. In the month leading up to the midterms: a staggering 26 per day. By my count, he's now at 3,749 false claims since his inauguration. The Post, which tracks both false and misleading claims, has tallied up to 6,420.

Meanwhile, the press continues to blast out the lies unnoted. Two weeks ago, Axios and the AP uncritically tweeted his nonsense about the United States being the only nation to grant birthright citizenship. (They updated after they were criticized.) It happened again Monday, when Trump earned credulous tweets and headlines from ABC, NBC and others for his groundless assertion about "massively infected" ballots in Florida.

There's nothing especially strategic about much of Trump's lying; he does it because that is what he has always done. But the president also knows the lies will be broadcast unfiltered to tens of millions of people — by some of the very outlets he disparages as "fake news."

Many of Trump's false claims are so transparently wrong that I can fact-check them with a Google search. It's the comically trivial ones that stand out. I'll never forget when the Boy Scouts of America got back to me to say that the president of the United States had made up a nonexistent phone call in which the Scouts' chief executive supposedly told him he had given "the greatest speech that was ever made" to a Scout Jamboree.

For reporting such things, I receive vitriolic emails from some of Trump's fervent supporters. More interesting to me are the messages from well-meaning skeptics. Why waste your time, people ask, when facts obviously don't matter anymore?

I disagree. There is a substantial constituency for accurate information about the claims of a president who is, polls suggest, seen as untrustworthy by two-thirds of voters. Even people who generally know that Trump isn't honest might not know how he is misleading them, and they might want to. The media shouldn't treat Trump's devotees as America's only relevant people.

We also shouldn't write off every devotee. I've met Trump voters who insist that he's honest, even Trump voters who say they like his lying because it bothers "elites" like me. But I've also spoken to Trump voters like Bruce Brown of rural Pennsylvania, who gets much of his information from Fox News and Rush Limbaugh. Soon after I interviewed Brown about last year's Obamacare debate, he messaged to tell me he'd discovered my list of Trump's false claims.

I braced for him to say I'd tricked him by sounding friendly, that I, too, was fake news. Instead, he wrote: "Wow ... I kind of knew he wasn't truthful much of the time, but not to the degree of hundreds of lies in such a short period of time. Thanks for opening my eyes."

[dianeravitch](#) | November 19, 2018 at 2:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbs>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



David Sirota: How Big Oil & Gas Industry Fights Efforts to Slow Climate Change

by [dianeravitch](#)

Investigative reporter David Sirota [writes in The Guardian about the money](#) spent by big oil and gas corporations to block efforts to protect the environment.

In the last election, the fossil fuel industry spent heavily to defeat referenda that would protect the environment.

In state after state, the industry attacked efforts to promote renewable energy.

He begins:

The world's leading scientists issued a report warning of total planetary dystopia unless we take immediate steps to seriously reduce carbon emissions. Then, oil and gas corporations dumped millions of dollars into the 2018 elections to defeat the major initiatives that could have slightly reduced fossil fuel use.

Though you may not know it from the cable TV coverage, this was one of the most significant – and the most terrifying – stories of the midterms. For those who actually care about the survival of the human race, the key questions now should be obvious: is there any reason to hope that we will retreat from “drill baby drill” and enact a sane set of climate policies? Or is our country – and, by extension, our species – just going to give up?

Before answering, it is worth reviewing exactly what happened over these last few months, because the election illustrates how little the fossil fuel industry is willing to concede in the face of a genuine crisis. While the dominant media narrative has been about Democratic voters euphorically electing a House majority and yelling a primal scream at Donald Trump, the loudest shriek of defiance was the one bellowed by oil and gas CEOs. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that we have only 12 years to ward off an ecological disaster, those oil and gas executives' message to Planet Earth was unequivocal: drop dead.

That message was most explicit in Colorado, where a drilling and fracking boom is happening in the middle of fast-growing suburbs. With oil and gas companies seeking to put noxious derricks and rigs near population centers, local activists backed a ballot measure called Proposition 112 that aimed to make sure new fossil fuel infrastructure is set a bit farther away from schools, hospitals, residential neighborhoods and water sources.

“The initiative was an angry response to a state government so awash in fossil fuel campaign cash that it has blocked legislation to merely allow regulators to prioritize the health and safety of residents when those regulators issue permits for drilling and fracking.

“According to an industry analysis, Proposition 112 would have left much of the oil and gas reserves near Denver accessible for extraction, but yes, it is true – at a time when climate scientists say we must keep fossil fuel deposits in the ground, there was a chance the initiative would have stopped some extraction.

“The oil and gas industry could have looked across a Colorado ravaged by climate-intensified wildfires, droughts and floods and decided to accept the modest measure, knowing that the initiative is the absolute minimum that is required at this perilous moment. Instead, fossil fuel companies did the opposite: they poured \$40m into opposing Proposition 112 and spreading insidious agitprop.

“Despite scientists warning that fracked natural gas threatens to worsen climate change, oil and gas operatives in the state promoted cartoonishly dishonest claims that burning fossil fuel “is cleaning our air and improving health”. As Colorado’s local media effectively erased the term “climate change” from its election coverage, the industry managed to defeat the measure by outspending its proponents 40-to-1. In the process, fossil fuel companies’ scorched-earth campaign was a clear statement that in the face of an environmental cataclysm, oil and gas moguls will not accept even a tiny reduction in their revenues.”

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Utah: Why the Secrecy Around This Lucrative Charter Chain?

by [dianeravitch](#)

The largest charter chain in Utah is American Preparatory Academy. It is [operated by a for-profit entity](#). The schools are very profitable. The owners keep their operations secret, as they probably assume that the public would not be happy to learn how much tax dollars go into their bank accounts, not the schools.

One of its founders and its Executive Director, Carolyn Sharette, is also the registered agent of a for-profit management company, American Preparatory Schools, Inc., which will charge the school \$5,805,200 for the 2018-2019 school year. That's a bump up from the \$4.6 million the company got last year.

Where's the money going?

State funding, your taxpayer dollars, comprise 88 percent of American Prep's budget. But what do the students get with that money?

Sharette isn't telling – and she doesn't have to. The State Charter School Board does not demand accountability from contracted companies working for the school.

The Board told KUTV's Beyond the Books that it monitors a charter school's student performance and adherence to its charter and state and federal rules. But Sharette's for-profit company is beyond its reach.

It's also a family affair. Two of Sharette's siblings, brother Howard Headlee and sister Laura Campbell, are co-founders of American Prep.

Sharette and Campbell sit on its executive board. Headlee registered three 501(c)3 companies that own the school's property and buildings and lease them back to the schools. And at least two of Sharette's children have been employed by the for-profit management company, American Preparatory Schools, Inc.

Where's your tax money going, Utah citizens?

None of your business!

Once it goes to this charter chain, there is no accountability.

Satisfied?

[dianeravitch](#) | November 19, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [For-Profit](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l9J>

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Angie Sullivan: Stop the For-Profit Charter Scam in Nevada

by [dianeravitch](#)

Angie Sullivan teaches young children in a Title 1 school in Clark County (Las Vegas), Nevada. She writes an email blast to every legislator in the state.

Angie writes:

Folks in other states are banning for-profit charter management corporations.

With good reason.

Whole campaigns are built on banning for-profit scams in other states. We need folks in Nevada to notice this mess.

http://m.wtol.com/toledonewsnow/db_347256/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=yQmm1LBE

Attendance should match testing.

In Nevada we have for-profits corporations claiming they have thousands enrolled but only a few test?

We cannot afford to give \$18 Million to a corporation if they are only providing \$1 million in educational type services. Note: I did not state learning - because providing a type of service is NOT learning if students do not graduate.

Meanwhile, we elect lawmakers who sit on for-profit charter boards, manage a for-profit branch, or work at a for-profit charter. They will sit in legislative session next year and have their hands on bills to line pockets. Note: I did not say teach kids, because that is NOT the bottom line or mission of a corporation. No wonder no one graduates.

Let's not repeat mistakes of other states which expanded charters at an alarming rate and now the tax payer suffers. Nevada has a big enough mess already.

Nevada Charters are definitely not a remedy or an example. It is a travesty that a real public school in CCSD is threatened with being turned into a charter. Scary.

It is not fiscally responsible to allow Academica, Gulen Corals, or On-lines to run rampant without the same transparency and accountability required by all public schools.

Time for a for-profit charter moratorium and to clean up this \$350 million mess.

CCSD Parents need to be demanding expansion of CCSD Magnets - which are the top schools in the nation - instead of these scammers. And we need funding to maintain quality in Magnets. That is what works. People need to demand what works.

The Teacher,
Angie

[dianeravitch](#) | November 19, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Failure](#), [For-Profit](#), [Funding](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-kU2>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Indianapolis: The Resistance Pushes Back Against Corporate Reformers

by [dianeravitch](#)

Indianapolis has been a major target for the privatization movement. A group called The Mind Trust, funded by billionaire foundations, has led the effort to destroy public education, while presenting its motives as benign and admirable.

The corporate reform attack on Indianapolis was [described vividly in this post](#) by Jim Scheurich and Gayle Crosby.

Tom Ultican [wrote about the destructive role of The Mind Trust in Indianapolis](#), which claims to be allied with the Democratic Party.

Locals, lacking the resources of the privatizes, have fought to save their public schools.

Here is a report on the recent elections from Dountonia Batts, an active member of the Network for Public Education:

Sending a clear message that the community is fed up with corporate reform, voters in Indianapolis ousted two incumbents on the Indianapolis Public School (IPS) Board, replacing them with opponents of the district's corporate reform agenda.

First-time candidates Taria Slack and Susan Collins were backed by the IPS Community Coalition (the Indianapolis AROS Chapter) and the local teachers union and ran against incumbents backed by Stand for Children and the Mind Trust, a corporate reform institute. Slack and Collins are vowing to pressure the IPS administration to improve

transparency, genuine community collaboration and engagement, and hold the administration accountable.

Indianapolis schools have been under persistent attack by corporate reformers over the past decade, with increasing numbers of charters and public school closings. The district —under the tutelage of the Mind Trust—has also created so-called “Innovation Schools,” which are IPS schools that are handed over to a charter management organization. Innovation Schools have complete autonomy, a school board that is not elected by the public, and receive public funds. Additionally, this structure allows charters under the IPS umbrella to take advantage of district-provided services such as transportation and special education services at no cost. This victory is proof that ordinary citizens can defeat big money. People power trumps money power. IPS Community Coalition is organized, prepared, and ready to reclaim our schools

Sincerely,

Dountonia S. Batts, J.D., M.B.A., N.S.A.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 19, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Closing schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Indianapolis](#), [Privatization](#), [Resistance](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-laM>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Cost to Protect Betsy DeVos: \$20 Million

by [dianeravitch](#)

Why is Betsy DeVos afraid? In her first year in office, some protestors in Washington, D.C., objected to her visit at a public school.

Since then, she has had a special detachment of U.S. Marshalls [giving her round-the-clock protection](#).

Other cabinet secretaries have encountered protestors. None of them are guarded by

U.S. Marshalls.

Of course, she is very special. She is a billionaire.

She doesn't leave her office much. She has many days off.

She seldom visits schools, and in the few instances where she does, it is either a religious school or a charter school.

Her [public schedule indicates](#) that she doesn't have much to do, perhaps a meeting once a day, perhaps not.

[Others have commented on her many "unexcused absences."](#) A year ago, the media realized that she was absent from her job about 1/3 of the time and that she has poor work habits. Presumably she still has round-the-clock protection even when she skips work. A teacher who skipped work 1/3 of the time would be terminated.

Does she lack grit?

Does she have a guilty conscience about removing protection from transgender students, indebted college students, and sexual assault victims?

My guess is that she has led a sheltered life and wants to avoid public contact to the greatest extent possible.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 18, 2018 at 2:00 pm | Categories: [Betsy DeVos](#), [Billionaires](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbw>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Denis Smith: GOP Collusion In 1968

by [dianeravitch](#)

Denis Smith writes [here about a Presidential election](#) in 1968 where the GOP candidate colluded with a foreign power to win the election.

Tonight at 9:00 pm, MSNBC will air a special about these events.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 18, 2018 at 1:00 pm | Categories: [Corruption](#), [Education Reform](#), [History](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbm>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



How Facebook Dealt with Crisis: A Tale of Denial

by [dianeravitch](#)

This article was [published](#) by the New York Times on November 15. You will learn how Facebook dealt with questions about its slipshod handling of multiple crises. Facebook has the power for great good, connecting people to act collectively as they did in the teachers' protests last spring, or for great evil, as it has been used to sell personal data, to spread racism and hate speech, even to facilitate [genocide](#), as in Myanmar (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Congress has pondered whether or how to regulate this communications behemoth. This article describes how Facebook responded to this threat to its autonomy.

Sheryl Sandberg was seething.

Inside Facebook's Menlo Park, Calif., headquarters, top executives gathered in the glass-walled conference room of its founder, Mark Zuckerberg. It was September 2017, more than a year after Facebook engineers discovered suspicious Russia-linked activity on its site, an early warning of the Kremlin campaign to disrupt the 2016 American election. Congressional and federal investigators were closing in on evidence that would implicate the company.

But it wasn't the looming disaster at Facebook that angered Ms. Sandberg. It was the social network's security chief, Alex Stamos, who had informed company board members the day before that Facebook had yet to contain the Russian infestation. Mr. Stamos's briefing had prompted a humiliating boardroom interrogation of Ms. Sandberg, Facebook's chief operating officer, and her billionaire boss. She appeared to regard the admission as a betrayal.

“You threw us under the bus!” she yelled at Mr. Stamos, according to people who were present.

The clash that day would set off a reckoning — for Mr. Zuckerberg, for Ms. Sandberg and for the business they had built together. In just over a decade, Facebook has connected more than 2.2 billion people, a global nation unto itself that reshaped political campaigns, the advertising business and daily life around the world. Along the way, Facebook accumulated one of the largest-ever repositories of personal data, a treasure trove of photos, messages and likes that propelled the company into the Fortune 500.

But as evidence accumulated that Facebook’s power could also be exploited to disrupt elections, broadcast viral propaganda and inspire deadly campaigns of hate around the globe, Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg stumbled. Bent on growth, the pair ignored warning signs and then sought to conceal them from public view. At critical moments over the last three years, they were distracted by personal projects, and passed off security and policy decisions to subordinates, according to current and former executives.

When Facebook users learned last spring that the company had compromised their privacy in its rush to expand, allowing access to the personal information of tens of millions of people to a political data firm linked to President Trump, Facebook sought to deflect blame and mask the extent of the problem.

And when that failed — as the company’s stock price plummeted and it faced a consumer backlash — Facebook went on the attack.

While Mr. Zuckerberg has conducted a public apology tour in the last year, Ms. Sandberg has overseen an aggressive lobbying campaign to combat Facebook’s critics, shift public anger toward rival companies and ward off damaging regulation. Facebook employed a Republican opposition-research firm to discredit activist protesters, in part by linking them to the liberal financier George Soros. It also tapped its business relationships, lobbying a Jewish civil rights group to cast some criticism of the company as anti-Semitic.

In Washington, allies of Facebook, including Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic Senate leader, intervened on its behalf. And Ms. Sandberg wooed or cajoled hostile lawmakers, while trying to dispel Facebook’s reputation as a bastion of Bay Area liberalism.

This account of how Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg navigated Facebook’s cascading crises, much of which has not been previously reported, is based on interviews with more than 50 people. They include current and former Facebook executives and other employees, lawmakers and government officials, lobbyists and congressional staff members. Most spoke on the condition of anonymity because they had signed confidentiality agreements, were not authorized to speak to reporters or feared retaliation. Facebook declined to make Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg available for comment. In a statement, a spokesman acknowledged that Facebook had been slow to address its challenges but had since made progress fixing the platform.

“This has been a tough time at Facebook and our entire management team has been focused on tackling the issues we face,” the statement said. “While these are hard problems we are working hard to ensure that people find our products useful and that we protect our community from bad actors.”

Even so, trust in the social network has sunk, while its pell-mell growth has slowed. Regulators and law enforcement officials in the United States and Europe are investigating Facebook's conduct with Cambridge Analytica, a political data firm that worked with Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign, opening up the company to fines and other liability. Both the Trump administration and lawmakers have begun crafting proposals for a national privacy law, setting up a yearslong struggle over the future of Facebook's data-hungry business model.

[Despite a turbulent two years, here's why almost no one in tech thinks Mark Zuckerberg should step down from the company he built.]

"We failed to look and try to imagine what was hiding behind corners," Elliot Schrage, former vice president for global communications, marketing and public policy at Facebook, said in an interview.

Mr. Zuckerberg, 34, and Ms. Sandberg, 49, remain at the company's helm, while Mr. Stamos and other high-profile executives have left after disputes over Facebook's priorities. Mr. Zuckerberg, who controls the social network with 60 percent of the voting shares and who approved many of its directors, has been asked repeatedly in the last year whether he should step down as chief executive.

His answer each time: a resounding "No."

'Don't Poke the Bear'

Three years ago, Mr. Zuckerberg, who founded Facebook in 2004 while attending Harvard, was celebrated for the company's extraordinary success. Ms. Sandberg, a former Clinton administration official and Google veteran, had become a feminist icon with the publication of her empowerment manifesto, "Lean In," in 2013.

Like other technology executives, Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg cast their company as a force for social good. Facebook's lofty aims were emblazoned even on securities filings: "Our mission is to make the world more open and connected."

But as Facebook grew, so did the hate speech, bullying and other toxic content on the platform. When researchers and activists in Myanmar, India, Germany and elsewhere warned that Facebook had become an instrument of government propaganda and ethnic cleansing, the company largely ignored them. Facebook had positioned itself as a platform, not a publisher. Taking responsibility for what users posted, or acting to censor it, was expensive and complicated. Many Facebook executives worried that any such efforts would backfire.

Then Donald J. Trump ran for president. He described Muslim immigrants and refugees as a danger to America, and in December 2015 posted a statement on Facebook calling for a "total and complete shutdown" on Muslims entering the United States. Mr. Trump's call to arms — widely condemned by Democrats and some prominent Republicans — was shared more than 15,000 times on Facebook, an illustration of the site's power to spread racist sentiment.

Mr. Zuckerberg, who had helped found a nonprofit dedicated to immigration reform, was appalled, said employees who spoke to him or were familiar with the conversation. He asked Ms. Sandberg and other executives if Mr. Trump had violated Facebook's terms of

service.

The question was unusual. Mr. Zuckerberg typically focused on broader technology issues; politics was Ms. Sandberg's domain. In 2010, Ms. Sandberg, a Democrat, had recruited a friend and fellow Clinton alum, Marne Levine, as Facebook's chief Washington representative. A year later, after Republicans seized control of the House, Ms. Sandberg installed another friend, a well-connected Republican: Joel Kaplan, who had attended Harvard with Ms. Sandberg and later served in the George W. Bush administration.

Some at Facebook viewed Mr. Trump's 2015 attack on Muslims as an opportunity to finally take a stand against the hate speech coursing through its platform. But Ms. Sandberg, who was edging back to work after the death of her husband several months earlier, delegated the matter to Mr. Schrage and Monika Bickert, a former prosecutor whom Ms. Sandberg had recruited as the company's head of global policy management. Ms. Sandberg also turned to the Washington office — particularly to Mr. Kaplan, said people who participated in or were briefed on the discussions.

In video conference calls between the Silicon Valley headquarters and Washington, the three officials construed their task narrowly. They parsed the company's terms of service to see if the post, or Mr. Trump's account, violated Facebook's rules.

Mr. Kaplan argued that Mr. Trump was an important public figure and that shutting down his account or removing the statement could be seen as obstructing free speech, said three employees who knew of the discussions. He said it could also stoke a conservative backlash.

"Don't poke the bear," Mr. Kaplan warned.

Mr. Zuckerberg did not participate in the debate. Ms. Sandberg attended some of the video meetings but rarely spoke.

Mr. Schrage concluded that Mr. Trump's language had not violated Facebook's rules and that the candidate's views had public value. "We were trying to make a decision based on all the legal and technical evidence before us," he said in an interview.

In the end, Mr. Trump's statement and account remained on the site. When Mr. Trump won election the next fall, giving Republicans control of the White House as well as Congress, Mr. Kaplan was empowered to plan accordingly. The company hired a former aide to Mr. Trump's new attorney general, Jeff Sessions, along with lobbying firms linked to Republican lawmakers who had jurisdiction over internet companies.

But inside Facebook, new troubles were brewing.

Minimizing Russia's Role

In the final months of Mr. Trump's presidential campaign, Russian agents escalated a yearlong effort to hack and harass his Democratic opponents, culminating in the release of thousands of emails stolen from prominent Democrats and party officials.

Facebook had said nothing publicly about any problems on its own platform. But in the spring of 2016, a company expert on Russian cyberwarfare spotted something worrisome. He reached out to his boss, Mr. Stamos.

Mr. Stamos's team discovered that Russian hackers appeared to be probing Facebook accounts for people connected to the presidential campaigns, said two employees. Months later, as Mr. Trump battled Hillary Clinton in the general election, the team also found Facebook accounts linked to Russian hackers who were messaging journalists to share information from the stolen emails.

Mr. Stamos, 39, told Colin Stretch, Facebook's general counsel, about the findings, said two people involved in the conversations. At the time, Facebook had no policy on disinformation or any resources dedicated to searching for it.

Mr. Stamos, acting on his own, then directed a team to scrutinize the extent of Russian activity on Facebook. In December 2016, after Mr. Zuckerberg publicly scoffed at the idea that fake news on Facebook had helped elect Mr. Trump, Mr. Stamos — alarmed that the company's chief executive seemed unaware of his team's findings — met with Mr. Zuckerberg, Ms. Sandberg and other top Facebook leaders.

Ms. Sandberg was angry. Looking into the Russian activity without approval, she said, had left the company exposed legally. Other executives asked Mr. Stamos why they had not been told sooner.

Still, Ms. Sandberg and Mr. Zuckerberg decided to expand on Mr. Stamos's work, creating a group called Project P, for "propaganda," to study false news on the site, according to people involved in the discussions. By January 2017, the group knew that Mr. Stamos's original team had only scratched the surface of Russian activity on Facebook, and pressed to issue a public paper about their findings.

