



THE OTHER HALF OF THE STRATEGY

**Following Up on System Reform
By Innovating with School and Schooling**

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ee education|evolving

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Following Up on System Reform By Innovating with School and Schooling

1. In its effort to improve learning, and its public education, this country cannot rely simply on system-level reforms. To reach our national goals we must make a major effort now to build on these by developing quite different new forms of school and schooling.

The system-level reforms -- standards and accountability, choice and chartering (financing, too, for that matter) -- do not directly effect achievement. They make it increasingly necessary and increasingly possible for educators to improve student achievement. But students learn from what they read, see, hear and do. Learning improves only as educators respond to the system-reforms by changing school; improving the governance, the culture and the approach to learning. To date the efforts at improvement have clung to conventional forms of school and schooling, trying to get better performance from the traditional model. It is little wonder the country is disappointed with the slow pace of progress

2. If we seriously mean for students to learn, then we must find ways to get better effort from students and from teachers: If achievement is essential then effort is essential. And if effort is essential then motivation is essential and has to be made central. Unhappily, conventional high school with its obsolete 'batch-processing' model of courses and classes is designed almost to suppress motivation -- for students and for teachers.

- We need to find different models that motivate better. It would be imprudent to bet all the chips on conventional school now doing what it never has been able to do. It never did educate all students. There is

concern that it might not be sustainable economically. Also: Changes in the economy are creating a need for skills and knowledge different from those sought by conventional school. These different schools should be quality schools. But they are likely to be different from what we have thought of as 'school'.

- So we need a major effort at innovation, making use of the digital electronics that vastly expand access to information. Young people, skilled with this technology, would like to customize their learning. This matters: The effort we get from students comes for free.

3. The job for policy is to enable and to stimulate such a new program of innovation. This requires creating an open sector in both the chartered and the district sectors of public education to support 'different' schools. The job is primarily one for the states, with help from the national government. Foundations can provide much of the early venture capital.

4. 4. A strategy keyed on innovation can succeed if we can move away from the old notion that there should be one model for everyone, everywhere; if we let K-12 change as other institutions change, with different models developing alongside the traditional. With this 'split screen' strategy those who prefer conventional school can continue there; those who want the innovative schools can choose those. Over time K-12 will change as new models gradually replace the old; people moving to the new as they decide they are ready.

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We Have to Develop New Models of School

This country has only half a strategy for upgrading the skills and the knowledge of its young people and the schools in which they learn. The new pressures for achievement are somewhat improving performance, and schools. But mandates and regulations will not be enough.

With nothing but an effort to improve conventional school this country would not be able to do what it urgently needs to do. It would not get all children to learn. It would not develop the skills and capabilities needed by an economy shifting toward knowledge work. It would not be able to improve productivity in that increasingly knowledge-based economy.

We need to develop different models of school. This will require a major effort at innovation, which will require action by state policy leadership. Both public officials and private organizations should now make the search for new forms of schooling the top priority for the next stage of education policy. Compared to this the issues internal to No Child Left Behind, however intensely debated, are of second-order importance.

Why do we need different forms of school and schooling?

Because we have switched the assignment to our educators. A system once told to provide young people the opportunity to learn is now told it must ensure that they learn. This radical change in the mission, from access to achievement, cannot succeed unless we change the traditional model of schooling.

The traditional model never did educate all children well. High school never graduated all its students. Some who did graduate might have learned more than they did, or learned better. This is no criticism of the good people who have worked so hard in education: Most of them would stipulate the need to do better. Their institution and its schools were built in a time when achievement was considered optional. If we now tell our schools that students have to learn then we must in fairness develop arrangements for K-12, and forms of school, that make that possible. There is real urgency about this now when it is harder to count on kids coming to school ready to learn and pushed by their parents to learn, and harder to count on exceptionally able and motivated people coming to teach.

Think of it this way. The automobile worked well

to get you from New York to Los Angeles. Over the years the trip got better as the cars, the roads, the maps and the motels improved. Suddenly you're told instead to go from New York to London. Now the car no longer serves: You have to find a different vehicle.

