

Talking Points: **Why We Can't Wait for Superman**

- America is in an educational crisis that is negatively affecting our economy and society
- **Big Problems Need Big Solutions**
 We don't need Superman we need "Super Systems" capable of rescuing tens of thousands of young people

- **Charters are an inadequate solution— that will leave behind most kids.**

Charters have a place in our educational landscape, but they only educate 4% of U.S. children. The fastest growing system of charters is in New York, with 22% growth and only educates 2% (21,000) of New York City's over 1 million students. To expand this program nationally would take roughly 150 years to meet all our students' needs.

According to one recent and highly regarded study only 17% of charter schools do better than regular public schools and 36% do significantly worse.



- **We Must Identify the Status Quo in America and Move Away From It**

For over 100 years inequitable resources in schools has been the status quo. Educational systems incapable of accommodating ALL students in Black and Brown communities has been the status quo. Closing schools and firing teachers, principals and superintendents in high poverty, high minority areas has been the status quo—its less likely to happen in high income communities and educational systems that work,

We must provide a fair and substantive opportunity to learn for ALL students in ALL schools especially in high minority communities---this will break the Status Quo.

- **Systemic Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Can Be Closed in a Reasonable Time**
 In New Jersey, after the Abbott decision—which equalized resources for all New Jersey's schools—graduation and achievement scores for all students rose—based on national standards.
- **Public Dollars Must be Used to Create Models that Work and are Scalable in the Public Sector**
 There are many traditional public schools, programs and teachers in this country that have implemented successful turn around strategies and positive outcomes for children. They must be highlighted as a part of the solution. We must focus on how to scale up what works within the public system rather than identifying models where public money is managed by private entities.

- **Systemic Solutions Must Involve Universal Access to Research-Proven Resources, e.g., High Quality Early Childhood Education**
 We've known for years that this works, why not guarantee it to all our children? A child who starts school ready to learn and is literate by 3rd grade has lasting positive outcomes.
- **Funding Education Based on Property Taxes Creates Inequities**
 The price of a child's home should not determine that child's access to a good education. It's time to explore alternatives to property tax funding, including state income tax.
- **Education is a Civil Right**
 It can't depend on a lottery. We must guarantee all students access to high quality early education, highly effective teachers, college and work-preparatory curricula and equitable instructional resources like good school libraries and small classes. A right without a clear map of what that right protects is an empty statement.

The concept of public education is the foundation of our democracy and each child failed by our education system creates another crack that threatens our democratic structure.

- **Bigger and Bolder Approaches**
 The potential return on the investment needed to give every child an equal opportunity to learn is 250%.

Our country's future is at the crossroad of opportunity for all or progress for a few. The path we take is critical. There a crisis; we need a dramatic change from the status quo. The answer is not in a lottery or Superman but in solutions that give all our children an opportunity to learn and create one America.

- **The national policy debates must engage key community voices, including parents, young people, and teachers**
 Parents and youth have a lot to say about what works and what does not. They are an essential part of shaping education reform that directly affects their lives. We must strive to ensure their voices are heard by policymakers and not left out of the echo chamber of 24-hour news cycles.
- In the past ten to fifteen years, the parent and youth education organizing movements across the country have grown and they have also created some of the best solutions to the failure of schools in their communities. Parents in the South Bronx created New York's Lead Teacher program, in Chicago they created Grow Your Own, and in Sacramento the Home Visiting program. The Annenberg Institute for School Reform's research shows that schools are stronger and have better outcomes when the community is engaged.

