

REMODEL EDUCATION

A Master Plan for Action on Education Reform

Ready for school

Ready for life

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FOREWORD

We can all agree that parents want their children to live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives – to be equipped to handle life’s challenges, to continue to grow and learn throughout their lives, and to be valued and supported by their community.

By the time a child starts school, the skills that will help them throughout their lives are already taking shape. At this formative stage of their development, we must take this opportunity to help shape their life for the better.

Research shows that a child’s most formative years are during early childhood, at the very beginning stages of their formal education, and even prior. The education and guidance children receive during these years have a profound effect on their academic success at every subsequent stage.

Unpreparedness in kindergarten permeates through the education pipeline, as these students are often the same ones who cannot read or do math at grade level, who drop out of high school, or who need remediation in college, if they even pursue a college degree. Today’s high school students need more innovative delivery models, such as early college or high-tech career and technical schools. They are likely the same students who, in early grades, require extended learning hours to achieve literacy. In later years, these students can benefit from experiential college opportunities such as cooperative education or internships in order to transition to successful careers.

The State of Louisiana frames this subject well in stating: “Improving education is not just about minimum workplace competencies, but about preserving our republic by ensuring that every child’s education helps form him or her into a contributing member of society. In a seminal article, Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman discussed the role and funding of education in our democratic republic. “A stable and democratic society is impossible without widespread acceptance of some common set of values and without a minimum degree of literacy and knowledge on the part of most citizens,” he wrote in his introduction. “Education contributes to both. In consequence, the gain from the education of a child accrues not only to the child or to his parents but to other members of the society...” Because of America’s unique form of government—self-government under the law—every citizen benefits from having educated peers, and educating everyone helps cultivate leaders. This is why education justifies government subsidies at all, Friedman wrote. The societal benefits of universal education “do not justify subsidizing purely vocational education which increases the economic productivity of the student but does not train him for either citizenship or leadership. [However,] it is clearly extremely difficult to draw a sharp line between these two types of education.”

Obviously, teaching a child to read will benefit him his entire life, both in the marketplace and at home. Its immense personal benefits incorporate societal benefits, just as a public education that appropriately prioritizes citizenship will also have great personal and economic benefits. A young person prepared to think and lead in social affairs is also well-equipped to think and lead in his or her business and personal lives.

Every human deserves to choose his or her own destiny, and to choose it freely. To make a truly free choice, children need to be able to consider the consequences of their actions, and join the great human conversation about actions and consequences, right and wrong, practical and impractical. Their minds must be well informed so they can make wise decisions as adults (both for themselves and their fellow citizens when they vote), search for and engage in meaningful work, and begin a family. The classic disciplines of mathematics, literature, history, science, and the arts have for centuries proven their ability to help cultivate citizens like this.

With all of the school shootings, violence, and bullying that have gone on, the focus has unfortunately been elsewhere (gun control and so forth) – working to treat a symptom, when poor education and mental health is the disease.

This Education Reform Plan is focused on Pre-School to High School and calls for curriculum frameworks and learning standards for all students in all core academic subjects. A natural part of any plan is finding the highest caliber teachers and mandating top level requirements for certification, as well as the development of a system of performance metrics however for the purposes of this Plan, our focus is on the curriculum itself as paramount, independent of the timing of other aspects of education reform.

Education is how we change the world for the better.

When children can handle life and themselves, at least better than they do today, and with confidence, like anyone, they will do better by each other.

This plan is a plan to facilitate a curriculum that will do that.

Acknowledgements

This plan was developed by piecing together other education reform plans, along with original plans. A major contributor to format and certain verbiage is the *Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan* done by the Australian government. However, in concept and approach, this plan is significantly different.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Education Reform Plan* outlines a vision for youth education, and the reforms we will need to undertake to create a higher quality, more equitable and inclusive education system.

We seek to undertake these reforms because the evidence is overwhelming – the early years matter. They matter because the right education experience will set the course for successful lifelong learning. And they matter because every child – no matter where they live, no matter what their circumstances – will thrive in a safe and supportive environment.

These reforms will lift outcomes for all children, and will make an especially big difference to those children and families who need extra support. More hours of higher quality services together with more supportive home environments and better relationships with parents will support all children to learn and grow, so they are ready for school and ready for happy and successful lives. They will in turn make an enormous contribution to our community, to our economy and to the future of our country, and the world.

With this Plan, we are responding to societal ills with the actions needed to deliver a high-quality and inclusive system for all Americans, transform the lives of thousands of young children, and create a generational change that will shape the future of our country.

