

***Differentiating Education Reform from Equity and Innovation:***

***Today's Framework for Understanding Education***

*By*

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Two opposing sides have emerged in the battle to recreate today's public schools. While both sides claim to want to improve American education, the means and policies towards those seemingly similar goals, differ significantly. Public education is recognized as the source from which our society springs forth, politically, socially, and economically. Our responsibility as parents, teachers and citizens requires that we explore *who* is doing the shaping, for what *purpose*, and through what *means*. The direction we choose in policy making and budgeting will determine the path for America's citizens and the Nation's future.

**Understanding the Differences**

Have you ever seen the boxes of Legos packaged with a specific design? You may see them in the stores with a picture of a fire truck, tractor or boat. Each package includes the exact parts for the specific design enclosed with a diagram or instructions.

If you could imagine two different groups of children, one group with the pre-packaged logo kits assigned to each child. The other group with an abundant variety of Legos and unlimited construction potential.

An outsider observing these two groups will notice vast differences, not only in the end products, but especially throughout the process of engagement. As the two groups of children work you might notice group one with the pre-packaged design completes their structure within a short period of time, works in an isolated fashion and may have to be re-directed frequently for lack of engagement.

Group two will be seen working enthusiastically, collaborating, discussing experiences and sharing ideas. When provided flexibility, resources, opportunity and support, students experience a much higher level of engagement and satisfaction in their accomplishments.

After the learning exercise has been completed, group one will have assembled their kits. Group two on the other hand will have erected an entire metropolis with buildings, a transit system, parks, commerce, services and places for the community to gather. No matter how many times you conduct this experiment, the second group will always create something entirely different with original structures, varied purposes, different functions and unique stories reflecting the individual interests and experiences of the child. The first group with prescribed outcomes, will always duplicate the same objects – a truck, a tractor and a boat.

### **Reformers**

This example illustrates the difference between Reform and Innovation. Reformers are characterized by “Control.” In the discussion of how to best educate America’s children they demand prescribed curriculum, standardized assessments, and measurable outcomes. “Was the object completed as pictured? Were the steps followed sequentially? Completion times can be used to make comparisons and rank students.

Reformers also emphasize a financial approach to education, with the goal of lowering operating costs, increasing production, with faster processing, and higher returns. Reformers apply the “business approach” to education, for greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Control is exercised centrally through a uniform system designed with the singular purpose of counting, sorting, and quantifying progress. Education improvement is determined by making the process faster with less money and time.

According to Reformers, a common curriculum, uniform tests, incentives for conforming and punishments for non-conformity is understood as a function of management and regulation. Their tools are dependent on competition and comparisons, factors that have very little to do with learning, and nothing to do with children. The best way to distinguish a Reformer from an Innovator is whether the solution is tied to a price tag, product, sales or service.

Reformers tend to accept the traditional methodologies and underlying assumptions of education. They approach instruction from the perspective that knowledge and skills can be imposed on students. Their focus is primarily on testing and the alignment of curriculum to the assessments. They define human success in terms of productivity, rewarding the fastest and highest producers, punishing those who do not, or cannot conform with narrower options and barriers to future education and advancement.

Corporate executives with the Business Roundtable, lobbyists, and policy leaders such as the National Governor's Association, and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) comprise the reform leadership. Reformers include Foundations such as Gates, Walton, and Eli Broad. Leaders include Betsy DeVos, Corey Booker, and Michael Bennet. Those who identify as Reformers also include, Jeb Bush, President of Foundations for Excellence in Education, Michael Bloomberg, Michelle Rhee, CEO of Students First, Wendy Kopp, CEO of Teach for America, and Kipp Founders Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin. Eva Moskowitz with Success Charters, Corporations include: K12, Edgenuity, Renaissance Learning, Canvas, and Accredible.

Reformers advocate for online for-profit schools, external school management companies, virtual learning, consultants, data systems, standardized tests, aligned curricula, pre-determined outcomes or benchmarks. Their agenda includes high-stakes testing, performance pay, charter schools, vouchers and Common Core. Major policy accomplishments of Reformers include, Goals 2000, during the Clinton administration. No Child Left Behind under the leadership of George Bush Jr.. The Obama administration's Race



to the Top initiative, linked to teacher performance pay. As well as the National trend to replace neighborhood schools. Reformers do not follow party lines and include leaders affiliated as Democrats and Republicans. While their agendas vary, they share a common affinity for free-market principles and leave the door open for the commercialization and privatization of public education.

