

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**“THE PROMISE OF PROFICIENCY”**

**INTRODUCTION AND OPENING REMARKS:  
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CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS**

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**CLOSING REMARKS:  
J.B. SCHRAMM, FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
COLLEGE SUMMIT**

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MS. CYNTHIA BROWN: (In progress) systems to identify and target the level of reform and resources necessary to improve struggling high schools, and the Fast Track to College Act which would provide support for the implementation of dual enrollment courses in early college high schools were both introduced earlier this year and our two proposals that the center believes can help around high schools and ensure that students are college and career ready.

Today's event is accompanied by the release of a report by College Summit and the center entitled "The Promise of Proficiency."

In the paper and in today's discussion, we hope to zero in on the ways in which college enrollment, first year completion rates and other data can help high schools improve their own operation and program.

To start us off on this discussion, I'd like to introduce and turn it over to J.B. Schramm, founder and chief executive officer of College Summit.

But before I do, I want to thank Melissa Lazarin and Isabel Owen of the center who worked closely with College Summit on this paper and event.

So let me tell you about J.B. J.B. Schramm's founded College Summit in 1993 while directing a teen center in the basement of a low-income housing project in Washington, D.C. This year, the organization will work with 160 high schools, with 17,000 seniors and 80,000 total students in 12 states.

In recognition of the organization's impact, College Summit was honored at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in 2008 by the Schwab Foundation as the United States social entrepreneur of the year.

So let me turn it over to J.B. (Applause.)

MR. J.B. SCHRAMM: Thank you, Cindy. As many of you know, College Summit is not a policy shop. We work with high schools and school districts to help them build college going culture and raise their college enrollment rates. And the goal is to have every students connect the dots between their future goals and the academic decisions they make every day in high school.

And, as Cindy said, we do this in 12 states working with over 160 high schools. And every so often, we learn something from our education partners that we feel needs to be a part of the national policy conversation. And "The Promise of Proficiency" is one of those ideas.

And I want to thank the Center for American Progress, Cindy, for your leadership, Melissa and Isabel, for the thought partnership and support throughout this process. I want to acknowledge by coauthor, Kinney Zalesne. Could you stand? It's been a pleasure to work with you on this project. (Applause.)

And I'd like to acknowledge Bob Campbell and Evan Hochberg from Deloitte. Deloitte and their CEO, Barry Salzberg has been really committed to this issue. And thanks for making this day possible.

And, of course, we're very much looking forward to hearing from the under secretary in a few minutes. And thank you for joining us.

Here's what's driving the paper. In our work with schools over the last year, we've been struck by their interest in saying how their students are actually doing once they get to college that that information is concrete, valuable information to help them start conversations in their buildings about instruction.

As we've been working with the educators and working on this idea, we've come to three realizations.

The first one is that high school cannot be seen by students as a destination, as an end in and of itself. The purpose of high school needs to be students' college and career success if for not other reason than that's what would motivate the students. Many of you have probably seen this, but earlier this week, Deloitte released their annual national education survey.

And one of the chief findings in that was that in our low-income communities, parents and students rank college preparation as the most important purpose of high school. Joel Klein puts it this way in the paper. He says, those of us in the k-12 world need to realize our responsibilities don't end in high school.

The second realization is that high school leaders are already using data on their students' post-secondary performance. Tom Boasberg, superintendent in Denver, puts it this way. He said, we measure college readiness but the best indicator of high school performance is how many students are actually performing in college without remediation. But unfortunately, the data our educators have is usually anecdotal. A principal runs into a student who's back from winter break or a teacher gets a letter from a distraught parent of a recent graduate.

So the third realization is what educators are calling for is regular comprehensive post-secondary data on the performance of all their students and federal supports and incentives to support this. And in particular, they're asking for two kinds of data. One is college enrollment rates – whether their students actually enrolled in college and where. And second, college proficiency which is which of their students actually completed a year of college coursework beyond remediation within two years.

Now, the good news is there's been enormous progress in the last couple of years in terms of the building of the measurement infrastructure to make this possible. States have been building longitudinal data systems, the leadership of the Data Quality Campaign, the work of the National Student Clearing House.

But I'd say even more exciting have been the ways in which the U.S. Department of Education has called on k-12 leaders to focus on increasing and rewarding college proficiency. Six months ago in the initial guidance regarding how to spend Recovery Act dollars, the secretary called on states to build longitudinal data systems that can track college enrollment and college proficiency by school and by student.

Now, three months ago, in a wonderful example of cross-sector engagement, College Summit worked with the CEOs from Deloitte, Google, Pepsi, Princeton University and others to write to the secretary in support of the department's efforts around college proficiency.

Last month, the department required state receiving phase two stabilization dollars to actually report on college proficiency. And then just a couple of weeks ago, the final Race to the Top guidelines came out.

And these guidelines elevate this issue even further calling on states to commit to state success factors which are going to be the outcomes that undergird all four assurances in Race to the Top. And these measurements include college enrollment, college proficiency, as well as high school graduation and other student achievement measures.

So that's a lot of good news. What's next? What we're proposing in "The Promise of Proficiency" is that the federal government take these promising trends and institutionalize them so all students can benefit, not just those in the states that win the big state grant programs.

So we're going to ask for three steps to be taken. The first is to continue supporting the gathering of college proficiency data through the development of state longitudinal data systems so that the schools can know who their students are doing.

Second – to disseminate that data and train educators to use it to make a difference in their buildings. And this can be done by funding in already authorized provision in last year's Higher Education Opportunity Act.

Number three, in the reauthorization of ESEA, to support high schools, focus on college proficiency and to reward high schools that make significant progress in raising their college proficiency rates.

Before we really engage in the conversation, I do want to acknowledge one special group of folks here. We have a number of principals and district folks from New York City, Baltimore City, Prince George's County, Washington, D.C., Alexandria.

If you work for a high school or a district, could you please stand up? It is so important that we've got you feeding into this conversation. And I want to just acknowledge you all – (applause) – for taking time away from your buildings but really for the work that you do day in and day out to really support your students' post-secondary success.

So now, with that, we'll move to our keynote speaker. Here to introduce our keynote speaker is Bob Campbell. Bob is the vice chairman and the head of Deloitte's U.S. State Practice. So we really appreciate Bob coming here because Deloitte has been behind this effort and supporting this effort from the very beginning. Bob, thank you for joining us. (Applause.)

MR. BOB CAMPBELL: Thank you, J.B., and huge congratulations to the College Summit and the Center for American Progress on the release of today's report. At Deloitte, we're pleased to have had the opportunity to help sponsor, be engaged in the development of the report and believe it is absolutely right for the times.

At Deloitte we are strongly committed to the issue of education performance improvement in the U.S. and we very much recognize the vital relationship between improving high school proficiency and securing the workforce of the future required for global competitiveness purposes.

Accordingly, I'm very pleased to share with you Deloitte's renewed five-year commitment to the College Summit to help facilitate the summit's mission with regards to improving college admissions levels and student performance once in college.

It's now my distinct pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker, U.S. Under Secretary of Education Dr. Martha Kanter.

As I'm sure is evident to you, Martha and her team very much share this vision and are helping focus our high schools on college proficiency and helping drive an integrated vision of k-12 and the post-secondary world which very much is right for the times as well.

Martha is uniquely qualified for the role she's been asked by the president to play. She actually was a high school teacher in, I believe, New York and Massachusetts. Most recently she played a leadership role in San Jose City college system and the California Community College's Chancellor's Office and most recently, before the current appointment, served as the chancellor of the 45,000 student Foothill De Anza Community College district in California.

