

PODCAST #4—A HIGH SCHOOL FOR STEVE JOBS, WHOOPIE GOLDBERG, AMY KLOBUCHAR, THOMAS FRIEDMAN, YOU AND ME.

WELCOME TO VIEWS AND VOICE: ABOVE THE NOISE, THE PODCAST HOSTED BY MASA, MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS. I AM YOUR CONVENER, JANE SIGFORD.

TODAY'S DISCUSSION IS THE NEXT INSTALLMENT IN LOOKING AT WHAT A HIGH SCHOOL COULD BE THAT ALLOWS "PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS THE FLEXIBILITY TO DETERMINE THE COURSE WORK AND EXPERIENCE NECESSARY TO MEET GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS", WHICH IS ONE OF THE ITEMS THAT IS CURRENTLY A PART OF THE LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM OF MASA. BECAUSE LEGISLATORS WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THAT MIGHT LOOK LIKE, WE GET TO EXPLORE THIS RICH TOPIC.

IN THE PREVIOUS PODCAST WE EXPLORED THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, WHAT PERCENTAGE OF AMERICAN STUDENTS FINISH HIGH SCHOOL AND WHY STUDENTS LEAVE HIGH SCHOOL WITHOUT EARNING A DIPLOMA.

IN THIS PODCAST I WILL PROPOSE A MODEL THAT WOULD MEET THE NEEDS OF STEVE JOBS, WHOOPIE GOLDBERG, AMY KLOBUCHAR, THOMAS FRIEDMAN, YOU AND ME. I CHOSE STEVE JOBS BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW HE WAS A DIVERGENT LEARNER, ONE WHO SAID HIS LIFE WAS SAVED BECAUSE OF TWO TEACHERS, A FIFTH GRADE TEACHER WHO RECOGNIZED HE WAS "GIFTED", LEARNED DIFFERENTLY, AND NEEDED TO BE ADVANCED TO A HIGHER GRADE, AND A COLLEGE PROFESSOR. HE ALSO HAD A FATHER WHO ENGAGED HIM IN HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES IN THE GARAGE WHICH IS WHERE HE AND STEVE WOZNIAK EVENTUALLY BUILT THEIR FIRST COMPUTER. HE DID NOT FINISH COLLEGE, BUT BECAUSE OF A WISE TEACHER WHO ALLOWED HIM TO AUDIT CLASSES, PARTICULARLY ART, JOBS FOUND A PASSION FOR THINGS AESTHETICALLY PLEASING. HE DEVELOPED THE DIFFERENT FONTS FOR COMPUTER USE WHICH HAD NOT BEEN CREATED BEFORE. PLUS, HE BECAME VERY FUSSY ABOUT THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE APPLE MACHINE WHICH LED TO STYLISTIC FEATURES UNIQUE TO APPLE.

WHOOPIE GOLDBERG DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. YET SHE HAS FOUND A NICHE IN COMEDY, ACTING, CHALLENGING THINKERS ON TALK SHOWS AND MAKING HER MARK IN MANY WAYS.

AMY KLOBUCHAR WAS A RATHER TRADITIONAL LEARNER IN A SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL, EARNED A LAW DEGREE, AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN POLITICS IN MINNESOTA AND NOW IN THE US SENATE. NOT TOO LONG AGO HER NAME WAS ONE CONSIDERED AS A CANDIDATE FOR NOMINATION TO THE US SUPREME COURT.

THOMAS FRIEDMAN GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA. HE TRAVELS WORLD-WIDE, WRITES BOOKS, ONE OF WHICH, *THE WORLD IS FLAT*, COINED A PHRASE THAT HAS BECOME PART OF A WIDELY ACCEPTED LEXICON OF TERMS THAT DESCRIBE OUR CURRENT WORLD.

AS FOR YOU AND ME, I CAN ONLY SPEAK FOR ME. I WAS A GOOD STUDENT IN HIGH SCHOOL BUT IT WAS NOT A LOT OF FUN. I DID NOT THINK I HAD ANY OPTION BUT TO ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL BECAUSE I KNEW I WAS GOING TO COLLEGE. AND I LIKED COLLEGE A LOT MORE. I HAD MORE LATITUDE TO CHOOSE WHAT I WANTED TO LEARN, I WAS MORE CHALLENGED AND WAS ABLE TO TAKE COURSES THAT WERE FOREIGN TO MY SMALL TOWN EXPERIENCE, SUCH AS MY FIRST DOWNHILL SKIING CLASS WHICH MANDATED THREE HOURS IN -60 WIND CHILL. THAT'S AN EXPERIENCE I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN. AS FOR YOU, I'D LOVE TO HEAR WHAT TYPE OF HIGH SCHOOL WOULD HAVE BEEN YOUR DREAM.