But Mr. Kaplan and other Facebook executives objected. Washington was already reeling from an official finding by American intelligence agencies that Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian president, had personally ordered an influence campaign aimed at helping elect Mr. Trump.

If Facebook implicated Russia further, Mr. Kaplan said, Republicans would accuse the company of siding with Democrats. And if Facebook pulled down the Russians' fake pages, regular Facebook users might also react with outrage at having been deceived: His own mother-in-law, Mr. Kaplan said, had followed a Facebook page created by Russian trolls.

Ms. Sandberg sided with Mr. Kaplan, recalled four people involved. Mr. Zuckerberg — who spent much of 2017 on a national "listening tour," feeding cows in Wisconsin and eating dinner with Somali refugees in Minnesota — did not participate in the conversations about the public paper. When it was published that April, the word "Russia" never appeared.

Ms. Sandberg's subordinates took a similar approach in Washington, where the Senate had begun pursuing its own investigation, led by Richard Burr, the North Carolina Republican, and Mark Warner, the Virginia Democrat. Throughout the spring and summer of 2017, Facebook officials repeatedly played down Senate investigators' concerns about the company, while publicly claiming there had been no Russian effort of any significance on Facebook.

But inside the company, employees were tracing more ads, pages and groups back to Russia. That June, a Times reporter provided Facebook a list of accounts with suspected ties to Russia, seeking more information on their provenance. By August 2017, Facebook executives concluded that the situation had become what one called a “five-alarm fire,” said a person familiar with the discussions.

Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg agreed to go public with some findings, and laid plans to release a blog post on Sept. 6, 2017, the day of the company’s quarterly board meeting.

After Mr. Stamos and his team drafted the post, however, Ms. Sandberg and her deputies insisted it be less specific. She and Mr. Zuckerberg also asked Mr. Stamos and Mr. Stretch to brief the board’s audit committee, chaired by Erskine Bowles, the patrician investor and White House veteran.

Mr. Stretch and Mr. Stamos went into more detail with the audit committee than planned, warning that Facebook was likely to find even more evidence of Russian interference.

The disclosures set off Mr. Bowles, who after years in Washington could anticipate how lawmakers might react. He grilled the two men, occasionally cursing, on how Facebook had allowed itself to become a tool for Russian interference. He demanded to know why it had taken so long to uncover the activity, and why Facebook directors were only now being told.

When the full board gathered later that day at a room at the company’s headquarters reserved for sensitive meetings, Mr. Bowles pelted questions at Facebook’s founder and second-in-command. Ms. Sandberg, visibly unsettled, apologized. Mr. Zuckerberg, stone-faced, whirled through technical fixes, said three people who attended or were briefed on the proceedings.

Later that day, the company’s abbreviated blog post went up. It said little about fake accounts or the organic posts created by Russian trolls that had gone viral on Facebook, disclosing only that Russian agents had spent roughly \$100,000 — a relatively tiny sum — on approximately 3,000 ads.

Just one day after the company’s carefully sculpted admission, The Times published an investigation of further Russian activity on Facebook, showing how Russian intelligence had used fake accounts to promote emails stolen from the Democratic Party and prominent Washington figures.

A Political Playbook

The combined revelations infuriated Democrats, finally fracturing the political consensus that had protected Facebook and other big tech companies from Beltway interference. Republicans, already concerned that the platform was censoring conservative views, accused Facebook of fueling what they claimed were meritless conspiracy charges against Mr. Trump and Russia. Democrats, long allied with Silicon Valley on issues including immigration and gay rights, now blamed Mr. Trump’s win partly on Facebook’s tolerance for fraud and disinformation.

After stalling for weeks, Facebook eventually agreed to hand over the Russian posts to Congress. Twice in October 2017, Facebook was forced to revise its public statements,

finally acknowledging that close to 126 million people had seen the Russian posts.

The same month, Mr. Warner and Senator Amy Klobuchar, the Minnesota Democrat, introduced legislation to compel Facebook and other internet firms to disclose who bought political ads on their sites — a significant expansion of federal regulation over tech companies.

*“It’s time for Facebook to let all of us see the ads bought by Russians *and paid for in Rubles* during the last election,” Ms. Klobuchar wrote on her own Facebook page.*

Facebook girded for battle. Days after the bill was unveiled, Facebook hired Mr. Warner’s former chief of staff, Luke Albee, to lobby on it. Mr. Kaplan’s team took a larger role in managing the company’s Washington response, routinely reviewing Facebook news releases for words or phrases that might rile conservatives.

Ms. Sandberg also reached out to Ms. Klobuchar. She had been friendly with the senator, who is featured on the website for Lean In, Ms. Sandberg’s empowerment initiative. Ms. Sandberg had contributed a blurb to Ms. Klobuchar’s 2015 memoir, and the senator’s chief of staff had previously worked at Ms. Sandberg’s charitable foundation.

But in a tense conversation shortly after the ad legislation was introduced, Ms. Sandberg complained about Ms. Klobuchar’s attacks on the company, said a person who was briefed on the call. Ms. Klobuchar did not back down on her legislation. But she dialed down her criticism in at least one venue important to the company: After blasting Facebook repeatedly that fall on her own Facebook page, Ms. Klobuchar hardly mentioned the company in posts between November and February.

A spokesman for Ms. Klobuchar said in a statement that Facebook’s lobbying had not lessened her commitment to holding the company accountable. “Facebook was pushing to exclude issue ads from the Honest Ads Act, and Senator Klobuchar strenuously disagreed and refused to change the bill,” he said.

In October 2017, Facebook also expanded its work with a Washington-based consultant, Definers Public Affairs, that had originally been hired to monitor press coverage of the company. Founded by veterans of Republican presidential politics, Definers specialized in applying political campaign tactics to corporate public relations — an approach long employed in Washington by big telecommunications firms and activist hedge fund managers, but less common in tech.

Definers had established a Silicon Valley outpost earlier that year, led by Tim Miller, a former spokesman for Jeb Bush who preached the virtues of campaign-style opposition research. For tech firms, he argued in one interview, a goal should be to “have positive content pushed out about your company and negative content that’s being pushed out about your competitor.”

Facebook quickly adopted that strategy. In November 2017, the social network came out in favor of a bill called the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, which made internet companies responsible for sex trafficking ads on their sites.

Google and others had fought the bill for months, worrying it would set a cumbersome precedent. But the sex trafficking bill was championed by Senator John Thune, a Republican of South Dakota who had pummeled Facebook over accusations that it

censored conservative content, and Senator Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat and senior commerce committee member who was a frequent critic of Facebook.

Facebook broke ranks with other tech companies, hoping the move would help repair relations on both sides of the aisle, said two congressional staffers and three tech industry officials.

When the bill came to a vote in the House in February, Ms. Sandberg offered public support online, urging Congress to “make sure we pass meaningful and strong legislation to stop sex trafficking.”

Opposition Research

In March, *The Times*, *The Observer* of London and *The Guardian* prepared to publish a joint investigation into how Facebook user data had been appropriated by Cambridge Analytica to profile American voters. A few days before publication, *The Times* presented Facebook with evidence that copies of improperly acquired Facebook data still existed, despite earlier promises by Cambridge executives and others to delete it.

Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg met with their lieutenants to determine a response. They decided to pre-empt the stories, saying in a statement published late on a Friday night that Facebook had suspended Cambridge Analytica from its platform. The executives figured that getting ahead of the news would soften its blow, according to people in the discussions.

They were wrong. The story drew worldwide outrage, prompting lawsuits and official investigations in Washington, London and Brussels. For days, Mr. Zuckerberg and Ms. Sandberg remained out of sight, mulling how to respond. While the Russia investigation had devolved into an increasingly partisan battle, the Cambridge scandal set off Democrats and Republicans alike. And in Silicon Valley, other tech firms began exploiting the outcry to burnish their own brands.

“We’re not going to traffic in your personal life,” Tim Cook, Apple’s chief executive, said in an MSNBC interview. “Privacy to us is a human right. It’s a civil liberty.” (Mr. Cook’s criticisms infuriated Mr. Zuckerberg, who later ordered his management team to use only Android phones — arguing that the operating system had far more users than Apple’s.)

Facebook scrambled anew. Executives quietly shelved an internal communications campaign, called “We Get It,” meant to assure employees that the company was committed to getting back on track in 2018.

Then Facebook went on the offensive. Mr. Kaplan prevailed on Ms. Sandberg to promote Kevin Martin, a former Federal Communications Commission chairman and fellow Bush administration veteran, to lead the company’s American lobbying efforts. Facebook also expanded its work with Definers.

On a conservative news site called the NTK Network, dozens of articles blasted Google and Apple for unsavory business practices. One story called Mr. Cook hypocritical for chiding Facebook over privacy, noting that Apple also collects reams of data from users. Another played down the impact of the Russians’ use of Facebook.

The rash of news coverage was no accident: NTK is an affiliate of Definers, sharing offices and staff with the public relations firm in Arlington, Va. Many NTK Network stories are written by staff members at Definers or America Rising, the company's political opposition-research arm, to attack their clients' enemies. While the NTK Network does not have a large audience of its own, its content is frequently picked up by popular conservative outlets, including Breitbart.

Mr. Miller acknowledged that Facebook and Apple do not directly compete. Definers' work on Apple is funded by a third technology company, he said, but Facebook has pushed back against Apple because Mr. Cook's criticism upset Facebook.

If the privacy issue comes up, Facebook is happy to "muddy the waters," Mr. Miller said over drinks at an Oakland, Calif., bar last month.

On Thursday, after this article was published, Facebook said that it had ended its relationship with Definers, without citing a reason.

In public, Facebook was more conciliatory. Mr. Zuckerberg agreed to testify on Capitol Hill. The company unveiled a gauzy advertising campaign, titled "Here Together," to apologize to its users. Days before Mr. Zuckerberg's appearance in Congress in April, Facebook announced that it was endorsing Ms. Klobuchar's Honest Ads bill and would pre-emptively begin disclosing political ad buyers. It also informed users whose data had been improperly harvested by Cambridge Analytica.

But Mr. Zuckerberg's good-will tour was bumpy. Thanks to intensive coaching and preparation, the company's communications team believed, he had effectively parried tough questions at the April hearing. But they worried he had come off as robotic — a suspicion confirmed by Facebook's pollsters.

Mr. Zuckerberg's political instincts were no more well-tuned. During a break in one hearing, he buttonholed Greg Walden, an Oregon Republican who leads the House Energy and Commerce Committee, to express his surprise at how tough on Facebook Democrats had been.

Mr. Walden was taken aback, said people who knew of the remark. Facebook's leader, Mr. Walden realized, did not understand the breadth of the anger now aimed at his creation.

Personal Appeals in Washington

Ms. Sandberg had said little publicly about the company's problems. But inside Facebook, her approach had begun to draw criticism.

Some colleagues believed that Ms. Sandberg — whose ambitions to return to public life were much discussed at the company — was protecting her own brand at Facebook's expense. At one company gathering, said two people who knew of the event, friends told Ms. Sandberg that if Facebook did not address the scandals effectively, its role in spreading hate and fear would define her legacy, too.

So Ms. Sandberg began taking a more personal role in the company's Washington campaign, drawing on all the polish that Mr. Zuckerberg sometimes lacked. She not only relied on her old Democratic ties, but also sought to assuage skeptical Republicans, who grumbled that Facebook was more sensitive to the political opinions of its work force than

to those of powerful committee leaders. Trailing an entourage of as many as 10 people on trips to the capital, Ms. Sandberg made a point of sending personal thank-you notes to lawmakers and others she met.

Her top Republican target was Mr. Burr, whose Senate committee's Russia investigation had chugged along. The two spoke by phone, according to a congressional staff member and a Facebook executive, and met in person this fall. While critics cast Facebook as a serial offender that had ignored repeated warning signs about the dangers posed by its product, Ms. Sandberg argued that the company was grappling earnestly with the consequences of its extraordinary growth.

She made the same case in June at a conference of the National Association of Attorneys General in Portland, Ore. At the time, several attorneys general had opened or joined investigations into the company. Facebook was eager to head off further trouble.

The company organized several private receptions, including what was billed as a conversation with Ms. Sandberg about "corporate citizenship in the digital age" and a briefing on Cambridge Analytica.

While Facebook had publicly declared itself ready for new federal regulations, Ms. Sandberg privately contended that the social network was already adopting the best reforms and policies available. Heavy-handed regulation, she warned, would only disadvantage smaller competitors.

Some of the officials were skeptical. But Ms. Sandberg's presence — companies typically send lower-ranking executives to such gatherings — persuaded others that Facebook was serious about addressing its problems, according to two who attended the conference.

Facebook also continued to look for ways to deflect criticism to rivals. In June, after *The Times* reported on Facebook's previously undisclosed deals to share user data with device makers — partnerships Facebook had failed to disclose to lawmakers — executives ordered up focus groups in Washington.

In separate sessions with liberals and conservatives, about a dozen at a time, Facebook previewed messages to lawmakers. Among the approaches it tested was bringing YouTube and other social media platforms into the controversy, while arguing that Google struck similar data-sharing deals.

Deflecting Criticism

By then, some of the harshest criticism of Facebook was coming from the political left, where activists and policy experts had begun calling for the company to be broken up.

In July, organizers with a coalition called Freedom from Facebook crashed a hearing of the House Judiciary Committee, where a company executive was testifying about its policies. As the executive spoke, the organizers held aloft signs depicting Ms. Sandberg and Mr. Zuckerberg, who are both Jewish, as two heads of an octopus stretching around the globe.

Eddie Vale, a Democratic public relations strategist who led the protest, later said the image was meant to evoke old cartoons of Standard Oil, the Gilded Age monopoly. But a Facebook official quickly called the Anti-Defamation League, a leading Jewish civil rights

organization, to flag the sign. Facebook and other tech companies had partnered with the civil rights group since late 2017 on an initiative to combat anti-Semitism and hate speech online.

That afternoon, the A.D.L. issued a warning from its Twitter account.

“Depicting Jews as an octopus encircling the globe is a classic anti-Semitic trope,” the organization wrote. “Protest Facebook — or anyone — all you want, but pick a different image.” The criticism was soon echoed in conservative outlets including The Washington Free Beacon, which has sought to tie Freedom from Facebook to what the publication calls “extreme anti-Israel groups.”

An A.D.L. spokeswoman, Betsaida Alcantara, said the group routinely fielded reports of anti-Semitic slurs from journalists, synagogues and others. “Our experts evaluate each one based on our years of experience, and we respond appropriately,” Ms. Alcantara said. (The group has at times sharply criticized Facebook, including when Mr. Zuckerberg suggested that his company should not censor Holocaust deniers.)

Facebook also used Definers to take on bigger opponents, such as Mr. Soros, a longtime boogeyman to mainstream conservatives and the target of intense anti-Semitic smears on the far right. A research document circulated by Definers to reporters this summer, just a month after the House hearing, cast Mr. Soros as the unacknowledged force behind what appeared to be a broad anti-Facebook movement.

He was a natural target. In a speech at the World Economic Forum in January, he had attacked Facebook and Google, describing them as a monopolist “menace” with “neither the will nor the inclination to protect society against the consequences of their actions.”

Definers pressed reporters to explore the financial connections between Mr. Soros’s family or philanthropies and groups that were members of Freedom from Facebook, such as Color of Change, an online racial justice organization, as well as a progressive group founded by Mr. Soros’s son. (An official at Mr. Soros’s Open Society Foundations said the philanthropy had supported both member groups, but not Freedom from Facebook, and had made no grants to support campaigns against Facebook.)

Definers also circulated research about other critics of Facebook, such as Diamond and Silk, the pro-Trump social media stars who had claimed they were treated unfairly by Facebook.

In at least one instance, the company also relied on Mr. Schumer, the New York senator and Senate Democratic leader. He has long worked to advance Silicon Valley’s interests on issues such as commercial drone regulations and patent reform. During the 2016 election cycle, he raised more money from Facebook employees than any other member of Congress, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Mr. Schumer also has a personal connection to Facebook: His daughter Alison joined the firm out of college and is now a marketing manager in Facebook’s New York office, according to her LinkedIn profile.

In July, as Facebook’s troubles threatened to cost the company billions of dollars in market value, Mr. Schumer confronted Mr. Warner, by then Facebook’s most insistent inquisitor in Congress.

Back off, he told Mr. Warner, according to a Facebook employee briefed on Mr. Schumer's intervention. Mr. Warner should be looking for ways to work with Facebook, Mr. Schumer advised, not harm it.

Facebook lobbyists were kept abreast of Mr. Schumer's efforts to protect the company, according to the employee.

A Senate aide briefed on the exchange said that Mr. Schumer had not wanted Mr. Warner to lose sight of the need for Facebook to tackle problems with right-wing disinformation and election interference, as well as consumer privacy and other issues.

The War Room

One morning in late summer, workers layered opaque contact paper onto the windows of a conference room in Facebook's Washington office. Not long after, a security guard was posted outside the door. It was an unusual sight: Facebook prided itself on open office plans and transparent, glass-walled conference rooms.

But Ms. Sandberg was set to testify before the Senate Intelligence Committee — a pivotal encounter for her embattled company — and her aides were taking no chances.

Inside the room, they labored to prepare her for the hearing. They had assembled a binder-size briefing book, covering virtually every issue she might be questioned about, and had hired a former White House lawyer who specialized in training corporate executives.

Facebook lobbyists had already worked the Intelligence Committee hard, asking that lawmakers refrain from questioning Ms. Sandberg about privacy issues, Cambridge Analytica and censorship. The argument was persuasive with Mr. Burr, who was determined to avoid a circuslike atmosphere. A day before the hearing, he issued a stern warning to all committee members to stick to the topic of election interference.

In the committee room the next day was an empty chair behind a placard labeled "Google." Facebook had lobbied for the hearing to include a Google emissary of similar rank to Ms. Sandberg. The company won a partial victory when Mr. Burr announced that Larry Page, a Google co-founder, had been invited, along with Jack Dorsey, Twitter's chief executive.

Mr. Dorsey showed up. Mr. Page did not.

As the hearing unfolded, senators excoriated Google for its absence, earning a wave of negative news coverage for Facebook's rival.

Ms. Sandberg spread neatly handwritten notes on the table before her: the names of each senator on the committee, their pet questions and concerns, a reminder to say thank you.

In large letters were her stage directions: "Slow, Pause, Determined."

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Colorado: Charter School Principal Suspends Entire High School for Failing to Recite School Pledge

by [dianeravitch](#)

Parents of students at a Colorado charter school [filed a federal lawsuit](#) claiming infringement of the students' First Amendment rights after the principal suspended the entire high school for refusing to recite the school pledge.

"Students at Victory Preparatory Academy said their First Amendment rights were violated, last year on September 28, during a school assembly. According to the lawsuit, after standing and reciting the United States Pledge of Allegiance, the students chose not to participate in the school's own pledge in protest of "certain VPA (Victory Preparatory Academy) policies and practices" which they elaborated on in a letter given to the school's Chief Executive Officer Ron Jajdelski."

Charters can treat their "scholars" in an authoritarian way when they are in elementary school, but high school students won't be bullied.

Peter Greene checked into this story and concluded that the charter was at war with the First Amendment. He has more detail and explains why the students refused to recite the school pledge. He also says this is an example of a charter operator who believes he is exempt from the laws known to every other school administrator.

<http://curmudgucation.blogspot.com/2018/11/co-charter-battles-first-amendment.html>

[dianeravitch](#) | November 18, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Colorado](#), [Discipline and Suspensions](#), [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-la4>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Tom Ultican: How Betsy DeVos's Ideology Damaged the Schools of Michigan and Destroyed the Schools of Detroit

by [dianeravitch](#)

Tom Ultican posted [this research about the damage wrought by the Destroy Public Education movement on Michigan and Detroit last March](#). I missed it. It is still painfully current.

What is the DeVos agenda? It is an aggressive version of Christian evangelism that opposes public schools.

He writes:

The destroy public education (DPE) movement's most egregious outcome may be in Detroit and it is being driven by a virulent Christian ideology.

In 2001, Dick and Betsy DeVos answered questions for the Gathering. Dick DeVos opined that church has retreated from its central role in communities and has been replaced by the public school. He said it is our hope "churches will get more and more active and engaged in education." Betsy noted "half of our giving is towards education."

Jay Michaelson writing for the Daily Beast described the Gathering:

"The Gathering is a hub of Christian Right organizing, and the people in attendance have led the campaigns to privatize public schools, redefine "religious liberty" (as in the Hobby Lobby case), fight same-sex marriage, fight evolution, and, well, you know the rest."

"The Gathering is an annual event at which many of the wealthiest conservative to hard-right evangelical philanthropists in America—representatives of the families DeVos, Coors, Prince, Green, Maclellan, Ahmanson, Friess, plus top leaders of the National Christian Foundation—meet with evangelical innovators with fresh ideas on how to evangelize the globe. The Gathering promotes "family values" agenda: opposition to gay rights and reproductive rights, for example, and also a global vision that involves the eventual eradication of all competing belief systems that might compete with The Gathering's hard-right version of Christianity."

In the Gathering interview, Betsy talks about how she and Dick both come from business oriented families. From their experience, they understand how competition and choice are

key drivers to improve any enterprise. She says public education needs choice and competition instead of forcing people into government run schools.

She was also asked how she felt about home schooling? She replied, "we like home schools a lot," and humorously shared, "not sure our daughters do, they were homeschooled for three years." Then Dick added how impressed he was with Bill Bennet's new project, K-12. He said it wasn't a Christian oriented on-line curriculum but it was a complete education program that could help homeschoolers.

By the 1990's Dick and Betsy DeVos were successfully influencing Michigan education policies and using private giving to drive their agenda. Christina Rizga wrote about the DeVos's philanthropy for Mother Jones.

"... [T]here's the DeVoses' long support of vouchers for private, religious schools; conservative Christian groups like the Foundation for Traditional Values, which has pushed to soften the separation of church and state; and organizations like Michigan's Mackinac Center for Public Policy, which has championed the privatization of the education system."

As the new century opened, the DeVos agenda was being ever more adopted in Lansing. If improving the education of children in Michigan was the goal, then the DeVos education agenda has proved to be a clear failure. On the other hand, if destroying public education to accommodate privatized Christian schools was the goal, they are still on track.