In fact, to my knowledge, Martha is the first community college administrator to actually be elevated to the under secretary level so we're all very fortunate to have that occurrence.

With that, please join me in warmly welcoming our keynote speaker, Dr. Martha Kanter. (Applause.)

MS. MARTHA KANTER: Thank you so much, Bob, for that kind introduction. I've been part of the Obama administration for only five months but in the first five months I've made it a high priority to talk to business leaders, people like Deloitte and others, all of you – many of you in the audience, to talk to teachers, to talk to principals, to talk to superintendents, to talk to college presidents – many college presidents – to talk to policy researchers – I've seen David Baime here from the American Association of Community Colleges and others, and also talked to the research community.

And I think what College Summit is sharing this morning is research that we can apply to not only k-12 and higher education but early learning as well. And that sort of ties into the president's vision and Secretary Duncan's plan to connect early learning, zero to third grade, with k-12 to higher education and the workforce.

And I say higher education and the workforce because I think when you step back and look at American higher education, we have 6,000 colleges and universities across the country; we have 21 million undergraduates, a little less than half are in the two-year colleges. The rest are in the four-year colleges and universities.

Many don't realize that two-thirds of college students today work while they attend college. So I think we can – and many high school students like the ones I had in Lexington and Tarrytown, New York, are working while they go to high school. And I think when I look back over sort of my last 35 years in education and look ahead, I think we can do so much more to partner with industry and business to really actually look at the number of hours students need to work while they attend high school and while they're in college and reframe that agenda so students can be more fulltime. And we know that the more fulltime a student is, the higher the proficiency rate, the more success, and the more likely that student will be to graduate.

So when we think about work and education, and we think about framing things in the federal government like work study opportunities for college students or the Workforce Investment Act youth employment dollars, and we think of the large number of under prepared students who are already in the pipeline, you just need to look at the scores to see what the next decade is going to look like in terms of proficiency, which is why Secretary Duncan and I and Emma, all of us in the Department of Education, really talk about ways to use the research to do the one thing that we think will make a difference in the short term, which is to accelerate American achievement, make sure the quality is there, make sure it's driven by high standards, and beyond that, build the infrastructure that starts with early learning so we will have students at third grade reading at third grade level, so we will have the bridge from middle school to high school so girls, for example, will be encouraged to look at stem opportunities for them while they're in high school instead of sort of turning away, so that we will have addressed that 27 percent of students that are now completing high school, more than 50 percent in many of our urban areas.

We've got to change this whole picture of that pipeline so that we can get students ready for work and ready and functioning in higher education.

So we've got to do this altogether. We need to use the research on the one hand. We need to look at better policy that will really drive incentives, be based on proficiency, performance reviews and milestones, and more ahead.

So that's why College Summit's work is important to inform us. It's important to know what is happening on the ground, what will the research tell us are the best things we can do to frame that infrastructure, to frame the policy conversations that will take us forward in the long term while we concentrate on getting that preparation of students all across the early learning to k-12 pipeline ready to be proficient for work and for college.

And I do think – just stepping back in my career, having taught many, many difficult to serve, under served kids in my career as a high school teacher and then certainly working as a professor in college – really looking at how students have to work to live and to really understand ways that we can support students who need to work with work that is going to be academically relevant to the career opportunities they may have before them, not just putting them in a job for the sake of being employed but putting them in career opportunities and working with Deloitte and others to figure out how can we really strengthen those opportunities for students while they concentrate on academics because we've got to have that academic foundation.

I've got to talk to the principal of one of the Prince George's high schools and I think he well knows, as I do, that the academic foundation for these kids is paramount to their future success which is really emphasized in your research.

We all share the same commitment. The report focuses on outcomes. It focuses on the fact that we've got to find ways to use data in meaningful segments so teachers and students and parents can know where they stand and know what choices they have.

So we have to do a lot of work at the federal level to improve our data systems and look at the gaps so that we can focus our intention on really closing those gaps so that we make those smooth transitions all the way from early learning through a college and smooth transitions in the workforce.

You'll see a lot of conversations about career ladders. You'll see Department of Labor talking with Department of Education about stackable credentials. You know, can you start in a field and then stack up. You start as a nursing assistant. You may go to an LVN. You could go to an RN. You might think of being a doctor. But actually making these kind of career trajectories better understood for students as they go through the pipeline.

Now, our president – it's very exciting to me in Washington. I'm a newbie from Silicon Valley and I thought I was in the world's center of innovation. But I think with

our new president we have a new kind of policy innovation going on here in Washington. And the president has set a clear goal for us.

I think in my – more than 40 years in education I've never seen a goal that says by 2020 we want to have the best educated, most competitive workforce in the world. I love that sentence. I say it everywhere I go because it sets the proficiency level.

It sets for us the fact that we have about a little less than 40 percent of American who hold baccalaureate degrees. Our early short-term competition is Canada. They're at 51 percent of baccalaureate degrees in the country. If you look at the April McKinsey report, it will lay out all of the countries and talk about where we are in the pipeline on competitiveness – and we're not first anymore.

So to reach that goal, we've got to increase that graduation rate, not only in high school but transition from middle school to high school – we lose kids there. I hate to say it but we've got so many problems in middle schools that I think it needs a tremendous amount of attention as does high school – these are all short-term kinds of things we need to look at while we build a much stronger infrastructure.

But to get to that college going best educated, most competitive workforce in the world at 40 percent, the president has challenged us to move to 60 percent, to increase by 50 percent that number in the next decade. And what it specifically means if you talk to the senior economists in the White House is that from the two-year college system, we'll need five million more graduates, people with certificates and degrees, and we'll need 4.3 million more college and university graduates.

So I think I talk about it in a serve around number about 10 million more. And those would be above our natural growth rate. So we have to really accelerate the proficiency levels across the board.

That's why I'm very excited that we're focusing on early learning to get kids ready for kindergarten because we know that in low-income communities, 20, 30 percent aren't ready when they start kindergarten. Well, we've got to focus on that while we build a pipeline and focus on high school to college and that bridge.

And the other thing that we don't talk a lot about is the fact that over 90 million Americans have little or no college. So we have a huge number of adults – and I went with President Obama to Warren, Michigan, in July when he announced the American Graduation Initiative and we talked with a number of displaced workers from the auto industry.

And frankly, a significant number did not have the literacy skills to transition – they've been working on the assembly lines for 20, 25 years – to transition into other, better or at least other comparable jobs that were outside of the auto industry.

So we've got to do a lot of things in education across the board. That's why we call ourselves higher education and life-long learning, not just post-secondary education because we really want to reach out and look at our adult ed systems as well as our bridge from high school to college and all the other pieces I've talked about.

Now, within high school, I'm sure many of you may know that over a million teens didn't graduate from high school last year. And we have about 7,000 dropouts a day in this country every 26 seconds, I'm told. And as I said, more than half of all teens in some of the urban areas are not finishing high school much less college.

So, given that, we're lagging behind other nations. We're not first anymore. We've got major problems in closing the achievement gap across America. And if we had closed the achievement gap in the last decade, our GDP would have been almost double.

So we've got to focus on not only closing the achievement gap which ties in to Secretary Duncan's four assurances for k-12 and you'll see a lot of language coming out of our office about equity and achievement and closing the gaps so that all students can be succeeding or moving toward proficiency at comparable rates. That's the goal.

