

WARREN SIMMONS: That's the warmest applause I've ever gotten at the beginning of a presentation, which portends well. So you've been doing this for six years, and this is the first time you've invited me. Ah, that's interesting, interesting.

MAN: You say the fifth.

SIMMONS: That's useful. So, you know, my goals here are to sort of describe the national context that's affecting school reform and particularly to talk about the frames that are being used to describe the nature of the problem and the solution, because I think it's important for us to understand frames and what my colleague Gloria Ladson-Billings calls who the cartographers are, you know.

They are people who draw the maps, and they can misrepresent what things look like geographically, and they can misrepresent what things look like substantively and conceptually based on the position they take when they draw the maps. So it's very mindful of us to think about what the national frames are and who the cartographers are so we can develop richer, fuller, more accurate maps and, as a result of who the, what the frames are and the cartographers are, discuss the strategies that I think we need to use.

So this isn't about saying they're wrong. This is about saying that based on their position and their understanding, there are certain levers that they emphasize, which, you know, may be necessary, but in and of themselves, they're not sufficient and used solely by themselves. They actually can do more harm than good. That's my conclusion. Are there any questions?

We've got a lot of time for dialogue here. I think, as Ron said, that I'm uniquely well-suited for this conversation, because I've been in philanthropy at the Casey Foundation, at the Annenberg Institute. I arrived there in 1998 at the tail end of the Annenberg Challenge, and the Institute took on responsibility for convening and developing research reports and having conversations with the arch-challenged communities, the urban-challenged communities and the rural-challenged communities.

And for those of you who are too young to remember the Annenberg Challenge, it was the first large-scale corporate philanthropic effort focused on urban schools. I mean, Ambassador Annenberg gave \$500 million in 1993 at the White House with President Clinton, and that was an unprecedented, you know, gift at its time, but also that gift generated a total of \$1.2 billion, because it had matching requirements in local communities.

To get your \$25 million or \$50 million, you had to have a one-to-one match in some communities, made a two to one match. But you ask yourself, you know, you know, the origin of that effort. You know, basically, it was Vartan Gregorian, the president of Brown, Ted Sizer, who was the head of the education department at that time, meeting with the Ambassador who as a corporate philanthropist, you know, they are the CEOs of their foundations. They don't have boards.

They don't even have large staffs. They, you know, the Annenberg Foundation had a staff of three people. Most of the people were there to do the fiscal bookkeeping,

but in terms of substantive direction, there were two or three people at the Annenberg Foundation.

So you think about an initiative that effected school, urban schools in particular and some rural schools across the country being designed at Brown University by, you know, Ted Sizer, Vartan Gregorian, and maybe a small staff, working very closely with a very small staff at the Annenberg Foundation, that tendency of corporate philanthropy hasn't changed much.

Although the Gates Foundation staff grows enormously over time, it's still the case that, you know, you're talking about capturing the imagination of a single individual who isn't consulting with a broader board who has the power, because it's their money, to then act. And that's, you know, what happened with the Annenberg Challenge.

In fact, when I arrived at the Annenberg Institute, I arrived having learned some lessons from the Challenge, which was, you know, basically an effort to change, fundamentally change schools and actually laid the foundation for the birth of the small schools movement, which was later picked up by the Gates Foundation.

But one of the things I learned from the Annenberg Challenge, having been director of the Philadelphia Education Fund, which was one of the Challenge sites, is that we didn't pay enough attention to the role of the district and either furthering reform or undermining it and the need to think about how you redesign and reinvent school systems if you want a mechanism that takes reform to scale that's consistent with the urgency and pace and timeline set by our national goals.

I reminded people earlier today that the Annenberg Challenge occurred during an era where there was a shift in the voices supporting education reform. If you think about the era where Ron and I were in elementary school, it was a long time ago, but we were in school during the, why are people smirking when I say that? Yeah. There's no respect for their elders apparently.

We were in school during the civil rights era where the frames about the problem our schools faced were about the needs to address poverty and discrimination. All right? So those were the primary frames and also the need to develop communities. And so what's interesting is that that was a frame from roughly the 1960s, you know, *Brown v. Board*, you know, Johnson and the War on Poverty and the Model Cities Program. That was the era in which, you know, I went to school and was educated and went to college.

And then in 1983 with a nation at risk, the frame shifted. The business community talked not about equity but about excellence and talked about the relationship between education not as a tool for eliminating poverty and addressing social ills but as a tool for advancing the economy. And that creates a frame that puts an emphasis on another set of tools and levers, standards, assessments, accountabilities.

It's not that that frame is incorrect, but the emphasis in priorities shifted from equity in community development and social justice and anti-discrimination to excellence through accountability and standards and to their credit, the recognition that more resources needed to be given but more resources in exchange for greater accountability and higher standards.

And so Ambassador Annenberg gave his gift during that era, and it was also the era where we established the six national education goals, which then grew to seven or

eight or nine by the end of the decade, none of which we actually met. So when I arrived in 1998 towards the end of Goals 2000, I arrived at the Annenberg Institute, it was focused on individual school change and teacher critical friends groups, and I said that's important work, but lots of organizations do that work.