WASHOR AND MAJKOWSKI IN LEAVING TO LEARN SAY THAT A HIGH SCHOOL THAT HELPS STUDENTS WANT TO KEEP LEARNING IS ONE THAT UTILIZES "RIGOROUS STUDENT WORK THAT FOCUES ON DEMONSTRATIONS OF COMPETENCE AND LEADS STUDENTS TO SEEK HIGHER LEVELS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT THROUGH CRAFTSMANSHIP, MASTERY, AND ARTISTRY."

THEREFORE, THREE PERENNIAL QUESTIONS NEED TO BE ADDRESSED RELATED TO PRODUCTIVE LEARNING:

WHAT CONSTITUTES SUCCESS?

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO LEARN TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS?

HOW SHOULD SCHOOLS HELP STUDENTS LEARN PRODUCTIVELY? " P. XXVI.

THEY GO ON TO SAY THAT "TO GET TO SOMETHING REALLY DIFFERENT AND BETTER, EDUCATORS NEED TO THINK ABOUT LEARNERS AND LEARNING DIFFERENTLY. THEY NEED TO QUESTION THEIR TAKEN-FOR-GRANTED ASSUMPTIONS, FORGET WHAT THEY KNOW ABOUT SCHOOLS, REASON WITH A BEGINNER'S MIND, AND SEE POSSIBILITIES

WITH NEW EYES—PARTICULARLY THROUGH THE EYES OF ONE YOUNG LEARNER AT A TIME." P. XXIX

HERE IS ANOTHER SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING LIKE I'VE OFFERED IN PREVIOUS PODCASTS: THE IDEAS PROPOSED HERE ARE MINE, AND HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED OVER YEARS OF TEACHING, BEING AN ADMINISTRATOR, OBSERVING, BEING A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, AND PARENTING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, AND "GRANDPARENTING" TWO MORE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

THIS PROPOSAL IS ONE IDEA. IT IS MEANT AS A DISCUSSION STARTER. WHEN TRYING TO GET A GROUP OF PEOPLE TO CREATE REALLY NEW IDEAS, I HAVE FOUND IT IS OFTEN EASIER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE TO PROPOSE AN IDEA AND THEN HAVE OTHERS MAKE IT BETTER BY MODIFYING, IMPROVING, AND EDITING THE IDEAS. SO I AM STARTING WITH ONE IDEA BUT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT NOT ALL HIGH SCHOOL INNOVATIONS WOULD HAVE TO LOOK THE SAME.

HOWEVER, WHATEVER TRUE INNOVATION, NOT TINKERING, IS CREATED, THERE NEEDS TO HAVE A LOT OF BACKSTAGE WORK BEFORE IT COMES TO FRUITION. THERE IS A REASON THAT GOOD THEATER INVOLVES STAGES IN LEARNING THE PLAY—READING THROUGH THE SCRIPT, MAPPING OUT THE STAGING, REHEARSALS IN SECTIONS, REHEARSALS GRADUALLY ELIMINATING HAVING WRITTEN SCRIPTS, REHEARSALS OF THE ENTIRE PRODUCTION, DRESS REHEARSALS, AND THEN OPENING NIGHT. ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN IN A THEATER OR LIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE ARTS KNOWS THAT EVEN WITH ALL THE DIFFERENT REHEARSALS, INVOLVING ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE FROM ACTORS, TO STAGE CREW, TO CHOREOGRAPHERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, EVERY PERFORMANCE IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT, EVERY AUDIENCE IS DIFFERENT. SO TOO WITH MAJOR CHANGES IN SCHOOLS: IT DEMANDS A LOT OF INFORMATION, TEACHING, SUPPORT, FLEXIBILITY, EXCITEMENT, AND DEDICATION FROM AND FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