And if we don't, frankly, have a game changing national strategy, we're going to decline even further. A generation ago it was good enough for 40 percent of Americans to have a degree. I mean, that was good enough. We were first in the world and we were the most educated country.

But today, about 10 countries have passed us by all the way from Korea to Canada, Japan, Russia, just to name a few. And we know that you won't be competitive unless you continue your education and are ready for five to 10 career changes in your lifetime. It's not going to be somebody like me that stayed in education.

Young people are going to have to change. I know when we had the dot.com bust in Silicon Valley, we literally had hundreds of college and career students coming back to move from IT to bioscience. Well, it meant they had to catch up in biology and chemistry and some of the courses that they haven't had a lot of access to whether they were in high school or college.

So they had to do that career change and I think that's going to be more prominent for all of us because as the president noted in his remarks, 30 of the fastest growing fields are going to require a minimum of a baccalaureate degree. And also the Labor Statistic Bureau reports that an associate degree, a two-year degree or a post-secondary vocational credential are going to grow faster than baccalaureates because we're going to have all those middle level jobs available in increasing numbers going forward.

So today we rank 15 in the world in terms of college degrees and certificated. President Obama has said a college education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success. It's a prerequisite to success. And I think that's what we're saying. We've

got to get that 27 percent of students graduating from high school. That's our goal. We're hoping to get at least to 80 percent of that. We would make a huge step forward.

And in the first year toward that end, our president has really put in place ARRA, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Over \$100 billion has been put to k-12 to look at how we can improve our programs and stave off the loss of teacher jobs. I think it was reported in the paper, over 250,000 teaching jobs have been saved because of ARRA.

And beyond that, beyond saving jobs, we're using it as the opportunity to drive k-12 reforms and really also – and we're thrilled the Congressman Miller introduced the American Graduation Initiative, H.R. 3221, to really build upon the proficiency agenda. It's over in the Senate now. I know that the Senate committee is looking at that and hopefully will release its version for really focusing on not only getting into college from high school or from those 90 million adults that have had little or no college.

But the focus is on completing, completing high school, completing college in the short term, building the infrastructure to really increase significantly those numbers going forward.

To do that in the k-12 agenda I think you talked about the kinds of reforms Secretary Duncan is putting in place really adopting much more rigorous standards. If you want to go to [achievethecore.org](http://achievethecore.org) you'll see all of the work on English and Math standards going on nationally. It's wonderful because we have 48 of 50 states agreeing to move ahead with the standards.

This would be commonly agreed to standards that states would adopt as part of participating in the recovery and hopefully in the competition for race to the top recruiting and retaining effective teachers. We have many, many teachers that will be retiring out of the system in the next five years. Between now and 2014 we'll need over a million teachers in our k-12 schools. We'll need a huge number for community colleges and the rest of higher education.

That third assurance is building better data systems, what Deloitte has done with College Summit to really track student achievement and teacher effectiveness over time. And also Arne Duncan has said we want to have the 5,000 lowest performing schools become as good as the 5,000 best schools in this country. So there's a real commitment to reframe what happens in those struggling areas in our country to really improve performance in those schools.

So when you look at all of that and you take the new legislation which we hope will be coming forward through the American Graduation Initiative, we will really look at through those new dollars how can we increase the preparation of students across the board.

So the graduation initiative is asking for more college graduates. It's taking right now over six years, about half of college students in the country complete college. Now, remember, two-thirds of them are working while they attend college. It's also in the two-year colleges about 25 percent.

So we have got to – we have simply got to do a better job in improving these outcomes and the first step toward that is to have a good hard look at the data and see where the gaps are, see where the achievement gaps are, look at it on the basis of race and ethnicity and age and other factors, look at the working students and the number of hours it takes for students just to simply get through and get their classes and do the kind of studying they need to do in high school and college. And really use these investments to spur higher levels of proficiency and accelerated learning models. So we're very excited that we'll see hopefully an access and completion fund focusing on completing high school and college.

You'll see a lot of legislation that is focusing on high school completion. We're hoping that the in ESEA reauthorization, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, there will be a focus on increasing proficiency and then using the best of the research to get students through with higher quality education, with more promise to be that student that will be able to transfer across a lot of very good careers, healthcare, IT, you name it. We do have some fields that are growing even though we're in a downturn right now.

I don't want to talk specifically a lot more about all the details in the bills but when you step back and you look at all the k-12 reforms ahead of us and what we need to do in community colleges and in higher education in general, I think the big message is we need to do a lot better job of using data, using research, identifying those best practices and applying those to helping students achieve at higher rates with a higher quality education. You'll see it in higher education.

There's a big project, a feasibility study starting. It will be an international study called the assessment of higher education learning outcomes. You'll see a lot of work in accreditation and reviews.

I was in New Haven with Secretary Duncan looking at a new contract in the New Haven public schools that ties teacher evaluation to student learning outcomes. All of this is part of the reform package that we are very excited about moving forward. So we look forward to collaborating with you, with business.

There will be a huge role for business to play in partnering with education, k-12, early learning and higher education, an enormous role for us to make much better use of the research that's coming out on what it takes to increase proficiency.

A great study out of Columbia Teachers College was looking two-year students and actually giving need and merit based scholarship dollars in segments so students would get one amount when they started, an amount for completing the freshman year. We know when you complete that freshman year, it's a bellwether to moving ahead and

getting that degree or what certificate and then giving a larger amount when you actually did complete.

So we can take existing funding, existing models, use the research to really increase that achievement level in our students. And we know that it's not going to be one single fix. We've got such diversity across our country that students really will need individual education plans and much better resource acquisition from not only parents but teachers and the rest of our communities to make this difference happen.

But I just want to say how exciting it is to be part of this agenda that President Obama has set forward and we look forward to working with the Center for American Progress and College Summit and all of the rest of the people in this audience who really want to work on these issues before us. They're extremely challenging and we have a tremendous amount of energy and intellect to really face this challenge and make a difference now for this next decade to reach that 2020 goal. Thanks so much.

MS. BROWN: Thank you, Dr. Kanter. That was really an important message. It's very interesting. I'm glad you cited those statistics about college students who are working. Here at the center, our focus on post-secondary, much of it has been on what we call working learners and we think it's that kind of approach that we're going to have to take to increase the proficiency rate, the graduation rate from college as you noted.

So I'd like to invite – we're going to have a panel discussion now about high school preparation and readiness for college. And I'd like to invite my panelists up here. And I will introduce them and then I'll join them. Come on up, Bethany, Emma and Charles.

So let me introduce my colleagues here and then I'll sit down and join them and we'll have a discussion.

Charles Thomas is the principal at Crossland High School in Prince George's County. He actually was a career changer becoming a teacher after 13 years at IBM and then as an owner of a small business. He's been a principal at Crossland for how many years?

MR. CHARLES THOMAS: This is just sixth.

MS. BROWN: His sixth year as principal at Crossland.

Emma Vadehra is deputy assistant secretary in the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy at the U.S. Department of Education. Emma came to the department from Senator Kennedy's office where she served as senior education council for the senator and the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Bethany Little is the chief education counsel for that same committee. We call it the HELP Committee. She is responsible for legislation governing early childhood

programs, elementary and secondary education, higher education and workforce training. Prior to joining the Senate HELP Committee staff, she was the vice president for policy and federal advocacy for the Alliance for Excellent Education, a very important advocacy group around the high school agenda. She was responsible for guiding the alliance's policy work on high school reform issues including accountability and school improvement, adolescent literacy and college preparation.