Betsy and Dick DeVos got a referendum on the ballot in Michigan in 2000, aiming to revise the state constitution to allow for vouchers, so students could use public funds to attend religious schools. Their constitutional amendment was overwhelmingly rejected by the voters. So, the DeVoses turned to charter schools as their means to promote choice.

From 2000 to 2015, Michigan's scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress fell from 14th in the nation to 43rd.

Ultican describes what happened to Detroit. First, the state wiped out the elected board and established mayoral control. Then the state restored an elected board. Meanwhile the district's debt kept rising as its enrollment was plummeting. Detroit was flooded with charter schools, most of which operated for profit. The district was left with "stranded costs" as students transferred from public to charter schools.

He writes: *The extra-costs associated with privatizing DPS were all born by the public schools.*

As charters continued to open and enrollment continued to fall, the state stepped in again:

Not acknowledging their own role in creating the financial crisis in Detroit, the state government again pushed the elected school board aside in 2009. Education policy was theoretically left under the purview of the school board but financial management would be the responsibility of a governor appointed emergency manager. This time it was a Democratic Governor, Jenifer Granholm who selected a graduate of the unaccredited Broad superintendents' academy class of 2005, Robert Bobb, to be the manager.

Not only did Granholm select a Broad academy graduate, but Eli Broad paid part of his \$280,000 salary. Sharon Higgins, who studies the Broad academy, reports that a civil rights group and a coalition of teachers who oppose charter schools questioned “whether Bobb was in conflict of interest for accepting \$89,000 of his salary from a foundation that supports private and charter schools.”

Bobb made significant cuts to DPS. He closed many schools and eliminated 25% of the districts employees. He also sold several school buildings. The Detroit News reported in March 2010, “Instead of a \$17 million surplus Bobb projected for this fiscal year, spending has increased so much Bobb is projecting a \$98 million deficit for the budget year that ends June 30.”

Bobb blamed unforeseeable costs related to declining enrollment. Curt Guyette at the Metro-Times relates that many people blamed spending on high priced consultants and contracts. Guyette provided this example:

“Of particular note was Barbara Byrd-Bennett, hired by Bobb on a nine-month contract to be the district’s chief academic and accountability auditor. She received a salary of nearly \$18,000 a month plus an armed personal driver. In addition, Byrd, a former chief executive officer of Cleveland’s public schools system, ‘brought with her at least six consultants who are collectively being paid more than \$700,000 for about nine months of work,’ according to a 2009 Detroit Free Press article.”

In 2011, Republican Governor Rich Snyder ushered through two laws that had a negative effect on DPS. The first law, Public Act 4, gave the emergency manager total control and removed all powers from the elected school board. The second law, Public Act 436, created a state school district called the Education Achievement Authority (EAA) which took effect in 2013.

The EAA’s first task was to take over 15 of Detroit’s lowest performing schools. This immediately removed another 11,000 students from DPS and further stressed its finances.

Counting Robert Bobb there were five emergency managers at DPS between 2009 and 2016. Mercedes Schneider reports that “The most recent Detroit Public Schools emergency manager, Darnell Earley, is chiefly responsible for water contamination in Flint, Michigan.”

By 2016, the schools of DPS were in such a disgraceful condition that the New York Times called them “crumbling” and “destitute.” The Times’ article included this quote: “‘We have rodents out in the middle of the day,’ said Ms. Aaron, a teacher of 18 years. ‘Like they’re coming to class.’”

July 1, 2017 the EAA returned the fifteen schools to DPS and the Michigan legislature finally acted to mitigate the debt crisis created in Holland and Lansing not Detroit. Also on July 1, 2017 Nikolai Vitti the new superintendent of DPS took on the challenge or rehabilitating the public schools of Detroit.

Robert Bobb was handsomely paid. So was John Covington. So was Barbara Byrd-Bennett (who is now in prison, after being found guilty of taking kickbacks while CEO of the Chicago public schools). The leaders made lots of money.

The charters were a disaster. The Educational Achievement Authority was an even bigger disaster, consuming high administrative costs and producing nothing for the children of Detroit.

Ultican identifies one of the villains in this chain of events that harmed the children and the public schools of Detroit: the Skillman Foundation of Detroit. With "the best of intentions," this local foundation has supported every raid on the city, its children, and its public schools. It continues to support the Destroy Public Education Movement despite its repeated disasters and its failed experiments on children.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 18, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Betsy DeVos](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Detroit](#), [Education Industry](#), [Failure](#), [Fraud](#), [Michigan](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l8g>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Nancy Bailey: Disrupting Education with Technology is Unhealthy for Children

by [dianeravitch](#)

Veteran teacher Nancy Bailey warns about the [danger that technology poses to child development](#). In her post, she reviews the various efforts to “disrupt” learning and reviews NancyCarlsson-Paige’s newly released toolkit on technology and early childhood education.

She writes:

Public schools continuously change to keep up with progress. Technology has much to offer. But the idea that instruction should be disrupted using technology is putting students and the country at risk. It destroys the public school curriculum that has managed to educate the masses for decades.

Disruption is a troubling word when referring to public schooling.

Gradual change works better with students. Schools should be warm places where students can positively interact with other children and caring adults. Changes implemented gradually are more comfortable for teachers and students.

Technology is a helpful tool, but it won't provide that sense of stability. It's a cold machine. School districts push technology over teachers. They don't stop to think about what it will mean to children and their development.

We don't know what the future effects of technology will be. How will students learn what they need for college and career when they've experienced little but online instruction?

Most people recognize that continuous screen use is problematic. Transforming public schools to where students face even more online time all day makes little sense.

Early childhood teachers express concern that tech is invading preschool education. We know that free play is the heart of learning.

But programs, like Waterford Early Learning, advertise online instruction including assessment for K-2. Their Upstart program advertises, At-home, online kindergarten readiness program that gives 4- and 5-year-old children early reading, math, and science lessons.

Technology is directed towards babies too! What will it mean to a child's development if they stare at screens instead of picture books?

[dianeravitch](#) | November 18, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Disruption](#), [Early Childhood Education](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l9E>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



CTA congratulates Tony Thurmond

by [dianeravitch](#)

No one worked harder for the election of Tony Thurmond as State Superintendent of

Public Instruction than the California Teachers Association. The teachers knew what was at stake. In their view, Tony's opponent, Marshall Tuck, promised to manage the decline of the state's public schools, whereas Tony promised to fight for them.

Here is the CTA statement:

NEWS RELEASE

November 17, 2018

California Teachers Association
1705 Murchison Drive
Burlingame, CA 94010
<http://www.cta.org>
(650) 697-1400

Contacts at CTA: Mike Myslinski at 408-921-5769 or Claudia Briggs at 916-296-4087.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tony Thurmond Wins Historic State Superintendent Race -- All Students Gain with His Victory

Despite Billionaires Bankrolling His Opponent, Thurmond Takes Tight Race at Last, Vows to Fight for All Students

BURLINGAME – Assemblymember and former social worker Tony Thurmond will be California's next Superintendent of Public Instruction. In an historic victory for the millions of public school students across California, Marshall Tuck called Tony Thurmond 11 days after Election Day to concede in a race where every vote mattered.

The most recent results from the Secretary of State are available [here](#).

Despite being outspent by more than 2-to-1 by billionaires backing former Wall Street banker Tuck and his scheme to privatize our public schools, Thurmond prevailed in what was the most expensive race for a state schools chief in U.S. history thanks to the work of thousands of educators, parents and public education supporters.

"Congratulations to Tony Thurmond, California's next Superintendent of Public Instruction. Tony has always been a winner in the eyes of educators who were inspired by his character and genuine support for all the students of our state," said Eric C. Heins, president of the 325,000-member California Teachers Association. "It's clear that educators played a pivotal role in this election. We sent a loud message to the billionaires and corporate special interests who spent nearly \$40 million trying to buy the state superintendent's office: Our public schools are not for sale!"

"Never underestimate the power of public school educators, who stood together in unity to do what's right for our students. We phone-banked, texted, canvassed and volunteered for candidates like Tony who want quality public schools and an equal opportunity to higher education for all children. I want to thank all CTA members for their hard work in this election. We look forward to working with Tony to ensure all students succeed."

“Electing Tony Thurmond as state superintendent and Gavin Newsom as governor were our top priorities. Tony prevailed in the most expensive race for a statewide schools’ chief in the history of U.S. politics because California voters know he will advocate for all students. The misleading attack ads against Tony by the billionaire allies of Marshall Tuck backfired as voters rejected their agenda to take money from our neighborhood public schools to give to their corporate charter schools. Both Thurmond and Newsom will treat our schools as community centers, not profit centers.”

###

The 325,000-member California Teachers Association is affiliated with the 3 million-member National Education Association.

Government Action

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 7:59 pm | Categories: [Administrators, superintendents, California, Teachers, Unions](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbk>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



California: Official Announcement from Tony Thurmond Campaign

by [dianeravitch](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Madeline Franklin
209-210-8950

THURMOND WINS HISTORIC RACE FOR CA SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Pledges to be a champion of public schools and a Superintendent for all California students

California – Saturday, November 17, 2018 – Assemblymember Tony Thurmond is the

projected winner of the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction election. More than a week after Election Day, Thurmond has overcome an 86,000 vote deficit on Election Day to win the election. On Saturday, his opponent Marshall Tuck conceded.

“I want to thank the voters of California for electing me to serve the 6 million students of California, I intend to be a champion of public schools and a Superintendent for all California students,” said Superintendent-elect Thurmond. “I ran for Superintendent of Public Instruction to deliver to all Californians the promise that public education delivered to me – that all students, no matter their background and no matter their challenges, can succeed with a great public education.”

Thurmond was born in Fort Ord, California, and overcame humble beginnings. His mother was an immigrant from Panama who came to San Jose, California to become a teacher. Thurmond’s father was a Vietnam veteran who Tony met when he was almost 40 years old. After Thurmond’s mother died when he was 6 years old, Thurmond moved to Philadelphia with his sibling and was raised by a cousin whom he had never met before. With the help of the public education system and public assistance, Thurmond went on to attend Temple University, where he became student body president.

Thurmond has devoted his career to public service, specifically to at-risk young people. As a social worker, Thurmond spent 20 years working directly with families and youth in education, running school-based mental health services and teaching civics, life skills, and career training.

Thurmond later served on his local city council, school board, and was elected to the California State Assembly in 2014. In the State Assembly, Thurmond authored legislation that expanded the free lunch program and moved funding directly from the criminal justice system to school districts. He served as Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education.

In his campaign for Superintendent of Public Instruction, Thurmond was supported by Senator Kamala Harris, the California Democratic Party, and California’s teachers.

“We talked to voters across the state, and told them what this election means for each of us: It means giving every kid the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century, not just the ones that show the most potential. It means funding our public schools at the levels they deserve, not pouring money into our jails and prisons. It means providing mental health treatment for kids, not arming them with guns. It means supporting our teachers, not demonizing them. It means ensuring every child starts school on the same foot, and providing universal preschool to California’s children. And it means stopping Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos’s anti-education agenda from coming anywhere near California’s public schools.”

Thurmond went on to promise, “As Superintendent of Public Instruction, I’ll fight for these values every day. Because these are the values that will create a better life for all through the power of public education in the great state of California.”

###

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



California: Tony Thurmond Wins Election as State Superintendent of Instruction!

by [dianeravitch](#)

Tony Thurmond [tweeted that Marshall Tuck called to congratulate him](#) on his victory in the race to become State Superintendent of Instruction in California.

At last count, Thurmond was leading Tuck by 4,632,425 (50.8%) to 4,480,240 (49.2%).

There were not enough votes outstanding to change the outcome.

First of all, congratulations to Tony Thurmond for winning and fighting clean.

Second, condolences to Marshall Tuck.

Above all, a Bronx cheer for the billionaires who thought that they could buy this office by heaping millions on the Tuck campaign, twice as much as Tony Thurmond was able to raise.

It is no secret that most of the money for Tony Thurmond was contributed by the teachers' unions. Their money was not inherited, nor did it come from speculation on Wall Street. Their money came from the dues paid by teachers and other members of the union, as well as other unions.

This race was not between two men, but between two competing ideologies.

On one side, behind Thurmond, were the hardworking women and men who teach every day, most of them in the classrooms of California.

On the other were billionaires, who want to impose their DeVosian ideas about the free market on the public schools. They make no bones about their desire to encourage more privatization of public schools.

Tuck's leading contributor, who gave more than \$6 million, was billionaire Bill Bloomfield, a venture capitalist and a Republican. Close behind him were the Walton family (who don't believe in paying their 1 million workers at minimum wage), Eli Broad, Doris Fischer, Arthur Rock, and Richard Riordan. It is likely that none of these people have entered a public school since they were children, if then.

In time, the full list of contributors will be published, and it is sure to include other billionaires who have taken it upon themselves to inflict their wrongheaded ideas on America's children.

My wish is that their loss in this election humbles them, but in reality, I know that those who are billionaires never learn humility.

My wish is that they learn that the voters and parents don't like what they are offering.

My wish is that they would find a new hobby and make a pact to pay higher taxes so that teachers might have a good salary, not only in California but in every state.

Here are some suggestion for what they might do instead of pushing charter schools: build health clinics in every poor community; support school nurses for every school; establish well-supplied libraries in every school; give schools money dedicated to buying musical instruments and hiring someone to teach music, band, and orchestra; build playgrounds where they don't exist and pay schools to set aside time for recess and play. The best idea of all: Insist on paying higher taxes to support education! You can't take it with you, and your children don't need to inherit billions of dollars. It will make them lazy and ruin their lives.

There are so many useful ways that these very rich people could spend their money, ways that would help children and communities.

If they care about our national future, they would invest in good ideas instead of spending hundreds of millions to privatize public schools.

They would be revered instead of wasting their money trying to gain control of something they do not understand.

And, yes, one more thing!

Congratulations, Tony Thurmond for a race well run!

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 5:19 pm | Categories: [Billionaires](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lbc>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Atlanta: Take Note, There Is a New Science Educator in Town with Great Ideas!

by [dianeravitch](#)

Jack Hassard, professor of science education in Georgia, [has discovered a wonderful new science educator with great ideas for the Atlanta Public Schools, and they don't cost a dime.](#)

Veteran education guru Ed Johnson has some tips on how to put science at the center of the elementary school curriculum. His plan calls for using nature, exploring, seeing, touching, paying attention, learning the science that is right in front of you.

Hassard quotes Johnson's advice to the school board:

Atlanta Public Schools superintendent Meria Carstarphen has blogged good news: Let's Play! Every APS Elementary School Gets a Playground! She recaps that, as a consequence of the school board having decided to provide for schools to be more equitable operationally, nine of ten priority elementary schools now have a playground ready for back-to-school. In addition, she reports that a playground at the tenth priority elementary school, Beecher Hills Elementary, is under construction and that the planning process there includes working with a City of Atlanta arborist. Great! So, speaking of Beecher Hills Elementary School...

One of several points of entry onto a system of greenway trails is right next to the gated entry to Beecher Hills Elementary. It is at that entry point to the trails that I sometimes start and end a walk-run. Being out there to emerge in the surroundings and to be open to The Universe always proves a way to more fully engage the senses, and to renew. What am I seeing? Hearing? Feeling? Smelling? Tasting? One the most engaging times out on the trails occurred during a torrential downpour, and I got soaking wet. Still, the rain provided a very different learning context and experience I had not before imagined.

The greenway trails effectively extend Beecher Hills Elementary School's backyard. And because they do, I often think it would be magical to be a kid at Beecher with freedom to play and learn in and from that extended backyard.

The point of entry to the greenway trails at Beecher Hills Elementary lies adjacent to the school's front driveway. From that entry point the greenway meanders northward and down the westward side of the hill upon which the school sits. Then the greenway curves eastward along a fence behind the school before curving northward and connecting with an east-west trail just beyond having crossed a creek.

Environments outside the classroom for students to explore and learn.

Out Beecher's back doors and down the hill, the fence encloses an expansive green field just begging to be played on. The field catches my eye, every time. It always invites me to pause and wonder what would kids do if let loose upon it? What sort of games would they innovate and play? What sort of learning would they innovate and personalize and internalize for themselves? What sort of questions would the kids ask prompted by observations they would have made? Would they even ask questions, having been trained to give only answers à la standardized teaching, learning, and testing? Would teachers run themselves ragged trying to control the kids' play? How would teachers deal with kids' questions, especially questions lacking answers?

And then I think, hmm, nighttime. Hardly any surrounding light! Look up, "billions and billions!" –thanks, Carol Sagan! And, of course, thanks, too, to that astrophysicist guy Neil Degree Tyson who claims "All I did was drive the getaway car" when Pluto got knocked off. So, yep, a telescope, right in the center of the field out back Beecher Hills Elementary School. Can't you just imagine?!

Now there is a radical and innovative idea: Let the children play! Let them learn the lessons right in front of them! Let them understand that science is part of life and they are living in its midst.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 1:00 pm | Categories: [Atlanta](#), [Education Reform](#), [Play](#), [Science](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-laA>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



NPE and NYSAPE Call on New York Officials to Stop Authorizing Charter Schools

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Network for Public Education and the New York State Allies for Public Education—a consortium of 50 parent and educator groups—have issued a [joint statement](#) calling on the state's two authorizing agencies to stop authorizing new charter schools. The

agencies are the New York Board of Regents and the State University of New York.

NPE and NYSAPE invite you to support their action.

The New York State Board of Regents just approved six new charter schools.

Concerned with the drain of funds from public schools, as well as the problems outlined below, several Regents abstained from voting for approval. This is not surprising given all of the problems that the continual expansion of charter schools causes.

SUNY also has the authority to grant charters and the SUNY Board is the authorizer for the Success Academy charter chain that continually seeks to expand.

Enough is enough. Send your letter to the Regents and the SUNY Board today telling them we need a moratorium on charter school approvals.

Here are four reasons why:

Charters do not want all students and often engage in practices that push students out.

Unlike public schools, charters can expel students under the age of 17. Many engage in repeated suspensions and harsh discipline to push students out. They do not have to follow NYS public school rules for student discipline and appeal.

Charters can control their enrollment. No charters, for example, were obliged to take any of the displaced children of Puerto Rico. That is because they are not required to fill seats when students leave, unlike public schools that welcome all any time during the year.

Charters are not held to high standards of accountability, including the charter law.

Although the New York State charter law says that a “charter school shall demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment” of students with disabilities, English language learners and students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch, many fail to do so, and yet do not have their charter revoked. The [Hebrew Language Academy Charter School](#) chain, was just given permission by the Regents to open another school in Staten Island, even though their flagship school in Brooklyn enrolls about only half of the English Language Learners that it should. HLAC also exacerbates segregation in the area schools– while 31% of the the neighborhood district’s students are white, the percentage of white students at HLAC Brooklyn is 52%.

A recent [analysis](#) showed that only 10% of all New York City charter schools actually meet the standard in the law when it comes to English language learners.

Charters are not transparent in governance and reporting.

Unlike district meetings, which are open to the public, the meetings of charter management companies like KIPP, SUCCESS and other chains can be held behind closed doors, even though these CMOs receive tax dollars.

Every year, Success Academy schools flout requirements and do not accurately fill out their Violent and Disruptive Incidences Reports (VADIR). There is a wide discrepancy between their suspensions rates and reported incidents. That violation is ignored despite

the repeated complaints by parents of harsh discipline and frequent suspensions.

There is no accurate reporting of the financial impact that charter schools have on district public schools, who are their primary funder.

A [research paper](#) commissioned by the New York State Education Department estimated substantial reductions (up to \$1000 per student) in Albany public schools in 2010 due to the city's charter schools. It is time that the fiscal impact on public schools be transparent and taken into account before authorization.

For all of the above and more, it is time for a moratorium on charter schools in New York State while both Boards and the legislature address all of these issues and more. Please send your letter, sponsored jointly by NPE and the New York State Allies for Public Education (NYSAPE) to the members of the Board of Regents and the SUNY Board today.

Please post this [link](#) to the letter on social media.

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-the-new-york-state-regents-and-the-board-of-suny-no-more-charter-schools/>

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-laF>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Kentucky: Beware Voucher Fraud!

by [dianeravitch](#)

EdChoice (formerly the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation) conducted a telephone poll of 600 people in Kentucky and found [support for “scholarships,” also known as “vouchers.”](#)

Proponents of vouchers avoid using the V word, because the public understands that it means sending public money to religious and private schools. The public is okay with

scholarships but opposes vouchers.

When proposals for vouchers (or scholarships that allow public money to be spent for religious or private schools) is on the ballot, the voters say no. They said NO last week in Arizona by a vote of 65-35%.

EdChoice and the Goldwater Institute are based in Arizona. The Koch brothers and DeVos' American Federation for Children supported the voucher referendum (called Empowerment Scholarship Accounts), and despite the money and the euphemism, it was defeated overwhelmingly.

Watch out, Kentucky. The voucher zombies are coming for you.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Kentucky](#), [Lies](#), [Vouchers](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-laZ>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Kansas Will Pay TFA \$270,000 for Recruiting 3 Teachers

by [dianeravitch](#)

You read that right. Kansas is a state that has cut taxes and cut its education budget repeatedly and whose teachers are paid poorly. It is under court order to finance its schools adequately. You may recall that former Governor Sam Brownback imposed a far-right policy of cutting taxes to “grow the economy” while starving the schools and other public services. The experiment failed. Trump [appointed](#) him the “Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.”

So now, because of low salaries, Kansas has teacher shortages. The remedy? A lavish contract with TFA to bring in temp teachers.

The Kansas Legislature agreed to pay education nonprofit Teach For America more than \$500,000 this year for a pilot program to recruit 12 teachers to the state.

But the national organization only recruited three teachers for the state in 2018. All of them were placed in Kansas City, Kansas, where the local school district pays their salaries and benefits on top of another \$3,000 per teacher per year to Teach For America.

Meanwhile, the state is still on the hook to pay the nonprofit \$270,000 for training and recruiting teachers with no guarantee they will work in Kansas schools.

Mischel Miller, director of teacher licensure and accreditation at the Kansas State Department of Education, said the contract was intended to help fill a teacher shortage in the state.

