

EDUCATION REFORM AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: REFLECTING ON
THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL CENTER
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>> McCASLIN: First of all, I would like to welcome you to our presentation this morning.
Dr. McKenney has asked if I would do the honors of introducing our speaker today.
And when we review our past history, we've been down many roads together, so it was a rather easy decision for me to do when Floyd asked me to do this.
So Charles and I go back several years together.
We served together at the University Council for Workforce and Human Resource Education, and prior to that, many AVERA things, and I don't know what all.
So I'm really pleased to be able to be here.
Charles is a native of Minnesota.
His bachelor's degree is from Saint Cloud University, and his master's and Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota.
He currently serves as the director of the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education.
Prior to that, he was the dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota.
And prior to that, he was a department chair.
So I can relate well to that experience, and we were sharing some of our war stories here a little bit ago, but (inaudible), and he also taught high school and adult business ed in Wisconsin and in Minnesota.
And Charles has authored over 100 articles, chapters, and research reports and presented 150 papers, speeches, and workshops.
He has more than 160 graduate students who have completed their study with them, 55 master's students, 75 master's of ed students, and 29 doctoral students and three specialists.
He also has the privilege of having served as the visiting research fellow at the Center for Applied Environmental and Social Education Research at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
So without much further ado, I'm going to turn this over to Charles for his presentation entitled "Educational Reform and Career and Technical Education: Reflecting on the Role of the National Center."
So, Charles, welcome.
(Applause)
>> HOPKINS: Thank you, Mac.
Can you tell if you're picking up?
And if I put this down here, is it okay there?
Thanks, Mac.
It's a real pleasure for me to be back at Ohio State University, among our friends and colleagues out here at the National Dissemination

Center for Career and Technical Education.

And it's a real pleasure to have new colleagues at Ohio State University as well as to see some of my longtime colleagues in business and marketing education, like Bob and Charlotte and some of the others with whom I've worked over the past hundred years. It appears -- those things aren't really accomplishments that Mac listed, it just means that I've lived longer than a lot of other people to get that done.

A few nights ago, when Dr. McKenney asked me to do this, I thought, sure, and I agreed right away that this is something I wanted to do. I had several months to prepare and thought about it.

The topics were unlimited, and as my colleagues in Australia used to say, "No worries, mate." You're hearing that a lot today in these days now with the Olympics down in Sidney.

However, selecting a topic did present a bit of a challenge to me.

A review of the topics -- I think this is the third lecture now, and a review of the other topics indicated that the people who had been presenting were sharing research that they had undertaken and that that might be one of the things I should do.

But the stuff I had been working on, learning from school-based work experiences, school-based enterprises, and then leadership development through on-the-job experiences were somewhat dated, and I didn't really want to get into that because I'm not up to date on that.

I considered, also, emulating Red McCombs -- Red McCombs, as you know, is the president of the Minnesota Vikings, and shortly after he came to Minnesota, he was a keynote speaker scheduled for the Minnesota Business Partnership, and he came in for a 30-minute presentation and did 10 minutes and left, and I thought that might be an easy way out with -- but that might be a possibly critical group.

But as Dr. McCaslin mentioned, about 10 months ago I did accept the position as director of the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, adjusting being back in this room, Floyd and Susan and Morgan, and we spent some long days, at least one weekend in this room, as we cranked out that piece of work that has resulted in this activity we're in.

I guess, Jim, you were there, then, and I can't remember everyone else who was here those days.

So this was another new challenge in my variety of educational experiences, my 40 years of education.

So I thought for today it might be appropriate that I use my time reflecting on this new challenge, the role of the National Center in what appears to be an ever-changing educational environment.

That's the title for my comments, "Education Reform in Career and Technical Education: Reflecting on the Role of the National Center."

So what I plan to do, then, is take a quick look at the past, some of the concerns about the educational enterprise that we have heard and some of the calls for change or reform that we have faced, and then to spend a few minutes sharing some thoughts about the education

(inaudible) by this reform or change successes or lack thereof in response to these reform initiatives, and then discuss a little bit how the National Research Center might play a role in bringing synergy to school change endeavors or some of the reform efforts to fruition. So that's what I want to do in my 10 minutes.

Most of my friends and colleagues back in Minnesota know that I am a graduate of Vallard Minnesota High School, 21 students in my graduating class.

Most of them also know that Vallard is a very small town, central Minnesota, approximately 250 people when I graduated from high school, approximately the same population today.

Though the school is gone, merged with two other school districts in central Minnesota, the time remains and there's still a great deal of loyalty to that old school.

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in an annual all-school reunion.

