Welcome. My name is Doug Biklen and I'm the Dean of the School of Education. And it's a great pleasure to welcome you to 2007 and 2008 Ganders Lectures and the final address in our landscape of urban architecture, I always want to say urban architecture, urban education lecture series. Dr. Pedro Noguera, professor at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. He's previously held faculty positions at the University of California Berkeley, where he earned his doctorate in sociology, and at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. He's taught in public schools. And according to his book, continues to do so on occasion. He's done research and written on issues of economic and social development in the Caribbean and has served as the president of the Caribbean Studies Association. He's received many awards, including the Whitney Young Award for leadership and education, the Centennial Medal from the Philadelphia University, and a distinguished teaching award from the University of California Berkeley. Dr. Noguera dedicates his most recent book, The Trouble with Black Boys, to his late wife. And it's in that dedication that I think we get a sense of him, the humanity that he brings to his work. He refers to his late wife as my confidant, my counselor, my comrade in struggle, my best friend, a tireless fighter for peace and justice, an artist, a musician, a gardener, a building contractor. I'm going to make you cry. A student, a mother and a daughter. I found this dedication quite moving, and surely reveals we have a sensitive person with us today. This lecture series, the landscape of urban education, is about urban education because this is where one of this country's greatest crises is laying out. You probably know that in virtually every urban center, 50% of students do not graduate from high school. And the percentage of students not graduating is much higher among students of color. In his remarkable book, The Trouble with Black Boys, Dr. Noguera provides us with an engaging, personal narrative, you can't read it without getting hooked, and a narrative connected to social science research on racial politics, identity, popular culture and education. Just this morning, one of our faculty sent out a reminder to students about the lecture and referred to our speaker as a giant in urban education. It's a great pleasure to introduce truly a giant in urban education, Professor Pedro Noguera.

[Applause]

Good afternoon. Good afternoon. And thank you for such a generous introduction. I hope I don't disappoint you now. And it's great to be here at Syracuse. It's my first time on the campus. And I actually got a chance to sit in a class this afternoon. So that class, I really enjoyed that free interaction there. So it's good to be here at a school that follows mostly from the achievements of your basketball team. I've also actually visited here with the Syracuse public schools. I know there's some educators here from local schools and neighboring districts as well. So it's an honor to be here
with all of you. I realized when I look at the title that it actually is a typo. It's in the first word. Because what I meant to say is context mileage. Content mileage, too, all right? But I'm here to speak about context and why context is important for understanding what it takes to educate children today. And I want to start by saying, it should seem obvious that context matters, that understanding where--who you're educating, the particular needs of that community has got to be taken into account as you figure out what it takes to educate that population of students. ^M00:04:39 But I would argue that we have very little evidence out there that either global policy, that is that policymakers get that point, that context matters, or even at the level of practice. That is, in the way we go about educating kids, or for that matter, the university, preparing teachers that we take context officially into account. So I want to be focused today about context and why it matters. And I will start with a little bit of biography to explain how I came to understand this so profoundly. Let me start with some confession. The confession is I got in the field of education almost accidentally, okay? I say almost because I did get a credential while I was a student at Brown. So I was certified to teach. I actually taught in [inaudible] public schools, history at Central High School, for my first year, but then I [inaudible] for sociology. And I studied politics in the Caribbean, a totally different topic. But because I had this credential, and because I needed to earn money, and because I thought that teaching would be a good way to also learn about the community, I would substitute teach at open public schools while I was in graduate school in sociology at Berkeley. And every day, well, not every day, I would substitute twice a week. ^M00:06:03 This very schizophrenic existence because life at the Oakland public schools was very different than life at UC Berkeley. And I would often say that although the distance between where I lived in Oakland and where I went to school at Berkeley, it was only about three miles. It really took them 3,000 miles because of the total difference in circumstances that were there. As is often true for someone who subs, I was assigned, in many cases, to middle schools because middle schools are hard to teach. ^M00:06:37 And because I was a young man, they figured, you know, yes, put him in a middle school. And what I figured out quickly, though, is that if you could be relatively entertaining, that you could pretty much get through a day of middle school. Because you couldn't count on the teacher having left a lesson plan to work with. But if you could be quicker on your feet, come up with something engaging for them to do, kids would more or less work with you. And that's what I learned. So, I mean, subbing is not so bad. $100 a day. Even better if you get, at that time, in most university jobs, the money was even good. One day I was asked to teach art at a school way out in East Oakland. Very far away in a very tough part of the city. And I said, no, I've never taught art. But how hard could it be? ^M00:07:29 I'll draw. They'll draw. We'll all draw together. And it will be a wonderful time. And first it worked. I drew, they drew. One a time, we tossed it. [ Inaudible ] But second period, I noticed something strange [inaudible]. And that was there were a lot more people in the class than the roster said there should be. About 40 kids. And I said, why are so many people here? And one of the kids said, well, the other kids had heard that there was a cool sub in the art room. So they're coming. So I said, okay, well, this is a lot of kids, but as long as we all draw. Okay, with me. ^M00:08:14 Well, that many kids
drawing became a lot less engaging than there were other things including throwing the crayons. So I spent most of the period just trying to manage the crayon fights. It was a lot less pleasant. Third period, about 50 kids in the room. And they just keep coming. I finally closed the door because I can't tell who belongs, who doesn't belong. It's getting loud, chaotic, they don't know me, I don't know who belongs. I'm getting a headache. I hear a loud pounding at the door. And I said, boy, that's [inaudible] at the door. And it's a girl with an umbrella. And she's banging at the glass. So I go to the door, open the door, and I said, what is your problem? And the girl says, let me in that [inaudible]. I said, little girl, go away, go away. You don't belong here. Don't come back. And she laughed and she takes her umbrella and hits me. I said, little girl, I'm a substitute teacher. That means when the day is over, I'm not a teacher at all. If I catch you after school, you're mine.

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[ Laughter ]

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I go back, and by now, there's total hell breaking loose. And I am just losing it, trying to stop them from destroying the classroom. But I do make it through third period. ^M00:09:36 Fourth period comes lunchtime. We leave, break up and go to the teacher's lounge for lunch. So it took me about five minutes to realize this is worse than the classroom because every table was full of people who were miserable, who would, all they would talk about is how terrible the school was, how terrible the job was, and it was just so depressing. So I went back to that classroom. Ate lunch in the classroom. Talked to the kids about school. They said, oh yeah, they would tell you, this is a terrible school, this is such a bad school, just to warn you how bad. ^M00:10:07 So I said, oh, I see what they're talking about. So then fifth period comes, and now there's about 100 people there. So I said, let me call [inaudible]. I said, I can't do this. I said, listen, you don't have to pay me, I'm not going to do this, though. I'm going home. I've had a bad day. I can't handle this anymore. I'm out of here. He said, are you sure? I said, yeah, you don't have to pay me. I just want to leave. So I'm headed out, and I run into the principal. She said, how was your day? I see you're leaving early. I said, yeah, I can tell you, this was the worst school I've ever been to. She said, it's true, I hate it too. I'm trying to get out of here. ^M00:10:43 And we started to commiserate about the kids. She says, but, you know what? You have to see something. I said, what's that? She said, go down the hall and see Ms. Brown's room. Just watch what you see. I said, all right, I said, why? She said, you'll see. So I go down the hall, and I knock on the door, and she lets me in, and low and behold is it's a normal classroom. She's teaching math. Kids are hard at work.

