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.

—Rachel Brown

MORE TEACHING IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

Average number of hours teachers instruct students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Hours/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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AMERICA VALUES TEACHERS LESS THAN OTHER COUNTRIES DO

Percentage of applicants accepted to the University of Helsinki’s teaching program:

- Finland: 53%
- South Korea: 55%
- United States: 55%

Percentage of master’s applicants accepted to Johns Hopkins University School of Education:

- Finland: 53%
- South Korea: 55%
- United States: 55%

Average salary for teachers with 15 years of experience:

- United States: $60,000 average full-time earnings of college-educated 24- to 64-year-olds
- Other top-ranked countries: 80% of average full-time earnings of college-educated 24- to 64-year-olds

54% A McKinsey study predicts that if teacher salaries began at $65,000 and maxed out at $180,000, the number of high-achieving college grads who would consider teaching would increase by 54%.

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%.

The resulting increase in GDP over 80 years would be $75 trillion (nearly five times the current GDP).

STAND FOR CHILDREN

Influence:

- Status Quo
- Radical

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.

STUDENTS FIRST

Influence:

- Status Quo
- Radical

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.

FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Influence:

- Status Quo
- Radical

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.

DEMOCRATS FOR EDUCATION REFORM

Influence:

- Status Quo
- Radical

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.

EDUCATORS 4 EXCELLENCE

Influence:

- Status Quo
- Radical

Who

- Founded in 2010 by two Teach for America alums in the Bronx. New numbers suggest 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.

NewTLA

Influence:

- Status Quo
- Radical

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.

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