This little town every year has an annual all-school reunion.

About 150 people come each year to participate in this type of activity.

And I'm old enough now that I can participate, also.

On display at that dinner were copies of annuals, or yearbooks, whatever term you use with that, from the 1940s and 1950s, some from the 1960s.

As I perused these yearbooks, the statements of two school administrators included in three of those yearbooks struck me, and it really caught me.

And I had been reading these things for years.

I might have even read them when I graduated from high school.

But these comments really caught me, and I wanted to use those comments, share them with you as I set the stage for the rest of my comments today.

In the 1953 Vallandia, Leonard Voeglin, then superintendent of schools at Vallard wrote, "Nobody would think of putting as many hours working for another without getting something for his" -- and please pardon the "his" and "hims," but this was written -- we're not going to sing any hymns, but please parton the "his" and "hims" in this language -- "without getting something for his investment in time.

Yet in spite of the concern of the average American that he get his money's worth, many a student invests several years of his life in the public schools with little value received.

Seems to be that some people lose sight of the unlimited opportunity that really exists by arguing that we have poor teachers, poor facilities, and teach the wrong things.

Many young people cannot wait for vast improvements that educators hope to bring about in the years to come.

You must grasp our great opportunity now so you need not suffer in the years to come for letting it go."

That was 1953.

In 1955 Herr Winter, principal at Vallard wrote, "A few years ago a high school diploma meant that the person earning it was either more intelligent or more ambitious than the average person. The diploma can now be earned with little more effort than fair attendance requires.

I would advise young students to guard against cheapening themselves by lack of study because they have a false hope that this less valuable diploma will convince a prospective employer of his competence."

That was 1955.

In 1956, Voeglin writing again wrote, "In this highly technical age, a good education becomes increasingly necessary.

The word 'automation' isn't listed in our new dictionaries. Still, automation already is displacing thousands of working people. More than ever before, machines are taking jobs away from men. We can expect that the demand for unskilled labor will be small in the future. That being the probability, smart young people will try harder than ever to acquire a good education."

Those thoughts, as I read them a year ago, just really sunk into me now as I thought about the education reform initiatives that we're moving through.

As I pondered these statements made in the mid 1950s by two high school administrators, several questions came to mind.

I need to move this mike.

Are the problems of the schools as we know them today so much different than have always been faced over the years?

Is the educational change reform movement that we have heard so much about over the last 10 to 15 years something new, or have the calls for educational reform been a continuous, ongoing activity?

And have we as educators, in response to the critics for school change, made use of the best information that's available to us?

When one reviews the literature, it appears that schools in the United States have always been subjected to criticism and controversy, a situation also -- often resulting in attempts at reform.

Typically, the response from the schools was to find ways to include more pupils by broadening the curriculum in some way, changing enrollment standards, such as special courses for girls or boys, increased attendance requirements, inclusion of students with special needs, and these types of activities.

In the mid 1950s, Voeglin and Winter commented about some of the concerns or criticisms that education and educators were hearing, (inaudible) or lack thereof of the students, some of the (inaudible) in terms of the quality of the teachers and the curriculum, and, of course, the facility.

And in 1953, in that year we didn't have classrooms that were adequate, we had no school gym, no lunch program, those types of things, and we hear those same concerns today.

And with the launching of Sputnik, these types of criticisms

increased.

The curriculum and the quality of graduates were of much concern. But the very strong current calls for education reform did not appear until the early 1980s, often more specifically identified with the publication of a Nation At Risk, which contained a strong critical statement about the health of the schools and included a set of get-well recommendations.

This report was significant for a number of reasons.

While many of its major contentions were not substantiated by research, it nevertheless won the support of important decision-makers, and I understand -- what was the response to that, that was done here?

What was the response to Nation At Risk?

What was the name of that report?

>> "The Unfinished Agenda."

>> HOPKINS: "The Unfinished Agenda," yeah, that was kind of a response to that.

The author did not seek to broaden the scope of the education system, rather, emphasized the need to improve the accomplishments of its graduates.

The concern was quality.

We kept hearing about quality, an emphasis that continues to occupy center stage in the reform efforts today.

Each day we hear about high academic standards, high-stakes testing, accountability, and those types of activities related to quality.

A Nation At Risk was followed by a bevy of other reports by committees representing state and national professional organizations, educational foundations, and business groups, all of which felt compelled to comment on the prevailing quality agenda.

These reports were extremely critical of the schools and the academic achievement of the graduates.

In general, they suggested that students lacked basic skills.

They couldn't read and write, they couldn't compute, they were not technology illiterate -- or literate, were not able to use rational thought processes in decision-making, were not able to work together in groups or teams, were not able to plan.

