UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

+ + + + +

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE COMMISSION

+ + + + +

THURSDAY

APRIL 21, 2011

+ + + + +

SAN JOSE HEARING

EVENING SESSION

+ + + + +

The Commission met at the San Jose City Hall, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, California at 6:00 p.m., Alberto Retana, presiding.
PRESENT:

ALBERTO RETANA, Dir. Community Outreach
DAVID SCIARRA, Commissioner
LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND, Commissioner
MARIANO-FLORENTINO CUÉLLAR, Commissioner
STEPHEN CHEN, Executive Director, EEC
RUSSLYNN ALI, Assistant Secretary, DOED
MIKE HONDA, Representative, U.S. Congress

ALSO PRESENT:

JOHN AFFELDT, Public Advocates, Inc.
MARTHA INFANTE, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Middle School
JASON WILLIS, Stockton Unified School District
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call to Order</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Remarks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of Commissioners</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Remarks</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of Speakers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Willis</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Affeldt</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Infante</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitated Small Group Discussion</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6:15 p.m.

MR. RETANA: I'm just waiting for the signal from CNN. As soon as I get that, we're ready to roll.

Good evening. I'm a community organizer by heart and by training, and I never like to start any meeting without a nice good evening, or good morning or good afternoon, from both the folks up at the table, but also, from those that are here participating. So, good evening.

My name is Alberto Retana. I'm the Director of the Community Outreach for the Department of Education. I'm from Los Angeles. So, it's good to be home, here in California, and calling this meeting to order, on this wonderful day, a beautiful sunny, clear sky, in the wonderful city of San Jose. So, let's give ourselves a round of applause for coming out tonight, on this critically important issue and topic facing our
communities in our nation.

Just to start us off, I'd like to bring up our Assistant Secretary, Russlynn Ali, who is doing phenomenal work, in charge of the Office of Civil Rights, and has been a leader in equity, both in California and across the country, certainly, partnering with us as community organizers, before we joined the Department. Now, I'm at the Department and now, Russlynn is at the Department and we're trying to open things up and we're very glad to be here in front of you.

So, everyone, let's give her a nice, warm welcome and warm applause, Assistant Secretary Russlynn Ali.

MS. ALI: Thank you, thank you, thank you. This is a real delight for us, to be here.

As I hope you know, the Equity and Excellence Commission was called on by the Secretary. Our first meeting was February 22nd. It was made up of 27 of the most
phenomenal and experts -- knowledgeable
experts in the country, on issues of equity
and excellence and issues of systems, state
and local finance.

The administration is fully
committed to this effort, as is evidenced, I
think, by both the Commissioners, in who they
are, as well as by the Ex-Officio members,
which span the Department of Education, as
well the Office of Management and Budget in
Domestic Policy Council within the
Administration, and we understand that this is
a hugely important issue for us to tackle as a
nation, if we are truly going to meet the
President's goal, that by 2020, we will once
again, lead the world in percentages of
college graduates.

I want to give a special thank you
to Congressman Honda of San Jose and
Congressman Fattah of Philadelphia. Without
them, this Commission would not exist.

I would like to introduce some of the
distinguished Commissioners that we have with us. They need no introduction, here in California, especially Linda Darling-Hammond, who has just been a leader for all of us, for a very, very long time. David Sciarra, who is a national expert in finance equity, and how to ensure that the kids that need the most get at least their fair share.

We're waiting on another Commissioner that will be here shortly, also a fellow Californian, Tino Cuéllar, he's on his way, but the traffic is a little bit terrible. I also want to thank those that are speaking for us today, and that we heard from earlier.

It is precisely these kinds of conversations that inform the work of the Commission, and certainly will inform its recommendations, that we, the Department, will take hugely seriously.

I will tell you that we don't want this report to do what so many have done over the course of history, and that is, sit on
This is very much about developing some recommendations and short order, for us to change things in the short term and the long term, and determine and act on the appropriate role of the Federal Government in ensuring that we can get to equitable funding systems, so that the achievement cap can begin to seriously close and we can commit ourselves, as we have in rhetoric, to ensuing fundamental fairness in our nation's schools.

So, with that, Congressman Honda, thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to be here today.

CONGRESSMAN HONDA: Thank you, and I just want to say thank you, to you, because when this first started, we had two staffers, and you know, she's not willing to just have two folks working for her.

So, she went out to different departments and I guess she called them, what it is when you get people from other
departments?

MS. ALI: Colleagues.

CONGRESSMAN HONDA: No, no, you took folks from other departments.

MS. ALI: They weren't in other departments. You're talking about Stephen?

CONGRESSMAN HONDA: No, Stephen and you, you went out and got more people to work in our groups, because you have a staff now, of over eight, or six or eight, or something like that.

Anyway, she is not a slouch, and she is an attorney and she has a civil rights background, and so I think that that's, for me, the bottom line, background. And Alberto, thank you. Where are you?

I love community organizers, too, especially when they start out, "Good afternoon," that's a good way to start.

What we want you to be able to do this evening is to really get engaged and excited about the topic of equity in education.
and excellence.

I want to thank Linda Darling-Hammond, David Sciarra, who just came in from New Jersey, just now, and he left his fight with the Supreme Court of New Jersey, fighting for equity for youngsters there, jumped on a plane and came over here, Russlynn Ali, our Secretary, and Stephen Chen, who hails from San Francisco.

So, for all the hard work they put into this Commission, and to their un-wavering dedication to our children, and of course to our community organizer.

I want to thank all the speakers who have agreed to give their time, and make sure that this Commission has the best input possible, and finally, I want to thank all of you for being here and attending this event, which is for you.

You are doing the most important thing you can do as a member of this society. You're speaking true to power. We know that
the only way we will ever be able to change this thing we call public education, is if you, the public, can generate the political will and the public sentiment, to make it happen.

We know that the only way those changes will be worth the paper they're written on is if they are based on the truth you and your children experience every day.

This Commission, in meetings like this, will allow students, parents, teachers, administrators, community groups, and business leaders, the opportunity to engage in the process.

This is the first in series of nine field hearings in this country, and we're going to visit various regions of this country.

It is that connection to the different communities of the country that I contend will make a difference between success and failure, and the key to that success is a
willingness of each of one of us, to challenge paradigms that we hold, put aside pre-
conceived notions and assumptions, and to actively listen with fresh ears.

We see this happening in pockets all across the country. We see parents in Los Angeles, challenging the idea that they must accept whatever service can be presented with, they're challenging that.

We see teacher unions across the country, striving to innovate and find what works best for each student. We see places like KIPP, Knowledge is Power Program, KIPP, challenging their varying calendar, and making sure our students have sufficient time on task, to compete and to succeed, and the Harlem Children's Zone, challenging where school ends and community begins.

Today, we will challenge our ideas about equity. We will get passed the whole idea the completes equity and parity, and see if we cannot find a better solution, and I
contend that there is a difference in the distinction, acquired distinction between the term equity and parity.

We have to remember that while education is worth its weight in gold, the only commodity our children bring to school, the only currency our children bring to school is time, and time is something that we cannot bank, and withdrawal later, for it's application for our children.

Once it's spent and once it goes through, it never comes bank. So, we cannot withdrawal that time from that bank.

It behooves us to find a system of finance for our schools of honors. Every student’s achievement, their honors are recognized as each child's right to a good education, and I just want us to think through, as we talk this evening, about the distinction between all children and each child, and how that may shape or reshape our thinking.
Again, I want to thank all of you for being here, and thank our facilitators, and my staff. Would you all raise your hands, because I'm not going to name all of you. There you are.

And before I sit down, as a parent, I just love to embarrass children. Albert, where is your mom? There she is. Stand up. There is a mom of one of our staff.

Okay, so, like they say on TV, "Let's get started."