The current strategy, embodied in national legislation in 2001, sets out a marvelous goal: for all children to learn, with a special commitment to those groups traditionally left behind. But no one can say for certain that with the current strategy the goal of universal proficiency will be reached. It is by no means clear that young people who have not learned in conventional school will now learn because we tell districts, schools and teachers, "They have to". Many people hope -- "believe" -- that requiring schools to do better will get us to that goal. But this is a risky strategy. The limitations of the conventional model impose very real constraints on teachers and on administrators. It is usually not a good idea to 'require' people to do what probably cannot be done.

The current strategy sees the problem as one of securing better performance from conventional school -- by raising standards and toughening accountability and by getting better teachers and better leaders. But often the problems lie not in the

people but in the faulty arrangements in which people are asked to work. If all kids are to learn it will be critical to have arrangements in the system and in the school designed to maximize student and teacher motivation.

Motivation truly is at the heart of it. Current strategy does not emphasize motivation. It concentrates on what subjects and what achievement to require, almost as if the standards produce the learning. We still hear talk of schools 'delivering education' to students. Less is heard about the need for school to interest students. Yet if achievement matters then effort matters, and if effort matters then motivation matters and needs to be made central.

High school, secondary school, is obsolete especially with its inattention to motivation. High school is designed almost as if to suppress motivation. Its model of courses and classes is a kind of batch-processing; a bus rolling down the highway with 30+ students on board, moving too fast for some and too slowly for others. An adult points out important things along the way. But there is no opportunity for a student to get off to explore what s/he finds interesting. The schedule calls for the bus, the course, to move on. For many students the size of high school is also a problem. Relationships matter for motivation, and in large

But haven't we been innovating?

Our point is that innovation with school and schooling has not been central in the strategy for improvement. The innovation this past 15 years has been mainly system-level innovation: standards, assessment and accountability; open enrollment, chartering and vouchers. These policy changes switched the assignment to K-12 from access to achievement, withdrew the districts' utility-like exclusive on public education, ended the old arrangement that limited choice to families financially able to move their place of residence. They did not directly change school.

We assumed this system-innovation would improve

schools with multiple courses where a teacher sees 150 students a day there is little chance for teachers and students to know each other well.

Nor is conventional school well designed to motivate teachers. Some state law carries forward a quaint provision: "The school shall be under the control of the teacher". But this is not true in any real sense: The school is not the teachers' school. Teachers work for administrators in a classic bureau model. And opportunities for professional growth are limited. Arley Gunderman used to say, when president of the National Association of Elementary School Principals: "Candidly, my job as a principal is to motivate as much as I can for as long as I can, people who are in essentially dead-end jobs". Even states regarded as high-performing lose half their new entrants in five years.

If we now mean to get more out of our students and our teachers we will need to find different models structured to elicit more effectively what Daniel Yankelovich has called the 'discretionary effort' that workers can always make if they wish. And, since every goal requires a method, we need to find a politically effective way to introduce models that will elicit that effort, recognizing that not all people will agree about which direction and how rapidly to move.

achievement in the existing schools. But now researchers say they cannot find significant achievement effects from these system reforms. What does this mean? Is the strategy of system-reform failing? If not, how do we make sense of what we're hearing?

Almost certainly the problem is to assume that system-level changes directly effect achievement, and would change school. In fact, students learn from what they read, see, hear and do. The system-innovations make it increasingly necessary and increasingly possible for schools to change what kids read, see, hear and do. But whether learning

improves depends on how imaginatively educators then do change schooling -- in ways that motivate students. "It has to be understood", writes Mary Metz of the University of Wisconsin, "that students hold veto power over all educational policies".

The system-level changes, in other words, are necessary but not sufficient. Half the needed strategy is missing. The job next for policymakers is to see that standards, accountability and the new-schools opportunity made possible by chartering do in fact produce schools different enough for all students to learn. The job now is to stimulate innovation.

The people in curriculum and instruction have been working to develop new and better approaches to learning. Chartering was a kind of R&D program, structured to open the way for new approaches to appear. It has produced more innovation than research has yet examined. But much in the policy discussion has discouraged innovation. The effort was not so much to develop a multiplicity of models to fit today's diversity of student aptitudes, motivations and interests as to find strategies that might 'work' for all students. The discussion assumed traditional forms of school. And the emphasis on achievement and assessment reinforced conventional methods of instruction.

