

# **Out of the Tower, Into the Schools: How New IES Goals Will Reshape Researcher Roles**

**Words of welcome, thanks to the introducer.**

I'm going to tell you a few stories of how we came out of the Tower and into the school house in Chicago--how that has shaped my career as a researcher and my goals as director of IES in Washington DC. But first I want to introduce you to a successful Chicago principal who ran a high school just a mile from my old office at the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago. Our proximity and her enthusiasm for using our data and research to improve her South Side school inspired a productive and mutually beneficial partnership that I suspect is rather rare between practitioners and researchers. I want to spend a couple minutes so you can take a peek inside Kenwood Academy High School and listen to a few thoughts from Principal Liz Kirby.

**(slide 1: kenwood)**

About 90 percent of the 1,700 students who attend Kenwood are African American; about three quarters are from low-income families. Kenwood offers magnet programs to which students apply, but draws its enrollment from the neighborhood. This year Kenwood was recognized by US News and World Report as a Silver Medal School

because of its rating on a College Readiness Index, which essentially looks at student success in advanced coursework such as AP, while taking into account the student demographics. In a decade, the school's freshman on-track rate—an indicator that is a critical predictor of high school graduation—went up nearly 20 points—from 51 to 72 percent. These kinds of results do not happen in a vacuum. On surveys, 91 percent of students report that the school does an excellent or adequate job on academic rigor—their teachers and other adults in the building believe in students and encourage them to think, work hard, and do their best. About as many students—89 percent—report that the adults at Kenwood listen to them, care about them or treat them fairly. I know it sounds like something that should be an expectation in every high school—but we know this isn't the case, and these kinds of responses are well above the average in Chicago, especially in its neighborhood high schools.

**(Video Clip- 2 minutes- Liz Kirby and footage of Kenwood)**

So now that you've seen Kenwood, let me tell you how this partnership worked. In 2007 my colleague Elaine Allensworth and I published a report about what matters for staying on track and graduating from Chicago Public Schools. The report pointed to the elements of school performance that predict whether students will graduate – namely freshman grades and attendance. The dropout problem can feel overwhelming to address because its causes are myriad and complex. But this report highlighted important predictors that were tangible, measurable and within a school's control. We

talked to a lot of school leaders about this report, but we also wanted to reach out to parents. So Elaine visited Kenwood during a summer orientation meeting, to meet with parents of incoming freshmen. They were sitting in the darkened auditorium, fanning themselves with the thick folders of school rules and course requirements, and this slide flashed on the screen.

**(Slide 2, graduation rates)**

This shows the difference that just a week of absences can make—miss more than one week a semester as a freshman, and the probability of graduating drops from 87 to 63 percent; miss more than two weeks in a semester, the probability drops from 63 to 41 percent. Parents saw this, and they gasped audibly. Now, that’s a rare thrill for a researcher, let me tell you, hearing parents react that way to a figure from a research study. And as Liz Kirby explained in that film clip, she started using this research to re-think her priorities and the decisions she made every day. She later told us she cut out that figure and taped it to the side of her computer. And every time she had to make a decision about suspending a student for a week or two weeks, she asked herself: “Is this discipline worth the harm of this student missing 35, or 70 classes? Is it worth risking this student’s chances of graduating?” Principals across Chicago started asking that same question, because they know suspensions contribute to the high absentee rate of Chicago freshman, 40 percent of whom miss more than four weeks of school in their first year. But Kirby did more than ask the question; she changed her suspension policy

for all but the most serious infractions. Instead of sending the students home for three days or a week, she asked parents to come to school and follow them from class to class. If the parents questioned her tactics, she showed them the research about the importance of attendance to graduating. And Kirby found that most parents agreed. After all, can you imagine a more devastating consequence for a 14 year old than have his mom sitting next to him in algebra?

Now, remember, this wasn't about a researcher coming into a high school with a new "program" for improving graduation rates. This was about shining a light, giving principals the data they need to connect the dots, supporting them as they searched for their own solutions to their toughest challenges.

Let me mention a few other examples of how this partnership worked to create a body of relevant research that influenced policy – both from the top down and the bottom up.

