

Closing the Education Opportunity Gap: Strategies and Challenges

September 11, 2020

Part 1 – The Opportunity Gap

Ludger Woessmann, University of Munich – Chair



Ludger Woessmann is Professor of Economics at the University of Munich and Director of the ifo Center for the Economics of Education at the ifo Institute. He is also Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. His main research interests are the determinants of long-run prosperity and of student achievement. He uses microeconomic methods to answer applied, policy-relevant questions of the empirical economics of education, often using international student achievement tests. Special focuses address the importance of education for economic prosperity – individual and societal, historical and modern – and the importance of institutions of the school systems for efficiency and equity. Further research topics cover aspects of economic history, economics of religion, and the Internet.

Eric Hanushek, Stanford University – Presenter



Eric Hanushek is the Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University. He has been a leader in the development of economic analysis of educational issues. His most recent book, *The Knowledge Capital of Nations*, describes the economic impact of higher achievement. Prior books include *Endangering Prosperity*, *Schoolhouses*, *Courthouses*, and *Statehouses*, and *Making Schools Work*. Government service includes being Deputy Director of the Congressional Budget Office. He is a Distinguished Graduate of the United States Air Force Academy and completed his Ph.D. in economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dany Shakeel, Harvard Kennedy School – Presenter



M. Danish Shakeel is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Program on Education Policy and Governance at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. His research interests include politics of education, program evaluation, research methods, civic values, religious schooling, inequalities in education, educational leadership, school choice, and history and philosophy of education reform. Along with Robert Maranto (editor of the *Journal of School Choice*), he recently coedited two special issues of the journal on religion and school choice and school choice in rural communities. He is coediting another special issue of the journal on school choice and populism.

Paul E. Peterson, Harvard University – Presenter



Paul Peterson is the Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government in the Department of Government at Harvard University. He directs the Harvard Program on Education Policy and Governance, is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and is senior editor of *Education Next*. He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Chicago. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Education, he is the author or editor of over 30 books, four of which have been identified as the best work in their field by the American Political Science Association.



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Matthew Chingos, Urban Institute – Discussant



Matthew Chingos is director of the Urban Institute's Education Policy Program, which undertakes policy-relevant research on issues from prekindergarten through postsecondary education. Current research projects examine universal prekindergarten programs, school choice, student transportation, school funding, college affordability, student loan debt, and personalized learning. Chingos is an executive editor of *Education Next* and coauthor of *Game of Loans: The Rhetoric and Reality of Student Debt* and *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities*.

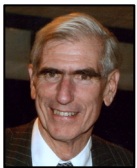
Guido Schwerdt, University of Konstanz – Discussant



Guido Schwerdt is Professor of Public Economics at the University of Konstanz. Before joining the faculty in Konstanz, he was Professor of Economics, in particular Applied Microeconomics, at the University of Siegen, researcher at the Ifo Institute for Economic Research in Munich and research fellow at the Program on Education Policy and Governance (PEPG) at Harvard University. He graduated in Economics at the University of Bonn and received his Ph.D. in Economics from the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence. He is also Research Professor at the Ifo Institute for Economic Research and fellow of the CESifo, IZA, and ROA Research Networks. His research interests include the Economics of Education, Labor Economics, and Public Economics.

Part 2: Creating Educational Opportunities Panel A: Charters

Boyden Gray, Boyden Gray and Associates, LLP – Chair



C. Boyden Gray is a former American diplomat and public servant. He is the founding partner of Boyden Gray & Associates, a law and strategy firm in Washington, D.C., focused on constitutional and regulatory issues. Mr. Gray worked in the White House for twelve years, first as counsel to the Vice President during the Reagan administration and then as White House Counsel to President George H.W. Bush. In 1993, he received the Presidential Citizens Medal. Under President George W. Bush, Mr. Gray was U.S. Ambassador to the European Union and U.S. Special Envoy to Europe for Eurasian Energy.

Deborah McGriff, NewSchools Venture Fund (formerly) – Discussant



Deborah M. McGriff was a Managing Partner with NewSchools Venture Fund where she focused on closing the demographic gap between students and leaders in education. Through leadership positions at NewSchools Venture Fund and EdisonLearning, she expanded access to innovative, high-quality charter schools for low-income and working class students in 16 of the nation's largest cities in a dozen states and the District of Columbia. She began her career in 1970 as a teacher in Community School District 13 of the New York City Public Schools. McGriff was the first female Assistant Superintendent in Cambridge, Mass., and the first female Deputy Superintendent in Milwaukee, Wisc.