SO HERE GOES---

A PROPOSAL FOR S.J., W.G., A.K., T.F., J. S., AND YOU HIGH SCHOOL:

1. COURSES WOULD BE DIVIDED BY STRANDS INTO LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2, WHICH ROUGHLY ALIGN WITH 9TH/10TH GRADE AND THEN 11TH AND 12TH. STUDENTS WOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE A CERTAIN NUMBER

FROM EACH CATEGORY TO GRADUATE SUCCESSFULLY. COURSES WOULD NOT BE DESIGNATED AS GRADE LEVEL COURSE, ONLY LEVEL. A STUDENT WHO WAS VERY GIFTED IN ART MIGHT BE READY FOR AN ADVANCED ART COURSE DURING THE 2ND YEAR OF THEIR HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND COULD BE IN A CLASS WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN THERE FOUR YEARS. CHOICE WOULD BE DETERMINED BY SKILL LEVEL, AND INTEREST. ONE OF THE REASONS I WOULD DIVIDE INTO LEVEL 1 AND 2 IS THAT THE LEVEL 2 STUDENTS MAY HAVE MORE ACCESS TO INDIVIDUAL TRANSPORTATION AND COULD BE ON AND OFF CAMPUS IN A MORE FLEXIBLE MANNER.

2. STRANDS WOULD ROUGHLY BE EQUIVALENT TO DISCIPLINES BUT THERE COULD BE CROSS-OVERS WHERE A COURSE MIGHT COMPLETE STANDARDS IN MORE THAN ONE DISCIPLINE. A STUDENT COULD CHOOSE WHICH STRAND SATISFIES THEIR PROGRAM. ONE COURSE COULD BE TAKEN AS A MATH STRAND OR A TECHNOLOGY CLASS, FOR EXAMPLE.
3. THE COURSES WOULD CONTAIN THE MINNESOTA STANDARDS. STUDENTS WOULD DESIGN THEIR CHOICES SO THAT ALL THE REQUIRED STANDARDS ARE ACCOMPLISHED. AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH COURSE STUDENTS WOULD RECEIVE A CHECKLIST OF WHAT STANDARDS ARE IN THE COURSE AND THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY BEFORE THE COURSE WAS FINISHED. THE CHECKLIST IS THE LEARNING TARGETS FOR THE COURSE. WE KNOW STUDENTS LEARN BETTER IF THEY KNOW THE EXACT TARGETS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES. THEY COULD ACTUALLY CHECK THEM OFF AS THEY ARE COMPLETED SO STUDENTS KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY HAVE LEFT TO DO. QUALITY OF COMPLETION WOULD BE EVALUATED BY THEIR TEACHER OR A PANEL OF EXPERTS, DEPENDING ON THE COURSE.
4. STUDENTS WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO AN ADVISER WHO WOULD WORK WITH THEM FOR FOUR YEARS MUCH LIKE SOME HOMEROOM PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO FUNCTION. EACH TEACHER WOULD HAVE 20-22 OR SO ADVISEES (OR FEWER) AND WOULD MONITOR A STUDENT'S PROGRESS THROUGHOUT HIGH SCHOOL. (THE BENEFIT OF THIS IS THAT STUDENTS HAVE AN ADULT WITH WHOM THEY ARE CONNECTED AND KNOWS THEM FOR 4 YEARS. PLUS, IN MY EXPERIENCE OF DOING THIS AS A TEACHER, THE TEACHERS BECOME MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE TOTAL HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

AND ARE MORE ABLE TO RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE COURSES FOR THEIR ADVISEES.) THE ADVISOR WOULD SEEK THE INPUT OF OTHER CONTENT SPECIALISTS ON CERTAIN COURSES THAT ARE NOT IN THEIR AREA OF EXPERTISE, THEREBY BUILDING INTERDEPENDENCE, RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AND BETWEEN TEACHERS.