Several years ago, Chicago's school leaders announced a new policy goal: To significantly increase the number of high school students graduating with an ACT score of 20 or above—a score that would give students access to most public colleges in Illinois. They asked for the Consortium's help in analyzing years of data to understand what it would take to meet this goal, and then asked us to present our findings to senior administrators.

**(slide 3 here-ACT scores/8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

About halfway through my presentation I showed to this complex graph that demonstrated the likelihood of reaching 20 on the ACT given 8<sup>th</sup> grade state test scores. You will note that as 8<sup>th</sup> grade scores go up on the horizontal axis so does the likelihood of reaching 20 on the ACT three years later. This is not surprising. Nor is it surprising to learn that students who exceeded state standards had a pretty good shot at reaching 20. What was very surprising was that students who met the state standard had less than a 10 percent chance of reaching 20 on the ACT. We had been telling our schools, students and their parents that they were doing well when in fact they weren't.

Here was a finding that revealed a yawning disconnect between elementary school standards and the demand on high schools to produce college-ready students. Here was a finding that illuminated the nature of a major problem in a new way and gave these school administrators a better sense of how to address their new policy goal and understand the paradox of apparent strong performance in elementary schools in contrast to weak high school performance.

But it also convinced elementary principals that they had a stake in what was happening to their students in high school – that just “meeting standards” (or achieving proficiency) on Illinois’ accountability exams does not mean they are prepared for high school work or college entrance exams.

And sometimes we delivered news policy leaders and practitioners did not want to hear.

**(Slide 4, ACT test prep)**

Here was a study we released in 2008, showing that schools that devoted months of class time to ACT test preparation were not helping students do better on the exam. In fact, in some cases, the test prep was hurting student scores, because it was taking time away from regular course instruction. This was a hard message to swallow for teachers because they want to help their kids do better on these tests. And even principals and teachers who hated putting lesson plans on hold for months to practice test questions were under tremendous pressure to improve scores. This study offered no easy solutions: Good grades. Demanding instruction. An environment focused on preparing students for college.

Still, Elaine Allensworth delivered this unwelcome news to every HS principal and area superintendent in Chicago during six regional meetings. And we discovered that there were a few messages they COULD bring take home to their schools: Give the students more timed tests and fewer practice questions. Or offer test prep after school instead of during class.

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My work in Chicago convinced me that effective education research must be guided by the voice and interests of practitioners and policy makers. If we researchers want our work to be relevant, our connection to schools needs to go FAR beyond just gathering

data and observing students and teachers. We need to spend time in schools talking with administrators and teachers before and after studies about the challenges they face; we need to reach out to policymakers; we need to collaborate with researchers outside our own expertise.

It is this commitment – supporting top-notch education research that matters to schools and improves educational outcomes for children – that will drive our work at the Institute of Education Sciences over the next five years of my term.

Before I went to Washington almost a year ago, I devoted my entire career to analyzing data, researching reform and school improvement efforts, and working with members of Chicago’s education community to make those findings useful. I spent 12 years at the University of Chicago, first as deputy director and then as executive director at the Consortium on Chicago School Research. The consortium’s national reputation was built on the strength of a deep bench of top-notch researchers, who are committed to a very different model of education research. These researchers are not content to just publish reports and disseminate findings; as you’ve heard, they help principals, teachers and district leaders understand how to use the research to improve their schools.

During some of the Consortium’s most productive years, we worked closely with Arne Duncan, who was Chicago’s school chief for more than seven years until he left last year to become secretary of education. Some of the most important reforms in Chicago were a direct result of that partnership -- helping to fine tune the controversial policy for

ending social promotions; keeping freshman on track and trying to dramatically raise graduation rates; tracking college enrollment and completion; developing a growth model to measure student achievement; and thinking very differently about how to turn around under-performing schools. What Arne asked of me then is what he expects from IES now: “to tell us the cold, hard truth, without regard to ideology or politics.” (*Duncan speech to IES Conference, 2009*).

**(slide 5, five themes)**

I’m going to spend the remainder of my time today talking about five broad themes, issues that will shape IES during my next five years and I hope inspire a new vision of the responsibility researchers share to better connect their work to schools and practitioners: The first will be one I’ve spent a whole lot of time talking about—the critical need to make our more work more relevant to policy leaders and educators working on the ground to make a difference in the lives of school children need; I will explore how we should move our work from a focus on developing and validating interventions and programs to understanding schools as organizations; I will explain why we need to expand our repertoire of rigorous methodologies and create new measures that can help guide states/districts make sense of an ocean of new data; I will reflect briefly on the burning research question of “teaching quality”—what we need to know more about; finally, I will call on you to help train and inspire a new generation of researchers.

