

Town Hall Los Angeles: “2001 – 2101: The Education Century? Rebuilding our Economy through Education Reform”

Full Report

Main sponsor: Corwin Press

Attended by: Kim Anderson, Cecilia Mansfield & Patty Scriptor

Commission: State PTA Legislation Team

Date: July 14, 2009

Location: National Center for Preservation of Democracy 111 N Central Ave, Los Angeles.

Overall Summary:

- Conference ran from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- About 200 people were present.
- This event was recorded and being shown live across the US. It will also be available via webcast on the Town Hall website: www.townhall-LA.org
- Focus was on three things:
 - 1) Existing successful education programs within public education systems
 - 2) Training for a 21st century workforce of highly effective teachers
 - 3) Charter schools

SPI, Jack O’Connell gave Luncheon Keynote Address: “California: State of Education.”

The conference was extremely interesting & well worthwhile attending. It provided many different perspectives on public school systems – ranging from Superintendents from other states, to teacher recruitment organizations, to charter school operators and LAUSD administration.

Workshop Titles & Presenters:

Panel 1 – Bright Spots in Education:

Moderator: Eli Broad – Founder, *The Broad Foundation*

Panelists: Gary Mangiofoco, CEO, *LA Universal Preschool*

Peggy O’Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and Chief
Communications Officer, *DC Public Schools*

Honorable Paul Pastorek, State Supt. Of Education, *Louisiana*

Marco Petruzzi, President & CEO – *Green Dot Public Schools*

Panel 2 – The 21st Century Workforce:

Moderator: Frances Lapedes, Co-Chair Education Study Committee. *LWV - LA*

Panelists: Lisa Barrett, Partner Teaching Fellow Programs and Training and
Certification, *The New Teacher Project*

Matthew Kramer – President & Chief Program Officer,
Teach for America

Ellen Moir – Executive Director, *The New Teacher Center*

Panel 3 – New Solutions to Old Problems: The Charter School Model:

Moderator: Jed Wallace: President, *California Charter Schools Assoc*

Panelists: Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation*

Michael Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools*

Highlights:

- It's clear that we cannot continue to do things in the same old ways and remain competitive
- Strong need to look at what's working in public schools & what's not
- Lot of talk about "Reconstituting" schools
- Schools thrive when a school's leadership is allowed to take control of the destiny of their school
- Desire for charter schools is to remove institutional barriers
- Charter schools are a key component of the reform movement
- Focus of charter schools is on outcomes
- Students want rigorous instruction & engagement
- Teachers must believe in the abilities of their kids and expect them to do well. Until they believe that, nothing will change
- Have to get union on board with firing bad teachers
- Early learning is not just an academic or social benefit but also an economic investment
- More buy-in now to concept of national standards - 46 Governors have agreed that there is a need for them.

Memorable quotes:

- ❖ Eli Broad – Founder, *The Broad Foundation*: ***"The Obama Administration recognizes the correlation between economic health and the education system"***
- ❖ Gary Mangiofico, CEO, *LA Universal Preschool*: ***"Quality takes place at the point of interaction between the teacher and the student"***
- ❖ Peggy O'Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and Chief Communications Officer, *DC Public Schools*: ***"Every child can achieve at high levels regardless of background and finance"***
- ❖ Honorable Paul Pastorek, State Supt. Of Education, *Louisiana*: ***"There's been a "Reconstitution" ... a new game plan for teachers & principals"***
- ❖ Marco Petruzzi, President & CEO – *Green Dot Public Schools*: ***"We've experienced lots of desperation in low-income communities"***
- ❖ Frances Lapedes, Co-Chair Education Study Committee. *LWV – LA*: ***"50% of the teaching force will leave the profession within first 5 years."***
- ❖ Lisa Barrett, Partner Teaching Fellow Programs and Training and Certification, *The New Teacher Project*: ***"Can't continue to treat teachers like interchangeable parts, the way we do now. We must differentiate between good & bad teachers."***
- ❖ Matthew Kramer – President & Chief Program Officer, *Teach for America*: ***"We need to establish standards for teachers which are linked to outcomes for kids."***
- ❖ Ellen Moir – Executive Director, *The New Teacher Center*: ***"We need to build a career lattice for teachers."***
- ❖ Jed Wallace: President, *California Charter Schools Assoc*: ***"With the upcoming budget cuts, far greater responsibility will be placed on charter schools"***
- ❖ Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*: ***"All of our kids come to us brilliant"***
- ❖ Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation*: ***"We need to hear words like magic, passion, compassion, engagement etc"***
- ❖ Michael Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools*: ***"If unions are going to hang on – public schools will go the way of GM within 10 years"***

Town Hall – LA background

One of the Top 10 Forums in the nation, TOWN HALL Los Angeles has been a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization since 1937. Their mission is to provide a forum for ideas - a place for conversation and community - through our events which they call [Meetings of the Mind](#). One of the most important themes is education.

