

ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE:
WHEN EDUCATION QUALITY SPEAKS, EDUCATION EQUALITY ANSWERS

H. George Frederickson

Remarks in honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary

of the

Department of Special Education

University of Kansas

November 29, 2007

Accountability and Performance:

When Education Quality Speaks, Education Equality Answers

H. George Frederickson

Introduction

Let me begin by adding my voice to those congratulating the University of Kansas Special Education Program on its fiftieth birthday. I am honored to have been asked to be part of this birthday celebration and especially honored to have been asked to give this lecture. It speaks well of the Special Education Program that you would invite a heathen from public administration to come among you.

It is worth noting, as we begin, that the KU Special Education Program is 50 years old and that my own program, public administration, recently celebrated its fiftieth birthday. Both programs, as you know, are regularly ranked number one in their American higher education specializations, indications of status not lost on the university administration. If you will allow me this metaphor, both programs are evidence of 50 years of careful and deliberate academic gardening. The KU special education garden and the KU public administration garden were initially envisioned by astute academic entrepreneurs, leaders who understood that great gardens take time. Academic gardens start slowly and are not really beautiful until they are mature. The best academic gardeners are a sweet combination of vision, energy, and very great patience. Most important, the best academic gardeners understand that the subject is the garden and not the gardeners. As the evidence of the past 50 years now clearly shows, the University of Kansas Special Education Program and my own public administration program have had

just such gardeners. As students and faculty, we now labor in and enjoy the beautiful gardens they planted and tended for us.

Tonight I shall address the subject of school accountability and performance. In doing so I shall defend the claim that the contemporary school accountability and performance movement is best understood in the context of two primary public school policy objectives, educational quality and educational equality. The burden of my argument is that the modern school accountability and performance movement has been pulled back and forth along a sweeping arc of history, first in the direction of educational quality at one pole of the arc and then in the direction of educational equality at the other pole.

American public education has always been about educational achievement, on one hand, and educational opportunity, on the other. Educational achievement has to do with student and teacher merit, quality, grades, advancement, capability, performance, and work. Educational opportunity has to do with justice, fairness, and an equal chance for students and their families. Both education quality and education equality matter importantly because our public education system is still the primary engine driving the allocation of social and economic goods, and the level of one's education is still the best predictor of one's future success or achievement.

At the policy making level as well as the level of policy implementation in the day-to-day operation of schools, the values of educational quality and achievement often compete with the values of fairness and equality. The public and their democratic representatives want, indeed demand, both quality and equality, as if they are noncompetitive objectives and as if seeking more of one will not be at the expense of the

other. But in the recent arc of public education history, say the last 30 years, the magnetic pull of the values of school and student achievement have been much stronger than the magnetic pull of the values of equality and opportunity.

You are attending, therefore, an argument about cycles of history and a claimed dichotomy between quality and equality in those cycles. While I will go from time to time on excursions into political, intellectual, and educational history, my main purpose is not historical. I shall attempt a light phenomenology of reform involvements and disappointments that is meant to account for the swings or the arc of change from educational quality to educational equality and back again. And in this phenomenology, I shall attempt, from time to time, to fix the part that special education has played in these arcs of change.

The claims made here are fashioned after two similar approaches to accounting for or explaining competing forces of reform in the public sector. In separate works Herbert Kaufman¹ and Albert Hirschman² describe the adoption of policy changes and subsequent disappointment with those changes as the essential dynamic that explains cycles of government reform. One version of this dynamic accounts for the American economic Depression in the 1930s, the New Deal response to the Depression, and then, beginning in the 1970s, a distinct swing back in the direction of deregulation, unfettered capitalism, and market solutions. Another version of this dynamic, and the one most particularly applicable to public education, is the arc of change from public institutions built on the values of efficiency, professionalism, and neutral competence, and our subsequent disappointment with them, followed by institutional changes built on the values of executive leadership. The point is that institutions are imperfect,

disappointment almost always sets in, and we respond to that disappointment by reforming our institutions. This is essentially the story of the arcs of educational equality reform and educational quality reform.