Let me say this first: IES has done a fabulous job over its short history in increasing the scientific rigor of our work, by demanding stronger methodologies and a greater capacity to make causal inferences, and by training researchers across the nation in these rigorous standards. By doing so, it raised the bar for all education research and evaluation nationwide. We got the “rigor” part right. And I am not retreating from that. But now it’s time to focus on relevance and usability. We've got to bring the same determination, the same effort, the same energy, to making sure that our work matters to schools. One of the key ways to do that is to truly engage practitioners and policymakers in our work at the ground level -- not when it's done and we want it to be translated, or we want it to be applied, but as we envision it, as we plan it and conduct it.

What does this look like on the federal level? It could look like the work of NAGB, the Governing Board for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. With a wide range of voices at the table, this board has pushed to make NAEP more responsive and more useable.

**(Slide 6, NAEP page)**

The NAEP reports present complex analysis and a mountain of data in really accessible ways that are attuned to the needs of practitioners and policymakers. That's the kind of a model we could bring to IES as we strive to become more relevant and produce knowledge that is widely used in schools. In this vein, we’re very excited to move

forward with a major new initiative for us -- evaluating the impact of ARRA, the federal stimulus funds for education. We will be conducting impact studies of school turnarounds and evaluating the Teacher Incentive Fund programs. With this project, we are really putting our money where our mouth is, because this is going to be a test for us. We want IES to be a key player in learning more about school improvement and communicating our findings in a compelling fashion to those who need to hear from us the most. We cannot squander this incredible opportunity to learn from these reform strategies.

As we make this push toward relevance, I want to shift the conversation away from disseminating research findings to facilitating the use of research, as Liz Kirby described. The key to this difference is, again, a closer partnership with practitioners and policy makers, and the commitment on the part of researchers to assist in school improvement efforts. That means we're not just dropping research findings on schools and saying, "Here's good stuff that you need to use." Rather, we invite practitioners and policy makers to the table from the beginning, so we're studying the right problems of practice, and so research is not something we're doing *to* them. They're at the table, so they understand the work and are more able and invested in adopting some of these findings. We also want our publications and reports to reach this critical audience of practitioners and policy makers, to be written in an accessible way and convey findings that are timely and meaningful to their day-to-day work.

When I think about what this facilitation looks like on the ground, I think of the work of Harvard researcher Catherine Snow, and a project called: Strategic Education Research Partnership.

**(Slide 7, Vocabulary)**

Catherine and her team went to district educators in Boston and asked: How can our knowledge about reading instruction help your schools? Educators identified academic vocabulary development among middle schoolers, and Snow and her team of researchers created a vocabulary program in collaboration with their school partners that would support this priority. The program was designed to create a coherent school-wide effort that demystifies the process of teaching vocabulary and gives students sustained exposure to academic language they need for success in school— words like confirm, hypothesis, theory, evidently. Early findings are promising.

The Chicago work around postsecondary access and success, led by Melissa Roderick, illustrates what happens when researchers identify a problem crying to be fixed... then work with district leaders to find out why it's happening and how it can be fixed.

**(Slide 8, Chicago Tribune headline)**

Since 2004, CCSR has tracked the postsecondary experiences of successive cohorts of Chicago graduates and examined the relationship among high school preparation, support, college choice, and postsecondary outcomes. The goal of this research is to help Chicago Public Schools, other urban districts and national policy makers understand

what it takes to improve the college outcomes for urban and other at-risk students who now overwhelmingly aspire to college. After the shock of these early findings and glaring headlines, district leaders and researchers started tackling some of the unresolved issues identified in the first report; namely, why students tend to enroll in a limited number of colleges – especially ones with such low graduation rates -- and why college enrollment varies so dramatically across different high schools and racial groups. The study relied on qualitative and quantitative data —student and teacher surveys, transcripts, college enrollment data reported by the National Student Clearinghouse, and student interviews. Melissa’s team also spent nearly two years interviewing and tracking the academic progress of 105 students in three high schools.