"Our intention," Miller said in an interview, "is that those dollars would be used for Kansas teachers."

Yet the Kansas City, Kansas school district says it only hired three Teach For America instructors this year. Two other recruits started teaching in the district last year before Kansas hired the organization.

The state education department says Teach For America told the department it recruited all five of those teachers this year. The department is currently drafting a \$270,000 contract to pay the organization.

A budget document from the Kansas Legislative Research Department dated Oct. 10 states, "Teachers will be paid a salary of \$36,000." But that money actually goes just to recruiting, training and placing each teacher.

That totals \$180,000 from the state for recruiting five teachers, plus \$80,000 to pay for the salary, benefits and travel expenses of a recruiter and \$10,000 for one day of professional development. The rest of the money appropriated during the legislative session, totaling \$250,000, will go back to the state's general fund to be appropriated for the next fiscal year.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Education Reform](#), [Kansas](#), [Kansas City](#), [Teach for America](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-laU>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**





Los Angeles: Austin Beutner's Plan to Disrupt the Schools and Impose the Portfolio Model

by [dianeravitch](#)

The Los Angeles Times [exposed school superintendent](#) Austin Beutner's no-longer secret plan to reorganize the district by downsizing the central office and decentralizing authority to 32 "networks." You may recall that the Gates Foundation set aside money to support "networks," so this may be an effort to get Gates money or simply jumping on the latest fad. It is not as if this is a new idea. Joel Klein created networks about 10 years, as one of four different reorganizations during his time as chancellor of the NYC schools. Beutner seems to think that decentralization to networks will raise test scores. Uh-huh. What part of reorganization raises test scores?

Capitol & Main [explains the logic \(or illogic\) behind the plan.](#)

Times education writers Howard Blume and Anna Phillips say highlights [of the plan] include a purge of "discretionary" staff at the district's Beaudry Avenue headquarters. Budgeting, hiring and curriculum authority would be transferred to LAUSD's 988 district-managed schools, which will be organized into 32 geographic "networks" under the oversight of regional offices. The theory is that cost savings and "charter-like" autonomy will improve student outcomes. Beutner is expected to unveil details next month.

Reimagining's actual reimagineers are outside consultants who carried out a similar reorganization of Newark, New Jersey schools using a highly controversial approach borrowed from Wall Street. Called the "portfolio model," it means each of the 32 L.A. networks would be overseen like a stock portfolio. A portfolio manager would keep the "good" schools and dump the "bad" by turning them over to a charter or shutting them down much like a bum stock. Why that should fare any better than a short-lived LAUSD reform in the 1990s that also divided the district into small, semi-autonomous clusters but failed to budge academic performance remains unclear. The changes in Newark included neighborhood school closures, mass firings of teachers and principals, a spike in new charters and a revolt by parents that drove out former Newark supe — and current L.A. consultant — Cami Anderson.

One wrinkle in LAUSD going portfolio is the March 5 special election to fill the District 5 seat left vacant by the August resignation of disgraced board member Ref Rodriguez. District 5 veteran Jackie Goldberg's October 26 announcement that she is running for a third term in her old board seat could effectively make the contest a local referendum on the Beutner plan. The progressive, twice-elected L.A. City Councilmember and two-term California Assemblymember has never lost a race in her political career. The pro-charter forces on the current one-vote board majority might consider having a kinder, gentler-to-public school families Plan B waiting in the wings.

If Beutner seems clueless, it is understandable. He has no experience in education, and he doesn't know anything about the past. His ideas are based on his experience in corporate America. The people he brings in are reformers who believe in disruption.

The race to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of charter founder Ref Rodriguez after his conviction on various felony charges may well determine the future of Austin

Beutner's plan and Austin Beutner.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Disruption](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Los Angeles](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-I9R>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



The Secret to Being Recognized by Forbes as an "Edupreneur"

by [dianeravitch](#)

Valerie Strauss posts an [analysis of who wins recognition](#) as a leader of the "30 under 30" award by Forbes magazine.

It turns out that the winners of this competition are not the best classroom teachers but the people who are part of the judges' social network. Who are the judges? You will not be surprised to learn that they are part of the TFA-Charter-DeVos privatization network.

Winning depends on connections, not your contributions to students, communities, or knowledge.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 17, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Betsy DeVos](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Teach for America](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-I9d>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



California: Tony Thurmond's Lead over Marshall Tuck Just Grew to 160,000

by [dianeravitch](#)

The vote totals have been growing.

The last report, published by the Secretary of State at 4:59 pm PST, shows a big increase for Tony Thurmond. His total is now nearly 160,000 more than Tuck's.

<https://vote.sos.ca.gov/returns/superintendent-of-public-instruction>

This is nearly a two-point lead.

The charter billionaires spent twice as much on Tuck's campaign as Thurmond received, mostly from teachers and unions.

Passion beats money. Not always. But maybe in this race.

Wow!!

[dianeravitch](#) | November 16, 2018 at 8:38 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Administrators](#), [superintendents](#), [Billionaires](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-laS>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



“Dear Mr. Zuckerberg.” Students Take Their Grievances about Summit Platform to Mark Z.

by [dianeravitch](#)

Students at the Secondary School for Journalism walked out to protest the Chan-Zuckerberg Summit depersonalized learning program, but thought Mark Zuckerberg might not have noticed. [So they wrote him a letter](#) to explain why they don't like interacting for hours a day with a computer. They wrote and told him that they were learning little or nothing, and they complained about the collection of their personally identifiable data. They asked why Summit (and CZI) was collecting all this data without their knowledge or consent. Great points!

The article appears in EdSurge, a tech journal that is partially underwritten by the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative. I bet Mark and Priscilla see it.

They had tried before to address their concerns with the program, says Kelly Hernandez, one of the organizers of the protest. But no matter how many times they talked to their principal, or how many calls their parents made to the school to complain, nothing changed.

“We wanted to fight back with a walkout,” Hernandez, a 17-year-old senior, tells EdSurge, “because when we tried to voice our concerns, they just disregarded us.”

The Secondary School for Journalism is one of about 380 schools nationwide using Summit Learning, a personalized learning program that involves the use of an online instructional software, called the Summit Platform. This program grew out of Summit Public Schools, a network of 11 charter schools based in California and Washington, and soon caught the eye of Facebook, which lent engineers to help build the software. The platform was later supported by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

Earlier this year, Summit Public Schools announced it would be spinning the program out as an independent nonprofit in the 2019-2020 school year.

This is not the first time that the Summit software has attracted questions and protests. Around this time last year, a Connecticut school suspended its use of the software just months after implementing it.

For Hernandez and her classmates, the breaking point came the week of Halloween, when students got their report cards, she says. Some weren't showing any credit for the courses they'd taken and passed—courses that were necessary to graduate. Others had significant scheduling errors. “It was just so disorganized,” Hernandez recalls.

So she and her friend, senior Akila Robinson, began asking around to see who might participate in a walkout. A few days later, on Nov. 5, nearly 100 students left the school to protest Summit.

“We didn't necessarily want attention,” Hernandez says, even though they got plenty from the media. “We wanted the changes we felt we needed.”

Some changes have come. The school dropped the learning program for 11th and 12th grade students, because teachers of those grades didn't receive any professional

development for Summit. It is still using it with 9th and 10th graders, which Hernandez wants to change.

She believes a lot of the problems with Summit fall on her teachers and administrators, who were not properly trained in using it. Summit Learning officials, in an email to Education Week, also attributed the problems described by the students to poor implementation and a lack of professional development for teachers.

But fundamental issues with the learning system, as well as concerns over the data Summit collects and shares about its students, must be addressed with the people behind Summit, Hernandez feels. That's why she and Robinson drafted and sent a letter to Zuckerberg on Thursday.

Below is the full text of the email the students sent to Facebook's chief executive. Diane Tavenner, CEO of Summit Public Schools, is also copied on the note.

[Please open the link to read the students' letter.]

Disclosure: EdSurge has received grant support from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 16, 2018 at 1:00 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Privacy](#), [Students](#), [Technology](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lan>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



New Bedford, Massachusetts, Doesn't Need or Want More Charter Schools

by [dianeravitch](#)

The public schools of New Bedford, Massachusetts, have gone through a remarkable turnaround in recent years. They are getting better and better. In 2016, nearly 60% of the voters of New Bedford opposed any increase in the number of charters in the state. But now the state—in the hands of charter zealots—wants to expand the number of charter

seats in New Bedford. These two citizens of New Bedford explain why this is a terrible idea that will do irreparable damage to the public schools.

[The authors of this article](#) are Joshua Amaral, a member of the New Bedford School Committee and the chair of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Division IX (urban districts), and Bruce Rose, president of the New Bedford NAACP. “Ignore the Charter School Think Tank Crowd,” they say, and they are right. Why sink the ship for the benefit of a leaky rowboat?

They begin like this:

YOU ARE AN EDUCATION RESEARCHER sent to discover best practices in urban schools so that you can replicate them to create results for more kids—kids who you believe are trapped in mediocre schools. You look at three exemplar schools to scale up:

School A has 336 students and rates in the state’s 85th accountability percentile, a measure now used to aggregate a school’s performance on MCAS relative to other schools in the state. This school made 95 percent improvement toward its own goals, such as increasing the percentage of students who score advanced or proficient on statewide exams, or improving attendance rates. Remarkably, 46 percent of this school’s students have a first language other than English, and 75 percent are considered economically disadvantaged. The school has been named a School of Recognition by the state, among only 50 others.

School B has 730 students and rates in the state’s 59th accountability percentile and made 83 percent improvement toward its targets. The school is home to specialized classrooms designed to serve students with severe behavioral and developmental delays, and 27 percent of the school’s students have disabilities, 44 percent are economically disadvantaged, and 21 percent have a first language other than English.

School C has 413 students and rates in the state’s 38th accountability percentile and made 47 percent improvement toward its targets. At the school, 23 percent of the students have a first language other than English, and 58 percent come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

If you had to make the call on which school to expand by 300 percent – to double- or triple-down on – I suspect you would favor schools A and B, New Bedford district public schools Congdon and Pulaski, respectively, over School C, Alma del Mar Charter School, the school actually proposing such an extraordinary expansion.

The New Bedford district public schools have a plethora of higher performing schools. Not just Pulaski and Congdon, but 10 of New Bedford’s elementary schools finished higher in accountability ranking than Alma del Mar, more than half of the city’s primary schools. On improvement toward targets, 18 of the district’s 23 schools exceed Alma’s 47 percent improvement rate. And among those performing worse than Alma? The city’s other two charters: Global Learning and City on a Hill. The district educates a higher percentage of English language learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students and has schools soaring past Alma nonetheless.

Why siphon from the most successful of New Bedford’s schools, which outperform

charters with a more challenging student population, just to increase charter seats? With a concerted and well-funded public relations strategy unmatched by cash-strapped district schools, it seems the only advantage charters have over traditional public schools is in the marketing department. It's a credit to the public relations efforts of charters that the success of the New Bedford district public schools relative to its charters comes as a surprise.

The New Bedford district public schools have undergone a marked turnaround over the last six years, stemming the tide of mediocrity and ineffectiveness that branded the district poorly across the state. The wave of accountability that rolled in post-ed reform hit New Bedford hard. Systems were put in place, issues were corrected, difficult decisions were made. The road to improvement has not always been smooth, but focused leadership and putting students first has left the district primed for takeoff, not takeover.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 16, 2018 at 12:00 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l99>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Colorado: Governor-Elect Jared Polis Packs His Education Transition Team with Privatizers

by [dianeravitch](#)

Coloradans should not be surprised to learn that Governor-Elect Jared Polis [has packed his transition team on K-12 education with people who have a history of preferring charters and vouchers over public schools](#).

Polis himself founded two charter schools and is a fierce advocate for privately managed charter schools. He was [one of the wealthiest members of Congress](#).

So of course he appointed Jen Walmer from DFER, the notorious organization of hedge fund managers who advocate for charter schools, never for public schools, and who are anti-union, pro-merit pay and pro-high-stakes testing. DFER is the face of corporate reform, using its ample resources to undermine public education. Walmer, according to

the article, is an unregistered lobbyist for DFER. The Democratic party of Colorado (and California) both passed resolutions calling on DFER to stop calling itself "Democrats for Education Reform" because its idea of "reform" is to turn public schools over to private management. Its political action arm, Education Reform Now Advocacy, bundles hedge fund money to candidates in state and local races across the nation without releasing the names of the donors. The linked article says that ERN gave out \$1.8 million in Colorado races, "almost all of it on behalf of Polis and Democrats running for the General Assembly. Education Reform Now Advocacy is a dark money group that doesn't disclose its donors."

It gets worse. Polis invited former Republican Congressman Bob Schaeffer to join his transition team on K-12 education. Schaeffer supports vouchers. Not only that, he directs the "Leadership Program of the Rockies," an organization that prepares candidates to run for local school boards and to become active in local politics on behalf of vouchers and other conservative principles. Schaeffer's group was active in leading the effort to turn Douglas County into the first district in the nation to vote for vouchers. The DougCo School Board supported by Schaeffer paid former Secretary of Education Bill Bennett \$50,000 to speak to local civic leaders and praise its voucher plans. After a bitter, divisive fight, the entire pro-voucher board members were ousted by popular vote in 2017.

Schaffer also is chairman of the board of the Leadership Program of the Rockies (LPR) a Republican-leaning organization that provides training on conservative principles and leadership. Its graduates include three of the former members of the Douglas County Board of Education who approved a controversial private-school voucher program in 2011. Schaffer advocated for the state board of education to endorse the voucher program.

The Dougco program led to lawsuits, including a trip all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. It was dismantled last year after voters elected an anti-voucher school board.

Another member of Polis' transition group is Michael Johnston, who ran for governor against Polis and lost. Johnston is a graduate of Teach for America and author of what is possibly the most punitive teacher evaluation law in the nation, known as SB-191. Johnston, of course, favors privately managed charters. I was in Denver in 2010 on the day the SB-191 passed. I was scheduled to debate Johnston, who arrived at the event the minute I finished speaking. He proclaimed that as a result of SB-191, which based 50% of the evaluation of teachers and principals on student test scores, Colorado would soon have great teachers, great principals, and great schools, because the bad teachers and principals would be fired. Reformers across the country hailed Johnston and his law as the dawning of a new day. Last year, one of Colorado's reform leaders, Van Schoales, [lamented the failure of Michael Johnston's law](#). Most teachers were not teaching the tested subjects, so could not be judged by student test scores. All of Colorado's 238 charter schools waived out of this wonderful system designed by one of their champions. The new evaluation system failed: less than 1% of the state's teachers were found to be "ineffective," about the same as before the law. As Van Schoales put it, we "not only didn't advance teacher effectiveness, we created a massive bureaucracy and alienated many in the field."

So what Governor-Elect Polis has pulled together is a transition team devoted to charter schools, vouchers, the discredited VAM method of evaluating educators, and high-stakes

testing.

I had a brief and unpleasant personal experience with Polis in 2010, when I was invited to meet with the Democratic members of the House Education Committee to talk about my reasons for abandoning school choice and standardized testing. We met in a Congressional conference room. I explained that charter schools and vouchers were harming public schools and were part of a national effort to turn public education into a free market (this predated my awareness of Betsy Devos, who makes no bones about her desire to do exactly what I predicted). At the end of my talk, Polis took the floor, announced that my book (*The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*) was "the worst book he had ever read." He then threw the book across the table at me, and said, "I want my \$20 back." Another member of the committee reached into his wallet, pulled out a \$20 bill, and bought the book from Polis. To say he was rude would be an understatement.

Parents of Colorado: Prepare to protect your public schools from your new Governor. He doesn't like public education.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 16, 2018 at 11:00 am | Categories: [Charter Schools](#), [Colorado](#), [Dark Money](#), [Democrats for Education Reform](#), [Education Reform](#), [Vouchers](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-la6>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Restore Reason: What Happens When Government Services Are Privatized

by [dianeravitch](#)

Thanks to Guy Brandenburg for directing me to this [fascinating post](#) about what happens when private corporations take over government services, in this case, reporting the weather.

Restore Reason [writes about the commercialization of weather reporting](#) and draws a parallel with charter schools and vouchers. Please open the link and read the entire post.

I just listened to “The Coming Storm”, by Michael Lewis. I didn’t carefully read the description before diving in, and thought it would inform me about the increasing violence of weather. Rather, I learned about the privatization of weather, or at least the reporting of it, and the Department of Commerce.

Turns out, the Department of Commerce has little to do with commerce and is actually forbidden by law from engaging in business. Rather, it runs the U.S. Census, the Patent and Trademark Office, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Over half of its \$9B budget though, is spent by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to figure out the weather. And figuring out the weather, is largely about collecting data. “Each and every day, NOAA collects twice as much data as is contained in the entire book collection of the Library of Congress.” One senior policy adviser from the George W. Bush administration, said the Department of Commerce should really be called the Department of Science and Technology. When he mentioned this to Wilbur Ross, Trump’s appointee to lead the Department, Ross said, “Yeah, I don’t think I want to be focusing on that.” Unfortunately for all of us, Ross also wasn’t interested in finding someone who would do it for him.

In October 2017, Barry Myers, a lawyer who founded and ran AccuWeather, was nominated to serve as the head of the NOAA. This is a guy who in the 1990s, argued the NWS should be forbidden (except in cases where human life and property was at stake) from delivering any weather-related knowledge to Americans who might be a consumer of AccuWeather products. “The National Weather Service” Myers said, “does not need to have the final say on warnings...the government should get out of the forecasting business.”

Then in 2005, Senator Rick Santorum (a recipient of Myers family contributions) introduced a bill to basically eliminate the National Weather Service’s ability to communicate with the public. Lewis asks his readers to “consider the audacity of that maneuver. A private company whose weather predictions were totally dependent on the billions of dollars spent by the U.S. taxpayer to gather the data necessary for those predictions, and on decades of intellectual weather work sponsored by the U.S. taxpayer, and on the very forecasts that the National Weather Service generated, was, in effect, trying to force the U.S. taxpayer to pay all over again for the National Weather Service might be able to tell him or her for free.”

It was at this point in my listening that I began to think how this privatization story was paralleling that of education’s. In both cases, those in the public sector are in it for the mission, not the money. In both cases, the private sector only “wins” if the public sector “loses”. In both cases, it is in the interest of the private sector to facilitate the failure of the public sector or make it look like it is failing.

Just as private and charter schools profit when district schools are perceived to be of lower quality, Barry Myers has worked hard to make government provided weather services look inferior to that which the private sector can provide. As Lewis points out, “The more spectacular and expensive the disasters, the more people will pay for warning of them. The more people stand to lose, the more money they will be inclined to pay. The more they pay, the more the weather industry can afford to donate to elected officials, and the more influence it will gain over the political

process.”

This is the beginning of a thoughtful post. Please read it.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 16, 2018 at 10:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reform](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Deregulation](#), [Disruption](#), [Education Industry](#), [For-Profit](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l9C>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Jan Resseger on the Debate About Who Governs Public Schools

by [dianeravitch](#)

Jan Resseger always comments thoughtfully about important issues. [In this post](#), she weighs in on the debate about whether it matters who controls public schools by reviewing a much-discussed article by David Labaree, historian of education at Stanford. Open her posts to see the links.

She begins:

There has recently been a debate among guest writers in Valerie Strauss's "Answer Sheet" column in the Washington Post. The Network for Public Education's Carol Burris and Diane Ravitch published a defense of public governance of public schools, a column which critiqued a new report from the Learning Policy Institute. The Learning Policy Institute's Linda Darling-Hammond responded with a defense of the Learning Policy Institute's report, which defends school choice including privately governed and operated charter schools. Finally Diane Ravitch and Carol Burris responded to Darling-Hammond's response. This blog weighed in here last week.

As it happens, Stanford University emeritus professor of education, David Labaree enhances this conversation with a new column on the public purpose of public education at Phi Delta Kappan: "We Americans tend to talk about public schooling as though we

know what that term means. But in the complex educational landscape of the 21st century... it's becoming less and less obvious...."

A spoiler: There is no equivocation in Labaree's analysis. He is a strong supporter of public education, and he worries that by prizing the personal and individualistic benefit of education, our society may have lost sight of our schools' public purpose: "A public good is one that benefits all members of the community, whether or not they contribute to its upkeep or make use of it personally. In contrast, private goods benefit individuals, serving only those people who take advantage of them. Thus, schooling is a public good to the extent that it helps everyone (including people who don't have children in school). And schooling is a private good to the extent that it provides individuals with knowledge, skills, and credentials they can use to distinguish themselves from other people and get ahead in life."

Labaree traces the history of public education through the 19th and early 20th centuries, but he believes more recently: "Over the subsequent decades... growing numbers of Americans came to view schooling mainly as a private good, producing credentials that allow individuals to get ahead, or stay ahead, in the competition for money and social status. All but gone is the assumption that the purpose of schooling is to benefit the community at large. Less and less often do Americans conceive of education as a cooperative effort in nation-building or collective investment in workforce development."

[dianeravitch](#) | November 16, 2018 at 9:00 am | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Corporate Reformers](#), [Education Industry](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l9G>

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New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



California: Tony Thurmond Vs. Marshall Tuck: More Than \$50 Million Spent

by [dianeravitch](#)

I have been watching the [website](#) of the California Secretary of State to follow the close contest between Tony Thurmond and Marshall Tuck. The polls and pundits predicted that Tuck would win.

When the polls first closed, Tuck had an early lead, but millions of votes had not been counted. In California, mail-in ballots postmarked on the day of the election must be counted, and they are still being counted.

After election day, Thurmond went into the lead, then Tuck came back, then Thurmond opened up a lead of 65,000-85,000 votes. That lead has held steady over the past couple of days as the vote total grows.

The vote is not final, and the numbers obviously could change in the days ahead.

Thurmond is winning heavily in Los Angeles (the city that should be Marshall Tuck's base, where the most charters are located) and in San Francisco, which is Thurmond's base.

On October 28, EdSource in California reported that at least \$50 million had been raised for the race, and that Tuck had outraised Thurmond by 2-1.

When all the reports are in, the total amount of spending will surely be even more.

Thurmond was backed by the California Teachers Association and labor unions, meaning that his campaign was paid for by the dues of working people.