One particularly important factor explains the arc of policy change in a field such as education. Public attention and particularly the attention of elected officials is a scarce and limited resource. A high level of public attention toward a particular public problem or persuasive reform is often at the expense of possible attention given to other problems or reforms. In organizational decision making, as Herbert Simon explained, we practice bounded rationality. One of the bounds or limitations on organizational rationality is the scarcity of attention space³

To continue the use of the fiftieth birthday of the Special Education Program, let us go back in time about 50 years. On September 25, 1957, nine black children integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Ten days later, on October 5, 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the world's first Earth-orbiting satellite. Triggered by the Supreme Court's Brown versus Board of Education case three years earlier, the integration of the Little Rock schools set off waves of educational *equality* reforms that continued through much of the rest of the twentieth century. Sputnik set in motion waves of educational *quality* reforms that gathered strength through the twentieth century, culminating in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) tsunami in 2002. It could be said that both of these great modern epochs, the equality in education epoch and the quality in education epoch, began at about the same time 50 years ago.

The Arc of Education Equality Reform

Following *Brown versus Board of Education* and the Little Rock Nine, the courts in many states decided that public schooling was distinctly unequal and that such inequality was unconstitutional. The remedies—school spending equalization and busing—were put in place after bruising legal battles in the courts and political battles that pitted representatives of rural and suburban areas against representatives from inner cities. As the years went by it became evident that equal per pupil spending did make inner-city schools more equal to suburban schools and significantly improved the performance of inner-city schools. But equal per pupil spending did not eliminate the performance gap between inner-city and suburban schools. Busing and other systems of school desegregation were likewise successful, at least in terms of integration. However, busing did not eliminate the performance gap between children from the inner city and children from the suburbs, even when they went to the same schools.

Gradually, equality reforms lost their momentum. In California and Texas-- hotbeds of school spending equalization—and in several other states, politics moved steadily away from equality reforms, and state courts were less inclined to support equality reforms. Busing was discontinued, and other forms of educational special treatment based on poverty, race, or ethnicity faced stiff opposition on the grounds that such treatment was unequal. Put another way, education equality reforms often involved spending more on poor and minority children in an effort to make them more nearly equal to more advantaged children. Unequal inputs were justified by education equality reformers so as to achieve more nearly equal education results outputs. In a profound

irony, the language of inequality would come to be used as a weapon against busing and equal spending on the grounds that such programs gave more to poor and minority children. By the 1990s the school reform emphasis had shifted from equality toward individual and school “merit.”

The other key feature of modern education equality reform started at about the same time. In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the first major piece of legislation that addressed inequality of students, specifically those from low income families. The next year, 1966, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended to include two parts aimed specifically at students with disabilities. First, Congress established the Bureau of Education of the Handicapped and the National Advisory Council for the Benefit of Students with Disabilities. Second, Title VI was established to help create and fund educational programs for students with disabilities, authorizing grants for states to pass along to institutions and schools that serve students with disabilities. This was the first federal government legislation that required a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities.

Both pieces of legislation had an enormous impact on the educational systems of the time. By some estimates, federal spending on students in grades K-12 tripled because of ESEA. As a successful part of Johnson’s war on poverty, ESEA provided specifically for children in need (minority students, low income students, bilingual students, and students with disabilities). When this law was passed by Congress many people criticized it and fought against its enactment. Southern Democrats were afraid of the federal government’s involvement in racially segregated areas, while some Republicans

were afraid that the federal government would someday claim undue authority over local education decision making. It turns out that the Republicans were right. It was the Republicans, after all, who led the charge for passage of No Child Left Behind, a law that almost everyone now agrees has made the federal government into a kind of national school board.

In 1975, as an amendment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, President Gerald Ford signed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law was created in an effort to provide an appropriate education for the millions of children with disabilities who were not receiving a proper education.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was passed and signed by President George H. W. Bush in 1990. It changed the name of special needs students from “handicapped children” to “children with disabilities” and established the right of qualifying students to receive special education to begin as early as three years of age. IDEA offers educational services to students with disabilities from the time they are toddlers until the time they receive stable jobs.

IDEA has been amended several times; the last amendment was signed by President Bush in 2004. IDEA 2004 maintains the basic structure of the original IDEA, while adding several specific requirements such as special education teacher qualification requirements.

As we found in the case of school per student spending equalization reforms and busing reforms, special education reforms called for more to be spent on children with disabilities than on other children in order to make them more nearly equal with regard to

educational performance. These reforms, however praiseworthy, were not followed by federal money, leaving school districts with sizeable unfunded mandates.