Panel 1 – Bright Spots in Education

By: Kim Anderson

Moderator: Eli Broad – Founder, *The Broad Foundation*

Panelists: Gary Mangiofico, CEO, *LA Universal Preschool*

Peggy O'Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and Chief Communications Officer, *DC Public Schools*

Honorable Paul Pastorek, State Supt. Of Education, *Louisiana*

Marco Petruzzi, President & CEO – *Green Dot Public Schools*

Eli Broad began by stating the following:

- **Need to look at what's working in public schools & what's not**
- Clear that alternative education systems are necessary
- In the 50's & 60's, the US had the #1 economy on the world and the #1 schools. As our economy has declined, so have our schools
- From 1983 – 1998, had the US been able to close its international achievement gap, our GDP in 2008 would have been \$1.3 - \$2.8 TRILLION higher
- **Obama Administration recognizes correlation between economic health and the education system**
- US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, is very close to the President and has \$100 billion in federal stimulus dollars for education – represents an unprecedented opportunity
- Through his Foundation over the last ten years, he's learned that:
 - a) We've made some progress
 - b) We need alternative options to traditional public school – which include mayoral / gubernatorial / state control plus Charter Schools.
- He's seen improvement in public schools when Mayor has control – single point of accountability

Background remarks from panelists

Paul Pastorek, State Supt. of Education, *Louisiana*:

- After Hurricane Katrina, state took over the schools
- Abolished Collective Bargaining and created new entity called, "Recovery School District" (RSD), led by the State Supt. of Education
- **Desire was to remove institutional barriers** so they created as many Charter Schools as possible **where the Principal had autonomy, flexibility and accountability**
- In last 2 years of RSD, best academic gains ever seen in New Orleans (scores still not high BUT gains were dramatic)
- Need a healthy balance between testing & educating
- **More buy-in now to concept of national standards**

Peggy O'Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and Chief Communications Officer, *DC Public Schools*

- Schools are under mayoral control (for last 2 years)
- Focused efforts entirely on the children and not adult centered issues
- **Put principals in charge as instructional leaders**
- Helped parents understand what good education looks like
- First year test scores went up dramatically. This year, gains not as big but everything went up
- Achievement gap is narrowing

Gary Mangiofico, CEO, *LA Universal Preschool (LAUP)*

- LAUP is an independent, non-profit organization created in 2004 and funded by First 5 LA through Prop 10 tobacco tax money
- Lots of kids don't start school K/g ready
- With their preschool model, kids are coming out with 2 x the vocabulary and land within the norm on math and English language mastery
- These kids outperform their peers who don't attend preschool

Marco Petruzzi, President & CEO – *Green Dot Public Schools*

- With climate in LA, charters have flourished
- Parents now have a choice
- A year ago, Green Dot took over Locke High School (one of the lowest performing campuses in LA & California) and they are changing the culture of that campus
- **Focused on common sense reforms: student needs & accountability**
- They've been aggressive in organizing communities to demand change
- Reformed the union – lots of teachers "trust" them and they've given teachers a lot of say in how things are done

Questions from moderator Eli Broad:

Q1. What have Charter Schools contributed to public school and how have they changed the dynamic of improving student achievement?

Paul Pastorek, State Supt. of Education, *Louisiana* :

- **There's been a "Reconstitution" – new game plan for teachers & principals**
- **Have to allow a school's leadership to control destiny of their school**
- Have to be very careful who you allow to run a charter school (there are bad charters too)
- Stanford report showed that in Louisiana, charter schools had performed better than traditional schools in almost every category (14 out of 15)
- Charter schools create an environment where kids more likely to succeed than not

Peggy O'Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and Chief Communications Officer, *DC Public Schools*:

- **Charter schools are very important to the reform movement**
- Charter schools provide 1/3 of DC kids with their education
- Good charter schools provide parents with notion of what a good education looks like
- They put pressure on traditional schools
- High Schools need the most help
- Three of their high school will be totally reconstituted in terms of leadership & teachers

Gary Mangiofico, CEO, *LA Universal Preschool* :

- They'll serve over 11,000 kids
- **Focus of charter schools is on outcomes**
- **Quality takes place at point of interaction between the teacher and the student**
- **Focus on leadership is key**

Q2. How do high performing school districts use data to deliver high quality education to students?