The intent is for the government to take on a greater leadership role, and work in close partnership with local governments, the private sector, and community partners to deliver the reforms under the following four key directions:

- Leveraging technology to facilitate a customized, personalized learning experience
- Providing real world skills courses
- Mental Training for children to handle their emotional and physical development and build emotional intelligence

Reform Directions	Leveraging technology to facilitate a customized, personalized learning experience	Providing real world skills courses	Mental training for children to handle their emotional and physical development and build emotional intelligence
The vision	Each child, learning at their pace, in their own unique way, fully engaged in the process.	Every child will learn and know basic real world survival skills that are in common demand.	All children, developing an understanding of their instincts, their drive, their energy so as to ensure mental wellbeing is as developed as intelligence.
Key Reform Actions	<p>Technology stations at each desk Each child utilizes software that adapts to them.</p> <p>Through these stations, each student has access to thousands of teachers to choose from who will teach one-by-one or in groups that have reached the same technical expertise, with a teacher onhand for local guidance This decreases student to teacher ratios and increases support provided to teachers to improve the quality of the teaching</p> <p>This use of technology provides for the delivery of reporting and communication with parents Providing parents the information necessary to understand what their kids are learning so they can be a partner in the educational process.</p>	<p>Education based on real world scenarios Rigorous role playing and scenario practice in real world adult scenarios including managing finances, home economics, business, and career experiences, along with creative arts, to provide both a sampler for future endeavors and the ability to handle different situations.</p> <p>Supporting those with a disability Focus spent on educating those with disabilities to contribute to society without much impence from the disability</p> <p>Exposure to mentorship Connect child to child and child to older mentor to facilitate engagement where each learns from the other.</p>	<p>Facilitating a partnership with local behavioral health programs Engagement, child to psychologist to work together in order to facilitate a mentally balanced, positively reinforced world view, with coping skills, that does not rely on pharmaceuticals but instead relies on consistency.</p> <p>Make it easier to access services Psychologists will be on hand at schools and mandated monthly therapy sessions will be a part of a standard curriculum.</p> <p>Defending privacy All interactions with psychologists will be held in the strictest of privacy and in no way hinder nor in any negative way affect a child’s life chances or opportunities.</p>

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

For America to be the Number One in Education, significant and strategic effort to improve our education system is required.

In recent years, there have been a slew of school shootings, bullying (in person or cyber bullying), abuse, and violence, in and around our schools. Our schools went from being community landmarks, to places of danger and volatility. Recent efforts have focused on the symptoms but not the underlying problem.

It is clear that we need to do more and better to ensure that all children have the chance to succeed.

Early childhood matters for every child

What happens in early childhood matters for life.

Young children do not spend their days in a classroom, but they are still always learning – as they explore their world, as they interact with adults and other children, and as they play.

The foundations for a child's long-term development are laid in early childhood. In these years, children develop crucial cognitive and emotional skills such as reasoning, problem solving, and how to get along with others.

The prime time for the development of vision, emotional control and language is before the age of three, and the prime time for the development of social skills with peers is before the age of six.¹

We do not have a measurement of how well our young children are developing, as such one needs to be developed. Not by means of standardized testing to see how much a child has retained but by means of real world exposure, to see how much logic a child has developed to figure things out for themselves instead of just going through the motions or regurgitating information.

It goes without saying that quality early childhood services can help children. We also know that parents have an early and lasting effect on their child's development, and that regardless of their circumstances, children experiencing supportive parenting have better outcomes. This is most achievable when a parent knows enough to get effectively engaged in their child's education.

And high-quality, play-based learning, such as that in a high-quality school, can have a strong positive impact on child development.

Long-term benefits to society

In addition to the benefits to individual children, early childhood investment provides benefits for everyone.

Children who have positive early childhood experiences grow up to contribute to a harmonious, healthy and prosperous society.

The number of jobs requiring a combination of both social and cognitive skills is likely to grow.² These and other important skills such as creativity, resilience and communication are enhanced through participation in high-quality early childhood education.

Conversely, children who have adverse early childhood experiences can struggle over their whole life. There are strong links between poor development in the early years, and poor outcomes in adult life, which increase the economic burden across a society's health care, criminal justice, and social welfare systems.³

Early childhood presents an opportunity to invest early and reap the long-term dividend from this investment, as well as avoiding significant long-term costs to society.

Economist and Nobel Laureate James Heckman has shown that early childhood investment is generally less costly than later interventions during school or early adulthood, and more effective in improving the social and economic participation of citizens.⁴

The initiatives outlined in this Plan represent a plan for initial steps to address this challenge, and will mean that our children will be ready for school and ready for life.