5. THERE WOULD BE A VARIETY OF WAYS THAT A STUDENT COULD COMPLETE THE MATERIAL, TO BE AGREED UPON WITH THE ADVISOR AND PERHAPS A CONTENT-LEVEL TEACHER. SOME COURSES COULD BE COMPLETED RAPIDLY—A MONTH OR SO AND SOME WOULD TAKE LONGER DEPENDING ON WHAT THE STUDENT DID. SOME COURSES COULD BE TAKEN IN A TRADITIONAL FASHION WITH READINGS, GROUP DISCUSSIONS, TESTS AND SOME WOULD BE COMPLETED BY DOING A PROJECT, DEMONSTRATION, OR MENTORSHIP. THIS WOULD BE DESIGNED WITH THE ADVISER. JUST KNOW, THAT I DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING SHOULD BE COMPLETED WITH A PROJECT. IT WOULD BE UP TO THE ADVISER TO HELP SHAPE THE PROGRAM AND PROVIDE EXPERIENCES THAT EACH STUDENT NEEDS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF A STUDENT HATES READING AND WRITING BUT NEEDS PRACTICE IN IT, THE COURSE WOULD BE DESIGNED MORE TRADITIONALLY TO LEARN THESE SKILLS. IF A STUDENT NEEDS PRACTICE DESIGNING AND DELIVERING PRESENTATIONS, THE COURSE WOULD REQUIRE EXPERIENCE IN THAT AREA. THE IDEA IS TO BUILD ON STRENGTHS AND TEACH HOW TO OVERCOME SKILLS THAT ARE MORE FRAGILE.
6. SOME SEQUENTIAL COURSES SUCH AS MATH WOULD HAVE TO HAVE AN ASSIGNED TIME SLOT WHERE THERE IS INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT IN A CLASSROOM SETTING. THE COURSES COULD MEET 3-4 TIMES A WEEK WITH A STUDY DAY BUILT IN FOR EXTRA HELP EACH WEEK. BUT THE DAILY SCHEDULE WOULD NOT BE A TRADITIONAL SETTING WHERE EVERY CLASS IS 47 MINUTES AND THERE IS A 5 MINUTE PASSING TIME 5-6 TIMES A DAY.
7. COURSES AT LEVEL I WOULD BE DESIGNED TO SOLIDIFY THE KNOWLEDGE BASE THAT WE EXPECT OF AN EDUCATED US CITIZEN. FOR EXAMPLE, LEVEL I WOULD CONTAIN A CULMINATING US HISTORY COURSE (WHICH IS ANOTHER DISCUSSION BECAUSE WE NEED TO RE-EXAMINE HOW WE TEACH THIS), CIVICS, CRITICAL READING SKILLS, ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY SKILLS, COURSES IN THE

ARTS, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION. THE COURSES WOULD BE DESIGNED TO BE A WAY TO SECURE FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE.

8. LEVEL 2 COURSES WOULD BE MUCH MORE ADVANCED, MORE LIKE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCES WITH A VEHICLE FOR STUDENTS TO USE AND EXTEND THEIR KNOWLEDGE. WE WOULD OFFER NEW COURSES, SUCH AS GEO-POLITICS, BIO-ETHICS, GLOBAL ISSUES, HOW TO MEDIATE ACROSS CULTURES, WORLD PROBLEM-SOLVING, INDIVIDUAL ART PROJECTS, WORLD MUSIC, WOMEN COMPOSERS, MUSIC COMPOSITION/ PERFORMANCE, COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS. THERE WOULD BE STANDARDS PROVIDED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COURSE AND STUDENTS WOULD KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WERE EXPECTED TO KNOW AND DO. HOW THEY ACCOMPLISH THAT WOULD BE UNIQUE TO A STUDENT. AGAIN, THE WAYS TO LEARN WOULD BE DESIGNED TO BUILD UPON STRENGTHS, AND MEDIATE DIFFICULTIES.
9. COURSES WOULD BE DESIGNED THIS WAY TO RECOGNIZE THAT LEARNING IS NOT A LINEAR FLOWCHART. IT IS CIRCULAR, OR IT DOUBLES BACK OR NEW LEARNING IS CREATED.
10. COURSES WOULD BE ORGANIZED BY STRAND, NOT BY RIGID TITLES, RECOGNIZING THAT STANDARDS CAN OFTEN BE ACHIEVED IN SEVERAL OF THE DISCIPLINES. MATH CAN BE LEARNED IN ART. HISTORY CAN BE LEARNED THROUGH LITERATURE.
11. COMPLETION OF A COURSE COULD BE DEMONSTRATED BY A PRESENTATION, PORTFOLIO, SPEECH, ONE-ON-ONE MEETING WITH THE ADVISOR AND PANEL OF PERHAPS 2 OTHER ADULTS WHO WOULD SIGN OFF ON THE QUALITY OF THE WORK.
12. SOME STUDENTS WOULD BE ON CAMPUS EVERY DAY AND SOME WOULD NOT. THEREFORE, ATTENDANCE POLICIES BECOME REDUNDANT WHICH THEY ARE ANYWAY. EXCUSE SLIPS, HALL PASSES, UNEXCUSED/EXCUSED ABSENCES ARE LEFTOVERS FROM THE BELIEF THAT SCHOOLS ARE MEANT TO INCULCATE THE INDUSTRIAL AGE VALUE OF TEACHING WORKERS TO COME ON TIME, PUNCH IN, ETC. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO RESEARCH THAT VALIDATES THAT INSISTING ON ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS IN SCHOOL TRANSLATES TO THE WORKPLACE. WITH THE NUMBER OF WORKERS FOR WHOM WORK HAS BECOME DISENGAGED FROM A JOB, THIS INSISTENCE ON THIS DATED PRACTICE IS NON-PRODUCTIVE AND

