
Appendix A

Task Force Forums and Commissioned Papers

Over the last 18 months, the *Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future* National Task Force on Public Education has examined the current state of America's public education system. The Task Force has sought to identify practices that contribute to American students' uneven performance, areas in which important student needs are going unmet, and examples of excellence that are boosting student achievement. To do so, the Task Force held six public forums across the country and commissioned five papers from leading education researchers, advocates and policymakers. Insights gained from these events and papers have informed the Task Force's recommendations. Forum reports and copies of the commissioned papers are available online at: <http://www.americanprogress.org/schools> or http://www.ourfuture.org/issues_and_campaigns/education/ros_sof.cfm

Public Forums

Community Schools: Working Together to Address the Needs of All Children

Portland, Oregon - August 27, 2004

This forum focused on community schools and highlighted Oregon's Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Initiative. Established to create stronger relationships between public schools and their larger communities, the SUN Initiative has shown success in providing needed services and programs for children, including in-school support teams and after-school programming, uniting communities around public schools and improving test score levels. Discussion ranged from partnerships and implementation, to cultural competency, to parental outreach and involvement. This forum provided a constructive conversation on the strengths and challenges of community schools and the need for strong relationships with local agencies, organizations and businesses.

Speakers at this forum included:

- Susan Castillo, Oregon State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Jonah Edelman, Executive Director, Stand for Children
- Barbara Kienle, Director of Student Services, David Douglas School District
- Diane Linn, Chair, Multnomah County Commission
- Lorenzo T. Poe, Vice-chair, Board of Education, Portland Public Schools and Director, Office of School and Community Partnership, Multnomah County

Early Childhood Education: An Investment in Our Future

Columbus, Ohio - September 9, 2004

Discussion at the second forum surrounded the importance of early childhood education programs and introduced several of Ohio's initiatives that focus on young children. Many of these initiatives focus on child development, pre-academic skills, and social and emotional development. High-quality early childhood education programs give children a strong start,

help to prepare them for academic success, and help to close the achievement gap. This forum addressed investments in early childhood education; implementation of programs; partnerships with community, business and government leaders; and addressed several of the lessons learned.

Speakers at this forum included:

- Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Mayor of Columbus
- Barbara Haxton, Executive Director, Ohio Head Start Association, Inc.
- Michelle Katona, Interim Coordinator, Early Childhood Initiative, Cuyahoga County
- Chris Stoneburner, Project Director, Build Ohio
- Susan Tave Zelman, Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Charleta Tavares, Councilwoman, Columbus City Council
- John Taylor, Regional President, PNC Bank

Workforce Development: Ensuring Students Have the Tools to Succeed

Albuquerque, New Mexico - September 28, 2004

This forum addressed the importance of post-secondary education and training in the development of a prepared workforce. Aligning the educational system with the nation's economic and industrial needs will equip students with the skills they need to flourish. This event focused on New Mexico's state- and school-level initiatives designed to align the states employment needs with its curricula and while ensuring high-quality programs. Several of the issues discussed include: the challenges of preparing students to meet the demands of today's economy; the critical role community colleges can serve to provide a wide array of occupational programs for students; the adequacy of current high-school requirements in preparing students for a college education; and the difficulties and changes needed to enhance educating children in math and science.

Speakers at this forum included:

- Leticia Chambers, Executive Director, New Mexico Higher Education Commission
- Veronica Garcia, Secretary of Education
- Michael Glennon, President, Technical Vocational Institute-Workforce Training Center
- Lorenzo Gonzales, Master Teacher, Math and Science Academy
- Joseph Martin, President, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
- Tony Monfiletto, Founder and CEO, Amy Biehl Charter School
- Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico

Postsecondary Education: Ensuring Access for All

St. Louis, Missouri - October 20, 2004

This panel highlighted the challenges of making post-secondary education more accessible at a time when a college diploma or post-secondary vocational credential is increasingly important. Students need to be better prepared academically to take on college-level coursework, and college needs to be within everyone's financial reach. Panelists addressed the fact that paying

for higher education presents a challenge for a growing number of students, especially as financial aid has failed to keep pace with tuition increases. This challenge contributes to significant disparities in college enrollment rates among racial/ethnic and income groups. Also addressed was the need for greater funding for the Pell Grant, ways to make higher education more accessible to non-traditional students (e.g., older, working students or parents), and the importance of high schools in preparing students and parents for the college and financial aid application processes.