So let me sit down and open with the first question. So, Charles, you and your school are highlighted in the report that we're releasing today. And the report begins with a vignette that includes you and a former student, Destiny. Under your leadership, Crossland has made some enormous strides, but a letter from Destiny's mother saying that Destiny, who was at the top of her class in high school, is now struggling in college. And this spurred you to reevaluate everything you were doing at Crossland.

Can you describe how the feedback from this parent changed things at Crossland and share your thoughts on the significance of finding a way to collect information on how your students are doing in college more strategically and systematically?

MR. THOMAS: Yes. I have vivid memories of that conversation. Destiny's parents are outstanding parents. They've supported our school tremendously and they actually have a son there now. So I have an ongoing relationship with them.

And, you know, you like to think that your best students are going to be prepared for whatever occurs when they leave.

And if that was any student in our school who I thought was going to do well, it was this young girl. And as a matter of fact, at our school we have what we call an academic "hall of fame," and we select four or five kids from our entire student body every year and we select them very carefully. We use as much objective data as we can and we place these kids in our academic hall of fame. And actually, we have photographs of them in our lobby. And Destiny was one of those kids that were selected for that because she was just an outstanding young lady.

But when I got this letter from her mom – her mom was very thankful for the opportunities we'd given her. She was very appreciative of the changes that had occurred in the school during the time Destiny was there. But she told me that she was having some issues in calculus.

And I don't know – for some reason, I felt personally responsible for that because, as a principal, I think that is my responsibility to make sure that when my kids graduate, they're prepared for what comes next.

So I knew if a kid like Destiny was struggling, then I knew most of my kids were struggling. And I knew that we had to do something to make sure that future kids didn't also struggle.

Now, I think that that goes to the core of what we're talking about today. We have to have some way of defining success. In our school system, our superintendent gave us two basic goals for high schools. The first goal was to make sure all of our ninth graders became 10<sup>th</sup> graders. The second goal was to make sure that all of our seniors graduated college or career ready.

Now, it's very easy to define success when a goal is for all your ninth graders to become 10<sup>th</sup> graders. At the end of the year you look and see how many ninth graders became 10<sup>th</sup> graders. But when you define that – the way you define success for that second goal, all of your seniors to graduate college and career ready, we had no way of defining that. I have no way of knowing. I can graduate them but are they really ready? And without any feedback, we don't know. And the only feedback I got was anecdotal.

So just hearing that from Ms. Stewart, I knew that we had to do something different. And so we did.

MS. BROWN: Tell us a little bit about what you did. That involves College Summit.

MR. THOMAS: Well, we already had College Summit in the school. At our school, all of our kids – our seniors are required to take College Summit and this year we have 316. They're all in a College Summit program. But I feel that in order for a child to be prepared for college they have to get a taste of college in high school.

We wanted as many of our kids to take AP classes, advanced placement classes, and we've had great success in convincing our students, in convincing our parents to have their children take AP classes in the school. But we did not focus as much on the kids actually passing the AP exam. We felt in the beginning that they would benefit just from the experience of finding out what the demands would be. We've changed that goal now.

And one of the things that I think is so true about high schools is – and I'm sure most of you have heard this, but in high schools what gets measured gets done. We had not been measuring our individual AP students on how many of their students passed the AP exam. We had not made that a focus for them. We had not told them this is what we want and this is how we're going to track it, and this is how we're going to find out if you did well. Now we do that. Now, each one of them have a goal for the AP students when it comes to the AP exam.

Throughout this year we have had – I've had meetings with all of my AP teachers. And we by using AP exams as quarterly tests, we're using them as benchmarks. They're looking at the results in there focusing on those things that the kids are weak on. We've even (had ?) assemblies with AP kids to motivate them. We're showing them movies to motivate them.

But we've changed our whole approach and now every AP student, every AP teacher in our school, they have a goal of 15 percent of those kids passing the AP exam. And I'm pretty confident we're going to make it because we're going to measure it in our teacher-student, what we ask them to do when we measure it.

MS. BROWN: Terrific. Emma, the Department of Education has prioritized enrollment and proficiency data in state applications of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund and the Race to the Top grants. Have you started to see states respond to these provisions? And what kind of steps can be taken to make sure that this data is not simply reported by also spurs actions like we just heard happened at Crossland High School?

MS. EMMA VADEHRA: Yes. Sure. So I think on the first point as states are constantly telling us, we're asking them to do a whole bunch of things at the same time and I think they're still frankly getting their heads around everything, and getting plans in place to move forward on all of it to get all of their systems in place and to move a lot of their system forward as we sort of move towards the Race to the Top guidelines and encouraging more states to move in that direction. So I think we're still learning there.

I think the second point though is really the key one because I think everybody in this room would agree that the necessary next step moving – or I hope everybody is in agreement – the necessary next step moving forward is for k-12 systems to not just be thinking about k-12 systems and it doesn't end on graduation day. It ends at – every level of the system is thinking about preparing kids to get to and through the next level of the systems.

So that means, as Martha said, middle schools thinking about getting kids transitioning from eighth to ninth grade and succeeding in high school. It means secondary schools aligning their goals and their expectations and their teachers' goals and their students' goals and their expectations around getting to and through post-secondary education.

And so while the first piece is getting the data – we can all agree we need data systems that will put all of this in one place so teachers even have a shot at knowing whether their kids are getting to and through college, whether their kids are truly college proficient as opposed to getting out of high school by whatever standard 50 states have set for them – then next step is figuring how to get that data back down into the system, and I think that's going to continue to be a big focus for us moving forward.

I think we're really interested, again, as Martha said, in seeing how we can use ESEA to first benchmark all states to this goal, no longer a sort of 50 varying states standards. The goal for all kids and all states needs to be true college and career readiness. And that means to me and you're ready to go to college without remediation. And we should be asking that of all of our k-12 systems.

Once we have those systems in place, we need to see what we can learn and see how we can get that data back down to teachers for them to know how to change their

practice and move forward and whatever we can do to help with that. We're eager to learn. I mean, this is all – I think it's one of the things that's so old news to teachers and district leaders that this is data they need and data their teachers need to drive change because what's measured and what data you get back is what will change practice. But we're still figuring it out how we can encourage it from here.

MS. BROWN: Yes. It's pretty amazing that it's taken us this long to get to these kind of discussions. And no one knows better the in attention high schools have gotten historically from a policy perspective in this town that Bethany Little who's worked very hard in two different places now to put high school reform on the agenda. She also knows the legislative landscape as it affects high school programs better than anyone else. So I have this kind of complicated question, Bethany.

So this report highlights several recommendations. J.B. went over them about amending ESEA to reward schools that demonstrate a significant increase in college proficiency rate, the encourage the collection of data as we've heard described and to build the capacity of high school to better use this post-secondary education data.

So what are the chances that some of these recommendations we might see them in some of these proposed pieces of high school legislation, first of all?

And secondly, explain to us where high schools are fitting in the current legislation, with current congressional environment. I know it's a high priority but we get sort of confusing signals about what's going to move when. And I know you don't have the perfect crystal ball either but maybe you can give us a little hint of where things are going.

MS. BETHANY LITTLE: Yes. I'd be making a lot more money if I had the perfect crystal ball in this town. I think high schools really do remain a strong priority certainly on the Senate HELP Committee and I see that in the House and Labor Committee as well. And I think Congress remains very concerned about the issues of dropouts and about college readiness and college success.