WASTEFUL OF PEOPLE'S TIME. STUDENTS DO NOT SEE CONNECTION TO THEIR LIFE; HENCE, THEY DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.

13. A SCHOOL DAY WOULD LOOK MORE LIKE A COLLEGE SETTING IN THAT SOME DAYS STUDENTS WOULD BE IN A "CLASS" MORE OFTEN AND SOMETIMES THEY WOULD BE WORKING WITH A PARTNER OR ALONE ON THEIR LEARNING. MEDIA CENTERS WOULD BE WITH MEDIA, NOT JUST BOOKS, AND A PLACE WHERE STUDENTS CAN USE EQUIPMENT TO LEARN AND PRESENT. THE CENTERS WOULD NOT BE QUIET, BUT FILLED WITH "JOYFUL NOISE" OF INTERACTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS.
14. SOME STUDENTS COULD GRADUATE WHEN THEY ARE 16 AND SOME COULD STAY UNTIL THEY ARE 21 OR COME BACK AFTER A "GAP YEAR" SERVICE PROJECT OR TRAVEL EXPERIENCE. IF OUR GOAL IS LEARNING AND A RESULTANT DIPLOMA, IT IS NECESSARY THAT OUR PRACTICES AND IDEAS OF COMPLETION BECOME MORE FLEXIBLE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN THIS PROGRAM, SOME STUDENTS WOULD MOVE THROUGH JUST LIKE THEY DO NOW BUT THERE WOULD BE OPTIONS FOR SOME DIFFERENCES AND FLEXIBILITY TO ENGAGE MORE STUDENTS. WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT THAT SOME STUDENTS COULD MOVE ON APPROPRIATELY AND SOME COULD STAY AND REALLY COMPLETE THE WORK? SOUNDS LIKE A BEAUTIFUL THING TO ME.
15. COURSES OFFERED TO FULFILL REQUIREMENTS WOULD REFLECT THE COMMUNITY. FOR EXAMPLE, IN SOME AGRICULTURAL AREAS A SCIENCE AND EVEN MATHEMATICS CREDIT COULD BE EARNED IN A COURSE ON CALCULATING THE IRRIGATION NEEDS FOR CROPS WHEN USING A SATELLITE PROGRAM THAT TELLS THE MACHINE WHAT IS NEEDED WHERE. OR IN AN URBAN SETTING STUDENTS COULD EARN SCIENCE OR TECHNOLOGICAL OR BUSINESS CREDIT BY FIGURING OUT HOW TO BUY OR RENT A VACANT LOT TO MAKE COMMUNITY GARDENS. THE POSSIBILITIES ARE LIMITED ONLY BY THE HUMAN MIND AND WHAT IT CAN THINK UP.

