ACHIEVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA:
Where are we? What can we do?

Association of California School Administrators
Sacramento, CA
November, 2015

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America: Two Powerful Stories
1. **Land of Opportunity:**

Work hard, and you can become anything you want to be.
2. **Generational Advancement:**

Through hard work, each generation of parents can assure a better life — and better education — for their children.
These stories animated hopes and dreams of people here at home

And drew countless immigrants to our shores
Yes, America was often intolerant...

And they knew the “Dream” was a work in progress.
We were:

- The first to provide universal high school;
- The first to build public universities;
- The first to build community colleges;
- The first to broaden access to college, through GI Bill, Pell Grants, …
Percent of U.S. adults with a high school diploma

1920: 21%
1940: 38%
1960: 61%
1980: 85%
2000: 88%
2012: 90%
Percent of U.S. adults with a B.A. or more

2012

33%
Progress was painfully slow, especially for people of color. But year by year, decade by decade...
Percent of U.S. adults with a high school diploma, by race

2012

White: 95%
Black: 89%
Latino: 75%
Percent of U.S. adults with a B.A. or more, by race

2012

White: 40%
Black: 23%
Latino: 15%
Then, beginning in the eighties, growing economic inequality started eating away at our progress.
In recent years, most income gains have gone to those at the top of the ladder, while those at the bottom have fallen backwards.

Instead of being the most equal, the U.S. has the third highest income inequality among OECD nations.

Note: Gini coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates total income equality and 1 indicates total income inequality.

Not just wages and wealth, but social mobility as well.
U.S. intergenerational mobility was improving until 1980, but barriers have gotten higher since.

The falling elasticity meant increased economic mobility until 1980. Since then, the elasticity has risen, and mobility has slowed.

The US now has one of lowest rates of intergenerational mobility

Cross-country examples of the link between father and son wages

At macro level, better and more equal education is not the only answer.

But at the individual level, it really is.
There is one road up, and that road runs through us.
So, how are we doing?
First, some good news.

After more than a decade of fairly flat achievement and stagnant or growing gaps in K-12, we appear to be turning the corner with our elementary students.
Since 1999, large gains for all groups of students, especially students of color

9 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

Average Scale Score

*Denotes previous assessment format

Since 1999, performance rising for all groups of students

9 Year Olds – NAEP Math

*Denotes previous assessment format

Middle grades are up, too.
Record performance for students of color
13 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

*Denotes previous assessment format

Over the last decade, all groups have steadily improved and gaps have narrowed.

National Public – Grade 8 NAEP Math

*Accommodations not permitted

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 299)
Also big progress in California for some groups of children.
NAEP Grade 8 Reading – African American Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: On average, mean scale scores in reading for African American eighth-grade students increased by 4 points from 2003 to 2015.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data
## NAEP Grade 8 Reading – Low-Income Students

**States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: On average, mean scale scores in reading for low-income eighth-grade students increased by 7 points from 2003 to 2015.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data
### NAEP Grade 8 Math – African American Students

States with the Biggest Gains in Mean Scale Scores (2003 – 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: On average, mean scale scores in math for American-African eighth-grade students increased by 8 points from 2003 to 2015.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer

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Bottom Line:

When we really focus on something, we make progress!
Clearly, much more remains to be done in elementary and middle school.

Too many youngsters still enter high school way behind.
But at least we have some traction on elementary and middle school problems.

The same is NOT true of our high schools.
Achievement is flat in reading for students overall.

Source: NAEP Long-Term Trends, NCES (2004)
Math achievement for students overall is flat over time.

17-Year-Olds Overall - NAEP

* Denotes previous assessment format

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress
And despite earlier improvements, gaps between groups haven’t narrowed much since the late 80s and early 90s.
Reading: Not much gap narrowing since 1988.

17 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

*Denotes previous assessment format

Math: Not much gap closing since 1990.

17 Year Olds – NAEP Math

*Denotes previous assessment format

Moreover, no matter how you cut the data, our students aren’t doing well compared with their peers in other countries.
Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 17th in Reading

2012 PISA - Reading

Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 17th in Reading

Higher than U.S. average  □ Not measurably different from U.S. average  □ Lower than U.S. average

Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 20th in Science

2012 PISA - Science

- Higher than U.S. average
- Not measurably different from U.S. average
- Lower than U.S. average

Of 34 OECD Countries, U.S.A. Ranks 27th in Math Literacy

2012 PISA - Math

Only place we rank high?