MR. RETANA: Thank you Congressman Honda. If you will, give him another nice, warm applause, please.

I want to just take a moment and acknowledge some local leadership who has joined us and who is with us tonight. We certainly can't do this without our local leaders, and we certainly can't do it with the grassroots, as well.

First, Joseph DeSalvo, County Office of Education, please stand up and raise
your hand. Thank you, sir.

Darcy Greene from Alum Rock School District, thank you. Bob Avento from Morgan Hill Unified School District Trustee. Excellent, thank you.

Judy Cherco, from former San Jose City Council, thank you very much for being here. Keith Neuin, Franklin McKinley School District, thank you so much.

Christ Stampolis, there you are, sir, from the West Valley Mission Community College District. Allison Wiscon from California State PTA, excellent. Rose Alvaro from San Jose City Council. Oh, and thank you, yes, for allowing us to use your place, absolutely, it's gorgeous, and to have sunlight, rather than electricity is beautiful. Thank you.

Javier Campos from San Jose City Council, thank you, again. Rose Buteburn from Osh Kosh San Jose and -- sorry, and Osh Carr from San Jose City Council, there you are,
thank you.

Cathy Jung and Ann Canson Chu from San Jose City Council, as well, thank you. Minchu Nguyen and Zoe Lapren from the U.S. House of Representatives, where are you? Thank you.

I was hoping they would all be in Spanish, because I could tackle it and I'm struggling here, and I'm San Jose, man.

Alice Coviachi from Senator Alan Covart's office, thank you.

Let me just break down a little bit of how this evening is going to go.

(Off microphone comment)

MR. RETANA: Okay, help me out. Where are you? Sorry, thank you, sir. League of Women Voters, excellent. Thank you.

Vince Matthews, State Superintendents' Office, where are you? Vince Matthews, thank you. Thank you, sorry, apologize. Superintendent, sorry, Superintendent Matthews, I apologize. That's
what happens when community organizers
disconnect from the neighborhood. You start
like, messing it all up. So, yes?

(Off microphone comment)

MR. RETANA: Excellent, thank you,

excellent. I'm going to do one last shout
out, and that's to all of you for -- yes?

(Off microphone comment)

MR. RETANA: Yes, sir, thank you,
sorry. You know what? What does it mean,
right, when all of our leaders come out to
this conversation? Let's give them a big
round of applause for being here. Thank you.

So, let me just go through how	onight is going to work.

I'm going to speak for the next
three hours, and then we're going to call it a
day. No, no, no, no, no, just kidding.

What we're going to do is, we want
to do this a little different. We wanted to
have an informed conversation, and so, the
first part of our Town Hall, we've asked three
leaders in this work, who have been doing innovative, exciting, amazing work to come and speak, to set some context.

These are our three speakers, to my right, and they'll all have -- they'll each have about seven minutes to break down everything that we need to know.

They're going to touch on themes that are going to be real important, and those themes are going to guide the discussions in each of your groups.

After we hear from our three community leaders, we're going to break down and have discussions at each or your tables. We thought that this was the best way to create a space for everyone to be able to participate in the conversation.

We will be taking -- you will have -- each of you will have a facilitator at your table. So, if you have a facilitator, raise your hand, you know who they are, where they are.
We'll also have note takers at your table, and you will -- your facilitators will explain to you, what you will talk about throughout the evening.

You will be answering two questions and you have about 15 minutes to go into each of those questions. This will be after our presentations, and we'll get into those questions a little bit later.

Then we'll close out, and hear about what people had to say. But we're going to take all of your ideas, we're going to write them down and we're going to put them into our thinking caps and prepare information for our Commissioners to read.

We have 27 members on the Commission that are all going to be taking your ideas very seriously. Very important process, and so, that's what this is about.

Three goals, really, we want you to accomplish tonight. We want you to feel heard. We want you to get a better
understanding of the context, and we really want to build a sense of community around this issue, and if we can start doing that now, we could really have a big impact on this particular issue.

So, with that, why don't we jump straight to our presenters, and we're going to start with Jason Willis, to my right, and let me just say a few words about Jason Willis, who has done amazing work and served as Budget Director of Oakland Unified School District in California.

Also, he worked with the U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for National Service on researching the impact of service learning on student achievement. I know there are some folks from the city here in the room, so, we can give the city some love. Where are you? You are there, they have the yellow jackets.

A lot of the work that Mr. Willis did had a lot to do with informing that kind
Of work.

So, with that, let's give him a warm round of applause and bring out Jason Willis.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening, and thank you so much for the introduction, Alberto.

As it was mentioned, I was previously the Budget Director in a district just north of here, Oakland Unified. Currently, I'm the Chief Financial Business Officer in Stockton Unified School District.

One of the unique experiences I had in Oakland was managing a unique system we called 'results based budgeting', which was a collection of tools and processes that the school district used to develop and plan its budget.

Now, budget development isn't always the sexiest thing on the planet, I will have to admit, but the work that we were doing in Oakland Unified around budgeting, certainly
brought a different perspective and a fresh set of ideas to the way that we think about using resources in education.

One of this Commission's primary objectives is to make recommendations for restructuring school finance systems, to achieve equity in the distribution of educational resources and further student performance.

So, tonight I have the privilege of sharing how Oakland really looked to restructure its school financing systems. I'm going to talk a little bit about the results it achieved, and talk about both the effective practices, as well as a lot of the lessons that we learned.

Let me briefly paint a picture of how Oakland did this. Not a lot of people are familiar with the way school districts allocate resources, and in the vast majority of school districts in the country, it's a pretty simple formula.
If you have 250 students in a school, and you want to allocate 25 students to every teacher, that school is going to get 10 teachers, and so on, down the line. You allocate a principal, secretaries, etc., etc.

As numerous research studies over the past decade have shown, this method does and continues to inequitably allocate resources, dollars, to those schools.

Oakland's approach, instead, really allocated dollars on the basis of money. So, think about it as back-pack funding, if you will.

A school would receive dollars for students, based on their profile, if they were general education, special education, low income, ELL. They would receive those dollars for that student, and then they would make a series of decisions, at their discretion, with their school leadership team, their communities, about how best to use those resources, to address the needs of both that
individual child, as well as the full profile of the children in that school.

I think it's important to mention that results based budgeting was one of several strategies that Oakland really used to drive performance. It wasn't the only one.

There were several other things that were happening in Oakland at the time that contributed to this, but let me talk a little bit about the results, which personally, I'm very proud to talk about.

Oakland has been the most improved large urban district in the state of California six years running. The district has made gains on the academic performance index, as our measure of academic performance for students, of over 116 points, over that time period, 116.

In last year alone, in 2009/2010, we had 12 schools in Oakland Unified that achieved API growth of 50+ points. We had three with 100+ point gains.
Despite the continued constraints on those schools -- school resources throughout California, principals continue to overwhelmingly demand this system. There was a survey done of all Oakland principals last Spring, 93 percent saying that they valued that decision making authority.

We also had a study that was conducted by the American Institutes of Research, back in 2008, looking at the distribution of resources, both before and after RBB was implemented.

One of their significant findings identified that the district had essentially directed more dollars to high poverty elementary schools under RBB than pre-RBB, in such cases that an elementary school with 50 percent poverty was expected to spend approximately 20 percent more on average than a zero poverty school.

So, the implication here, just from some of the data that we're looking at,
is that it worked, in Oakland at least, that we as a large -- we are a large urban system that was able to achieve and sustain this type of different resource allocation policy, and there are other examples across the country, New York, Houston, Baltimore, most recently, that have implemented or are implementing these systems.

So, I want to talk for a second, around the opportunity of these -- that school districts might have of thinking about a system like this, and to accomplish the same type of distribution methods that were happening in Oakland.