These types of concerns were shared in such publications as "Educating Students in the 21st Century," published by our Minnesota Business Partnership; and the eye-catching sidebar on the cover of the September 19, 1988 "Business Week Special Report," if you can remember this, "Human Capital: The Decline of America's Workforce" noted, "The nation's ability to compete is threatened by inadequate investment in our important resource, people.

Put simply, too many workers lack the skill to perform more demanding jobs."

My God, wasn't that one of Voeglin's concerns more than 30 years earlier.

These reports have adopted what could be considered major themes for

the reform movement, calling for strengthening the schools by adopting new strategies and techniques, increased use of technology, changes in school organizations, such as site-based management, curriculum improvements such as integration of vocational and academic education, increased emphasis on the basics, linkages with the family, linkages with business and industry, and improved teacher education programs. Yet after almost two decades or more, perhaps a lifetime of educational school change reform efforts, the cries of bad performance often seemed to be as loud as ever, and the public schools still face low public esteem and confidence and a suspicion that better performance should be possible.

For example, just two weeks ago an article in the "Minneapolis Star and Tribune" was titled "Students Have Made Few Gains in Reading Skills, Analysis Finds."

The lead paragraph in that article states, "Despite years of efforts to improve education, U.S. students read no better than their predecessors did a generation ago, and their basic math skills have only advanced slightly, according to a new analysis of standardized test scores given since the early 1970s," and this is part of the NAEP report that just came out recently.

Thus, it appears we in education continue to be faced with perennial problems and issues in education that just never seem to go away, and, therefore, we're always under attack, concerns and issues in the system that we seem never able to solve.

And our students, thus we in education, seem to be faced with an increased number of social problems that affect our successes and divert us from the primary focus of our work, that is, trying to help students attain high academic skills.

After years of responding to criticism and votes of nonsupport, have we made any progress?

Have we made any of the changes that would satisfy our critics?

If not, what can we do to understand better and make better use of the information and research available that would help us implement change and provide better schooling to our young people?

In a recent chapter by Stone and Clements in a book titled, "The Superintendent of the Future," they write, "Schools are inundated with research that promises to improve achievement.

Results of this activity are readily available to schools through a variety of sources -- Floyd, I want you to note these for the Dissemination Center -- "books, professional academic journals, newsletters, technical bulletins, and other published sources.

Many recent publications are available on the Internet.

The amount of research available through these several sources is staggering, and most of it is directly or indirectly related to the problem of improving school achievement."

However, if you look at the first chapter of their text, "Educational Research: An Introduction in Borg and Gall," they comment or compare medical doctors to educators and their willingness to use research --

a research base in their professions.

And Borg and Gall then suggest that "The point of our colleagues' comparison of medicine and education is that research has relatively little influence on the day-to-day work of education."

They continue, "Whether true or not, his" -- and they're talking about their colleague's assessment, comparing medicine and education -- "raises an important question.

Why do educational research?

Like other researchers, we" -- speaking as Borg and Gall -- "can state some of the taken-for-granted answers to this question.

The major reason for educational research is to develop new knowledge about teaching, learning, and administration.

The new knowledge is valuable because it will lead eventually to the improvement of educational practice."

Yet there's still that concern that this has not happened.

We've got the research, but it hasn't happened.

It is noted, "Stone and Clements suggest that we have not been successful moving that vast amount of research to practice; that is, it has not had much impact on the actual operation of the schools."

They wonder why, when programs are implemented, the results always seem to fall short.

"How can that be in school after school, year after year?

If there is a significant amount of research and the findings are widely available, why is there not at least a trend toward improved achievement?

Researchers" -- we know it all -- "often suggest that while good research is available, schools fail to implement it or fail to implement it correctly.

Teachers have a tendency to remain with the custom approaches, if only for the reasons of comfort and familiarity.

Schoolteachers don't know good research when they see it.

Teachers are often drawn to unfamiliar practices supported by weak evidence" -- I'm sorry -- "teachers are often drawn to familiar practices, supported by weak evidence, over unfamiliar practices supported by good evidence or strong evidence.

One other explanation popular with researchers is that institutional inertia and resistance to change retards progress.

Teachers unions and administrative customs, along with community expectations, regulatory policy, and public oversight can all assert resistance to change, thus making it difficult to implement change."

You hear the attack on teacher organizations.

You hear the attack on administrative organizations.

Well, Stone and Clements also share what they perceive to be the points of view of practitioners, those who are expected to implement the research.

"Teachers and administrators say that research has little impact because much of it does not work in the real world.

