

Chiefs^{FOR} CHANGE

We live in one of the most exciting and challenging times in our nation's history. The global economy is more interconnected and interdependent than ever before and our national security is inextricably linked to our nation's growth and stability. Developing countries around the world are entering the race for knowledge and the prosperity that comes with it. For America to remain an economic powerhouse and ensure its citizens a safe and bright future, we must prepare our students to succeed in this increasingly competitive and dynamic environment.

As members of Chiefs for Change, we believe that, now more than ever, leaders of every state's department of education have an incredible opportunity to lead the nation in transforming education for the 21st century.

To transform education, we believe we must, without exception, make decisions that are based on what is in the best interest of our children. We must be willing to address and change the entrenched practices that have held back our education system, practices that have long favored adults, not children. These practices must change.

It's time for all of the adults—superintendents, educators, elected officials, labor unions and parents—to accept responsibility for the future of our children. They are truly our greatest resource. Our communities', states', and country's continued prosperity depends on whether or not we will make decisions in the interest of children.

We also recognize that times are tough and money tight. The fact is that there are policies and practices in education which don't yield much in terms of student achievement. We'll advocate only for those things that have big pay offs for students and taxpayers.

Chiefs for Change is committed to putting our children first. Our mission is to bring about bold, visionary education reform with a laser-like focus on improving academic achievement, closing gaps between groups, and preparing all of our students for success in college and careers.

A Roadmap to Excellent Education

Recruit, Reward and Retain Excellent Teachers and Leaders

- We need a new compensation and support system that meets the modern-day needs of hiring, retaining and rewarding effective teachers and leaders for all students regardless of zip code.
- Highly effective teachers and leaders must be recognized, rewarded and supported based on their performance rather than certification or credentials.
- Teachers and leaders must be evaluated primarily based on student outcome

data and growth with an emphasis on closing achievement gaps.

- Ineffective teachers and principals must be removed.

Reward Excellence

- Teachers, schools, and districts must be rewarded for increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps.
- As schools and districts meet academic targets and raise student achievement, they should earn flexibility and autonomy.

Replace Failure with Success

- Intense interventions must be provided for chronically low-performing schools.
- Failing schools cannot be permitted to shuffle along the road to improvement; schools must show demonstrable and sustained improvement or face closure.
- School and district funding and governance are key leverage points to turnaround low-performing schools and districts.

High Academic Standards

- High standards should be the norm for all students across the nation.
- Standards should be benchmarked against international standards.
- Expectations should be measured against the highest achieving students, states and countries while systematically raising the bar.
- Graduation standards should ensure success in college and careers.

Transparent and Rigorous Accountability

- All schools must be accountable for the academic progress of all students.
- School accountability should measure student growth annually, ensure continuous improvement over time and focus attention on gap closing.
- Academic assessments should be sophisticated, rigorous, effectively measure student achievement and provide useful and timely information to teachers and families.
- School accountability should incorporate tiered interventions based on school performance and progress with students.
- School accountability should disaggregate student achievement data and effectively use that data to inform real time instruction and interventions.
- School rankings should categorize schools based on student outcomes and should recognize excellence.
- School rankings and reports on student achievement should be transparent, clear and easily understood by parents and the public.

Viable Options for All Students

- All students should have the opportunity to attend an excellent school.
- Funding should follow the student and allow for parents to decide what is best for their child.
- States should provide an expanded array of viable educational options for all students, including charter schools and digital learning opportunities.
- Funding and other policy incentives should be provided for rigorous, strategic and aligned digital learning options, specifically those that allow for customized, accelerated, student-centered learning.