There were very few organizations at that time that focused on the district and the need to reinvent and redesign the district so they could become organizations that provide supports to schools necessary to take reform to scale. If, indeed, that's what we say we're after, and Goals 2000 said that's what we're after, and that was even ratcheted up with No Child Left Behind. Right? They said that's what we're after and actually put out adequate yearly progress goals not just for schools but for districts.

So No Child Left Behind actually did focus on districts from an accountability standpoint. What it did not do was focus on districts from a capacity-building standpoint but, again, the conclusion. So at Annenberg, we focus on district change. We support networks of superintendents. We have coalitions of community groups that we also support and then New York City, the Coalition of Educational Justice. We provide technical assistance and research support.

And that's a coalition that also has the United Federation of Teachers. So our work reflected our understanding that while we need to continue to focus on, to understand the features of schools that beat the odds and that are high performing, we also need to pay attention to the redesign of districts so they provide the necessary support to take school reform to scale, thus our three circles of work, district redesign and leadership, community organizing and engagement, research of policy.

The final thing I'll say about us is, again, through very difficult lessons learned in my own experience, we understand the reform just isn't simply a technical endeavor. All right? If it was a technical endeavor, just getting the right standards, the right assessments, the right curriculum, if it was a technical endeavor alone, we probably wouldn't even have made more progress and wouldn't see so many best practice models not extended or adapted or replicated. Right?

We seem to still believe that the solution is to identify what we now call proof points. We've gone from calling them best practice models to proof points. If we can just show enough of you people what it looks like, you'll adopt it and take it to scale. And what we learn time and time again is that doesn't happen, because there's no system in place that can take the best practice and take it to scale.

So here we are again having not met the goals of Goals 2000 coming dangerously close to knowing we're not going to meet, you know, the deadline of 2014 set by No Child Left Behind. And so the problem becomes as a nation, what are we going to do about this? And the thing that concerns me is at the, this conversation, because of the 1983 *A Nation at Risk*, is increasingly occurring at the national level and less and less at local levels, be they urban, suburban, or rural.

And when you, when the conversations are happening at the national level, they are happening in accordance with this slide, philanthropic, political media leaks and meeting in small rooms. All right? Because you can, in fact, convene 50 governors, 50 chief state school officers, the leaders of the major philanthropies and the assistant secretaries of this or that in a room that holds about 200 people.

And then you can have a smaller, you know, after they get the 200 meeting, then you go into the back room with the really, you know, powerful guys who are saying, now

that we heard that, what are we going to do? All right? The problem with those rooms are several. Number one, you know, and I confess that sometimes I'm actually in those rooms, though I don't know why I continue to get invited, because I tend to be the counter, offer a counter narrative.

But I think that's why I'm there, as a counter narrative. Warren's going to tell us what people are going to criticize, and they have to be able to respond to that. All right? But I still want to be invited to those meetings. I'm looking at the camera there, so that's, make sure that's in the clip. All right? The problems with those rooms is it's mostly white guys in there, literally, males. All right? Also the people in those rooms increasingly don't have direct experience in schools or school districts. Right?

They come from the business community, because you talk about corporate philanthropy. They are management consulting, and they're management consulting experts. And they're those people from outside of the tradition, which is understandable, because in those rooms, they see the traditional educators as part of the problem. And our track record reinforces that perspective, that we are part of the problem, not part of the solution. All right?

Except when you're at an urban level, you understand that the people who you think are part of the problem have to be part of the solution, because that's what you're there to work with. All right? But it's easy to lose sight of that when you're in that room of 50, 50, 50, 50, 50 and when you have these tight timelines that are set by political lifecycles and philanthropic lifecycles. There's a sense of urgency in those rooms.

I respect it and understand it that we've got three years, four years to fix this thing before the next election rolls around, before, you know, the grant runs out. I mean, this is our time to move. Ron, you and I were there at one point in our careers. This is our, when I arrived in Washington, and I'll say it, I arrived in 1980 at the National Institute of Education. All right? I was young. I was in my 30's. I thought this is my time to make change, and I was thinking about change in three-year cycles. Right?

And that's how those room think, you know. But when you're on the ground, as many of you are, if you adopt the mentality of the leader, which many of you and us do, you are stuck with the three-year cycle. Right? The leader has three years. The superintendent, the mayor, the city council person, the union president may even have three years. Right?

But when you're directing an education fund, when you're a principal of the school, when you're a teacher living in a community, you are actually trying to create change using resources that span more than three years, you hope. Right? So the one question becomes, you know, how do we shift from leader-centered design and implementation, which is reinforced by corporate philanthropy, because they're also leader-centered. Right?

When it's company failed, you bring in what? A new CEO, a turnaround specialist. Right? And they do it in X number of years. Right? And our approach at the district levels in many places is if the scores aren't increased, you bring in a new superintendent. Right?

And that individual, he or she, is given three or four years to turn a whole community, us, around, and we lie passively in many cases sitting there waiting for that person to do it to us, right, in a three-year period of time, which, you know, quite frankly, leaves us to the cycles of change that we have.

