

Excellence in Action 2009: A National Summit on Education Reform
October 8 & 9, 2009
Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C.

2009 Syllabus

Lunch: Thursday, October 8, 2009, 12:15 – 1:45 p.m.

Winning the International Education Arms Race: A Conversation with Jeb Bush

Providing a quality education to every student in every classroom in every school in the Nation is the moral and economic imperative of our era. Knowledge has the power to end the cruel cycle of poverty for millions of children across our country and to fuel the economic engine that feeds the world. *Excellence in Action 2009* opens with a conversation on closing the achievement gap – within the cities of our nation and with emerging economies around the globe. The keynote presentation will include a marquee Q&A session with special guests, including former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and New York City Schools Chancellor Joel Klein.

Strategy Sessions: Thursday, October 8, 2009, 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

Strategy #1: Show Me the Money: Funding and Incentivizing

With little empirical data to support a direct correlation between dollars spent on education and the results of student performance in the classroom, it is clear how money is spent may be more important than how much funding is budgeted. Learn more about funding that recognizes and rewards progress, results in rising student achievement, reverses failure and produces more efficient and productive school systems. The expert panelists talk dollars and common sense about how America pays for education – and how it should.

Panelists:

- Tom Luce, *Chief Executive Officer, National Math and Science Initiative*
- Eric “Ric” Hanushek, *Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution*
- Vicki Murray, *Associate Director of Education Studies, Pacific Research Institute*
- Eric Osberg, *Vice President and Treasurer, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute*

Strategy #2: Spin City: Communicating the Case for Reform, With or Without the Fourth Estate

In a survey of 30 industrialized nations, U.S. students ranked 21st in science and 25th in math, and our graduation rate ranks 20th of 26 developed countries in the world. So, if the success of today’s students will shape the future of our country and define our role in the world, where is the outrage and who is leading the charge for change? Education reform has rarely drawn the same attention garnered by other pressing domestic issues, but the tides are changing. Hear a media savvy bipartisan panel discuss successful strategies for advocating and defending education reform, from the halls of Congress to the court of public opinion.

Panelists:

- Michelle Bernard, *President and CEO, Independent Women's Forum*
- Stephen Moore, *Writer, Wall Street Journal*
- Dana Perino, *Chief Issues Counselor, Burson-Marsteller*
- Joe Williams, *Executive Director, Democrats for Education Reform*

General Session: Thursday, October 8, 2009, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

The Great Debate: Academic Standards in America

Enticed by billions in “Race to the Top” dollars, nearly all 50 states have joined forces to create common academic standards. Once the third rail of education policy, the path to national standards now appears certain. Or, is it? Can standards created by committee and consensus be truly rigorous? Will the states and territories currently participating in the drafting process ultimately adopt the final grade-by-grade standards? An expert panel deliberates and debates all sides of the issues, from content versus performance benchmarks to national versus state standards.

Moderator: Chester E. Finn, *President, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation*

Panelists:

- Byron Auguste, *Director, McKinsey & Company*
- Mitchell D. Chester, *Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*
- Neal McCluskey, *Associate Director, Center for Educational Freedom*
- Gary Phillips, *Vice President and Chief Scientist, American Institutes for Research*
- Gene Wilhoit, *Executive Director, Council of Chief State School Officers*

Dinner: Thursday, October 8, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

Allies in the International Education Arms Race

Excellence in education is the only sure path to success in the increasingly competitive 21st century economy. Thankfully, it is not a zero sum game. As the national movement for reform grows in numbers, results and momentum, more and more American leaders are looking across borders and oceans for the best ideas in education from around the globe. Hear foreign experts and the world’s most innovative practitioners share cutting-edge catalysts for dramatically improving student learning.

