

2016

The Influence of Economic Ideologies on U.S. K-12 Education Policy: Testing, Markets, and Competition

Corinna M. Svarlien
Scripps College

Recommended Citation

Svarlien, Corinna M., "The Influence of Economic Ideologies on U.S. K-12 Education Policy: Testing, Markets, and Competition" (2016). *Scripps Senior Theses*. Paper 853.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/853

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Scripps Student Scholarship at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scripps Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

**The Influence of Economic Ideologies on U.S. K-12 Education Policy:
Testing, Markets, and Competition**

by

Corinna M. Svarlien

**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE
OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**Professor Golub
Professor Tyson**

April 22, 2016

The American public school has been characterized by inequality and segregation based on race and class since its inception. Disparities in funding, facilities, and qualified staff have been documented in countless government reports, books, and articles, yet little has changed in terms of racial segregation and socioeconomic class inequality in public schools.¹ It's clear that the mere injustice of inequality is not enough to mobilize Americans to pass serious education legislation; fears over racial unrest and economic decline are needed to create an atmosphere open to reform. Despite this historic trend, education policy continues to rely on accountability models in which data collection is used to hold students and teachers accountable to the state. These models rely on several flawed assumption, primarily that if inequality is well documented, policymakers will take steps to remedy the disparities in achievement and resources.

Education has long been valued for its economic function of preparing the professional and working classes for their future careers. However, economic structures and ideologies are increasingly viewed as tools to shape education policy in addition to being the end goal of elementary and secondary education. I identify three major economic principles that have influenced recent developments in the federal K-12 education policy, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): competition and scarcity, government responsibility to protect the economy, and the collection and distribution of data to inform rational market decisions.

Ideas of competition and scarcity serve as a barrier to equitable reform as privileged parents recognize their interest in securing as much of the scarce funding available for public education as possible for their own children.² Neoliberal views of competition have also led to conservative lawmakers to advocate for introducing market competition into the public school system, through policies such as expanding charter schools, education vouchers, and Title I

portability. Proponents argue that these reforms will increase the quality of education for all as schools compete against each other, but detractors see these policies as diverting resources away from high-poverty schools currently receiving federal support and threatening failing schools with closure instead of improvement. Moving away from neoliberal conceptions of the economy, policymakers and advocates on the Left and Right point to the government's responsibility to protect the national economy through education reform. The policies created by these demands include accountability systems that measure for career and college readiness and an increased focus on curricula that looks more like worker training. Advocates on the left have also used this economic model to push for greater education equity, pointing to the economic benefits of investing in marginalized communities.

The third principle, neutral data collection, is the most interesting and important. It is essential for the market competition model of education because it allows parents to make rational decisions and it is the main standard of measurement for the government's economic success in education. It also has support from the Left because it is seen as the best way to demonstrate and remedy educational disparities among racial and socioeconomic groups.³ Researchers looking at No Child Left Behind have shown how liberal forces played a key role in creating accountability-based reform as a path towards civil rights in education.⁴

Should we then view testing and data based policy as a positive example of bipartisan reform with the potential to improve education for marginalized groups while also satisfying conservative demands for improving economic preparedness, holding schools accountable for the funds they spend, and maintaining a data based meritocracy? No. To believe this would require us to rely on several highly flawed assumptions. The first of these assumptions is that if we can prove that educational inequality exists, the United States government and people

will step up to fix the problem. In reality, disparities in educational achievement and resources are well documented and have been for decades. We have no reason to believe that simply providing more proof of these inequalities will be enough to motivate effective reform; in fact the historical evidence suggests that privileged parents are prepared to fight to protect the educational opportunities of their own children even in the face of devastating inequality. Secondly, we should not assume that the tests that create these data are as neutral as they claim to be. Biases in testing can create a misleading representation of the intelligence of students of color and low-income students, which can then be used to justify current economic inequalities as simply a reflection of a meritocracy. Thirdly, we should question the assumption that policymakers are being upfront about the interests at play in this debate. Educational entrepreneurs are aware of the profit making possibilities of testing, testing preparation, and the political pushes to privatize education, using data from failing schools as justification. We should not ignore these forces when evaluating the possibilities of reform based on testing and accountability. I will argue that although it is important to focus on the educational opportunities and achievement of marginalized students, testing is a misleading and potentially harmful way of measuring educational equity. Its exclusive focus on outputs ignores the current and historical inequities in funding, access, and support. Low test scores can then be used to justify economic inequality or be used to show the failings of the public school system in order to push for privatization.

The Development of the ESEA

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first passed in 1965 under Lyndon Johnson and provided federal funding to address, “the special educational needs of children of low-income families and the impact that concentrations of low-income families have on the

ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs.”⁵ The legislation expanded in 1968 to include migratory children, neglected and delinquent children, and new programs for students learning English as second language.⁶ It has since been reauthorized and revised several times, including the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001. NCLB was set to expire in 2007 and the Obama administration granted waivers to states unable to meet the law’s requirements as Congress struggled to create NCLB’s replacement. In December 2015, Congress passed the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which keeps NCLB’s focus on accountability, but shifts much of the power to create these systems to the states. The ESEA has maintained its commitment to low-income students through Title I funding, but other aspects of the law have fluctuated in importance since its original passage.

In the 1970s and 80s attention shifted from the needs of disadvantaged students to the problem of student achievement as a whole. This shift was solidified when the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* in 1983.⁷ The report warned of the economic and security risks that the United States makes itself vulnerable to when the education system fails, claiming that, “the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.”⁸ The fear of America losing its standing in the international community due to poor education has remained constant through reforms since *A Nation at Risk* was published, fueling the increased focus on holding states, schools, teachers, and students accountable to the educational goals of the nation.

As understandings of the purpose of education and the problems facing America change, the parameters of the debate around education policy change with them. Currently, economic concerns dominate the ways policymakers diagnose problems and imagine solutions in education

policy, and these problems and solutions are shaped by different ideological understandings of the economy and its relationship to education. Due to the dominance of neoliberal outlooks, this largely takes the form of concerns that American workers do not have the skills to compete in the competitive global economy, and that K-12 public education is the best way to impart those skills. There is also often concern that public education is costing the country too much money without returning acceptable, measurable results and a belief that the private sector and market models can make education more efficient.