So here we are again in another three-year cycle, ladies and gentlemen, with corporate elites in small rooms meeting with the administration, and, again, because of the frames they use and the perspectives and backgrounds they have and also because of our unique governance system, which creates checks and balances between the federal government, the state government, and the local government, the federal government's actually supposed to have a minimal role in education.

And the state delegates most of its authority to the districts to implement. So we've got this little dance we've got to do around the checks and balances in our governance structure that other nations actually don't.

They can develop standards, curriculum, teacher development strategies, community engagement strategies, urban strategies, all at the national level. They can do it in consultation, but it's appropriate for them to convene nationally to have that conversation. It's difficult for our governance system to do that.

So as many times as I tell Secretary Duncan, you need to convene urban and suburban districts without the states to have this conversation, our governance structure makes it difficult for the U.S. Department of Education to do that, because they typically talk to states. Right?

And that's the state. And when they're talking to states, they're talking to a governor, they're talking to the head of the assembly, they're talking to the chief state school officer. And, typically, maybe there's one superintendent in the room or one union leader in the room, but it's usually your state leader.

So there's a governance problem, which explains why we get stuck with the national levers given the frames being standards, assessments, teacher and principal equity and effectiveness using data improvement instruction and turning around low-performing schools. Right? That's what you would get if you have a restricted role at the federal level, and you're using your power and authority to press on the levers that you can most appropriately press on. You can't press directly on curriculum.

That's a local responsibility. You know, there's even a dance around standards. Notice, we don't, in the '90s, we called them national standards. In the, whatever this is, 2000s, we call them the Common Core, because we're afraid to say national. All right? So we have to call them a Common Core, and the federal government has to sort of hide its role in their development to be consistent with our governance structure.

And even as the national level talks about teacher and principal equity, they don't talk about it in reference to capacity building, curriculum instruction, and pedagogy. They talk about it in terms of incentives and sanctions and evaluation. Right?

So it's a particular frame on teacher effective and equity called human capital, which is consistent with your sort of hands-off role minimalist intervention can't intervene on curriculum and instruction pedagogy, because that gets too much into a national dictating to a local, but what we can do is intervene on the accountability side.

Whatever you're doing around curriculum instruction, that's your business, but we want to make sure you're measuring teachers against their ability to raise student performance. We want to make sure you have an evaluation system and an accountability system that takes the bad teachers out of the classroom. Right?

Now that is necessary, but without the other pieces of that, curriculum, instruction, pedagogy, the system at the school level and district level that supports that, you and I know that that can distort practice more than inform and enrich it.

But this is what happens when people at the national level who feel that they have restrictions on what they can actually talk about and do, and they want to make change, maximum change, and this is what they tend to center on, and this is what's being, you know, visited upon states and districts and communities. So this started in the '90s, and it's intensifying now. All right?

What the view was in the '90s was standards weren't rigorous enough or authentic enough, so we want a little more rigorous and authentic set of standards. The assessments got taken over by the publishing companies, and they went back to the basic skills stuff, so we went more robust.

Assessments, again, we don't know, we're not going to prescribe to you what curriculum instruction looks like, but we are definitely going to give you the data that you can use to determine what you're doing well and what, and is up to you to change. And if the current workforce you have in place can't do it, then you need to get some new people.

And so there are alternative staffing and governance models that allow you more flexibility, so after the three years are up, and you look at your data, and you don't know, and progress haven't moved, get rid of the people, and get some new people in that can make the change. And I'm oversimplifying this, I'm sure. Right? I'm sure. But this is what you would think of and promote with a particular frame.

And I'm saying that this is not necessarily wrong, but it is insufficient, all right, particularly given the need to meet standards in particular timelines. But the reality is now, that agenda has lots of corporate dollars, philanthropic dollars, behind it, and it now has your dollars and my dollars behind it, so Race to the Top and the school improvement grants.

So we now have billions, I repeat, billions of dollars from corporate philanthropy, which is now aligning its work with the U.S. Department of Education behind these levers as exercised through Race to the Top competitions and school improvement grants. And if any of you have worked in states on these steering committees, I mean, I've seen entire agendas shift in the last six months to respond to and adapt to this. And it's not surprising, because these are the stakes involved. Right?

This is billions of dollars. And if you think about the politics of this, right, billions of dollars are going to be out, are now out the door. And in your states, it's not clear how much is making it down to the districts, right, because we worked with Central Falls at the Annenberg Institute, and, you know, we're into what? October.

And my colleagues in Central Falls are still not sure how much money they're going to get from the school improvement grant funding, and, but they know it's not as much as they thought they were going to get. But we're, it's October, and then somebody's going to tell a story in about six or seven months.

So it'll be on CNN, or it'll be on Fox what did or did not happen in Central Falls, and then, again, Central Falls will morph from being a little tiny local story to a national/international story about the nature of school reform in the United States of America. And I say this because I was in Senegal watching CNN, and there I was looking at Fran Gallo, the superintendent in Central Falls, a little tiny community, got about, oh, 2,400 kids, I think, in all of Central Falls, and she was on the news. All right?

And the superintendent in Rhode Island, Commission Gist, became the 100 most, was on *Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World*, because she

fired the teachers in Central Falls. All right? So for a brief period of time, Central Falls became a national and international story. So think about these dollars. Think about the number of schools that are identified, 2,136, and actually this information didn't come initially from the Department of Education.

