Colman Genn Lecture Series

From Crisis to Catalyst:

Transforming the New York City
Public School System

Speaker:

Joel I. Klein

New York City Schools Chancellor

May 15, 2007

"Fifty-three years ago in America, the Supreme Court decided Brown v. the Board of Education... We promised every kid in America an equitable opportunity for a good education and 53 years later, we have a system that eschews accountability and refuses to differentiate its rewards and its consequences. Fifty-three years later, we're not meeting that challenge. We can do it, but it is going to take a committed citizenry prepared to tackle these significant challenges."

- Joel I. Klein
Chancellor, NYC Schools

About CEI-PEA

The Center for Educational Innovation – Public Education Association (CEI-PEA) is a New York City-based nonprofit organization that creates successful public schools and educational programs. CEI-PEA's staff of experienced leaders in public education provides hands-on support to improve the skills of teachers and school leaders, increase parent involvement, and channel cultural and academic intervention programs into schools. The benefits of this hands-on support are multiplied through a network of more than 220 public schools in New York and other major urban school systems across the country and around the world.

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About the Colman Genn Lecture Series

The Center for Educational Innovation – Public Education Association (CEI-PEA) established the Colman Genn Lecture Series to honor the work and achievements of CEI-PEA Senior Fellow Colman Genn. The annual lecture takes place in New York City and features individuals who are making significant contributions to the advancement of public education for urban school children. Through the lecture series, the Board and staff of CEI-PEA seek to inform and enrich debate surrounding the greatest issue of our day—public education—and recognize individuals whose ideas or accomplishments have improved the lives of public school children.

Cole Genn spent his career in the New York City public school system as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent. He helped establish the first public school choice system in East Harlem where he created three successful alternative schools, including the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics. The first graduating class from Manhattan Center (1986) made the front-page of *The New York Times* when every student was graduated and went on to college. Cole again made headlines in 1989 when, as Superintendent of Community School District 27, he was profiled on *60 Minutes* for his courageous exposure of corrupt school board members.

For the last 13 years of his life, Cole was a Senior Fellow at CEI-PEA. He played a major role in making the organization a leader in public school reform. While at CEI-PEA, Cole helped start such successful New York City schools as the Wildcat Academy, The Young Women's Leadership School, and KIPP Academy. He also helped spread the small schools movement to Chicago, Baltimore, and Newark, as well as Santiago, Chile and Israel.

Cole believed in the power of debate and dialogue to transform the minds and deeds of people. The Colman Genn Lecture carries forward this tradition by providing a forum for debate and dialogue around critical issues and ideas in public education.

Introduction

Sy Fliegel
President, CEI-PEA

Good afternoon and welcome. I want to particularly welcome the Colman Genn family: Cole's wife Brenda, son David, daughter Shari, brother Manny, grandchildren Ashley, Emma and Gabby, and Cole's good friend Harold Lefkowitz and his wife Marilyn. Thank you for coming. [Applause.]

I want to say a few words to Cole's grandchildren. I want you to know your grandfather was a great man. [Applause.] I want you to understand that. [Applause.] You loved him because he was your Grandpa, we loved him because of who he was and what he did. You are lucky grandchildren to have a Grandpa like Colman Genn, and I am glad you're here.

Let me tell you a little bit about Cole. As you can read in his bio, Cole made the front page of *The New York Times* because of what he did at the Manhattan Center for Science and Math. I want you to know what Manhattan Center for Science and Math was before Cole took over. It was originally named Benjamin Franklin High School, and when Cole arrived, these were the statistics—I've said them a thousand times and I still can't believe them—7% of the youngsters who entered the school graduated. The attendance was 44%, and that was always taken prior to lunch. The yearbook cover showed a picture of two crossed sneakers, because Benjamin Franklin's basketball team was the state champion. Cole always would note that the sneakers weren't even tied. Four years later, after closing Franklin with the help of Frank Macchiarola, and opening in its place the Manhattan Center for Science and Math, the statistics had changed dramatically: every single youngster graduated and went off to college that year. And that's what got Colman on the front page of *The New York Times*. As all of us in New York know, nothing is real until it is in *The New York Times*, and once it is in the *Times*, it's real forever.

The other item noted in Cole's bio is his work with the community school board in Queens where he was superintendent. The school board was corrupt and racist; they all thought Cole was a pushover because he spoke very, very softly. Most people went to their hearing doctor after having a long conference with Cole. [Laughter.] In order to uncover the corruption of the school board, Cole carried a wire for six months to build a case for the Gill Comission. When charges were filed, Cole's life was threatened many times. But he got these guys indicted and removed.