Scholarship and political debate around education policy in the United States generally identifies three key historical moments: the 1965 passage of the ESEA as part of the “War on Poverty”, the rise of neoliberal reforms in the 1980s, and the emergence of high-stakes standardized testing found in NCLB. The original passage of the ESEA is usually evoked by the Left in calls to return to education policy that explicitly focuses on low-income students and students of color.⁹ Scholarship also places the different versions of the ESEA in the context of the civil rights movement in order to depict the policy as part of the advances made by *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹⁰ Other authors have diverged from the narrative of linear progress toward achieving the promise of the ESEA and have instead used a Critical Race Theory framework in their analyses.¹¹

Much has been written on the privatization of education through neoliberal reforms in the United States. Economist Milton Friedman is most associated with this ideological movement as he was the first to propose replacing the public school system with government vouchers in 1955.¹² Proponents of privatization argue that introducing market competition into the public school system will increase school quality and provide more choice in the kinds of education available for parents to choose.¹³ Many scholars have explored the ideological underpinnings of

calls for privatization¹⁴ while others have examined whether market reforms can deliver their promises of increasing efficiency, freedom, quality, and equity in education.¹⁵

Although government mandated standardized testing seems antithetical to the freedom of neoliberalism and privatization, education theorist Michael Apple argues that the kind of information gathering and publishing found in testing is essential for eventual implementation of market reforms.¹⁶ This is because consumers (parents) need access accurate and objective information on school performance to make rational choices in order for the education market to function properly. This model, of course, assumes the neutrality/objectivity of standardized testing, which allows test scores to be used to compare individual students, racial and class groups, and states. Other arguments for testing come from a neoconservative tradition, either focusing on fiscal responsibility or conservative morality. A corporate managerial model of education requires standardized testing in order for the government to appropriately assess schools to make sure that money is being efficiently spent and measurable results are being achieved.¹⁷ Neocon arguments that focus on traditional values tend to depict the country as being in a state of moral decay that must be remedied through a return to high standards and a national, conservative curriculum.¹⁸ This argument has been less present in the current ESEA debate, which has been dominated by economic concerns and the need for local control.

However arguments for standardized testing do not only come from the Right. In the current ESEA debate one of the strongest advocates for continuing testing has been a coalition of civil rights organizations that argues that testing is a necessary tool for holding the state accountable to educating all students equitably.¹⁹ Organizations such as The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and The National Council of La Raza have called for Congress to maintain standardized testing and other

accountability measures in order to ensure educational equity. These groups point to achievement gaps in testing scores and graduation rates to show the importance of collecting and publishing this information; however, we should remain skeptical that testing is the best way to remedy these injustices.

Conditions for Reform

This paper does not attempt a thorough study of the conditions necessary to push through education reform in the United States. However, the principle of interest convergence, coming out of Critical Race Theory, is a useful tool for examining the political motivations of reform and the impact those interests have on policy. Derrick Bell's conception of interest convergence argues that major civil rights advances are not made through moral persuasion, but rather occur when the demands of activists align with the real or perceived interests of the white elite.²⁰ Similarly, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis argue that education reform has historically occurred during times of intense class conflict, which created conflict and accommodation among the capitalist and working classes.²¹

Government reports from the 1960s, published around the time of the 1968 expansion of the ESEA, document fears that, "Many of those whose recent acts threaten the domestic safety and tear at the roots of the American democracy are the products of yesterday's inadequate and neglected inner-city schools."²² The reports, which examine the relationship between violence, crime, and education identify many of the same problems that reformers point to today, and identify the school as one of the government's last chances to instill a respect for authority and strong work ethic in "slum children" and "delinquents." Although the reports contain some progressive policy suggestions, such as abolishing biased tracking and testing systems,²³ they do so by mobilizing white fears of angry, uneducated, and unemployed young black men.

Following in the tradition of five decades of government reports of educational inequality, the Equity and Excellence Commission released a report on educational disparities in 2013. The report also advises a variety of progressive policies, but instead of focusing on fears of black youth, the Commission uses American anxieties over its declining economic standing. Pennsylvanian Congressman, Chaka Fattah, writes in his forward of the report, “We can no longer afford to deny any child, let alone entire communities, the opportunity to learn, achieve and compete. What was once a question of justice and fairness is becoming a question of economic survival and success.”²⁴ Statements like this are found throughout the report, echoing the economic fears of *A Nation at Risk*. Although this rhetoric likely more tactical than ideological, the intense focus on education’s economic utility helps shape the direction of education policy.

The Purpose of Education

Debates over education policy are usually framed as being disagreements over the best methods to achieve a shared goal of improving education. Policymakers rarely explicitly debate what the purpose of education is, even though the methods and goals of education vary radically across different theories. A debate over the purpose of education needs to happen openly. Theories of education and its role in society have been explored and debated in academia for many decades, creating a rich library of competing ideas. These theories give us tools to critically examine current education policy and to imagine a more hopeful future for education. This section offers a brief summary of a few key theories used directly and indirectly by this paper to evaluate the ideological forces behind educational reform.

One model, Functionalism, argues that the purpose of education is to create social cohesion. It does this by socializing students into society, passing on cultural traditions and

history, teaching shared values, training the future workforce, and sorting students by merit.²⁵ Sharing some of these ideas is the Social Reproduction model,²⁶ which claims that education exists to reproduce the current economic structure by training students to either be good workers or good capitalists according to their socioeconomic class. Instead of providing a path to class mobility, public education entrenches inequality. Other economic purposes of education include improving the economic wellbeing of the country. Building off of human capital theory, this model aims to prepare students to be productive in the competitive global economy by teaching whatever skills are deemed essential to the national economy. This is closely tied to the neoconservative managerial style of education, which demands efficient use of funds in order to maximize its investment in students.