The technical systems inside of the districts exist. It is possible to do these types of things. If, you know, the Commission were to think about something like a nationwide rollout of this, considering it on a rolling basis, all right, you would -- very similar to the way GASME-34, which is a Governmental accounting standards, roll it
out, year over year, starting with some of the largest public agencies.

And as one of the Commissioners suggested, developing some measure of resource distribution, how about a school level per pupil spending index that compares schools across districts, and might I even say, states.

You could adjust this for regional costs and other needs of students along the way.

The other thing that we realized in Oakland is that we really started to see a connection between what was being expected of students, that is content standards and things like that, as well as how resources were being used.

I now, work in Stockton. We don't have a system like that currently in place in Stockton, and what I can tell you is that there is a demonstrable difference in the types of conversations that are occurring.
between principals and between the central office and principals, about how resources are being used, by the very presence of the system, itself.

Because principals had choices -- have choices in Oakland Unified School District, what it allowed was to be able to think about resources in a very effective and more efficient manner, and even in the presence of declining revenues in the state of California, principals in Oakland Unified continue to want to make those choices.

So, on either side, whether resources were increasing or decreasing, they wanted to be able to make that best choice, and the way that I would say it to many of my colleagues is that, if the choice is between school principals making the choice about how to best use resources, or it's myself, in the central office, 100 out of 100 times, the principal is probably in a better position to be able to make that choice, with the
leadership of the school.

Let me end, because I know I've already been called for time, here, but let me end by first saying, it is possible.

It is possible to think about restructuring the way that you distribute these resources, and that with the right policy, the right support and the right persistence, it can make a demonstrable difference in the way that you allocate resources.

And finally, it's an imperative, that there is an open dialog, not just about the goals for America's students and how to deliver an equitable education, but that efficiency has a seat at the table, as well, that we can really think about how to stretch dollars, especially in a climate where dollars are dramatically declining for public education.

Frankly, if we're not able to meet the challenge of doing more with less head on,
then the economic fiscal and demographic realities of our age will certainly force us there. Thank you for your time.

MR. RETANA: Thank you, Jason. Our next speaker is someone who I know, it's great to have you here. John Affeldt, he is Managing Attorney of Public Advocates, he's focused on educational equity issues for some time now, through litigation policy advocacy and partnering with grassroots organizations, and I know that first hand, because I worked with him, when we had our grassroots -- and still do, have a grassroots organization in Los Angeles.

Affeldt served as a lead counsel Williams v. California, resulting in a landmark 2004 settlement, guaranteeing California students with sufficient instruction materials, decent facilities and qualified teachers.

In 2005, Affeldt was named California attorney of the year, by California
Lawyer Magazine, for his work on the Renee v. Duncan, which struck down the U.S. Department of Education regulation, allowing teachers in training to be disproportionally aside a low income and high minority schools, and in the winter 2007, was named the leading Plaintiff lawyer in America by Law Journal Magazine.

It's certainly an honor to be on this panel, standing here with you. Thank you so much, for being here tonight. Let's give him a warm welcome. Thank you, John.

MR. AFFELDT: Thank you to the Commission and Congressman Honda, for this opportunity, and I think I want to start by stepping back and looking at a bigger picture.

The Federal Government spends approximately $5 billion a year on California K-12 education and lately with stimulus money, as spent as much as $10 billion a year, and in doing so, the Federal Government is subsidizing the inadequate and inequitable education of millions of California children.
The state is not investing adequately in its K to 12 schools and the Federal Government is standing by watching that.

Once the envy of the nation, with the best funded and one of the best funded and highest performing school systems, today, California is racing to the bottom. We're 44th out of 50 states, in poor people spending, and 46th in education spending, as a percentage personal income.

The state spends inequitably among its districts. Just down the road, one of the Plaintiff districts in our school funding litigation, Frederick City Unified, received $6,500 per pupil in unrestricted funding, while next door, largely white, middle and upper class Portillo Valley districts and Woodside, receive $16,000 and $14,600 per pupil respectively.

You throw in categoricals, okay, Redwood City rises to $9,900 a pupil, for
Portillo Valley and Woodside, $16,000 and $17,000, respectively.

How can we, as a state, be so inequitable in expending resources to our children and how can our Federal Government be turning over so much money without leveraging at all, equitable access to even our Federal dollars?

The Stanford, “Getting Down to Facts” studies, confirmed all of this. Districts of similar size and demographics throughout California receive very different amounts of money, and the range goes from $6,000 a kid, to as much as $30,000 a kid, in some districts.

Now, the unfunded and inequitably funded system is failing to maintain learning conditions. That had consequences.

We are 50th, out of 50 states, in terms of adults in the system, teachers, administrators, counselors, librarians, put all those folks together, we are 50th out of
50. There are not enough adults to deliver the product.

How can you have education, when you don't have educators?

Because of the inequitable distribution of existing funds, we see vast inequities in the distribution of fully prepared and experienced teachers.

Teachers at Redwood City start out, get trained, become experienced and then go to Portillo Valley next door, where they get $10,000 more.

The horrific budget cuts in the last three years, some $18 billion in the K-12 system had brought our system to its knees, with the most dire consequences being delivered on the poorer schools.

Instead of expanding learning time, as President Obama has called for, we're cutting it, in this state. Sixty percent of our districts have cut a year off the school year, and many are talking about cutting three
more -- I'm sorry, not a year, a week off the school year. We're almost there. We're heading in that direction. Give us a little more time.

But many districts are talking about cutting a month, if these tax extensions don't go through.

Class sizes are sky-rocketing. In Redwood City there are 30 kids in a kindergarten class. Computer labs, libraries are being shuttered. Half the districts in the state report that they've cut art and music electives and quarter of them have eliminated those programs entirely.

Last year, nearly two-thirds of districts reported cuts to building grounds and maintenance and 58 percent reported cuts to instruction materials.

Teachers, librarians, nurses, counselors are being cut by tens of thousands. These are not the conditions we should ask our children to thrive in, much less, to
survive in.

The consequences, we have low achievement, and we have an increasing achievement gap. Nearly one in three California students fail to graduate from high school and it's closer to one in two, when you look at African American and Latinos.

Those that do graduate, that two-thirds percent, only one in four are prepared to go onto college.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress scores that were released last Spring, have us among the lowest achieving states, alongside Mississippi and Alabama, so, we're getting what we pay for.

The California Constitution guarantees all children a right to a quality education, and because we're not living up to that, public advocates, representing a number of community groups, some of which are here, PIQE and the Campaign for Quality Education have sued the state, and so has the PTA, who
is here, and a number of school districts, the California School Board Association has begun litigation.

So, stay tuned, we're working that. But the question tonight is what can the Federal Government do, in the meantime? What should they be doing, so that we don't have to go to Court?

Now, the two main buckets of proposals. One, incentivize states to fund schools -- incentivize states to fund school adequately and equitably, taking into account, students with the greatest needs.

Two, strengthen and enforce existing -- or strengthen and enforce Federal requirements, such as Maintenance of Effort and Comparability.

So, number one, we require districts to meet -- to equitably distribute their state and local dollars before they get any Federal dollars, but we don't do that with states, among districts.
So, it's a little schizophrenic. You have to provide every school in your district the same amount of state and local money, if you want any Federal money.

But if the state wants to spend $16,000 on Portillo Valley and $6,000 on Ridgewood City, have at it.

So, there needs to be, as a condition of getting Federal education money, a requirement that states, over time, equalize their spending among districts, as well as within districts.

Beyond that, the state should be recognizing that the English Learners and low income kids need more to get across the finish line, equity, not parity, as Congressman Honda mentioned.

The Federal Government should require that states promote equitable spending by requiring them to demonstrate that state and local money is positively correlated with poverty, across school districts.
The more impoverished kids you have in your district, the state should be spending more on that, before they get Federal dollars.