As they see it, schools are doing everything they can to implement the

latest findings, but social and economic realities impose limits." Olson," as referenced in Stone and Clements, "suggests that implementing research is like rebuilding a ship -- implementing research in the public schools is like rebuilding a ship in the middle midst of a voyage.

Staying afloat has to be the first consideration."

Actually, I asked my wife to read through my notes before I came down. My wife is a high school teacher.

And she said, first of all, "Boring."

And then she said, "You hit it on the nail" -- or "You hit the head on the nail."

She said, "My problems are so great that I don't have time sometimes or help in thinking about what is happening here."

So staying afloat has to be the first consideration.

And then she -- Olson suggests rebuilding during a storm is even more problematic, and that's where some of the people in our schools feel they are.

"Schools can and do make the changes suggested by research, but circumstances can trump even the best laid plans.

Even with successful implementation, the effects are often obscured or nullified by factors such as limited resources, two-earner families, single-parent families, increased crime, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, gangs, television, and a host of other hindrances and adversities."

And that's why when we were looking at that list earlier, Barbara and Floyd, about the dropout rate, why, they hit right home with that.

Stone and Clements suggest "There are other pragmatic considerations that play a role as well, for example, attractiveness of any type of change that's being proposed to students, teachers, parents, and other school system stakeholders can have a heavy influence on what's happening.

So can public relations.

For example, the desire of school leaders and board members" -- and, I would add, various state and federal agency personnel and politicians -- "to demonstrate progressive leadership often plays a contributory role."

That is, sometimes it's nice to get a publicity piece out there even if it's not supported by the best evidence, or sometimes without any evidence at all.

"In short, the selection of research-based programs and implementation may be substantially influenced by considerations other than evidence of effectiveness."

So Taylor, writing in an article titled, "Impacting Practitioners with Enhanced Research" -- this was in a March, 1999, research bulletin published by PDK Center for Evaluation -- states that "The current relationship between education research and the application of practical knowledge in the field is almost nonexistent."

This comes from PDK, a rather reputable group made up of secondary and postsecondary people as well as higher education folks.

She, too, suggests several reasons for this.

"One, there's little common language between university researcher and practitioners, which may explain the lack of communication between the two groups.

Two, researchers do not provide research results to practitioners in a form that practitioners understand and find useful because the basis of their operations and professional goals are so different from that of the practitioners.

And, three, practitioners do not understand the basic processes or languages of research.

Consequently, they find it difficult to understand the purpose of the research, the source of research information, and how research is formulated."

On the latter point, Walker shares a distinction on one of the causes of the problem when he writes, "Most education programs for teachers and administrators do a pitiful job of teaching students to differentiate viable research from poor research," and I add, if they address research at all in the teacher education programs.

So there's been an ongoing criticism of the education enterprise, and that includes criticism of the teacher education enterprise over the last few years.

There would be people who would do away with teacher education, and you know it.

I say ongoing.

At least it appears ongoing during my lifetime.

While the criticism is especially focused on the quality of graduates of high schools, it is either directly or by implication also focused on the curriculum and the quality of teachers and other persons involved in the educational enterprise.

There have been a number of reform initiatives that focus on new strategies and techniques that might be instrumental in increasing the quality of education provided our young people.

I've mentioned increased use of technology, changes in school organizations, curriculum, changes in improvement, linkages with the family, better linkages with the family, or, in some schools, any linkages with the family, linkages with business and industry, and include teacher education programs.

This then brings me to the National Research Center.

You thought I'd never get there, didn't you?

This then brings me to the research center portion of today's topic, "Education Reform in Career and Technical Education: Reflecting on the Role of the National Center," more specifically, the role of the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, although I think much of what I'm sharing is equally applicable to the National Dissemination Center.

In a short summary statement, one might say the role of the National Research Center is to assist teachers, administrators, and policymakers in developing and implementing programs designed to

overcome the problems discussed earlier in this paper, but let me be a hair more specific than that.

The statement of need portion -- and it was interesting for me to go back and have to reread this material that we have in our files.

The statement of need portion of the Center's cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, includes the following statement.

I don't know if I'd read that.

"Since the release of A Nation At Risk since 1983, many people have focused their efforts on improving education.

For vocational education, too, this past decade has been a time of renewed concern that students are no longer being adequately prepared for higher education or skilled employment.

Consequently, there is greater need now than at any other time since the early decades of this century to build a secure foundation" -- and I would insert in brackets, research foundation or knowledge base -- "on which to design school improvements that benefit all students and support the efforts of classroom practitioners to help all students learn to achieve high academic standards and acquire the broad array of skills required in the workplace."