Neoliberal models also center economic goals but use the individual as the unit of analysis. School choice becomes an essential tool for maximizing individual market success, as parents are able to place their children in schools that cater to their needs and interests. Although the focus is on the individual, there are presumably also communal benefits as free market competition forces schools to respond to consumer needs and improve their quality. Another argument for privatization can be found in Milton Friedman's theory of neighborhood effects.²⁷ According to the theory, universal education has an effect on everyone in the community regardless of their participation in the education system, including the cost of contributing to the financing of education through taxes and the myriad benefits of living in a well-educated society. Because Friedman argues for minimal government control but recognizes the benefits of universal education, he proposes a school voucher system that would allow for more school freedom and diversity through privatization.

Other models of education prioritize social justice over economic goals. The field of critical pedagogy views the goal of education to be the formation of critical citizens. Henry A. Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux write that critical pedagogy, “reflect[s] both a shared belief in education as a moral and political practice and a recognition that its value should be judged in terms of how it prepares students to engage in a common struggle for deepening the possibilities of autonomy, critical thought and a substantive democracy.”²⁸ Instead of preparing students for the workplace, critical pedagogy aims to prepare them for active citizenship. None of these theories of education controls the U.S. public education policy, which is formed through conflict and compromise between groups advocating for different educational goals and practices.

The ESEA in 2015

In the summer of 2015 the 114th Congress passed versions of a reauthorized ESEA in the House and Senate. The House bill, The Student Success Act (H.R. 5), passed under the leadership of John Kline (R-MN) with no Democratic Support. The Senate version, Every Child Achieves Act (S. 1177), passed with bipartisan support led by Alexander Lamar (R-TN) and Patty Murray (D-WA). In November of 2015 members from both chambers and parties created a conference committee to reconcile the House and Senate bills, which was passed by the committee with Rand Paul (R-KY) as the only dissenting vote. The agreed upon compromise, The Every Student Succeeds Act, was signed into law on December 10th and maintains the current testing schedule (testing in grades 3-8 and once in high school in reading and math) but allows states to determine the weight of test results in their school accountability systems. States would also be able to create laws addressing the ability for students to opt-out of testing, although 95% of students would have to participate and only 1% of students would be allowed to take alternate tests for severe cognitive disabilities (with necessary accommodations available for

non-severely disabled students taking the standard test).²⁹ These restrictions on alternate tests and opt-outs are to prevent schools from inflating their test scores by mislabeling low-performing students as severely disabled or otherwise discouraging them from participating in testing, which is believed to have happened across the country under NCLB accountability systems.³⁰

Accountability measures would take place for the bottom performing 5% of schools in each state and any school that has graduation rates below 67%. States would also have to intervene when schools fail to close achievement gaps among racial and class groups; however, the process of identification and intervention is left for the states to determine.³¹ The agreement also leaves out the controversial Title I Portability, which was present in the House bill. Title I Portability would alter Title I funding to be tied to individual low-income students instead of schools with high proportions of low-income students. This would allow schools that do not currently receive Title I funding to get federal money for every low-income student enrolled, while current Title I schools would likely lose funding. Proponents see this as a crucial tool for increasing school choice while opponents view it as a redistribution of wealth from poor to wealthy schools.³² The bill also includes support for charter schools and various other programs, including family engagement and civic education.

Education and the Economy

Almost all national debate around education reform in the U.S. today addresses the connection between education and the economic prosperity of the nation and of individuals. These intersections include the effects of socioeconomic status on educational achievement, the tailoring of curriculum to economic needs, and the need to improve education in order to

strengthen the economic success of individuals and the nation, and the use of market models and/or the private sector to reform education.

Low-Income Students

The ESEA was originally passed to address the needs of low-income students through the creation of Title I funding, and even as it's grown and added more programs it has maintained its focus on disadvantaged students. Throughout this section I often discuss class and race together; this is because although the ESEA does not mention race (except to require compliance with civil rights laws), many legislators use the law's focus on low-income students to also discuss how race impacts education. The relationship between socioeconomic class and academic achievement has been thoroughly studied for several decades.³³ However, the response to this relationship has varied through time and along ideological lines. The most influential document on the topic is the 1966 report *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, more commonly known as the Coleman Report.³⁴ The report was commissioned in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and described widespread segregation and inequality in America's public schools and revealed gaps in average academic achievement and school resources between white and non-white students (with a focus on black students). Although it does not make policy recommendations, its connection to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 implies an obligation to act on these disparities.

Twenty years later, the authors of *A Nation at Risk* rejected responsibility for remedying social and economic inequality by bemoaning the, "educational cost as well as financial" cost of calling on schools, "to provide solutions to personal, social, and political problems that the home and other institutions either will not or cannot resolve."³⁵ This complaint may have been most pointedly directed at busing initiatives addressing de facto racial segregation; however it

represents a larger trend toward ideals of neoliberal individual responsibility. Although these reports are no longer household names, their findings have become embedded in America's understandings of the public school system.

Although Republicans in the 2015 ESEA debate did not deride the social and political power of education, they also rarely talked about education as a tool for equality. This fact is made especially conspicuous by the Democratic Party's intense focus on the problems and possibilities of educational equality. Nearly every Democrat who spoke during floor debate over ESEA reauthorization stated something along the lines of Senator Chris Coons' (D-DE) comment, "Our Nation has long struggled to fulfill our fundamental promise of equal opportunity since our Nation's founding. It is a struggle that, despite many efforts, continues today."³⁶ Many Democrats spent the majority of their remarks addressing the moral imperative of providing equitable education to all children regardless of their identity or where they live. However, these sentiments were often expressed as part of a narrative of American progress in which the country was founded on great ideals, which it hasn't achieved but is always striving towards. This is most evident in Senator Murray's comment, "since our Nation's founding, the idea of a strong public education for every child has been a part of the fabric of America."³⁷ Although universal access to quality public education can be extrapolated from America's founding values, it was certainly not part of its early history. Laws against educating slaves and a lack of free education barred many children from learning and many argue that early public education was largely focused on assimilating immigrants and training workers.³⁸ Although America's unfulfilled promise of equality makes a compelling argument for expanding educational opportunities, it risks ignoring the historical realities that created many of the

achievement gaps policymakers seek to address today. This is not only dishonest, but also impedes the creation of meaningful responses to an unjust history and present.