Schools should be funded transparently, and Jason was talking about. There should be indexes to measure them at the school level, so that parents and communities can hold schools accountable. There should be transparency to knowing, what are the actual dollars being spent at that school level? What are the actual teacher salaries being spent there?

There is a Federal -- I'm just going to wrap up here. There is a Federal Maintenance of Effort requirement, also per districts. If you want Federal money, you have to maintain how much you're spending on public education.

But there is also a Federal Maintenance of Effort for the state. If the state wants to cut, cut, cut, that's okay.
Keep taking our Federal money and use it to back-fill.

The Federal money is supposed to supplement what the state provides. It's supposed to help low income students and supplement their education.

If you're not requiring the states to maintain effort, than you're just back-filling their cuts, and you're not supplementing, and more specifically, what we've talked about in the earlier session, is that education gets cut disproportionally, compared to the rest of the budget in California. That shouldn't happen.

There should be a maintenance of effort requirement that says you can't -- you can cut -- if you're going to cut, okay, but you have to be equal to education. You can't cut education disproportionally, and when you're cutting education, you can't disproportionally cut English learners and low income kids.
There should be a maintenance of effort requirement that takes care of that kind of shenanigans.

And finally, we're in support of the Obama Administration's efforts to close the comparability loop-hole, which is something Jason was talking about, and making sure that districts, before they get their Federal dollars, are spending equitably with their state and local dollars, between schools.

So, that needs to be fixed, and it's going to be a heavy lift, but the Administration is behind that initiative.

In closing, I think the guiding principle for what the Feds should be doing is to treat children in this country, first and foremost, as children of the United States, and not children of their states, captive to the exigencies of their states public finance system.

We are one nation. Education is a
national interest, and if the Federal Government is going to spend dollars, it ought to make sure that those Federal dollars are being spent equitably. Thank you.

MR. RETANA: So, thank you, John.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to introduce Martha Infante, who is a bilingual social studies teacher at the L.A. Academy School in Los Angeles.

Talk about getting right into the classroom. We've got a teacher here. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in history at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1994. She received her teacher training through the Los Angeles Unified District intern program and is a frequent presenter in both the gifted and social studies fields.

Martha has trained educators nationwide and participated in international study tours in Japan, China and Saudi Arabia.

As a 16 year veteran of public schools, Martha became involved with education
reform issues when her school was decimated by lay-offs in 2009, reduction in force.

Since then, this UCLA graduate and former California Council for Social Studies teacher of the year has blogged frequently about the important impact of Federal education policy on the South Central Los Angeles school community.

Let's give her a warm round of applause, a teacher who is here to tell us a little bit about what's going on in the classroom. Thank you.

MS. INFANTE: Thank you very much. Hello, everyone. My name is Martha Infante. Thank you for the introduction. Thank you, Congressman Honda, for the invitation. I do think it's important to share, what's happening in the actual classrooms of California schools.

So, today, I'm going to talk about that.

I am a member of the accomplished
California teachers network, and so is David Cohen, my colleague, and he spoke earlier this evening, about what it's like to teach in Palo Alto schools, and he shared the experiences of the students, having a plethora of electives, having very little teacher turnover at his school, having a strong community of parents who are there to supplement the budget, when cuts happen.

And so, today, I want to share with you, what is happening at my school, and basically, it's the total opposite.

Just a little bit of my background. I am from East Los Angeles. I attended public schools since the 1970's. I was very fortunate to participate in the gifted and talented education program, and received a robust arts education as well, which is not the norm now.

I chose to become a public teacher and to render my services to the hardest to staff area in LAUSD, which is South Central
Los Angeles, where I have worked for 20 years.

In this time, I have gained an insight that I think would serve the purposes of this committee, and I'm going to share some of the experiences of my students, as well as observations that I have made about various programs that have been created to reverse educational inequities that have existed in schools for many years.

The state of education funding today has hit schools like mine in a way that very few have come to know. Increases in class size are common and limited classroom resources are the immediate obvious results.

However, it is the precipitous state of the whole child that is affected in the urban schools, when cuts hit hard and often. Students with special needs, such as autism and dyslexia appear in over-crowded classrooms, but their needs go un-noticed by the predominantly novice teachers, which tend to be employed in hard to staff schools.
Training to recognize the warnings signs of emotionally disturbed students has virtually ceased, due to the market decrease in professional development funds, and even if funding were available, it's usually geared toward training and reading and math, as this has been the focus of No Child Left Behind.

In the past year, our school counselors' loads have doubled from 350 students per counselor to 700. With further cuts looming, that number will surely rise.

Parents in my community are workers and do not often have the time to interact with the schools often, if necessary, or to know the warning signs that they must look for, to tell them that their child is at risk.

As such, the school becomes the last best hope for students, before they become a danger to themselves.

In the past 12 months, I have identified two students with Asperger's,
suicidal student, and a student being physically abused at home.

These students had gone unidentified by novice teachers on campus, and missed by their counselor, due to the tremendous strain of reduction and support services in the last several years.

I shudder to think what would have happened to these students if the teacher in front of them had been a new teacher and at the same time, realized that many such students have already slipped through the cracks.

My initial comments have focused on support services by counselors and mental health professionals, because all teachers know that if a student’s basic needs of safety and security are not met, than learning is not happening in the classroom.

However, even in the best of times, when schools have been fully staffed in this area, the issue of inequity continues to
be prevalent. Staffing has been a constant issue in schools like mine, because of difficult working conditions, and the depth of social, emotional and economic problems that my students face have an impact on the educators.

These conditions have been known to defeat even the most valiant of educators because all workers like to believe there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Working at urban schools sometimes means surviving, not knowing if your colleagues will return to work the next day, whether your principal is there to make a difference, or just passing through, and learning to fend for yourself, when it comes to acquiring the necessary resources to teach students.

As a result, teacher turnover is extremely high in urban schools, and the learning curve is steep, with the rookie teachers who are relegated to teach in these
communities.

Burn-out is even higher at charter schools, and I wonder whose children suffer because of this.

To me, equity is not just a funding issue. We have received generous Title 1 funds in the past, yet, disparities continue. Equity means acknowledging that every school, every community and every setting has its own unique needs that call for individual solutions.

Take the problem of staffing at my school. Many studies show that teacher quality is the most important in-school factor that can improve education. Socio-economic factors being the most important factors overall, for under-served students, yet, few programs have been successful in helping to retain the most knowledgeable and capable teachers in schools that need them the most.

Yes, there have been grants offered periodically, but systemic changes
have not been made to the way teachers are
assigned to schools, and how schools can work
to retain key staff.

The recent ACLU law suit against
the Los Angeles Unified School District
attempted to address the situation. This law
suit requested that high-need schools be
exempted from seniority case layoffs.

However, as is the case with many
educational policies, no attempt was made to
dialog with the teacher leaders, who would
have told the ACLU that exempting these
schools from layoffs was only a stop-gap
measure.

The ACLU won the law suit and 45
schools in LA Unified are now protected from
layoffs, but no programs are in place to
retain the most necessary and effective staff
members who can counter-act educational
inequity.

In other words, when the
conditions get to be too much to bear,
teachers at my school will transfer to schools like David's, in Palo Alto, where they will likely serve out their careers.

My school was effective in creating a successful teacher retention program with very simple strategies, and we reduced teacher turnover from 40 percent yearly, to zero percent in 2009.

These simple strategies included mentorships, pizza welcome parties, new teacher photos and bio's placed in all the staff members mailboxes, so, we could know who they were and we could greet them by name, even a new teacher welcome brunch at the principal's house.

Our staff was celebrating the solving of the quest to reduce turnover when the budget cuts hit in 2009.

So, instead of losing zero teachers, we lost 23 teachers that year, out of a staff of 110.

The following year, we lost 12,
and this year, we are slated to lose 28. The number is higher this year, because of the ACLU settlement, which did not take into account, the individual unique needs of each school community.