(In thinking about innovation it will help to separate school and schooling. This paper sometimes talks about one or the other; says 'schooling' when it refers to both together.)

- School is defined in time, in space and in its form of organization. The traditional notion is of a building, to which children come for

certain years of their lives, months of the year, days of the week and hours of the day. There they are grouped by age into 'grades', to be instructed by adults. Size varies, but schools have been growing larger: The urban high school might have 1,000, 2,000, even 3,000 or more students. The school is not a discrete organization but a unit of a larger organization that employs its teachers, owns its facility, provides its revenue and sets out its method of operation. The teachers, unlike professionals in most white-collar occupations, are not in charge of the administrators but work for administrators.

- Schooling, the process of educating young people, has been conceived of as teacher-instruction. Adolescents are taught subjects: history, civics, physics, mathematics. These are divided into courses; courses are taught in classes. It is group work; teachers instructing 25, 30 or more students who move week by week through the subject and chapter by chapter through the text. The idea is to cover and to master the subject matter of the course. The assumption is that all students will know all subjects. Success is defined mainly as scoring well on tests for that knowledge.

In thinking about innovation it is important to see, too, that 'different' cannot always mean 'never seen before'. Some different forms of school are well known and proven: peer tutoring, for example (same-age and cross-age). But, happily, recent developments in digital electronic technology do open the way to forms of school not seen before.

There is great potential to make school different

We have a coincidence of need and opportunity. New technology is appearing just as the old technology is reaching its limits. This often happens. The automobile appeared just as cities needed an alternative to the horse. Business

machines appeared as office filing-systems broke down. Petroleum came along as whale oil disappeared. The telegraph appeared just as communication needed to cross the continent.

One person who listens closely to young people catches the need by saying: "Most adults do not appreciate the degree of frustration, disappointment and anger in students today about what they experience in school". Young people today -- described by some as "defiantly inattentive" to teachers talking -- want to be interested, challenged. Seeing what students today are 'not buying', innovators will look for models of schooling that offer features not now available. Sony's transistor radio was better and successful because it made radio for the first time truly portable. Happily, there are also opportunities now to offer the equivalent of 'portability' to students stuck in conventional courses.

Digital electronic technology can motivate learning

Most schools now have computers; most connected to the internet. The issue today is use. Most is 'type one' use, adapting the new technology to present-day school -- much as, early on, cinematography was used to film stage plays. With laptops students take notes; teachers keep records. The opportunity to change school really opens up with the 'type two' applications in which school is adapted to the characteristics and the potential of the electronics; applications of the sort appearing now in the adult world outside school. In contrast to conventional school these offer flexibility of time and place. The interaction between teachers and students can actually improve in the online and on-the-phone relationship.

No one can now foresee all the ways digital electronics will impact learning and schooling. But we know we are in a revolution when we see the cellphone becoming a portable computer, able to access the internet and the Web. Clearly one potential is to customize learning for students; to move away from the obsolete batch-processing model of high school.

Young people know the technology and want to customize their learning

Everything we hear suggests that young people

would like to pursue what interests them and to learn through the study of real-life applications. The new technology can be organized to permit this, either as coursework or as project-based learning. Customization does not mean letting students study whatever they wish. It means individualizing the way they learn and perhaps the pace at which they learn, with teachers building on students' individual aptitudes and motivations to move them toward what the standards require them to know.

This new conception of school makes adults uncomfortable. But clearly the day is gone when the best or the only way to put young people in touch with knowledge is to send into their classroom an instructor with books under her arm. School should let students explore the enormous resources now available. Young people today are skilled with the technology, move comfortably in the digital world. We might be surprised how many would move toward math and science if high school let students pursue what interests them in these fields.

It is hard to believe digital electronics will not affect education as profoundly as it has other activities that involve the storage and manipulation of information: newspapers, magazines, books, film, video. Chris Anderson's **The Long Tail** suggests what is coming. Should districts really be prohibiting the possession and use of digital devices in school -- or taking advantage of this technology? Resistance might ensure that innovators using new technology will create new arrangements for learning outside school, so that change will sweep around it.