An organization called Communities for Excellent Public Schools, which is a coalition of local community organizing groups, adult and youth, asked the Annenberg Institute to put together a research brief for them to use to create an alternative approach to school turnarounds that they released here in Washington, D.C., so, in fact, this data actually was generated by Annenberg before even the Department had a handle on how many schools were being affected by their criteria.

But over 2,000 schools is predictable. Eighty-three percent of these schools are African-American. Blacks and Latinos are overrepresented as our poor students. But it's also the case that a number of these schools, they're mostly in urban areas, but they're also in suburban and rural areas. So this is truly a national phenomenon, and the levers and resources of the Department of Education are going to be felt not just in urban communities but in rural and suburban districts and communities as well.

And so we all need to be mindful about the implications of this for our work going forward. And we're all mindful that the options that these dollars are supposed to be used for are these four. Now the Department also listed some data just the other day that 75% of the schools that have been identified have chosen the transformation model, which in their view is the least, maybe, I won't say least promising, that's putting words in their mouth, least intrusive and more traditional. All right?

The other models are more radical, you know, turning it over to an education management or a charter school, closing the school down, getting rid of, firing, or removing 50% of the staff. For the transformation model, you're basically changing the leadership and also agreeing to evaluate the remaining teachers more closely. So to be fair, there are some additional items here, innovation. The new standards are about preparing all kids for college.

You know, obviously, there's an emphasis on charter schools, and that's the kind of pressure support. If the traditional systems won't change, we'll encourage them to change by creating alternatives, which are charters. In recognition, we need to pay attention to preschool and science and math.

But, again, ask yourself the question that I asked when I got to the Annenberg Institute, so what's the vision of the system at the district or local level that takes reform to scale? What is it that you see in the current agenda that speaks to the broader system that we need to create that other countries pay lots of attention to. Right?

They don't just pay attention to the individual school, they pay attention to restructuring their LEA and the national agency, and it's fairly quiet on that, but if you look at the people who are touted in the media as the change agents for district reform, you know, Paul Vallas, Michelle Rhee, Joel Klein, the model that they tend to emphasize in terms of district reform is the portfolio of schools model. All right?

The professional learning community's model says the district's role is to create communities of practitioners, give them the data they need and the tools they need to create change but not only create communities to practice within schools but across schools as a sort of brief summary. Joan Talbert and Milbrey McGlaughlin describe it more eloquently than that.

The managed instruction model, which actually is really what Paul Vallas is known for and favors, because that's what he did in Chicago, and that's what he attempted to do in Philadelphia until the state intervened with the portfolio of schools approach. Again, this is the state district issue. Managed instruction says most schools actually don't have the capacity to change and don't have the capacity to develop curriculum instruction. It's the job of the district to do that.

And so we will develop the curriculum. We will develop the professional development that goes with that. And we will, through, you know, area superintendents and district-wide professional development, implement that with support of principals and obviously teachers and in collaboration with unions, but that's a managed instruction approach. And the portfolio of schools approach, which was more recent, says, well, we'll, we buy the autonomy idea.

You know, teachers and principals say they know what to do, so we'll give them resources, and we'll give them freedom, and we'll also offer them the right to choose partner organizations, you know, charter management groups, universities, community development corporations. If you look at, you know, Philadelphia, if you look at New York City, if you look at what's going on in Chicago now, you see a lot of the EMO support organization strategy in place.

But the district's role in that regard isn't to focus on teaching and learning in terms of tool development, it's to provide data, to provide accountability systems, to review schools, to provide high-quality professionals, but also to remove people in schools that don't meet the standards. All right? So the district's role in that regard isn't focused on capacity building. It's focused on standards, assessment, quality review, and accountability. All right?

It's an interesting strategy in the midst of national goals that say we want kids to be somewhere within three years. Can that strategy actually bear fruit? This is a very indirect capacity building strategy. All right?

So as you look at the data, I'll give you the money, you look at the data, and you figure out what you need to improve, and if you're not good at that, I'll remove half of your teachers, remove the principal, and remove whoever you chose to partner with and maybe close you down, maybe find you another partner. And then I'll look at you again in another two or three years. And my job is to look at you and give you freedom and autonomy. All right? Well, that's an interesting strategy. It allows for flexibility.

It also allows for more neighborhood control. Think about that. Right? And if you think about this and some of the research that I'll be showing you shortly, what it demonstrates is with this strategy, communities that have partners with social, cultural, and fiscal capital actually do pretty well, right, because they have partners down the street. They have the University of Pennsylvania. They have Columbia University. They have reform support organizations nearby.

It's the communities that have less social, political, and social capital. When you tell them you're free to choose a partner, right, you are free, you have the autonomy to create change on your own, and I'll just come back in a year or two and look at your data, those schools struggle with this freedom. They struggle to build capacity. That's the story of the Local School Councils in Chicago. That's the story now that's emerging in New Orleans with the charter schools.

The charter schools in communities that have significant social, political, cultural capital can use that freedom and autonomy to produce results in the communities that don't. So I think we need to create a new frame, you know, obviously. And a new frame has to shift from leader-centered reform and primarily, and an almost singular focus on standards assessment and accountability and human capital to something that's more community-centered, because, in fact, that's a research-based frame.