SOME POSITIVES ABOUT SUCH A PROPOSAL:

A KEY COMPONENT OF TRUE REFORM WOULD BE IF SCHOOLS WERE FUNDED ON WHEN STUDENTS LEARN, NOT ON HOW OLD THEY ARE IN OCTOBER. DISTRICTS SHOULD RECEIVE FOUNDATION AID WHEN STUDENTS MAKE A YEAR'S WORTH OF GROWTH IN READING, MATH, AND

SCIENCE. AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL SCHOOLS WOULD BE PAID AFTER COMPLETING A CERTAIN NUMBER OF COURSES WHICH WOULD COINCIDE ROUGHLY WITH A YEAR. CURRENTLY, SCHOOLS ARE JUDGED BY STANDARDIZED TESTS SUPPOSEDLY BASED ON STANDARDS. WE ARE JUDGED BY SCORES BUT PAID ON ATTENDANCE. THIS IS A HUGE DOUBLE MESSAGE.

TEACHERS WOULD HAVE MORE INCENTIVE, TO MAKE CERTAIN STUDENTS MASTER THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES BEFORE BEING MOVED FORWARD. I HAVE HAD CONVERSATIONS WITH TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING CURRICULUM WHERE THEY HAVE SAID THAT BECAUSE THEY ARE FOURTH GRADE TEACHERS, THEY DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT FIFTH GRADE STANDARDS FOR EXAMPLE. IF A STUDENT WAS NOT MOVED FORWARD UNTIL MASTERY OCCURRED, THAT COMMENT COULD NOT HAPPEN.

LET'S TALK ABOUT ESSA REQUIREMENTS:

1. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ASSESSMENTS AT HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL WOULD BE, AND ARE, REDUNDANT. IF THE STANDARDS ARE TRULY MEANINGFUL AND ARE TRUE STANDARDS, WHEN A STUDENT COMPLETES A COURSE SUCCESSFULLY AND WITH EXPERTISE, THERE IS NO NEED TO REASSESS BY A MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST. MOST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DO NOT TAKE THESE TESTS SERIOUSLY ANYWAY BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN TESTED SO MUCH AND THEY SEE NO CONSEQUENCE OR BENEFIT TO THEM. SO WHY DO WE DO IT? WE WASTE PRECIOUS TIME.

THIS IS WHERE IT IS IMPORTANT TO DISTINGUISH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLS AND THE PURPOSE PUBLIC EDUCATION. IN MY DEFINITION PUBLIC EDUCATION IS MEANT TO TEACH AND HAVE STUDENTS LEARN CERTAIN INFORMATION AND UTILIZE SOCIAL PROCESSES TO DO SO. THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLS IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION. THERE IS A CONVERSATION NOW ABOUT CREATING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WHICH COULD FULFILL MANY OF THE TASKS THAT HAVE BEEN ADDED TO PUBLIC EDUCATION SINCE 1900, ACCORDING TO JAMIE VOLLMER, AND ARE NOT REALLY THE JOB OF PUBLIC EDUCATION. <https://www.jamievollmer.com/pdf/the-list.pdf>

THE SCHOOL IS A PHYSICAL LOCATION; THE ROLE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IS TO TEACH AND HAVE STUDENTS LEARN CERTAIN CONTENT AND SKILLS. THE COMMUNITY, PARENTS, CHURCHES MUST BE EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN. I'M THINKING OF SUCH

THINGS AS MENTAL HEALTH AND FOOD PROGRAMS AS AN EXAMPLE. TEACHERS NEED TO BE TRAINED TO RECOGNIZE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES BUT WE NEED TO HAVE RESOURCES FOR REFERRALS TO THE EXPERTS FOR HELP. WE ARE NOT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS. THE SAME IS TRUE WITH PROGRAMS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY SUCH AS BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS EVEN DURING THE SUMMER. THIS IS A SERVICE THAT THE COMMUNITY CAN AND SHOULD PROVIDE. WE ALL KNOW THAT KIDS LEARN BETTER IF THEY ARE NOT HUNGRY BUT THAT IS A ROLE THAT MANY AGENCIES SUCH AS NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS OR CHURCHES COULD TAKE ON TO BUILD A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT. SCHOOLS CAN'T DO IT ALONE. BUT SCHOOLS COULD BE THE SITE OF SOME OF THESE SERVICES BUT NOT THE ORGANIZATION THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM.

SOME OF THE MONEY FROM ESSA COULD BE USED TO ESTABLISH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COULD BE USED TO ESTABLISH MAKER ROOMS FOR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY ADVISORS TO WORK AND DESIGN PROJECTS. STUDIOS AND LABS CAN BE USED FOR THE SAME—A PLACE FOR MENTORS/COMMUNITY EXPERTS/TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO WORK. THERE ARE MANY, MANY MORE POSSIBILITIES.