Have the education equality reforms of the past fifty years worked? Generally, yes. But starting in the mid-1980s, education equality reforms began to lose momentum. In Hirschman's terms, we are disappointed that the racial integration of schools did not do more to equalize student performance. We are also disappointed that equalized per-student spending did not do more to equalize performance. And we are disappointed that federal special education mandates have not been better funded. Another breed of education reformers sensed these sundry disappointments and has mounted a ferocious response. That response is the work of the education quality reforms of the 1990s and 2000s, the subject to which I shall now turn.

The Arc of Education Quality Reform

It was Ronald Reagan who accidentally invented modern education politics. While he was running for the presidency in 1979, Reagan campaigned to eliminate the U. S. Department of Education, only to discover the political usefulness of the "Nation at Risk" report produced by his secretary of education. By the end of his second term he had morphed into our first "education president," which is ironic because the Department of Education was a Jimmy Carter initiative.

Here is the little story of how Ronald Reagan learned to love public education. After campaigning to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education, President Reagan appointed Terrell H. Bell to be his secretary of education. Terrell Bell was a wily old school superintendent who had earlier served as Dwight Eisenhower's commissioner of

education. Bell was raised poor in south central Idaho and attended the Southern Idaho College of Education, the only college he could afford. I grew up nearby in Twin Falls, Idaho, and most of my teachers were products of the Southern Idaho College of Education. Bell started out as a teacher and bus driver and went on to distinguished careers as a principal and as a superintendent. Bell was one of that wonderful old breed of school superintendents, and I might add, city managers, who faithfully followed this creed:

first, have a passion for anonymity;

second, do not draw attention to yourself or your staff;

third, when things go wrong take the blame;

fourth, when things go well all credit goes to the school board.

After his confirmation, the new secretary of education drove a U-Haul truck to Washington, D.C. In the first two years of the Reagan Administration, Bell always ranked at the bottom of indices of influence measured by beltway media talking heads and the chattering classes, which is exactly where Reagan wanted him inasmuch as Reagan intended to trash the department anyway. Bell's agreement to serve as Reagan's secretary of education was popularly referred to as "captaining the Titanic."

In the meantime, Bell was quietly at work on his plan. He talked Reagan into appointing a task force to evaluate the status of American schooling; after all, how dangerous can a task force be? Reagan assumed the task force would simply put more nails into the Department of Education coffin. Bell had other ideas. The task force was headed by David Gardner, the president of the University of California and a personal friend of Bell's. The task force report carried an ominous title: A Nation at Risk. Rather

than calling for less federal government involvement in education, the report claimed that American schools were falling behind those in the rest of the developed world and that the federal government needed to be more involved in education. The media loved it. The chattering classes loved it. President Reagan soon discovered that talking about A Nation at Risk drew attention away from scandals in the Departments of Defense and Interior. As he began campaigning for reelection, he also discovered that his best applause lines came when he described what the federal government was going to do to improve the schools.

There was no more discussion of eliminating the Department of Education. That crafty old school superintendent had taken Ronald Reagan to school.⁴ It was the beginning of modern federal education politics, the politics that later brought us No Child Left Behind. These are the politics of educational quality.

Since Reagan, successive presidents have called themselves “education presidents.” At the state level, all governors now fancy themselves to be “education governors.” And in more recent years it has even become fashionable for mayors to present themselves as “education mayors,” most notably the mayors of Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Cleveland. These developments are especially important in light of the logic associated with the traditional system of public school governance. School districts were purposely set up as jurisdictionally distinct from cities and states and were autonomous from them. The idea was to separate school governance from traditional city and state politics. The coming of education presidents, education governors, and education mayors has, in many places, turned education politics in the

direction of traditional politics. Generally speaking, this has not been good news for schools.

The lesson is that presidents, governors, and mayors know that criticism of the schools is easy and that education reform is almost always good politics. Although the Nation At Risk report marks the starting point for modern education politics, it is almost certainly the case that Terrell Bell and Ronald Reagan were supporters of public education. The Nation at Risk, while implicitly critical of the public schools, was mostly a formula for federal involvement in local schools and particularly a formula for federal funding to help improve local schools.

The Nation At Risk report was a solid start for what would eventually become the modern education quality reform movement. That movement began with a group of serious reformers who had the noble goal of improving schools. But reform movements have a way of attracting hustlers, true believers, charlatans, those with easy answers to complex questions, and seekers after rent. We see all of them in the current cast of characters in the education quality reform movement.

