



Education Redesign: Building a New Model

Section 5: Looking Ahead

Video 2: Pulling It Together

PAUL REVILLE: I have several final thoughts for you. One that I keep coming back to is that we need to want for all children what those of us who have privilege want for our own children. Simply said, but requires deep thinking, requires a new vision, and requires change and the sacrifices that go along with change in order to do it.

It isn't a mystery what it takes to raise children to be successful in society. Those of us who have privilege, those of us who've had opportunity in our lives, know, on average, how to get that done. What we don't know how to do is take children who haven't had those kinds of advantages and opportunities and routinely, routinely, achieve success with those children.

The world is filled with amazing examples of young people who come from challenging backgrounds and defied the odds. And we have some classrooms and even some schools that are doing a terrific job of that now. But we're not doing it at scale anywhere.

So we know what it takes at one level in terms of how we do it with our own children.

We don't know what it takes in terms of building systems to get that job done. We know that education is much more than schooling. That's our own personal experience. That's our experience with our own children.

Now we need to figure out how to build the systems to get that job done. Not just outstanding programs, but systems that make it the reality that all children-- and all means all-- have access to those kinds of opportunities. And job number one for a lot of us will be generating urgency in our politics and in our culture for the kinds of changes that we're talking about.

We live in a culture where if you prescribe more school for somebody, they think they're being punished as opposed to being given an opportunity that's in addition to everything that they currently get through school. In our politics, we're very divided and we're stalled out. We're not about consensus right now. So we need to work hard at this as well as working hard at developing a vision in terms of where we're headed.

I can't think of any more important work in our society right now to do than that of ensuring the future by making a big and important investment in conceiving of, envisioning a system, that actually delivers on the long-term promise of education in America. Horace Mann, the first Secretary of Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in the country, argued that schooling, that education, ought to be the great balance wheel of our society. It ought to create that level playing field, that meritocracy that in our myth about what America is, is at the center. It's at the core of what we believe we are.

But the data shows us we're not doing that right now. We have greater and greater disparities. And it's harder and harder for people to overcome their social class of birth, to move up the ladder. So it's a great time for us to pause and rethink. And it's a huge opportunity for educators to lead that discussion.

So I welcome the opportunity working with you in the field, working with students and parents, working with policymakers and experts and researchers of all kinds to have a rigorous, robust, lively, national conversation on what is the design of the new engine that's going to drive us forward and guarantee that every child gets an excellent education and gets an equitable, fair chance to succeed within our society on all the dimensions that we know are important.