## **Innovators**

Innovators represent group two in the Lego illustration and can be characterized by their commitment to Freedom and Equity. They reject the business model in education, considered inappropriate to the application of human development and the cultivation of Democracy.

The purpose of education is seen as advancing our citizenry and reaches far beyond workforce development. Innovators do not evaluate productivity in terms of skills acquired or concepts demonstrated. Instead they deem success in terms of developing the individual for the purpose of contributing to the collective good.

Children as unique learners are never identical. When the inputs vary, the outputs, despite manipulations, will also vary. This is a good thing. Standardization is an artificial construct that has no application in the realities of education. Differences in economics, talents, interests, experiences, culture, genetics, chemistry, and living environments render comparisons irrelevant and competition counter to the needs for collaboration and cooperation in our Democratic society. Knowledge is not packaged, learning outcomes cannot be prescribed, and increasing human capacity is a goal, not a measurement.

The concern on the part of Innovators is that manipulating the nature of something often leads to the destruction of that nature. Children are natural learners and innovators promote education policies and practices that honor a student's individual ways of learning and knowing without imposing contrived concepts and artificial determiners. Unlike reformers, Innovators are neither the "shaper" nor the "shape." They facilitate learning through experience, exploration and critical analysis that fosters natural and complete human development with unique outcomes, often beyond measurement.

Innovators view education not as a function of management and efficiency but as a function of culture and experience. Innovators share the philosophy that the public education system should emphasize not "what to think," but instead nurture the innate human quality of "how we think." Innovators respect differences in the way we learn, the varied talents with which we are endowed, and the unique ways in which individuals experience and express life and learning. They define human success in terms of academic achievement as well as initiative, adaptability and social contribution. They direct their attention to building trusting relationships, enriching experiences, shrinking inequalities, growing opportunity, improving conditions, targeting resources, nurturing creativity, addressing the whole child, and applying evidenced-based and research-driven practices.

Innovators promote all levels of diversity in education, especially diversity of ideas. Their goals are to address institutionalized and system inequities and remove barriers to equality and opportunity. They recognize the essential components of inclusive and empowering school cultures, focused on teacher autonomy, student empowerment, and parent engagement. The most essential aspects of learning are beyond measurement and Innovators champion imagination, risk-taking and collaboration.

While some Innovators have created alternatives in education, others have worked to reduce childhood poverty. The long history of Equity leaders and Innovators include: Dwight Eisenhower who ordered the National Guard to enforce integration in Arkansas in 1954. Lyndon Johnson who passed the first Elementary and Secondary Education Act as part of the

War on Poverty. Innovators include those well-known leaders long recognized by the education community including: Rudolf Steiner founder of Waldorf Education, Maria Montessori, founder of Montessori Schools, and Maxine Greene. More recent innovators include: Deborah Meier known for her leadership in democratically run public urban schools; Howard Gardner, for his theory of multiple intelligences; Daniel Goleman and his work on Emotional Intelligence; and Don Glines providing alternatives in education. David Berliner, Diane Ravitch, and Linda Darling-Hammond also comprise those associated as Innovators and leaders in justice and education equity.

Innovators work for more choice throughout the system and greater autonomy for both students and teachers. Their policy agenda focuses more on Democratic school governance, targeted interventions and resources aimed at prevention. Their influence can be seen in experiential and collaborative school models, integrated subjects, portfolio assessment, differentiated outcomes, student-centered learning and Community driven public schools. Their policy accomplishments include The GI Bill, Desegregation, Licensing and Credentialing for Educators, Magnet schools, alternative learning, social justice curriculum, formative assessments, and social-emotional objectives, Head Start (before it was corrupted by the Reform Agenda.) Those on the side of Equity and Innovation, work to ensure public dollars are used in public schools with public oversight and protect against the corporatization of Democracy's Public Trust. If we return to the Lego example, Innovators go beyond the box and even further beyond Legos. They collectively work to ensure that all learners have equal access to whatever tools and resources can be utilized, provided those resources are tied to the purpose of students learning.