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[ Inaudible ]
They're there working away. So I'm watching this, and I say to her after, I say, you know what, this is amazing, because at this school, I've been told that the chaos in my classroom is happening throughout the school. But not in here. Why? She said, well, the kids know I'm [inaudible]. And they know that with me, they have to learn. So I don't even send them to the office. Because they know that's their play. Here they have to work. I said, well [inaudible] and you need to share it with your colleagues because they're struggling. And she said, well, that's the one thing I won't do. I learned a long time ago, the only way I can survive here is to stay away from the adults. She said, I go to faculty meetings. I don't eat in the teachers' lounge. I come to this classroom. And this is the only place in the school where I have some peace. And I will come early to tutor and I will stay late to tutor any kid who wants help. And then I go home. That's the only way I can survive. And I thought to myself as I was leaving how sad it was that the school had the solution to its problems right there in its face, but did not know how to tap into the strengths of that classroom. Now, what's important about this example is that in every school I've ever been to in this country, no matter how bad its reputation is, I almost always find a teacher like Ms. Brown, a teacher who knows how to teach the children. But it's almost always the case that they teach in isolation, that they are not honored and respected, and that the wisdom they bring to their work goes unrecognized. And what I find particularly important about these examples, because the truth is that there's not only isolated classrooms like this, now I get to also visit whole schools that are like this, where kids who come from very disadvantaged backgrounds are learning and achieving higher levels. And what I'm reminded of, and what I try to remind people I speak to over and over again, is this simple fact. What those classrooms and those schools show us is that the problem is not the kids. The problem is the way we treat the kids. The problem is what we expect or don't expect from those kids. And even more fundamentally, the problem is that too often, we simply don't know how to do the job. Now, I know that might seem like an awful [inaudible], but what else can you conclude when you end up with the kind of data that [inaudible]? I mean, if you didn't read it, I would encourage all of you to look at a report that was done by the Gates Foundation two years ago called South Epidemic on the national dropout rate. And for the first time, we have good empirical evidence that in every major city in the country, we have a dropout rate that's over 50%. Now, we just had the data come out last week on New York City. It's much higher than that in New York City. And New York City, just last year, received an award from the Grove Foundation for being supposedly the best urban district in the United States. [Inaudible] New York is the best. The year before, he said Boston was the best. I also lived in Boston. And when I saw that, I just went, what the hell did he say? I had an opportunity to go to George [inaudible] High School. I had the opportunity to go to a whole number of schools in New York City because there's no way that they could have and concluded this is the best that this country could do in urban education. Now, the truth is, though, I could take you on a picture of schools in New York City, and I could show you some of the best public schools in the country right there in New York City, many of which serve very poor children.
But I could also take you to some of the worst schools in the country or in the world, schools that are so bad that a few years ago, New York City was so desperate for teachers, think about the irony here, so desperate for teachers that we were recruiting teachers in Jamaica, in the Philippines, in Spain. Look at the irony, that this country with our vast resource, our great universities, we can't produce teachers. We have to go recruit from the Third World teachers. And they were recruiting teachers and promising them salaries four times higher than they would normally make and a Green Card. You know what's happening? After one year, those teachers said, we're going back home. It's not worth the money to work under those conditions. I had a friend who lived at [inaudible] that liked to say, we don't have a shortage of teachers, we have a shortage of people willing to work in those schools under those conditions. That's the problem. And just claiming that we've solved it doesn't usually get us very far. But that's the kind of game we're playing politically right now. So Mayor Bloomberg claimed to have solved urban education so much that he's about to run for president on the fact that he solved New York City's public school problem. Except no one is actually looking at what's going on in schools. And even [inaudible]. They're about to, in New York City, initiate a new proposal to retain eighth graders who are not yet--who can't pass the Regents, are not at grade level. And they've deduced that they don't want kids to enter high school unprepared. That makes a lot of sense. We shouldn't want kids in high school unprepared. Except that all of the data shows and all of the research shows that when you [inaudible] a child in children, you increase, particularly in middle school, you increase the likelihood of dropout. What's more is why should we think another year of what they just failed at is an intervention? That is, no one has ever asked this very simple question. When did we first notice they weren't making progress? Was it eighth grade or second grade? And if we notice in second grade, why didn't we do something then? Why would we wait until they're in eighth grade to say, this kid can't read? And someone needs to make sure they're reading because the simple fact is that in so many of our schools, basic fundamental questions about the quality of education provided to kids aren't being asked. Like are they learning? And if not, why not? And that seems like so fundamental. It seems like common sense. As my brother, who was a cop from New York City for 27 years like to say, common sense really isn't that dumb, especially when it comes to education. Because so much of what we do in the name of reforming schools never gets at the basic issues facing schools. I'll give you another example. Gates Foundation has spent close to $1 billion in the last seven years to make schools smaller, that there's research out there that when schools are smaller, somehow the quality of learning improves. I say somehow because the connection between the size and learning is a very ambiguous one, at best. Very few direct relationships. In fact, you could also argue, because the so-called best high schools in New York City are also the largest high schools. Sidenson [phonetic] High School, Bronx Hines [phonetic] have close to 5,000 kids. No one's talking about making them small. But Gates has spent, in New York City alone, $100 million to create small schools. Now, over seven years after doing this, Gates is realizing, guess what? $1 billion wasted because it takes more than making it small to make it better. Because just because it's smaller doesn't mean the quality of teaching improves. Just because it's smaller
doesn't mean that teachers actually know and understand how to teach the kids now. Just because it's smaller doesn't mean the teachers get the support they need to teach those kids. But they spent all of this money to reorganize, restructure the schools. We spend millions each year to change the curriculum, the latest math curriculum, we get new textbooks, new training for teachers on having some new math curriculum or the new reading curriculum. And every few years, it changes, doesn't it? Teachers out there? And we almost never ask before we change it, what was wrong with the last one?