**(Slide 9, of FAFSA findings)**

One finding surfaced early during the four year study—the importance of filing a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), an important predictor of whether students ultimately enrolled in college. Among students who were accepted into a four-year college, the analysis revealed that 84 percent of those who completed a FAFSA ultimately enrolled in college—compared to 55 percent who didn’t fill out a FAFSA. The research team shared this finding more than a year before the report was finalized, and the school leaders were able to respond with a proactive fix, creating a financial aid tracking system allowed all Chicago high schools to get daily updates on their students’ filing status. Schools started paying attention to this, and the percentage of students

completing FAFSAs (by June 30) jumped from 45 percent in 2007 to 69 percent in 2009.

College enrollment in Chicago increased from 48 to 53 percent in two years.

How can we inspire these kinds of partnerships at the federal level? Some of this has already started to take shape across the Department of Education—in new state/district/research collaboratives proposed in Race to the Top applications and in innovation grants that offer money to districts that want to explore a promising reform idea but must partner with outside researchers to study its efficacy. We have been building language into our Request For Applications that explicitly encourage—and in some cases require—collaboration between researchers and schools. And we are thinking hard about what role our 10 regional labs will have in promoting these partnerships, because these 10 labs are our closest link to state and local education agencies.

You probably know that IES has focused much of its research grants on developing and then validating programs or interventions, in the hope that these can then be scaled up to have broad impacts. Yet, I believe that IES also needs to help the field develop stronger understandings of schools as organizations, how schools and districts improve, and how they become learning organizations. I am not at all convinced that good schools are the sum of discrete programs and interventions. Instead, good schools are learning organizations that value strong leadership; encourage and support innovation; use data for continuous improvement; hire good teachers, support and develop them,

and encourage their collaborative efforts; and make good programmatic decisions and constantly change, tweak and revise. I mention these ideas in almost every talk I give and often refer to the work of my friend and colleague Charles Payne, whose book *So Much Reform, So Little Change*, explores why even the most promising interventions fail at dysfunctional urban schools. The analysis looks closely at schools in highly impoverished neighborhoods that have too much student turnover and too few strong leaders and high-quality teachers. These schools often think they can solve their problems by buying new programs. You know, schools are inundated with salespeople who are selling programs, some of which have a good evidence base, but many of which do not. All too often, these “miracle” programs don’t produce a single miracle – because, as we have learned from all these depressing failures, you can’t string together a bunch of disconnected programs and call it a school improvement strategy. Michael Fullan echoes this theme in his book *All Systems Go: The Change Imperative for Whole System Reform*: “The solution is not a program; it is a small set of common principles and practices relentlessly pursued. What I am finding in our work is that the strongest solutions consist of going from practice to theory. Effective practitioners are critical consumers of research and not implementers of research findings.”

One theme that I hear regularly at IES and elsewhere is that many of our disappointing evaluation results come about because programs are not implemented correctly or with fidelity. What this means, I suspect, is that we don’t fully understand the underlying

principles, processes and mechanisms that we are trying to enact and how important context and setting are for how these play out. That's why we also need to learn more about factors that facilitate or hinder development of schools as learning organizations. Dick Murnane argues that yes, good programs and good curricula can help schools move up a notch. It can help them solve very specific problems. But it's not going to transform them into really good schools. Struggling schools are transformed when they become learning organizations. Learning organizations understand how to implement promising programs in a way that insures they can be embraced by staff and sustained over time.

**(Slide 10, Data Wise)**

In his 2004 book *Data Wise*, Murnane outlines an eight step strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning. He argues that examining test scores and other classroom data can become a catalyst for important school-wide conversations that will enhance schools' ability to capture teachers' knowledge, foster collaboration, identify obstacles to change, and enhance school culture and climate – In other words, harnessing all the components crucial to becoming a learning organization.

Last month IES announced a new grant program that attempts to dig deeper at this very question -- the organization and management of schools and districts. Researchers who apply will study the organizational factors, such as the coherence of the instructional program, the degree of trust in a school, or how teachers learn from one another, that contribute to successful schools.