As I noted earlier, the modern education quality movement traces to Sputnik and the role of schools in the context of competition with the Soviet Union. Over time, threats of competition with outside forces changed from the Soviets in the 1960s and 1970s, to the Japanese and Germans in the 1980s, and now to the Chinese and the Indians. The threat of competition is essential to the logic of the many consultants, experts, and policy entrepreneurs who now make up a modern “schools are no damn good” movement. Over the past thirty years, in one form or another, the schools are no damn good movement has savaged the public school. No longer is criticism of the

schools implicit in reform proposals. Now the rhetoric of education quality reform is explicitly critical of the schools. We are treated routinely to descriptions of failing schools, incompetent teachers, and other forms of trash talk. As a predicate to proposed solutions to the challenge of education quality, it is acceptable to explicitly trash schools and teachers. Given this relentless criticism, it is no wonder that contemporary polls indicate that the majority of Americans believe that “the schools” are ineffective. The people who respond to the same polls, however, indicate that the schools they attended or their children attended were effective. The point is that polls that indicate that people believe “the schools” are ineffective is not evidence that they are ineffective, it is only evidence that the schools are no damn good movement has been effective.

The modus operandi of the schools are no damn good movement is the use of a universal predicate. That predicate is the schools are no damn good so we need charter schools. Or, the schools are no damn good so we need vouchers. Or, the schools are no damn good so we need the profit making Edison schools. Or, the schools are no damn good, so we need to pass the No Child Left Behind Law. Or, the schools are no damn good so we need performance pay for teachers. The most important justification based on the claim that the schools are no damn good is this: the schools are not accountable.

The use of the schools are no damn good as a universal predicate is ideally suited to the way *homo politicus* thinks and the way politics works. Like a heat seeking missile, *homo politicus* will find what is wrong with schools, exaggerate what is wrong with schools, and embellish what is wrong with schools. Having established that the schools are terrible *homo politicus* will then cry “elect me for I will fix the schools.” *Homo politicus* learned long ago that there is no political advantage to defending the

status quo and that an “elect me I will keep things the way they are” platform, doesn’t work well in American politics.

While this may be very good education politics it has, in my opinion, been mostly bad policy, policy harmful to American public education. In the first place, the vast majority of schools are demonstrably good and, as the polls indicate, Americans generally feel that the schools with which they are familiar are good. There are, of course, troubled schools and bad schools. The evidence indicates, however, that factors of inequality account for or explain troubled schools, bad schools, and schools with low educational quality. In the language of regression analytics: education inequality explains or predicts education quality, but education quality does not explain or predict education inequality. If this is true, and I believe the evidence shows it is, the key to improving education quality is to work on education inequality.

In the second place, public schooling is an enormously complex undertaking. Our predecessors understood this and wisely devised a system of public democratic accountability that separated school affairs from city and state politics. They knew that all schooling is local and is best governed locally. And they knew that the schools would be best governed by a corporate model in which the policy making bodies, the school boards, appointed professional superintendents to manage the schools. They knew that the checks and balances model of city, state, and national government was ill suited to the governance of schools. They knew the importance of educational professionalism and set up teachers colleges to provide a steady stream of qualified teachers, principals, and superintendents. Based on this collective knowledge, the American public schools became the great engine of social integration, social mobility, and economic

development. Failing to recognize the importance of how and why American public education governance was designed to be structurally autonomous and corporate in nature, the education quality reformers have pushed school governance steadily in the direction of ordinary city, state, and federal politics. As a consequence, the politics of education has become more polemic, more divisive, and much more noisy. Why do the education quality reformers push education politics away from the school districts and toward mayors, governors, presidents, and elected bodies at all those levels? Mostly because school boards would not buy the untested reforms being sold by education quality reformers. And teacher's unions did not buy them either. School boards and teachers' unions know easy answers to complex problems when they hear them. Not being able to sell their sundry solutions, the education quality reformers gravitated into the schools are no damn good movement and took their proposed solutions to the state and federal levels of politics.

In the third place, as American public schooling evolved there were serious design mistakes. The first and most important mistake was racial segregation. The second mistake, closely connected to the first, was the setting of school district boundaries in such a way as to enable separation by race and social class. What was initially a policy of racial segregation is now an equally pernicious pattern of racial segregation based on housing demographics and school district boundaries. There has been no political will at either the local or the state level to fix the boundaries problem. Instead the courts have imposed fixes that leave the boundaries in place and require per-pupil spending equalization and/or busing. While these fixes have helped, the momentum for these and other educational equality reforms has steadily diminished.