This analysis looks at the differences between Equity and Innovation and Reform through the examination of the following categories:



# Uniting4Kids

**Purpose** – Central motivation

**Values** – Unifying beliefs

**Goals** – The desired result that validate their values and purpose

**Policies** – Legislative actions taken to achieve

those goals **Practices** – The application of the values, goals, and policies



<i>Education Purpose</i>	
<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
Educate to shape students to the world	Educate students to shape the world

<i>Education Values</i>	
<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The desire to <b>direct student outcomes</b>, raise <b>profits</b> and reduce costs through <b>competition</b></li> <li>● <b>Centralized</b> – concentrate control and authority</li> <li>● <b>Hierarchical</b> – power is exercised from the top administrative levels who operate exclusively</li> <li>● <b>Enforce - Conformity and compliance</b> are imposed through severe punishments and heavy sanctions (high-stakes)</li> <li>● <b>Standardization</b> – One size fits all: complete alignment between curriculum, assessments and outcomes. Only one path to success</li> <li>● <b>Market orientation</b> – Maximize efficiency through automation and increase profits through commercialization and competition for the benefit of corporate gains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The desire to ensure <b>freedom</b> and <b>Equal opportunity</b> throughout the <b>process</b></li> <li>● <b>Decentralized</b> - authority and control are shared</li> <li>● <b>Egalitarian</b> – both power and responsibility is shared equally among stakeholders inclusively</li> <li>● <b>Justice</b> - Remove political, social, and economic barriers particularly for disadvantaged children</li> <li>● <b>Diversity</b> is a recognized strength. Learning is personalized, instruction is differentiated and alternative pathways lead to success</li> <li>● <b>Human Orientation</b> – Respect student’s differences while developing social/emotional and cognitive capacities for the benefit of Community and the contributions to Democracy</li> </ul>



<i>Education Goals</i>	
<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
<p><b>Outcome Driven:</b></p> <p>Test centered learning - Compulsory High-stakes Testing at every grade and in every subject and in every grade beginning in preschool</p> <p><b>Centralized:</b></p> <p>Prescribe "what students know" as defined by the test. School success determined by test publishers through federal, state and district reporting and accountability mandates. CAREER is emphasized</p> <p><b>Hierarchical:</b></p> <p>Segregation and stratification is achieved through TRACKING, COMPARING, and forcing competition between students, teachers and school administrators</p> <p><b>Enforcement:</b></p> <p>Sanctions and Incentives – HIGH STAKES, Performance Pay has teachers evaluated and Compensated based on test scores. Students punished for non-compliance. Schools closed</p>	<p><b>Process Driven:</b></p> <p>CHOICE centered learning – Options for schools, courses, programs, curriculum, areas of study and a variety of means for students to demonstrate mastery</p> <p><b>Decentralized:</b></p> <p>Community directed, teacher driven schools. "What a student becomes" is defined by the individual student realized through access and opportunity. CITIZENSHIP is emphasized</p> <p><b>Egalitarian:</b></p> <p>Inclusion is achieved through authentic EMPOWERMENT and COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. Teachers, parents, and students are recognized as leaders</p> <p><b>Justice:</b></p> <p>Remove institutionalized barriers – effectively addressing at risk students (poverty, mental health, trauma, students with disabilities and second language learners)</p>



<b><i>Education Goals (cont.)</i></b>	
<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
<p><b>Standardized:</b></p> <p>Impose a national curriculum (Common Core) and mass standardized testing through state and district measures. Narrow objectives completely align instruction, curriculum, and assessments to the prescribed standards and performance outcomes for all students and teachers in all subjects</p> <p><b>Market Orientation:</b></p> <p>Charter Schools offer a CHOICE OUT!</p> <p>Capitalize on education market opportunities, create new product lines, expand new business, and increase revenues and profit margins for corporations and private industry</p>	<p><b>Diversified:</b></p> <p>Alternatives in education: Moving far beyond one-size-fits-all to personalized, adaptable, flexible, intuitive, integrated and multi-sensory approach to instruction, curriculum and assessments. Customized approach to meeting the developmental needs of the individual so students can <i>exceed</i> their own unique capacity</p> <p><b>Human Orientation:</b></p> <p>Child-centered, holistic, real-world approach: integrated content and subjects, experiential, collaborative, project-based, aligned to student interests, and supported by best practices and evidenced based, scientifically proven research</p>