Democratic Senators proposed several amendments meant to address some of the non-academic barriers to success faced by low-income and otherwise marginalized students. This includes an amendment proposed by Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) to reinstate grants for improving mental health in schools, with a focus on combatting high suicide rates among Native American youth (this amendment did not pass).³⁹ In arguing for her amendment on the Senate Floor, Heitkamp underscored the important connection between mental health services and K-12 education, stating, “By helping schools coordinate with health professionals specializing in addressing the effects of traumatic events and mental stress, we will secure for our most disadvantaged the equal opportunity they deserve—that equal opportunity to learn and to achieve.”⁴⁰ Some may be wary of attempts to explain achievement gaps by pathologizing poor students and students of color or identifying a “culture of poverty.” However, the report that Heitkamp draws from⁴¹ clearly places the problem outside of the children in the violence that they witness or are victims of. Other Democrats also reject a deficit view of poverty in education, calling on schools to, “honor the children, their beauty, their potential” and to “serve the genius of our children.”⁴²

The Senate approved an amendment offered by Joe Manchin (D-WV) to require state accountability plans to include strategies for supporting students dealing with substance abuse at home. Notably, the drug problem faced by Senator Manchin’s West Virginia constituents is mostly prescription drug and opioid abuse by whites. Many have noticed the correlation between an increase in deadly drug abuse by white Americans and an increase in sympathy for addicts from policymakers and the public.⁴³ Although this amendment would presumably help

all children affected by drug abuse, it seems unlikely that it would have been proposed without the new visibility of white drug abuse and its costs.

This is not to say that policymakers and advocates have not attempted to address some of the racialized barriers that target students of color. In his testimony on Testing and Accountability to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee, Wade Henderson writes,

States and school districts must diagnose the causes of low achievement or graduation rates and identify barriers to improvement. They must then employ effective remedies to eliminate these causes and barriers and improve instruction, learning, and school climate (including, e.g., decreases in bullying and harassment, use of exclusionary discipline practices, use of police in schools, and student referrals to law enforcement)⁴⁴

This statement speaks honestly about the criminalization of students and the negative effects of learning in a hostile environment, placing the responsibility for achievement gaps largely on schools. Congress acknowledges this problem by including some references to the importance of school climate and disciplinary practices; however no significant time is given to discussing the problem. There are many stories of harsh school discipline policies that range from ridiculous to horrifying⁴⁵ and members of Congress often use heart-wrenching personal stories in their arguments, so the absence of these stories is significant. Perhaps Republicans and Democrats are hesitant to address the criminalization of black and brown students because they believe Senator Coons' statement that, "educational inequality is no longer a story of a deliberate, legalized racism in need of Federal intervention."⁴⁶ Recognizing the violent and discriminatory practices that can be found across the country would disturb this view of educational inequality.

Excessive discipline may be the result of a functionalist view of education that sees schools as a tool for either socializing children into middle class values or sorting them into the criminal justice system.

Although there is increasing discussion of the effects of poverty on education, some promising solutions to those problems are outside of the political possibilities of the ESEA. Arizona's Mexican American/Raza Studies program taught a critical and progressive curriculum that was relevant to many students' histories and sociopolitical realities. In the six years that the program existed, students that participated outperformed their peers in Arizona on standardized tests, graduation rates, and were much more likely to go to college than other Chicano/a students across the country.⁴⁷ Instead of using this curriculum as a model for national programs exploring race and class, the program was made illegal by a 2011 Arizona law that banned classes that are tailored for specific ethnic groups, promote the overthrow of the U.S. government or racial or class resentment, or, "advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals."⁴⁸ Because the Raza Studies program violates neoliberal understandings of individualism it is not seen as a possible solution for achievement gaps, despite its impressive results. Instead, the Every Student Succeeds Act creates grants to support the teaching of (undefined) "traditional American history."⁴⁹

Another serious issue facing low-income students is the fact that they often attend schools in poor neighborhoods that receive less funding than their more affluent counterparts due to the use of local property taxes to fund schools. This funding system is inherently inequitable as it directs more resources toward schools in wealthier neighborhoods where property values and taxes are higher. The Every Student Succeeds Act begins to address this injustice with the creation of a pilot program in which states can consolidate all of the local, state, and federal funding they receive for education and then distribute that funding to schools on a weighted per-pupil allocation system where more funds would go to schools with high populations of low-income students, English-learning students, and other groups deemed appropriate.⁵⁰

Participating states would have to ensure that schools currently receiving Title I funding would have the same or higher levels of funding in the first year of the program.

Some policymakers argue that you can't solve inequality by throwing money at the problem. For example, conference committee member Representative Todd Rokita (R-IL) addressed his colleagues' concerns over the diverting of Title I funds by saying, "this isn't about money. Federal Spending in education has gone up 300 percent since the Federal Government got involved in this business, and test results are flat."⁵¹ This is a common argument used by conservatives to avoid acknowledging resource disparities in schools and to argue for a reduced federal role in education. However, Democrats in the Senate and House identify funding disparities as one source of achievement gaps, stating that, "We must look to hold our educational system for both results and for resources."⁵² This wording is important because resource inequity is often presented as an unfortunate fact of life instead of the result of specific policies that reflect the priorities of lawmakers.

Given all of the challenges facing low-income students and the fact that the majority of children in American public schools qualify for free or reduced lunches,⁵³ it seems impossible to talk about fixing the education system without also tackling the larger problem of wealth inequality. Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) addresses this concern during floor debate, saying,

I run into people periodically who say to me that you can't fix [the education system] unless you fix poverty...Don't tell kids in my city who are living in poverty that that is true. Outside of every one of our schools it says "school." It doesn't say "orphanage." It says "school." We need to make sure every one of those schools is delivering for every kid in our community, no matter where they come from. Otherwise, what is left of us? What is left of this land of opportunity?⁵⁴

It's not exactly clear what Senator Bennet is trying to say here, but presumably he's suggesting that the purpose of an orphanage is to deal with the social problem of poverty while the purpose of a school is to educate and provide opportunities to children. He also seems to be rejecting the

idea that the existence of poverty is an insurmountable obstacle to improving education for low-income kids. Although it is overly pessimistic to not attempt education reform just because economic inequality will still negatively impact low-income students, it is also a mistake to try to completely separate the two issues. Senator's Bennet's rhetoric glosses over the fact that education does not protect people of color from discrimination⁵⁵ and underplays the roles schools can play in addressing social inequality in addition to providing education. Schools have the potential to serve as valuable community resources, but these possibilities are shut off when lawmakers embrace the kind of derision for these services expressed in *A Nation at Risk*.