Cole was a very courageous man. The news media called him the "Serpico Superintendent." When he testified before the Gill Commission, I went down there and a reporter asked me, "What do you think of this guy?" Of course I didn't tell her I knew Cole. Instead, I asked, "Are you kidding? This guy is a major hero." And she went on the news that night and said, "A major hero reports to the Gill Commission." [Laughter.]

But Cole was more than that. He was generous to a fault. Anytime I walked into my office and saw someone who looked down and out, I knew they were there to see Cole. Cole was giving handouts 20 years after he had first known the person. Cole was also extraordinarily knowledgeable. He used to pick me up every morning, and it was like going to college. I would ask questions, and he would give me the answers. And he knew so many different things. I really got educated in that car with Colman Genn.

You always felt safe when you were with Cole. I could tell you many stories, but I'll tell you one story. When he was at the Harbor School, which was a performing arts school for grades seven, eight and nine, a young woman was kidnapped, taken to Baltimore, and held hostage. She managed to escape with a quarter in her pocket—enough for one phone call. She did not call the police, and she did not call her parents. She called Cole Genn. Cole told her where to go in Baltimore and he went down to Baltimore and he brought her back to New York. That was Colman Genn.

On occasion Reggie Landeau and I used to kid him because he had a lot of patience with people. There was one gentleman who I think was quite delusional but I could be wrong. He kept coming and would tell how he built all these buildings, he was a major builder, and Cole would send him to meet the Chancellor. And we would ask him, "Cole, how come you keep answering this guy's call and why do you meet him?" And he said, "Because he is a human being." That was Colman Genn.

One of the last jobs he did for CEI-PEA as a Senior Fellow was to go to Israel and set up a school for immigrants from Ethiopia. At that time, no one in Israel wanted to have a school for Ethiopian immigrants because they said to him, "Why, that would be segregation. We have no segregation here." And Cole pointed out to them that every school and every class that the Ethiopian students were in, they were either in the basement or in separate classes. Today, a school now exists in Israel for Ethiopian immigrants that is doing exceptionally, exceptionally well. And it was Cole who convinced the political leadership to do that. CEI-PEA's Harvey Newman has since picked up the mantle. We had Israel's Minister of Education come to New York to tour schools, and she has asked us to help establish a CEI-PEA in Israel. We felt it was too long a commute. [Laughter.] We introduced her to Joel Klein, we had a very nice lunch in Judy Berkowitz's wonderful apartment, and since then, Harvey has traveled to Israel a number of times to move the school reform agenda forward. Now, there are 80 schools reforming educational practices based on what the Minister learned during her visit to New York. Basically, Israel is following the path that Chancellor Klein is forging here in New York. We thank you for that, Chancellor Klein.

It is most appropriate that Joel Klein is the first speaker in the Colman Genn Lecture Series. First, Cole admired and respected him. I didn't plan on saying this. The first time we met with the Chancellor, we explained to him our concept of the gang, which Cole was brilliant at using. People always came to Cole and said, "I'm getting beat up." And he would listen patiently, and then he would say to them, "Well, who is your gang?" and they would say, "Gang? I'm an educator, I don't have a gang." Cole said, "Then they are going to keep beating you up." [Laughter.] So I told that story to Joel when we first met him. Since then, I've noticed that Joel is starting to get out of line with the idea. Last time I saw him, he said to me, "My gang is better than your gang." [Laughter.]

Cole loved the idea that Joel is not doing just another reorganization. This is a revolutionary change where we are bringing power to the school site. This will have national implications and it's going to empower principals who are smart enough to be in power. Cole empowered himself when he was principal of the Manhattan Center through a wonderful plan to manage his superintendents. He had two superintendents—one from the high school division, and one from East Harlem District Four. He did whatever he wanted to do, and if anyone ever questioned anything, he'd say "Well, the other superintendent ordered me to do it." [Laughter.] So Cole was empowered long before anyone else was empowered. But he would greatly appreciate what you are doing, Joel, and the art here is going to be how many principals really opt to take the power, because most of the time, people veto themselves. It is more comfortable for them to say, "The Chancellor won't let me do this; the school board won't let me do that; my mother won't let me do this." [Laughter.] Now principals can make decisions and they can't veto themselves—they are gong to have to do it, and I think your best principals are going to take that power and run with it.

It also will empower teachers and parents because people may be saying, "Well, what about the parents?" The easiest place to organize parents is at the school site. You can't effectively organize the millions of parents citywide. But in a school, you can organize the parents, and they will have tremendous input into the decision-making in exchange for real accountability and pupil performance.