HERE COME THE YEAH, BUTS----

I HEAR MANY OF YOU SAYING, "YEAH, BUT"... WHAT IF YOU THINK ABOUT THIS DIFFERENTLY? "IT'S NOT RIGHT OR WRONG, LEFT OR RIGHT; IT'S OPEN VS. CLOSED." ARE WE OPEN TO TRULY MAKING A CHANGE OR NOT?

YES, IT'S CHANGE AND A MAJOR CHANGE. TO MAKE IT WORK THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A LOT OF TIME DEVOTED TO EDUCATING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND PARENTS AND STUDENTS WE ARE EDUCATORS; WE CAN , AND NEED, TO DO THIS.

A PROGRAM LIKE THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DESIGNED WITH A LOT INPUT FROM TEACHERS TO MAKE IT WORK. THEY ARE THE PROFESSIONALS AND THE EXPERTS. THE MASTER SCHEDULE WOULD HAVE TO BE SEEN AS A TOOL FOR INNOVATION, INSTEAD OF AS A WEAPON TO CONTROL AND MANAGE.

THERE WOULD BE BENEFITS BECAUSE OF THE FREEDOM OF THE STRANDS AND CLASSES BECAUSE IT WOULD ELIMINATE MANY ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS, I TRULY BELIEVE. ATTENDANCE CLERKS COULD BE REPURPOSED. SATURDAY SCHOOL COULD BE ELIMINATED. I BELIEVE

AND SCHOOLS ORGANIZED SIMILAR TO THIS WILL CORROBORATE THAT DISCIPLINE ISSUES DECREASE. WOULD WE NEED FEWER DEANS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS? LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT WOULD BE MORE NETWORK-LIKE, LESS TOP-DOWN WHICH WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLE TO SOME BUT THERE MUST BE TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR CHANGES.

CLASSROOMS AND THE SCHOOL WOULD BE MORE ACTIVE, MORE ALIVE, MAYBE EVEN NOISIER IN A WAY, BUT IT WOULD BE ALIVE, ENGAGING, AND MEANINGFUL. NOT SO MUCH NOISE AT "PASSING TIME" BUT THAT WOULD BE BECAUSE STUDENTS ARE BUSY ALL THE TIME.

TO SUM IT UP, IN THEIR BOOK *LEAVING TO LEARN* ELLIOT WASHOR AND CHARLES MOJKOWSKI STATE "DEVELOPING SOCIAL CAPITAL IS A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT COMPETENCY. HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN, LEARN FROM, AND CONTRIBUTE TO LEARNING ORGANIATIONS, COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, AND THE PANOPLY OF SOCIAL NETWORKS THAT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, AND WORK." P. 58

THEY BELIEVE THAT WE EMPHASIZE WHAT IS NOW STATED AS "THE COMMON CORE" BUT "THE COMMON CORE IS SINGULARLY NARROW AND IGNORES A LARGE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS—CREATIVITY AND INVENTION, DESIGN THINKING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE ACROSS MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES, AND GOING DEEPLY INTO AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE TOWARD MASTERY—THAT ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS." P. 59. THESE ARE THE EXACT SKILLS THAT BUSINESS LEADERS CRITICIZE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR NOT DEVELOPING!

"WE NEED TO DEVELOP "AN UNCOMMON CORE" BECAUSE ALL STUDENTS BEING ABLE TO READ AND COMPUTE IS *NOT* A HIGHER STANDARD WHEN THE WORLD WE ARE COMING TO—THE *WORLD WE ARE ALREADY LIVING IN*—" REQUIRE THE SKILLS OF SOCIAL COMPETENCY ENGAGING THEM IN MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS PERSONALLY AND GLOBALLY. P. 59

THANKS FOR LISTENING. I WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTFUL COMMENTS AT JLSIGFORD@COMCAST.NET

I LEAVE YOU WITH WORDS AGAIN FROM ONE OF MY FAVORITE PHILOSOPHERS, DR. SEUSS.

“Why fit in when you were born to stand out?”