We do need to find models that are more sustainable financially

The economics of K-12, too, argue for innovation. In education as in all labor-intensive services costs rise inexorably: 'Instruction' is expensive. Legislators and citizens work hard to raise adequate revenue. But as these efforts fall short, taxes rise and the program gradually shrinks, year by year offering "less, for more". Our policy discussion

contains little if any serious discussion about improving productivity. Often that idea is either refuted (“We want smaller classes, not larger”) or ridiculed (“Should the teacher talk twice as fast?”). Still, “less, for more” seems an unattractive prospect, politically.

Costs and results together determine productivity. New forms of schooling can improve on both, moving away from the model of service-delivery toward a ‘supported-self-help’ arrangement in which the student is increasingly the worker on the job of learning. Whatever we get from students comes for free: Student effort we do not compensate. Better motivated, the students would learn more. And teachers’ work would upgrade from presenting-information to planning, advising and evaluating. Such a scenario might prove attractive to families, to citizens and to policymakers as a formula for improvement.

If teachers held the responsibility they might innovate with schooling

Organizations in which the workers are also the owners tend to take up new methods and new technology very rapidly: Witness the American family farm. If the school were the teachers’ school, our schools might be taking up improvements rapidly, too; improving both performance and productivity.

But this is not the arrangement. Education does not offer teachers the control of their work that defines being professional. There are teacher teams, professional communities of practice and similar efforts. But these usually try to expand teacher roles within the boss|worker arrangement of conventional school. A truly professional model would place the opportunity to design and to run the program of learning fully with an organized group of teachers.

This is the partnership concept we see in most white-collar occupations we call professional. It is now beginning to appear in K-12, with teachers formally organized as a professional practice getting the authority to arrange and operate a school,

accepting collegially in return the responsibility for student and school success; then setting out to change schooling. (See Joe Williams, “Revolution from the Faculty Lounge”, Phi Delta Kappan, November 2007.)

There is major potential to expand this partnership model. **Public Agenda** asked a sample of the nation’s teachers how interested they would be in working in a charter(ed) school run and managed by teachers. Asking respondents first to affirm a willingness to come into the charter sector makes the findings especially remarkable. Fifty-eight percent said they would be somewhat or very interested in that arrangement; two-thirds of the under-five-year teachers and 50 percent of the over-20-year teachers. A union-compatible form of partnership could today be introduced in many states with no new legislation and no new negotiation.

The common assertion that teachers resist accountability and oppose change might be mistaken. That behavior might be specific to the ‘management’ model. In the professional model quite different attitudes and behaviors are visible, with student attitudes and behaviors changing in response.

We also need different outcomes, and ways to assess them

The rapid and seemingly remorseless change in the country’s economy is requiring a different set of skills and knowledge. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has begun to lay out the new-economy requirements: to analyze and problem-solve, to adapt, to be creative, to speak more than one language, to work effectively in teams, to know how to gather facts when needed. This implies models of schooling that more resemble life outside school; that move away from the memorization and repetition of content knowledge.

The different outcomes will need to be clearly defined, and new ways to assess these different

outcomes will need to be developed, so we can know what and how well students are learning in the new-and-different schools. This will supplement, not supplant, current assessments designed to ensure that students have the basic skills: reading, writing, computing. The work to define the new outcomes and their related assessments is only beginning. It will take time.

This change has mostly to do with high school, since high school is where the new concepts of “21st-century” outcomes will most clearly apply. The usual impulse in deciding “what students should know and be able to do” is to think about creating new standards for students exiting high school. It might be more useful to adopt the standards that students will face at the institutions they propose to enter following high school: college and university, of course, but also the military, the trades, government, business. Showing the students what it will take to get where they want in the outside world might cause them to

become more serious about their work while in school.

Many people become anxious at any suggestion to depart from -- even to go beyond -- the traditional academic outcomes and assessments. Yet surely in a fast-changing world we should be open about what young people need to know, and about whether all students should (or can) know the same things. Young people do differ. And parents, the public, probably do value outcomes beyond the academic. If, for example, students previously bored with school and disinterested in learning come to like school and to be interested in learning, surely that is a desirable outcome, a visible success, for the school.