Going forward as we shape our new grant programs and priorities, we will expect our funded researchers and our evaluation contractors to better understand educational and learning processes and the mechanisms through which schooling policies and practices affect students. This means looking beyond what works and what doesn't, but "how?" and "why?" and "for whom?" and "under what conditions?" This will require supporting research on the effects of practices and programs on different subgroups of students, testing hypotheses regarding mediating processes and mechanisms, studying the roles of classroom, school, and social contexts in moderating the effects of policies and practices.

We have an important study coming out in the next few months—a large-scale RCT on Charter School impacts.

**(Slide 11, Charter School)**

But this study will not simply say whether or not our sample of charter schools improved student outcomes; it will explore under which conditions charter schools could improve outcomes, and for which groups of students. It will provide some context about where the findings from this study fit into a large body of research on this subject. And given the incredible interest in this subject, we are taking pains to write the executive summary in a way that is clear, succinct and accessible.

And if we are asking our research to answer more complex questions, it also means we must expand our repertoire of rigorous methodologies. Moving forward, I believe IES

should investigate mechanisms and moderators using data from randomized trials; allow for the analysis and use of quasi- and non-experimental evidence for studying schooling processes and context; and measure program implementation, fidelity and sustainability. We can apply the same effort to building rigor into these methods as we have to RCTs.

Inadequate measurement of schooling processes and outcomes remains a substantial limitation to much educational research. Going forward, I think that IES should support more work aimed at improving the measurement of both key aspects of educational processes and expanded set of outcomes. In particular, IES should promote the development of more and better measurement instruments and systems for measuring: 1) a broader range of student cognitive outcomes, including higher-order thinking ; 2) important other cognitive and dispositional outcomes such as student self-regulation and perseverance; 3) classroom and instructional processes; 4) district, school, and classroom processes related to program implementation, fidelity and enactment; and 5) district- and school-level leadership and organizational structures (for example, teacher hiring and placement systems).

Let me give you a few examples of what I mean by these.

**(Slide 12, Essential Supports)**

My colleagues Tony Bryk, Penny Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu and I worked for about a decade on a research project in Chicago that culminated in a book

called *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago* that was published early this winter. Taking advantage of a natural experiment in the Chicago Public Schools that was created by school decentralization and by careful and consistent measurement of many variables over time, we identified a set of key factors that we assert are responsible for whether schools made consistent gains in student learning over time or not. We call the factors the five essential supports for school improvement. This slide shows four of these supports (the fifth is quality instruction) and some of the variables that we used to measure them. Let me talk a bit about one of them, one of my favorites, called collective responsibility. This highly reliable seven-item scale includes questions such as: How many teachers in this school help maintain discipline in the entire school, not just their classrooms? Feel responsible to help each other do their best? Feel responsible that all students learn? As you can see from the slide, schools that are strong on this variable in a base year improve value-added student performance by two-tenths of a standard deviation more than schools that are weak, and that schools that actually develop stronger collective responsibility improve student value-added by about a tenth of a standard deviation. Variables like this one are what I mean by a school-level organizational factor that is so vital to building a strong, robust school.

**(Slide 13, Grit scale)**

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Let me say a little bit about another variable, this one a dispositional outcome. Angela Duckworth, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, developed a scale that reliably measures a trait shared by many successful people: Grit, or the ability to set a specific long-term goal and do whatever it takes until the goal has been reached. This scale has been used in many scientific studies that compare the relative importance of grit, intelligence, and innate talent when it comes to determining achievement.

Duckworth told the Boston Globe: “I’d bet that there isn’t a single highly successful person who hasn’t depended on grit.”

I want IES to expand its range of student outcomes to include important variables like grit, which predict positive outcomes over and above student achievement and intelligence. We need to learn how our schools promote these characteristics in students as well.

When I was in Chicago, I met regularly with teachers and principals from across the city. Arne assembled a group of 25 top-notch teachers each year, The University of Chicago supported a network of teachers from the south side, and my colleague Melissa Roderick led a principals’ network that I joined at frequent meetings. These were disparate groups representing both young and new to the field; others, experienced veterans from very different settings—all with distinctly different challenges. Although each of these groups had their own purpose, for me they provided wonderful opportunities to discuss my current research, provide technical assistance, but mostly to

gather feedback and input to inform our work and our outreach strategies. The discussions with bright and energetic teachers proved a powerful reminder: teachers have a very potent influence on student achievement. I won't reiterate the ample research on this topic, but by now it is well demonstrated that, yes, teachers matter greatly when it comes to student achievement. There are very great differences in student learning from one teacher to another.