So one of the -- one of the suggestions is, then, that there is a need now more than ever that we have a sound knowledge base on which to design these school improvements.

And as you look over through the literature, you see that not always have these recommendations for school improvement been based on a sound knowledge foundation.

"To meet these needs adequately, the Center must conduct a coherent, sustained program of research."

And that's one of the problems we find ourselves facing is sustainability, sometimes.

"The Center must conduct a coherent, sustained program of research development and evaluation and information dissemination that advances theory and leads to the improvement of practice.

Such proactive approaches will give credibility to vocational technical education as a discipline, with the potential to help both reshape vocational and technical education and renew all education."

And it's interesting, as I reread this, the emphasis on education/vocational education.

That is, we have a role in all of education, not just career and technical education, as we move forward.

We sometimes receive criticism, I think both in the Dissemination Center and in the Research Center, that we take too broad a look, but we have to look at all of education.

Then we try to position career and technical education within those efforts.

"To guide the work of the center, a number of goals have been identified.

As you consider these goals, I believe you'll see the importance of

the work of the Center in the education reform initiatives."

One of our goals is national leadership.

"The goal is to exercise national leadership in the area of research in vocational and technical education.

This includes serving as an effective catalyst for program improvement, stimulating and contributing to a national debate on issues in the field, providing guidance to federal, state, and local policymakers on matters of national significance, and serving as a major resource for knowledge about education in general and vocational and technical education in particular."

In working with this, then, we have a lot of partners in that.

We work with OVAE very closely.

We work with the state directors of vocational and technical ed very closely.

We work with ACTE, the Association for Career and Technical Education; National Council on Occupational Education; American Association of Community Colleges; and other groups as we try to position ourselves with these different organizations.

The second goal relates to research development and evaluation.

And the goal is to implement a research development and evaluation program that advances theory and improves practices, addresses the needs of a wider, more diverse range of participants than has traditionally been the target of vocational and technical education research community, and helps schools move from -- move educated gifting to informed decision-making.

And I think that's one of the things I tried to indicate is that we need the knowledge base there to move from gifting to educated or well-founded decision-making.

The resource development and evaluation activities must take the opportunity to influence the direction of reform of the nation's schools.

And, you see, this comes out again.

We're expected to help take a position and help provide some background information in terms of the direction of reform of the nation's schools with the ultimate goal of improving the academic and occupational achievement of America's students.

So even as we keep talking about that, we keep talking about quality, high academic standards, high skills, high-stakes testing, and accountability as we move this along.

And one of the ways that we keep on top of the issues here is through the work that Morgan Lewis and his colleagues are doing and the needs-sensing/environmental scanning tries to keep us abreast of what those issues and changes are so that we know and can speak intelligently about these, also.

The third goal is collaboration, to collaborate to the extent practicable with other members of the education research and development community in order to build strong partnerships and facilitate systemic change.

And we're trying to work closely with NSF.

Our people are active in AERA, the various higher education programs that Dr. McCaslin referred to in our Research 1 institutions, if you will, where we're doing high-level research, AVERA and its work, so that we collaborate -- OERI and others as we continue to work.

And then a last goal that I want to mention today then is dissemination, to actively coordinate with the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education a system for the broader dissemination of the results of the research development and evaluation activity.

This includes the dissemination of information and resources through a wide variety of means, as we've indicated and -- and to use networking, technical assistance, and customer service and marketing and promotion to increase the visibility of the Research Center to a national level and to promote the image and quality of vocational and technical education.

And I think that's one of the things that we have to keep working on. As we were at the state directors meeting last -- a few days ago, last weekend, why, this concern came up again about the image of vocational and technical education and being second-class citizens, and the way we help overcome that is through a sound knowledge base with the implementation of practices based on that sound knowledge base and high academic achievement and high-stakes testing, if you will. So as a result of these goals, we've developed a rather ambitious program of work.

I'm not going to share all those research studies with you today. They're on the Web site.

There's a brochure that -- a pamphlet has all of those listed, and I'm not going to go through all of that.

But in terms of that program of work, there is a statement of expected benefits or outcomes.

And our agreement notes that "The Center's program of work should expand the fundamental knowledge and understanding" -- and they don't even use career and technical education in this statement -- to understand -- I'm sorry.

"The Center's program of work should expand the fundamental knowledge and understanding of education, promote excellence and equity in education, and promote the use of research development and evaluation to improve practice in the classroom at the secondary/postsecondary levels with the intent of improving learner achievement, promoting secondary to postsecondary transition, and preparing all learners for meaningful and rewarding employment over the long run."