Here is a partial list of Tuck donors, a veritable Who's Who of the school choice movement:

Bill Bloomfield: \$6.761 million

Bloomfield is a [billionaire Republican mega-donor who has become a charter school advocate](#).

The Walton Family: \$5.138 million

Walmart billionaires

Eli Broad: \$3.2 million

The Los Angeles billionaire who believes in closing public schools and privatizing them into charters.

Arthur Rock: \$3.2 million

A California [venture capitalist and billionaire](#) who gives millions to Teach for America

Doris Fisher: \$3.1 million

A billionaire, thanks to The Gap and Old Navy; the family gives heavily to KIPP

Richard Riordan: \$2 million

[The former Mayor of Los Angeles](#)

These were the totals as of October 28. We will have to wait a few weeks for a complete accounting.

Undoubtedly these donors could have given twice or three times as much, but must have

decided that it might embarrass Tuck to have three times as much money as Thurmond. Twice as much should have been enough.

One thing is certain. This is the most expensive contest in history for the job of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a job that pays \$175,000 and has limited authority.

The symbolic importance of this race, however, cannot be overstated. If the charter lobby prevails in a deep blue state, it can prevail in every state. It already owns Governor Cuomo in New York (but lost control of the State Legislature, when progressive candidates ousted fake Democrats in the State Senate). It tried and failed to lift the charter cap in Massachusetts in 2016, routed in a public referendum, even though the Governor and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is in the hands of the charter industry.

So, we will continue to keep a close watch on California, where the teachers and the charter billionaires are in a face-off.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 15, 2018 at 7:57 pm | Categories: [Accountability](#), [Administrators](#), [superintendents](#), [Billionaires](#), [California](#), [Charter Schools](#), [Education Industry](#), [Education Reform](#), [Privatization](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-lae>

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<http://dianeravitch.net/2018/11/15/california-tony-thurmond-vs-marshall-tuck-more-than-50-million-spent/>

New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



Students and Parents Reject Zuckerberg's Summit De-Personalized Learning

by [dianeravitch](#)

New York Magazine [takes notice of the rebellion](#) against Mark Zuckerberg's Summit Program, Which puts students on computers for hours a day.

It is important when the world beyond education takes notice of really bad ideas. Zuckerberg can ignore parents in Connecticut and students in Brooklyn, but when the bad news seeps into the mainstream media, he notices.

It begins:

The revolt over the Summit Learning Program, an online learning system partially bankrolled by Mark Zuckerberg and implemented in schools nationwide, has come to Brooklyn. Last week, a group of high-schoolers at Park Slope's Secondary School for Journalism staged a walkout in the middle of the school day to have the "personalized learning" regimen removed from their classrooms.

Summit's leaders say the school's administrators botched the rollout, introducing it to all the grades at once and not putting all of their teachers through training. But this isn't the first time Summit has earned the enmity of the communities it's meant to help. Parents in many other districts throughout the country have also complained, generally with mixed success; in one Connecticut district, parents of middle-schoolers were able to get the program jettisoned after a months-long campaign. (You can read more about the Cheshire revolt against Summit here.) But Brooklyn's student-led charge is a new phenomenon — perhaps because the program has been concentrated until now in middle schools, not high schools. As it continues expanding to higher grades, more teens may well become the faces of their local opposition.

Summit was designed roughly six years ago by a network of West Coast Charter schools, and developed later with software help from Facebook engineers. It's now funded by Zuckerberg and several other billionaires and foundations. The idea is to help kids take charge of their own education, in part by working independently on the software instead of listening to teachers lecture. Some families love it, and the leadership says the dissenters make up a small minority, magnified by their presence on social media. It's impossible to get an objective overall picture, because there are no empirical studies on satisfaction rates, and the data on outcomes is limited.

At SSJ in Park Slope, some of the students' complaints echo those that have arisen in Cheshire and elsewhere. "I didn't like that it was a more self-taught kind of thing," said Akila Robinson, a senior who helped organize the protest last week. "A lot of kids are more comfortable learning the more traditional way." Other students have said it leaves them feeling stranded and requires an uncomfortable amount of screen time.

One teacher, who asked to have her name withheld, said most kids using Summit clearly haven't been able to concentrate. "I'm walking around thinking, This is absolutely insane. They're not learning," she said. "I tell the kids to come off that Walkman, tell them to come off the phone, tell them to come off the website they're on and go back to their modules."

[dianeravitch](#) | November 15, 2018 at 2:00 pm | Categories: [Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-l9y>

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Subject: Occlusion - plus, a new word family quiz

Date: Sunday, November 25, 2018 at 3:54:20 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: M-W's Word of the Day

To: jamico@revere.mec.edu



WORD OF THE DAY

November 25, 2018

occlusion

noun | uh-KLOO-zhun

Definition

1 : the act of **occluding** : the state of being occluded: such as

a : the complete obstruction of the breath passage in the articulation of a speech sound

b : the bringing of the opposing surfaces of the teeth of the two jaws into contact; *also* : the relation between the surfaces when in contact

c : the inclusion or sorption of gas trapped during solidification of a material

2 : the front formed by a cold front overtaking a warm front and lifting the warm air above the earth's surface

Scroll down for more about *occlusion*

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Do You "Party Hearty" or "Party Hardy" (or Both)?

How English Grew Its 'Mustache'

Can a Dinner Be 'Amazing'?

11 "Problems" Inspired by Animal Names

WORD GAMES AND QUIZZES: WEEKLY CHALLENGE

A Thanksgiving Word Quiz

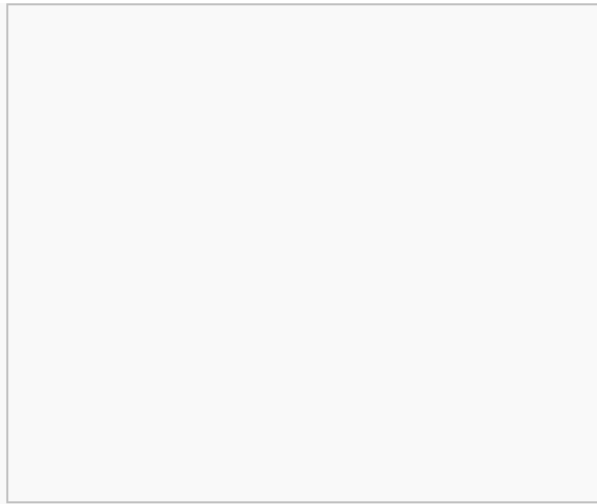
We are thankful for obscure words.

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Nailed this quiz? We have plenty more to try! **TAKE ME THERE** ▮

Did You Know?

Occlusion is a descendant of the Latin verb *occludere*, meaning "to close up." *Occludere* in turn comes from the prefix *ob-*, here meaning "in the way," and the verb *cludere*, meaning "to close or shut." *Occlusion* is one of many English terms derived from *cludere*. Some others are [recluse](#), [seclusion](#), and [exclude](#). An occlusion occurs when something has been closed up or blocked off. Almost all heart attacks are the result of the occlusion of a coronary (heart) artery by a blood clot. When a person's upper and lower teeth form a [malocclusion](#), they close incorrectly or badly. An occlusion, or [occluded](#) front, happens when a fast-moving cold front overtakes a slow-moving warm front and slides underneath it, lifting the warm air and blocking its movement.



Examples of OCCLUSION

The meteorologist said that the weakening *occlusion* heading up the coast would lead to off-and-on rain showers throughout the night.

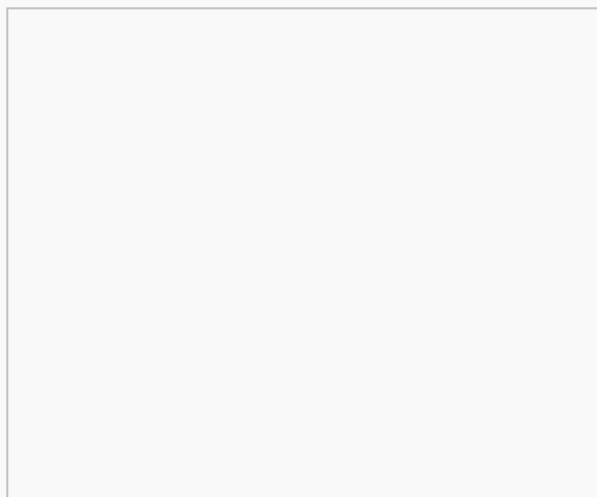
"The company's facial recognition technology can identify a particular person even in complex situations and accounts for variables like facial changes, age-gender handling, as well as facial *occlusion*."

— **Abhishek Baxi**, *Forbes*, 28 Sept. 2018

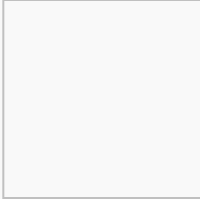
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What member of the *claudere* family can refer to a monastery or convent?

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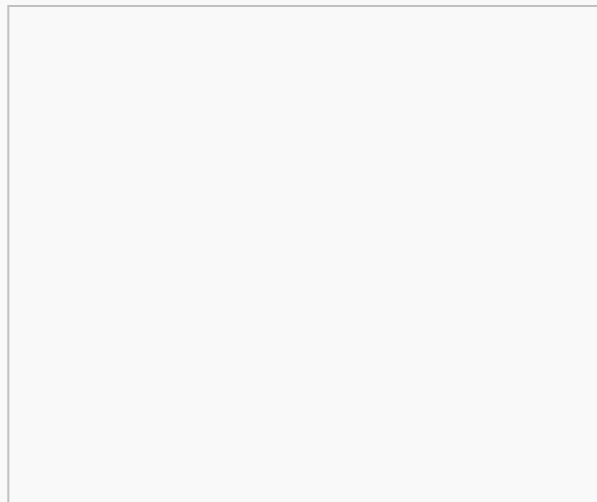
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Subject: Occlusion - plus, a new word family quiz

Date: Sunday, November 25, 2018 at 3:26:54 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: M-W's Word of the Day

To: dburridge@reverek12.org



WORD OF THE DAY

November 25, 2018

occlusion

noun | uh-KLOO-zhun

Definition

1 : the act of **occluding** : the state of being occluded: such as

a : the complete obstruction of the breath passage in the articulation of a speech sound

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**Can a Dinner Be
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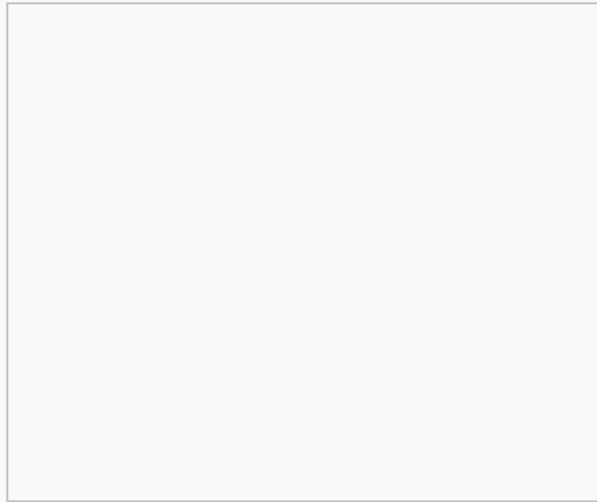
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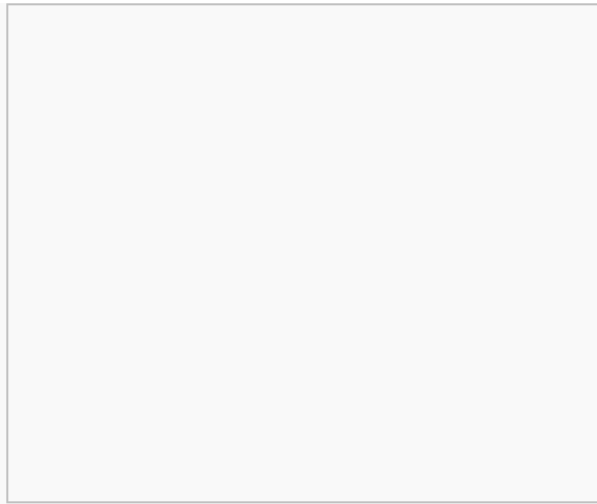
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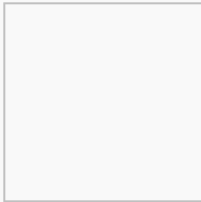
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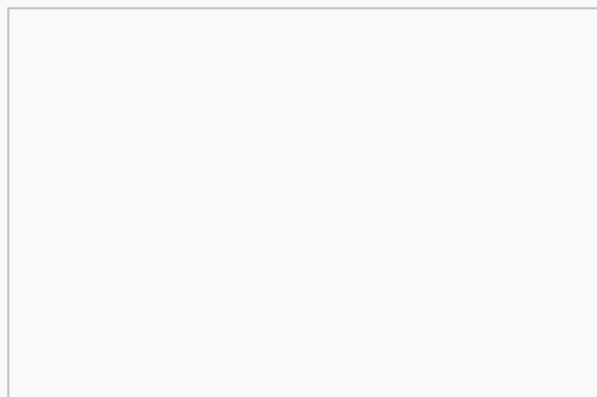
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Date: Sunday, November 25, 2018 at 3:26:44 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: M-W's Word of the Day

To: kverrill@revere.mec.edu



WORD OF THE DAY

November 25, 2018

occlusion ☐

noun | uh-KLOO-zhun

Definition

1 : the act of **occluding** : the state of being occluded: such as

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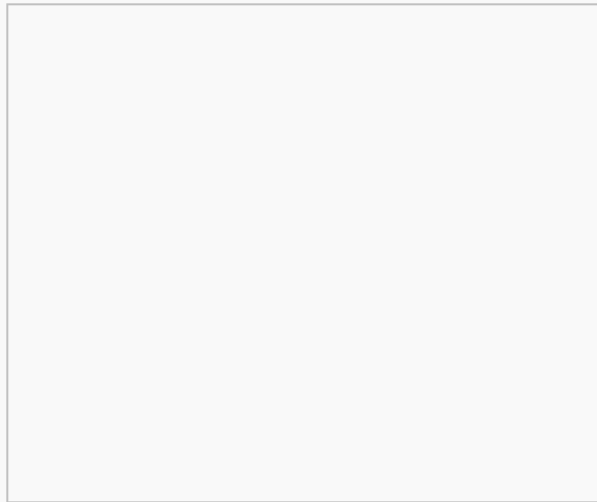
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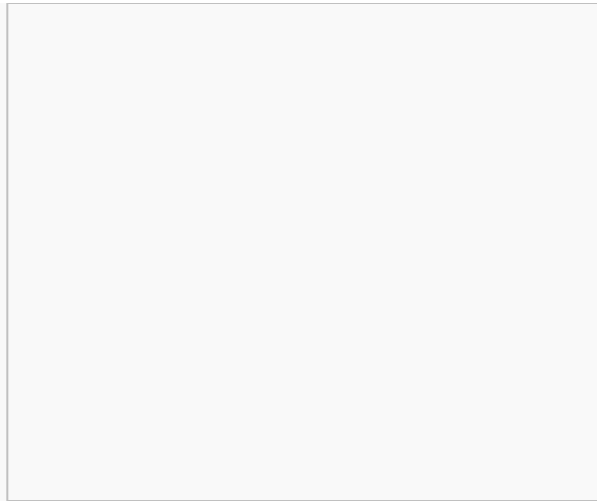
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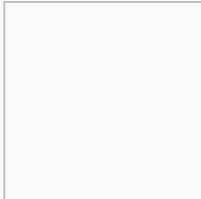
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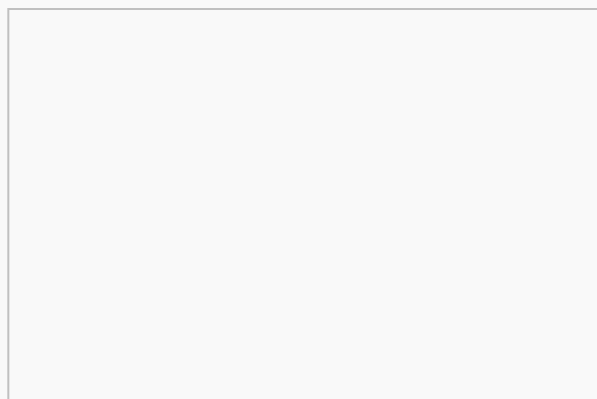
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Subject: [New post] China Moving Ahead with “Social Credit” Rating System

Date: Friday, November 23, 2018 at 2:01:17 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Diane Ravitch's blog

To: mcatyb@revere.mec.edu

Respond to this post by replying above this line

New post on **Diane Ravitch's blog**



China Moving Ahead with “Social Credit” Rating System

by [dianeravitch](#)

Bloomberg News reports on China’s obliteration of privacy:

China’s plan to judge each of its 1.3 billion people based on their social behavior is moving a step closer to reality, with Beijing set to adopt a lifelong points program by 2021 that assigns personalized ratings for each resident.

The capital city will pool data from several departments to reward and punish some 22 million citizens based on their actions and reputations by the end of 2020, according to a plan posted on the Beijing municipal government's website on Monday. Those with better so-called social credit will get "green channel" benefits while those who violate laws will find life more difficult.

The Beijing project will improve blacklist systems so that those deemed untrustworthy will be "unable to move even a single step," according to the government's plan. Xinhua reported on the proposal Tuesday, while the report posted on the municipal government's website is dated July 18.

China has long experimented with systems that grade its citizens, rewarding good behavior with streamlined services while punishing bad actions with restrictions and penalties. Critics say such moves are fraught with risks and could lead to systems that reduce humans to little more than a report card.

Beijing's efforts represent the most ambitious yet among more than a dozen cities that are moving ahead with similar programs.

Hangzhou rolled out its personal credit system earlier this year, rewarding "pro-social behaviors" such as volunteer work and blood donations while punishing those who violate traffic laws and charge under-the-table fees. By the end of May, people with bad credit in China have been blocked from booking more than 11 million flights and 4 million high-speed train trips, according to the National Development and Reform Commission.

According to the Beijing government's plan, different agencies will link databases to get a more detailed picture of every resident's interactions across a swathe of services. The proposal calls for agencies including tourism bodies, business regulators and transit authorities to work together.

The tracking of individual behavior in China has become easier as economic life moves online, with apps such as Tencent's WeChat and Ant Financial's Alipay a central node for making payments, getting loans and organizing transport. Accounts are generally linked to mobile phone numbers, which in turn require government IDs.

The final version of China's national social credit system remains uncertain. But as rules forcing social networks and internet providers to remove anonymity get increasingly enforced and facial recognition systems become more popular with policing bodies, authorities are likely to find everyone from internet dissenters to train-fare skippers easier to catch -- and punish -- than ever before.

[dianeravitch](#) | November 23, 2018 at 2:00 pm | Categories: [Education Reform](#) | URL: <https://wp.me/p2odLa-ld7>

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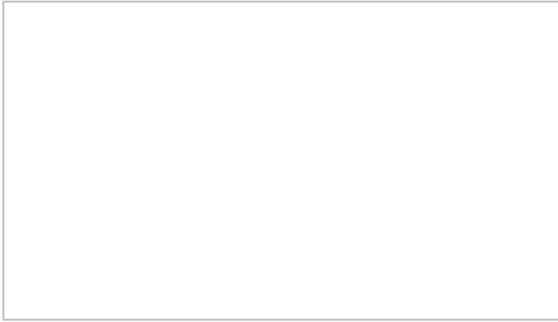
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Subject: Facial Recognition Software Helps Identify Unknown Figures from the Civil War, Vanilla's First-Known Use, Model Airplanes Powered by Electric Fields and More
Date: Wednesday, November 21, 2018 at 5:59:08 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Smithsonian.com
To: erappa@revere.mec.edu

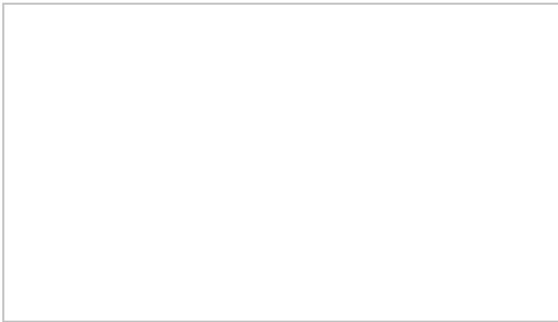
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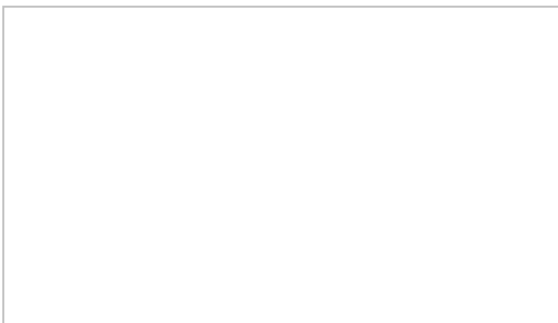
Facial Recognition
Software Is Helping
Identify Unknown Figures
in Civil War Photographs



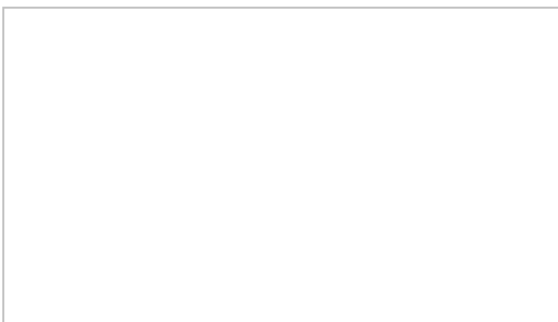
Vanilla's First-Known Use
Came 2,500 Years Earlier
and Half a World From
Where We Thought



MIT Flies Model Airplane
Powered by the Blue
Glow of Electric Fields
and Ionic Winds

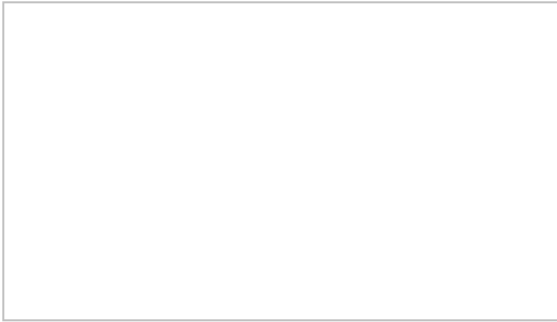


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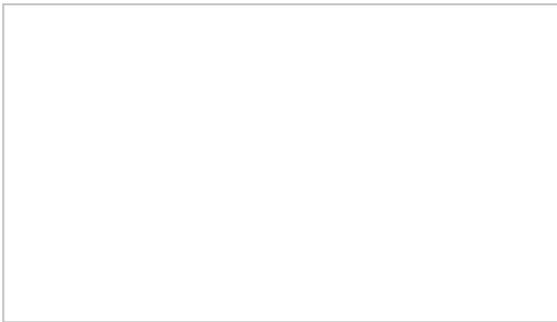


How a Changing Climate
May Have Killed Off the
Marsupial Lion

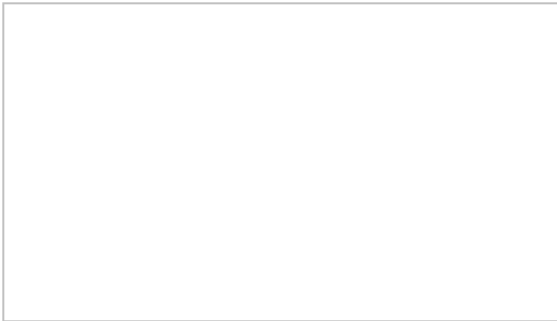




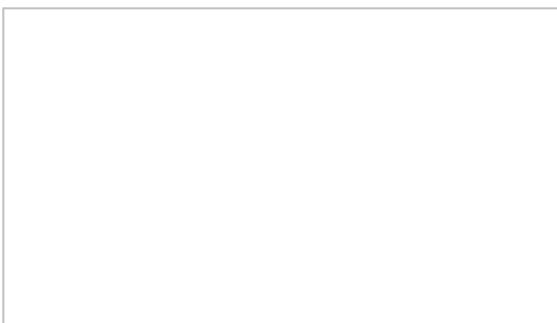
These Ants Immobilize
Prey With Acid Then Drag
Them Back to Nest for
Dismemberment



Rapa Nui Representatives
Visit British Museum to
Discuss Repatriation of
Moai Statue



Brown Recluse Silk Is
Stronger Than Steel
Because It's Constructed
Like a Cable



French Report
Recommends the Full
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PHOTO OF THE DAY

"The Living Goddess of Nepal" Photo by Maria Contreras Coll

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Subject: School shootings have fueled a \$2.7 billion school safety industry. What makes kids safer? - Washington Post

Date: Sunday, November 18, 2018 at 8:21:55 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Robert O'Brien

To:

School shootings have fueled a \$2.7 billion school safety industry. What makes kids safer?