And the president has put that agenda front and center with the comments that Dr. Kanter laid out and with his follow up which was not simply to lay out a goal but to actually put in place some opportunity to move that agenda forward in very meaningful ways that have had a significant impact in the legislative environment and specifically the president has said that he's ready to take on the issue of student loan reform and stop subsidizing lenders and instead use that money to invest in getting more students to and through college successfully.

And he worked closely with the chairman of our Budget Committee in the Senate to have reconciliation instructions. This took a significant amount of political will and muscle. And doing that has allowed us to have a shot at doing something meaningful legislatively on this front. Even in this time of tight budgets there's a way to do this without increasing the deficit that could really move the ball forward.

And specifically on the high school piece, most people have seen the House bill on this, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act that's been referenced earlier today and that makes major investments in community colleges and Pell grants and key pieces of this puzzle.

But the Senate feels very strongly that another key piece that wasn't addressed in the House bill is the question of the high schools, is what we call the pipeline to college, what is it that we're doing to make sure that more students will be able to get to college and get there ready to succeed? And so legislatively we have every intention in the Senate of taking up this challenge, of passing this legislation. And we have every intention of including in it an investment in improving high schools and focusing them on college readiness.

So I think that's one piece of the legislative puzzle but I think the recommendations around data and the recommendations around ESEA reauthorization are equally critical to the investment directly in high schools and deal with some of the accountability and information side.

And I think you'll see movements forward on that and reauthorization definitely. I feel very strongly that more and more the confluence of events is a natural evolution towards focus on outcomes.

In our last – (inaudible) – conversation that largely was around test scores. I think in our next ESEA reauthorization conversation it's going to be a focus on outcomes that matter in many contexts. And no outcome is a better measure of the success of our K-12 education system than how students are doing getting to and through college.

MS. BROWN: Charles, before we came into this room we were talking about the data that's made available to your school by your district and the state. And you thought there were some ways that could be improved or better organized. And share with us at your – at the practitioner level, what data means the most? And if you could give some advice to your central administration in the state, how would you suggest they better organize the data they give you?

MR. THOMAS: Well, I think the most important thing is simplicity. We don't – a lot of the data that we get, we don't need. We don't use it. In many cases, when I get data, I will take a lot of that data out because it is only confusing and it's not relevant.

MS. BROWN: Give me an example. So what would an example be?

MR. THOMAS: Well, for example, when we get test scores back. That may be – it may be all out on the spread sheet and that may be 10 or 15 columns of data. And I may need four columns of data. I need to know who the student is. I need to know when they took the test and what their score was.

And a lot of times I will take away the stuff I don't need and I will put it on a spreadsheet separately with just what I need because when I disseminate that to the people who really need to know, which is the assistant principals and the teachers, they need to focus on what's necessary. And the other stuff isn't necessary to them and they need to focus on those things that they can understand. And unnecessary data just creates another job because we have to get rid of it. There are only a few data points that a high school really needs.

So I think that the most important thing for whatever is given to us as principals is that it be simple. And sometimes making things – as a matter of fact, one of the things that we say the teacher is – the genius of a great teacher is the ability to make something complex simple. If we can do that, I think it would be a lot more beneficial to the people on the end, the end users.

MS. BROWN: Right. So, Emma, we've seen the federal government take more initiative with regard to criteria to be met to distribute more money than it's ever been available to public schools from the federal level. And it's a fantastic opportunity and the administration is to be commended for its really thoughtful guidance that it's put together for these various programs, particularly Race to the Top and several others. So data – the department's very committed to common standards, moving in the direction of common assessments or at least a few good assessments.

But what – and you've put a high priority on data but how are you going to – are you really going to get in there and judge these Race to the Top applications in terms of whether states are taking steps to make data organized and provided to districts and schools in a way that can be usable? We at the center have spent some time on state websites and – the variation in the quality of information and data is huge and that means – I, for one, hope you're not rewarding states that aren't taking major steps to make their data systems useful. Have you thought about that?

MS. VADEHRA: We have thought about it and let me talk about it broadly as opposed to in the judgment of Race to the Top applications, maybe, if that's fair?

MS. BROWN: Yes.

MS. VADEHRA: I think that's a really good point and it goes exactly to your point. When you look at federal statutes, we often go around asking for lots and lots of pieces of data. In Title One we have state and local report cards that asked for lots of pieces of data.

Parents are supposed to get all these pieces of data. whether those pieces of data are the right pieces of data, whether they're going to be useful for parents, whether the sheer number of them means inherently they won't be useful for parents or teachers or leaders because it's just too much information and too much information that may or may not be the key data points, I think is a challenge we're really running up against.

And as we sort of look forward, we know there are in some ways more data points we want to be more serious about. We want to be more serious about not just, as Bethany said, whether a student is passing a test but whether a student is at a point in each grade such that they are on a track to be college and career ready by the end of their career.

So that's a really key data points. There are key data points about transitions. There are key data points about getting to college – about entering college and not needing remediation in the college proficiency data points.

But what are the other key data points we actually need and at what point do we start overwhelming everybody with information such that we've actually moved backwards because – and honestly, I think we're really struggling in trying to do a lot of thinking about moving forward, how could we ask states and districts and everyone to be designing their data sharing platforms, whether it's a piece of paper or an Internet website in such a way that everyone will actually be able to use it and it will drive parents to learn what they need to know, drive them to make good choices for their students. We're really struggling a lot with it.

I think that for those in the audience who are in the system and who have their local report cards and their local – being overwhelmed with information, we'd love thoughts on what we should be asking for so that there is a clear tight piece of paper, website that everyone gets and that drives what we need.

MS. BROWN: So Bethany, I have to ask you a question that I know is on the mind of the audience. I've talked with you some about it but I bet you're asked about it every day. What do you think is going to be the schedule for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act?

MS. LITTLE: Emma, what do you – (laughter) – so before I say that, it reminds me I needed to make my congressional standard disclaimer which is that everything for any reporters that I'm saying is background and not on the record.

But I will say, I think that – I can say that Secretary Duncan and Senator Harkin have spoken and they have committed to one another to work together as soon as possible to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Secretary Duncan has been out there publicly saying many times that he feels like there are some serious changes that need to make and they need to be made now. And I think Senator Harkin shares his sense of urgency and wants to take this on as quickly as possible. So I would say at the beginning of next year we'll be diving right into this.

MS. BROWN: Great. So what I'd like to do now is invite Dr. Kanter to take this seat – I'll stand over there and I'll open it to questions from the audience if you have time to join us, I hope.

It's on right? So Dr. Kanter, do you have anything to say in response to what you've heard from our panel?

MS. KANTER: Well, I love the simplicity. There's a great book by John Maeda called *The Laws of Simplicity*, out of MIT. And I think you are absolutely right to talk about this because the data is overwhelming.

And when we have historically used the data for compliance purposes and now we're also adding the core goal to make it useful to teachers, students and principals and parents, it's very important that we think through all of that and push all that compliance data over to the people that need to monitor and go in and say, we're spending the money the right way, you know, we said you were going to make this amount of progress, did you, and so on.

But for usability, I just think that is going to be a driver that we think about in Washington in the U.S. Department of Education, work with the Senate and the House and others to see what is essential for us to know. And I think what you said about knowing where a student stands and knowing what the quality of that education is – and I think when you talk about the quality of education and you'll see a lot of focus on learning outcomes. What does it mean for us in higher education – what does a college degree really mean?

And there's great work at the American Association of Colleges and Universities to look at the learning outcomes that have been supported by the business leaders across America to say, we want students at these levels of proficiency so that they will be that competitive workforce that we talked about.

