

By the Numbers

HOW FAR WE'VE FALLEN BEHIND THE REST OF THE WORLD—AND THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF CATCHING UP

TOP-RANKED COUNTRIES

According to the Program for International Student Assessment, 2009

SCIENCE

1. Shanghai, China
2. Finland
3. Hong Kong, China
4. Singapore
5. Japan
6. South Korea
7. New Zealand
8. Canada
9. Estonia
10. Australia
11. Netherlands
12. Taiwan
13. Germany
14. Liechtenstein
15. Switzerland
16. United Kingdom
17. Slovenia
18. Macau, China
19. Poland
20. Ireland
21. United States
22. Czech Republic
23. Denmark
24. France
25. Iceland
26. Sweden
27. Austria
28. Portugal

READING

1. Shanghai, China
2. South Korea
3. Finland
4. Hong Kong, China
5. Singapore
6. Canada
7. New Zealand
8. Japan
9. Australia
10. Netherlands
11. Belgium
12. Norway
13. Estonia
14. United States
15. Poland
16. Sweden
17. Ireland
18. Taiwan
19. United Kingdom
20. Portugal
21. Macau, China
22. Latvia
23. Slovenia
24. Greece

MATH

1. Shanghai, China
2. Singapore
3. Hong Kong, China
4. South Korea
5. Taiwan
6. Finland
7. Liechtenstein
8. Switzerland
9. Japan
10. Canada
11. Netherlands
12. Macau, China
13. New Zealand
14. Belgium
15. Australia
16. Germany
17. Estonia
18. Iceland
19. Denmark
20. Slovenia
21. Norway
22. France
23. Austria
24. Poland
25. Sweden
26. Czech Republic
27. United Kingdom
28. Hungary
29. Luxembourg
30. United States
- Ireland

TOP-LEVEL SCIENCE SCORES

Only 1% of American 4th- and 12th-graders scored at the Advanced level on national science exams in 2009.

ENGINEERING DEGREES

as a percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded in 2008:



29 U.S. states and the District of Columbia are actively looking abroad for guidance on education policy.

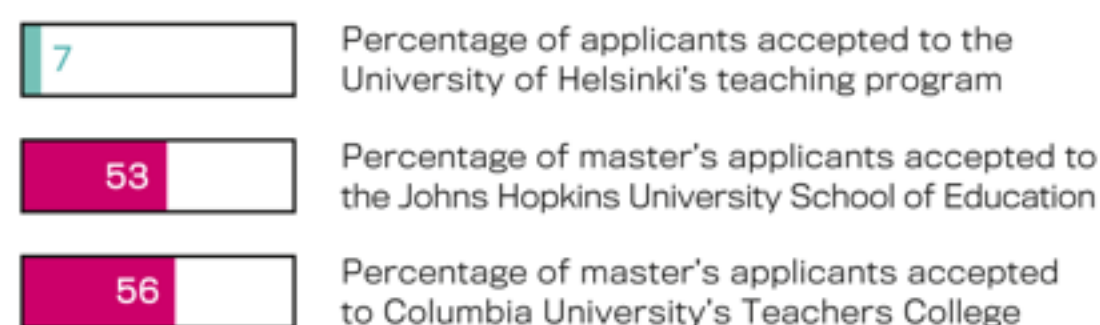
18 U.S. states named Singapore as a model for math and/or science standards.

MORE TEACHING IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

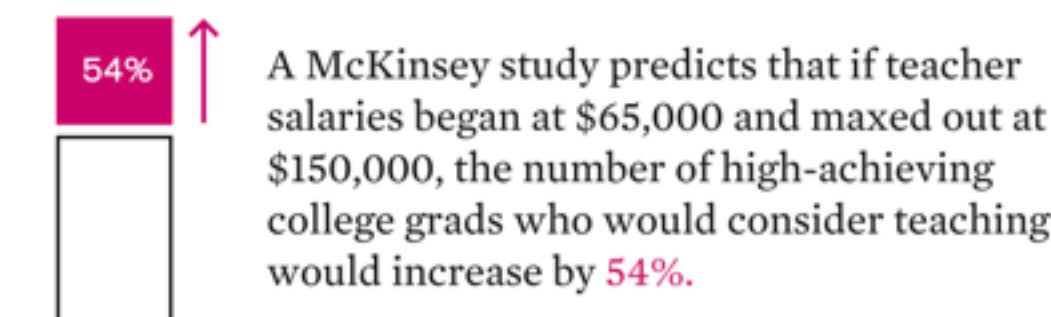
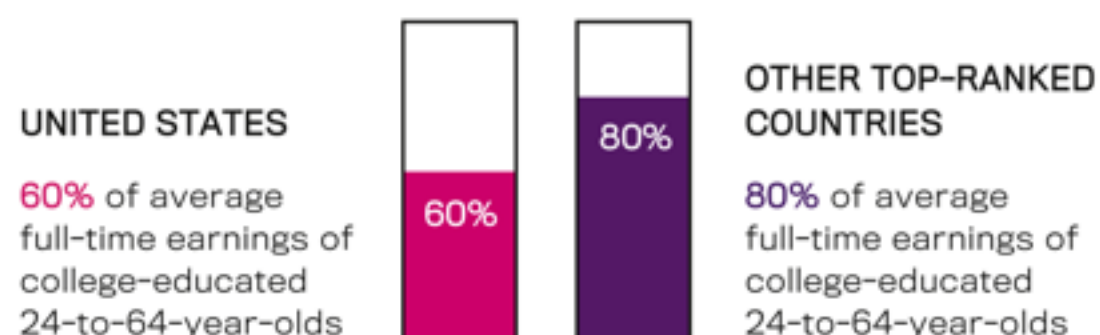
Average number of hours teachers instruct students:



AMERICA VALUES TEACHERS LESS THAN OTHER COUNTRIES DO

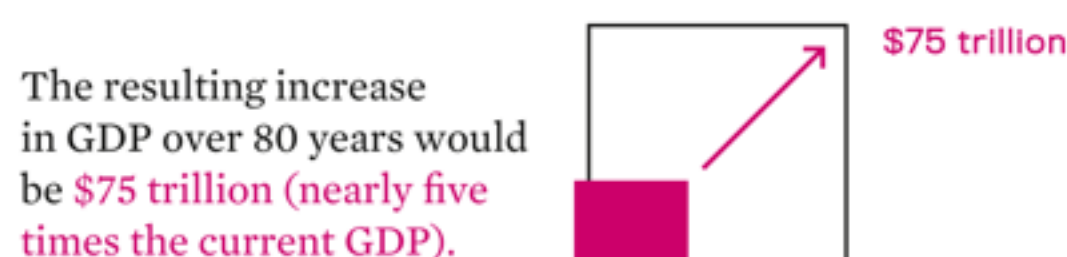


Average salary for teachers with 15 years of experience:



HOW SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS COULD JUMP-START THE ECONOMY

If the math proficiency of U.S. students improved to match that of Korean students, our annual growth rate would increase by 1.3%.



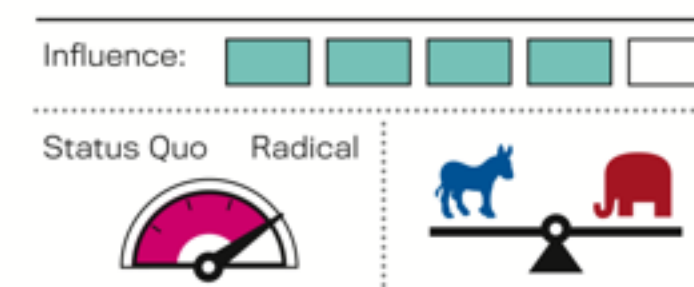
SOURCES: EDUCATION WEEK; ERIC A. HANUSHEK, STANFORD UNIVERSITY; NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS; NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION; ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT; U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

NEW ADVOCATES, NEW IDEAS

Education policy has long featured two institutional players—the government and teachers unions. But in recent years, a new generation of activists has stepped up to lobby legislators and drive the conversation. Here's a rundown of worthy upstarts.

—Rachael Brown*

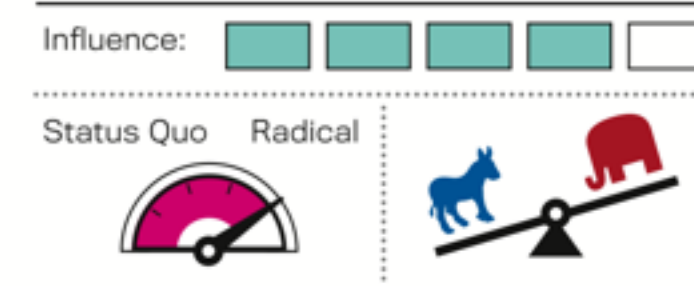
STAND FOR CHILDREN



Who
Co-founder and CEO Jonah Edelman is the son of the civil-rights leader Marian Wright Edelman.

What
The most grassroots of these groups. Leads efforts to lobby state governments for reforms such as algorithm-driven teacher evaluations and more-equitable school funding.