Armored school doors, bulletproof whiteboards and secret snipers

Billions are being spent to protect children from school shootings. Does any of it work?

The company that sells these bulletproof doors to schools says that several they've talked to are "extremely interested." (Cassi Alexandra for The Washington Post)

<div class="noscript-warning"> Warning: This graphic requires JavaScript. Please enable JavaScript for the best experience.
</div>

The expo had finally begun, and now hundreds of school administrators streamed into a sprawling, chandeliered ballroom where entrepreneurs awaited, each eager to explain why their product, above all others, was the one worth buying.

Waiters in white button-downs poured glasses of chardonnay and served meatballs wrapped with bacon. In one corner, guests posed with colorful boas and silly hats at a photo booth as a band played Jimmy Buffett covers to the rhythm of a steel drum. For a moment, the festive summer scene, in a hotel 10 miles from Walt Disney World, masked what had brought them all there.

This was the thriving business of campus safety, an industry fueled by an overwhelmingly American form of violence: school shootings.

At one booth, two gray-haired men were selling a 300-pound ballistic whiteboard — adorned with adorable animal illustrations and pocked with five bullet holes — that cost more than \$2,900.

“What we want to do is just to give the kids, the teachers, a chance,” one of them said.

“So they can buy a few minutes,” the other added.

Elsewhere at the July conference, vendors peddled tourniquets and pepper-ball guns, facial-recognition software and a security proposal that would turn former Special Operations officers into undercover teachers. Threaded into every pitch, just five months after a Parkland, Fla., massacre, was the implication that their product or service would make students safer — that, if purchased, it might save a life.

What few of the salespeople could offer, however, was proof.

Although school security has grown into a [\\$2.7 billion market](#) — an estimate that does not account for the billions more spent on armed campus police officers — little research has been done on which safety measures do and do not protect students from gun violence. Earlier this fall, The Washington Post sent surveys to [every school in its database](#) that had endured a shooting of some kind since the 2012 killings of 20 first-graders in Newtown, Conn., which prompted a surge of security spending by districts across the country.

Superintendent Randy Russell checks camera feeds at Freeman High School in Rockford, Wash., which spent about \$200,000 on new security after a deadly shooting last year. (Rajah Bose/For The Washington Post)

Of the 79 schools contacted, 34 provided answers, including Sandy Hook Elementary. Their responses to questions about what they learned — some brief but many rich in detail — provide valuable insight from administrators in urban, suburban and rural districts who, as a group, have faced the full spectrum of campus gun violence: targeted, indiscriminate, accidental and self-inflicted.

When asked what, if anything, could have prevented the shootings at their schools, nearly half replied that there was nothing they could have done. Several, however, emphasized the critical importance of their staffs developing deep, trusting relationships with students, who often hear about threats before teachers do.

Only one school suggested that any kind of safety technology might have made a difference. Many had robust security plans already in place but still couldn't

stop the incidents.

In 2016, Utah's Union Middle School had a surveillance system, external doors that could be accessed only with IDs and an armed policewoman, known as a resource officer, when a 14-year-old boy shot another student twice in the head during a confrontation outside the building just after classes ended.

"Even if we would have had metal detectors, it would not have mattered," wrote Jeffrey P. Haney, district spokesman. "If we would have had armed guards at the entrance of the school, it would not have mattered. If we would have required students to have see-through backpacks and bags, it would not have mattered."

Excerpts from Union Middle School's survey responses

The survey responses are consistent with a federally funded 2016 study by Johns Hopkins University that concluded there was "limited and conflicting evidence in the literature on the short- and long-term effectiveness of school safety technology."

The schools that have experienced gun violence consistently cited simple, well-established safety measures as most effective at minimizing harm: drills that teach rapid lockdown and evacuation strategies, doors that can be secured in seconds and resource officers, or other adults, who act quickly.

But fear has long dictated what schools invest in, and although campus shootings remain extremely rare, many superintendents are under intense pressure from parents to do something — anything — to make their kids safer. It was the nation's renewed anxiety, after 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High in February, that had drawn so many administrators to the National School Safety Conference at the Florida hotel, 200 miles north of Parkland.

People wait to hear from students after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., in February. (Amy Beth Bennett/South Florida Sun-Sentinel/AP)

Also there, hoping to capture some piece of the new spending, were 105 vendors, an all-time high for the expo and a 75 percent increase over the previous year.

"This is our first school conference that we've ever done," said SAM Medical

sales director Denise Ehlert, who, at one point that evening, knelt down and encouraged a 6-year-old girl to tighten a tourniquet on a woman's arm as a way to demonstrate that anyone could do it.

"This is brand new. . . . This is our first show," said Paul Noe, who had come to sell a high-tech, armored classroom door that, for the price of \$4,000, he claimed could stop bullets, identify the weapon, photograph the shooter and notify police. The bright yellow one they'd put on display had been shot 57 times.

Bullets stopped by this armored classroom door, which costs up to \$4,000, are marked by the style and caliber of the weapon that fired them. (Cassi Alexandra/For The Washington Post)

"We just released it in the past couple of months to be available to schools, and we've been obviously overwhelmed with interest," said Monte Scott, who sells guns that fire balls packed with a potent pepper mixture meant to disable a shooter. Scott had just returned from training U.S. troops in Afghanistan on how to use the weapons in a combat zone.

Echoing a frequent refrain at the expo, Justin Kuhn said his own children, not money, led him to found his company, which produces an elaborate door-security and weapons-detection system.

Although Kuhn, who had previously invented a scraper blade and a car wax, acknowledged he didn't know whether his new product would have stopped the attack at Stoneman Douglas, he had still tried to leverage the bloodshed. Standing next to his company's 2,500-pound aluminum-framed vestibule, he recalled a meeting in Indiana with one district's head of school safety who had noted that the price tag for Kuhn's entire system seemed steep.

"If you think \$500,000 is expensive, go down to Parkland, Florida, and tell 17 people \$500,000 is expensive. That's \$29,000 a kid," Kuhn recalled saying. "Every person would pay \$29,000 a kid to have their kid alive."

Freeman High upgraded its cameras to high definition after last year's shooting. (Rajah Bose/For The Washington Post)

By this spring, Huffman High in Birmingham, Ala., had, in security parlance, been "hardened," a term that in recent years has migrated from anti-terrorism circles to school board meetings. Surveillance cameras were mounted inside and out, and Huffman's 1,370 students were periodically checked for weapons, both with

handheld and walk-through metal detectors, administrators say. Three resource officers patrolled the hallways.

But none of those measures saved the life of Courtlin Arrington, a senior who was about to leave school one afternoon in March when a boy showing off a handgun unintentionally fired it, sending a round through the girl's chest two months before her graduation.

How the weapon got into Huffman remains unclear — Arrington's family has sued the district, limiting what administrators can say — but the incident highlights a theme that appears throughout the survey responses: No amount of investment in security can guarantee a school protection from gun violence.

Much of what can be done to prevent harm is beyond any school's control because, in a country with more guns — [nearly 400 million](#) — than people, children are at risk of being shot no matter where they are. A [2016 study](#) in the American Journal of Medicine found that, among high-income nations, 91 percent of children younger than 15 who were killed by gunfire lived in the United States.

But several administrators did point to specific steps that at least contained the attacks on their schools.

At Florida's Forest High in April, for example, teachers and teens who had undergone safety training locked classroom doors and barricaded them with chairs and desks just seconds after realizing that a man with a shotgun was in the hallway. He fired through one door and wounded a student but surrendered shortly after failing to get inside.

A month later, at Dixon High in Illinois, resource officer Mark Dallas heard shots near the school gym, rushed toward the noise and in, an exchange of gunfire, struck the shooter, who was quickly arrested.

Increased spending on school resource officers

After the February 2017 shooting in Parkland, many school districts in Florida sharply increased the amount they spent per school year for armed officers.

Parkland

shooting

Source: Data provided by school districts and

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Seven of the 23 surveyed schools that had officers at the time of their shootings indicated that they played a direct role in limiting the harm done. Still, what Dallas did is exceedingly rare. The Post's analysis identified just one other case over the past 19 years in which a resource officer gunned down an active shooter. (To put that in perspective, at least seven shootings in the same period were halted by malfunctioning weapons or by the gunman's inability to handle them.)

While the mere presence of the officers may deter some gun violence, The Post found that, in dozens of cases, it didn't: Among the more than 225 incidents on campuses since 1999, at least 40 percent of the affected schools employed an officer.

Beyond armed security or any other particular safety measure, survey respondents emphasized that nothing was more important to minimizing the violence than preparation.

This Northern California school responded to a November 2017 shooting by locking down in less than a minute. The gunman fired more than 100 rounds at the buildings but could not enter. (Elijah Nouvelage/AFP/Getty Images)

Last November, staff at Rancho Tehama Elementary, a school in rural Northern California, heard what sounded like gunshots and hustled the children outside into the building. All students and staff had locked down, something they regularly practiced, 48 seconds after a secretary called for it — and just 10 seconds before a man with an AR-15-style rifle reached the quad. The gunman, who had already killed five people during his rampage, fired more than 100 rounds, shattering glass and tearing holes in walls.

He tried to enter classrooms and the main office, but all were secured. Six minutes after arriving, he gave up and left, taking his own life a short time later. One student, age 6, was wounded but survived.

Excerpts from Rancho Tehama Elementary School's survey responses

The school's security plan worked "flawlessly," wrote Superintendent Richard Fitzpatrick, but that didn't diminish the indignation he felt that his students and staff had suffered through the terror — and that so little had been done to ensure someone else couldn't attempt to do the same thing, there or at any other American school.

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Without what Fitzpatrick called "sensible gun control . . . We are largely powerless from determined shooters with high-capacity, high-velocity, semi-automatic assault rifles."

This Orlando expo for school security products had a record 105 vendors in July, 75 percent more than last year's. (Cassi Alexandra/For The Washington Post)

The idea for Jordan Goudreau's business came to him in Puerto Rico, where he had traveled to work in private security in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Goudreau, a U.S. Army combat veteran, was making lots of money on the island, he said, but the new opportunity was too enticing to pass up.

"I saw Parkland, and I was like, 'Well, nobody's really tackling this, so I want to fix this,' " Goudreau explained at the expo in Florida, where the state legislature had just committed more than a quarter-billion dollars to school safety.

The solution, Goudreau concluded, was to embed former Special Operations agents, posing as teachers, inside schools. He argued that the benefits over resource officers were obvious.

First, because the children wouldn't know who his guys really are (or that they're armed and adept at counterterrorism tactics), students would be more likely to open up, giving agents a chance to glean information that could expose a potential threat.

"He's just a — he's a cool shop teacher: 'Hey, what's up, fellas,' " said Goudreau, 42, envisioning a potential conversation with a child. "I go sit down with a kid who's alone, playing 'Dungeons and Dragons,' and I just try to see whether there's any problems."

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"The beauty of it is it's all for the price of a Netflix subscription, so it's really hard to argue with me about, 'Well, it costs too much.' You can't tell me that," insisted Goudreau, hair buzzed and jaw square.

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"But we don't want to. We don't want that," he said. "We want private money, because it's faster."

Among the many challenges educators face in trying to protect their students from harm is determining what product, or person, to trust.

As [Home Depot](#) and [Walmart](#) market \$150 bulletproof backpacks to frightened parents, administrators are being inundated with pitches from entrepreneurs pushing new concepts that make grand promises. One superintendent who responded to the survey said that within hours of a shooting earlier this year, her inbox was "flooded from vendors with some pretty disrespectful and tacky statements: 'had you had this . . .'; 'if you had this . . .' "

The industry is also rife with self-appointed experts and consultants who claim to know what safety measures are most effective, but given that so little government or academic research has been done on what insulates students from on-campus gun violence, it's enormously difficult for schools to reach conclusions based in fact.

"Decisions about whether to invest in school security technology for a school or school district are complex," the Johns Hopkins study said. "Many choices about the technology selected, however, may be made with incomplete information or

with information that is influenced more by political or reactionary consideration than by local conditions.”

Superintendent Randy Russell checks in to Freeman High’s sign-in system, which can run real-time background checks. (Rajah Bose/For The Washington Post)

For administrators at the expo, trying to understand which vendors were true authorities was especially tricky, in part because, like Goudreau, dozens had worked in other industries before pivoting to school security.

Joe Taylor, co-founder of Nightlock, created a residential door barricade 15 years ago after someone tried to break into his parents’ home. Back then, he never envisioned producing a version for classrooms. Now, schools make up 95 percent of his business.

As he explained that the company had made the transition after being bombarded with requests following the Sandy Hook shooting, a man approached his booth.

“I just bought about \$7,000 worth of these,” said Cas Gant, an assistant principal from a charter school in Panama City, Fla.

Taylor noted that, at one point, his devices were back-ordered nearly two months.

Nightlock owner Joe Taylor, center, sells 95 percent of his company’s door barricades to schools. (Cassi Alexandra/For The Washington Post)

“Right after the Parkland shooting —” he said, pausing.

“A surge?” asked Gant’s wife, Desiree.

“There was a big surge,” he said. “But we’re finally caught up.”

“That’s good,” she said. “Anything to keep our babies safe.”

As the men continued discussing the door lock, Desiree looked around, taking in the scene. Her husband had attended school safety expos before, but this was her first.

“This is sad. I came in here with my mouth wide open,” she murmured. “Isn’t it

scary that we literally have to go through this — that all of these vendors are here?"

Carl Manna, an assistant principal at another Florida high school, felt the same way as he wandered the room, though none of this was new to him.

At one booth, he paused to stare at a photo from Forest High showing the desks and chairs that had been stacked to the classroom's ceiling to keep the gunman out. Months earlier, Manna had pretended to be an active shooter in a training video his school produced.

"That," he said, "is what the room looked like after I left."

1:49

Critics argue that one aspect of the training known as "Counter," which teaches students to confront shooters, is dangerous and irresponsible. (Amber Ferguson/The Washington Post)

The video opens with Manna, in jeans and a dark hoodie, stalking Branford High's hallways. In his right hand, he holds a water pistol wrapped with black tape.

Manna, also the narrator, explains that the video would review "ALICE" training, a set of strategies developed by an Ohio-based company that teaches people how to respond to active shooters. The acronym stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate. "The proper use of these five steps could save your life," he says, as the video illustrates a series of widely accepted approaches to staying safe in an active-shooter situation.

Then, at the 2:13 mark, a plastic Germ-X hand sanitizer bottle appears on the screen, followed by a 20-ounce Mountain Dew, a travel mug and an Adobe

Photoshop hardcover textbook.

"Once you have locked and barricaded the door, quickly move to an area out of sight," Manna says. "Grab several items you can use to protect yourself. Every room is equipped with something that could distract and defend against the aggressor."

Seconds later, the video shows Manna and a disguised administrator at another high school each entering classrooms, their guns raised. When Manna walks in, he's bombarded with flying bottles, books and a backpack before the teenagers rush him. In the other video, kids tackle the man to the floor directly beneath an American flag mounted to the wall.

This is what the ALICE Training Institute describes as "counter."

The drills have grown in popularity in recent years, and many schools, including some of those surveyed, have credited its conventional lockdown and evacuation training with saving the lives of students and staff. But numerous ALICE critics — including consultants, school psychologists, safety experts and parents — have argued that teaching children to physically confront gunmen, under any circumstances, is dangerous and irresponsible.

"What if the person is ex-military or the person has police training, and you're teaching the student to throw a can of green beans or attack?" asked Joe E. Carter, vice president of business development and marketing at United Educators, an insurance company that covers more than 800 K-12 schools around the country. "I haven't seen any data out there — real data — that this is something that makes it safer."

Representatives from ALICE, which was founded by a former police officer, insist that the counter strategies should be used as a last resort and that schools are responsible for deciding what's suitable for their students. Colleen Lerch, a marketing specialist at the company, said their instructors recommend "SWARM" techniques — in which kids may gang tackle shooters — only to students who are at least 13 or 14 years old.

"At this age, it is statistically very high that the shooter will be the same age as potential victims. A room full of 14 year old's can easily control another 14 year old," Lerch asserted in an email to The Post, though she provided no evidence to

support either claim.

In fact, a third of shooters who attack middle and high schools are older than their victims, according to a Post analysis. Also, while The Post found that adults who were not members of law enforcement have subdued more than a dozen school shooters over the past 19 years — including on at least three campuses that underwent ALICE training — the company could not point to a single case in which students used its counter techniques to take down a gunman.

Parents and students leave Freeman High near Spokane, Wash., after last year's shooting. (Colin Mulvany/Spokesman-Review)

On multiple occasions, however, students who have confronted armed attackers, whether on purpose or accidentally, have been killed or wounded. Last year, a 15-year-old boy was shot to death at Freeman High, just outside Spokane in rural Rockford, Wash., after he tried to stop an armed student in the hallway. Three months later, a 17-year-old was killed when he came upon a gunman in the bathroom who was readying an attack at Aztec High in New Mexico, and a 17-year-old girl was wounded when she did the same thing at Alpine High in Texas two years ago.

Excerpts from Aztec High School's survey responses

Malcolm Hines, head of safety for the Florida district where Manna participated in the active-shooter video, understood criticisms of the counter training but said he also suspected some parents would object if the kids weren't taught how to defend themselves.

"This is an option for them to at least fight back," said Hines, whose district has paid ALICE more than \$7,500 since late last year.

In numerous ALICE training videos online, the plan always works to perfection: Students pelt the faux shooter with objects the moment he appears, then — without hesitation — several kids charge the intruder, easily bringing him to the ground before he fires a shot.

It's ludicrous, critics say, to think that children would behave with such decisiveness and precision if they were facing a real gunman.

"There is no research/evidence . . . that teaching students to attack a shooter is

either effective or safe,” Katherine C. Cowan, spokeswoman for the National Association of School Psychologists, wrote in a statement to The Post. “It presumes an ability to transform psychologically from a frightened kid to an attacker in the moment of crisis, the ability to successfully execute the attack on the shooter (e.g., hit the shooter with the book or rock, knock them down, etc.) again in a crisis situation, the ability to not accidentally hurt a classmate, the reality that unsuccessfully going on the attack might make that student a more likely target of the shooter.”

A memorial for the victims of the Sandy Hook massacre outside a home in Newtown, Conn., in 2013. (Robert F. Bukaty/AP)

Nicole Hockley, whose 6-year-old son, Dylan, was killed at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012, concluded long ago that much of America looks at school safety the wrong way.

“It’s so much focus on imminent danger and what you do in the moment,” she said, “as opposed to what you do to stop it from happening in the first place.”

Hockley and her colleagues at Sandy Hook Promise, a nonprofit she co-founded, have argued that reforming gun laws would make a difference, but she knows that there are other, perhaps more attainable, ways to prevent harm, too. In March, her organization launched the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System, which allows users to privately submit safety concerns through a computer, phone or app.

Because many, if not most, shooters offer some indication of their intentions through comments to friends or online, Hockley has for years encouraged students to speak up if they’re aware of a potential threat. Often, though, kids said that they feared repercussions, a concern that the anonymity should alleviate.

The service, which is free and will be adopted by more than 650 districts by January, has already produced meaningful results.

Nicole Hockley, shown with husband Ian in 2013, co-founded Sandy Hook Promise, which launched a system to discreetly report safety concerns. (Jessica Hill/AP)

At the start of this school year, the organization said, a tipster informed the crisis center that a student who might have access to guns had talked about shooting

gay classmates. Staff immediately contacted local law enforcement and school district leaders, who intervened. In another case, someone reported that an eighth-grade friend was cutting herself and considering suicide. Sandy Hook Promise said the girl is now receiving treatment.