Teachers start by, before you change everything, saying, what happened with the last one? But we don't. So we spend money on reforms, and rarely ask basic questions about what works, what doesn't work, we rarely look at the data. And not surprisingly [inaudible]. And most of that sense is mostly educators themselves. Talk to teachers about reform. If they don't go to sleep right away, they're more likely to just say, what's the flavor of the month? What's the reform of the month? Because every time we have a new governor, new reforms. New superintendent, new reforms. New board, new reforms. New principal, new reforms. My colleague, I cannot call his name right now, Charles Payne, just wrote a book called So Much Reform, Why So Little Change, about the Chicago Public Schools. He asked the same question. Why do we put so much money into reforming and restructuring, changing the curriculum, changing professional development, and so little change in basic outcomes for kids, like the graduation rate? And what he finds is the same thing that Seymour Sarason found when he wrote the book, The Culture of School and the Problem of Change back in 1972. And that is that you don't change the culture of that school. And by culture, I mean attitudes, beliefs, relationships, the norms that are operative in the way they do things, nothing will change, nothing will change. And why does culture matter? Because in too many of our schools, there is a culture of blame. What does the culture of blame look like? We blame the parents. We blame the kids. We blame the teachers. We blame the principal. Blame the superintendent. Blame the school board. Blame the governor. Blame global warming. You can get real sophisticated about it, can't you? And depending upon who you are, you tend to blame somebody else, don't you? Guess what? In the schools that are high performing and serving high-need kids, what you find is a call to responsibility. That means a responsibility for the kids we educate. We don't make excuses and wait for our parents to send us some different kids. We accept the responsibility. And this is why context matters because they actually spend time asking a basic and fundamental question. And that is, who are the kids we serve? And what would it take to educate them? See, it's so simple, huh? Now, I said a little while ago that common sense is a scarce resource. I will also say this, that in other ways, common sense is an obstacle to change. Because it is sometimes that common sense assumptions we have about race and socio-economic status and ability that get in the way of creating powerful schools. Because if you live in America for too long, you can start to believe that if a kid is black or Latino or poor and white or comes from a single-parent household, that those kids simply can't learn as much. Because that's the pattern in lots of our schools. In fact, that's the pattern. Each teacher will say the strongest predictor for how well a student will do in school, family income,
income combined with maternal education, how much education a mother had will be a strong predictor for how well that child will do not only in school, but in college as well. Since we don't control family income and mother's education, well, not a whole lot schools can do about that. And if you believe that not a lot of schools can do about that, then chances are, they won't. But if I took you to PS188 right now on the lower east side, where all of the kids are poor, all of the kids are black and Latino, live in the house [inaudible] next door, 30% of the kids are homeless, you might be shocked to find that it's also one of the highest performing elementary schools in New York City. What's different? What's different is they don't make excuses for who they serve. They don't blame parents. They ask, how can we work with these parents? They don't look at the kids and say what the kids can't do. They ask, what are the strengths these kids bring and how can we build upon these strengths? Because these schools don't think they're in the business of simply measuring ability and sorting accordingly. They are in the business of cultivating talent in children. And if you see yourself as being in the business of cultivating talented children, then you don't do something that many schools do. You know what many schools do? They assign their best teachers to teach the highest achieving kids, and the least experienced or least effective teachers to teach remedious [phonetic] kids. New York City calls that the urban teaching fellows program. They take people with almost no training, give them six weeks and put them in the high-need schools. And then they wonder, why did they give up? Why don't they last? Well, is there any research anywhere in the world that would tell you that strategy will work? No. In fact, the opposite is true. If you're going to teach high-need kids, you need more training, more preparation, more support, better conditions to be successful. But that's not how we approach it. So we set teachers up for failure. We set kids up for failure by putting them in conditions that we knew from the very beginning it would take an awfully resilient kid or teacher to make it through there successfully. And sometimes they do. Every once in a while, we'll see a kid who comes from this--they actually made a movie about a kid like that. Homeless girl, drunk, drug addict parent, ended up at Harvard University. They had to make a movie about that one. They had to make a movie. That is so rare. Why? Because most high-achieving kid have parents who are behind them, who are pushing them, who are encouraging them, and are lucky enough to go to schools where someone cares about them and is competent enough to know how to teach them. It doesn't mean that not a whole bunch of other kids out there who under the right circumstances couldn't also have performed and produced and achieved, because they could, and that's what [inaudible]. A bunch of other schools I could name that describe, show us it can be done. The question is, why do we settle for what we have? Why do we settle for what we have? Why is it that only eight years after No Child Behind was enacted into law, we still have so many children left behind? Something is wrong. Well, I would say one of the starting points of what's wrong is we don't even understand what it takes. And it starts even with the very slogan itself. That slogan, No Child Left Behind, did not come from the Bush Administration. It came from the Children's Defense Fund. But when Marion Wright Adelmann and her colleagues came up with the slogan, no child, leave no child behind, it didn't mean test the kid as frequently as possible. What it meant was in a wealthy nation, we should ensure that the basic needs of all
children are met. Health, nutrition, safety, all right? Maslow called a hierarchy of human needs the base of that hierarchy. Well, guess what? For a large number of kid in America, the base of that hierarchy is totally [inaudible]. We are serving kids who come to school hungry, kids who haven't seen a doctor, haven't seen a dentist, kids who have trouble reading, not because they can't read, but because they can't see. They need their eyeglasses. [Inaudible] Can you actually see the board? I was talking to a principal in Los Angeles of the second largest middle school in the United States. He has 4,700 kids in his middle school. Think about that for middle schools. I was trying to understand, how do you run a school of this size? I said, how do you do this? He said, well, it's tough to test these students. He's supposed to administer the state examinations. And I had a hunch there was a real problem with my school. And I asked my teachers that morning the day before to see if they could identify kids who could not take the test because they couldn't see it. They said, what do you mean they couldn't see it? He said, well, we literally have some kids whose eyesight is so poor, they were holding their test up to their face. And that day alone, we identified there were 60 kids whose sight was so poor, they could not see the test in front of them. Hard to read if you can't see. No provision in No Child Left Behind make sure it gives me glasses and they see a dentist, that they get their three square meals, that the FDA says they're supposed to get, right? Have a balanced diet. And because we have this impoverished view of education, this David Burline's [phonetic] term, is it surprising that we end up consistently so far behind so many other countries? Every time these rankings come out, the [inaudible] exam is done, and lo and behold, the United States is way behind. We're behind Canada. We're behind Norway. We're behind the English, the French. Last time it was done, we were behind Slovenia. That really pissed people off. They didn't know Slovenia was a country. We're behind Slovenia. But no one asked the next question. What do they do that we don't do? Some people think it's got some gimmicks, so now they think, let's do Singapore math. Singapore is always near the top. Yeah, I'm all for open, I'm open to new approaches on how we teach math. And [inaudible] evidence shows how we teach math and language. We could really improve if we, for example, did what Canadians do. Now the Canadians teach, make sure people can speak more than one language. They don't wait for them to get into high school to teach it. They start in kindergarten. And it also starts from a value they believe that speaking more than one language is a good thing. So they don't pass English-only or French-only laws. They think it's a valuable thing to speak more than one language. So we could learn a lot. But what we also need to learn from it, the fact that every one of those countries that's ahead of us, they also have universal healthcare and universal access to free schools and [inaudible]. There is a whole lot that the society does to support children and families so schools don't have to do it, so schools can actually focus on the academics. Because the simple truth is hungry kids have trouble concentrating. I worked in a school in Port Chester, New York, Edison Elementary. And it's a full-service school. They have onsite dental workers, social workers, after-school programs, evening classes for the adults. All of the kids are poor. All of the kids come from homes where English is not spoken as the main language. Another very high performance school. How do they do this?
field trip, a kindergarten teacher was helping a kid open his lunchbox and saw a jar of Anbesol in the lunchbox. She asked the kid, why is that there? And the kid opened his mouth and she saw this huge abscessed tooth. And just looking at it, she knew this child was in pain. So she went to the principal to tell her about the child. And she said, you know, we have lots of kids like this, whose parents don't have health insurance, aren't getting medical attention. We need to do something about it. And because this principal, like the principal at PS188, was a resourceful person, and realized that she lived in the United States of America. And the United States of America is a rich country. She figured there must be resources out there to help kids. And maybe what I need to do is figure out how to get some of those resources into my school. So they started writing grants and they started approaching local businesses. And they made sure they got onsite social workers and medical workers. And they have this full-service school. And because they are full-service school and they're not simply a welfare agency, they then started focusing on how do we meet their academic needs? And you know what's powerful about this school? They don't assume that because you don't speak English you're dumb. Guess what? A lot of schools, if you don't speak English, you are tracked into remedial classes and you will almost never get out. Because we make this assumption that not speaking English is a disability in a lot of our schools. And I can't tell you how many schools I visited where they have kids who don't speak English in bungalows out back taught by someone who is not even qualified to teach them. But Edison, PS188, their focus is how do we teach, how do we meet the needs of the kids we serve? So let me describe in a little more detail that strategy. What does that tell you? And before I do, just let me say, I was asked about three weeks ago to speak to the nation's governors, the National Governor's Association, so all 50 governors. I said, this is really an opportunity. I left vacation early to come. I said, I want to see the Schwarzenegger. See what--