Marco Petruzzi, President & CEO – *Green Dot Public Schools* :

- Use it excessively: four benchmarks per year; compare data with other teachers for maximum transparency; develop best practices; base all planning on data

Peggy O'Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and Chief Communications Officer, *DC Public Schools*:

- Data very important for benchmarking, testing, portfolios
- Last year used it to reorganize all professional development for principals
- This year using it to reorganize all professional development for teachers
- Used data to rearrange school calendar and also Central Office

Gary Mangiofico, CEO, *LA Universal Preschool* :

- Use as a score card
- Developed coaching model
- Do trend analyses for emerging themes
- Use for child outcomes
- Produce expense to revenue ratios

Paul Pastorek, State Supt. of Education, *Louisiana* :

- **Some belief systems are fundamentally wrong...that some kids can't learn. Wrong - all kids can learn if teachers teach properly**
- Why is summer school necessary? Wouldn't be if teachers were looking at data during the year and acting on it

Q3. Lots of resistance to reform: what opposition have you seen and overcome?

Peggy O'Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and CCO, *DC Public Schools*:

- Change is difficult – especially in education
- Some educators are risk averse
- Hard to leap over barriers to get to an unknown future
- In D.C. they had difficulties in getting:
 - a) Community members and teachers to embrace change
 - b) People to believe that **every child can achieve at high levels regardless of background and finance**
 - c) The union contract changed
 - d) Everyone to put students front & center

Marco Petruzzi, President & CEO – *Green Dot Public Schools* :

- Took lots of grassroots support from parents & teachers
- They went knocking on doors to talk to parents
- **Experienced lots of desperation in low-income communities**
- Very successful at community organizing

Gary Mangiofico, CEO, *LA Universal Preschool* :

- Tendency to dismiss early learning as childcare
- Encountered resistance due to competing forces with other issues
- Had to help people understand that **early learning is not just an academic or social benefit but also an economic investment, which research supports**

Paul Pastorek, State Supt. of Education, *Louisiana*:

- Louisiana had very little control of its spending
- Used influence & persuasion & examples of success to help school districts use their dollars wisely
- Looking at Obama's goals very carefully & trying to mirror those
- **Teachers must expect kids to do well**
- Success breeds success

Q4. What are you doing differently with your teachers?

Paul Pastorek, State Supt. of Education, *Louisiana* :

- Have developed teaching model effectiveness guidelines
- **In their first year of teaching, an outside agency evaluates them based on their students' performance.**

Peggy O'Brien, Chief of Family & Public Engagement and Chief Communications Officer, *DC Public Schools*:

- Willing to use federal dollars for: teacher professional development & developing new teacher evaluations

Question from the public:

Unions – are they a hindrance or a bright spot?

Marco:

- Not all unions are same – some are good & some are bad
- Some unions show lot of leadership while some unions slower to embrace change because they're protecting their job security & their tenure

Eli Broad's closing remarks:

- The U.S. has lacked national standards. **46 Governors have agreed that there is a need for them.**
- The school calendar no longer makes sense with 10 -12 weeks off in the summer
- The U.S. has 720 hours of academics – other countries have 1 ½ times that
- Growing recognition that more homework is necessary
- We are so far behind with technology
- Obama has \$5 billion in "Race to the Top" money – but only two states are making dramatic changes
- **It's clear that we cannot continue to do things in the same old ways and remain competitive** – we must have collaboration between union leaders and management

California's Superintendent of Public Instruction - Jack O'Connell

Luncheon Keynote Speaker

By: Kim Anderson

- Need to talk to more groups *outside* the education world: Chamber, Business Roundtable, hi-tech industry
- His top priority is closing the achievement gap
- Operates a no excuse zone – **every student can learn and succeed**
- P-16 Council issued a blueprint a year ago for ways that CDE can help schools close the achievement gap. All blueprint findings are being implemented
- Believes in the three R's: Rigor, Relevance, Relationships
- Big believer in CTE
- Budget needs to be a majority vote
- Prop 98 is under assault & next year we'll have the largest class sizes in the country
- CSR will have less participants
- Critical that we invest in education

Panel 2 – The 21st Century Workforce

By: Cecilia Mansfield

Moderator -Frances Lapedes, Leagues of Women Voters Los Angeles

As with Panel I, the moderator made a brief statement to frame the issue and asked the panelists to respond to a series of questions. Panelists were Lisa Barrett, The New Teacher Project; Matthew Kramer, Teach for America; and Ellen Moir, The New Teacher Center. Each presented their unique perspective on how to shape policy to ensure a highly qualified teaching workforce in the future.