Because of our lower turnover numbers, due to our program, our school did not qualify for layoff protection, and therefore, we were forced to absorb even larger number -- a larger number of layoffs than other schools that have no teacher retention programs in place.

Again, you have to talk to the people on the ground, and we can give you some good ideas.

So, the last issue I'd like to close with is the attention to -- in terms of equity of the issue of challenging students, students with special needs, English learners, or those from disadvantaged homes, not only require talented, experienced teachers, but they require the knowledge that their school
will provide a safe haven from the tumbles they may face in their lives, when they are at home.

They need to know that their school will be there, and will not be closed down. When I drive to school, I get a smile on my face, seeing John walk to school with his lop-sided gate, or Jerome, riding to school on the back of his friends' bike. They are rushing to school, at the un-Godly hour of 7:00 a.m., because they know that we offer breakfast and shelter, which may be more than they have available when they're not in school.

It takes every ounce of ability and resources to serve students such as these, and yet in the last several years, the concentration of such students at schools like mine seems to be rising. Our school does not have an admissions policy. We do not require a 30 to 40 hour commitment from parents as a condition for their child's enrollment.
We do not expel a student if he misses the opening week of school or refuses to stay for after school classes. But other schools do, and when these students are removed from those schools, they are accepted at the only schools left for them, the traditional public schools.

It seems to me that if we're really going to make an effort to increase equity for students like John and Jerome, we would require that all schools receiving public funding are required and held accountable for serving all students, challenging or not, and building stronger efforts to spread equity across schools.

Lastly, just please talk to teachers. Talk to people in the community and I think that will help provide lots of new and valid insights into how we can spread equity everywhere. Thank you very much.

MR. RETANA: So, one other great round of applause for our three distinguished
Now, we're going to take a couple of questions from the Commissioners, if we have a couple for our guests, and before transitioning to our small group discussions. So, yes, Mr. Cuéllar?

MR. CUÉLLAR: I want to thank all of the presenters for some very thoughtful and provocative and challenging commentary.

I wanted to ask Martha Infante a question, because Martha, you highlighted one of the challenges of the ACLU settlement, which is that it can have unintended consequences, probably not what they had in mind, but this is what happens.

So, part of the reason we're all here is that it's -- we have a gap between the world we'd like to live and the world we live in, and that prompts the question of, what we should do in that interim period, while we're working towards a different arrangement, where these problems are better dealt with, and in
that interim time, how do you think school districts should handle the painful question of letting teachers go, when there are no resources?

It's not a scenario any of us want to see, but when that does happen, how do you mitigate the challenge and the damage?

MS. INFANTE: Well, I always want to remember how we got to this position in the first place.

We should not be experiencing this type of layoff situation and we must never forget that that is number one.

Having said that, to answer your question, the issue of seniority based lay-offs is very complicated and it's very debated everywhere.

I got involved in education reform because my school was decimated by the lay-offs, and it's easy to paint a simple picture, "Oh, we lost our best teachers, we lost some good teachers, we lost some average teachers,
we lost some poor teachers.”

So, to me, it doesn't seem that seniority was the issue. You know, my theme has been, every school community has its own unique needs and so, for us, a problem was turnover. We found a way to solve that issue.

It seems to me that if you're going to come up with solutions, you wouldn't dismantle the school that is already making solid and innovative progress, because I haven't heard of any other school reducing turnover to zero, in difficult hard to staff communities, like mine.

So, we talk about looking at data and data, data, data, that's all we live in. No one looked at that data. No one looked to see why that number was shrinking and what our school was doing.

So, you know, asking questions and looking at different data, maybe.

MR. CUÉLLAR: Thank you.

MR. RETANA: Perhaps one more
question? We'll do two more questions.

MS. ALI: Okay, because I think it's hugely important, and John, as you know, the comparability proposals in ESEA are absolutely designed to ensure that the principals of supplement plan to actually become a little more than rhetoric, and as you mentioned, it is a very heavy lift.

You may also know that outside of that condition of Federal funding, to ensure equity once the money goes to the district, our proposal for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is also about reporting for the first time, inter-district inequities and developing plans on how to solve them, and in addition, through recovery money, reporting, as well as the civil rights data collection, we are now, for the first time, beginning to collect data at the school site level.

My question is, so, at least two of the pots that you touched on, we are -- we
have ambitious proposals to do something about that. That's Title I, and we talked a lot, both earlier today and just now, about leveraging Title I dollars. I think our proposal does that to a great extent. We'd love to hear advice on how to move further, faster.

What else? All right, given that historically, the Federal Government's contribution is anywhere from eight to ten cents on the dollar, how do you use and leverage that ten cents, to ensure that where the super majority of the money flows from, i.e., state, is done in an equitable way?

MR. AFFELDT: Yes, so, I think my proposal was basically saying that's good, that the Federal Government is leveraging districts, to try to spend equitably between schools, and that closing that loop hole.

The loop hole that we're talking about is, the -- legislation took out counting teachers' salaries, when you count it up, you
know, how much does a poor school spend, versus non-poor, and they have to be the same, and if you take out 80 percent of the calculation, then you're -- you know, you've really skewed the ball game.

So, the loop hole will be closed, but teachers' salaries will be included in that, and since, as Martha was saying, you know, more experienced teachers, they have higher salaries. It's hard to get them at the hard to staff schools. You end up spending a lot more money, and you know, not on the neediest kids.

So, that's good, but -- I think the thing that the reauthorization should look at is saying, "California, you don't get your $5 billion unless you are making progress on closing that gap between districts."

MS. ALI: Yes, yes, and -- again, that's the one, and we are talking about transparency as a very first step for what we have been doing, right?
MR. AFFELDT: Yes.

MS. ALI: And that is, having states report and develop plans on how they're going to do just that, as a condition of Federal funds, right?

MR. AFFELDT: Okay.

MS. ALI: So, the proposal attempts to get at that.

The question is, again, that's Title I dollars, $5 billion, huge, big chunk of money for California. What we've seen over the last two years in particular is there are additional pots of money that could be leveraged.

MR. AFFELDT: Yes, right.

MS. ALI: There are policies that can be leveraged. What are your thoughts about, you know, how would we -- how to incentivize – as Jason said, the country to roll out a kind of results based budgeting. How does that work?

MR. AFFELDT: Yes, I mean, I don't
think you have to limit the incentives to Title I. You could say, you know, get any of our Federal dollars in education, if you don't do that.

I mean, but California did a lot to try to get $700 million for Race to the Top and they came up empty handed, but they -- and as you said, 37 states passed laws for a few, you know, hundred million dollars.

So, if you've got $5 billion or $10 billion, I think you really have a tremendous amount of leverage that you can do it, and yes, I think that you are, really, and I know you, personally care about this issue, and are moving things, I appreciate that, getting school level expenditure reporting. That's key, that transparency.

That's going to start the conversation. We've done some of that work together here in California, you and I, and you can certainly include in that, the kind of reforms that Jason is talking about.
School based budgeting or weighted student formula or make sure that, you know, you -- I mean, it's sort of the poverty index I was talking about, and on this district level.

Your high poverty districts should get more state and local money before we give you our Federal money, and you can take it down to the school level. Your high poverty schools within the district should be, you know, money should be following those kids down at the school level, too.

MS. ALI: And so, as John Mockler told us earlier, though, that didn't work.

MR. AFFELDT: Sorry?

MS. ALI: Right, when we -- and we should move on, but when we had conditions on Title I dollars and incentives on Title I dollars, over time, to try and get at that, where California, as John Mockler shared, got enormously short changed, because it wasn't doing that, that didn't incent states to move
in the right direction. It penalized those states that didn't.

MR. AFFELDT: Yes, well, I think that was as different question about, will you spend more, and the state said, "You know, I'm not going to spend billions more for your few cents there."