And then when you drill back all the way down to even early learning, what does it mean to be ready for kindergarten, what's the quality of that early learning experience, what's the role of teachers, what's the role of parents to get that kid ready for learning and all the way then up to college and career proficiency and readiness. I just think that is the conversation that we need to pay a lot more attention to. So I think it's very exciting.

And I'm glad to know that the Senate is going to be coming out with this version because a lot of work – and I think you'll see all of us talking about the entire pipeline. That's the other thing that struck me about the comments, that we're all talking about a connected system of education that you can't have one part without the other part. And if we can move all in a common direction, I think we really will meet those 2020 goals.

I mean, I kind of think in generations now maybe because of my age but I just think that we've got a crisis now. We have two-thirds of the students that come to a two-year college, the one I ran for 16 years, not ready for college. Whose fault is that? That is not the conversation. It's what can we do about it now to get students more prepared for industry, for business, for non-profits, for public service.

One thing I just would add that it's the work that we have done in the first six months of the Obama administration to really look at reforms for federal student aid are going to be so important for high school students from those community that don't have the performance levels, that do have the high dropout rates to really get families understanding that college is possible and college is an expectation. College and career are both expectations for every student. And the Federal Student Aid program is the door in for many of those students. So it's very exciting.

And one thing that we haven't focused enough on that's also been passed already is public service loan forgiveness. So we're going to be talking a lot about going forward with interesting high school students and all forms of service careers but the public service loan forgiveness will even allow students not to have those tremendously huge loans facing them when they graduate.

So I think paying attention to the economic side, paying attention, of course, to the education and proficiency side are going to be essential moving forward.

MS. BROWN: Okay. Great. I'd like to open it to questions. Right here. All right. If you want to be first, then the woman right behind you.

Q: Thank you.

MS. BROWN: Please tell us who you are.

Q: Yes. My name is (Gwendolyn Hubbard Lewis ?). I'm out of Alexandria, Virginia, and I'm the founding executive director for the Concerned Citizen Network of Alexandria, CCNA. And we've come together to lower the dropout rate and to close the achievement gap within Alexandria. We have the second highest dropout rate in Northern Virginia. So this is a very serious matter for us.

And I'm a former school board member there and I feel as though I can bring some – allow the engagement of the community and empower the parents to surround the children to make sure that they reach their fullest potential. So what I'm trying to say here is that we are a microcosm in Alexandria of what is happening nationwide.

And it would seem to me that we would make a perfect model for all that's being said here because we have one high school that's never made AYP. We have two middle schools and a ninth grade academy and 13 elementary schools. It's perfect to put a lot of these things in place in Alexandria to begin measuring the kind of things and use the data in the way that we are talking about.

And my question is how can we develop or establish this kind of model within the context what we are discussing here today?

I have a two-point question. The second part of my question is how can we, as a community, bring to bear on our district, on our small district of 10,000 children all of the

resources that are here today to make these children successful on the way to their career and high school graduation?

MS. BROWN: Anyone who would want to take a shot at that? Emma?

MS. VADEHRA: Me?

MS. BROWN: Yes.

MS. VADEHRA: So I'm the first in terms of how – are you asking how can we do more to be encouraging the sort of partnerships you're already taking on and the challenges that your community is taking on?

Q: It's how can we make that a model, a project with all of the different aspects of reform that we are trying to legislate and put into action?

MS. VADEHRA: So I think that one of the things that I think we're hearing from you and are hearing from more and more places around the country is when we – there has been a sort of new focus on the federal government needs to be paying more attention to high school.

We've been ignoring this in the past. And as part of this, one of the things we should be doing is asking full communities to be focusing on increasing the high school graduation rate, and not just the graduation rate but the college ready graduation rate, the college proficiency rate and that realistically this is sort of saying explicitly that this isn't just about the k-12 system.

It's about the non-profit partners and folks like College Summit and community-based organizations that are going to come in and help you build a college going culture in your school. It's about asking the business community to come in and help guide what needs to be done at the high school level such that students are actually finishing high school and are career ready and can take on the jobs of the future.

And it's about the higher ed community coming in and saying, well, this is what we need and this is what the k-12 system should be aligning to so that kids don't need remediation once they get to college.

So I think we're definitely interested in look at how we can encourage partnerships like that but sort of – and integrated partnerships within and outside the k-12 system. And some of the pieces of Race to the Top are about a sort of a comprehensive plan that's asking more than a principal standing up and say, I'm going to try really hard to do this but asking all the players in the system to come together.

And I think as we move forward in some of the competitive grant programs, as we look toward ESEA further encouraging those comprehensive partnerships, looking at accountability systems that encourage alignment between the higher ed system, the k-12

system and talking to your business community as you've set your goals. So I think that's what we're thinking of doing to encourage the work. It sounds like you all are already doing but love to hear it from others.

MS. BROWN: The woman in the blue dress.

Q: Good morning. My name is Kimberly Jones. I'm with the Council for Opportunity in Education. We advocate for the Federal TRIO Programs. And even though we're moving away from anecdotal information, I do have a question for Principal Thomas about your student you mentioned in the beginning and the difficulty she's encountered in college despite the strong academic and college going culture at Crossland.

I'm wondering to what extent, if any, do you think those difficulties resulted from a lack of inadequate support system on her college campus whether it be academic tutoring, mentoring, social support, if not for her then for other graduates of your high school, particularly those who are first generation college students.

MR. THOMAS: No. I would not place that on her college. I think that the primary problem, and it's a problem that I think we've made great progress toward addressing is the quality of her teachers. I think that is the most important thing for any student to be successful on any level.

And I think that if the federal government is going to do anything that is going to have a profound effect on the quality of education in any high schools and in closing any achievement gap that may be anywhere, if you put good teachers in schools, then it's sort of like finding one thing that will fix 10 problems as opposed to 10 things that will fix one. Our teachers are the most important people in our school and we have tried very hard and gone beyond the boundaries to find the best possible teachers for our kids.

And I think Destiny's Math teacher was not the best possible teacher she could have had. And I think that if she had some of the teachers that I have now, she would not have had the problems that she had in her first year of college. But that's the most important thing. You have to have good teachers.

MS. BROWN: Can I ask you a follow-up question?

MR. THOMAS: Yes.

MS. BROWN: I think your comment is hugely important. So have you changed – it sounds to me like you've changed the composition of your teaching force.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, yes.

MS. BROWN: And how did that happen?

MR. THOMAS: Well, I don't now if I should say that publicly. Well, no.  
(Laughter.)

MS. BROWN: I'm very interested in the answer.

MR. THOMAS: Well, that is probably one of the most critical questions in American education. Everybody knows the difficulty in dealing with difficult teachers. And what we do is we basically – we have expectations for all of our teachers. And we insist that they do the things that we asked them to do.

Now, as I said before, what gets measured gets done in high school. And we measure everything our teachers do just like we measure everything all the students do. And those teachers who are motivated and prepared and professional, they have no problems with that. They love that. Those teachers who are not inclined to be professional or inclined to be prepared, they don't like that. So they have the option of transferring to other schools.

Now, I'm not one to promote transferring one problem from one school to another but when my teachers say they want to transfer, I say, okay. I wish you well. And I make it my purpose to replace them with a teacher that's better than the one that left. But my preference is to make them better and a lot of them have changed their practices and decided to get better.

MS. BROWN: Dr. Kanter?