So I thank you, Joel, for what you are doing, which we at CEI-PEA support tremendously. [Applause.] And believe

it or not, his gang isn't large enough yet. [Laughter.] He needs your support in this issue because there are many people who really like the status quo. So it's my pleasure to introduce Joel Klein, Chancellor.

[Applause.]

Speaker

Joel I. Klein
Chancellor, New York City Public Schools

Thank you, Sy. That's an enormously generous introduction, and I am delighted to be here with so many friends. Let me say to Cole Genn's family, I knew your father, your husband, your grandfather—he was an extraordinary man, and it's a great privilege and honor to be able to be the first speaker. Actually, I saw Ruth Shuman here from Publicolor and she also gave out a Cole Genn Award, so now I have received two awards in your father's name and I feel especially blessed that this is the case. Sy, I want to thank you and CEI-PEA for so much that you've taught me over the years. I'm now completing my fifth year as the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools. I've served now longer than Frank Macchiarola, who sent me the most gracious note the other day about it. And I wanted to do several things today because as I know the people in the room and I know what you care about, I hope not just to tell you about where we are but really to give you a vision of where we need to go.

Let me start with some basic facts. In the past couple of months there are two facts that I think are critical about what's happening in public education under Michael Bloomberg in this city. First of all, we got nominated for the Broad Prize. Most people don't know what the Broad Prize is, but it's an annual prize given to the best performing urban school district in the country. They start with over a hundred, and each year they winnow it down to five and there are five finalists and then there is a winner. The past two years, we were one of the five finalists, and once again we're one of the five finalists. Three years in a row, based on a rigorous analysis. And the reasons they give for New York is that we've out-performed comparable districts in our state serving students with similar income levels in reading and math at every grade level. We've also outperformed comparable districts in the performance of our low-income students, our African-American students, and our Hispanic students in every sub-group at every level. In addition, we are closing the achievement gap for Hispanics compared with White counterparts in high school reading and math and elementary school reading and math as well as African-Americans compared to their White counterparts in elementary and high school math. Lastly we've increased significantly the rates of African-Americans and Hispanics taking the SAT exam. So, the first point to know is across the board in real "apples to apples" comparisons, we're making progress.

The second and, in my view, more important statistic, is the one released by Commissioner Mills recently on graduation rates. There are several dimensions to it, but in the past two years, New York City took its graduation rate from 44% to 50%–I'll be the first to admit, far too low, but that is a 6-point (or 14%) gain in two years. If we can keep on that pace, that will be significant. What makes it even more important is that the other large cities in our state went down four percent during those ten years, and indeed the entire rest of the state went down two points. Another significant data point that I want to highlight is our five-year rate, which went up ten points while the other large cities went up six points and the rest of the state went up four points. So in every dimension, not just four years, but four year, five year, six year, we are moving forward and closing the gap. And as important as that is, I want you to know that that is not a place to rest, but a place to build on. If we stayed on that path, we would not get done the work we need to do.

In my remarks today, I want to convince you of three fundamental points because I think these are the critical points in educational reform in the United States. First of all, we have a crisis. Many people in this country do not realize the dimensions of the crisis we face, and the complacency we feel nationally in the face of this crisis is something we need to change. There is a racial and ethnic achievement gap that is the shame of this, the greatest nation on earth. Fifty three years after *Brown v. the Board of Education*, as early as the third grade, the average Black and Latino child is significantly behind the average White kid and by the time they get to high school, a seventeen year-old African-American or Latino kid (and that doesn't include the kids who already dropped out) is more than four years behind a comparable White child, so performing at the level of a thirteen year-old White child. And when they go to college, African-American and Latino kids increasingly are needing remedial work. That racial achievement gap is reason enough for people to think that we need to do something very differently. But it's now going to be exacerbated significantly by a global achievement gap. I sat next to Claire Flom at lunch, and the first point she made was just that point.

I think most people don't know this but on international tests when they compare America to the industrialized countries in the OECD on math in high school and middle school, we're twenty-one out of twenty-nine, twenty-four out of twenty-nine. And that doesn't even take into account the growing threat that is going to come from India and China and other parts of the world that are ready to compete with us. And when you look at, for example, the percent of our kids graduating college and compare it to other countries, on all of these metrics, we do not have a good story to tell. If you look at it in our city, I think the only diploma ultimately that's going to matter, and I give the Regents—and Merryl Tisch and Harry Philips are here; if there are others forgive me—but I give them great credit because they've now said that going forward in years to come, only a Regent's Diploma will count. If only a Regent's Diploma will count, slightly more than a quarter of our African-American and Latino kids are getting a Regent's Diploma in New York City. And I did a study to show that there are now 140,000 children out there who either have already dropped out between the ages of 16 to 21 or are on their way to dropping out. A hundred and forty thousand kids. If that was a high school district in the United States, it would be the third largest high school district after New York and Los Angeles. So I don't want to upset you over lunch, but I hope you have some dimensions of the problem.