Lead Panelist: Jeb Bush, *former Governor of Florida*

Panelists:

- Peje Emilsson, *Founder and Chairman, Kunskapsskolan Education Sweden*
- Julia Gillard, *Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and Minister for Social Inclusion, Commonwealth of Australia*
- James Tooley, *Professor of Education Policy, Newcastle University*

Breakfast: Friday, October 9, 2009, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Defeating the Status Quo: Big Reforms Yield Big Results: A Conversation with Michelle Rhee

From pay raises to pink slips, Washington, D.C. Chancellor Michelle Rhee is shaking up the status quo to turnaround a school system in shambles. What unions call her “scorched earth” policy may be just the thing that’s needed to transform the worst performing schools in the nation – letting a thousand flowers bloom in the wake of the revolution. Hear firsthand from the courageous reformer who will stop at nothing to put kids first in a system that had forgotten its singular purpose – learning.

Strategy Sessions: Friday, October 9, 2009, 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Strategy #3: Top Gun Teachers: Recruiting and Retaining the Best of the Best

Study after study show the quality of teaching is paramount to student achievement, but our policies for recruiting, hiring and retaining teachers rarely treat educators as the mission-critical professionals they are. Moreover, some of the nation’s most qualified candidates, including graduates of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Teach for America and Troops to Teachers programs, are often kept on the sidelines by bureaucratic policies. Learn more about proven recruiting and hiring strategies, the effectiveness of American colleges of education, alternative routes to certification and the devastating academic and economic impacts of inadequate teaching.

Panelists:

- Tony Bennett, *Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction*
- David W. Saba, *President, American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence*
- Elisa Villanueva-Beard, *Chief Operating Officer, Teach for America*

Strategy #4: Blueprints for Aspiring Architects: Profiling Successful Voucher Models

Don’t believe the press and the polls. With 11 states – plus the District of Columbia – now offering a total of 18 private school choice programs, and more on the horizon, the future of school choice in America is brighter than ever. From pre-kindergarteners to kids with disabilities to children in families with low incomes, hundreds of thousands of students are enjoying a better education and the opportunity for a better life. Learn more about these innovative voucher programs and hear candid analysis from the policymakers who are successfully advancing and implementing choice in their own states.

Panelists

- Robert Enlow, *President and CEO of the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice*
- Matthew Ladner, *Vice President of Research, Goldwater Institute*
- Chip Rogers, *Majority Leader, Georgia State Senate*
- Will Weatherford, *Chair, Education Policy Council, Florida House of Representatives*

Strategy Sessions: Friday, October 9, 2009, 10:45 a.m. – noon

Strategy #5: Stacking the Deck: Keeping Education's MVPs in the Classroom

According to a recent study, less than six percent of traditional public schools use pay incentives to reward outstanding teachers, and the statistics on other innovative, market-based approaches to compensation and evaluation aren't much better. Imagine a major-league baseball team paying a three-time Cy Young award-winning pitcher the same salary as a fifth-string reliever. What is an unacceptable, unfeasible practice in nearly every other aspect of society is the norm in education. Witness the nation's boldest practitioners take on the status quo regarding measurement of teacher effectiveness, tenure, performance and differentiated pay and collective bargaining.

Panelists:

- Joel Klein, *Chancellor, New York City Department of Education*
- Paul Pastorek, *Louisiana State Superintendent of Education*
- Ariela Rozman, *Chief Executive Officer, The New Teacher Project*
- Kate Walsh, *President, National Council on Teacher Quality*

Strategy #6: Let Freedom Ring: Overcoming the Political and Legal Challenges to Choice

Parents from around the nation and every socioeconomic background are demanding the best education for their child, whether it is in a public, charter or private school. Despite growing support for choice – from both sides of the political aisle – opponents of choice remain well-organized, well-funded and politically savvy. Hear battle-tested experts share the winning legal and political strategies for protecting and expanding school choice.

Panelists:

- John E. Chubb, *Chief Development Officer and Senior Executive Vice President, EdisonLearning*
- Tim Keller, *Executive Director, Institute for Justice, Arizona Chapter*
- Gerard Robinson, *President, Black Alliance for Educational Options*
- Adam B. Schaeffer, *Policy Analyst, Center for Educational Freedom, The Cato Institute*

Lunch: Friday, October 9, 2009, 12:15 – 1:45 p.m.