There really are two different paradigms visible in our discussion. Some people will prefer one; some the other. Yet the existence of these differences need not keep us from a strategy keyed on changing the forms of schooling.

A new ‘deal’ can make innovation possible

In a situation where not everyone is ready for new concepts -- of school, of outcomes, of assessment -- the only practical way to make progress is to set aside the old assumption of some ‘right way’ that will apply to everyone. If we think we must have an ‘agreed solution’, with everyone ‘buying in’ on a single model, we will not accomplish much change that is truly significant. And if we set out to ‘impose’ some significant change, political resistance would probably block action. Occasionally someone does offer a dramatic vision that, if implemented according to the blueprint provided, would transform the system. But these proposals for large-scale engineered change tend not to succeed. It is beyond the capacity of our political system to impose a blueprint on dissenters or to execute it faithfully in 29 steps over the next nine years.

We do need different forms of schooling capable of getting all kids to learn. We cannot settle for

marginal improvement. We need to find a way to get dramatic improvement. Restating the problems builds concern, and reaffirming the goal of ‘better learning’ creates an interest in doing-something. But neither results in action. Nothing happens until someone finds a method. We need to find a method. So:

What if we were to run a “split-screen” strategy; working simultaneously to develop new and different models of schooling while continuing also to do everything possible to improve the existing schools in the traditional district sector?

Such a strategy for producing significant change would require only that we develop a tolerance for diversity and differentiation; that we think of providing a ‘uniform’ system not as mandating a standardized model of school but as creating the opportunity for each student everywhere to have the kind of schooling s/he needs. Those attracted

by new-model schools would go there; those uncomfortable with innovation would stay with the traditional. The new will not be imposed on the traditional and the traditional will not block the innovative. Deal.

Most change happens as new and different models develop alongside the existing; the new gradually improving and replacing the old. On this basis the

country can develop a far more effective strategy for improving learning and for changing the K-12 system. Such a strategy will respond to the differences in aspirations and in aptitudes among students. It can be effective, because it is realistic; rational. Efforts to improve marginally are not acceptable and efforts to transform K-12 dramatically through politics are not realistic.

The states can create the opportunity to innovate

The strategy begins with the states creating a sector in public education in which innovators -- in the districts and outside the districts -- can try new forms of schooling; a sector structured to be congenial to innovation and in which the new and different models are protected. Public education exists in state law and if a new space is to be created the governors and legislatures will be the architects and implementers of the change.

Such an open sector is of course already emerging. States began in the 1980s to let students cross boundaries and to let somebody other than the local board offer public education to the children in a district. To the program of public-school choice the chartering laws, beginning with Minnesota in 1991 and California in 1992, added choices, broadening the varieties of schooling available. Much work remains, however, to put this open sector in shape for an aggressive program of innovation. Laws need to be enacted where they do not now exist, and improved almost everywhere they do exist.

Governors and legislators will need support from national leadership, of the bipartisan sort that has existed for standards and for chartering. National leadership can push the policy agenda: As the Democratic Leadership Council pointed out in 1992, nothing limits the president to speaking only to the Congress; nothing prevents the president from making proposals to the legislatures of the states. But the states and the national government should work with a light touch, should keep 'the rules' minimal. For government, innovation means providing opportunities, not producer subsidies.

Innovation is a huge opportunity for the foundations interested in K-12 education. There needs to be support for the effort to legitimize the new and different. There needs to be support for the policy effort to put the open sector into shape for new models of schooling. And there needs to be support for the innovators who will be developing the new models.

Who are the innovators? Can districts innovate?

For the new models of school and schooling we will probably need to look mainly to people new to education and now outside it.

Innovation often comes from non-traditional people with un-conventional backgrounds. And it can be a challenge to believe in unconventional people. Paul MacCready talked about this more

clearly than anyone. He had won the Kremer prize for human-powered flight; first around a one-mile course and then, in 1979, 50,000 British pounds for a flight across the English Channel. How could he do this, not being an aircraft structural designer?