Well, this is an ambitious challenge we've accepted.

But we're not in this work alone.

As I've indicated, we have a number of partners and collaboratives -- or collaborators.

Most importantly, in my mind, is the National Dissemination Center. Floyd and I talk if not daily, twice daily, in terms of helping get a

well-developed program of work for the Research Center and figuring out ways to implement that and translate that research to practice so that it can, in fact, affect school reform in a positive way. And we have a group of respected and seasoned researchers committed to the past that we've accepted.

So that's kind of the role, then, the way I see it.

We have an important role in this school reform initiative, and if we screw it up, we're in trouble because it will be hurtful to career and technical education generally, and that's why we keep at it so hard. So thank you very much for having me here.

If you have questions, Floyd will answer them, and -- and if not, I see there's still a lot of doughnuts and stuff back there.

>> McCASLIN: (Inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible) I think that would be helpful.

>> HOPKINS: I think that's a super idea, Mac.

And I think if I share the moderating with that, you and Floyd and Morgan and everyone can share the responses.

Seems fair, doesn't it?

>> McCASLIN: I'd like to lead off with the first question.

We hear a great deal of concern about the quality of our educational programs, and this group says we aren't doing the right thing.

And I was looking at the recent Gallup poll done by Phi Delta Kappa, and it asked for the general rating, and it's above average, but it isn't stellar at all.

And then it asks, well, what about the quality of the schools that your children (inaudible) or in your community?

And without question, it's very, very high.

Is there a mixed signal being sent?

What's your take on this whole idea of do we have quality education or not?

>> HOPKINS: I think we get a lot of that mixed signal from the government personnel, if I may use that, elected personnel, our governor.

I assume he's not -- I assume he's not watching today.

Our governor -- our governor has been an education basher.

He's getting more knowledgeable about what happens in education.

But I think this comes from people whose children aren't in the school.

So this message gets given out in Ohio and in -- we were at a mayor's -- well, we weren't at the mayor's meeting.

The mayors were meeting in Boise when we were there, and what happens is some of these ideas are floated at a meeting like that, at the Governors Association meetings, at other meetings, and people come back and carry that message, the newspapers pick them up.

On the other hand, we still don't have good evidence that we're making any major changes or any evidence that we're making major changes out of all these initiatives.

And maybe there's so many intervening variables that we can't.

There are people who would call for dumping the system as we know it, just rebuilding the ship in the midst of a storm.

It's a mixed message.

I never feel that it's as bad as we say it is, or as we hear it is, but there are places where it's really pretty damn bad.

And this might be situational, also, as you go to -- Floyd has been doing some work with some schools where they talk about a, what, 50% dropout rate.

I mean, that's pretty bad.

But if I go to a suburban high school in Minneapolis, it might not be that bad.

That's a good nonanswer.

That's a dean's answer.

"I don't know" is the answer.

>> This is just a partial observation, but the political paradigm is you have to trash something in order to create (inaudible).

>> HOPKINS: But there are people who want to trash it and not invest in it, and that's what's scary about this, is that they trash it and say, "You're given so much money to do this, and you can't do it well; let's take money away."

And we can't do it that way.

I want to say hello to professor -- I'm going to say Daniel.

In case you didn't know, when I was interim dean, I hired professor T. K. Daniel -- T. K. is correct, right?

>> McCASLIN: Yes.

>> HOPKINS: -- up in Minnesota, and he stayed for a year and then bailed out on us and came back down here to Ohio State, and I personally was very disappointed, and it's good to see you again. Thanks for coming over.

Thanks.

I'm sorry.

>> (Inaudible)

>> I was struck by (inaudible) (inaudible), and there were at one time (inaudible) where you have (inaudible).

It seems to me that's what we're trying to do.

And I was wondering if you think we might have to reorganize the reform, (inaudible) to really be (inaudible) structure (inaudible).

>> HOPKINS: That sounds like a good idea.

Were the lab schools successful before?

Did we really try out anything new in these lab schools, and then did we implement those?

One of our problems always has been that we identified new -- as one of the people I quoted, we identify what appear to be new, successful initiatives, and we can never bring them to school -- or to scale because of the -- all of the intervening variables, whether it's cost, whether it's groups that stand in the way.