I mean, so one of the things that's interesting here is that foundations and the U.S. government that emphasizes data and research, their frames don't seem to reflect the full range of data and research that's available. All right? So what would I say about the frames that they currently use? There's a failure to narrow the achievement gap over time, because they don't pay attention to the broader social and economic factors.

They sort of characterize that as excuse making, all right, you know, and now that's interesting, because here's where we're hoisting our own petard. Right? If you say I can't raise the achievement of these kids because of the parents and the communities they come from, that is excuse making, because you've only focused on a problem. You haven't offered a solution.

And I would say that for many educators under duress, that they stop at saying that, I'm having difficulty raising the achievement of these kids because of the families and the communities they come from. If you stop there, you've identified a problem, but you haven't identified a solution, and you've kind of shifted the blame from yourself.

If you go further to say, and therefore there are things and supports we need inside of school, and there are partnerships we need to build outside of school, because we have evidence that if you do that, we raise achievement, then you are not excuse making. All right?

But there's too many examples in the media where we have stopped at the statement, I can't do more because of the families and communities that these kids come from. And then people will jump on that, rightly so, perhaps as excuse making, but where they're wrong is saying that can be ignored, because, fundamentally, it can't. It's a good strategy. It can be ignored for exceptional people who have the wherewithal to amass social and political capital on their own.

It, unfortunately, the exceptional people are exceptional because they're rarities. All right? So it's not a strategy for turning around communities that have been distressed, plus the strategy totally lacks attention to the need, publicly at least, to the need to build state capacity if states are going to be in leadership roles over districts. Right? The Race to the Top competition is run through states.

Privately, when I'm in rooms with these guys, they discuss very urgently the need to build a theory of action about what the SEA does and to build the SEA's capacity as well as the district's capacity. Now if you look at the research, and I urge you to take a look at a recent publication by the Educational Testing Service, the black/white achievement gap, when progress stopped. When did it stop?

If you look from the '60s to now, when did progress and narrowing the achievement gap seem to come to a stop? I realize many of you weren't alive. But take a guess.

WOMAN: Mid-'80s.

SIMMONS: Mid-'80s. All right? Mid-'80s. And, in fact, the gap seems to be widening at the period when we implemented No Child Left Behind based on NAEP scores. So this is based on NAEP scores, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Now the argument that ETS makes, which, it's like ETS is making this argument, have they become a social justice organization, you can cut that out, is that when our nation had an agenda that not only was about education reform but building broader social and community capital, we were building capacity both in schools and in communities that were necessary to address issues of poverty even as problematic as most of those programs were.

As poorly implemented and perhaps designed, they still, through Head Start, through Model Cities, paying attention to building the social, political, cultural capital both inside of schools and in families and communities necessary to create people who could overcome poverty.

And it seems to be, based on the data, that when we shifted from an equity agenda to an excellence agenda and shifted from thinking about education as a community deliverable to an individual deliverable, it's what the individual teacher does, it's what the individual student does. I'm not saying it's not individual. It is. It's individual plus, though. It's what a community of practitioners does, a community of students does in schools and in communities.

When we shifted the frame, it seems to coincide with a lack of progress. And so when my colleagues around the country, and I've been to New Orleans, to Philadelphia, to New York, to Boston and back to Washington, in fact, I was at a White House conference on communities. What was that? Were you at that? No, Sheila was at that, community-based organizations and school turnarounds.

So the voices I hear at the local levels say, well, those four options and this whole agenda, it is problematic, because it imposes interventions on schools and communities. All right? When you do that, even if the intervention is good, as I said in an earlier conversation, it doesn't build ownership, all right, which threatens then sustainability.

The interventions focus on governance and leadership more than instructional change, because it delegates that to people to figure out what their autonomy and their increased resource is without worrying about the system infrastructure that needs to be built so that that can be not only generated in individual schools but generated across schools. And, again, because of the no excuses mentality, failure then is totally the responsibility of people in schools.

It had nothing to do with, you know, outside of school, and then you can point to be people like me and Ron as examples. But they did it. And Geoffrey Canada, he did it. All right? And I'm thinking about the social capital that was behind us, because you're only focusing on our achievement as an individual product.

And, again, the data also showed that many of these models, many of the charter schools, and they're staffed by hard-working, well-meaning, well-intentioned, dedicated people, fortunately, they don't have the wherewithal to deal with the English language learners and the students with disabilities. Right?

Because if you don't think about that systemically, if you say each school go forth and create the wherewithal and the capacity without thinking about the district's role and

the state's role, where are the tools going to come from to do this? They can't be generated in schools alone because of the number of hours in the day and the expertise that does and does not exist there.

So when community groups and this coalition that I talked about came together, they critiqued the administration's perspective, and they offered these as recommendations. Strong focus on school instruction, you need to have sustainable transformation, and, again, they're changing the frame. What's sustainable transformation? We want sustainable school change, not just school reform, not just innovation, not just governance and autonomy. We want sustainable transformation.