Leveraging technology to facilitate a customized, personalized learning experience

The vision

Each child, learning at their pace, in their own unique way, fully engaged in the process.

A high-quality school experience is the gateway to a life full of learning. Early schooling builds on the societal and cultural foundations of our country and the philosophies laid at home and in other early learning services, and helps children to take the next step along their education journey. It sets children up to be ready for school, and ready for life.

We understand that not all children have the same experience. Today, even the best teachers and educators do not typically have the resources at hand to help children learn, let alone to catch up.

Only a high-quality early childhood system, which recognises that children need different levels and different kinds of support to learn and develop, will truly give every child the opportunity to thrive. This is achieved through technology, leveraging the thousands of teachers available whose backgrounds may apply more directly to the given child's situation.

The quality of instructional support that children get from their teachers and educators makes all the difference to building the skills they need to succeed at school and in their lives ahead. Educators who interact with children during play and day to day routines, and use every activity as a teachable moment, make the biggest difference to children's learning. This is where a local, present teacher comes into play.

Every child comes to school with a different story. They come from different home and life experiences, with different family and cultural backgrounds, and at different stages of learning and development. Our schools need to be better supported to work with every child at their level, and according to their needs.

To ensure that every child starts school ready to learn means recognising that some children need additional support to reach the same level as their peers. The way we plan and fund our schools needs to reflect this.

Every child needs access to a quality schooling, irrespective of where they live or how much their parents can afford to pay.

This is why we are looking to change the way we help schools improve the quality of their teaching, with funding on resources that have long term benefit and streamlining or removing costs that pose no practical value for the objectives we outline here.

Initiatives

Technology stations at each desk

Each child utilizes software that adapts to them. Through these technology stations, they can learn at their pace.

Through these stations, each student has access to thousands of teachers to choose from who will teach one-by-one or in groups that have reached the same technical expertise, with a teacher onhand for local guidance

This decreases student to teacher ratios and increases support provided to teachers to improve the quality of the teaching

This use of technology provides for the delivery of reporting and communication with parents

Providing parents the information necessary to understand what their kids are learning so they can be a partner in the educational process.

The State of Louisiana put together an Education Reform plan that summarizes this well: If school choice personalizes school choices, digital learning personalizes student choices. Online learning can redefine not only where and when learning takes place, but also the pace, content, and method of instruction. For example, Rocketship Education, a charter organization, uses apps and software to figure out which content each student has mastered. If it discovers Peter hasn't mastered triangles but John is struggling with fractions, the teacher can focus specifically where each child needs help, rather than spending time with the whole class going over the same content, or re-teaching the course.

Technology also gives teachers more flexibility to use different teaching methods with different children in the same classroom. One group of students could play an individualized math game on a computer while the teacher gives intensive instruction to a small group. It also allows schools to hasten or slow teaching to match the pace of a child's learning. Instead of keeping the entire class on the same content when some students have already mastered it, teachers can advance students to new content or slow them down to go over a tricky topic again. Students remain more engaged when they are not relearning content they already know or feeling overwhelmed by content they do not.

States should authorize online charter schools and course providers, while removing legal impediments that block traditional schools from using technology. For example, online schools do not have school buildings; school-specific building codes and square-footage requirements should not apply. In addition, an online course can serve more students at the same time, suggesting that states should waive or modify the mandatory student-teacher ratios for these types of courses and reexamine them in general.

Starting school is a major transition for children and their families. Providing for regular automatic, objective updates makes it easier for families to access what is going on and provides children with a more stable transition between home and school.

It is important that all parents have easy access to reliable, evidence-based information whenever they need it. This provides that.

Providing real world skills courses

The vision

Every child will learn and know basic real world survival skills that are in common demand.

An accessible and inclusive early childhood system will help all children to reach their full potential.

For us to build the best early childhood system we need to recognise that some children need different kinds of support and at different paces.

Initiatives

Education based on real world scenarios

Rigorous role playing and scenario practice in real world adult scenarios including managing finances, home economics, and career experiences, to provide both a sampler for future endeavors and the ability to handle different situations.

Supporting those with a disability

Focus spent on educating those with disabilities to contribute to society without much impendence from the disability. Some children simply cannot attend school without additional support. An inclusion support program will allow children with a range of disabilities, including severe disabilities, to experience and benefit from kindergarten the same as other children their own age. It would support the attendance of children who would not be able to attend school without additional support, and also ensures that when children do attend, they are able to fully benefit from the education program.

Exposure to mentorship

Connect child to child and child to older mentor to facilitate engagement where each learns from the other.