My second point—and this is a point that's hard to convince many people of, but it's absolutely demonstrable empirically—and that is, it doesn't have to be that way. We hear so many reasons exogenous to the school system about why it is that our kids are not performing. But there are schools out there with the very same kids that are getting entirely different results. Look, I know the challenges of educating kids who grow up in poverty, who come from challenging families, and so on and so on. But the fact is we can do an entirely different job. If you haven't read it, take a look at Paul Tough's piece in the November 26th *New York Times Magazine* from last year, "What it Takes to Make a Student." I can show you example after example and, indeed, I can make it easy for you because I can show you middle schools. So I know where the kids start. There is a middle school in New Haven that I studied carefully, and I can show you their proficiency rate when they started was about 15% or 30%, the same as New Haven overall. And the Connecticut rate was about 55%. By the time those kids, every one of them African-American and Latino, graduated, those kids were at 80% proficiency, and the state was actually stagnant and New Haven was stagnant, so they had moved from comparability to a low performing city to exceeding probably the highest performing state in the union, all with African-American and Latino kids. And I can give you example after example—I don't want to embarrass anybody—there are people in this room that are doing that kind of work today.

The question I ask is, "If that's true, why do we accept the facts that I started with? Why do we tolerate that?" And

the answer is because fundamentally we are not prepared to make the tough changes that we need to make to truly transform education in this city. You know, if we keep doing what we're doing, we're going to get the same results. Article after article whether it's Charles Payne, the Duke professor who's written an article called "So Much Reform, So Little Change." Whether it's Rick Hess at American Enterprise Institute who talks about the "spinning wheels" of school reform. And you know, in every case, what do they talk about? It's the same discussion over and over again. It's about curriculum, extended day, extended year, teacher certification, class size…on and on, programmatic issues. Now, let me make clear: each one of those things is important. And I think you've got to get each one of them right. I think curricula are not as rigorous as they should be, obviously extended time, etc. But the fundamental fact is that if you focus on those issues and a derivative of those issues (how much we spend on those issues) you'll continue to get the same results. If you have any doubt about this, take a look at the District of Columbia. They spend over $20,000 a kid, they have low class sizes, they have all these other things, and they get results that are abysmal, that are shocking—worse than we get in New York. Look at our colleagues in New Jersey in the Abbot Case, which is like our Campaign for Fiscal Equity case. They are now spending in New Jersey over $18,000 a year per kid to get results that are worse than ours in places like Newark and Jersey City. So if we continue to focus on that part of the problem, we're going to miss the story.

Now Joe Williams is sitting out there; when he was a *Daily News* reporter early in my tenure, he wrote a story that I remember vividly. It's about a school in Washington Heights, right? They had a leaky roof and the gym floor buckled underneath. They called the school facilities organization and three months later—we don't want to rush these things—a guy comes out and he says, "I'm here to fix the floor." The principal—this is one of the principals that Sy's talking about—the principal said to him, "Fix the floor? You've got to fix the roof first." The guy says, "Look bub, I'm a floor man. They sent me here to do the floor, and I'm going to do the floor." The principal tries to track down his supervisor and in the meantime the guy fixes the floor, the roof continues to leak, and the floor buckles again. That's what we are doing in public education.

It's important to fix the floor. As a kid who grew up loving gym, shooting hoops, I get the importance. I get the importance of all these issues, but if we don't fix the roof, we are not going to succeed in what we are trying to do here in a systemic way. You'll have these isolated islands of excellence, but we will not have systemic reform.

Paul Tough concludes his article, and if you haven't read it, read it, because I think he nails this, he says, "The evidence is now overwhelming that if you take an average low-income child and put him into an average American public school, he will almost certainly come out poorly educated. What the small but growing number of successful schools demonstrate is that the public-school system accomplishes that result because we have built it that way. We could also decide to create a different system, one that educates most (if not all) poor minority students to high levels of achievement." And that's what I think the reforms that the mayor announced in January are all about. They are not the end game, but they are a critical point from which to move forward from those results that I talked to you about at the outset.