IF HIGH SCHOOLS WERE ENGAGING AND DIVERSE? WHAT IF LOCAL REQUIREMENTS REFLECTED THE NEEDS/DESIRES OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES? FOR EXAMPLE, IN COMMUNITIES WHERE AGRICULTURE IS THE MAINSTAY OF THE ECONOMY, COULD STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THEIR MATHEMATICAL AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE BY DESIGNING AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM THAT USES TECHNOLOGY TO IRRIGATE IN AN ECOLOGICALLY RESPONSIVE MANNER? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN AN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL IF A STUDENT WANTED TO DESIGN A WAY FOR STUDENTS TO DESIGN COMMUNITY AREAS TO GROW LOCAL GARDENS TO PROVIDE HEALTHY, FRESH PRODUCE? WHAT IF STUDENTS WERE AS ENGAGED IN LEARNING AS THEY ARE IN THEIR FRIENDSHIPS, SPORTS, THEATER, MUSIC, ROBOTICS CLUBS WHICH ARE MOSTLY OUTSIDE OF THE SCHEDULED DAY? WHAT IF THESE ACTIVITIES WERE PART OF THE LEARNING CREDITS THAT STUDENTS LEARNED DURING THE “NORMAL” DAY?

HIGH SCHOOLS ARE DESIGNED TO HAVE STUDENTS ACQUIRE CREDITS TO FULFILL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AS ESTABLISHED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD. SO MANY LANGUAGE ARTS REQUIREMENTS, SO MANY SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS “CREDITS” REQUIRED. THE BIG QUESTION IS WHAT IS A “CREDIT”? IS IT ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE SKILLS OR TIME IN A SEAT? AND HOW DO “CREDITS” TRANSLATE TO PREPARATION FOR LIFE, POST-SECONDARY, OR DO THEY MEET INDIVIDUAL SKILLS AND TALENTS? ARE WE MISSING THE STUDENTS WHO FIND THE DEFINITION OF LIFE BY WORKING IN THE

YET, OUR HIGH SCHOOLS CONTINUE TO BE LOCKED IN TO THE IDEA OF SEQUENTIAL CLASSES PROGRESSING THROUGH THE GRADES, CREDIT REQUIREMENTS, TIME BEING ALLOTTED BY 50 MINUTE SEGMENTS, AND PASSES FOR BEING NECC-ESSENTIAL TO BE OUT OF CLASS OR GO TO THE BATHROOM. SOME STUDENTS HAVE BOUGHT IN TO THE SYSTEM BECAUSE IT IS WHAT THEY KNOW, FAMILY PRESSURES DEMAND IT, IT “IS WHAT ONE

DOES" SOME STUDENTS DROP OUT, EITHER PHYSICALLY OR EMOTIONALLY,

HERE'S THE QUESTION THAT FOLLOWS THE ABOVE DISCUSSION *IS EDUCATION DISCONNECTED FROM SCHOOLS? AND IF SO, IS THERE A WAY TO RECONNECT IT IN A MEANINGFUL WAY THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF OUR KIDS IN A 21ST CENTURY MANNER? IS THAT NECESSARY? OR IS THE IDEA OF SCHOOL GOING AWAY?*

MCGOWAN GOES FURTHER TO SAY THAT "LEARNING BECOMES MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWING" BECAUSE A MUCH AS 50% OF AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE MAY BE OBSOLETE WITHIN 5 YEARS—EVEN BEFORE THE DEGREE IS ACHIEVED. P. 258.

IN A POLL OF ONE MILLION WORKERS, STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND EMPLOYERS DISCOVERED THAT *SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS HAD ONE OR MORE TEACHERS WHO WERE MENTORS AND TOOK A REAL INTEREST IN THEIR ASPIRATIONS, AND THEY HAD AN INTERNSHIP RELATED TO WHAT THEY WERE LEARNING IN SCHOOL.* " P. 265

FRIEDMAN QUOTED LUANA IORIO, DIRECTOR OF GES THREE DIMENSIONAL MANUFACTURING UNIT WHO QUOTES THAT "COMPLEXITY IS FREE." SO TOO WITH CHANGING HIGH SCHOOLS? HERE ARE SOME BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT CHANGING HIGH SCHOOLS.

QUANTITATIVE REASONING
EMPIRICAL REASONING
SOCIAL REASONING
COMMUNICATION SKILL
PERSONAL QUALITIES