But if you're saying, you don't get this 10 percent, unless you do a better job of figuring out how you're going to even things out, I think it's more leverage, to even -- to do that, than it is to get a state to increase substantially.

MS. ALI: Okay.

MR. RETANA: We'll take one more question.

MR. SCIARRA: I have a question for Jason. Jason, Martha described the serious deficits in her school, which probably is relatively common across a lot of the high poverty schools in her district.

So, my question to you is, how do
we make sure that as we work on trying to make sure that resources within districts are better distributed and more transparent and all of that, that we don't lose sight of the bigger -- we don't allow that to be an excuse or to lose sight of the bigger, much, much bigger problem, which is the deep inadequacies in resources, state and local, provided through state finance system to districts?

MR. WILLIS: That's a really big question. But I appreciate that, and I -- we realize, here in California, and I've been going through this as a budget officer and now, a CFO in Stockton, that these are extraordinarily painful times in California.

I think it would be a joke, if anybody said to me that we have an adequate level of funding here, in California. That's just completely unreasonable.

Having said that, and while we do need to fight for getting those additional amounts of resources, I think it's also our

65
obligation and our duty, to be able to prove
to the public, to parents, to other community
members, that -- to dig into their pockets and
commit dollars to K-12, as well as other
public agencies, to be able to show that we're
using our dollars as effectively as possible.

I think, you know, just from the
basis of thinking about the way that we budget
the idea of staffing, is a very archaic
method.

We've been using it for decades,
50, 60, 70 years. I would surmise that this
country and the work that we're doing and the
direction we're going in, adapting to issues
like globalization is very -- we're a very
different place than we were 50 or 60 or 70
years ago.

And so, David, to your question,
yes, we do need to be fighting for those
appropriate, adequate resources, but I think
in the same conversation, in some -- and it's
something we haven't been able to figure out,
what that conversation looks like, myself. We need to be able to talk about how do you more effectively use resources that are out there, to be able to drive student achievement?

I think Martha talked about this earlier, that, you know, we talk about data and sometimes, it's not always the sexiest thing to talk about, but it is extraordinarily useful, and we need to be doing more of it.

We need to be looking at it, just as much on the resource side, in terms of how we allocate time of adults, which is the majority of our system, on how we allocate resources, as we are looking at measures of student achievement, and improving on those measures.

CONGRESSMAN HONDA: I know that was the last question, but I want to ask a question about -- let me just make a couple of statements, here.

Observations, like Martha, who spent close to 30 years in education, so,
you've seen things happen. Being on the school board, you've seen certain things happening, like parents hiring lawyers to sue the district, to get the kind of special Ed that they need for their child, the district having attorneys to defend the decision of the school district, and the irony is that you have two groups of folks who are advocates for children, fighting with each other, right.

It's all about resources and funding. We find ourselves, sometimes, in a box that we have to work in, state kinds of mandates, separation of states from Feds, and Feds contributing maybe ten cents to the dollar, at best.

All of our ADA differs in different parts of the state, and between states.

So, the question I think we need to sort of step back and say, other paradigms that we should be stepping out of and looking at expanding the paradigms and asking
questions that we should be asking, that will create a larger pie, rather than fighting for a slice of the pie that we have, in front of us, and I remember in the 60's, you know, some of those activists in Oakland used to say, "We have to expand the pie, not fight over the same piece of pie."

I think we're faced with that, right now, and with allocations and resources that are dwindling, school people are forced to make due for that year, and most of the times, they do, and at the end of the year, everybody says, "Look, they made it. There must be more to cut."

That has happened year after year after year. So, we know it has to stop. I think that with the proposal, this action should just be stopped now. I think we'd get 100 percent, right?

And so, then, what -- where do we go? I mean, do we fight within the confines of the walls that we've been given, or should
we step back and ask the larger question, what else can we do, and I think that one of these ideas that I heard in the past year or year and a half, was -- and I'll paraphrase it for myself, why is it that Federal Government is so -- you know, is only at 10 percent of a child's education?

Why don't we just look at partnerships and not look at the separation between the states and the Feds that supposedly is based upon the Constitution, and I think that's debatable.

Yes, well, we can do that, too, but let's stick to the issue of what we can do, okay. We can look at ways that I think, the Federal Government has a larger role.

Someone said that if children are our national priorities, should not the Federal Government have a greater role in addressing that national priority?

And so, I think that through our discussion, we might want to step outside of
the box and ask ourselves questions, because we're from Silicon Valley, you know, we ask the question, why not, or what if?

So, let me just leave you with that idea and turn it over to Alberto, again. Thank you.

MR. RETANA: Thank you. So, there is a lot of texture here, and I'm going to throw this off a little, facilitators. So, pay attention, please.

What we're going to do is, we're all going to write a 500 page essay, each, and see where it goes. [laughter]

Certainly, the context that has been laid out is a challenging one, with the budget clearly being communicated.

I think that as the Commissioner said, it's something that all of us should be thinking about in our small break outs, is sort of this gap that we're in, of where we are and where we want to be, and how we make decisions in this space, of wanting more and
spending better.

So, what we'd like for you to do in your break outs, is think about the sort of the presentations of what is happening in the classroom, sort of unintended consequences, sort of the challenges and decisions. Actually the thing that really got me inspired is starting with what Jason said, is something that's working, so easy to get caught up in.

All of that is not working, and we forget about, where are those promising practices, like what's happening in Oakland and how can we replicate and make those stronger and have those stories to tell?

So, in your break outs, what I'd like for you to do is, we're going to spend 20 minutes in your break out, and you're going to ask yourselves, what is it that we could do different to address this issue of equity, both in terms of what's real and in terms of longer term vision?

What we were going to do was spend
15 minutes on what is not working and 15 minutes on what is working, but I think we all know what isn't working.

So, I want to push you to think about what needs to happen different. With that said, if you feel the urge to talk about what is not working, that's important, because we've got to capture that sometimes.

But I really want to push this conversation to think about what we could be doing different, both in terms of what could really happen in the short term, what's possible, and then, what can happen in the long term?

Let me ask, how many of you are parents? Raise your hands. I feel like this is a critical conversation now.

We've certainly heard about the teacher and our researchers and our experts and our elected officials, but this is in your hands. It's your babies. It's your education, your children's education, and so,
let's really take this time to make that happen.

Those of you in the back, who are not at a table, we'd like for you to leave. No, I'm just kidding. We'd like for you to join a table. There are some tables over here, on the far right, that could take some more folks. If you can squeeze in, and be -- there are some seats right there, that are available, ask you to be patient, and then in about 15 minutes, I am going to give you a five minute warning.

So, please, you've got 20 minutes.

Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter recessed for break out sessions.)

MR. RETANA: Okay, get your final words out, your final 30 seconds.

Maybe we can end with a unity clap. First and foremost, I wanted to talk about Martha Infante, again. Where is Martha at? There she is.
The reason I wanted to point to Martha Infante is because I failed to mention in the introduction of her bio, it wasn't in her bio, but that -- and this is absolutely the best part of tonight, I think, she is a graduate of Roosevelt High School. So, she did say she's from East LA.

But she is a graduate from Roosevelt High School, and the reason I bring that up, because not only is she a teacher, and that she is committed to this issue, but she is from the community. She is from the neighborhood and she is still involved, and that's the kind of model that we need across this country.

So, if we can give her another round of applause for that.

The other thing I wanted was -- pardon me?

(Off microphone comment)

MR. RETANA: She does a blog, that's right. So, we can start following her,
and I'm sure she's on Twitter.

The other thing I wanted to do, before we start the report backs, and we'll do this again a little later, but I just want to, once again, thank Congressman Honda and his staff, for putting all the energy, doing the outreach, getting you all here. Give him a round of applause.