You can go throughout America and you won't hear a school reform proposal that rests as Michael Bloomberg says on the three pillars of leadership, empowerment and accountability. Right? You can show me no other city where that is true. And that goes to a fundamental sense of the way we organize to do the work. And if you don't organize to do the work properly, you won't get the work properly done. The roof will continue to leak and the floor will continue to buckle.

At the last CEI-PEA event where my Chief Operating Officer Kristin Kane talked, she discussed at length some of these issues of empowerment. And Sy sort of nailed it to-

day. He said, "We will see which principals step up as they are empowered." When people tell me principals are not prepared to be responsible for their schools, when people say that to me, my answer is that we have the wrong principal. Folks, if you don't create the conditions that will attract talent to the system, then talent does not come. Indeed, one of the reasons so many leaders prefer to work in the charter movement is precisely because they feel empowered. If we empower people, we will attract people who are up for the job. And indeed, they will teach us through differentiation rather than through top-down mandates the ways to succeed with highly challenging—and I understand the complexities—highly challenging populations.

There are two other main points that I want to emphasize today. Both are at the core of the work that we are doing in New York City. It is work that the nation has to do, and it is work that will be difficult to do. The first is that the system has to be built on meaningful accountability. Leadership and empowerment without real accountability is a prescription for failure and the status quo. And when I say accountability, we need to be able to differentiate the performance of the adults, administrators, teachers and others in the system, based on what they contribute to student performance. Now, a lot of people resist that idea. And one of the reasons they resist is, quite frankly, I think No Child Left Behind (NCLB) focuses on the wrong set of metrics. I don't think the question is how many kids are proficient; that could depend on how you admit kids; that could depend on the neighborhood you live in. The question to me is how much gain. The example from New Haven is what it is all about. If some kids who start at one level can be moved to the next level, the question that we need to ask ourselves is, "Why aren't all kids being moved to the next level?"

Under our new accountability system, which I was proud to announce here a little over a year and a half ago, that is exactly what we will be measuring: real "apples to apples." In schools that have lots of kids who are high performing, the students will be compared to each other. And in schools that have lots of kids who are low performing, they will be compared to each other, and we'll look at the differentiation.

That is the power. And there will be real consequences.

In the last few months a couple of very famous people have written a couple of books that I found very comforting on this question. Sy asked who's in whose gang, and we don't like to talk that way—so I'm sure these people haven't joined my gang but I find their words comforting. The first question you often hear a lot about is, "Well, you can't use test scores; there's a problem with tests." And there's been what my communications director calls "testophobia." Now I'll be the first to admit you shouldn't only use tests, but standardized tests matter. And on this particular point, I think Chuck Schumer recently nailed it. He said, "Every student in America should be tested on basic knowledge in a standardized way every year," calling for national tests. That's how we'll know that kids are learning and how well schools are teaching. This part of the plan, he says, is not voluntary. Each year, every student in the country will take a national test. Then he says, "Sometimes people complain about teaching to the test. They say that the standardized test replaces creativity with multiple choice. In truth, though, it's a false opposition. Standards and creativity are not in conflict. For most students, standards should be the beginning of education, not the end. If students are struggling and the teacher must choose between focusing on the national test, and something else, the primary goals should be to teach the skills and knowledge that are on the test. Teaching to standardized tests isn't perfect, but it's a whole lot better than teaching mush."

And the second argument you get, and you get it time and time again, is that there is something unfair or wrong about holding adults accountable for the performance of their students. And on that one, Bill Bradley just came out with a book in which he says, "There are some who argue that it's impossible to hold a teacher accountable for student performance. After all, they say, so many things happen outside the classroom that teachers cannot control." And

he lists many of them that are familiar to you, and then he says, "There are thousands of excuses. But that's all they are. They are excuses." I think we've got to put our heads around it because if we do not differentiate the effects that the adults have on the kids, then we will continue not to focus on the kind of restructuring of a system that we need to get the work done.

To me, today, the greatest crisis in public education bar none is expressed by a fact recently documented by the Aspen Report. The report looks at NCLB through bi-partisan commissions, some of the most distinguished people in America, and what the report said fundamentally is that teaching is the most important in-school quality, more important than any of the things I mentioned, the quality of a teacher is the most important thing in a child's education. And today in America—people are nodding their heads—research shows this over and over. There are studies that show if you give a kid a good math teacher three years in a row that you will close that achievement gap significantly. You give a kid a good math teacher as a low-performer and he will perform higher than a good student with bad teaching. And yet that fundamental resource is not remotely equitably distributed in the United States. And if you look at the research, what the research shows—and I find this very, very troubling—what the research shows is the kids with the highest needs, the kids with the greatest needs tend to have access to the least qualified and effective teachers. Now I want you to think about that. The kids with the greatest needs systematically are being denied access to an equitable share of high quality teachers. Now, if you follow that through, you will see the nature of the challenge we face.