The system and others like it address what several of the surveyed schools said was the only thing that could have stopped the shootings on their campuses: a tip from someone who knew it might happen.

No one at a South Carolina school knew that a former student would drive there and open fire on the playground two years ago, but afterward, the superintendent in Anderson County, Joanne Avery, fixated on finding another way to keep her kids safe.

Avery overhauled the school system's safety measures after the shooting, adding resource officers, increasing the number of active-shooter drills, installing trauma kits, updating surveillance systems and providing receptionists with panic buttons.

She changed one district practice, too.

The shooter, who was 14 at the time, had been expelled from a middle school in a neighboring district after making threats and bringing a hatchet in his bag. It was then, in his isolation as a home-schooler, that he became obsessed with mass murderers and planned his attack on [Townville Elementary](#).

So, early this year, when the principal at one of her schools asked to expel a student who'd talked on social media about bludgeoning classmates, Avery said no.

"I'm not just going to expel him and be done with him," she recalled telling the principal. "You're going to increase your chances of that person coming back to your school and doing harm."

Subject: School shootings have fueled a \$2.7 billion school safety industry. What makes kids safer? - Washington Post

Date: Sunday, November 18, 2018 at 8:21:55 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Robert O'Brien

To:

School shootings have fueled a \$2.7 billion school safety industry. What makes kids safer?

Armored school doors, bulletproof whiteboards and secret snipers

Billions are being spent to protect children from school shootings. Does any of it work?

The company that sells these bulletproof doors to schools says that several they've talked to are "extremely interested." (Cassi Alexandra for The Washington Post)

<div class="noscript-warning"> Warning: This graphic requires JavaScript. Please enable JavaScript for the best experience.

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The expo had finally begun, and now hundreds of school administrators streamed into a sprawling, chandeliered ballroom where entrepreneurs awaited, each eager to explain why their product, above all others, was the one worth buying.

Waiters in white button-downs poured glasses of chardonnay and served meatballs wrapped with bacon. In one corner, guests posed with colorful boas and silly hats at a photo booth as a band played Jimmy Buffett covers to the rhythm of a steel drum. For a moment, the festive summer scene, in a hotel 10 miles from Walt Disney World, masked what had brought them all there.

This was the thriving business of campus safety, an industry fueled by an

overwhelmingly American form of violence: school shootings.

At one booth, two gray-haired men were selling a 300-pound ballistic whiteboard — adorned with adorable animal illustrations and pocked with five bullet holes — that cost more than \$2,900.

“What we want to do is just to give the kids, the teachers, a chance,” one of them said.

“So they can buy a few minutes,” the other added.

Elsewhere at the July conference, vendors peddled tourniquets and pepper-ball guns, facial-recognition software and a security proposal that would turn former Special Operations officers into undercover teachers. Threaded into every pitch, just five months after a Parkland, Fla., massacre, was the implication that their product or service would make students safer — that, if purchased, it might save a life.

What few of the salespeople could offer, however, was proof.

Although school security has grown into a [\\$2.7 billion market](#) — an estimate that does not account for the billions more spent on armed campus police officers — little research has been done on which safety measures do and do not protect students from gun violence. Earlier this fall, The Washington Post sent surveys to [every school in its database](#) that had endured a shooting of some kind since the 2012 killings of 20 first-graders in Newtown, Conn., which prompted a surge of security spending by districts across the country.

Superintendent Randy Russell checks camera feeds at Freeman High School in Rockford, Wash., which spent about \$200,000 on new security after a deadly shooting last year. (Rajah Bose/For The Washington Post)

Of the 79 schools contacted, 34 provided answers, including Sandy Hook Elementary. Their responses to questions about what they learned — some brief but many rich in detail — provide valuable insight from administrators in urban, suburban and rural districts who, as a group, have faced the full spectrum of campus gun violence: targeted, indiscriminate, accidental and self-inflicted.

When asked what, if anything, could have prevented the shootings at their schools, nearly half replied that there was nothing they could have done. Several,

however, emphasized the critical importance of their staffs developing deep, trusting relationships with students, who often hear about threats before teachers do.

Only one school suggested that any kind of safety technology might have made a difference. Many had robust security plans already in place but still couldn't stop the incidents.

In 2016, Utah's Union Middle School had a surveillance system, external doors that could be accessed only with IDs and an armed policewoman, known as a resource officer, when a 14-year-old boy shot another student twice in the head during a confrontation outside the building just after classes ended.

"Even if we would have had metal detectors, it would not have mattered," wrote Jeffrey P. Haney, district spokesman. "If we would have had armed guards at the entrance of the school, it would not have mattered. If we would have required students to have see-through backpacks and bags, it would not have mattered."

Excerpts from Union Middle School's survey responses

The survey responses are consistent with a federally funded 2016 study by Johns Hopkins University that concluded there was "limited and conflicting evidence in the literature on the short- and long-term effectiveness of school safety technology."

The schools that have experienced gun violence consistently cited simple, well-established safety measures as most effective at minimizing harm: drills that teach rapid lockdown and evacuation strategies, doors that can be secured in seconds and resource officers, or other adults, who act quickly.

But fear has long dictated what schools invest in, and although campus shootings remain extremely rare, many superintendents are under intense pressure from parents to do something — anything — to make their kids safer. It was the nation's renewed anxiety, after 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High in February, that had drawn so many administrators to the National School Safety Conference at the Florida hotel, 200 miles north of Parkland.

People wait to hear from students after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in

Also there, hoping to capture some piece of the new spending, were 105 vendors, an all-time high for the expo and a 75 percent increase over the previous year.

"This is our first school conference that we've ever done," said SAM Medical sales director Denise Ehlert, who, at one point that evening, knelt down and encouraged a 6-year-old girl to tighten a tourniquet on a woman's arm as a way to demonstrate that anyone could do it.

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When the media relations liaison standing beside him at their booth suggested that, if necessary, they could go through school boards and accept government money, Goudreau cut him off.

"But we don't want to. We don't want that," he said. "We want private money, because it's faster."

Among the many challenges educators face in trying to protect their students from harm is determining what product, or person, to trust.

As [Home Depot](#) and [Walmart](#) market \$150 bulletproof backpacks to frightened parents, administrators are being inundated with pitches from entrepreneurs pushing new concepts that make grand promises. One superintendent who responded to the survey said that within hours of a shooting earlier this year, her inbox was "flooded from vendors with some pretty disrespectful and tacky statements: 'had you had this . . .'; 'if you had this . . .' "

The industry is also rife with self-appointed experts and consultants who claim to know what safety measures are most effective, but given that so little government or academic research has been done on what insulates students

from on-campus gun violence, it's enormously difficult for schools to reach conclusions based in fact.

"Decisions about whether to invest in school security technology for a school or school district are complex," the Johns Hopkins study said. "Many choices about the technology selected, however, may be made with incomplete information or with information that is influenced more by political or reactionary consideration than by local conditions."

Superintendent Randy Russell checks in to Freeman High's sign-in system, which can run real-time background checks. (Rajah Bose/For The Washington Post)

For administrators at the expo, trying to understand which vendors were true authorities was especially tricky, in part because, like Goudreau, dozens had worked in other industries before pivoting to school security.

Joe Taylor, co-founder of Nightlock, created a residential door barricade 15 years ago after someone tried to break into his parents' home. Back then, he never envisioned producing a version for classrooms. Now, schools make up 95 percent of his business.

As he explained that the company had made the transition after being bombarded with requests following the Sandy Hook shooting, a man approached his booth.

"I just bought about \$7,000 worth of these," said Cas Gant, an assistant principal from a charter school in Panama City, Fla.

Taylor noted that, at one point, his devices were back-ordered nearly two months.

Nightlock owner Joe Taylor, center, sells 95 percent of his company's door barricades to schools. (Cassi Alexandra/For The Washington Post)

"Right after the Parkland shooting —" he said, pausing.

"A surge?" asked Gant's wife, Desiree.

"There was a big surge," he said. "But we're finally caught up."

"That's good," she said. "Anything to keep our babies safe."

As the men continued discussing the door lock, Desiree looked around, taking in the scene. Her husband had attended school safety expos before, but this was her first.

"This is sad. I came in here with my mouth wide open," she murmured. "Isn't it scary that we literally have to go through this — that all of these vendors are here?"

Carl Manna, an assistant principal at another Florida high school, felt the same way as he wandered the room, though none of this was new to him.

At one booth, he paused to stare at a photo from Forest High showing the desks and chairs that had been stacked to the classroom's ceiling to keep the gunman out. Months earlier, Manna had pretended to be an active shooter in a training video his school produced.

"That," he said, "is what the room looked like after I left."

1:49

Critics argue that one aspect of the training known as "Counter," which teaches students to confront shooters, is dangerous and irresponsible. (Amber Ferguson/The Washington Post)

The video opens with Manna, in jeans and a dark hoodie, stalking Branford High's hallways. In his right hand, he holds a water pistol wrapped with black tape.

Manna, also the narrator, explains that the video would review "ALICE" training, a set of strategies developed by an Ohio-based company that teaches people how to respond to active shooters. The acronym stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate. "The proper use of these five steps could save your life,"

he says, as the video illustrates a series of widely accepted approaches to staying safe in an active-shooter situation.

Then, at the 2:13 mark, a plastic Germ-X hand sanitizer bottle appears on the screen, followed by a 20-ounce Mountain Dew, a travel mug and an Adobe Photoshop hardcover textbook.

"Once you have locked and barricaded the door, quickly move to an area out of sight," Manna says. "Grab several items you can use to protect yourself. Every room is equipped with something that could distract and defend against the aggressor."

Seconds later, the video shows Manna and a disguised administrator at another high school each entering classrooms, their guns raised. When Manna walks in, he's bombarded with flying bottles, books and a backpack before the teenagers rush him. In the other video, kids tackle the man to the floor directly beneath an American flag mounted to the wall.

This is what the ALICE Training Institute describes as "counter."

The drills have grown in popularity in recent years, and many schools, including some of those surveyed, have credited its conventional lockdown and evacuation training with saving the lives of students and staff. But numerous ALICE critics — including consultants, school psychologists, safety experts and parents — have argued that teaching children to physically confront gunmen, under any circumstances, is dangerous and irresponsible.

"What if the person is ex-military or the person has police training, and you're teaching the student to throw a can of green beans or attack?" asked Joe E. Carter, vice president of business development and marketing at United Educators, an insurance company that covers more than 800 K-12 schools around the country. "I haven't seen any data out there — real data — that this is something that makes it safer."

Representatives from ALICE, which was founded by a former police officer, insist that the counter strategies should be used as a last resort and that schools are responsible for deciding what's suitable for their students. Colleen Lerch, a marketing specialist at the company, said their instructors recommend "SWARM" techniques — in which kids may gang tackle shooters — only to students who

are at least 13 or 14 years old.

“At this age, it is statistically very high that the shooter will be the same age as potential victims. A room full of 14 year old’s can easily control another 14 year old,” Lerch asserted in an email to The Post, though she provided no evidence to support either claim.

In fact, a third of shooters who attack middle and high schools are older than their victims, according to a Post analysis. Also, while The Post found that adults who were not members of law enforcement have subdued more than a dozen school shooters over the past 19 years — including on at least three campuses that underwent ALICE training — the company could not point to a single case in which students used its counter techniques to take down a gunman.

Parents and students leave Freeman High near Spokane, Wash., after last year’s shooting. (Colin Mulvany/Spokesman-Review)

On multiple occasions, however, students who have confronted armed attackers, whether on purpose or accidentally, have been killed or wounded. Last year, a 15-year-old boy was shot to death at Freeman High, just outside Spokane in rural Rockford, Wash., after he tried to stop an armed student in the hallway. Three months later, a 17-year-old was killed when he came upon a gunman in the bathroom who was readying an attack at Aztec High in New Mexico, and a 17-year-old girl was wounded when she did the same thing at Alpine High in Texas two years ago.

Excerpts from Aztec High School’s survey responses

Malcolm Hines, head of safety for the Florida district where Manna participated in the active-shooter video, understood criticisms of the counter training but said he also suspected some parents would object if the kids weren’t taught how to defend themselves.

“This is an option for them to at least fight back,” said Hines, whose district has paid ALICE more than \$7,500 since late last year.

In numerous ALICE training videos online, the plan always works to perfection: Students pelt the faux shooter with objects the moment he appears, then — without hesitation — several kids charge the intruder, easily bringing him to the ground before he fires a shot.

It's ludicrous, critics say, to think that children would behave with such decisiveness and precision if they were facing a real gunman.

"There is no research/evidence . . . that teaching students to attack a shooter is either effective or safe," Katherine C. Cowan, spokeswoman for the National Association of School Psychologists, wrote in a statement to The Post. "It presumes an ability to transform psychologically from a frightened kid to an attacker in the moment of crisis, the ability to successfully execute the attack on the shooter (e.g., hit the shooter with the book or rock, knock them down, etc.) again in a crisis situation, the ability to not accidentally hurt a classmate, the reality that unsuccessfully going on the attack might make that student a more likely target of the shooter."

A memorial for the victims of the Sandy Hook massacre outside a home in Newtown, Conn., in 2013. (Robert F. Bukaty/AP)

Nicole Hockley, whose 6-year-old son, Dylan, was killed at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012, concluded long ago that much of America looks at school safety the wrong way.

"It's so much focus on imminent danger and what you do in the moment," she said, "as opposed to what you do to stop it from happening in the first place."

Hockley and her colleagues at Sandy Hook Promise, a nonprofit she co-founded, have argued that reforming gun laws would make a difference, but she knows that there are other, perhaps more attainable, ways to prevent harm, too. In March, her organization launched the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System, which allows users to privately submit safety concerns through a computer, phone or app.

Because many, if not most, shooters offer some indication of their intentions through comments to friends or online, Hockley has for years encouraged students to speak up if they're aware of a potential threat. Often, though, kids said that they feared repercussions, a concern that the anonymity should alleviate.

The service, which is free and will be adopted by more than 650 districts by January, has already produced meaningful results.

Nicole Hockley, shown with husband Ian in 2013, co-founded Sandy Hook Promise, which launched a system to discreetly report safety concerns. (Jessica Hill/AP)

At the start of this school year, the organization said, a tipster informed the crisis center that a student who might have access to guns had talked about shooting gay classmates. Staff immediately contacted local law enforcement and school district leaders, who intervened. In another case, someone reported that an eighth-grade friend was cutting herself and considering suicide. Sandy Hook Promise said the girl is now receiving treatment.

The system and others like it address what several of the surveyed schools said was the only thing that could have stopped the shootings on their campuses: a tip from someone who knew it might happen.

No one at a South Carolina school knew that a former student would drive there and open fire on the playground two years ago, but afterward, the superintendent in Anderson County, Joanne Avery, fixated on finding another way to keep her kids safe.

Avery overhauled the school system's safety measures after the shooting, adding resource officers, increasing the number of active-shooter drills, installing trauma kits, updating surveillance systems and providing receptionists with panic buttons.

She changed one district practice, too.

The shooter, who was 14 at the time, had been expelled from a middle school in a neighboring district after making threats and bringing a hatchet in his bag. It was then, in his isolation as a home-schooler, that he became obsessed with mass murderers and planned his attack on [Townville Elementary](#).

So, early this year, when the principal at one of her schools asked to expel a student who'd talked on social media about bludgeoning classmates, Avery said no.

"I'm not just going to expel him and be done with him," she recalled telling the principal. "You're going to increase your chances of that person coming back to your school and doing harm"

Subject: Amazon Cuomo? *Seriously*?

Date: Friday, November 16, 2018 at 8:16:26 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Linda Sarsour

To: ggarro@revere.mec.edu

Gina—

ICE, the deportation force that rips families and communities apart and puts migrants in cages, is a moral abomination that must be abolished.

So why is Andrew Cuomo rolling out the red carpet for one of ICE's key contractors, Amazon.com—while claiming to be the immigrant-friendly Governor of New York?

Cuomo is acting as corporate hypeman for Amazon's move to Queens—New York City's gateway for immigrants—for their new headquarters.

Local residents, overwhelmingly opposed, are getting zero say.[1]

[Tell Governor Cuomo: no ICE contractor should get a warm welcome in New York. Listen to front-line communities and trash the Amazon HQ deal.](#)

Here are a couple of facts to consider:

1. Amazon has been caught red-handed pitching facial recognition technology to ICE—hoping to improve their ability to target and hunt down immigrants.[2]
2. The company already facilitates ICE's deportation agenda by providing them with cloud computing services.[3]
3. Cuomo has repeatedly claimed to be a bulwark against Trump's anti-immigrant agenda, stating that New York won't cooperate with ICE and calling ICE agents a "bunch of thugs." [4]

If he's claiming to stand up to Trump and ICE, it's not a great look for Cuomo to grovel before Amazon to the extent that he offers to change his name to Amazon Cuomo.[5] (Yes, he really did that ðŹˆ! â€¦.)

It's especially not a good idea when the company, anti-immigrant track record and all, is looking to take over space in Queens—one of the most immigrant-heavy counties in all of the U.S.[6]

***Cuomo is movable on this issue*—and if we move him, we can show Amazon that there's a cost for working with the brutal anti-immigrant forces of ICE and the Trump administration.**

[Sign here and let's remind Cuomo that he can't play both sides: he's either with Amazon, ICE, and Trump or he's with the immigrant-rich communities of NY.](#)

Of course, Amazon's cooperation with ICE isn't the only reason to keep them out of New York.

For starters, there's the **over \$1.5 billion in tax breaks and incentives** that New York is handing to one of the largest and richest companies in the world—funding that could go to repairing a broken subway system, help struggling segregated schools, or any of a number of more worthy causes.[7]

Then there's the horrible conditions in Amazon's warehouses and its union-busting activities at Whole Foods.

Finally, there's the fundamental issue of its grossly massive economic and political power—which allows the megacorporation to bully not just suppliers and workers, but even the largest city in the U.S. and its allegedly immigrant-friendly Governor.

We've stood up to Amazon before—and won. Let's not allow Governor Cuomo to let them steamroll us now.

[Join us and send a message to Governor Cuomo: keep ICE-enabling Amazon out of New York's immigrant communities.](#)

In solidarity,
Linda and the MPower Change team

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Subject: [SUSPECTED SPAM] [MKTG] Want to Save This Historical Maine House? Move Into It | Dunkin' Gets a High-Tech Makeover

Date: Thursday, November 15, 2018 at 8:15:55 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: BostInno

To: cflahive@revere.mec.edu

Thursday, November 15, 2018

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What to Know

The fun, innovative, newsy stuff happening right around you.

Move to Maine?: If you're in the market for a remote house and want to do help in preserving history, here's an option to consider. The **National Park Service** is urging volunteers to move the historic 135-year-old **McGlashan-Nickerson** house, based on Red Beach in Calais, Maine.

The house spans over 5,400 square feet, but will cost about more than \$1 million to rehabilitate and stabilize. And? The house is listed as one Maine's most endangered historic places. *[Read: Looking for a new home? This Maine one is up for grabs — with a catch](#)*

Lower Carbs, Increase Health: If you're a fan of the **keto diet** or follow low-carb/high-fats eating plan, here's some validation. New research from **Boston Children's Hospital** and **Framingham State University** supports the theory that lowering the intake of carbs is indeed helpful in maintaining weight loss. The research studied 234 overweight adults and their weight-loss diets in phases, and found that people burned more calories when on a low-carb diet and also felt less hungry. *[Read: Boston Children's Hospital study may add to case](#)*

supporting low carb diet

Dunkin' Gets Dandy: First the name, then the image - **Dunkin** is definitely trying to do more with less. As a part of a brand revamp, the coffee chain first dropped 'Donuts' from its name and is now unveiling a slew of new product offerings, including its new espresso machines that serve drinks that are three times stronger, as well as several holiday foods. The chain will also test a new store format with beverages on tap (including nitro-brewed cold coffee) and use voice and facial recognition inside its doors. *Read: Post-'Donuts', Dunkin' pivots to espresso, high-tech ordering*

Jack's Abby at North Station: North Station will get its first **Jack's Abby** pop-up taproom, taking over the bar in the waiting terminal. The bar, which will be called **Track Zero**, currently has 10 **Jack's Abby** and **Springdale** beers. The taproom is open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on non-event days, and until 11 p.m. during **Bruins** and **Celtics** games. *Read: Jack's Abby launches North Station taproom*

What to Do

The events in Boston to hit up today, tomorrow.

Harry Potter Trivia: Calling all Potterheads to **Hurricane's At The Garden** for trivia. "The questions will get progressively harder, so study up ... where's **Hermione** when you need her? **Sirius**-ly, you may want to brush up on your knowledge of fantastic beasts (and where to find them). " Details [here](#).

Thanksgiving Pies: Don't have time to make one? Here's where [you can order Thanksgiving pies from around Boston](#).

Weather

Stick your head out the window. Or read below

Baby, it's () Outside: First snow day!!!! Stay swaddled, stay warm. Highs of 37 degrees, here are seven maps showing how much and where we will see snow in the coming week.

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Building Operating Management, 2100 W. Florist Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53209

Subject: Walmart Sued for Alleged ADA Violation | Jobs

Date: Monday, November 12, 2018 at 9:33:34 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Facilities Daily

To: jvadala@revere.mec.edu

Issue Date: 11/12/2018

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Subject: Walmart Sued for Alleged ADA Violation | Jobs

Date: Monday, November 12, 2018 at 9:28:55 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Maintenance Daily

To: csvendsen@revere.mec.edu

Issue Date: 11/12/2018

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Subject: Face Off: AMD Ryzen 7 2700X vs Intel Core i7-9700K | The Best PC Builds: From \$500-\$5000

Date: Friday, November 9, 2018 at 9:31:01 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Tom's Hardware

To: sdriscoll@revere.mec.edu

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Subject: Education in Alaska often comes down to tech

Date: Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 1:48:42 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: SmartBrief on EdTech

To: pherlihy@revere.mec.edu

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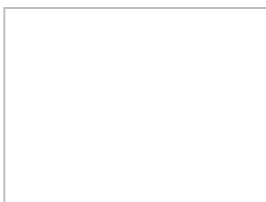
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Mobile tech puts learning in students' hands

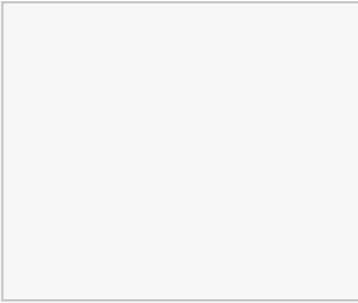


(Christophe Archambault/AFP/Getty Images)

Mobile technology is changing the education landscape, Apple Education executive Jon Landis said this week at the State Education Technology Directors Association conference. He noted that teachers may need more training to adapt to the new "knowledge economy," where students often learn on mobile devices.