I also want to take the moment to thank all the facilitators from the Bay area, that chose to come here tonight, to help with this conversation.

There is no need to have a bunch of Feds at your table. I think sometimes, it's more empowering when you have your own community there with you.

Last, but not least, I also want to just take a moment to thank the Federal staff of the Department of Education staff, Office for Civil Rights staff that really helped pull this together, Ida and Steve and the rest of you. So, give them a round of
applause.

    Now, let's get to the nitty-gritty, right? Let's get to the ideas, what you all have to share.

    This can be a tough part, because we have about 15 tables, and if we all do our part, and are focused and focus on our themes, we can really do this smoothly.

    I have faith that that's going to happen and we have -- we're going to start with the back table, and the way this is going to work is, we have a microphone, and we're going to go from table to table, and then in 2014, when we get over here, just playing. Go table to table.

    If an idea has already been mentioned, I would like for you to just give love and say, "You know what? We agree with that table, thank you very much for saying, what we were going to say."

    There is no need to repeat what has already been said, if it's already been
said.

So, let me repeat that. Just kidding. All right, so, with that, we'll start with the back table. Thank you.

MS. MARTINEZ: Hello, my name is Marissa Martinez and I'm a counselor and San Jose City College, and what we came up with at our table is, building on the best practices.

There are many, many school districts that really have good practices, and we don't duplicate and we don't honor that.

So, in always keeping the -- what's the best interest of the student at heart, and that's what we -- we have a lot of people in education that really care, and we've got to duplicate that.

So, that's what we came up with, building on best practices, okay.

MR. RETANA: Excellent, thank you.

MR. SORICH: Hi, my name is Jason Sorich, Principal in Alumrock School District some of the things that our group came up with
was, incentivizing progress that can be made at each site, rather than punishing and incentivizing, based on the unique needs of each school, so schools can come up with different ideas, districts can come up with different ideas that can earn incentives, and of course, establishing a minimum threshold based on equities that the money goes to the students and the children that need it the most, with incentives attached on top of that.

MR. RETANA: Thank you.

MR. BENEVINTO: My name is Bob Benevinto. I'm from the Morgan Hill Unified School District. I'm on the Board of Trustees.

The topic that we focused on mostly here was that of collaboration. We felt as though it was important to have the collaborative effort at the site, amongst the teachers who plan their weekly sessions in some type of collaborative fashion, not to be redundant.
For the principals and the site supervisors, to be involved with those collaborations, and for the district offices and the curriculum coordinators to be involved with those programs, such that we're building a progressive program, keeping all of the sites involved.

MR. RETANA: Thank you.

MS. GALLO: I'm Melissa Gallo. I'm a parent and teacher in San Jose Unified School District, and what our group came up with is pushing real funding decisions to the school site level, so that a body like the school site council can decide how best to use the money to meet the needs of their students.

The Federal Government can help by creating an incentive structure that does not create a larger bureaucracy, but encourages participation in this model.

MR. RETANA: Thank you.

MR. Mvirhead: My name is Ben Mvirhead. I'm a student at Santa Clare High
Our group came up with -- we highlighted two things.

The first was SCA-5, a Bill proposed by Sumitian, that would lower the requirement for it to pass a parcel tax to 55 percent, and the second was eliminating unfunded Federal mandates, where the example we came up was with was special Ed requirements, which are put on by the Federal Government, and then turns out, we have no money to pay for them. So, they take away from the school district money.

MR. BOLCE: Hi, I'm Don Bolce with the Santa Clara County Office of Education.

We talked about the inequities of funding between districts, among districts here in Santa Clara County, and the great range of funding that they receive, and we thought about using the leverage of the Federal money to sort of stimulate, making that more equitable.
You know, having the same sort of impact, that little bit of Federal money did on -- with accountability, you know, use it to do good.

MR. RETANA: Thank you.

MS. IRVING: Good evening. My name is Yvette Irving. I'm director of secondary curriculum and instruction unified and also a parent of two students in San Jose Unified.

Our group also echoes the idea of providing incentive funding to sites, districts and schools, based on a growth model, where each school is held accountable to each individual child's growth versus to an arbitrary target, as which exists currently.

MR. RETANA: Thank you.

MS. DIETZGEN: Hello, I'm Jan Dietzgen, a retired teacher, and we had a fabulous discussion over the Oakland situation, because we had Vincent Matthews here, who had worked as -- in the district,
but now is superintendent of San Jose Unified
and had Benito, who is also doing his PhD on
the very subject.

   So, we discussed a lot about it,
and we came up with the idea that we have to
be able to have the ability to take what's
good from what's working, and be able to use
that, and we discussed that.

   MR. RETANA: Thank you.

   MS. YICK: Hello, my name is
Eleanor Yick. I'm a retired educator and
after much discussion, I think our table came
closest to consensus on agreeing on the need
for -- or the desire to have a weighted
student formula with school based budgeting.

   MS. BENNETT: Hello my name is
Tameeka Bennett. I am community organizer
with Peco, California, who is also onboard
with public advocates in ensuing California
for equitable funding and education, and my
group came up with withholding Federal dollars
in California, if they do not do what needs to
be done, in terms of funding schools equitably.

MR. SAMET: Hi, my name is Mark Samet. I'm an activist with Lynden LaRoche.

We agreed that the main thing -- well, one thing that we agreed on was that we need to bring back autonomy to the principals and actually, giving the principals the ability to decide where funds go, like the charter schools.

But the big thing that people agreed to was, we need to create more pie, and we're in a collapsing economy. The best way to do that right now is, I think, with the glass legislation of Franklin Roosevelt, which is now in the Congress and I'd like to say that the Congressman should actually get behind this Bill.

It's an absolute imperative, because if we don't deal with the national crisis, we're kidding ourselves with these budget issues, and we're dealing with less and
less.

So, a lot of people are concerned about this, how do we create more taxes or how do we raise the taxes, so that we can give more to the schools? Everyone wants more education for the young people, but really, this has to be dealt with on a national level, and people have to understand what the national solution is.

Stop with bail outs and go with the people.

MS. PILLSBURY: Hi, my name is Diana Pillsbury. I'm a student at Santa Clara University.

So, we didn't come up with any definitive solution, but we did talk about collective responsibility, which is that in public education, we all have a responsibility that every child in the United States should and really will, receive a quality education one day.

So, what that means is that we
can't be so focused on our own personal needs, on our own local needs. We need to think nationally. We need to think about that individual communities have responsibilities, not just to their communities, but to their state and to their country, and that means that we are going to have some difficult conversations in the future, about wealthier neighborhoods needing to help some of the lower income neighborhoods.

We have to talk about it. It's unpleasant, but we have a public education system not a private one, and we have that for a reason, because we think everyone in this country has potential. So, thank you.

MR. COX: Hi, I'm Chris Cox. I teach in the Department of Sociology here at San Jose State University, and our group came up with a couple of things.

The basic thing is, we need more money. That's the simple part. The more complicated part is, with a larger pie, we
need to have more funding getting actually into the classroom and we need more teacher input on where funding should go, so, that we can have you know, manageable class sizes, appropriate resources within the classroom, to actually do the job of educating students, and part of that involves coming from an ethic where we realize that, you know, right now, the debate is framed, in terms of us being in a tug-of-war, but we need to realize that we're actually all on the same side, and that is that we want the outcome to be quality education for the students of California and for the United States.

MS. SERRANO: Hi, my name is Abigail Serrano, a teacher at East Side Union High School District here in San Jose.

Something that our table came up with is that a country as resourced as ours, there is no reason for such poor schools, and so, we were talking about looking at what is working in other countries, and really,
thinking about what's working well, and
looking at sound educational research, and not
just bowing down to political whim.

Also, investing in teachers,
looking at partnerships with the community and
making sure that those partnerships with the
community has sustainability, and really
professionalizing the teaching profession,
again. Thank you.