"All the groups in England that were serious", he

wrote, “had big teams of very qualified people that always included aircraft structural designers. They adapted, very ingeniously, from standard aircraft structure techniques.” MacCready could see that a traditional approach would doom the project. “Not having a background in structures permitted me to adapt some very simple-minded techniques rather than being blinded by training in structures”. People in any field tend to limit their own viewpoints and thereby block their own success, he wrote. “There is little in our schools and our culture that forces us to get away from established patterns and look at things in different ways. We need to be skeptical and try different routes to solve problems.”

In education, too, the tendency is usually to adapt from standard models. Most ‘reform’ discussion remains inside the traditional concepts: teaching as instruction; teachers as civil service employees working for a principal; schooling as courses and classes; buildings with corridors and doors with

little windows through which you see an adult facing students in seats. Too many persons enthusiastic about the new system-level arrangements create schools that are quite conventional, feeling apparently that these can do better simply by being outside the district bureaucracy and its union contract. Currently the theory about ‘scaling up’ looks toward large organizations that might be the least inclined to innovate. The conventional model of school is absolutely imprinted on our consciousness: A Microsoft ad plugging computers shows kids in a classroom with desks and a blackboard and not a computer in sight.

Seeing these difficulties even in the open sector makes it clear how much harder innovation will be in the district sector. Everyone would cheer if boards and superintendents would create new models as well as improve-the-existing. And certainly they should have every opportunity to use the new sector. Some will. But realistically their

The Present

Transform existing schools
 Larger schools
 ‘Delivering education’
 Read textbooks; listen to talk
 Time-bound/place-bound
 Technology as textbook
 Groups, classes
 Time is fixed
 Standardization
 Cover material
 Who and What
 Know things
 Rigor
 Multiple-choice tests
 Testing for accountability
 “Make ‘em”
 Instructors
 Teachers serve administrators
 Administrative management
 Adult interests dominate

The Future?

Create new schools
 Smaller schools
 Students learning
 Learn from the Web, in the community
 Any time/any place
 Technology for research
 Individualized
 Time is variable
 Customization
 Understand key ideas
 Why and How
 Apply knowledge
 Relevance
 Written/oral demonstrations
 Testing for diagnosis
 “Motivate ‘em”
 Advisers
 Administrators serve teachers
 Professional partnership
 Student interests dominate

contribution is likely to be replication and the gradual improvement that new models always require. It is very hard, especially where enrollment is not growing, to start schools that -- as superintendents, boards, and teacher unions see it - - "would compete against our own schools".

Internal competition of this sort can sometimes be arranged in the private sector. About 1960 Dayton-Hudson Corporation, while a high-class department-store company, ventured into discounting. The five brothers running the company could see even then that, as one of them said recently, the department store was "a dying breed of cat", doomed in the post-war era by the spread of automobile-ownership and by the suburban specialty stores. So they set up Target Stores to compete against their traditional stores.

The high school is a kind of department store; arguably now also obsolete. But how many boards

In summary

The strategy for innovation, for getting the new and different forms of schools that students need, is not complicated.

- Forms of school and schooling quite different from the conventional will be needed for all children to learn. Models that do not exist today exist will have to be developed through a process of innovation. Models that are not available in a particular community today will have to be imported.
- The schools developing or importing these different models will have to be created new.
- The new and new-model schools will have to be created mainly in a sector of public education set up in state law alongside the district sector. The constraints within the districts make it unrealistic to bet all the chips on that sector either developing new schools or transforming existing schools to produce the different models required.
- Choice and tolerance are the watchwords.

of education see their 3,000-student buildings, surrounded by athletic fields and parking lots, as "a dying breed of cat"?

Policymakers cannot responsibly bet everything on the districts' ability to transform existing schools or to produce different schools new. The uncertainty of success makes that a risk. It is not a necessary risk to be taking, since the state can clearly be moving at the same time with an effort at innovation. And since it is not a necessary risk it is not an acceptable risk to be taking with other people's children.

A state that does want to move its district sector toward change could by law push down to the schools real authority to decide on program and on management, on people and on the use of revenue; breaking down the old centralized authority model. The more points of decision, the greater the opportunity for innovation.

Those who want new-model schools should have them. Those who prefer traditional schools should have those. But the traditional will not be allowed to suppress the innovative.