An 8-Track Tape Deck in an iPod World: Fast-forwarding America's Education System

Like Amazon.com revolutionized the retail industry and iTunes modernized the music industry, technology has the potential to transform education in America. In fact, technology may be the only way to provide a high-quality education to each and every one of the nation's 50 million students. During a blockbuster keynote session, an all-star panel presents the key solution to overcoming the primary obstacles to student achievement -- access to quality educational content customized to meet the unique needs and interests of an individual student.

Lead Panelist: Rick Hess, *Resident Scholar and Director of Education Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute*

Panelists:

- Clayton M. Christensen, *author of Disrupting Class and Robert and Jane Cizik Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School*
- John E. Chubb, *Chief Development Officer and Senior Executive Vice President, EdisonLearning*
- William P. Coley, II, *Member, Ohio House of Representatives*

Strategy Sessions: Friday, October 9, 2009, 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

Strategy #7: What Gets Measured, Gets Done: The Essential Role of Data in Fueling Student Achievement

If credit card companies can track transactions in an instant anywhere in the world and Wal-Mart can track a box of cereal from the manufacturer to the checkout counter, why can't our education system track the progress of a student from one year to the next – from kindergarten through high school? The answer is we can, but most states don't yet. Fortunately, the competition for "Race to the Top" dollars is pushing states toward the adoption of comprehensive, longitudinal data systems. Learn more about individualized data management systems, the different ways to measure student growth and using data to drive reform in policies ranging from accountability to teacher pay.

Panelists:

- Jon Cohen, *Vice President and Chief Statistician, American Institutes for Research*
- Aimee Guidera, *Director, Data Quality Campaign*
- Lance Izumi, *President, Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges*

Strategy #8: The War on Charter Schools: Combating the Emerging Threats to Public School Choice

With the support of the past and current presidential administrations, charter school madness is sweeping the nation. Currently, more than 4,500 charter schools are providing innovative learning opportunities to more than 1.5 million American children. And, as pioneering charter models rack up victories against the achievement gap, the movement is growing at a rapid pace. Hear the nation's leading experts examine the current and emerging threats to public school choice – including overregulation, lax accountability for student performance and the political pressures triggered by a conflicting union agenda.

Panelists:

- Jeanne Allen, *President, Center for Education Reform*
- Jonathan K. Hage, *Chairman, President and CEO, Charter Schools USA*
- John Legg, *Florida House of Representatives*
- Susan Schaeffler, *Founding Principal and CEO, KIPP DC*

General Session: Friday, October 9, 2009, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

The Florida Formula Student Achievement: A National Model for Closing the Achievement Gap

A decade ago, Florida schools were failing and ranked near the bottom in nearly every national survey. Mediocrity was tolerated and excuses were more common than accountability. With the

introduction of bold education reforms in 1999, a transformation of schools began. Today, Florida is a top-ten state in the nation according to *Education Week* and has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as only one of only five states in the nation to narrow the achievement gap. Join Jeb Bush and a panel of Florida experts for a look at the Florida Formula for Student Achievement, a comprehensive cocktail of reforms responsible for dramatic student learning gains.

Panelists:

- Jeb Bush, *former Governor of Florida*
- Matthew Ladner, *Vice President of Research, The Goldwater Institute*
- Patricia Levesque, *Executive Director, Foundation for Excellence in Education and Foundation for Florida's Future*
- Eric Smith, *Commissioner, Florida Department of Education*

Dinner: Friday, October 9, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

All's Fair: Love, War and Politics, even Education: An Evening with Mary Matalin & James Carville

Political power couple Mary Matalin and James Carville will share their insights into the world of policy and politics, as well as their outlook on the future of education in America during the final event of *Excellence in Action*. Co-authors of the national best-seller *All's Fair: Love, War and Running for President*, Matalin and Carville are key players on the national political stage, having between them worked for every president during the last 25 years. As political consultants from opposite sides of the political aisle, each will offer their personal perspective on the direction of our country and the prospect for finding common ground across party lines to reform education for the 21st century.