Different policies attempt to address some of the causes of achievement gaps; however little thought is given to the historic and sociopolitical causes of these gaps. In order to address this problem Gloria Ladson-Billings offers an alternative framework for understanding disparities in achievement along racial and class lines: educational debt.⁵⁶ According to her model, the U.S. has a historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral debt to students of color and low-income students. Histories of exclusion and abuse, unequal economic resources, omission from the civic process and policymaking, and an inability/unwillingness to live by America's proclaimed values have created an enormous debt that the government owes to the students harmed by these injustices. By focusing exclusively on outputs, like test scores and graduation rates, policymakers allow themselves to ignore the government's role in creating the problems it seeks to remedy. Focusing on outputs also encourage comparing schools based solely on performance without critical analysis, which can exacerbate the idea that low-income students and students of color are simply less intelligent than their affluent and white peers.

The need to address "achievement gaps" has long been present in education policy. In order to address the problem policymakers must first identify the source of the disparities, which

has important implications for the policies created. *A Nation at Risk* identified the source of the “rising tide of mediocrity” of the 1980s in low standards and a lack of rigor in assignments and curriculum. Advocates for disadvantaged students today recognize that simply working harder and setting the bar higher cannot solve the problem of inequality; especially since NCLB set standards that the vast majority of schools were unable to meet. However, although policy makers are comfortable talking about the barriers to success, such as exposure to violence, trauma, substance abuse, excessive disciplinary policies, and a lack of resources, they rarely go into detail describing the injustices perpetuated by schools. Instead, their arguments rely on the rhetoric of the American Dream and the need to continue to strive toward that ideal. It should also be noted that while everyone is critical of using testing as the only measurement of achievement, there is little discussion of the potential class and cultural biases in standardized tests. Because test scores are one of the only tools the government uses to compare schools, the fact that it is a deeply flawed measurement has serious consequences. Republican members of Congress were rarely cited in this section, not intentionally but because Republican arguments had a near-exclusive focus on the importance of local control of education.

Education for Economic Success

Policy makers from both parties call for the investment in the human capital of children because it will pay out for the country and the fact that K-12 education should prepare students to be future workers has entered our commonsense and is emphasized by policy makers from the Left and Right. Education is widely seen as a tool for individual and national economic growth and it has become impossible to discuss education policy without examining its economic impact. This is unsurprising given the current state of the economy and the increasing importance of graduating from college in order to get a middle class job. Both Republicans and

Democrats echo Senator Murray’s argument that, “Providing a quality education isn’t just good for students today, it is an investment in our future workforce, it is an investment in our future economy, and it is an investment in a growing strong middle class that will help our country grow stronger.”⁵⁷ Economic concerns are at the forefront of American political debate, so the parameters of the ESEA debate include centering the economic goals of education.

The economic dangers of failing to fix the education system are often put in catastrophic terms. *A Nation at Risk* is saturated with militarized language, such as stating that the U.S. has, “been committing unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament” and that, “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.”⁵⁸ Cold War fears of military domination have transitioned to fears of America losing its standing in the “competitive global economy”. A 2013 report from the Southern Education Foundation warns that:

No longer can we consider the problems and needs of low-income students simply a matter of fairness ... Their success or failure in the public schools will determine the entire body of human capital and educational potential that the nation will possess in the future. Without improving the educational support that the nation provides its low-income students—students with the largest needs and usually with the least support—the trends of the last decade will be prologue for a nation not at risk, but a nation in decline⁵⁹

Although it is part of the SEF’s mission to, “advance equity and excellence in education for all students in the South, particularly low income students and students of color”⁶⁰ the language used in this report seems dismissive of a moral imperative for equitable education. Instead the focus is on the apocalyptic concern that the United States is headed toward ruin. Perhaps a group dedicated to improving educational opportunities for the marginalized has realized that the threat of national economic decline is the only way to gain support from policy makers and the public.

Market Innovation in Education

Data collection is also an important condition for the introduction of market models to education, which should alarm liberal reformers. Calls for privatization and a move toward a market model of education have been present since Milton Friedman first proposed the school voucher system in 1955. Sixty years later, Republicans are still calling for the introduction of market reforms into the ESEA, such as charter schools and Title I Portability. Proponents of Portability argue that the monetary incentive would make schools compete for low-income students, giving those students more freedom of choice and access to higher quality schools as well as increasing the quality of all schools through the introduction of market competition. House Republicans promote the program in their summary of *The Student Success Act*, writing, “Under current law, school districts choose which schools receive Title I funds within some parameters. This legislation, however, ensures all low-income students receive their fair share of federal dollars, rather than allowing the bureaucracy to choose winners and losers.”⁶¹ The language of “winners and losers” is often used by critics of government intervention in the economy and assumes that failing businesses/schools should be allowed to go out of business as the market dictates. Given the challenges facing low-income students it seems clear that communities should take steps to avoid the destabilizing effects of allowing neighborhood schools to close. However, this sort of intervention is unallowable in a free market model. Although Democrats have vocally opposed Portability, their critiques have not been that a market model is inappropriate for a school system. Instead they have made the valid, but more basic, argument that the program would divert funding away from the schools it was intended for.

Conservative advocates also claim that school choice will make families more engaged with their children's education. Representative Glenn Grothman (R-WI) criticizes the supposed deficit in parental involvement, saying, "we ought to focus on strengthening families instead" of expanding government early childhood programs.⁶² This focus on the need to encourage parental involvement might seem odd, given that Republicans usually praise how parents are the most natural and competent leaders of their child's education. However, these programs that aim to improve choice and involvement are discursively targeted at low-income families and people of color, who are seen as disengaged with their children's lives. Critical Race Theorists have also pointed out that programs of school choice put the responsibility for racial integration onto individual people of color choosing to send their children to majority-white schools.⁶³

In his article about poverty and education, P.L. Thomas writes how a popular framework for educating poor kids created by Ruby Payne teaches a simplistic understanding of class issues. This widespread training has encouraged educators and policymakers to view the academic problems of low-income students as stemming from cultural deficits, like not eating meals together.⁶⁴ These ideas inform the belief that achievement gaps are due to cultures of poverty and that the solution lies in poor families taking on more personal responsibility instead of increasing access to resources and community empowerment. Little thought is given to the economic policies that require low-income parents to work multiple jobs and the impact that has on the time they have with their children, let alone questioning the validity of cultural deficits. Instead, poverty is associated with poor work ethic or other moral failings that negatively affect children, causing them to fall behind.