## *Education Policy Agenda*

<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
<p><b>Direct outcomes</b> – Re-write tests, introduce more tests, change grading criteria, increase the stakes and create new incentives for compliance</p> <p><b>Centralized</b> - Expand Federal involvement, grow U.S and state departments, grant Mayoral control; federal and state grant monies conditioned on adherence to federal and state mandates driven by corporate lobbyists (2002 NCLB, Race to the Top, Common Core)</p> <p><b>Hierarchical</b> - Top down decision making. Reinforce predetermined common definitions of performance and impose those criteria from policy to practice, demanding equality in outcomes regardless of inequalities in resources and opportunities (Adequate Yearly Progress, (AYP), conditional waivers for NCLB, Race to the Top)</p> <p><b>Enforcement</b> - Compliance is rewarded and non-conformity punished. Consequences enforced through State Departments and Federal control of funding. (High-stakes include school closure, turnaround, firing, pay freezes, student exit exams, retention, lower learning tracks for students of color and low-income and higher learning tracks for students of privilege)</p>	<p><b>Process driven</b> - Freedom means expanding student and parental rights, promoting diverse models of learning and teaching. Identification of schools resources vs. test scores</p> <p><b>Decentralized</b> – Reduce standardized testing, engage local communities, and apply both common sense and critical thinking. Create safe, trusting cultures for learners and professionals (Locally controlled through democratically elected school boards.)</p> <p><b>Egalitarian</b> – Accountability is derived from within and carries both responsibility and authority. (Diverse faculty and empowered students comprise a democratic system of governance, managed through accreditation, and individualized school improvement plans reflective of the specific demographic needs of the community</p> <p><b>Justice</b> – Promote cultural competence, include social justice, and address bias. Target state and federal resources towards prevention and early intervention with added resources for at-risk students, impoverished families and requirements for inclusion. (Desegregation, IDEA, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pell Grants. Scholarships, Equal Protection Act, free and reduced lunch programs)</p>



## *Education Policy Agenda (cont.)*

<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
<p><b>Standardization</b> - One-size fits all/ monoculture. Students develop in the same way, at the same time. (High-stakes standardized tests: MAPS, PISA, TIMMS, SMARTER and PARCC, data-driven, online education)</p> <p><b>Market</b> – Orientation Free market principles applied through privatization and profit models. Alternative teacher training programs (TFA), for-profit online education (K-12). Hedge Fund charters and private Education Management Organizations (EMOs) takeover neighborhood schools</p>	<p><b>Diversification</b> – Protect the rights of the individual balanced with the interests of community. Eliminate practices of discrimination and exploitation and remove system inequities (Magnet schools, differentiation, formative assessments)</p> <p><b>Human Orientation</b> – People, not profit driven. Social/emotional development, art, music, PE, vocational experiences, apprenticeships, and mentoring, partnerships. Accountability is Public dollars in public schools with public oversight</p>

## The Answers are in the Outcomes

After three decades of Corporate Education Reforms it's clear who those reforms have served and why they haven't worked. While there are no indications Reforms have improved education, there are many indicators pointing to the devastating consequences as a result of testing, standardization, and cultures of rewards and punishments. As Yong Zhao, distinguished professor at Michigan State University, writes in his book, *Catching Up or Leading the Way*, China in its pursuit of innovation, creativity, and cooperation is trying to model its education system after America at the same time the nation's policy leaders are using tests to demolish ours.

Since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2002, the achievement gap has widened, more students are entering college unprepared, and more children are now identified as at-risk. Schools across the country are facing teacher shortages and teacher turnover is at an all-time high.

Reforms have not only failed to close the achievement gap, they have failed at their second promise, to better prepare students for the Twenty First Century. The need for college remediation has risen dramatically with the sorting and labeling of high-stakes testing. Findings from the 2018, Johns Hopkins University "Building Grad Nation," reported college remediation rates at 50%; an all -time high.

The opportunity gap between rich and poor widens as college tuition rates continue to rise faster than at any other time in history. According to the College Board, the average cost of a public four-year-University was \$12,000 in 1999. Twenty years later for the school year 2018-2019, the average cost for tuition room and board, adjusting for inflation is \$21,370. (<https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/tuition-fees-room-and-board-over-time>, 2018)

Most devastated by Reform initiatives have been poor and minority students. In the decade following the War on Poverty and the Original passage of the 1965 Elementary and

Secondary Education Act, poverty dropped by nearly half, from 19% to 11%. Before the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2002 there were 31.6 million people in poverty. By 2014, that number had risen to 46.7 million. (Ajay Chaudry, March 2016) Today the National Center for Children in Poverty reports 41% of children under the age of eighteen live in low-income families.

Suicide among teens is now the highest cause of death. The Centers for Disease Control show the suicide rate for white children and teens between 10 and 17 rose to 70% between 2006 and 2016. The increased rate for black children was even higher at 77%.

According to the ACLU 60,000 youth under the age of 18 are incarcerated in juvenile jails or prisons each day in the United States. Analyzing Justice Department Data, the Sentencing Project showed in 2001, black children were four times more likely to be incarcerated than white children. In 2015, black children were five times more likely than white children to be incarcerated.