[EdScoop](#) (11/7)





Webinar: The Invasion of Education by AI

How can you use artificial intelligence to improve student performance? This webinar will examine how machine learning and predictive analytics can be used to personalize instruction and proactively inform interventions. Nov 28, 4:00ET. [REGISTER NOW](#).

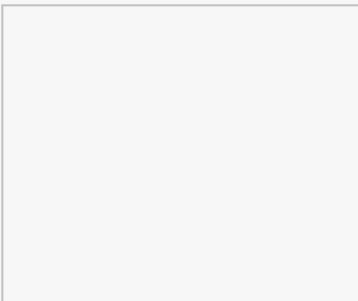
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Will flipped approach work in STEM courses?

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has received a \$598,402 National Science Foundation grant to implement and analyze the use of flipped teaching methods in science, technology, engineering and math courses. Researchers plan to look at designing a broad framework for the flipped model to better engage, teach and retain students in STEM.

[Campus Technology](#) (11/6)



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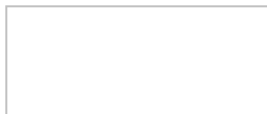
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SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Study considers effectiveness of credit recovery



Chicago Public Schools' students performed about the same in credit-recovery courses for ninth-grade algebra whether they took the course online or in a face-to-face class, according to a study. However, both groups were less likely



(Pixabay)

to graduate than students who had passed the class in ninth grade, data show [Education Dive](#) (11/7)



Other News

▪ [Should schools install facial-recognition technology?](#)

Forbes (11/7)

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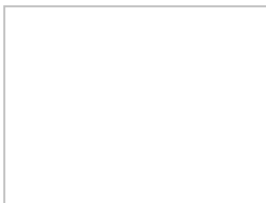
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MANAGING BUDGETS

Education in Alaska often comes down to tech



(Pixabay)

Educational organizations in Alaska increasingly are using technology to facilitate distance learning as part of an effort to reduce costs and expand educational opportunities for students. However, officials say, limited access to broadband internet in some areas can restrict the use of technology for learning purposes.

[Alaska Journal of Commerce](#) (11/7)



SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Online approach engages students in reading

A middle-school English teacher in Michigan is using an innovative approach to engage students with literature and reading. In this blog post, Jeremy Hyler shares how he uses a learning management system to engage students in online book clubs and reading groups.

[MiddleWeb](#) (11/7)



Other News

▪ Commentary: Google, Facebook won't reign forever

SmartBrief/Marketing (11/7)

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Fearless Girl becomes bulletproof-vested #FearfulGirl

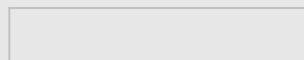
Manuel and Patricia Oliver -- the parents of Joaquin Oliver who was killed during the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting and the founders of Change the Ref -- placed a bulletproof vest on the Fearless Girl statue in New York to highlight the need for gun reform. The group, which teamed with MullenLowe-led Fight Gunfire With Fire on the initiative, sent a tweet showing a photo of the now #FearfulGirl, which went viral and read, "She can't be fearless if she's afraid to go to school."

[Adweek \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (11/6), [BrandChannel](#) (11/5), [Sun-Sentinel \(Fort Lauderdale, Fla.\) \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (11/5)



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Truman Capote,
writer



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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

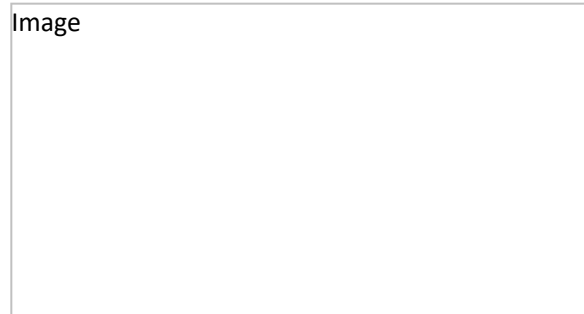
Date: Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 12:28:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Percy Napier

Hi Percy,

Our new SafeVisitor Kiosks have been released. They can be mounted in a vestibule and require visitors, volunteers or contractors to scan their ID before being allowed into the school. The kiosk is a great security enhancement that ensures only people that are approved are allowed inside.



The next phase of the kiosk will be facial recognition.

If you would like more information on SafeVisitor Kiosk, please email our team:

sales@safevisitorsolutions.com

Or schedule a live demo:

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Have a great day.

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Date: Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 12:28:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: William Coutts

Hi William,

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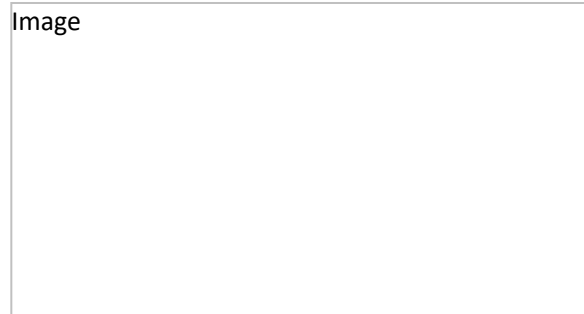
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From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Steven Magno

Hi Steven,

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 12:28:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Joanne Willett

Hi Joanne,

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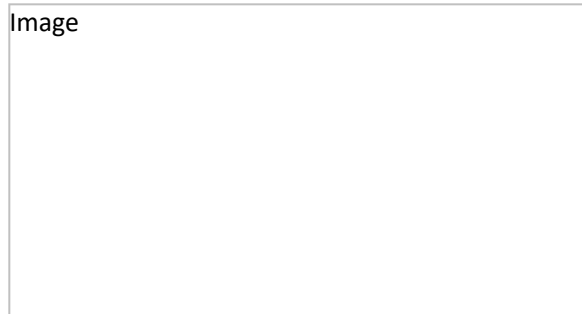
Date: Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 12:02:34 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Donna Bonarrigo

Hi Donna,

Our new SafeVisitor Kiosks have been released. They can be mounted in a vestibule and require visitors, volunteers or contractors to scan their ID before being allowed into the school. The kiosk is a great security enhancement that ensures only people that are approved are allowed inside.



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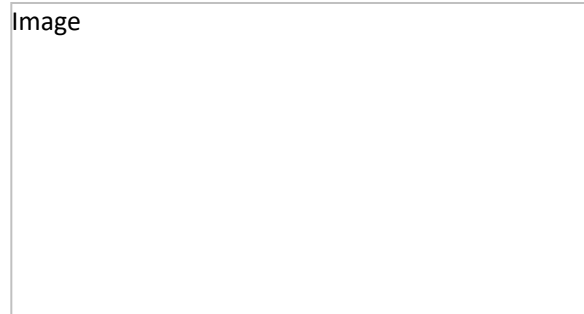
Date: Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 12:02:34 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Richard Gallucci

Hi Richard,

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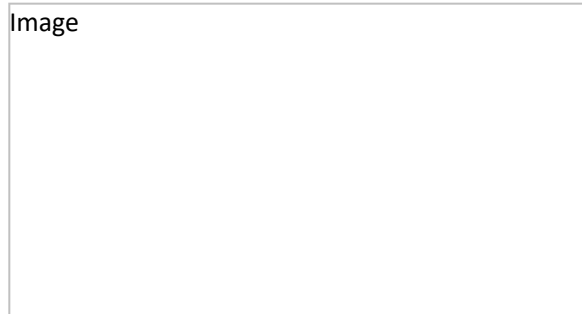
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From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: John Perella

Hi John,

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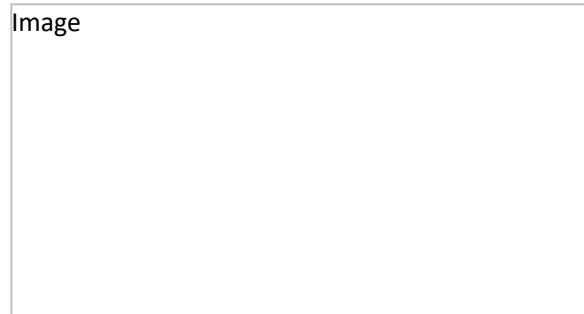
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From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Stephen Pechinsky

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From: NEC Display Solutions
To: jlasala@revere.mec.edu

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How digital displays and facial recognition technology can create more opportunities for consumer engagement.



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Facial detection systems can help close the competitive gap between brick-and-mortar electronics retailers and their online counterparts, while building long-term brand loyalty.

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Monday, November 5, 2018 at 9:07:03 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: John Perella

Hi John,

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

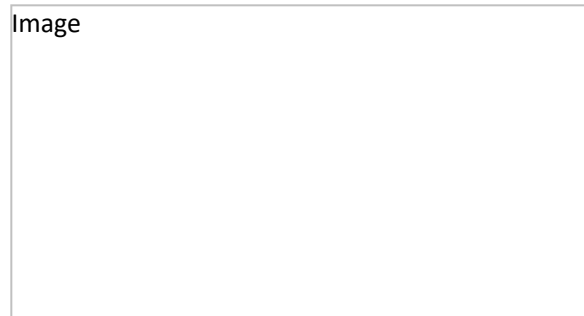
Date: Monday, November 5, 2018 at 9:06:52 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Stephen Pechinsky

Hi Stephen,

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Monday, November 5, 2018 at 9:05:48 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Donna Bonarrigo

Hi Donna,

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Monday, November 5, 2018 at 9:04:48 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Percy Napier

Hi Percy,

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Monday, November 5, 2018 at 9:04:41 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Steven Magno

Hi Steven,

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Monday, November 5, 2018 at 9:03:54 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Joanne Willett

Hi Joanne,

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To: Richard Gallucci

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Monday, November 5, 2018 at 9:01:20 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: William Coutts

Hi William,

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From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: John Perella

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From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Donna Bonarrigo

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 12:56:47 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Steven Magno

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Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 12:56:02 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Percy Napier

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Subject: Visitor Kiosk Increases School Safety

Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 12:55:40 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Joanne Willett

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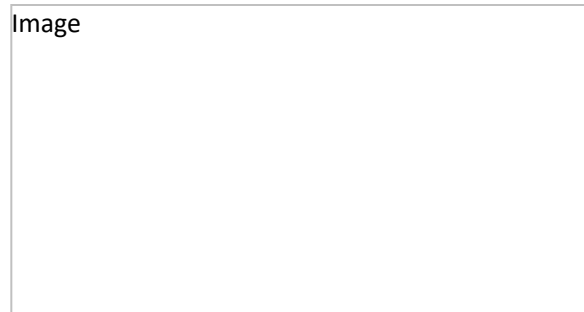
Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 12:55:29 PM Eastern Daylight Time

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To: Richard Gallucci

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From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: William Coutts

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From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Jamie Flynn

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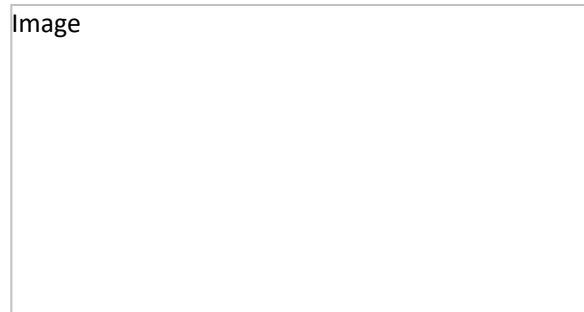
Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 12:54:42 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Safe Hiring Solutions

To: Melissa Lomas

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Subject: YouTube Investing \$20 Million in Educational Content

Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 11:25:57 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: THE News Update

To: smeier@revere.mec.edu

THEJournal

News Update

News

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Khan Academy Launches Video Series on Civics and U.S. History

The Khan Academy has launched a new series of videos focused on civics for students in K-12 and higher education — and anybody else interested in learning how government works in the United States.

[More](#)

Digital Promise Develops 'Map' to Help Schools Face Common Challenges

The Digital Promise Research team worked with school districts in its League of Innovative Schools to create an online tool that suggests resources for helping address common challenges found in education. The "Challenge Map" covers 36 different challenges, including supporting English language learners, assessing 21st century skills and addressing social-emotional learning.

[More](#)

Guide Designed to Help Parents Navigate ESSA

The U.S. Department of Education has released a parents' guide to understanding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

[More](#)

NEC Unveils Infinity Board for Collaboration

NEC Display Solutions has introduced a new collaboration tool that is intended to include everything needed to set up collaboration among multiple locations. Infinity Board includes hardware and software to "elevate" the interactive meeting experience.

[More](#)

Tennessee Aims to Improve Testing Experience with Changes to Assessment Program

Following a statewide listening tour, the Tennessee Department of Education is updating its TNReady student assessment program for the current school year and the 2019-2020 school year.

[More](#)

Windows Edition of Free Facial Recognition Launched

RealNetworks, which recently announced plans to make its new SAFR facial recognition software free to K-12 schools, has launched its Windows version. The program already runs on Mac and iOS.

[More](#)

Rhode Island Includes Teacher Absenteeism Indicator in ESSA Plan

While 28 states have designated the reduction of "chronic absenteeism" among students as school quality indicators in their ESSA plans, Rhode Island is the only one that's included chronic absenteeism among K-12 teachers as well. The state has included it as a metric for schools in its Every Student Succeeds Act plan, alongside suspensions and high school and science proficiency.

[More](#)

Upcoming K–12 Grants

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five

Sponsor: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services in conjunction with the U.S. Dept. of Education

Award: \$500,000 to \$15 million (average expected to be \$5 million)

Number of Awards: 40

Eligibility: "State government agency or a non-profit, nongovernmental entity"

Application Deadline: Nov. 6 (extended to Nov. 20 for North Carolina and South Carolina)

American Honda Foundation STEM Grants

Sponsor: American Honda Foundation

Award: \$20,000 to \$75,000

Number of Awards: Not specified

Application Deadline: Feb. 1 and Aug. 1 for new organizations; May 1 for returning organizations

NEA Foundation Learning & Leadership Grants

Sponsor: National Education Association Foundation

Award: \$2,000 or \$5,000

Number of Awards: Not specified

Application Deadline: Feb. 1, June 1 and Oct. 15 of each year

NEA Foundation Student Achievement Grants

Sponsor: National Education Association Foundation

Award: \$2,000 or \$5,000

Number of Awards: Not specified

Application Deadline: Feb. 1, June 1 and Oct. 15 of each year

SparkFun Community Partner Program

Sponsor: SparkFun

Award: STEM/STEAM-related prize packages, event and team sponsorships and other types of support

Number of Awards: Varies

Application Deadline: Ongoing: third Thursday of each month; awards announced on the last business day of each month

Adopt a Classroom

Deadline: Ongoing

Brinker International Grants

Deadline: Ongoing

Brown Rudnick Community Grants

Deadline: Ongoing

Corning Foundation Grants

Deadline: Ongoing

DonorsChoose.org

Deadline: Ongoing

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation Grants

Deadline: Ongoing

Award: No more than 10 percent of an organization's annual operating expenses or 25 percent of the total budget for the project being funded; awards have ranged from the hundreds to the millions of dollars.

Number of Awards: Varies

Qualification: Project should "directly serve or impact children living in urban poverty, particularly in the areas of education, family economic stability (including microfinance) and childhood health."

Naiku Innovative Teacher Grant

Deadline: Ongoing (approx. 10 awards per month)

Sony Grants for Education

Deadline: Ongoing (grants awarded on a rolling basis)

TAF Project-Based Learning Grants for Grades 6–12

Sponsor: Toshiba America Foundation

Award: Two categories: Up to \$5,000 and more than \$5,000

Number of Awards: Not specified

Application Deadline: Up to \$5,000 awarded on a rolling basis; Feb. 1 deadline for applications for more than \$5,000

Call for Papers & Proposals

Submit calls for papers/proposals to dnagel@1105media.com.

Upcoming Events

EDspaces

Nov. 7–9

Tampa, FL

Education Business Forum

Nov. 27–28

New York

FETC 2019

Jan. 27–30

Orlando, FL

TCEA 2019

Feb. 4–8

San Antonio, TX

SXSWedu

March 4–7

Austin

CUE National Conference

March 14–16

Palm Springs, CA

Editorial Webinars

NGSS Curricula: A Deep Dive into an NGSS-Aligned Curricular Unit

On Demand

Presenters: Joseph Krajcik, Michigan State University; Elliot Soloway, University of Michigan; David Nagel (moderator)

Sponsor: Insight Public Sector, Microsoft, HP, Intel

Speak Up Survey: Trends in STEM and STEAM Education

On Demand

Presenters: Julie Evans, Project Tomorrow; David Nagel (moderator)

Sponsor: Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company

Critical Thinking and Next Generation Science Standards

On Demand

Presenters: Joseph Krajcik, Michigan State University; Elliot Soloway, University of

Michigan; David Nagel (moderator)
Sponsor: Insight Public Sector, Microsoft

STEAM Research from the Front Lines: The Impact of STEAM on Teachers, Students, Administrators and Parents

On Demand

Presenters: Julie Evans, Project Tomorrow; David Nagel (moderator)

Sponsor: Connection Public Sector Solutions

Funding STEM: How Schools Can Get Creative with Federal Dollars

On Demand

Presenters: Anand Vaishnav and Jacob Waters, Education First; David Nagel (moderator)

Sponsor: Acer, Connection Public Sector Solutions

[More](#)

Professional Resources

- [THE Journal's Grant Listings](#)
- [THE Journal's News Archive](#)
- [Flipped Classrooms & Blended Learning](#)
- [Gaming & Gamification](#)
- [E-Learning & LMS](#)
- [STEM-Related Articles](#)
- [Administrative & Business Articles](#)
- [Classroom Technology](#)
- [Energy Efficiency & Green Schools](#)
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Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 11:25:36 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: THE News Update

To: epanesis@revere.mec.edu

THEJournal

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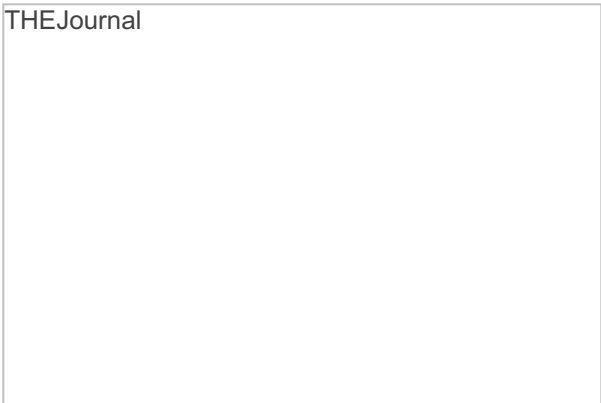
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To: bkelly@revere.mec.edu

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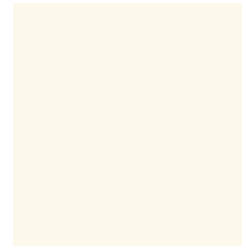
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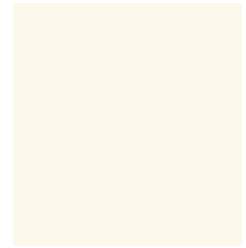
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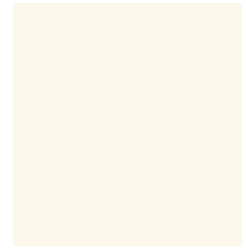
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To: mcaporale@revere.mec.edu

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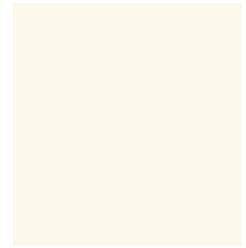
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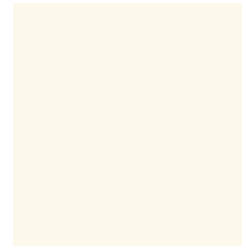
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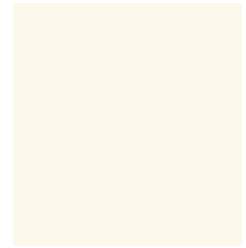
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Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 11:25:03 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: THE News Update

To: jmitchell@revere.mec.edu

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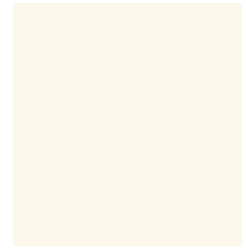
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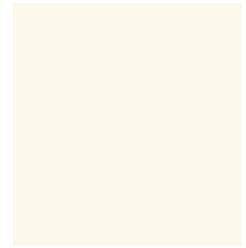
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Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 11:24:40 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: THE News Update

To: jsicuso@revere.mec.edu

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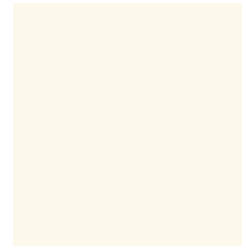
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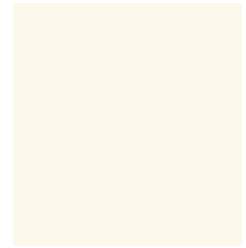
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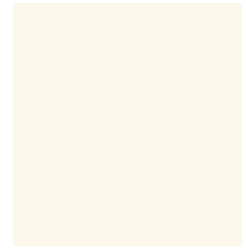
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Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 11:24:19 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: THE News Update

To: jferrara@revere.mec.edu

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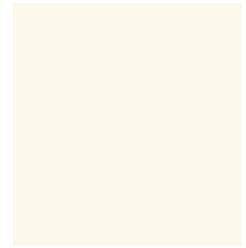
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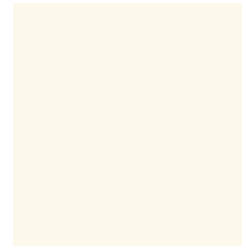
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