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Macke Raymond, Stanford University – Discussant



Margaret “Macke” Raymond has served as the Director of CREDO since its inception. She has steered the group to national prominence as a rigorous and independent source for policy and program analysis. She has done extensive work in public policy and education reform and is currently researching the development of competitive markets and the creation of reliable data on program performance. Macke also leads CREDO in investigating the effectiveness of public charter schools. Prior to joining Stanford in 2000, she held faculty positions in the political science and economics departments at the University of Rochester.

Nina Rees, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools – Discussant



Nina Rees is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, the leading national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement. Rees has over 20 years of experience in Washington, D.C., most recently as Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives for Knowledge Universe, a leading global education company with investments in early childhood education, before- and after-school programs and online instruction. Prior to her tenure at KU, she served as the first Deputy Under Secretary for Innovation and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education. Before moving to the Education Department, Rees served as Deputy Assistant for Domestic Policy to the Vice President at the White House. Rees has appeared on various news outlets including Bloomberg, CNBC, C-SPAN and PBS’s NewsHour

Keynote Address

James Blew, U.S. Department of Education – Speaker



James Blew serves as the assistant secretary for planning, evaluation and policy development at the U.S. Department of Education. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on July 17, 2018, after being nominated by President Donald J. Trump. Prior to joining the Department, Blew advocated for education reform across the country. His roles included serving as director of the 50CAN affiliate Student Success California, national president of StudentsFirst, and national director of the Alliance for School Choice and its predecessor, the American Education Reform Council. Before committing himself full-time to education reform, Blew worked at political and communications firms in New York and California. He holds a bachelor's degree from Occidental College and a master's in business administration from the Yale School of Management.



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Conversation on the Contemporary Crisis in American Education

Martin R. West, Harvard Graduate School of Education – Moderator



Martin West is the William Henry Bloomberg Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, deputy director of Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance, and Editor-in-chief of *Education Next*. West's research examines the politics of K-12 education policy in the United States and the impact of policy on student learning and non-cognitive development. His most recent book (co-edited with Joshua Dunn), *From Schoolhouse to Courthouse: The Judiciary's Role in American Education* (Brookings Institution Press), looks at the increase in judicial involvement in education policymaking over the past 50 years.

Alberto Carvalho, Miami-Dade County Public Schools – Discussant



Alberto M. Carvalho has served as Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the nation's fourth largest school system, since September 2008. During his tenure, M-DCPS has become one of the nation's highest-performing urban school systems, receiving systemwide accreditation from AdvancEd in 2014. The District has also been named as the 2014 College Board Advanced Placement Equity and Excellence District of the Year, as well as the 2012 winner of the Broad Prize for Urban Education. As a staunch believer in school choice, Carvalho has expanded choice options in Miami-Dade to include over 500 offerings including programs in fine and performing arts, biotechnology, engineering, robotics, aviation, forensic sciences, and many others.

Joseph Olchefske, Superintendent and Education Entrepreneur – Discussant



Joseph Olchefske has been a leader in the educational community for over twenty-five years, holding significant executive positions in for-profit, non-profit and public sector educational institutions. He currently serves on the faculty at Johns Hopkins University's School of Education, where he teaches courses in leadership, budgeting and entrepreneurship. Mr. Olchefske also served as Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools from 1998 to 2003; as SPS Superintendent, he served as the leader of a public school system with 47,000 students, 100 schools, 4,500 teachers and an annual operating budget of \$435 million.



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Part 2: Creating Educational Opportunities (*continued*) Panel B: Opening the Private Sector to the Disadvantaged

Robert Enlow, EdChoice – Chair



Before the establishment of EdChoice in 2016, Robert was an integral part of the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice from its founding in 1996. He served as fundraiser, projects coordinator, vice president and executive director prior to being named president and CEO of the Foundation in 2009. Under his leadership, EdChoice has become one of the nation's most respected and successful advocates for educational choice, working in dozens of states to advance parental freedom in education by disseminating research, undertaking training, sponsoring seminars, conducting advertising campaigns and investing in and organizing community leaders.