MS. KANTER: Just a comment that Secretary Duncan's plan to leverage incentives for the best teachers to work in the schools that have a large number of struggling students is really part of what we're trying to look at in Race to the Top and the four assurances that will really create that quality teacher going into schools that really need them most and to really discourage the kind of transferring on and on and on that just perpetuates the problems but really to focus at the core of it which is how can we raise the teaching profession in general in America. I would like to see our teaching profession be as high regarded as our medical profession, as our other professions.

So I think that's one of the biggest challenges that we have and there are a lot of parts to that, but really getting the best teachers for those students is really the driver for all of us.

MS. BROWN: Okay. The gentleman in the front row then I'm going to go to back.

Q: (Off mike) – Communications currently but I just came from running a college in Pennsylvania for five years with some world-class education programs. And I wanted to thank you, Cindy, for the excellent programs last week and this week. And I want to congratulate Dr. Kanter and Principal Charles for their accomplishments and dedication to education.

My question comes at this from a different angle. And you are examples of the reason I want to ask my question, and it has to do with the role of leadership.

Principal Thomas just said that he thought teachers were – they're the most important element, and I, over the last decade, have come to the conclusion that we are giving insufficient attention to the important role and responsibility of leaders in higher education, basic education, secondary education. I noted in Jake's report excellent data being gathered but a paucity of data on the role and responsibilities of leaders in education.

And I just wonder, you know, we focus almost all our attention on teachers and on students, whether we're gathering data, whether we're developing policies or programs. They seem to be 90 percent focused on students or teachers. Is there a chance we're paying insufficient attention to the importance of good leaders in education? Are we ensuring that we have good leader development programs?

I would challenge, Dr. Kanter, your statement that it doesn't matter who's responsible because in my organization we say we don't have bad programs. We just have bad leaders. And I wonder whether or not we need to pay a little bit more attention to the role and responsibilities and programs to ensure we have good leadership from the principal level, assistant principals all the way up through the state level. Thank you.

MS. BROWN: Yes. I think all of us would agree – I know we at the center are going to be doing more work on the roles of principals ourselves. Okay. Let me see. Someone back there.

Q: Hi. I'm Jim Loewen. I'm the author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me* about how we miss teach American History. But I have a question: do not we have already one institution and possibly two – I'm talking about ETS and possibly the ACT, the American College Testing program that already collect data on high school graduates, first semester college performance.

Massively in the case of ETS, as least, they don't do much with it. They ought to use it to improve their – shall I say – idiotic SAT, but they don't. But they could feed it back to high schools because they know the high school too.

They have all the information and they could feed back grouped so it wouldn't interfere with any students' right of privacy because given high school only probably has one graduate at a given college but if you got it back grouped, that would start this process that I think you're absolutely right in putting your finger on would be very helpful.

MS. BROWN: Good question. Anyone –

MS. LITTLE: Our experience with ACT at least is that they've actually been extremely thoughtful with their data and they have done a lot recently to move the ball forward in the understanding of college proficiency and the understanding of what it means to be college ready and successful in college. And they've used their data and mind their data certainly in ways that have been significant to the policymaking environment and have added really productive pieces to the conversation. So I actually give them a lot of credit for what they've done with their data to date.

MS. BROWN: Charles?

MR. THOMAS: Yes. I'd like to address that too. I think that would be an excellent place to start but I think that – and someone can correct me if I'm wrong – they only have data on those students who take the SAT or the AP exams. Now, in our school, that would not cover all of my students.

My AP students, and I have about a third of my students who are taking AP classes right now, but the county pays for them to take their AP exams. Less than half of my students, well, I'd say about maybe three-fourths of my seniors take the SAT.

But in my school, and I think my numbers are a little bit higher than most other students in Prince George's County, but more than 60 percent of my students are on free or reduced meals. They don't take a lot of exams if they cost a lot of money. So that's one reason why we initially pay for our students to take the AP exam and then the county decided to pay for them as well.

But I think that would be a great place to start but it wouldn't cover all of the kids. And we need data on all our kids, even the kids that go to junior college because a lot of our kids that don't go to four-year schools, they do go to the community colleges.

MS. KANTER: I'd just like to add one other piece. I served on a college board years ago and kids that took the PSAT were automatically put into a database that had college information sent to their parents, sent to their homes. And for kids that couldn't take the PSAT, they were cut out of that resources and you had to pay, I think it was \$50 or \$60 – maybe it was cheaper at that time. It was 10 years ago.

But there are systems like that I think we could look at and I would just suggest that's a great area for research that how do these testing systems and the databases they are connected to increase college going culture, what are the outcomes from those systems, and how do we feed back because, you know, two-thirds of the students especially from schools that you're talking about where 60 percent are on free and reduced lunch don't have that opportunity to even get into the system and that's a real concern for us.

MS. BROWN: The woman in the back row on the aisle and then Emily Bloomfield next to her in the back, standing in the back.

Q: Alma Clayton-Pedersen, the Association of American Colleges and Universities where Dr. Kanter mentioned we are advocating these learning outcomes.

I'd like to ask what is the federal government doing to coordinate the various pieces of this pipeline, that is we can have each of the pieces creating its islands of innovation with no bridges in between them.

So is there some way that you're going to connect the federal government's oversight of these different pieces? And secondarily, what are we doing with this specific case around immigrant students in these very large urban areas?

MS. BROWN: Good question.

MS. KANTER: Well, we have Jacqueline Jones who has come on board to lead the Early Learning Initiative; Thelma Melendez who's come on board to lead the K-12 Initiative. She's our assistant secretary for k-12.

And for higher education we are about to announce the new assistant secretary for post-secondary education. And we have already brought on board Brenda Dann-Messier from the Adult Learning Center in Providence, Rhode Island, the Dorcas Family Literacy Center. She's an expert in literacy.

So what you're seeing internally in the department are a coordinated cabinet – I don't even want to call it a cabinet, but a team that Arne Duncan has really brought together and we are working so that when we are coming together, we're looking at the four assurances for k-12 and we're paralleling the agenda for higher education.

We're very concerned about replacing professors across the country. We're very concerned about the quality of teacher education – in my comments about the teaching profession. I don't know that I said about responsibility. I didn't recall that comment but if I did, leaders are very much a part of this agenda and we are working with a lot of institution you'll see and one of the four assurances that Secretary Duncan has put forward has called teachers and leaders not just teachers because it is a partnership.

So you're seeing that internal coordination around the assurances, improving data systems that will start from early learning through career and college readiness.

So we want to track UI data as has already been done in Florida, tying UI wage data back to academic information about students so you can see along the trajectory, are they improving? Do they have the jobs that they had and tended to get what kinds of – what is the quality of our workforce and the like, and really going backwards to understand how all the pieces fit together. So it's very exciting for us.

And a lot of collaboration with people like Emma and the policy shop and our Office of General Counsel so that we really work forward in a very coordinated way. I think a lot of conversations with the Hill, constant conversation about, you know, are we

really missing any of the pieces? That's very exciting for us. And I think the last thing I'd say is that we're also convening business leaders and philanthropic leaders as well to be part of a conversation as well as the research community.

MS. BROWN: And Bethany or Emma, will you tackle the immigrant question, including the issue of undocumented young people who have spent their whole – went through the public school system and are often not allowed into post-secondary institutions, the DREAM Act?

MS. LITTLE: Right. Certainly for some time we have been trying to move the DREAM Act in Congress which would allow these students to – as their states permit – get access to federal aid and attend college appropriately. I think the reality is we're a nation of immigrants. We're going to continue to be a nation of immigrants.