Speakers at this forum included:

- Benjamin Ola. Akande, Dean, School of Business and Technology, Webster University
- Charles Dooley, County Executive, St. Louis County
- Dudley Grove, Secretary, Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education
- Dan Peterson, Director of Financial Assistance and Outreach, Missouri Department of Higher Education
- Francis Slay, Mayor of St. Louis

A High Quality Teacher for Every Classroom: Hiring, Supporting, Retaining and Assigning Them Equitably

Phoenix, Arizona - November 19, 2004

This forum tackled the challenge of training, recruiting, supporting and retaining teachers to ensure that every classroom is led by a high-quality instructor. Emphasizing that highly qualified teachers are integral to the learning process, panelists discussed teacher training programs, professional development, and compensation issues. Special attention was given to the critical challenge of retaining teachers, particularly in the high-poverty schools where turnover rates reach 40-50% over a five-year period. Task Force members and panelists also discussed alternative certification routes, incentives for teaching in hard-to-serve schools, and ways to recruit and retain more of the best teachers, including mentoring, career ladders and compensation plans that reward excellence.

Speakers at this forum included:

- Fred Jones, Educational Consultant, Frederic H. Jones and Associates, Inc.
- Ronald Marx, Dean, College of Education, University of Arizona
- Gaynor McCown, Executive Director, The Teaching Commission
- Janet Napolitano, Governor of Arizona
- John Wright, President, Arizona Education Association
- Steve Ybarra, Principal, Carl Hayden Community High School

Redesigning Schools for the 21st Century: Promising Innovations

New York, New York - December 10, 2004

The last forum centered on innovative efforts to redesign middle schools and high schools so that students are prepared to pursue post-secondary education opportunities. Several promising

models were highlighted at the forum including:

- Middle/early colleges, which are located on college campuses and enable students to complete some college credit, or even an associate's degree, while still in high school;
- Smaller learning communities, which foster deeper relationships between students and teachers, while promoting a greater sense of shared responsibility for student achievement among instructors;
- The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), which extends the school day, school week and school year, while focusing on setting high expectations and motivating students, to meet them.

Speakers at this forum included:

- Geoffrey Canada, President and CEO, Harlem Children's Zone
- Cecilia Cunningham, Director, Middle College National Consortium
- Gerry House, President and CEO, Institute for Student Achievement
- David Levin, Superintendent, KIPP Academy
- Arthur Levine, President, Teachers College, Columbia University
- Norma Morales, Principal, Bronx International High School
- Douglas Wood, Executive Director, National Academy for Excellent Teaching

Commissioned Papers

Investing in Early Childhood Education in Ohio: An Economic Appraisal

Clive R. Belfield, August 2004

The paper describes and calculates the economic benefits to Ohio that would result from expanding pre-kindergarten educational opportunities. According to Belfield, the net present value to the state of Ohio from expanding the provision is estimated at \$372 million.

Why Do High-Poverty Schools Have Difficulty Staffing Their Classrooms with Qualified Teachers?

Richard Ingersoll, November 2004

This paper addresses the reasons why the nation's schools, particularly those that are disadvantaged, are unable to provide each classroom with a highly qualified teacher. The paper concluded that teacher turnover is a major contributor to this problem.

Fast Track to College: Increasing Post-secondary Success for All Students

Hilary Pennington, December 2004

This paper offers a number of ways to create stronger links between high school and post-secondary education. Pennington proposes three innovative alternatives to the traditional high-

school senior year: an academic head start on college; an accelerated career/technical college; and a gap year, or college in the community.

Affordability of Post-secondary Education: Equity and Adequacy Across the 50 States

Edward P. St. John, January 2005

This report examines trends and research evidence related to two persistent patterns — inequality in financial access to post-secondary education for low-income students in the U.S. and disparities in financial access across states — and considers the implications for policy in higher education.

Evidence-Based Reform: Advancing the Education of Students at Risk

Robert E. Slavin, March 2005

This paper argues that genuine reform in American education depends on a movement toward evidence-based practice, using the findings of rigorous research to guide educational practices and policies.