Jason Bedrick, EdChoice – Discussant



Jason Bedrick is director of policy for EdChoice. In that role, he works closely with local organizations and state policymakers to develop high-quality educational choice policies that will benefit as many students as possible, including reviewing and providing feedback on legislation, leading policy briefings, providing expert testimony, writing op-eds and conducting original research. Previously, Bedrick served as policy analyst with the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom. He also served as a legislator in the New Hampshire House of Representatives and was an education policy research fellow at the Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy.

Clint Bolick, Arizona Supreme Court – Discussant



Clint Bolick is an Associate Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court. Previously, he served as Vice President of Litigation at the Goldwater Institute, where he litigated against governments and government employees on behalf of citizens. He co-founded the Institute for Justice, where he was the Vice President and Director of Litigation from 1991 until 2004. He led two cases that went before the Supreme Court of the United States. He has also defended state-based school choice programs in the Supreme Courts of Wisconsin and Ohio.

Albert Cheng, University of Arkansas – Discussant



Albert Cheng is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Education Reform in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas, where he teaches courses in education policy and educational philosophy. His research focuses on educational choice and faith-based schooling with particular attention to moral, civic, and character formation. He is a Senior Fellow at Cardus through which he recently coauthored a major study on Australian government, Catholic, and independent schools entitled "Australian Schools and the Common Good."



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Part 3: Expanding Educational Opportunities Panel C: Choice in District Schools

Chester E. Finn, Jr., Thomas B. Fordham Foundation – Chair



Chester E. Finn, Jr. is distinguished senior fellow and president Emeritus at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. He is a scholar, educator, and public servant who has been at the forefront of the national education debate for over thirty-five years. He was born and raised in Ohio and received his doctorate from Harvard in education policy. President from 1997 to 2014 of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, where he remains as a distinguished senior fellow, he is also a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, where he chaired Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education. A former member of the Maryland State Board of Education, he is the author of over twenty books and more than 400 articles.

Derrell Bradford, 50CAN – Discussant



Derrell Bradford is the executive vice president of 50CAN, a locally led, nationally supported education advocacy organization. In his national role, Derrell recruits and trains local leaders across the 50CAN network for roles as CAN executive directors, fellows and YouCAN advocates. Derrell previously served as the executive director at Better Education for Kids, where he worked to secure passage of the tenure reform legislation TEACH NJ. He serves on several boards dedicated to putting the needs of students and families first.

Chris Cerf, New Jersey Commissioner of Education (former) – Discussant



Superintendent Chris Cerf joined Newark Public Schools in July 2015, after having served as the New Jersey Commissioner from January 2011 to February 2014. He has comprehensive experience in large city school leadership positions having served as Deputy Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education during the Bloomberg Administration. During his career, Cerf has also served as Associate Counsel to President Bill Clinton and Law Clerk to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. He also taught high school history for four years.

Raji Chakrabarti, Federal Reserve Bank of New York – Discussant



Rajashri Chakrabarti is a senior economist in the Microeconomic Studies Function at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Her primary areas of interest include labor economics, economics of education, and public economics. Her research focuses on credit access and effects on educational investment decisions and future financial and economic outcomes, costs and returns to for-profit education, consumer debt, accountability and school choice, education finance, and econometric approaches to program evaluation.



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Caroline Hoxby, Stanford University – Discussant



Caroline Hoxby is the Scott and Donya Bommer Professor of Economics at Stanford University, the Director of the Economics of Education Program at the National Bureau of Economic Research, and a Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution and the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Previously she was the Fried Professor of Economics and a Harvard College Professor at Harvard University (1994-2007). Trained as a public finance and labor economist, Hoxby is one of the world's leading scholars in the Economics of Education. Her pioneering work in the field was transformative because she saw that applying economic thinking to education generates many important insights. Her work often draws upon models of investment, incentives, market design, finance, optimal pricing, social insurance, and behavioral economics.

Part 3: Expanding Educational Opportunities Panel D: Technology and Choice

Michael Horn, Clayton Christensen Institute – Chair



Michael Horn speaks and writes about the future of education and works with a portfolio of education organizations to improve the life of every student. He is the co-founder of and a distinguished fellow at the Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation, a non-profit think tank, and he serves as a principal consultant for Entangled Solutions, which offers innovation services to higher education institutions. Horn is the author and coauthor of multiple books, white papers, and articles on education, including the award-winning book *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns* and the Amazon-bestseller *Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools*. He holds a BA in history from Yale University and an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

Steve Klinsky, Modern States – Discussant



Steve Klinsky is an entrepreneur and philanthropist. He is the founder and chief executive officer of New Mountain Capital, LLC., which manages over \$25 billion of private equity, public equity and debt fund commitments. Charitably, Mr. Klinsky has started or led a range of non-profits, chiefly in the areas of education and children's health. Most recently, he founded the Modern States Education Alliance which has over 230,000 registered users in its first two years and provides universal access to tuition-free college courses online from top university professors. He is the chair of Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance, the chair of the American Investment Council, and has chaired or served on numerous corporate and not-for-profit boards.