What are the essential skills that can help in predicting great teachers? The moderator encouraged panelists to think of one great teacher in their schooling and the skills that made that person a great teacher. One panelist emphasized how important it is that students have a *series* of great teachers if they are to be successful. Inspired, engaged, a record of leadership and the ability to set goals were some of the important skills mentioned specifically.

How might we do a better job of retaining teacher? Teachers want to feel that they can make a difference. We need to honor and value teachers, build a profession that includes career ladders, provide professional development that meets their needs and includes meaningful feedback, as well as improve working conditions.

What is great teaching? Quality instructions begs for a definition, but it is more than a measure of what students learn. There is a need to resist a standardized approach to instruction. Good teachers are flexible and responsive to students.

Is teacher tenure a barrier to great teaching? Panelists agreed that the issue of tenure is complex. They also believed granting of tenure should be based on more than time in the profession. It is important to protect due process while setting higher expectations for tenure – including demonstration of interpersonal, problem-solving and communication skills. The role of the principal is critical to the evaluation process. Merit pay was also discussed. Better examples and models to pilot and encourage innovation and risk-taking are needed.

What budget decisions and priority setting would be helpful? Human Relations offices need to be run more efficiently, using technology effectively and improving alignment and coordination. The principal needs training to be an instructional leader, a teacher of teachers. Resources must focus on building leadership and capacity.

Panel 3 – New Solutions to Old Problems: The Charter School Model

By: Kim Anderson

Moderator: Jed Wallace: President, *California Charter Schools Assoc*

Panelists: Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director,
New Visions Foundation

Michael Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools*

Q1. The last 10 years has seen a shift from instructional quality to governance, collective bargaining etc – is that a healthy shift?

Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*:

- **Have to remain focused on teachers and learning.**
- **Can't continue to do things in the same old way**
- California has lost its way -we need to reexamine and revisit our school systems – unions, state policies, teacher turn over rates
- Need to build bridges with existing systems – tap into the good things that do exist
- Need to make teachers feel safe & nurtured
- Most teachers began with a passion but the lack of support they receive creates a vicious cycle & they give up

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation*:

- **Teaching conditions make it hard for teachers to be successful.** Used to be that there were 12 kids in a classroom for 4 periods per day. Today, in the inner cities, they are teaching 5 classes per day with 35 kids per class.
- Class sizes matter enormously & now we're talking about increasing them again
- All the discussion is on the expense side – no-one wants to talk about revenues - **BUT how we can improve our schools without bringing more revenue in?**
- Private schools spend 4x more per pupil

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- LAUSD used to have 760,000 students. Now they have 630,000
- Teachers who won't do their job get put at schools that no-one cares about
- LAUSD builds schools that cost \$500 - \$600 per square foot...very high
- No-one's ever accountable in LAUSD – which is unbelievable
- Amount of apathy in LAUSD is incredible
- LAUSD has 65% drop out rate
- Should get rid of all the people on auto-pilot, which is about 70% of them

Q2. Facilities: Student seats cost \$100,000 in the public schools versus \$25,000 in a charter school – is that because public schools have lots of restrictions?

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation* :

- Charters get no help with facilities – have to go to private sector & beg for money

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- Going to speak his mind (unlike everyone else today!)
- LAUSD tried to shut down 8 of his schools
- Charters are taking market share & sending kids to college
- Public is asleep – they'll be shocked when they realizes that 65% of kids drop out of LAUSD
- LAUSD is building schools for \$100k per seat that charters are building for \$25k per seat. There are 12 General Contractors building schools for LAUSD & getting very rich.

Q3. Do you think the mayor has attempted to address structural issues in LAUSD?

Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*:

- It's been a four year journey for Mayor Villairigosa to capture schools
- In other cities, they are making changes by changing the structure. In California, we are stopped state policy
- As we look at structures, we know the following:
 - a) We need to educate kids
 - b) Need to build a portfolio of options
 - c) It's a civil rights issue that **kids deserve to get a good education in the public school system**
 - d) There are multiple ways to educate kids
 - e) There have to be ways to turn LAUSD around
 - f) **Need to get rid of the inertia that exists**

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- Need mayoral control
- Must offer portfolio of options
- Districts should be elementary with middle & high schools run separately
- Without mayoral control, nothing can happen
- On the LAUSD Board agenda tonight – whether Charter Schools can have access to new facilities
- Need to shift focus to spending \$\$ in the classroom

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation* :

- Charter schools are a hybrid of public & private sector
- How do we harness what the private sector brings
- LAUSD spends \$9,800 per student versus Mike's \$7,000 per student & Mike gets better results with less \$\$

Q4. Charter Schools are very successful at raising private dollars but they don't get much financial help for their facilities. Will Charter Schools be seen as angling for more \$\$ from public schools or less?

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- **Teachers need better working conditions**
- **Have to get union on board with firing bad teachers**
- Unions have turned due process into 8 appeals over 3 years. It costs \$800,000 to fire teachers
- Need smaller class sizes
- **If unions are going to hang on, public schools will go the way of GM in 10 years**
- "Unified" school districts are broken – need a revolution of governance

Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*:

- **All of our kids come to us brilliant.** Why can't we educate our kids as well as before?
- Understand we have to change public education
- State has rules – bumping rules
- Got to think about the kids & what the relationship is between these two types of schools
- **Main issue for students is caring**
- **Students want rigorous instruction & engagement**
- Have to fight this together – public & charter

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation* :

- **In the first panel, they used many terms like: focus, data, matrix, hi-stakes testing etc, BUT what he didn't hear was: magic, passion, compassion, engagement etc**
- **There is just not enough money currently to provide all the things kids need: community service, arts. Music, environmental science, P.E. – so many of those have been cut out of budget**

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- Angela said, "All of our kids come to us brilliant." I tell teachers, "**You must believe in the abilities of your kids.**"
- 100% of his kids graduated high school
- All but six have gone on to college

Q4. Where are Charter Schools regarding results & accountability?

Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*:

- NCLB has brought attention & focus on accountability
- WE have a "one size fits all" mentality – have to realize it's OK to be different as long as we get instructional results
- There are both some charters & some traditional public schools that are not cutting it
- Charters have provided competition & that's good

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation* :

- LAUSD threatened to close some charter schools going into their 4th year, that were outperforming their local schools
- **Sometimes, it can take years to grow a great school**

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools*:

- Have to close unsuccessful charters within 5 years
- He closed one of his own that just didn't work
- Lots of people are ripping off kids – "fraud audit" very important
- **Until unions decide to clean their own house, they'll be improper behavior – have to let bad teachers go**

Q5. What are your ideas for making improvements based on schools with high API scores?

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- The great schools are educating kids in areas where they haven't typically gone to college
- Must allow the best people to run public schools

Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*:

- There are many public schools that are successful
- Do need to turn cultures around
- Still need options - those are called public schools

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation* :

- Don't see a lot of traditional schools in LAUSD doing a good job
- Don't think structures are there in same way they are in charter schools – counselor ratios are prime example of that

Question from the public:

Why are Charter schools so opposed to being more transparent and accountable?
(asked by Cecilia Mansfield)

Jed Wallace: President, *California Charter Schools Assoc*:

- Engaged now in conversation re conflict of interest to seek a good compromise
- 1090 is not appropriate for charters. It prevents employees from sitting on boards – like employees to be part of governance
- Criminal penalties are very severe
- Surveying all members across the state and are hopeful that they can take this in a good direction with Julia Brownley

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- This is a ridiculous law
- Julia Brownley's bill has been killed four times by the Governor
- It's interference & it's trying to disrupt charter school management

Have we shifted the debate from accountability to responsibility?

Angela Bass: Supt. of Instruction, *LAUSD*:

- **Do we love all these children?**

Paul Cummins: Founder & Executive Director, *New Visions Foundation* :

- In certain areas, we provide some kids with everything and some kids with nothing

Mike Piscal: Founder & CEO, *ICEF Public Schools* :

- **Do they believe that every kids can go to college? Until they do, nothing will change**

Jed Wallace's closing remarks:

- With the upcoming budget cuts, far greater responsibility will be placed on charter schools
- Going to see more focus on reform efforts