Vouchers do not appear in either the House or Senate bills, and Senator Murray, the Democratic lead in the Senate, warned during floor debate that, "[vouchers] would undermine

the basic goals of public education by allowing funding designated for the most average students to flow out of the public school system into mostly unaccountable private schools. Vouchers are unacceptable.”⁶⁵ Murray does not elaborate on what the basic goals of public education are, but they could include socialization into shared values and ensuring equal opportunity, which could be undermined by encouraging the growth of unregulated private schools.

Charter schools are more popular than voucher systems, with support from both parties. Senator Lamar, the Republican lead in the Senate, argues passionately for charter schools, describing them as, “public schools in which teachers have the freedom to give children what those children need, and parents have the freedom to choose the school that their child attends. I think any teacher would prefer to have that sort of arrangement and that sort of freedom—freedom from State regulations, freedom from some of the union rules.”⁶⁶ Here Lamar describes a sort Libertarian utopia where teachers, students, and parents are freed from the chains of government regulation and organized labor. Charter schools still have some accountability to the government, so they could presumably still provide equity and unity. Rather than a different view of the purpose of education, support for charter schools may simply indicate a belief in the superiority of the market in reaching those outcomes.

However, the fact that many charter schools are for-profit has led many people to be wary of political pushes to expand the charter system. For example, after Hurricane Katrina, the state-run Louisiana Recovery School District took over most of the public schools in New Orleans and began transitioning the city into an all charter school district. Kristen L. Buras describes how the move to charter schools led to the mass firing of current teachers, who were mostly black women with extensive teaching experience, and replaced them with a largely non-black and inexperienced workforce.⁶⁷ The transition also removed local governance as schools were

managed independently instead of an elected school board. Although Republicans laud charter schools and other forms of school choice as promoting parental involvement, they really replace democratic participation with market participation; parents can express their concerns by no longer “purchasing” education at a certain school instead of voting for or becoming a school board member. Buras also shows how the test score required to be considered a “failing school” changed several times during the charter transition and review process, allowing charter schools to artificially inflate the number of schools turned around from failing.⁶⁸ Reporting levels of school performance is an important tool for showing the effects funding inequity; however, these reports can also be used to further the marketization of education when the tests are accepted as neutral indications of merit.

Although market models of education are generally associated with the Right, the Obama administration’s 2010 “Blueprint for Reform” prescribes market models as a solution for failing schools. Obama’s proposal includes a description of school turn-around grants to help improve schools that consistently fail to produce acceptable test scores. Schools eligible for the grants fall into one of four models: Transformation, Turnaround, Restart, and School Closure. The first two models call for changes in leadership and staff and new learning programs. The Restart model requires the state to, “Convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.”⁶⁹ Education management organizations can be for-profit or non-profit, but in both cases they function like a firm managing the schools they direct. The reforms most resembling market models, Title I Portability and vouchers, will not make it into the 2015 ESEA reauthorization. However, the market logic they represent is very present in the debate between policy makers and there is little ideological opposition from the Left.

The Economy in the Curriculum

Another way data is used is to measure schools' success in training future workers in the skills required by the national and international economy. This takes the form of several amendments that specifically support STEM education, which is currently seen as one of the most valuable market skills. It also manifests itself in more local forms, such as the program endorsed by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) during floor debate. The program, in Laredo, Texas, partnered local public high schools with the oil and gas industry to teach kids about petroleum engineering and give them a head start in their seemingly inevitable careers in oil and gas. The students participated in dual-credit courses at a community college as well as internships and training, presumably unpaid. Cornyn describes the program as, "a great example of how local communities and the economy can work to shape education and provide a win-win opportunity for students, local industries, and the greater community."⁷⁰ An amendment, proposed by a Democrat, was passed in the Senate to expand the possibility for these public-private partnerships in education.⁷¹ By critiquing these programs I do not mean to imply that no good can come of them; however, because businesses are always seeking profit, we should be sure that any private partnership prioritizes the needs of students, not private interests.

Most of the arguments for curriculum tailored to the economy are more generalized and focus on teaching core subjects, like math, science, and reading. This is one of the suggestions of *A Nation at Risk*, which urged the return to traditional and rigorous subjects in order to strengthen the nation. Some policy makers also argue that schools should provide arts education. However, this may have less to do with a desire for a liberal education and more to do with a concern that the competitive global economy needs creative thinkers. Another indication of education being molded around market needs is that both Democrats and Republicans list

business leaders as stakeholders in public education. Senator Murray lists her constituents invested in education as ranging from, “teachers in the classrooms, to moms at the grocery stores, to tech company CEOs. They all have the same message: We need to fix the No Child Left Behind Law.”⁷² According to Murray all of these players, public, private, and familial, have a common, mostly aligned interest in education reform. This claim of unified interests is highly suspect and sets up corporations as having a legitimate and beneficial role in reforming education.

If a central purpose of education is to provide opportunities for individual market success and strengthen the national economy, it makes sense to create curricula based on market needs and to foster close relationships with the private sector. However, this material is necessarily supplanting other courses of study, and given the relative lack of attention from Democrats and Republicans given to civic education, it is clear that there is a consensus privileging educating workers over educating citizens. This places private sector interests in a privileged position to influence the direction of public education; data that shows schools’ failure to prepare students for the workforce add legitimacy to their argument. Additionally, training workers used to be the responsibility of companies and workers are generally compensated for training time. By creating market driven curriculum, public schools subsidize that cost for private firms and steer students into whatever industry has the political ability to secure these partnerships.