Take two schools in the city of New York, one of which for every vacancy it has will receive 100 or more qualified applicants. And this will be a highly sought after school. Or take another school, and each year we have to send that school an additional 10, 15, 20 or more new teachers. One school highly stable; the other school highly unstable. One school where the young people who come in get mentored, and taught, and supported. And believe you me, there is nothing like that. Another school where it is catch as catch can. There's very little support. An external professional developer, as important as it is, will never replace mentoring and direct support. One school will have an average teacher salary of $20,000 or even $25,000 more than another school, reflecting the fact that one school is a highly stable, successful organization in which talent teaches talent, talent reinforces talent, and talent supports talent. And another school is fundamentally a school that has teachers cycling through there. Those two schools are entirely different communities, and if we are going to change what happens in education we've got to realize that we're going to have to differentiate incentives and move to pay for performance in order to encourage people to take on high needs challenges. Let's be candid with each other: if I pay you exactly the same whether you teach in a school that has high-performing kids who come to school with all the advantages and are well-behaved, or you teach in a school where the students are enormously challenging, there are discipline problems, and there's instability, for the same sum, people are obviously going to time and time again choose one over the other.

So today, when I am short math and science teachers in New York City, which I am, it's the product of the intersection of supply and demand. But when I am short math and science teachers, I am short math and science teachers in my highest need communities. The middle schools in my high-need communities don't have qualified math and science teachers, and as a result of that those kids are not getting the education they need. And there is no reason in the world that the teaching profession should be different from all of the other professions out there. What Bradley says on this bears repetition. He says, "Teaching is one of the very few professions I know that only rarely rewards performance. When I was a basketball player, I knew that if I improved and I won the championship, I'd be paid more. That's also true of lawyers, bankers, and countless other professionals, including college professionals, but it's not true for K to 12 teachers. They advance according to seniority. Teachers are paid not because they are good but because they are

there. And we have got to change the culture to reward excellence, excellence to take on the toughest challenges and ensure an equitable distribution of teaching talent."

Fifty-three years ago in America, the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. the Board of Education*. I was in Little Rock this weekend at the Clinton library, and I got to talk to people who were actually involved in what happened in Arkansas in the Little Rock Central High School case. Here we are 53 years later and we promised every kid in America an equitable opportunity for a good education, and 53 years later, we have a system that eschews accountability and refuses to differentiate its rewards and its consequences. Fifty-three years later, we're not meeting that challenge. We can do it, but it is going to take a committed citizenry prepared to tackle these significant challenges. Paul Tough was exactly right: if you design a system a certain way, you're pretty much going to get certain results. If you're prepared to design a system differently, then you can get very different results. That's why I think that those schools that I mentioned, the schools that are performing very differently, are schools that will chart the way for us in the future.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Question & Answer

Roger Hertog: [Question taken off microphone.]

Klein: In my view, I want to continue, at a minimum, the path we're on—which would be if you can raise the graduation rate three points a year, and then an additional ten points in the fifth year and another three points in the sixth year—if we stay on that trajectory we will have made very substantial progress. It's going to get harder after 2009 because then you're going to have to pass more and more Regents, but if you stayed on that trajectory, you could be talking about a five-year graduation rate that's 70% to 72%. That would be a significant change in the city.

In reading and math, I'd want to see comparable results. Reading and math scores, though, you've got to tether to the state because the complexity of the exam, which is something that is legitimately differentiated, may mean one year is different from the next. The other thing I want to look at is gain scores. But what we're doing under our accountability system is giving every school a grade: A to F. And those that are going to be Ds and Fs, I will want to see those moving forward as well. So I think those are the accountability metrics that you need to see. If you look at, from the beginning, when Mayor Bloomberg took over, we've put out these data: in our fourth and eighth grade scores in every single one of them, we've significantly outperformed the rest of the state and comparable large cities. We need to continue on that trajectory.

David Rogers: People who have written extensively about mayoral control talk about one of its great potentials: it can become a tool for the mayor to use his office as a sort of bully-pulpit, to convene many of the key stakeholders in the city to participate in improving the schools. It takes a village. I would like to ask how you see that for New York in the past and in the years ahead.