It's a different frame that implies different levers have to be brought to the table. Again, this focus on instruction, the focus and the need to think about wraparound supports for our students, the need for collaboration to ensure a local ownership and accountability, again, shifting the frame.

This does not have to be the frame you use, but think about the leverage you would want philanthropy, the government, union leadership to pay attention to, and then what's the frame that gets you there, and what's the evidence that supports that? So let's look at some of the recent work that's been produced, once again, and this is where I get weary, and we seem to start, always start with, so what does a good school look like. Right? You know, yeah, this is year 2000, what are we, 2000 what?

And we are still, as a nation, discovering what a good school looks like. Well, the answer, actually, we actually, we've refined the question. What does a school that beats the odds look like, right, that takes those kids that we talk about, the kids with the parents and communities that are, what does that look like? Well, you know, Tony Bryk, Peggy Sebring, John Easton, who's now in the government, you know, new book out, *Organizing Schools for Improvement*. All right?

Here are the features that they say that the elementary schools, and, again, and we have to qualify this, this is elementary schools, this is what they do. These are the features that, Barbara, how are you, these are the features of elementary schools in Chicago that have beat the odds. They have taken kids from poor communities.

And what they also say is that these schools also have ties with community, but if you also read on, they also say that these features, first of all, have to be in place altogether in the school, but these features are enhanced if the school is in a neighborhood, even if it's poor, that has social capital. All right?

So even these features in this research aren't enough in and of themselves. These features work best in schools that have social capital. For them, what does that mean? They have faith institutions. They have recreation programs. They have arts and cultural groups. They have access to museums and other kinds of institutions.

So with their emphasis, they are, again, focusing on the issue to think about building professional capacity, building a climate of trust among the adults, among the adults and the students and the people inside the school and outside the school, principals providing instructional guidance, but also the nature of the instructional leader isn't this dominant, charismatic, you know, no excuses holds barred, ferocious leader that the *Wall Street Journal* keeps talking about.

The person is facilitative, inclusive, and instructional. Right? Not the ferocious, you know, if you read the *Wall Street Journal* and other magazines, what they need at the school level or at the district level are ferocious, no excuses, no holds barred

leaders. That's not the kind of leader that builds a community of practice. It's a leader that gets things done for a short period of time. Let's go to Elliott Seif in Philadelphia, away from Chicago into Philadelphia. Boom. This is about high schools.

What are the elements? These are the elements. Positive, success-oriented school climate, motivation with emotional support. It's not just instructional. These young people need opportunities to talk to each other, to talk to adults, to get motivated, to understand how they could overcome the obstacles in their life and not ignore them. Adequate time for professional development, tool development.

A relevant, coherent, authentic instructional program that relates to the lives of the students and the values and aspirations and challenges they have. All right? One more. Annenberg Institute, high schools in New York City that beat the odds, academic rigor, a network of timely supports coming from the central office and partner organizations in the communities, college expectations and access, but the access means that in addition to people skills about college, you take them to college.

They see what it's like. They see what it demands. They meet professors. They meet students. They have conversations so they can understand the distance between who they are and what they are and what they need to acquire isn't as great as they imagined. Effective use of data, important, but, again, you have to have the time in the school to use the data, which is a district responsibility to structure and organize the school day.

So each of these studies also speaks to not only what schools need, but they start to speak about the role of the district. And each of them, when you synthesize across them, talk about the district needs to have a better distribution of resources, and, in doing so, they have to address state and district mandates that limit on how resources can be used. There have to be equitable student enrollment policies.

Each of these studies demonstrates that if you over-enroll schools with difficult, hard to teach students, it's an overwhelming task. All right? And what many districts do through their enrollment policies is they pile up difficult-to-teach students in the older, traditional schools. All right? So the charter schools, and the special small schools have these enrollment policies that get these kids to start bouncing. In New York, they call them deflections.

They're students who just deflect from certain schools. That's a nice, passive way of describing an action. Right? You can't get into that school, and you wind up at another school. In fact, I got deflected out of Stuyvesant High School in New York City into Brandeis High School, which was my local, comprehensive school. So I, too, was a deflection.

Actually, I also learned something useful from Bob Balfanz, who runs town development, because he said that the students who get deflected, right, and into these comprehensive high schools, and this probably works for the adults too, one response is you turn off, and you drop out. Right? So you also find the dropouts are both students who are well behind but students who are smart and bored, and they drop out. All right?

And they said, but there's this other group of people, and I realized he's talking about me, who develop resistance strategies that keep them in school but always on the verge of getting kicked out. Right? But he called the category of indicators pain-in-the-ass indicators. You have to take that out. Right. It's like there's one response, is you

learn to become, and it's part of your resistance, from an environment that's not serving you well, you learn to become a pain in the ass. Right?

But there are a whole bunch of indicators, absenteeism, suspension, you don't turn in your homework, you go to the classes that are taught by teachers who engage you, and you cut the classes by, too, so you get this sort of real wide-range of grades, right, A's in one class and zeros and F's in another. It's the same guy. It was me. Right? I'm talking about pain-in-the-ass indicators.

And then think about the adults, the teachers and principals who become, to the system, what's the word, expression? Pains in the ass. Right? Right? Because we're responding to a system that doesn't support us. Right? And that's a destructive response, and, unfortunately, our response to that response is autonomy. Right?