In the fourth place, and finally, the application of local, state, and federal politics is evidence for Kaufman's claim regarding the cycle of public sector reform. The twentieth century model of school governance was based on nonpartisan professional competence and bureaucratic efficiency. Late twentieth century and early twenty-first century models of education reform are pushing school governance toward elected executive leadership--presidents, governors, mayors-- and toward traditional forms of elected democratic representation--the U.S. Congress and state legislators--exactly as Kaufman predicted. This has greatly politicized school governance, and seldom in ways that have helped to improve the schools. There are those, of course, who point out that school governance has always been political. They are right. But school governance was differently political, a kind of education politics. The new model is not so much education politics as it is ordinary politics applied to education.

For purposes of simplicity and generalization, I have used the phrase "education quality reforms." In fact, many kinds of reforms are lumped together as education quality reforms. One primary distinction between kinds of education quality reform is essential. One group of reforms actually involves some form of schooling, reforms such as charter schools, school vouchers, internet based virtual schools, home schooling, performance pay for teachers, and for-profit education contractors such as the Edison Schools. However one views these reform models, it is evident that they are actually forms of education. These reforms involve actually getting one's hands dirty in the day-to-day work of schooling.

The other group of education quality reformers does not bother to actually engage in schooling but presumes to reform education nevertheless. These reformers could be said to engage in the pursuit of education quality by spreadsheet.

It is almost certainly the case that “reform by spreadsheet” is the most powerful and visible set of tools in the contemporary education quality reform arsenal. Reform by spreadsheet has these profound advantages: It does not require reformers to actually know anything about education and schooling. It does not require reforms to actually engage in schooling. It does not require reformers to take responsibility for schooling. It does not require reformers to take responsibility for either the intended or unintended consequences of the application of its reform protocols.

If education reform by spreadsheet does not require knowledge or responsibility for schooling, what does it require? The evidence indicates that education reform by spreadsheet is antiseptic, which is to say that one can practice it without actually getting the hands dirty. The spreadsheet reformer can truly say, “Look Ma, no hands.” Evidence indicates that through the use of spreadsheets, complex educational questions and the mysteries of individual learning and maturation can be reduced to test scores, targets, grades, comparisons, and other forms of “metrics.” The spreadsheet yields numbers, ranks, and “evidence” that greatly impress the media, giving them stories that shock and titillate while not requiring any knowledge of education or any actual field work on the subject. The language of spreadsheet reform is ideally suited to media coverage, filled as it is with phrases like “failing schools,” “incompetent teachers,” and “targets missed.” Spreadsheet reform is ideally suited to “naming, shaming, and blaming” the schools. Spreadsheet reform is the natural home of the educational cynic, the hit-and-run

politician, and all of those hustlers and entrepreneurs who use the schools are no damn good universal predicate as the justification for their preferred reform scheme.

Spreadsheet reform is an educational application of parts of the logic of the so-called new public management, sometimes called managerialism. The secret to organizational success in the new public management is to steer rather than row. In the language of new public management, agents do the rowing and principals do the steering. Principals set out the terms of work to be done and use metrics or measures of performance to steer agents, who do the actual work of government.⁵ This is not management in the old fashioned sense in which school superintendents and building principals managed the schools. This is the new management by oversight and accountability, therefore the use of tests, spreadsheets, and performance metrics is essential to its logic.

All by themselves, tests, performance metrics, and spreadsheets, when they are used in education, can be useful for diagnostic and heuristic purposes. The problem is steering. Most applications of spreadsheet reform in public education include targets, and in many cases ridiculously high targets. Such targets may work politically, but they are understood by those who are actually engaged in education to be absurd. Furthermore, most applications of spreadsheet reform in public education have built in “consequences” for missing targets, consequences that tend to use highly charged words such as “failed schools” or “schools receiving an F.” Many spreadsheet reforms include threats of sanctions such as probation or closure.

Summing-Up: Recalibrating the Arc of Education Equality and Education Quality

Reform

In the last 30 years, and especially in the last 10 years, the forces associated with educational quality seem to have been stronger and more effective than the forces associated with educational equality. Still, in case after case, as schools implement educational quality reforms and particularly No Child Left Behind, they are met with the question of fairness—in other words, educational quality for whom? In each American metropolitan area the interplay between school quality and equality reforms is played out in the context of our unique jurisdictional arrangements for public education—poor racial minorities concentrated in inner city school districts, surrounded by better-off and whiter suburban school districts. The results of the application of the universal testing regimes required by NCLB have yielded one nearly universal conclusion—inner-city schools are not as good as suburban schools. We knew that all along, of course, but now we know *exactly* how much worse inner-city schools are. Now, with the authority of performance measures, we can label them “failing schools,” and we can point out to the third graders in those schools that when they and their teachers were held accountable they didn’t measure up.

