



Class Size Reduction	“Race To the Top” & corporate-style education reforms
Research shows demonstrated achievement gains, higher graduation rates, more engagement and lower disciplinary rates where class sizes are reduced. <sup>1</sup>	Key elements including high stakes testing and privatization (expansion of charter schools and online learning) have no backing in research or experience.
Institute of Education Sciences, research arm of the US Dept. of Education, cites class size reduction as one of four reforms proven to work through rigorous evidence. <sup>2</sup>	Nat. Acad. of Sciences issued 2 reports showing no evidence that high stakes testing or merit pay will improve schools and may have damaging effects. <sup>6</sup> Numerous studies show teacher merit pay doesn't work. <sup>7</sup> Most authoritative analysis of charter schools (CREDO) shows charters on average have no better results. <sup>8</sup> Online K12 learning has no research support whatsoever.
Finland, with greatest gains on international comparisons like the PISA, turned around school system in 1970's when they reduced class size. <sup>3</sup>	Finland has no standardized testing until final years of HS (for college entrance decisions); in other grades, only uses standardized exams on small samples of students. <sup>9</sup>
Class size reduction supported by public school teachers and parents—stakeholder groups closest to conditions on the ground.	Corporate reforms pushed by “Billionaire Boys Club” and hedge funders, like closing schools rather than improving them and more high-stakes testing, have little public support, according to PDK/Gallup poll. <sup>10</sup>
Smaller classes tend to decrease teacher attrition rates and lead to a more experienced, effective teaching force. <sup>4</sup>	Teacher evaluations tied to unreliable test scores causes good teachers to become demoralized and/or lose jobs.
Smaller classes foster deeper reflection, creativity and learning through questioning, discussion and debate.	High stakes testing leads to cheating and/or excessive test prep, narrowing of curriculum, rote learning, and weakens creative thinking and inventiveness critical for economic growth. <sup>11</sup> Since 1990, for first time, American creativity declining, most seriously among children in K-6 <sup>th</sup> grades. <sup>12</sup>
Greatest benefits of class size reduction received by students with the greatest need: low-income, minority students. This reform is one of few proven strategies to significantly narrow the achievement gap. <sup>5</sup>	Competition, privatization & high stakes testing hurts at-risk students most; as charter schools tend to exclude or push out struggling students. High stakes testing labels schools and teachers as failing where there is highest concentration of need, unfairly causing these schools to be closed or teachers to be fired, leading to massive dislocation and soaring dropout rates. <sup>13</sup>

## Where Does Voices Find Its Facts?

1. Haimson, Leonie. "The 7 Myths of Class Size Reduction –And the Truth." Nov. 1, 2010. The Huffington Post. Accessed from: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/leonie-haimson/the-7-myths-of-class-size\\_b\\_776706.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/leonie-haimson/the-7-myths-of-class-size_b_776706.html)

See also: Hiller, Robin and Nagel, Ami. Putting Children First TUSD's Investment in Class Size Reduction Accessed from: <http://www.voicesforeducation.org/storage/vfed/documents/putting%20children%20first.pdf>

2. U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, "Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: a User Friendly Guide," December 2003.  
<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousetid/rigorousetid.pdf>

For more information on the **importance of class size** visit our website: <http://www.voicesforeducation.org/>  
You can also access our report, *Smaller Classes. Brighter Futures.*  
<http://www.voicesforeducation.org/storage/vfed/documents/smaller%20classes%20brighter%20futures.pdf>

The Class Size Matters website:  
<http://www.classsizematters.org/>

3. Pasi Sahlberg (2007): Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach, *Journal of Education Policy*, 22:2, 147-171.  
<http://www.pasisahlberg.com/downloads/Education%20policies%20for%20raising%20learning%20JEP.pdf>

4. Pas, Emily. "The Effect of Class Size Reduction on Teacher Attrition and Recruitment: Evidence from Class Size Reduction Policies in New York State."  
<http://client.norc.org/jole/soleweb/7342.pdf>

5. Alan B. Krueger and Diane M. Whitmore, January 2001. "Would Smaller Classes Help Close the Black-White Achievement Gap?" in John E. Chubb and Tom Loveless, eds., *Bridging the Achievement Gap*, Brookings Institution Press 2002; also available at <http://www.irs.princeton.edu/pubs/pdfs/451.pdf>.

For more information on studies covering the **achievement gap** including the STAR project visit: <http://www.coffineducationcenter.com/?cat=248> to access the report summary:  
How Smaller Class Size Affects Student Achievement: A Literature Review of the STAR project and other studies

6. The National Academy of Sciences Report: *Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education*  
<http://seattleducation2010.wordpress.com/2011/05/29/testing-rewardpunishment-high-stakes-testing/>

7. Moran, Melanie. "Teacher Performance Pay Alone does not Raise student Test Scores." September 21, 2010. Vanderbilt News. <http://news.vanderbilt.edu/2010/09/teacher-performance-pay/> this was a study done in Nashville, Tennessee by proponents of merit pay from the National Center on Performance Incentives. Even they could not support their position!

Even the Institute of Education Sciences, the research arm of the U.S. Dept. of Education had qualms with the study which can be accessed from: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wcc/publications/quickreviews/ORReport.aspx?QRId=163>

8. <http://credo.stanford.edu/>

9. Pasi Sahlberg (2008): Rethinking accountability in a knowledge society, *Journal of Education Change*, 20 Nov. 2008.  
<http://www.pasisahlberg.com/downloads/Rethinking%20accountability%20JEC%202009.pdf>

10. <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/poll.htm>

11. George Madaus and Michael Russell, (2010/2011) Boston College, Paradoxes of High-Stakes Testing *Journal of Education*, 190:1/2, 21-30.

For further reading of **cheating due to high-stakes testing**: Turner, Dorie. "Atlanta Schools Created Culture of Cheating, Fear, Intimidation." July 16, 2011. The Huffington Post. Accessed from:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/16/atlanta-schools-created-c\\_n\\_900635.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/16/atlanta-schools-created-c_n_900635.html)

12. For more information regarding **creativity** <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/10/the-creativity-crisis.html> and <http://www.wm.edu/research/ideation/professions/smart-yes.-creative-not-so-much.5890.php>

13. Krueger and Whitmore, 2001. <http://www.irs.princeton.edu/pubs/pdfs/451.pdf>