The way to get rid of that system that does that to me is to shield me from it, to waive me from it rather than to talk about how we fundamentally create new kinds of systems that can sustain the transformation and convert me from a dropout or a pain in the ass as both a student or adult to a person who is motivated, supported, and engaged, and produces the kinds of change and outcomes that we want. So my point here is that we have to think about districts and systems.

And if we look at our other competing countries which Linda Darling-Hammond has done in *The Flat Earth and Education*, think about those first levers that I put up that our government focuses on, and this is what Finland, Singapore, South Korea, United Kingdom, this is what they do, equitable funding and national standards, but a curriculum focus on inquiry. When they say a national curriculum, you get away from our vision of it, which is a textbook publishing company somewhere develops it.

What they do is they convene groups of teachers and head teachers, which are principals, and that's what national means. It's a convening of. And it's delivered through technology so that when I go to London, which I'm going to on Sunday to work with a set of schools, and when I walk in there, the school's going to ask them, show me the national curriculum, which always is a gotcha question in this country, by the way. Show me your curriculum.

And usually when I'd ask a teacher in the United States that in an urban school district, they'd like run around the room, they'd get a book, they'd show me some mimeographed sheets, which obviously haven't been used in a long time. Right? Aha, it doesn't really exist.

When I go there and say show me the national curriculum, first of all, I'm confronted with calm and like a little surprise, well, why would you ask a question like that? Right? It's not a got you. It's like hmm. Okay. And then they take me to a computer, desk top or a laptop, and they can download the curriculum.

And they also show me evidence of, well, this is what we've got for the national, but this how our teachers augmented it and changed it and adapted it, and these are the other areas that we, it's like, wow, it's not a got you exercise. It's about an infrastructure that's been built over time responded to changes and data and outcome, and these are the levers that they use to build their systems which we say we're competing with and we're falling behind.

But these are their levers, and contrast them with the levers our government and our corporate philanthropic partners are using, and I'd say that, in part, the difference is the product of our governance system which forces our federal government and state

governments to look at a narrower set of things and then put the major load of capacity building to the district, which then turns it through our own efforts to the schools so that we don't fundamentally have the infrastructure necessary to mount the reform at scale.

So here's the flaws of the leader-centered approach that we're all complicit in. And I would say unions have to think about their role in this, because who do you negotiate with when you're in a community? Right? You say everybody else get out of here. I'm going to go talk to that school board chair and that leader, and that's about us talking about what we're going to do together. And we'll announce the results when we're done. Right? That's a leader-centered strategy.

And the person you're negotiating with is probably going to be around for three years in an urban area at best. Right? So you're tying your fate, the fate of your members, to somebody you talk to every three years and what you can negotiate with them every three years. And that gets you in this three- to four-year cycle. It limits community ownership. The community is a bystander of this conversation you're having. Right? So you don't build a broader constituency that can shift the frame.

You're kind of stuck with the frame the leader builds, and you're negotiating within that frame. It favors and privileges national expertise over local, because a new leader doesn't know you guys. Right? I just got to town. I don't know the Federal Education Fund, New Visions, I don't, yeah. Take me some time to figure that out, but I know doctor this, doctor that, this, you know, this, that, and, you know.

That's why I travel around so much. Right? I'm a national expert. And so local models, national models are favorite. And this approach of leader-centered reform, you know, where you bring in the national models and national experts, undermines the development of local infrastructure. All right? Just think about it.

The guys who are working on this on the ground like the Philadelphia Education Fund, where I was a director, so I had this role locally. Every two or three years when a new superintendent came to town, we would have to meet and convince them that we were a worthy organization. Even though we'd been working on high school reform in Philadelphia and middle school reform in science and math, it's there for 20 years.

Every three years, we marched to the new superintendent's door, get the, get on the calendar, and say we can help. All right? All right? And every local group, higher ed, everybody did that. So that's an approach that won't get us the results we need at scale, and when we don't get those results, it seems to me that rather than the leader taking the fall, implicitly the teachers and the students are taking the fall. Right?

Because I know leaders who, you know, get that little bump, which lasts about three years, right, predictably, lasts about three years. They leave celebrated and applauded and on to the next job. New person comes in, the bump disappears, because the test was recalibrated, and the new leader says the fault lies in? The fault lies in?

MAN: . . .

WOMAN: . . .

SIMMONS: Teachers and students. All right? And they're bringing in new national experts and their new models, and they get the bump. And then this is the cycle, ladies

and gentlemen, that we're in, and if you engage in a complicit and leader-centered reform, I don't know how we get out of it, and I don't know how we get out of the teachers and the students are the primary culprits, especially if I gave you the resources, and I gave you the autonomy that you asked for, right, and now you have data.

You know, where are the results? So we've argued at the Annenberg Institute, and I'm about to close, that we have to get beyond this issue of what do smart schools look like, because we've answered that question over and over and over again.

And by continuing to ask that question, we are implying that the solution to reform at scale is simply the replication, school by school, of best models, whether you call them research-based designs, charter schools. Whatever it is, it's a job that can be done by individual schools adopting models and replicating models on their own.