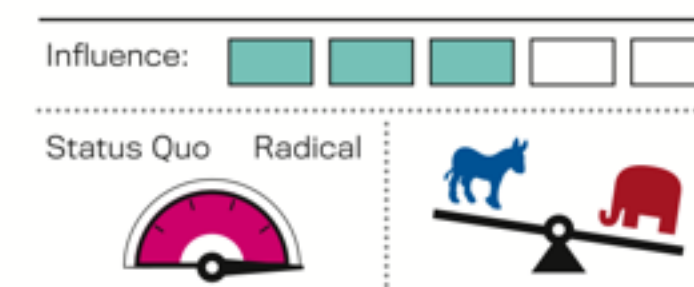
DEMOCRATS FOR EDUCATION REFORM



Who
Bankers, CEOs, and other wealthy Democrats. Adviser Cory Booker lends liberal star power.

What
Offers political cover to Democratic politicians who alienate teachers unions by supporting education reforms such as mayoral control of schools and national curriculum standards. Has helped loosen the unions' grip on the party.

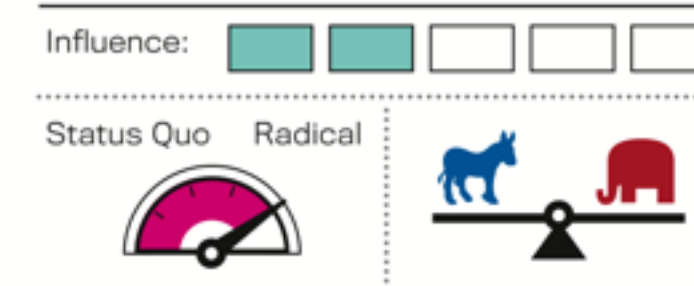
STUDENTS FIRST



Who
Founded by Michelle Rhee in 2010 after she stepped down as schools chancellor in D.C.

What
Uses its 1 million-strong e-mail list to lobby for data-based teacher evaluations and against seniority-based teacher layoffs. Rhee garners lots of attention, but her group has yet to establish itself as a major player on the policy front.

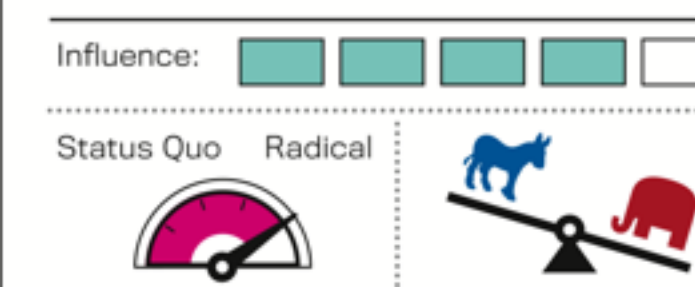
EDUCATORS 4 EXCELLENCE



Who
Founded in 2010 by two Teach for America alumni in the Bronx; now numbers some 7,000 pro-reform teachers in New York and Los Angeles.

What
Counterbalances the teachers unions by lobbying for policies the unions oppose, such as de-emphasizing seniority. Has buzz, and a seat at the table, but this approach may not play in other cities.

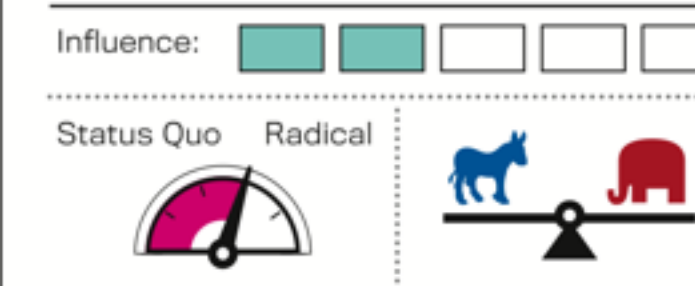
FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



Who
Founded by Jeb Bush, who made school reform one of his top priorities as governor of Florida from 1999 to 2007.

What
The GOP's favorite resource for education reform. Supports state legislators wishing to mimic Florida's approach by expanding charter schools and linking teacher pay to student performance.

NewTLA



Who
A self-appointed caucus of progressive teachers within the 38,000-member United Teachers Los Angeles union.

What
Currently holds more than 25 percent of the 350 seats in the UTLA House of Representatives, and helped elect a reform-friendly UTLA president last year. Has inspired similar factions in other districts.

* The author works for Bellwether Education Partners, a nonprofit organization that aims to improve educational outcomes for low-income students. Bellwether works with Stand for Children, and one of Brown's colleagues is on the board of Democrats for Education Reform.