Thought I'd see him too. And the topic they asked me to address was chronically underperforming schools. What should be done about them? What should the state [inaudible]? So I've actually written on this topic. So I sent them an article I had written called It Takes More Than Pressure and Humiliation to Improve Schools because under No Child Behind, what we do to schools that are not performing is put them on a list. And then we rank them. And we try to embarrass them into improving. If that doesn't work, then we threaten to shut them down. So the State of Florida took it a step further. They actually put letter grades on schools to let you know right upfront. Is it an A school or an F school? Now, I would think that [inaudible] has an F on the building and still allows kids to go there, the state should be sued, all right? They told you this was building was condemned, but have a nice time anyway. You should then go after the person who condemned the building. But that's what they think of as accountability. So I said, we need to
rethink accountability. We need to rethink standards. Because the way we conceive of standards right now, we have standards of what kids must do, but no standards for what the state must do. We have no standards for facilities. It should be the case that if your school is falling apart, you can't be in business, you can't educate these kids. If you don't have certified teachers who are certified in something to teach, they should not be in the classrooms. Sounds crazy, but we have standards for airports, we have standards for highways, we have standards for water, but no standards for schools. So we literally have schools in this country that are worse than you would find in that Third World countries in terms of conditions that are there. I said, you need to adopt some standards and hold yourself accountable to them. The government said, who hired this guy? What the hell is he talking about? And I said, secondly, you need to realize that the number one issue you're not addressing is poverty. Because all of those chronically underperforming schools are mostly serving poor kids. And you can't separate the issues related to poverty from the [inaudible]. So you have to be more strategic in how you address these schools. You can't just focus on academic standards. You have to make sure that schools are getting the support they need to address these other needs the kids have. By then, the governors were tired of me. But they did engage me for a long time. And I actually also pointed out that there's only one state in the country, and that governor was there, only one state in the country where the majority of children are in quality preschool. [Inaudible] It's not even one of the wealthy states, like New Jersey or Connecticut. It's Oklahoma. Oklahoma's not usually the first in anything except for football. They're first in preschool because for the last 10 years, they've invested in the public and private sector in ensuring that all kids, including very poor kids, have access to quality preschool. Because research shows it makes a difference. And we will see if I close the achievement gap, we will acknowledge that the gap begins before they get to us. That you address the needs early and make them easier to address those needs academically and beyond throughout life. Here is the crazy thing. Montessori, which I regard as one of the best early childhood education programs, started in Italy in the ghettos of Rome by Maria Montessori. But once it was imported here, it became almost exclusively available to most [inaudible] kids. That's not the origins. That's what it became here, for the most part. There are some exceptions. So we have this impoverished view of education that gets in the way of us doing more of what PS188 is doing or what many, many other schools that I can't name and describe for you, because, again, the existence of those schools is the proof that the problem is not the kids. And I have to keep saying that because I think part of the reason why there is not more outrage about what's going on is because of the common sense assumption that the reason why kids drop out is because they don't like school. They're lazy. They are budding criminals. And the reason why their achievement is low is because they're dumb and they have dumb parents, all right? And if that's the common sense explanation for what's going on, then what's the crisis? It's not a crisis. We blame the families for why the kids are not achieving. And we don't ask why is it that this rich nation can't do a better job of educating its people? A really basic fundamental question. So we have to spend more time learning from the schools that are showing us how it's done and really analyze what they
do. Ruby Pang [phonetic], who some of you may know, she's done this work on a framework for understanding poverty. And if you look closely at the framework, I would say it's really a very condescending way of looking at poor kids, poor families. And in fact, it's not what we need at all. What we need is a framework for great and [inaudible] who are breaking the cycle of poverty. And that looks very different than what she's offering the schools. That kind of framework has to begin by, starting by looking and asking the basic question, who are the kids, what are their needs, and what does it take to meet the needs? What are the skills that the teachers need? For example, if you are serving a large number of kids who don't speak English, then every teacher has to know how to work with kids who are learning English for the first time. If you serve a large number of kids with learning disabilities, then you can't rely on a Special Ed teacher. Every teacher needs to know how to work with kids with learning disabilities. And you have to have to teachers reporting to classrooms who do have that expertise with the other classroom teachers working together, figuring out how do we meet these needs? So you have to figure out how to build the capacity of the school, both to meet the non-academic needs, but also the academic needs. It also means knowing how do we build connections between the curriculum content that we've got to teach and the lives of the kids? How do we make it matter to them? Because when you're teaching middle class kids or affluent kids, you don't have to do that. Why don't you have to do that? Because they already get it. They understand the game. They do what's required of them. They get to go to college. They get access to the rewards. When you're teaching poor kids [inaudible]. Because they don't necessarily believe that education is their way to improve their lives. They have to be shown that with education, they can improve their lives for themselves and their families. And I would add, we have to do a better job at offering the possibility that if they work hard, if they're smart and if they're lucky, they can escape. Isn't that the message sometimes we send to poor kids? If you work hard enough, you will get to leave these people behind. Leave the ghetto, leave the trailer park. Which means they have to choose between ties to family and friends and community and individual success. And there are a whole lot of other