Corporate Reforms initiated under the claims of accountability have cost taxpayers more money and resulted in the closing of thousands of neighborhood public schools. Nearly all closings have been in high poverty areas where communities of color are predominant. The National Council for Education Statistics determined that in 2014-2015, there were 1,573 school closures. Of the schools that closed, 1,118 were regular schools, 66 were special education schools, 23 were vocational schools and 366 were alternative schools.

(<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=619>, 2018)

Reformers and the one-size-fits-all model of schooling has eliminated choice. Schools serving at-risk students or operating outside of the test bubble have been shut down and in many cases replaced with charter schools. The business efficiency model in education has had a de-humanizing effect on everyone.

The narrative shared in the book *Teaching as an Act of Love*, by Richard Lakin, former teacher, principal and kid, are a sharp contrast to today's "spreadsheet administrators".

## Two choices

In the most distilled sense, Innovators stand for freedom - freedom of thought, expression, faith, speech, and freedom from fear, oppression, discrimination and exploitation. Innovators recognize that freedom is inextricably tied to equity and justice.

In Finland, where there are no private schools or colleges, inclusive policies reflect the Country's commitment to equity. Safe schools, supported teachers and healthy children are the nation's goals. During the Cold War when the rest of the world was expanding militaries and building weaponry, Finland's leaders made the decision to defend themselves with the most educated citizenry. Finnish children are provided free nutritious school meals, quality health care, ample opportunity to play, and a plethora of pathways to success. Finland is now the third wealthiest in the world and was ranked by assorted international indices as the most stable and safest with trusted police, sound banks, election integrity, and ethical companies. Finnish citizens enjoy the highest levels of freedom, choice and wellbeing. (Henley, February 12, 2018)

Reformers have sought to maintain power and dominance by restraining knowledge and controlling the foundation of our democracy as a means to project their own ideals and increase their financial capital. In his article titled, "[Gated Intellectuals and Ignorance in Political Life: Toward a Borderless Pedagogy in the Occupy Movement](#)," Henry Giroux writes:

*"A gated or border pedagogy is one that establishes boundaries to protect the rich; isolates citizens from each other; excludes those populations considered disposable; and renders invisible young people, especially poor youth of color, along with others marginalized by class and race ... The gated intellectual works hard to make thinking an act of stupidity, turn lies into truths, build a moat around oppositional ideas so they cannot be accessed and destroy those institutions and social protections that serve the common good.."*

The majority of today's high school graduates know learning in terms of what can be measured on a standardized test. Their experience of achievement is realized only in their comparisons with others and only in the context of prescribed benchmarks. These young students are denied the opportunity to think critically, create solutions to the most challenging problems and build something worthwhile. Their education is being hijacked for purposes besides their own. As opportunities for college, employment, self-sufficiency, and the pursuit of happiness continue to diminish, students are recognizing that they are giving something for nothing.

Parents are discovering increased demands and declining budgets have led to overworked, underpaid teachers in overcrowded and underfunded classrooms. Attempts from Reformers to maintain and sustain power and control through all means necessary have degraded classrooms, fractured communities, trivialized the American education system, and demoralized educators and students. Jonathon Kozol, author of *The Shame of the Nation* explains, “The prevailing "Reform" paradigm has led to racial isolation and a narrowing of civic virtue.”

Although data centered, profit motivated reforms have left America’s neighborhood schools near collapse. The resulting devastation offers an opportunity for Innovators to create learning communities truly reflective of a democratic society, committed to the development of each human being, representative of validated evidenced based research and professionally driven by educators.

Education is about protecting children in their most formative years, advancing the human race, and sustaining Democracy. Public schools are the foundation of America. Our system of education, while not perfect, is intended to serve as an equalizer in a society of inequality. Equal opportunity, not outcomes, is our only means to ensure the promise of democracy.



Public education in the United States has sustained our free-market economy enriched by human imagination, freedom of thought and diversity. Our neighborhood schools, are the definition of accountability, if done well, they ensure transparency and integrity among our government representatives held responsible by a critically thinking, informed and engaged citizenry. When corporate interests drive workforce outcomes and exploit students through commercialization and market competition, we forfeit the most sacred parts of what it means to be an American citizen. Our families and children long for safe, equitable, affirming and invigorating examples of schooling. Freedom and diversity is the key to invention, progress and innovation. Ultimately it is our money and these are our children and the future of education is still to be decided.