What we don't know very well is what factors are associated with this variability. The one fact that researchers can agree on is that novice teachers don't do as well as more experienced ones. It also looks like the variables most commonly used on teacher pay scales – experience beyond the first couple of years and advanced degrees are not associated with student learning.

There seems to be a pretty wide gap now in the policy community about how to respond to this research. If I can exaggerate these differences, one camp advocates using value-added results to identify good or bad teachers and reward the good ones and remove the bad ones. On the other hand, another group is focused on better professional development, more effective teacher evaluation systems, and stronger teacher preparation. We agree that classroom instruction is the core of the schooling processes. Yet, the knowledge base regarding what constitutes quality teaching, how to identify it, and how to better train teachers remains thin, even as recent research has demonstrated the importance of quality teaching. I want IES to support more research

focused on understanding “quality teaching,” including research on how to better train current and prospective teachers.

For example, we have two studies funded out of NCER that are exploring these questions in new ways: one researcher is using video clips of classroom instruction as item prompts to measure teacher knowledge of teaching mathematics; another is testing a collaboration between university scientists and high school science teachers to develop cutting-edge biology labs, covering subjects such as protein transformation, and pharmacy & enzymes.

Such research, in conjunction with the current focus on the identification, recruitment, and retention of “quality teachers,” is necessary for improving the quality of instructional practices in our schools.

This research will require the application of rigorous research methods and improved measurement of classroom contexts and instructional processes to investigate the practices, mechanisms, and processes inside classrooms that lead to increased learning for students.

I think that the time is ripe for a renewed emphasis on understanding quality teaching. As Susan Fuhrman said in the New York Times the other day, “We’re at a huge frontier when it comes to understanding learning.” After decades of studying teachers and teaching, we need to strike out into that frontier and push the research agenda with new methodologies and new measurement.

**CONCLUSION:** A call to action.

Ok, so you must be asking yourself: How are we going to make this happen, in the next five years?

**(Slide 14, cartoon only that simple)**

Let me conclude by saying a few words about how we should ask more from a new generation of researchers. Far too much education research – including much that is done in universities – is driven by the interests and theories of the researchers' themselves and not the needs and problems of practice. This **MUST** change.

I recently attended a meeting of representatives from several research partnerships and consortia who work directly with school districts across the country. They gathered in Washington to discuss their commonalities and differences in their work and their research and development agendas. Although there are differences among the organizations themselves—one common theme was clear: the type of researchers they attract and develop. Researchers in these organizations play roles that are very different from the normative role of the university-based researcher and they have special skill sets.

**(Slide 15, special skills)**

These action-oriented researchers seek to both generate longer-term knowledge while also providing short or long-term service to districts. They use their formidable technical skills to help design studies and refine research questions rather than to create

questions. They use their complex communication skills to engage with practitioners and policymakers. They often begin their work with powerful descriptive data to explicate current practices and outcomes in new and useful ways, building a theory of action around the topic of concern.

And finally, they recognize the interconnectedness of classroom-level, building-level and district-level functioning so as not to create interventions that ignore these relationships.

In my first week on the job, Secretary Duncan spoke to a convening of IES funded researchers and urged us to think deeply about how to communicate our work to the folks working on the ground in schools -- the folks who don't live and breathe regression models and effect sizes. He wanted IES to do what the Consortium and others like it did so well-- to take these complicated ideas and make them understandable. He said: "That is the only way that good ideas can lead to action and not just remain on a shelf somewhere." We need other research organizations—especially universities—to create incentives for your young academics to pursue this kind of action-oriented research. And IES is going to play a role in this change. We recently issued a funding announcement for our post-doc programs. We will continue to seek candidates who are prepared to conduct rigorous studies grounded in the best science. But we also want to push these young researchers to ask more of the relevant questions that really matter

to schools. We want to nurture researchers who are interested in advancing knowledge for the benefit of their discipline, but at the same time are eager to engage schools and practitioners and build long-term collaborations with school leaders that lead to lasting, meaningful improvement in student outcomes.

Thanks for your time. I will be happy to take your questions.

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