kids out there that say, wait, I actually like my family. I don't want to leave. I like my community. I would rather be a part of that community. Why can't schools be a resource for that community? Why can't education serve as a means through which we can provide kids with schools, we resources that they can begin to address some of the challenges in their community? That would take a different kind of education, wouldn't it, than what we typically provide. It would take a different way of thinking about the curriculum too, a way that focuses less on passive learning and much more about problem solving. I'll give you an example. I had a student, this is a brand new teacher in America, a teacher, and I had gone to her school because they had asked me to help them, they were having trouble with discipline, and all of the teachers were going on about these are bad kids, bad kids, they are out of control, we need help. So finally I asked, I said, well, suppose you were a teacher in another country. What would you want to know before you went to that country? And the teachers came up with a whole list of things they thought they should know. They said, we should know about the history. We should know about the economy.
politics. We should know about culture. I said, okay, you should know that before you go to another country. Do you know those things about the community in where you work? Do you know about its history? Do you know about its resources, about the economy in this community? Do you know about the [inaudible] of institutions that are here? What do you know? And even though many of those teachers had been working for over 20 years, they knew very little. And that's because they perceive the community as a threat, as dangerous, as a place to be avoided. They thought they knew, but they knew about the problems they heard about. They didn't know really anything. They couldn't even tell me [inaudible]. They couldn't tell me whether there was a park or a library in the neighborhood. So I said, well, let's go on a field trip. So the next day, we got a van, and we drove through the community. I knew this pretty well. I was able to give them a little tour, show them, you know, where the libraries were, where the supermarket was. We went through the projects, saw the kids. They would say, hey, this is so and so, wave to us. Got back to the school. And almost every teacher said to me the same thing, you had no right to put us through that. People were looking at us. We felt out of place. We were embarrassed. We were like tourists. We don't need your help. We've been working here for 20 years and we have a normal community. Go back to Berkeley. We don't need you here. The exception was this one teacher [inaudible]. She comes up to me and she says, I really saw something that I think could help me. I said, what's that? She said, well, I'm going to teach environmental science this year. And I noticed that every family out there in their home I saw had a garden in the backyard. I said, what was significant about that? She said, well, I also noticed this community has lots of factories and surrounded by highways. And my suspicion is that people don't realize that the soil is [inaudible]. Because it's got lead in it. I'm going to design a whole unit about the effects of lead in the environment. So she does. And as a part of the unit, in addition to showing the kids how the lead goes from the atmosphere into the soil and the soil into the plants, and what happens when we eat the vegetables from our gardens, particularly for small children. She then teaches the kids how to do soil testing. And they go out to their neighborhood, and they start testing the soil and plotting the toxicity rates. And they come up with maps and they put red zones where the toxicity in the soil is greatest and most deathly. And after they produced this report, it grew as a report for a class, the affects of lead in the environment. The kids say to the teacher, we have to do something about this. We have to warn people about what's going on here. Because they don't know the dangers. The teacher said, you're right, we do need to do something about it. She said, let's send this report to the county health commissioner. They send the report to the county health commissioner who was so shocked to receive a report so beautiful coming from that school, which had a reputation for one of the worst schools. He said, I'm going to come visit. This is a class where kids present their report. He says, what I'm going to do right now is I'm going to send a letter to every household in this neighborhood warning them about the effects of lead in the soil and offer to provide re-topsoil to any household that wants it for the environment. Now, what's most important about this is what the kids learned. Because my bet is those kids will know about the effects of lead in the environment forever, won't they? But what's more, is those kids also saw that science can be a tool for
solving real problems in their lives. Bob Moses, the civil rights leader, has now decided that algebra is his battlefront because he knows that getting access to higher level math is the key to changing some of the patterns and the way to which we [inaudible] schools. Because in lots of schools, we systematically keep out disadvantaged kids from algebra, which is the gateway for us to high-level math. And the way he's going about it is he wrote a book. I encourage you to read it. [Inaudible] How do we teach higher level math to high-need kids? We do it by showing them how math is being used in everyday life. When we use examples from everyday life, we teach them the concepts that are so foundational to algebra and other forms of high-level math. When we can make these kinds of connections with kids, subjects that once seemed too far removed, too boring, too unengaging, suddenly take on new meaning for kids. And I would add that you don't only have to do it within the confines of the classroom. Last spring, I served as a judge for a competition called U.S. First. U.S. First is robotics competition. And kids make robots and they compete with other kids and do things with their robots. And they have [inaudible]. So I go to judge, I said I'm a judge, and I don't know nothing about robots. But there's 3,000 kids in the gym, in the auditorium. Music blasts. And these kids are excited about their robots. 68 teens. Group of kids from a school in the South Bronx called Eagle Academy came in sixth place. Now, sixth place is not good enough to make into the finals. The finals take place in the Georgia Dome, which is 10,000 kids. You have to be in the top three to get there. But they were thrilled they came in sixth place. And I was talking to them. I said, well, why are you guys so excited? They said, well, six out of sixty-eight is pretty good. They said, what's more is we got very little help from our teachers. I said, your teachers didn't help? They said, were too busy. I said, well, who helped you? They said, well, the first person to help us was the custodian. I said, the custodian helped you build a robot? They said, yeah, he kept getting us parts. They didn't know where the parts came from, but they kept coming.