Conclusion

It is commonly accepted that a key purpose of public education in the U.S. is to prepare students for the workplace so that they can achieve individual market success and increase the economic strength of the nation. Although this is a widely shared belief, different understandings of how the economy functions, the causes of inequality, and the relationship

between governments and markets lead to differences in how problems in education are identified and addressed. These ideological forces have a strong influence on the formation of education policy as civil rights organizations, business leaders, education entrepreneurs, local governments, and the Department of Education advocate for various policies.

The debate between these groups is largely centered on neoliberal ideas of the individual in society and the ability of the free market to repair inequality. However, Democratic policymakers have mostly rejected cultural deficit theories of poverty and recognize the role of the school to address socioeconomic inequality. Despite this more progressive understanding of the causes of the achievement gap, the concept of achievement gaps is rarely interrogated with a critical, historical lens. This prevents policymakers from recognizing the systemic roots of the problem and from creating or recognizing solutions.

In the past decade the Federal government has collected and published a lot data documenting the failings of public schools, which is sometimes used as a tool for proving the superiority of market models over government bureaucracy in order to promote the expansion of charter schools. In the coming years a huge amount of data on school achievement will be available for parents, students, and policy makers. It will be interesting to see how these data are used and if they will trigger the policy responses they're supposed to when schools fail to educate students equitably. I remain skeptical that the reforms passed in 2015 will create the changes in educational disparities that its authors advocate for. The forces pushing against educational inequality remain considerably stronger than the forces fighting for it because too many Americans in power have an economic and social interest in maintaining the current order. Although reframing inequality as an economic problem for the nation as a whole may be able build some to support a more radical redistribution of educational resources, I am far from

confident in the actual impact of this rhetorical shift. If the federal government is interested in actually supporting equity in schooling and opportunity, it should begin investing in communities that have the most to gain from real reform leading the effort rather than simply supplying data to policymakers, educational entrepreneurs, and advocacy organizations.

¹ Gary Orfield, Erica Frankenberg, Jongyeon Ee, and John Kuscera, “Brown at 60: Great Progress, a Long Retreat, and an Uncertain Future,” *UCLA Civil Rights Progress*, May 15, 2014, <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/brown-at-60-great-progress-a-long-retreat-and-an-uncertain-future/Brown-at-60-051814.pdf>

² Jamel K. Donner, “Education as the Property of Whites: African Americans’ Continued Quest for Good Schools,” in *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*, eds. Marvin Lynn and Adrienne D. Dixon, (New York: Routledge: 2013)

³ David Hursh, “The Growth of High-Stakes Testing in the USA: Accountability, Markets, and the Decline in Educational Equality,” *British Education Research Journal*, Oct. 2005, vol. 31 (5), pp. 605-622, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30032649>

⁴ Jesse Hessler Rhodes, “Progressive Policy Making in a Conservative Age? Civil Rights and the Politics of Federal Education Standards, Testing and Accountability,” *Perspectives on Politics*, Sept. 2011, vol. 9 (3), American Political Science Association, pp. 519-544, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592711002738>

⁵ Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Public Law 89-10

⁶ Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Public Law 90-247

⁷ National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, by David P. Gardner and others, <http://teachertenure.procon.org/sourcefiles/a-nation-at-risk-tenure-april-1983.pdf>

⁸ *Ibid*, pg. 5

⁹ See public letter to US Senate, “Keep the Promise of ESEA: Oppose the Every Child Achieves Act, S.1177,” *The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights*, July 16, 2015, <http://www.civilrights.org/advocacy/letters/2015/keep-the-promise-of-esea.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

¹⁰ Hewitt, Damon T, “Reauthorize, Revise, and Remember: Refocusing the No Child Left Behind Act to Fulfill Brown’s Promise,” *Yale Law & Policy Review* 30 (1), Yale Law & Policy Review, Inc.: 169–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23340061>

¹¹ See *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*, eds. Marvin Lynn and Adrienne D. Dixon, (New York: Routledge: 2013)

¹² Milton Friedman, “The Role of Government in Education,” Rutgers University Press, 1955

¹³ John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, *Politics, Markets, and America’s Schools*, (Washington D.C: The Brookings Institution: 1990)

-
- ¹⁴ Kevin B. Smith, *The Ideology of Education*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003)
- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ Michael Apple, *Educating the Right Way*, (New York: Routledge, 2006)
- ¹⁷ Michael Apple, "Creating Difference: Neo-Liberalism, Neo-Conservatism, and the Politics of Education Reform," *Education Policy*, (2004)
- ¹⁸ Ibid
- ¹⁹ "Ensure A Reauthorized ESEA Protects Children And Civil Rights," *The Leadership Conference of Civil and Human Rights*, June 18, 2015, <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/policy/letters/2015/Ensure-A-Reauthorized-ESEA-Letter-6-18-2015%20.pdf>
- ²⁰ Derrick Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma," *Harvard Law Review Association*, 1980, http://www.kyoolee.net/Brown_vs._Board_of_Education_and_the_Interest-Convergence_Dilemma_-_Derrick_Bell.pdf
- ²¹ Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America*, (New York: Basic Books, 1976), pg. 234
- ²² "U.S. Riot Commission Report," *National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, 1968, in *Patterns of Power: Social Foundations of Education*, 2nd Ed., Jack L. Nelson and Thomas E. Linton, eds., (New York: Pitman Publishing, 1974), pg. 172
- ²³ "The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society," *President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice*, 1967, in *Patterns of Power*, pg. 187
- ²⁴ "For Each and Every Child—A Strategy for Education Equity and Excellence," *Department of Education*, 2013, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/eec/equity-excellence-commission-report.pdf>
- ²⁵ See the work of Emile Durkheim
- ²⁶ Massimo Paci, "Education and the Capitalist Labor Market," in *Power and Ideology in Education*, eds. Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey (Oxford University Press: 1979), 340-355
- ²⁷ Milton Friedman, "The Role of Government in Education"
- ²⁸ Henry A. Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux, "Challenging Neoliberalism's New World Order: The Promise of Critical Pedagogy," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, February 2006; vol. 6, 1: pp. 21-32, doi: 10.1177/1532708605282810
- ²⁹ Alyson Kline, "Lawmakers Announce Preliminary Agreement on ESEA Rewrite," *Education Week*, Nov. 13, 2015, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/11/lawmakers_announce_path_forwar.html
- ³⁰ "Test, Punish, and Push Out: How 'Zero Tolerance' and High-Stakes Testing Funnel Youth into School-to-Prison Pipeline," *Advancement Project*, March 2010, http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/d05cb2181a4545db07_r2im6caqe.pdf
- ³¹ Ibid
- ³² Andrew Ujifusa, "School Choice Backers Lukewarm on Provision in ESEA Rewrite," *Education Week*, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/10/28/school-choice-backers-lukewarm-on-provision-in.html>
- ³³ Selcuk R. Sirin, "Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research," *Review of Educational Research*, Fall 2005 vol. 75 no. 3417-453, doi: 10.3102/00346543075003417