So hopefully that's one of the roles of the Center, is to try out new ideas, and one of our problems has been this first year is we really

don't have anything that's considered experimental in nature.
We have one quasi experimental study.
We've had it for five years, and we're under initial review -- I mean not under initial -- we're under project review each year, in terms of -- in terms of the continuation of projects.
And to do long-term studies -- I think I kind of indicated, to do long-term studies is really quite difficult, longitudinal studies, because of all of the different pressures that are there as we move ahead.
So if we could move those schools -- and perhaps what we could do is use some of these new ideas, such as academies.
That's probably not a new idea, probably not really new, but we're doing more of that now, academies, magnets, and use those as our lab schools, some of the tech prep things, where we can do things more controlled, in terms of trying to make change.
But, again -- but you still have to move that.
So we do a lab school, we get this idea, how do you move it?
(Inaudible) (inaudible).
We have these good ideas, but we have to (inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible) -- and the teachers groups all working to help bring that along as we do.
Phil had a question and then Bob.
>> (Inaudible) (inaudible) (inaudible).
>> HOPKINS: We realize there's a very important need for that.
And I did get your e-mail.
And -- and in -- yes, the question was, where do we stand on review and syntheses -- that's the term I'm going to use -- similar to those which we saw 20 or 30 years ago, where meta analyses of research that would try to tie together this whole body of work that's been done and bring it down to where a person can sit down and read it, if not overnight, at least in a day.
And -- and Jo had raised this question through an e-mail to either Barbara or Susan or the --
>> Judy.
>> HOPKINS: -- Judy, yeah, okay, and I said, "Jeez, that's kind of a good idea," and the old Center -- the old, old Center had been involved in some of those activities.
And I had been a coauthor on one of those back in about 1969, before most of you were born.
And I was in Washington, and I mentioned this to our program officer, and he said "That's a good idea, but the National Center never did those."
And I said, "You're wrong."
And he said, "I'm not wrong."
I went back and pulled it off my shelf, and it was the ERIC clearinghouse that had done those.
And so what I would encourage us to do is to go to the ERIC clearinghouse again and have those done because I thought they were

invaluable.

I thought those were -- no, actually, it was one of the best professional development activities I had ever participated in because I worked in the review synthesis of research in business and office education, and we collected everything for years and worked on that. So that's -- yeah.

Bob?

>> Having written the one for market education (inaudible).

My question gets back to what do we do now in terms of education reform and education research, when we really have different groups out there wanting different things out of schools, and the way we measure schools and what should we measure varies by the audience or the group (inaudible) measuring (inaudible)?

>> HOPKINS: Morgan, want to react?

>> LEWIS: You're on the spot.

>> HOPKINS: Your question is whether we -- there's such a diverse set of demands on the schools.

>> Yeah.

>> HOPKINS: And maybe what we have to do is maybe we have to start thinking about one school model doesn't fit all, and we're starting to see more of that.

We're starting to see charter schools that are semi supported, at least, by state -- with state funding or with other types of funding.

We're starting to see academies, more academies.

We're seeing magnet schools.

You know, maybe we're back -- we have -- what are the CES schools?

>> (Inaudible)

>> HOPKINS: The essential schools.

What's the first word?

Council -- Coalition of Essential Schools, where they want to -- I understand, a very much focus on academics, if you will, and may -- and then maybe what we do, I mean, so then you say all of that, and you say, "My goodness, are we back to when Hopkins started teaching when they had the Minneapolis Vocational School, when they had the Minneapolis Public Schools, or do you have what they had in New York with the Brooklyn Automotive High School and the Murray Bergstrom School for Business Careers.

I mean, I don't know if that solves the problem, but maybe we have to do those types of things.

And then we have the whole school voucher issue, where we let people vote by, if not their feet, their pocketbook or a combination of those things and choose among chartered -- did this fall off again -- and choose among charter schools, magnet schools, parochial schools, private schools, or whatever those might be, and let people vote that way.

And one of the dangers that I've always heard said is that if that happens and then if the more traditional public school just ends up as

a dumping ground, it's even going to be worse maybe than what it is now.

And I taught one of my first years of teaching in a town of about 50,000 that had a parochial school -- it was a private parochial school -- two public high schools, and then a -- and there was a hierarchy there, and when the students were too bad for the parochial school, they kicked them out, and they came to us, and when they got too bad for us, we kicked them out, and they went to the technical institute in town.

And so we -- that -- the students there weren't looking so good.

So I don't know the answer to that.

Floyd?

>> MCKENNEY: Charles, one of the concerns we hear frequently is (inaudible) in technical education at the secondary level.

And I had a call this morning (inaudible) about the policy.

(Inaudible) first of all and tell us what you see career-technical education looking like at the secondary level, based on the research.

>> HOPKINS: We're doing research to figure out what that is.