What he could use for the robots. The boiler doesn't work anymore, but the robot is working just fine.

I said, well, who else helped you? They said, well, there was a volunteer engineer from the CBS Evening News who came at the school weekends. I said, you guys worked weekends? They said, we put in 12, 14 hour days, Saturday and Sunday working on this robot for months. And when you watch these kids work on their robot, one kid, if the alarm doesn't do what it's supposed to do, they go back to the drawing board and do the math before they could fix the arm. It's about applying math and physics in building and working with this robot. And this team of boys built this robot. And I'm saying, okay, so you [inaudible]. You came in sixth place. What's next? Every single one of those kids said, I want to do mechanical engineering. And they think they can, why?
Because they built the robot. How often do kids get a chance to see how to apply what they've learned, to be engaged and feel good about working hard in school? *I often say that, you know, I talked before about culture change. One of the main changes in culture that, for many kids, we have to make it cool to be smart. We have to make it cool to be smart. We got a chance to find ways to make kids care about learning. So much of our reform is focused on changing the adults, changing the teachers, helping to produce systems. And we have no strategies for changing and engaging the kids. And if we don't know how to get kids to care about learning, then guess what? There's a huge [inaudible] waiting that's not been addressed. As kids make decisions each and every day that affect their education. They decide whether or not to come, whether or not to come prepared, whether or not to come intoxicated, whether or not to do their work and apply themselves and persevere when it gets hard. All of those decisions affect their education. And I don't care how good the teacher is. I have never seen a teacher who can make kids learn. I have seen it in two places where they used to have corporal punishment. I've seen some teachers who make kids learn. *And since we don't have corporal punishment, for the most part in this country anymore, what I have seen is teachers who know how to make kids want to learn. Because they're so good at enticing them, so good at finding ways to build these connections, that even kids who come in unmotivated, disengaged, suddenly say, wow, this is some interesting shit going on. I had one of my former students, he's teaching English, and he's got to teach the standards. [Inaudible] He taught The Canterbury Tales. The kids have argued that they don't want to read The Canterbury Tales. We don't like this stuff. And he's going back and forth and losing the argument. Can't get the kids to read the book. Finally, one of the girls in the class said, I don't like this Chaucer because he's a sexist. He said, why is he a sexist? She said, reading and writing is for [inaudible] wenches. He said, well, how many of you think Chaucer is sexist? Oh, everybody raised their hand. They thought, well, this will get us out of Chaucer. Sexism is a serious charge. *He said, okay, everybody who thinks he is a sexist, we'll get him on trial. We'll put Chaucer on trial. So he creates a defense team, a prosecutor team, witnesses. Two weeks later, he said, Pedro, I want you to come see this trial in my classroom. I come in there. I thought it was an O.J. trial going on. I mean, these kids are passionately debating Chaucer. He didn't [inaudible]. They still had to read Chaucer. But he found a way to make Chaucer come to life and make it matter for them. When you see teachers who know how to engage kids at high levels, it's not because they dumb it down, they know how to make it accessible to kids. And that's why I say, it starts with a basic question. What does it take to educate the children we serve? Who are those kids? We know it takes human capital. They need skills, training, because that's what it will take for them to get jobs later on. And there is a practical issue out there that education matters. It does matter. Ask any economist. *Education tend to make more money, unless they start out with a lot of money, then it doesn't matter so much. They need the human capital. They also need what we call cultural capital or what you call cultural capital. Why do we need cultural capital? Because they have to understand that they live in a country where they're going to be judged by their characteristics. And even if they're smart, if they don't speak standard English, someone is going to judge them as
being less intelligent, less capable. If they don't know how to dress appropriately for an interview, someone is just going to look at them and decide, not the right person for a job. If they don't know how to speak to a police officer and not get defensive or angry, especially if that cop is being unfair, they could end up in serious trouble. Lisa Delpit calls this teaching the call to power. Guess what? The call to power are not on the--they're not on the same framework. They're not on the same framework. But if you don't know when standard English is called for, if you don't know when it's time to pull up your pants and take the hood off your head because no one who cared about you, who respected you, who you cared about and respected told you guess what, don't dress that way. You can dress that way with your friends when you're playing, but not when you're here or not when you go to an interview. Because if you don't teach kids that, what we find is their options are [inaudible]. And again, that's not part of the same framework. So we've got to figure out ways to teach that. And you can only teach that if you build strong relationships with kids. Because if the relationship is not strong and you tell them, and you correct their speech, what happens? They think you're putting them down. Tell them to pull up their pants, they think you don't like them. They're going to show you their whole bottom now, right? Doing the opposite of what you asked because your relationship is not stiff. They're doing it to get at you rather than to--they don't think you believe them. You've got to get kids these kinds of tools. We've also got to give them some social [inaudible]. Because one of the big differences between middle class and [inaudible] kids and poor kids is their connections. Talk to your [inaudible] kids here at Syracuse. Ask them what they do [inaudible]. And they'll tell you, whatever my father gets lined up for me, right? They'll say, my father's friend has got the job for me over here. You know, they're not [inaudible]. They're not [inaudible] that they're connected. There's a whole article in the Wall Street Journal today about lacrosse and how people who play lacrosse and go to serve schools like Duke and Princeton have an immediate access to Wall Street because that's where the alumni are and they sincerely approve lacrosse players. >> [ Inaudible ] >> Well, then you got--

^M00:56:30

[ Laughter ]

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But guess what? There's a whole lot of kids out there that think [inaudible]. They don't even know what that stick with a net is. They are not connected to influential people. And all of the research shows that social capital is a huge resource for individuals and communities. One of my colleagues did a book called Heat Wave. This question was asking, why is it that in the heat wave in 1986 in Chicago, certain people in certain neighborhoods died in much greater numbers than in other neighborhoods? Do you know what it's about? Social isolation. The people, the old people who are isolated, no one even knew that that lady was up in that apartment and it was 110 degrees and she couldn't get any fresh air because she was up there in her [inaudible]. Forgot about her and she died. But the people who are connected to family and
friends, they got taken out, they got aired out, they survived through the heat wave. Your connections make a difference. Different resources and access to opportunities. And we have poor kids out there that are not connected. They don't know what it's like to be in a community where how you dress for work, that you need an alarm clock, that you need a datebook to organize your schedule. They've never seen, they don't come from a house where there's books in the library. There's a program in Boston, now going national, called Citizen Schools. Citizen Schools is based on the idea of building social capital in poor kids. So what they do is they take kids who join Citizen Schools, and they match them with a mentor. The point of the mentoring is not merely to provide guidance and counseling. It's also to introduce them to a profession, a field of interest, and to someone who can write a letter of recommendation, who can point them in a direction.

[ Inaudible conversation ]

So what they do is they connect these kids to influential people. And I have to say that if we don't do that, kids are unable to imagine what's possible for them. One of the functions of being poor is that you are isolated. I was talking to some kids in Brooklyn, some elementary kids who had never been to the beach. What do you think of the irony there? Because Brooklyn is on an island. You can take the train at Coney Island to get to the beach. And these kids have never been to the beach. Why? Because it's often the case that when you're poor, you're staying in your neighborhood. You stay in your area that you know. We've got to get--education should expose kids to new opportunities, new possibilities, and to influential individuals who can help and provide access and do the things that affluent kids get. Open doors, create options. But that takes a broader vision about what it takes to educate children.