And it is as critical that that part of our population have access to this high-quality education all the way through post-secondary and success in post-secondary as it is that everyone have access to that. And we need to be thinking about this as it relates to every part of our population. So that's what we're going to do.

MS. BROWN: Okay. Emily?

Q: Hi. I'm Emily Bloomfield. I'm with Stand for Children, which is a grassroots community organization in six states currently. And we are working with communities to promote initiatives that reduce the achievement gap and raise achievement for all children.

And what I'd like to know from the author, from Mr. Schramm and the principal and others, is what kinds of policies at the district level and at the state level can we be asking our communities to ask for that will have the most impact in achieving this goal of college preparedness in high schools? I mean, the data comes through loud and clear, but what some other really actionable items that will move us to accomplishing this goal?

MS. BROWN: You already talked about teacher policies but you might want to elaborate.

MR. THOMAS: Yes. Well, I can only speak for my own school. And the most critical thing that we have to do – well, the most critical thing we had to do was change the culture in our building. You know, our kids live in – I call it a “subculture” that does not have the same priorities that we try to implement into school. We have to give our kids a safe haven from that and once they get into the building, we have to institute different folkways and morays within our own building. We have to have different priorities. And we have to make it safe for them to accept those priorities because when they walk about of the building and go up on the corner, there's going to be a different set of priorities.

And a lot of our kids live dual lives because they have to be acceptable and cool on the corner and in the neighborhood, but when they come into the school, we're asking them to do something that's different and we have to make it acceptable and cool for them to be able to do that in the building.

So I'm amazed by my kids because I think that they can do things that other kids can't do. They can speak two different languages and they can have two different cultures and they can exist in both of them, but we have to make it safe for them to do that because I'm sure, if any of you remember your high school days, the most important thing was you had to be cool. And that hasn't changed.

So I think that's where the leadership comes in, the principals and the assistant principals and the teachers and the maintenance people and the security people – they have to embrace that culture and they have to make it safe for kids to exist in that culture knowing that when they leave in the afternoon they're going to have to go to a different culture, or a subculture. I won't call it a culture.

But, you know, there's no simple answer to that. I think some principals can create that and maintain it and other simply can't. And I think the ones that can, they have a leg up in closing that gap that we're talking about all the time.

MR. SCHRAMM: In addition to the point that Principal Thomas is making about the culture, the college going culture in the school, one of the strategies we work with with high schools around is around signaling, leadership signaling. And that goes for the principal and the educators but also for the parents.

And I referenced the Deloitte survey that was just done. And there's a striking disjunction. We've been asking our k-12 for decades to think of high school as an end point where graduation is the goal. And I think what the Deloitte survey found was that according to parents, as well as students, the primary mission of high school should be college success, college preparation.

And so the more we can encourage the parents to speak out and ask the question, what's our college enrollment rate at our school, what's our college proficiency rate, to just have the message coming loud and clear that the expectation on the part of parents and the community is that high school is a launch pad to college and career success.

MS. BROWN: And I would just add that for policymakers it's setting goals, very clearly, about college and career success. And it's about holding people accountable, including school principals and teachers as the principal outlined for results. I'm going to take one more question and then I'm going to allow J.B. to make the closing remarks. The woman in yellow. Wait for the mike.

Q: Hi. My name is Kathy Beland and I'm with School Connect Optimizing the High School Experience. We have a program that helps in freshman transition to high school. And this is probably a good question to follow on what we just talked about

because I've heard a lot this morning on measuring how well high school students are prepared for the academic rigor of college.

But that's not the only reason that they fail in college. There're other reasons, whether you call them social, emotional or interpersonal, interpersonal skills.

And what I'm talking about is the skills in self-awareness, self-management, being able to negotiate with a roommate, resolve a conflict, and probably most importantly how to self-motivate when you come upon an obstacle or a setback, whether that is bombing out on a midterm exam or ending a close relationship. And all those things really affect whether you do well in college and they are also what makes you successful in the workplace.

So has there been any talk about measuring those types of things or finding out more about the reasons why students don't complete college?

MS. BROWN: Dr. Kanter?

MS. KANTER: Well, the state of Texas – I'm pleased to report – went after – asked every college in the university in Texas over the last four years to identify students that left college and actually reach out to them and talk with them and ask them why with the goal of seeing how many they could return to the pipeline whether it was the University of Texas or the Dallas Community College or wherever. And they actually ended up getting half of the students back that had left.

And what they found was that the dropouts from college were really more about social and economic – you know, the economy was a huge driver, also mobility of families. We had to move. We couldn't stay and I just never went back.

So the reasons really weren't – I was sort of drilling down and just asking them, you know, a million questions and saying, was it the quality of what was taught in that particular year? The freshman year is the biggest make or break year. And it really wasn't. It was all of these other factors.

And I think your point is well taken. I think there is a lot of work going on in the research community to look at the factors affecting student performance and the kinds of motivations and incentives that we can give especially in that first year of college to curve that dropout rate and give students a sense of success, especially in that first semester, first quarter of the year.

So we need to do a lot more work but I think when you talk to people like Dr. Robert Sternberg who's at Tuft's and Vincent Tinto who's done a whole lot of work in learning communities and freshman experience, you'll see colleges and universities really using more of a cohort model. There are freshman experience programs being put into place and other ways to retain students in the first year and really address the other parts of education beyond the level of academic performance which is also a key.

MS. BROWN: Okay. I'm sorry. We have to close the question and answer, but please come up and talk further with our panelists. Thank you, panelists, for a really excellent conversation. (Applause.) And it's my pleasure to turn this over to our partner in today's event, J.B. Schramm.

MR. SCHRAMM: Thank you, Cindy. One reflection that leaps to mind is the importance of rubbing away that bright line that so often separates k-12 and higher education. And college proficiency as a measure reflects that but this panel and the backgrounds of each of these panelists reflects that as well.

Cindy made the point that it's pretty amazing that it's taken us long to have this kind of conversation. And, you know, Bethany made the point that we're getting now in the conversation to move to focusing on outcomes and that looking at college proficiency, college graduation are ways to really further that.

I'd like to highlight Emma's point that the necessary next step is to actually get this kind of information to be used. And Charles point that out – the importance of making simple enough that it can be used. I recall a superintendent once kind of shaking his fist and saying, you know, data, data, data, nothing to help me think. And so often that's a real challenge.

I would point to some interesting work that the Gates Foundation is doing around – they're focusing on three states and helping those states use post-secondary data in schools and they brought College Summit on to support that effort to actually pull together something like 70 focus groups of principals and educators in those states to talk about what form should the data be and to be useful. And we really need to listen to the educators so that the data can be useful. But then we also need to – and a part of the Gates effort is to get the training for the educators to actually apply the – what's being learned in their classrooms.

And then I just want to – I think Dr. Kanter summed it up that what we really need to do here is change the picture of the pipeline and that's what this is really about – changing the picture of the pipeline into higher education in the workforce.

So thank you everyone for joining us and engaging in the conversation and really starting the conversation here. And we look forward to an active 2010 on all the issues that were raised today.

A legion of generous people supported the development of this paper talking with us from school districts all over the country and helping us develop these ideas and craft these proposals. There's too many to name but in your booklet on page 22 there's a wonderful list of the folks we are indebted to for making this possible.

I do want to acknowledge four of my colleagues at College Summit, Rishi Jaitly, Mora Segal, Loretta Wiatr and Georgia Gillette for leading the effort on our end and

engaging in this conversation. Thank you all for coming and starting the conversation.  
(Applause.)

(END)