And we do want to do a study that -- we are proposing a study that would take schools that have been very much involved in reform initiatives, be those New American High Schools, be those High Schools That Work, be those Coalition for Essential Schools, be those Copa schools, if you know what I mean by Copa schools, but take a look at all of those and see what's happening with, if you will, career and technical education in those schools.

Because you get the argument that at a Coalition For Essential Schools -- I just made the statement they have no -- that they're very heavily focused on academic education, if you will, and that there's no career and technical education in those schools, yet we have -- one of the state directors I visited with the other day told me about one school they've been working with, and there's a very strong vocational education program in those schools.

And we don't really know -- and I say "vocational."

Actually, our language slides back and forth in the proposal and in our -- and in our work.

But we are trying to find out because we think if there's a new definition or if there's (inaudible) for career and technical education or what those programs are going to look like, it should surface in these schools that have already been going -- undergoing educational reform or educational change.

So who -- Floyd -- so I can't -- then there are others who say that there will be no career and technical education at the secondary level; there might still be some career education, but that all of the technical education will be moved to the postsecondary level, and I have friends who have taken that position, also.

And that varies from state to state.

So I think I don't know how I would answer.

But we're doing research on it.

There was another piece to that, I was going to provide an answer to, and I can't remember what it was.

Floyd told me on the plane back from Boise, he was going to sit and develop a list of -- it would be "Floyd's 10 Questions List."

Is that what that guy on TV at night does, whatever his name is?

>> Letterman.

>> HOPKINS: Letterman, yes.

Are there other comments or questions?

>> Going back to some of your earlier comments about the balance between academic and vocational, (inaudible).

And that is that in one of the investigations (inaudible) Latin high schools, back in, what, 1700s, had concluded that to improve their program and improve attendance and (inaudible), that they needed a more occupational emphasis.

One of the big -- one of the big issues is that we have created a number of institutions over the years, ranging from the land grant universities to area vocational schools, Ben Franklin's Franklin Academy that's involved in the University of Pennsylvania, and there's a constant evolution from an occupational focus (inaudible), and that issue is knowing the value and merit of career focus and interest, both as an outcome as well as its impact on motivation and interest in learning (inaudible).

>> HOPKINS: Well, I think Bob's work in contextualized learning really kind of speaks to that, that in fact if we're going to be successful in -- with a lot of students in developing the high academic levels of achievement, we need to do that in a contextualized form, even if we don't do occupational education as such.

If you go back into, what, the mid '70s, with some of the -- and I'm trying to remember who did this study.

I suppose it was one of the studies similar to the NAVE study -- I'm trying to think of who did that, but it was very critical about vocational education at the secondary level, and one of the criticisms was people weren't getting jobs in the area they were prepared for, and perhaps we were expecting too much, but at least it was a way to help students develop academic skills and transfer those skills even if they weren't used in that specific occupation.

I started teaching in 1960, so I started teaching 40 years ago this September, and we had business education A majors, we had business education B majors, we had general ed majors, and T & I majors in the high school.

Five valedictorians that year, and three of them were business ed A students.

I mean, these kids had -- were good students.

There was no question about they were getting a good academic education and an education they could go out and use.

I've never been sure about the relationship in 1963, then vocational

ed -- I'm sorry -- business ed was included under the Vocational Ed Act for support, and that kind of drove a wedge in -- kind of drove,

whew -- kind of drove an edge -- a wedge in -- in business education, and it really, I think, and often think, that it damaged the programs we were running.

Yet, there are other things that affected us during that period of time.

There was a real concern about stereotypical education programs. So, you know, I'd be remiss if I didn't say all three of those valedictorians were also females, and now they were -- now they're asked to go into other areas, and there are different changes. And so there are some of those societal things that affect what we do, too.

There's one more -- are you ready to quit?

One more quick comment, because you asked about occupational education and vocational education, and it seems to me that some of our concern, in terms of what this all means, is it's whatever you want it to mean. And we were at the state directors meeting, and they had a very fine presentation on some IT certification programs.

And they were running these programs at the secondary level, and these kids are going out and getting jobs at \$40,000 or \$50,000 a year.

And I said to one of the people sitting at my table, "Why is this so great, when they're criticizing other vocational ed programs just like that?"

Why is that different from a welding program, or an auto mechanic's program, or whatever?

They're teaching them specific occupational education."

And I think, "What's different in my mind?"

Well, those kids are going out and getting good jobs, and they're going out for \$40,000 a year.

I mean, and so that makes them feel good, the people who are running these programs, and people critical of career and technical education, and in -- there seems to be a mismatch there sometimes in my mind.

Anyway --

>> McCASLIN: We have time for one more question.

>> HOPKINS: Thank you all very much.

It's been fun.

(Applause)

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