[ Silence ]

For our kids who come from working class and poor families, when did you first think you were going to college? And they'll tell you. They didn't even know how it works. They didn't even know how college works. They didn't know you had to get SATs. They didn't know anything. It was a total mystery for them. What courses you need to take, that you should even take an SAT prep class. We have kids out there, in most of our schools, we have a counselor to student ratio of 200, 300 kids. How much time do you get to spend with each kid? [ Inaudible ] Schedule. Who is going to help them figure out how to get to college? Ask the affluent kids who counseled them about college. What you will find is a lot of them don't even go to guidance counseling. They go to [inaudible] coaches now. I have a friend of mine who went to school with
me [inaudible] become a private counseling coach. He gets $8,000 per student. ^M01:05:03 He calls the admissions office. He helps them write the essay. Sometimes writes the essay if he gets paid well. And he places them in college. It's a placement service. And if you're wealthy enough, that's what you rely on. You don't rely on—the guidance counselor doesn't even know your name. We've got to figure out ways to level the playing field out there because it's not level at all. It's not just about who works hard. It's also about opportunities that are available to you. My colleague, Kristin Luker, wrote a book called Dubious Conceptions. The question she asked is why is it that middle class girls are less likely to have babies as teenagers than poor girls? And she finds through her research, she does lots of interviews with girls of all kinds, is that the answer to the question is not about sex. Sex is involved. But middle class girls [inaudible]. The difference is college. If you think you're going to college, you think having a baby at 15 is a bad idea. It doesn't make any sense. ^M01:06:12 If you're going nowhere and you come from a family where your mother had a child at 15, it makes total sense. In fact, you're [inaudible], and the girls are saying, well, if I have a baby, I'm going to get more serious. I'll be more disciplined now. And you're thinking, what is this 15-year-old thinking? And you have to remember, oh, that's right, they're 15, and they don't have any sense at all about what this is going to mean for their lives. ^M01:06:34 And we know statistically that when you have a baby as a teenager, the like that you're ending up poor increasing significantly. So we've got to talk early to kids about their future, about where they're going. And we've got to make that future accessible to them. We've got to talk not just with the promise of college. It has to come with a plan about how you're going to get there. It's got to start not in 11th or 12th grade. It's got to start in elementary school. It's got to include some exposure to people who are like them, who go to college now, so they can say, this is what it's like to be a college student. ^M01:07:12 There is a program in San Francisco called The Mega Boys Club. The Mega Boys Club targets young men in gangs, in the [inaudible] housing projects. It provides mentorship. And then every spring, takes those young men on a tour of college campuses, historically black campuses in the south. And every time they do that, the boys come back, I want to go to college because I saw some women at those colleges. If that's what it takes to get them excited about school, maybe it's a good strategy. But really what's involved is getting them to create different aspirations. I meet young people out there, particularly boys, who are not afraid of going to prison, who think that's likely where they end up. Not afraid. If you're not afraid of going to prison, probably not much out there that you're afraid of. ^M01:08:07 I meet young people who tell me they're not sure if they're going to live to 25. They're not afraid of that either. If we don't give them something concrete to aspire to and a plan on how to get there, it's very difficult to alter the outcome. Because those aspirations do influence decisions kids make right now. ^M01:08:28 So we've got to invest in those strategies as well. We've got to figure out ways to finally engage the parents. And I realize this may be the hardest of all because unlike the kids, you can push the kids around. Hard to push the parents around. That's what I always say to [inaudible]. A lot of people say, oh, yeah, we need more [inaudible]. I always come back and say, are you ready [inaudible]? Are you ready to have the parents of your poor kids, your low-achieving kids
behave like the parents of your high-achievers? They hadn't thought that through. When you talk to schools that serve affluent communities, and you ask them, who are you accountable to? You won't hear, superintendent or the board. You will hear the parents. We are accountable for the parents who serve. And how do I know that? Because if those parents are not satisfied, those parents are in their face. They are demanding what they believe their kids have a right to. Even if they're totally unrealistic. Sometimes those parents are being really difficult. They make all kinds of demands. But they feel entitled to it. Poor parents tend not to engage that way. Poor parents tend to be much more likely to trust us. Maybe not completely, but they send off their kids. They assume that we'll do the best we can with them. Sometimes that's a mistake. That they don't know we have the less skilled teachers with high-need kids. Now, not every school does that. Some schools have teachers that want to teach those kids, that became Special Ed teachers because they knew they had a calling, they had a commitment to these kids. Let me be very careful now and not [inaudible]. Because there are people out there who have been doing this work for a long time. But I go to too many schools where I find people who are clearly not competent, teaching high-need kids. And then they're asking, why aren't they achieving? You're asking why are they not achieving? Look who's in the classroom with them. I was at a school in Montclaire, Montclaire affluent, liberal community, meeting with principals about their achieving gap. And they said that a lot of times the gap is perpetuated by denying kids the opportunity to learn. And educators are often complicit in that denial. So the principal of the high school raised his hand and said, well, I'm new here. I said, I want to ask you a question. I said, I've noticed that there's a group of African-American boys who linger in the hallway every day after the bell rings. And people seem to accept it. No one does anything about it. Because I'm new here, I decided I'm going to find out why these kids aren't taking the time to go to class. So he says, I started following the kids. I'm following these boys and asking, why aren't you going to class? And I notice that they're walking to the basement. I said, what are you going to the basement for? That's what I want to know, why do you go to the basement? I go down to the basement with them, and I find out that's where the Special Ed classes are. And they're taking their time because they're embarrassed to be seen going into the basement because it's a stigma associated with being in the dumb classes in the basement. He says, do you think we need to get the Special Ed classes out of the basement? Now, the teachers question. But how long did they know that those classes were in the basement? How long did we know that we assign an incompetent teacher to teach high-need kids? Whether we put ESL kids in a bungalow out back, how long has this gone on and no one has said, hey, this is a set-up, this will never result in a change with outcome? If we are ready for parental involvement, we've got to be ready for parents to start asking us tough questions about what's going on in our schools. We've got to be ready to prepare our teachers to engage those parents as partners. Here is the truth about parents. The vast majority of parents, even the most dysfunctional parents I meet, it's very rare to meet a parent, when you ask that parent, would you like to see your child succeed or fail, they'll say I want them to fail. I choose failure for my child. I'd like to see them end up in jail one day. No. If we are ready for parental involvement, we've got to be ready for parents to start asking us tough questions about what's going on in our schools.
Most parents would like to see their child succeed. Doesn't mean they know how to help their child succeed. In fact, they, sometimes, are doing things that contribute to that child's failure. And I'll be the first to admit that a lot of [inaudible]. And who are negligent as parents or worse. We may not be able to make up for those parents or compensate for those parents, but there's a whole lot of other parents out there who really would like to see their kids achieve. Doesn't mean they know how to help them, but if we know what to provide, if we know what advice to give them on how they can help their kids, and we have to recognize that all parents, regardless of how much education they've had, can help their kids. ^M01:13:33 Neither of my parents graduated from high school. They sent all six of their kids to college at the best college in the country. Ben Carson, the brain surgeon, didn't find out until he was 90 years old that his mother was illiterate. Because every day when he came home, he had to show his homework to his mother even though she couldn't read it. But he knew she wanted to know. ^M01:13:55 If we tell our parents very simple things, make sure they get to school on time, make sure they get to bed on time, make sure there's a place for them to get their work done, ask them about their work. And if you can, read to them at night or read with them at night or read while they do their homework. There are lots of things that all parents can do and will be more likely to do if we ask them to. How we ask matters. If we do so in a patronizing and condescending way, it's hard to get the support we want back. If we do so with the recognition that we need it, then we can get better results. I'll close with this. ^M01:14:37