-
- ³⁴ National Center for Education Statistics, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, by James E. Coleman, 1966, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED012275.pdf>
- ³⁵ National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, pg. 14
- ³⁶ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 14, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 109, Daily Edition, S 5047
- ³⁷ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 7, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 104, Daily Edition, S 4666
- ³⁸ Samuel Bowles, "Unequal Education and the Reproduction of the Social Division of Labor," in *Power and Ideology in Education*, eds. Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey (Oxford University Press: 1979), 137-153
- ³⁹ Lauren Camera, "Senate Votes to End Debate on ESEA Rewrite; Final Vote Expected Thursday," *Education Week*, July 15, 2015, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/07/senate_votes_to_end_debate_on_html
- ⁴⁰ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 7, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 104, Daily Edition, S 5042
- ⁴¹ "Safe, Healthy, and Ready to Learn," *Futures Without Violence*, May 2015, http://d3vc4vygg8dc62.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/Safe-Healthy-and-Ready-to-Learn_Full-Report.pdf
- ⁴² Sen. Corey Booker, *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 7, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 104, Daily Edition, S 4668
- ⁴³ Chauncey DeVega, "Sympathy is for white people: The '60 Minutes' segment that highlights America's startling double standard on addiction," *Salon*, Nov. 4 2015, http://www.salon.com/2015/11/04/sympathy_is_for_white_people_the_60_minutes_segment_th_at_highlights_americas_startling_double_standard_on_addiction/
- ⁴⁴ Wade Henderson, Statement to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions Committee, *Fixing No Child Left Behind: Testing and Accountability*, Hearing, Jan. 21 2015, <http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Henderson6.pdf>
- ⁴⁵ Jody Owens, "How Prison Stints Replaced Study Hall," *Politico*, March 15, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/03/criminal-kids-juvenile-justice-sentencing-reform-incarceration-116065>
- ⁴⁶ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 14, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 109, Daily Edition, S 5048
- ⁴⁷ Augustine F. Romero, "Arizona on the Doorstep of Apartheid," in *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*, eds. Marvin Lynn and Adrienne D. Dixon, (New York: Routledge: 2013), 304
- ⁴⁸ Arizona House Bill 2281 (2011)
- ⁴⁹ "Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015," 114th Cong., §4107 (a)(3)(E)
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid*, §1501
- ⁵¹ *Student Success Act of 2015*, H.R. 5, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 7, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 105, Daily Edition, H 4885
- ⁵² Jack Reed, *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 7, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 104, Daily Edition, S 4673
- ⁵³ "A New Majority Research Bulletin," *Southern Education Foundation*, <http://www.southerneducation.org/Our-Strategies/Research-and-Publications/New-Majority-Diverse-Majority-Report-Series/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now>

-
- ⁵⁴ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 8, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 105, Daily Edition, S 4812
- ⁵⁵ Rory O’Sullivan, Konrad Mugglestone, and Tom Allison, “Closing the Race Gap: Alleviating Young African American Unemployment Through Education,” *Young Invincibles*, June 2014, <http://www.studentimpactproject.org/reports>
- ⁵⁶ Gloria Ladson-Billings, “From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools,” *American Educational Research Association*, October 2006 vol. 35 no. 7, doi: 10.3102/0013189X035007003, 3-12
- ⁵⁷ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 16, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 111, Daily Edition, S 5138
- ⁵⁸ National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, pg. 13
- ⁵⁹ “A New Majority: Low Income Students in the South and in the Nation,” *Southern Education Foundation*, October 2013, <http://www.southerneducation.org/getattachment/817a35f1-abb9-4d6a-8c2e-5514d4a6d7d9/Test-Publication-4.aspx>
- ⁶⁰ “Mission and Vision,” *Southern Education Foundation*, <http://www.southerneducation.org/Who-We-Are/Mission-and-Vision.aspx>
- ⁶¹ “Summary of H.R. 5 as Reported by the Committee,” *Education and the Workforce House Committee*, summer 2015, http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/summary_of_hr_5_as_passed_by_the_house_final.pdf
- ⁶² Conference Meeting on S.1177 “Every Child Achieves Act of 2015, Nov. 19, <http://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/conference-meeting-on-s-1177-every-child-achieves-act-of-2015>
- ⁶³ Jamel K. Donner, “Education as the Property of Whites,” in *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*, eds. Marvin Lynn and Adrienne D. Dixon, (New York: Routledge: 2013), 196
- ⁶⁴ P.L. Thomas, “The Payne of Addressing Race and Poverty in Public Education: Utopian Accountability and Deficit Assumptions of Middle-Class America,” *Souls*, 12:3, 262-283, DOI: 10.1080/10999949.2010.499795
- ⁶⁵ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 7, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 104, Daily Edition, S 4667
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid*, S 4664
- ⁶⁷ Kristin L. Buras, “Let’s Be For Real,” in *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*, eds. Marvin Lynn and Adrienne D. Dixon, (New York: Routledge: 2013), 216-231
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 224
- ⁶⁹ Department of Education, “Blueprint for Reform,” March 2010, <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>
- ⁷⁰ *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 8, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 105, Daily Edition, S 4812
- ⁷¹ See Amendment No. 2100 offered by Joe Manchin, *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 16, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 111, Daily Edition, S 5142
- ⁷² *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, S.1177, 114th Cong. 1st Sess., July 7, 2015, *Congressional Record* Vol. 161, No. 104, Daily Edition, S 4667