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Michael Petrilli, Thomas B. Fordham Institute – Discussant



Mike Petrilli is president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, executive editor of *Education Next*, and a Distinguished Senior Fellow for Education Commission of the States. An award-winning writer, he is the author of *The Diverse Schools Dilemma*, editor of *Education for Upward Mobility*, and co-editor of *How to Educate an American*. Petrilli helped to create the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement, the Policy Innovators in Education Network. He serves on the advisory boards of the Association of American Educators, MDRC, and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. He lives with his family in Bethesda, Maryland.

Diane Tavenner, Summit Public Schools – Discussant



Diane Tavenner is the Founder and CEO of Summit Public Schools, a leading charter management organization serving California and Washington State. Summit invented Summit Learning, an approach which leverages technology to connect students' purpose to their daily actions and empowers them to own their learning. As a result, Summit's graduates are completing four-year college degrees at twice the national average. In partnership with the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Summit is currently working to scale personalized learning by making the Summit Learning Platform available to schools across the United States, for free, through the Summit Learning Program.

Part 4: Enhancing Opportunities Panel E: Teacher Quality

Hanna Skandera, Mile High Strategies – Chair



Hanna Skandera is CEO of Mile High Strategies, serving as an education and employability thought leader and advisor in leadership development and strategy, growing organizational impact, and transforming organizational culture. Skandera is also the Editor-in-Chief of *The Line*, Chief in Residence with Chiefs for Change and Co-Founder of the Women in Leadership Initiative, and the Visiting Professor of Education Policy and Impact at Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy. Recently, Ms. Skandera served as Secretary of Education for the State of New Mexico under Governor Susana Martinez.

Kate Walsh, National Council on Teacher Quality – Discussant



Kate Walsh has served as the president of the National Council on Teacher Quality since 2003, leading work to ensure that every child has equal access to effective teachers. At NCTQ, Walsh has spearheaded efforts to instill greater transparency and higher standards among those institutions that exert influence and authority over teachers. Notably, she launched the first-ever review and rankings of the nation's teacher preparation programs. Previously, Walsh worked at The Abell Foundation in Baltimore, the Baltimore City Public Schools, and the Core Knowledge Foundation.



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Michael Podgursky, St. Louis University Chaifetz School of Business – Discussant



Michael Podgursky is Chancellor's Professor of Economics at the University of Missouri – Columbia and Director of Sinquefeld Center for Applied Economic Research at Saint Louis University. His research focuses on the economics of education and he has written many articles and reports in the area. He serves on the board of editors of several academic journals including *Education Finance and Policy* and *Education Next*, and advisory boards for various research institutes and education organizations. He is an affiliated scholar with the Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) at the American Institutes for Research and CESifo in Germany.

Michelle Rhee, StudentsFirst – Discussant



Michelle Rhee is the former chancellor of Washington, D.C., public schools, serving from 2007 to 2010. Under her leadership, the worst-performing school district in the country became the only major city system to see double-digit growth in reading and math scores in 7th, 8th, and 10th grades over three years. In 2010 Michelle launched StudentsFirst, a bi-partisan national advocacy organization. StudentsFirst has built a state-based movement of over 1.5 million members and has helped pass over 130 policies to elevate the education of 23 million children. Michelle earned her bachelor's degree in government from Cornell and a Master's in public policy from Harvard Kennedy School.

Ben Scafidi, Kennesaw State University – Discussant



Ben Scafidi is a professor of economics and director of the Education Economics Center at Kennesaw State University. He is also a Friedman Fellow with EdChoice. Previously he served as the first chair of the state of Georgia's Charter Schools Commission, the Education Policy Advisor to Governor Sonny Perdue, a staff member to both of Governor Roy Barnes' Education Reform Study Commissions, and as an expert witness for the state of Georgia in school funding litigation. He received a BA in Economics from the University of Notre Dame and a PhD in Economics from the University of Virginia.