My colleague, [inaudible], when he was once a kindergarten teacher, he said he was doing parent-teacher conferences, and he started this conference with this simple statement. He said, you know more about your child than I do. What can you tell me to be a better teacher for your child? Tell me about your child. If you think about what that says to a parent, acknowledging their role and their knowledge. And even if that parent says, you know, I don't know what the hell to do with this child. The simple fact that we showed that kind of respect opens the door to the possibility of a partnership. And we need the parents because parents matter. ^M01:15:15 So let me be willing to acknowledge none of this is simple. Creating the kinds of schools we need to address the huge social problem this country faces is a major Herculean task. It's being done, though. It's being done at PS 188, it's being done at, I take you to Fenway High School in Boston. It's being done at lots of places, isolated places. And those places show us that it can be done, even with high-need kids. The reason why it's not being done in more places is largely due to a lack of will, a lack of commitment. And it is changing that political dynamic, ultimately, that will get us the schools we need. Thank you.

^M01:16:06

[ Applause ]

^M01:16:08
Okay, a couple of things. We will be able to take a few questions. This book is for sale just outside the door when you leave. And we have a gift for Pedro that he has to open right now.

^M01:16:25

[ Laughter and Applause ]

^M01:16:42

So I think we have time for a couple of questions or comments. >> Dr. Noguera, my question is about marketing. I know there is no simple answer. >> Why are you asking? >> But first of all, do you think that individual schools should have control over how their budget is allocated? And if not, why not? So what is the most critical [inaudible] control over? >> Well, I think the only equitable way to do it is to make sure that every child is getting similar amount of money. Or even more radical, dollars-based [inaudible] we're in trouble. Right now, we're the opposite. The kids who need less get more. And the kids who need more get less. Now, that's a very radical idea. It probably happens [inaudible]. Those who are in the back get to come up front. But I do think, I mean, New York City has now embarked on this very radical decentralization, where most of the accountability is on the principals. And the principals have a lot of control over how the dollars in their budget are spent. Now, they also have all of the accountability. And what they say in New York is if [inaudible]. And I can tell you, well [inaudible] willing principals waiting for their chance, and they don't. ^M01:18:15 So it's really a dumb strategy that way because they've taken inexperienced principals with inexperienced teachers and placed them in high-need schools with less resources. But I do think that principals should have a lot more control over the resources at their hand. And I think they also have to be accountable to their faculty and to their parents. I think [inaudible] make sense if we give them the resources and tools they need to have a chance at success. >> I have a question.

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[Inaudible]

^M01:18:54 One thing that I didn't hear and

I'd like to know what your thinking is about this. You mentioned [inaudible]. And I think you mentioned many, many more. >> Sure. >> What I didn't hear is how schools are sometimes ignoring color as a norm. And how does that fit in when a student does know almost more than the teacher knows that there's racism in the school? That there's something systematically wrong here, and the teachers are not recognizing that? >> Sure. >> And it's especially worse when they think that being, you know, ignoring color is, you know, the right thing to do. >> Sure. >> What are [inaudible]? ^M01:19:32

>> Well, for the [inaudible], I tried to say it, but I didn't attack it, was the question was the teachers ignoring color, and therefore, ignore the racism that kids may experience in their lives inside of school and
outside of school. I put it, we've got to know who we teach, right? And part of knowing it is really knowing them. And that means going beyond color and knowing about the circumstances in their lives and the challenges that they face. But also it means understanding how they're treated in the world, right? And whether that be in school or outside of school. I always say the most radical thing any of you can do is to listen to kids. Kids will tell you right away. They'll tell you who's teaching them, who's not, where they're learning, where they're not learning. And I think we're afraid to ask because we're afraid to doing something about the information. The kids will tell you, oh, is this so and so's parents? I've got to work. This class is a picnic. They'll tell you. They'll also tell you who's fair, who has high expectations, who doesn't is. What I also find is kids tend to be much less prejudice than adults, right? If you ask kids who are the best teachers, they will say, oh, the black teachers. The black kids [inaudible]. No, they're talking about the qualities of the person. And it doesn't matter what color that person is. If that person cares about them, challenges them, has high expectations, supports them, [inaudible] respond well to it. So the good news is any teacher, no matter the background, can be an effective teacher with all kinds of kids if they're going to empathize, if they're good at seeing beyond their own biases. I mean [inaudible] that do that. But they have to start by not ignoring the differences. You actually have to understand the differences. Any more? Yes?

>> You sort of slid away from the notion of reallocating resources in the state. >> Oh, okay. I was in Denver not long ago, and I was on this panel, and I said, we need preschool, we need after-school programs. So the [inaudible] well all of the teachers are saying to collect more money. Where is the money going to come from? Well, it can only come from one place, the prison system.

Because the prison system is absorbing all of these public dollars. Over half the people in prison are there for non-violent, drug-related offenses. And every dollar we spend to incarcerate [inaudible] we don't have education. I said, but there's not a single public official who will ever say [inaudible]. The governor of Colorado came on after me. And he started by saying he's right, I'm a former prosecutor, I know it, and that's where the money is and that's what we've got to do. I then thought, wow, what a bold statement. But you're governor. But he was leaving office. So it was such a shame that he realized that just as he was about to go on [inaudible]. But, I mean, we're just a major [inaudible]. We have whole towns upstate where the prison is their company catalyst. >> They're struggling to keep them open. >> They want to keep them open. Even if you and I [inaudible]. Because we need more prisoners up there. And I think we've got to get much more creative on how we stimulate this economy's, instead of relying on prisons, and we've got to realize that tax dollars that we're putting into prisons are just going down--I mean, our prisons are neither good at keeping us safe nor at rehabilitating the inmates. Prisons are breeding grounds for criminals. [ Inaudible ] In the last few years working with young people behind bars. And it's not a crime. I mean, the lost lives, the recidivism is 2/3 of those young men and women are back within two years. That's how good our prison self correction is. So we've got to really--
and these systems are connected. And we've got to figure out ways to get some of those resources out of there into health and education to begin to change the dynamic. >> Okay, we're out of time. Thanks so much.

^M01:23:42

[ Applause ]