We can continue with the current reforms of standardization and high-stakes testing leaving student's dulled and complacent enough to conform to the existing world around them. Or we can revolutionize the education system, inviting students to question, think critically and assert their rights as learners and leaders in order to create a world we have yet to see.



<i>Educational Leaders and Organizations</i>	
<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
<p><a href="#">ALEC</a> (American Legislative Exchange Council)</p> <p><a href="#">ExcelinEd</a></p> <p><a href="#">Renaissance Learning</a></p> <p><a href="#">McGraw Hill</a> (Curriculum and test publishers) <a href="#">Pearson</a> (Curriculum and test publishers) <a href="#">Democrats for Education Reform</a>, (DFER)</p> <p><a href="#">EdReformNow</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Walton Foundation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Common Core National Standards Foundation</a> <a href="#">Foundation for Excellence in Education</a> <a href="#">KIPP Schools</a> and <a href="#">Foundation</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Governors Association</a> <a href="#">Stand for Children</a></p> <p><a href="#">Students First</a></p> <p><a href="#">Americans for Prosperity</a> <a href="#">Teach for America</a></p> <p><a href="#">Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation</a> <a href="#">The New Teacher Project</a></p> <p><a href="#">New Leaders for New Schools</a> <a href="#">Edison Schools</a></p>	<p><a href="#">National Education Policy Center</a> <a href="#">Uniting4Kids</a></p> <p><a href="#">Rethinking Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Parents Across America</a> <a href="#">Fund</a></p> <p><a href="#">Education Now</a></p> <p><a href="#">Economic Policy Institute</a> <a href="#">Fair Test</a></p> <p><a href="#">National At Risk Education Network</a> (NAREN)</p> <p><a href="#">Save Our Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Alternative Education Resource Org</a> (AERO)</p> <p><a href="#">Leadership Center for the Common Good</a> <a href="#">United Opt Out</a></p> <p><a href="#">Coalition of Essential Schools</a></p> <p>Coloradans for Public Education</p> <p>Innovators also include members from both political parties and represent both secular and non-secular beliefs. The shared commonality among Innovators is marked by their experience in education. Innovators are school founders, administrators, scholars, researchers, professors, parents and educators.</p>



<i>Educational Leaders and Organizations (cont.)</i>	
<b>Reformers</b>	<b>Innovators</b>
<p><a href="#">Institute for Justice In Bloom</a></p> <p><a href="#">Edgenuity</a></p> <p><a href="#">Amplify Games</a></p> <p><a href="#">K12</a></p> <p><a href="#">CSUSA</a></p> <p><a href="#">TheSeventyFour</a></p> <p><a href="#">ShareFairNation</a></p> <p><a href="#">DataQualityCampaign</a></p> <p><a href="#">Accredible</a></p> <p><a href="#">Canvas</a></p> <p><a href="#">Polymath</a></p>	
<p>Reformers represent members from both the secular and non-secular community. Individuals from both the Republican and Democratic party identify as reformers. Most are corporate executives while others work in the political arena. None have originated from the classroom.</p>	

**Angela Engel, M.A.** Mother of two, Co-Founder, and Executive Director of *Uniting 4 Kids*, Author of [\*Seeds of Tomorrow: Solutions for Improving our Children's Education\*](#), Master Facilitator and Curriculum Designer, has over three decades of experience catalyzing change on an organizational and national scale.

Having birthed many successful initiatives, Angela started her first non-profit at nineteen, training mentors for Denver's at-risk children. Her activism was central to launching the national "OPT OUT" of testing movement beginning in 2004 with Don Perl. In 2008 she served as the project Director for the [\*Children's Action Agenda\*](#), coordinating children's advocacy groups from around Colorado on a common legislative platform. Engel designed the "[50 State Resolution](#)" to end No Child Left Behind and authored legislation to reduce high-stakes testing, protect parental rights, and improve prevention and early intervention services for low-income children.

Angela has been challenging standardization and failures in test-based accountability since she administered the first state standardized test to her fourth grade students in 1997. She speaks directly against campaigns to defund neighborhood schools, attacks on teachers, and the unregulated distribution of student data. Angela's extensive background of working with community, inside of classrooms and at the legislative level provides her audiences with detailed strategies to leverage authentic power and catalyze resistance against the destructive forces that bring harm to children, threaten public education and cut at the heart of Democracy.

Learn more at [Uniting4Kids.com](http://Uniting4Kids.com) and sign up to join Angela as a champion for Equity, Innovation and the advancement of people and our communities.



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