Education Redesign: Building a New Model

Section 2: Education Reform Landscape
Video 1: Recent Education Reform

PAUL REVILLE: I've spent many years now engaged in education reform of various kinds. This last chapter of education reform that we began in the early '90s in this country, focused on standards and assessment and accountability with a strong measure of choice, was focused on a goal which was equity-driven of "all means all." That is, we set an unprecedented and ambitious, some would say audacious, goal of challenging our public education systems to educate all of our students to a level heretofore reserved for an elite few.

And by educating all students to a high level, we meant educating all students for success. And by success, we meant preparing them with the skill and knowledge that they'd need to hold-- to get and hold 21st century jobs in this high-skill, high-knowledge economy.

We meant preparing them to be informed citizens and active leaders, should they prove to have an interest in that in our democracy. We wanted to prepare them with all the character traits and values that we associate with being heads of families, should they choose that pathway. And very importantly, we wanted to prepare them to be lifelong learners, to be able to solve problems that we as educators today can't even conceive of.

So that was our goal. It was a noble goal. It was a very ambitious goal. But nonetheless, state by state throughout the United States, we set forward on that pathway. No state, I'm proud to say, did better than my own home state of Massachusetts. We were the first in the nation on many different measures.

Right here, you see an exhibit that shows you the NAEP test, the nation's report card. And in fourth and eighth grade, in reading and math we came in first place in the last five administrations of this test. No other state has done it once. We've done it now five successive times. So from a comparative standpoint, we've done very well.

The problem is, these comparative scores and rankings are based on averages. And beneath those averages are deep, persistent achievement gaps.