- Change will then proceed through the system as the new models gradually improve and replace the old. We all see this, in all areas of life. Photography replaced the painting of portraits. The camera and the photos were not very good at the start but were steadily improved. The airplane replaced the passenger train for long-distance travel. The first airplanes were not very good, but quickly the aircraft, pilots and traffic control were made faster, safer, better. Computers replaced adding machines and typewriters. The early computers were slow and full of problems, but improved dramatically and quite rapidly.

The country simply must get this dynamic, this

improvement process, working in public education. There will never be the energy, the resources and the political capacity endlessly to be 'doing improvement' from the outside for a K-12 institution left -- as it is today -- essentially an inert institution. In time new needs and problems are bound to change the nation's priorities. We have to use today's concern for education (perhaps beginning to slip, already) to go to fundamentals; to make K-12 at last a self-improving system.

Such a strategy would carry some risk for those in policy leadership. But the rewards could be high for elected officials as well as for the country. It should be possible for a "politician of movement", as the old phrase has it, to persuade the country that the wisest course is a strategy of innovation; of replacing old models with new models. In 1985 when Gov. Rudy Perpich was trying to make Minnesota "the brainpower state" there was no support visible in public opinion for public school choice and inter-district open enrollment. Three years into the effort the poll numbers had flipped

upside down. Perpich, the Capitol reporter for the Saint Paul Pioneer Press wrote, had "struck gold".

Today large numbers of young people are almost certainly ahead of their elders in their desire for different and more challenging forms of school. The country needs their effort and their enthusiasm; their new skills. Teachers are disaffected; looking for a career that is both professionally and financially rewarding. Taxpayers would love an alternative to the endless cycle of tax increases and reductions in school offerings.

Policymakers have it within reach to provide what the public and our educators want and need. All it takes is to explain how the obsolescence of the current models creates the need for different forms of school and schooling. And to show that the transition to the new and different system can be successfully and peacefully accomplished if we will arrange for the change to come gradually and voluntarily as organizations and individuals decide they are ready.

About Education|Evolving

Education|Evolving is a joint venture of the non-profit Center for Policy Studies and Hamline University, both based in Saint Paul, MN. E|E was founded by two Minnesota public policy veterans, **Ted Kolderie**, senior associate at the Center for Policy Studies, and **Joe Graba**, a senior policy fellow and trustee of Hamline University. Its coordinator is **Jon Schroeder**, former director of Charter Friends National Network. Education|Evolving is undertaking a number of initiatives during the current year including a national effort to convince policy makers and influencers that new schools and innovation in school/ing must be essential elements in improving student learning. Parallel is an E|E initiative to challenge the premise that teachers in schools must always be "employees." Education|Evolving has also worked in Minnesota to strengthen and enhance the role of charter school authorizers. And E|E has placed a high priority on encouraging policymakers, journalists and others to more routinely and substantively tap the experiences and perspectives of students and of young people not now attending school. Education|Evolving's activities are regularly updated on the initiative's web site, www.educationevolving.org. For print or electronic updates on E|E initiatives, contact info@educationevolving.org.

About this E|E paper and its author(s)

This paper is the result of nearly a year of broad consultation with dozens of individuals, both within Education|Evolving and among education policy leaders and influencers across the country. Its principal author was E|E Co-founder **Ted Kolderie**. Ted has worked on system questions and with legislative policy in different areas of public life, including urban and metropolitan affairs through the 1960s and '70s. He is most recognized nationally for his work on K-12 education policy and innovation, which he has focused on since the early 1980s. Ted was instrumental in the design and passage of the nation's first charter school law in Minnesota in 1991 and has since worked on the design and improvement of charter legislation in about twenty states. He has written about the charter idea and its progress in a variety of publications and is the author of "Creating the Capacity for Change: How and Why Governors and Legislatures are Opening a New-Schools Sector in Public Education" (Education Week Press, 2005, 2007). A graduate of Carleton College and of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Affairs at Princeton University, Ted was previously executive director of the Twin Cities Citizens League, a reporter and editorial writer for the Minneapolis Star and Tribune and a senior fellow at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

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