Inequality.
Among OECD Countries, U.S.A. has the 4th Largest Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students

2006 PISA - Science

Source: PISA 2006 Results, OECD, table 4.8b

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Among OECD Countries, U.S.A. has the 5th Largest Gap Between High-SES and Low-SES Students

2009 PISA – Reading

Gap in Average Scale Score

350 400 450 500 550 600

Source: PISA 2009 Results, OECD, Table II.3.1
Gaps in achievement begin before children arrive at the schoolhouse door.

But, rather than organizing our educational system to ameliorate this problem, we organize it to exacerbate the problem.
How?

By giving students who arrive with less, less in school, too.
Some of these “lesses” are a result of choices that policymakers make.
# National Inequities in State and Local Revenue Per Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Poverty vs. Low Poverty Districts</td>
<td>-$1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Minority vs. Low Minority Districts</td>
<td>-$2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Trust analyses based on U.S. Dept of Education and U.S. Census Bureau data for 2010-12
In truth, though, some of the most devastating “lesses” are a function of choices that we educators make.
Choices we make about what to expect of whom.....
Students in poor schools receive As for work that would earn Cs in affluent schools.

Choices we make about what to teach whom...
Even African-American students with *high math performance* in fifth grade are unlikely to be placed in algebra in eighth grade.

And choices we make about *who* teaches whom…
Students at high-minority schools more likely to be taught by novice* teachers.

Note: High minority school: 75% or more of the students are Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander. Low-minority school: 10% or fewer of the students are non-White students. Novice teachers are those with three years or fewer experience.

Math classes at high-poverty, high-minority secondary schools are more likely to be taught by out-of-field* teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th>Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: High-poverty school: 55 percent or more of the students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. Low-poverty school: 15 percent or fewer of the students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch. High-minority school: 78 percent or more of the students are black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander. Low-minority school: 12 percent or fewer of the students are non-white students. *Teachers with neither certification nor major. Data for secondary-level core academic classes (math, science, social studies, English) across the U.S.

Source: Education Trust Analysis of 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey data.
Los Angeles: Black, Latino students have fewer highly effective teachers, more weak ones.

Latino and black students are:

3X as likely to get low-effectiveness teachers

1/2 as likely to get highly effective teachers

The results are devastating.

Kids who come in a little behind, leave a lot behind.
And these are the students who remain in school through 12th grade.
Students of color are less likely to graduate from high school on time.

Add those numbers up and throw in college entry and graduation, and different groups of young Americans obtain degrees and very different rates…
Whites attain bachelor’s degrees at twice the rate of blacks and three times the rate of Hispanics.

Bachelor’s Degree Attainment of Young Adults (25-29-year-olds), 2011

- White: 39%
- African American: 20%
- Latino: 13%

Young people from high-income families earn bachelor’s degrees at seven times the rate of those from low-income families.

Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity, “Bachelor’s Degree Attainment by Age 24 by Family Income Quartiles, 1970 to 2010.”
These numbers are not good news for our country—or for the lives of the young people in question.
Chances of Staying at the Bottom If You’re Born at the Bottom

Without a 4-Year Degree

45%

Among black men, education makes a huge difference in life outcomes.

Cumulative Risk of Imprisonment by Age 34 for Young Black Men:

Source: Bruce Western and Becky Petr.
What Can We Do?

An awful lot of Americans have decided that we can’t do much.
What We Hear Many Educators Say:

• They’re poor
• Their parents don’t care
• They come to schools without breakfast
• Not enough books
• Not enough parents
Let’s be clear, these things do matter.
Child Poverty in the US, 2013

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian</strong></td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau
And let’s also be clear: tolerating high child poverty rates is a policy choice. Though we remain the richest nation on earth…
U.S. Ranks Second to Last in Child Poverty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percent of Children Aged 0-17 Living in Households with Incomes Below 50% of National Median Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unicef, 2013
Yet, how we as educators respond to the effects of that choice is a choice, too.
We can choose to go along with what has become conventional wisdom in our profession—that, until we fix poverty, there’s not much we educators can do...
Or we can choose differently.