MS. KITCHENER: Hello, my name is
Monica Kitchener and I'm representing a group
of parents in East San Jose.

Our group had great ideas, but we
focused on the money allocation being --
allocated, being done early on and that's with
replicating the model, the Harlem Children's
Zone, with the baby college, educating the
babies, but also, educating the parents, so
that when that child walks into kindergarten,
they're already -- they're ready for school,
if not ahead of the game. Thank you.

MR. RETANA: All right, that's
everyone. Round of applause.

Okay, so, a couple of things.

One, be sure to submit all of the papers and the comment cards in to your facilitator. We're going to record all of that and we're going to take it.

Before I turn this over to our Assistant Secretary, I just have to make one comment. It's hard, not to, and that is this.

Maybe it's to the point that you raised, about withholding dollars, or professionalizing the profession, even on this notion of withholding dollars.

What is it going to take, to get there? If you think about historically, what it's taking, it's taking people, not just coming together in meetings like these, but willing to take it to the next level and build a movement.

I'm not talking about replicating the same kind of movement as 50 years ago or 100 years ago. But if we're ever really going
to get there, if we ever really want our Commission to move and our country to move and all of that, we have to do that movement work.

And so, hopefully, we can continue to do that, and so, with that, I'm going to turn it back over to our Assistant Secretary, and then over to our Commissioner, to close out. Thank you all, so much for your ideas.

MS. ALI: I just want to echo Alberto's thanks. We know how very busy you are, and that you took the time to spend so much of your time with us this evening, it's hugely important, not just to me and the Commissioners, but to the Secretary, to the President and our Administration.

We are deeply committed to using all of the tools within our disposal, to impact this issue of fiscal equity, in particular, but equity across the board, as we talked a little bit about, this evening, on things like our reauthorization proposal, on things like data collection, where we have the
leverage now, we are using it.

But the purpose of this Commission is in part, to get us smarter, because there is so much we don't know about both, the appropriate role of the Federal Government and what can be done that has never been tried before.

I, for one, and I'm sure I can speak on behalf of everyone on this panel, learned so much from you tonight. I hope this is not the end of a conversation, but the beginning of one, and that you will continue to provide feedback to myself, to the Commissioners and the Commission at large.

This Commission's report is due in December, and we need it to be hard hitting and based on the truth about what is happening in America's schools. Without a forum like this, we can't get there.

So, thank you, keep it up, as Alberto said, this is a movement. We also have colleagues locally. The Office for Civil
Rights, as the Congressman mentioned, we have pulled some folks together, to ensure that this Commission is staffed properly and appropriately.

But the Office for Civil Rights has nearly 700 people around the country. They're working to ensure our students are free from discrimination in our nation's schools.

Gayle, right there in the back, is one of our lead attorneys in the Chicago office -- in the San Francisco office, and so, this tells you what kind of planes I've been on lately.

But I hope that you will also go to Gayle and her team, because rigorously enforcing our nation's civil rights laws, as the Secretary and President have said, is hugely important, if we are to really move the dial on equity, and that's now and today, and we're here for you, to do just that.

This man needs no introduction.

NEAL R. GROSS
COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
(202) 234-4433
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701
www.nealrgross.com
You all know Tino Cuéllar. He is a phenomenal professor at Stanford Law School. Recently, Stanford's regain was our Administration's loss, because he held a very senior position in the Domestic Policy Council, that is also represented on this Commission as an Ex-Officio member, and I turn it to you Tino, to close us out. Thank you.

MR. CUÉLLAR: Fellow Californian's, thank you for sitting through all of this. I've been told that I have about an hour to talk, but I know we have a lot of teachers in the audience, and I'm a good student, and I just have to tell you, I was so impressed, not only that you had incredible ideas, but all of you got it down to one sentence, and that's a lesson.

I want to acknowledge my fellow Commissioners, but especially say a thank you to Congressman Mike Honda, who was instrumental in getting this Commission off the ground, and I think we all need to give
him a round of applause.

He is a former teacher and he still has a lot to teach us.

I want to just tell you an image that I have in my mind, that sums up why I think what we're doing here is so important, and why I'm so grateful that you were willing to devote your time to this.

Almost a year ago exactly, I'd had a very tough week, working in the Administration. It was one of those days where I didn't feel like everything was going our way. You know, we had tried very hard on a bunch of issues that I cared about, some of them were coming out okay, and others, clearly were getting caught up in the complexity of what is our American democracy.

So, I got on a plane and flew across the country to give a commencement address, at Rio Hondo Community College, near Los Angeles, and Rio Hondo, in Spanish, as you know, means deep river, and I got to tell you,
when I got out there and I saw 5,000 people standing next to each other, not just the students who were graduating, but the parents and the grandparents and the teachers and the professors, it absolutely stirred my heart.

But the thing that touched my heart the most was something that happened, just a few minutes before I went out to the field to give the speech.

The Community College Chancellor was full of pride, showing me what he built on the campus, what he had helped build together with students and a lot of other people, how the campus was changing, all of the people that were being served by the community college.

And he took me to an area that was right outside the textbook bookstore, and there was woman there, she couldn't have been more than about 24 years old, and she was balancing a textbook, with one hand, with her left hand, reading the textbook and she had a
baby in the other hand, and I got to tell you, even though it was California, it was pouring rain, and she was there, doing her reading and she was there, working so hard, to make the future work for her and for her kid.

And I just thought to myself, whatever else we do, let us never forget what that woman is doing, because every student deserves to be met with that same amount of energy and determination that they're willing to put in, and I fear that we're failing her.

We're failing millions and millions of people like her, and the reason we're here is because you're not going to let that happen. You're not going to let that happen, and we are not going to let that happen.

That is why we need your ideas. That is why we need to think about how to incentivize progress, that's how we need to think about what works at the Harlem Children's Zone and how we can bring that to
places across the country. That's how we have
to think about how to get the strong teachers
we need in the classrooms.

But I also have to tell you that
we need your help in another way, and that's
to make sure that nobody is mistaken in
ignoring what the risks are if we just let
this slide.

I'll just mention to you, what I
think the three risks are, and why you need to
share this with everybody you know.

America is a special place and
people around the world look to us. They know
that we're not a perfect country. No country
is perfect. No person is perfect. But we're
a special place. They look to us as an
example.

We are going to lose that place,
very soon, if we don't solve this problem.

Second, some people would say this
is the most important point. If we don't
solve this problem, if we ignore equity in
education, our economy will get smaller, our incomes will get smaller. We will be less well off, and that's going to hurt, and let's never forget that.

But this is what I care about the most, and that's the third point. America stands for something. We're a country that delivers a promise to people, and the promise is very simple, and it's the promise that I think immigrants are thinking about, when they take their naturalization oath and they become citizens, and the promise is, we don't guarantee you success, but we guarantee you a fair chance to succeed, and we're in danger of losing that, and once we lose that, it's very hard to see how we can ever get it back.

So, the time has come for us to write the next chapter in the story, and the chapter depends on solving this problem and it depends on you, it depends on remembering the great and extraordinary things this country has done. It depends on remembering how we
rebuilt Europe with the Marshall plan, how we
de-segregated the Armed Forces, when people
thought that that couldn't be done.

But it depends on you remembering
every single day that this is not a problem
that we can let slide and making sure that you
convince everybody around you, that if there
is some kid in the Valley who is not learning
how to read, that's not their problem, that's
our problem. Thank you very much, for being
here tonight.

CONGRESSMAN HONDA: Okay, you
heard it, you heard it, and I couldn't add
anything to that, except it's us, and remember
that movie "Waiting for Superman"? We don't
have to wait for Superman. We're going to do
it and we're going to make it happen, and it's
starting here tonight. So, thank you very
much, and have a good evening.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled
matter concluded at approximate3ly 8:15 p.m.)