Proposed Curriculum

Elementary School

Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Introduction to Arts & Science

Introduction to different careers

High School

Math up to and including Algebra. Math above and beyond Algebra is an elective.

English up to Advance Placement

History including (1) course on US History, (1) course on World History, (1) course on government/civics

Science includes (2) courses covering basic chemistry, biology, physics. Anything beyond these is an elective.

Economics including home economics, micro and macro economics.

Technology includes (2) courses on technical and engineering specialties

Arts include (1) broad creative arts introductory course

Electives include (2-4) courses out of a selection of Psychology, Philosophy, Religion, Anthropology, Sociology, including the above listed electives (math, etc)

There is NO foreign language requirement. Foreign language is an elective.

Studies have shown that people do not typically use the language they study.

PE: Basic PE involves basic aerobic exercise. Sports are an elective. Martial Arts are an elective.

The key part of the curriculum is Adult Sciences/"Home Economics": how to pay bills and other key technical training to handle life (job searching, writing resumes, wood shop, etc)

Introduction & engagement in different jobs/careers

Mentorship & Psychiatry visit (1) per month

Electives may be handled online or by third party schools in order to ensure there is enough coverage. If one school doesn't have anyone sign up for Psychology, then it goes to the 3rd party school which will have students from multiple schools, whether through online distance learning or otherwise, to populate the class.

College and University would follow similar measures, specifically a change to degree breadth requirements to be of real world skills application for the first two years with a heavy focus on internships and real world business experience as ways to earn course credits.

In summary,

Math up to Algebra. Anything beyond is an elective.

English

History including a course on US History, one on World History, and one on government/civics

Science includes 2 basic courses. Anything beyond is an elective.

Economics including home economics.

Technology includes 2 courses on technology/engineering

Arts include 1 creative arts intro course

Electives include 2-4 courses out of a selection of Psychology, Philosophy, Religion, Anthropology, Sociology

There is NO foreign language requirement. This is an elective.

PE: Basic PE involves basic aerobic exercise. Sports & Martial Arts are an elective.

The key part of the curriculum is Adult Sciences: how to pay bills and other key technical training to handle life (job searching, writing resumes, wood shop, etc)

Electives may be handled online or by third party private schools in order to ensure there is enough coverage.

And, through mentorship each child can learn from each other and from mentors. This philosophy gives children an extended period of structured, intentional teaching that helps them to build the foundations of a holistic education.

Mental training for children to handle their emotional and physical development and build emotional intelligence

The vision

All children, developing an understanding of their instincts, their drive, their energy so as to ensure mental wellbeing is as developed as intelligence

Initiatives

Facilitating a partnership with local behavioral health programs

Engagement, child to psychologist to work together in order to facilitate a mentally balanced, positively reinforced world view, and coping skills, that does not rely on pharmaceuticals but instead relies on consistency.

Make it easier to access services

Psychologists will be on hand at schools and mandated monthly therapy sessions will be a part of a standard curriculum.

Defending privacy

All interactions with psychologists will be held in the strictest of privacy and in no way hinder nor in any negative way affect a child's life chances or opportunities.

Each student must make a monthly visit to the school Psychologist. This is largely to mitigate the conditions that might lead to school violence/shootings. This will help identify and treat. Also, as today's parents are ever so busy, this provides an opportunity for counseling and mentorship by an adult as a bridge between the parents and the student.

The logic is that if people feel & and are able to understand their emotional selves, they will be less prone to violence, not be victims of abuse, & they will think long term in their decisions. This means people who get along and no school shootings.

NEXT STEPS – DELIVERING THE VISION

This Plan outlines a long-term vision to transform America’s education system into a higher quality, more equitable and inclusive system, to ensure all children are ready for school, and ready to lead healthy, happy and fulfilling lives.

This plan sets forth significant reforms. The plan is to begin immediately. While it will take time to establish a world-class early childhood system, it is important we start.

Measuring our achievements will be important. In the future, we will develop measures that track our progress towards improving outcomes for America’s children and families.

In delivering this vision, we will work closely with all of government, the private sector and community partners.

Together, we will transform the lives of generations of young Americans.

¹ Nelson CA (2000), 'The neurobiological bases of early intervention' in Shonkoff, J & Meisels, S (eds), Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention.

² Deming, D (2015), The growing importance of social skills in the labour market.

³ Caspi, A, Houts, RM, Belsky, DW, Harrington, H, Hogan, S, Ramrakha, S, Poulton, R & Moffitt, TE (2016), Childhood forecasting of a small segment of the population with large economic burden.

⁴ Heckman, JJ (2008), 'The case for investing in disadvantaged young children' in First Focus, Big ideas for children: Investing in our nation's future.