Klein: I see it in two ways. Obviously, it depends on the mayor, but I think the first thing that's critical is that most of school reform has been bedeviled by the politics of paralysis. It's a lot easier to block something than it is to get something done. And I think if you look at what this mayor has done, and indeed the noise that it has generated, I think it's testimony to the fact that he's willing to lead, and he's willing to lead in very tough situations. So that, to me, is a key point. It's not by happenstance that Antonio Villaraigosa from Los Angeles and Adrian Fenty from Washington DC came here first thing when they got elected, to learn from what Mayor Bloomberg was doing.

The second thing is the whole question of rallying the city, and I think under Mike Bloomberg's leadership there has been a city willing to stand behind him. Recently, we had an event where many of the major ministers, community organizations and others, stood with us to support the reforms going forward. So I think he's been able to create increased consensus, and the fact that we've been able to raise, for some core initiatives, somewhere in the neighborhood of $350 million in private dollars is also testament to the fact that people appreciate his leadership and are willing to make an investment in the transformation that he's trying to effectuate.

Michael Meyers: Kenneth Clark said exactly what you said many years ago in the 1970's. He found a chief and principal impediment to what he called a possible reality for all our children was the teachers' unions across the country. And they in fact were the block to educational reform innovation. Are you now confident that union issues have been overcome with respect to the New York City School District in terms of achieving your objectives?

But my real question is, aside from the issues of academic achievement, there is a real policy question with respect to global education, to use Claire Flom's word. That means not in terms of getting people organized in the public school system, but interacting regardless of your race and ethnicity and so-called culture and, therefore, you have these schools

that are coming up in your administration now including the so-called Arab public school and other schools like that that seem to be pushing ethnic culture and people congregating in schools based on their ethnic identity or national identity, as opposed to bringing people together regardless of their race, regardless of their color, and coming together, learning a common language and a common American identity.

Klein: All right, let me deal with your first issue. I think we are making real progress. And it's not a question of unions. It's a question of where the organization is set up and historically set up. So if you build it on certain principles then those principles understandably become expected. If you look at the recent contract we did with our principals, and this is an important point, basically we have a base salary, but we also have $25,000 a year that I can pay for principals that are high-performing based on our metrics to go to our most challenging schools for a three-year minimum commitment. That's $25,000. Then, another $25,000 tied to the pay for performance plan that I am talking about today. So a principal in New York City pretty soon could earn over $200,000 a year, $50,000 of it in pay-incentive and differential. I think that will have a meaningful effect along the lines we are talking about. With the teacher's union, we've negotiated some differentials for lead teachers. I've got over 200 of them in high-need schools. For math and science teachers, a $25,000 dollar signing bonus. I would like to see a lot more, and I understand that has to be negotiated, but as a matter of policy, nationally, if we do not create the right incentives to attract the talent in an equitable way, we will continue to get the results we are getting, I'm convinced.

Now on your point about differentiation—look, I believe that part of every child's education in this city is to make sure that you are educated as a citizen. We face enormous challenges in this city and we've tried some things before I got here and since I got here. About a decade ago we tried the Young Women's Leadership School, and there were all sorts of issues at that time about that. Then, we opened up a school in Chinatown called Shuang Wen, a dual-language school that by everyone's account is seen as one of the best schools in the entire city. Then working with David Banks and 100 Black Men, we opened the Eagle Academy, fundamentally an all-male school in one of our most challenging neighborhoods that is comprised almost entirely of African-American and Latino kids.

So, I think as we look at these issues as a city, it seems to me, you're right, that if it furthers balkanization rather than understanding, mutual respect, and a real sense that our kids are going to have to know about global history, global culture, and all of those challenges, I think this can be effective. I understand issues have been raised by other people about how you balkanize, but when I look at the work schools like Shuang Wen have done, and some of our other dual-language programs in this city, I'm convinced that there are things we can learn from them and we're a large enough and complex enough school system that I think the kind of differentiation we're experiencing will eventually help us.

Myers: Is the Arabic school dual language?

Klein: It is a dual-language school. And indeed it will have children in that school who are coming there to learn Arabic who are in English speaking schools like a lot of our dual-language programs in the city. They have schools like this in the West Side where there is a mix of native Spanish and native English speaking and the instruction is provided through dual language. So is Shuang Wen, which I think literally means dual language in Chinese.

Charles Capetanakis: Chancellor, I'm the chair of the Hellenic Classical Charter School. First and foremost, I want to thank you for your inspiration and I wanted to remind Michael Myers that we're the first attempt at balkanization because I think even though ours is a dual-language school in Greek and Latin, only about a third of our students are of Greek origin, and the majority are African-American and are just thrilled to learn both the Greek and Latin languages. And under your guidance (unintelligible)

Were it not for CEI-PEA and your vision, we would not be (unintelligible). [Applause.]

My question is, where do we stand on Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) funding?