We don't ask the other question, if this is what a smart school looks like that serves this population, by the way, what is the nature of the district that we have to create or system that would take that to scale and provide differential supports, because every school and community doesn't need the same mix of characteristics and supports, and it's variable, so a district has to be able to, or a system has to create variable supports, so we have to ask ourselves that question.

And increasingly, because of this issue of social and cultural capital in communities, we not only have to ask ourselves what does a smart school and a smart district look like, but what does a smart education system look like? Places where districts or school systems are working in partnership with city agencies, higher education institutions, community organizations to build a systemic network of supports.

So Providence is having that conversation under the Mott Foundation's New Day for Learning Initiative. San Francisco is having that conversation. Boston and the Promise Neighborhoods is about that conversation about going up from schools and districts to saying that they ideally have to operate in communities and neighborhoods where the resources of agencies, cultural institutions, faith-based organizations have to be aligned and coordinated in a systemic way, not a voluntary I'll choose you, you choose me, you'll go here, to address needs of students.

And my closing argument is to do that, which many systems are now and communities are now grappling with, they have to figure out how to create new kinds of governance systems. How does a mayor and his agencies come together on a regular basis with community organizations and faith institutions? What does that look like? How do they plan? What are they focused on? So this is not a series of meetings that we all don't have the time to go to. All right?

So in Providence and in San Francisco, we're thinking about organizing these conversations around a set of indicators about child and youth wellbeing that include academic indicators but also health, emotional, juvenile justice indicators so that we can map this across agencies and community groups, target resources that have particular need, and then think about how we organize the resources in agencies and public and private institutions to address that.

It requires cross-sector leadership development as I discovered in Philadelphia painfully. If you don't have a mayor and a city council president or a cloret(?) or community groups who understand standards assessment and what that means and how it can be applied and what do you need to add to it, you get into the battles over

language and differences in cultures, right, which keep us stuck and lacking in trust in each other.

So an urban education task force or commission, now these are vehicles where you bring together people over a period of time using data as a starting point rather than that historical experiences, as Lord knows, I've brought enough people together over the historical experiences. I mean, people yell, scream, you racist, you . . . your gender . . . no, don't do that again. Start with the data. Start with the data and a solution rather than historical grievances on the problem. Right?

Then think about the local action research and skunkworks function that many districts that make progress don't use national research so well, but they use local research, consortium, research for action. These are organizations that are generating, that are solving problems and questions asked by communities, not simply by the experts.

But we also need skunkworks, organizations that develop the curriculum materials, instructional strategies and tools and resources that actually teachers and people in schools just don't have the time to do, even if they have the expertise to do it. It's not structured for them to do. So you need other entities that have it but that are tied to and can develop tools in relationship to the kinds of people in these places in our schools.

And then, finally, you've got to have a community engagement strategy, as Michelle Rhee now understands. All right? Yeah. The sudden, you know, people, as I was told in Philadelphia in an earlier conversation, I got raked over the coals in Philadelphia for something I did not say, but it was reported, and the entire leadership of the community backed away from me and, in fact, made me apologize for something I did not say. It was a very painful experience, apologize before city council.

And when I asked the dean of the city council why this happened to me, because I was a well-intentioned Ph.D. from Cornell University, smart, national expert, here to help, she said, well, Warren, you didn't ask permission to fish in our pond. All right? And I said, in being the smart guy I was, oh, you know, I raised \$50 million. I wasn't fishing in your pond. I was putting fish in the pond. All right? And then she said, well, you know, well, Warren, you didn't ask permission to put fish in our pond.

And that made me realize I don't care how well-intentioned you are, how smart you are, even if your stuff works, you still need to ask permission, and that, what people are saying is, I want to be part of the solution, and I don't want you to tell me what that is. I want to own it. And I also know that you, smart guy, are probably going to leave in three years, which is what I did. All right?

So if it's going to be sustained, I've got to know what it is I've got to understand then, because you're going to be gone and making more money and being celebrated at NEA and other places after six years. And then the close is, because I was a naïve naïf, I didn't know how to deal with the media. All right? So when the *Philadelphia Daily News* came at me, you know, I was an academic. Right? I thought I could write a, I wrote a letter to the editor.

Last thing you want to do, because then they fought over the letter to the editor. They had that story going for, so I had to hire communications people, because people like us are just not good at getting those little crystallized sound bites out in ways that

the broader public understands, and increasingly people with different frames are doing a better job of that than we are.

So this is the infrastructure that I think needs to be built, and I think union leadership needs to shift from the trap of leader-centered reform, my president talking to your mayor talking to your superintendent talking to your foundation leader, right, that's what you guys are into right now, all right, to working with community organizations and groups as part of what you do to highlight the need to shift the frame and to highlight the need to build an infrastructure that provides the supports your members need to be successful but successful in ways it doesn't ruin their lives and forces them to leave, which is the model we now have. Okay.

This work is going to be so hard that we have to have replaceable teachers, because you're going to burn out in three and a half years, but that's what it is. That's the model we now have. That's not the model that needs to be there, but we have to have a discussion about the infrastructure that's, it has to be in place so that people can do this work and have lives, because, in essence, that's what builds community. Thank you very much.