...joining colleagues in schools all over this country that serve very poor kids but get very good results.
George Hall Elementary School
Mobile, Alabama

• 545 students in grades PK-5
  – 99% African American
• 98% Low Income

Note: Enrollment data are for 2011-12 school year
Source: Alabama Department of Education
Big Improvement at George Hall Elementary

Low-Income Students – Grade 4 Reading

Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Standards

- George Hall
- Alabama

2004: George Hall - 48%, Alabama - 73%
2012: George Hall - 94%, Alabama - 89%

Source: Alabama Department of Education
Exceeding Standards: George Hall students outperform white students in Alabama

Grade 5 Math (2011)

- **African-American Students - George Hall**
  - Exceeds Standards: 97%
  - Meets Standards: 7%
  - Partially Meets Standards: 24%

- **White Students - Alabama**
  - Exceeds Standards: 69%
  - Meets Standards: 7%
  - Partially Meets Standards: 24%

Source: Alabama Department of Education
Halle Hewetson Elementary School
Las Vegas, NV

- 962 students in grades PK – 5
  - 85% Latino
  - 7% African American
- 100% Low Income
- 71% Limited English Proficient

Note: Data are for 2010-2011 school year
Source: Nevada Department of Education
Big Improvement at Halle Hewetson Elementary

Latino Students – Grade 3 Reading

Source: Nevada Department of Education

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High Performance Across Groups at Halle Hewetson Elementary

Grade 3 Math (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Halle Hewetson</th>
<th>Nevada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nevada Department of Education
Exceeding Standards at Halle Hewetson Elementary

Low-Income Students – Grade 3 Math (2011)

- Halle Hewetson
  - Exceeds Standards: 63%
  - Meets Standards: 28%
  - Approaches Standards: 6%
  - Emergent/Developing: 4%

- Nevada
  - Exceeds Standards: 29%
  - Meets Standards: 33%
  - Approaches Standards: 25%
  - Emergent/Developing: 14%

Source: Nevada Department of Education
Elmont Memorial High School
Elmont, New York

2011-2012 School Year
• 1,907 students in grades 7-12
  – 78% African American
  – 12% Latino
High Performance by ALL Students at Elmont Memorial High School

Secondary Level Math (2012)

- Overall: 94%, EMHS: 82%
- African American: 94%, EMHS: 71%
- Hispanic: 97%, EMHS: 72%
- Low Income: 96%, EMHS: 76%


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High Performance by ALL Students at Elmont Memorial High School

Secondary Level English (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>EMHS</th>
<th>New York</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New York Department of Education

High Graduation Rates at Elmont Memorial High School

Class of 2011

Percentage of 2007 Freshmen Graduating in Four Years

- Overall: 94% (Elmont), 74% (New York)
- African American: 95% (Elmont), 58% (New York)
- Latino: 89% (Elmont), 58% (New York)
- Economically Disadvantaged: 97% (Elmont), 64% (New York)
- Not Economically Disadvantaged: 93% (Elmont), 81% (New York)

Note: Includes students graduating by June 2011.
Source: New York State Department of Education
This is what happens when teams of educators choose differently.
Available from Harvard Education Press and amazon.com
Just flukes, outliers?

No. Very big differences at district level, too—even in the progress and performance of the “same” group of students.
Average Scale Scores, by District
Low-Income African American Students

Grade 4 – NAEP Reading (2015)

Note: Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES

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Average Scale Scores, by District
Low-Income Latino Students

Grade 4 – NAEP Math (2015)

Note: Basic Scale Score = 214; Proficient Scale Score = 249

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES
Bottom Line:
What We Do Matters!
Over the next 40 minutes, we’re going to take a trip to 2 very different schools.

In one of those schools, you will see many of the practices that we see in every one of the schools across the country that is hitting it out of the park for poor kids…
• Rigorous academic expectations for all students;
• Nothing about teaching or learning left to chance;
• Coherent supports for students;
• Principal not the only leader in the school.
But most of all, what you will see is educators who understand the enormous power they have to shape children’s lives.
They know that it’s not about heroic individuals.

That path, as we all know, is unsustainable.
But they have seen the awesome power of the collective—some describe it as the “huddle”—to lift children up.
As educators, we have enormous power to pave the path upward for far more children...
And, as the following data on children of color in California make clear, they need us to exercise that power.
Scale Scores by State – African American Students
California, 6th from bottom
Grade 4 – NAEP Reading (2015)

- NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 238; Basic Scale Score = 208)
Scale Scores by State – Latino Students
California, 4th from bottom
Grade 4 – NAEP Reading (2015)

- NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 238; Basic Scale Score = 208)
Scale Scores by State – Latino Students
California, 5th from bottom

Grade 8 – NAEP Math (2015)

Average Scale Score

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 299; Basic Scale Score = 262)
Scale Scores by State – Latino Students

California, next to last

Grade 8 – NAEP Reading (2015)

Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Proficient Scale Score = 281; Basic Scale Score = 243)
This school year, Catalyze change.

Download this presentation or bring Catalyst to your District
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bhaycock@edtrust.org

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