The paradox is this: while it purports to tell us about school quality, No Child Left Behind actually tells us more about school equality, and particularly inequality, than it tells us about school quality.

The education quality reform movement is now entering the period of disappointment, as Albert Hirschman puts it. The latest national tests under NCLB show

that academic gains since 2003 have been modest, less even than those posted in the years before NCLB. In eighth-grade reading there have been no gains since 1998. There is disappointment that the main goals of NCLB-- that all children be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014-- are simply unattainable, a great example of promising far too much. The testing regimes imposed by NCLB have resulted in widespread gaming of the testing system and teaching to the test, as any serious student of reform movements would have predicted. Again, another disappointment. The sanctions built into NCLB are turning out to be both toothless and absurd. Only one percent of those eligible to transfer to other schools because they are in “failing schools” have chosen to do so. Only 20 percent of those eligible for extra tutoring have received it. Another disappointment.

Good politics, as every serious student of public administration knows, is not necessarily good policy, and the politics of modern education reform is a painful example. Central to the logic of the modern politics of education quality reform is the setting of targets and goals, as if to say that schools will be made better because a law has been passed or an executive order signed. For example, under NCLB all schools are to have a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom by 2005-6, and they are to bring all children to “proficiency” in math and reading by 2013-14. Which schools will come closest to hitting these targets? You guessed it: suburban schools.

In our federal system, each level of government should do what it does best. The federal government is good at collecting and distributing information and money. We know that federal resources make a difference when they are made available to help with education equality initiatives such as head start, school breakfast and lunch programs, and

special education programs. State governments are also good at financial redistribution, the most important factor in working around the unfortunate rigidity of boundaries between inner-city and suburban school districts. School districts are best at organizing, staffing, and operating flexible and pragmatic schools. It is time for the experiment with top-down federal involvement with school districts in the form of the No Child Left Behind law to slip gradually into our political history.

Larry Cuban and David Tyack, in their book *Tinkering Toward Utopia*, have it right. “The concepts of progress and decline that have dominated discourse about educational reform distort the actual development of the educational enterprise over time. The ahistorical nature of most current reform arguments results in both magnification of present defects in relation to the past and an understatement of the difficulty of changing the system. Policy talk about the schools has moved in cycles of gloomy assessments. . . and overconfident solutions, producing incoherent guidance in actual reform practice.”⁶

There is no doubt that the public schools, and particularly the inner-city schools, have serious problems and challenges. But top-down, politically driven, federal and state education reforms, based on high stakes testing and imposed on local school districts, are not working for the students who are most in need of good schools. That is because modern education reform places too much emphasis on test measured quality and not enough emphasis on education equality. We are, I believe, in the early stages of a recalibration of the arc between education quality reforms and education equality reforms. In the coming years the education equality reformers will overcome their policy “attention deficit disorder” and come once again to be a strong voice for change.

If my light phenomenology of education reform has it right, then when education quality reformers speak, they will be answered by education equality reformers. And the answer will not be that the schools are no damn good. The answer will be that the best way to achieve education quality is to work on education equality.

¹ Herbert Kaufman, "Administrative Decentralization and Political Power," *Public Administration Review*, 24 (January-February): 72. See also Kaufman, *Time, Chance, and Organization: Natural Selection in a Perilous Environment*. Chatham, N. J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1991.

² Albert O. Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1982. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

³ Herbert A. Simon. "Designing Organizations for an Information Rich World," in Simon, *Models of Bounded Rationality Volume 2: Behavioral Economics and Business Organization*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Harold E. Pashler. *The Psychology of Attention*. Cambridge, MA. MIT Press, 1998. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

⁴ Terrell H. Bell, *The Thirteenth Man: A Reagan Cabinet Memoir*. New York: The Free Press, 1988.

⁵ Mark Considine and Martin Painter, editors, *Managerialism: The Great Debate*. Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press. 1997. Kenneth Kernaghan, Brian Marson, Sanford Borins. *The New Public Organization*. Toronto, Canada. Institute of Public Administration of Canada. 2000.

⁶ David Tyack and Larry Cuban. *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press.