Klein: Well, under the Governor's leadership, we've gotten the first tranch of monies under fiscal equity. Basically it's a four-year plan, working with the Regents, and probably will end up putting in an additional $2 billion. The question again, and why I made the point earlier in my speech, is really a question of how we spend that money. I've seen so many school districts dissipate. I disagree with people who say that we don't need additional dollars. We need more dollars for pre-K; we've got to get our kids started early. We are wasting critical years. We need extended day and extended year, and that will cost us more. But we also need to do the kinds of things I am talking about today to encourage people to take on tough challenges and create an environment in which more and more people want to teach. So, I think lowering class size is a good thing; how you lower it matters. And I want to lower it in a way that attracts people to the tough challenges so that we can get the work done. I think CFE is an enormous opportunity. Under CFE we have the chance to expend dollars in a way that can really move the system, which is moving forward to a different height.

Carol Gresser: Thank you Joel. I have a burning question and it's been asked over and over again in many living rooms. There is a question of term limits, mayoral term limits. What happens when this mayor is leaving and your wonderful lofty goals are still being sought? What happens to this school system?

Klein: Well, I think several things. I think the reforms that we're doing now, Carol, are really about sustainability. I think when you make the system as transparent as we are going to make it so that people can literally see student gains, school, parent, and teacher surveys and all these other things, you won't be able to take that away. And let's be candid. It's not a smart thing, in one sense, for us to grade the schools because we'll hear the noise. But noise is always a catalyst for reform and you want to stimulate that.

Second, this whole empowerment thing, and bringing in both internal and external partnerships and watching the role of the principal change, will have enduring qualities because the principals will find that that's a leadership role they find more congenial.

And third, and this goes to CFE and also, driving the money to the schools—by now something like $400 million that used to be spent in the bureaucracy is being spent by the schools by principals making discretionary decisions. You won't be able to repatriate that money.

And lastly, and it goes to I think, Roger Hertog's question at the beginning, I think we need to make sure we continue to get the results and that the city understands the results so that the city insists that we continue to move forward on the path. We have two and a half years left to accomplish such things and I think, frankly, we can accomplish them. And I hope the next mayor finds that tackling the tough challenges, not doing what is politically opportunistic, is what it's going to take to change the city. That's what Michael Bloomberg did.

Harry Stern: [Question taken off microphone.]

Klein: I think we can do an enormous amount to make the racial gap certainly narrow, but there are other factors. If you want to know from me whether I think that we can close the racial and achievement gap in the United States through education, we don't even begin to know. What I do know is there are schools that have done it. And, if it can be done, the question then becomes why isn't it replicable? Now there are exogenous factors: the role of the family, what to bring to the table—all those things are things that need to be taken into account. But I must say I find it shocking that 53 years after *Brown v. the Board of Education*, 200 years after the inception of this country, we tolerate

that achievement gap so that we think we're going to solve the problem through affirmative action in college. We can't solve it through affirmative action in college. We've got to solve it by giving quality K to 12 education.

Speaker: The only thing I want to point out with respect to the concept of the separate schools is that we have to be intellectually honest. It's not quite the same, and I'm sure you've read the same studies of this that I have, it's not the same as having a Greek cultural school, an Irish cultural school. The literature is diffused in a different fashion. It's not like teaching Arabic at Queens College which is perfectly legitimate in high school as well. You will have to have your central office monitor the content, monitor the funding sources, because this is the real world that we're in.

Klein: I don't disagree. Don, I don't disagree with that, but let me say that on the other hand, I think it's important to get all the facts. What Merryl just said, I mean we're working with New Visions. New Visions created the Shuang Wen School in partnership with us and did an incredible job. Second of all, the Anti-Defamation League not only is supporting the Arabic school, but is working with us on this school. I take your point, but I take your point about virtually any school that decides its mission is to politicize rather than to educate and that is a fine line that needs to be drawn. [Applause.]

It happens in lots of different ways and it's not just this line, but I take your point, and if the Arabic school becomes, if you will, a political school with a political agenda, and decided that it's not about educating kids but serving other purposes unlike the Hellenic School or Shuang Wen or the others then you are absolutely right, and I said this, I won't tolerate that.

Fliegel: I want to thank the Chancellor and I want to thank all of you for coming here. Have a good day. [Applause.]

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Contact us:

CEI-PEA
28 West 44th Street, Suite 300
New York, NY 10036
(t) 212.302.8800 (f) 212.302.0088
www.cei-pea.org

Center for Educational Innovation -
Public Education Association
28 West 44th Street, Suite 300
New York, NY 10036