



The Daily Dish

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[ICYMI: One solar plan could cost \\$240 billion](#) to implement. The plan proposes to increase solar capacity in the U.S. by 700 percent by 2020. The costs are mainly upfront dealing with building the facilities necessary to handle this increase. Also, “unless the subsidy increases, the price of solar will probably escalate if demand increases by 700 percent from today’s levels.”

Over 300,000 veterans died waiting for care from VA hospitals. [According to a report](#) released yesterday by the VA’s own inspector general, there were about 800,000 records stalled in the agency’s system for 307,000 people who had died months or even years prior. One case was “pending” for 14 years.

[Here are your top ten most costly diagnoses](#) according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Last year, these top ten cost a cumulative \$26 billion.

Eakinomics: Education Policy: Must It Take a Hurricane to Produce the Results We Are Looking For?
Guest Authored by Chad Miller, AAF Director of Education Policy

Look past the flaws of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) – the claims of over-testing, narrowing of the curriculum, and the unfair labeling of schools. Keep looking, if you can, past the federal intrusion of the Obama administration’s waivers and their overly prescriptive directives and you will find, at the heart of recent reform efforts, sound policy that rejects decades of inequalities and injustice that presents itself by means of a growing achievement gap.

Using a [sample data point](#) from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveals that, despite targeted efforts to close the “achievement gap”, the long term trend in math scores for 17 year olds has only produced 6 point gains for black Americans, and a 1 point gain for Hispanics when it comes to narrowing the gap with their white peers. The trends for fourth and eighth grade in both reading and math are similar.

It’s not all doom and gloom out there though. There are bright spots of success. One such shining example is New Orleans Public Schools (NOPS). Sadly, however, it took the catastrophic event of Hurricane Katrina to achieve the results we should demand from our education systems.

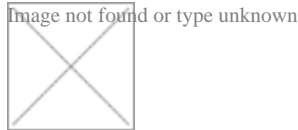
After the floodwaters wiped clean the urban school system that had failed generations of disadvantaged students, New Orleans civic leaders committed to reinventing the city’s public education system. What arose, as [Neerav Kingsland puts it](#), was a transition from government-operated to government-regulated schooling that lead to 93 percent of NOPS students attending charter schools that are producing significant gains in academic achievement. Consider these results:

- In 2005 (pre-Katrina) a mere 8 percent of New Orleans public schools achieved a grade of “A” or “B” on the state-wide rating system. By the 2013-14 school year that number had increased 216 percent.
- In 2004, 60% of New Orleans students – some 40,000 children – went to a school in the bottom tenth of all Louisiana public schools based on state-issued performance scores (SPS). In 2014, just 13% attended

these schools.

- A Stanford [report](#) by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) found that urban charters on the whole produce an extra 40 days of classroom learning — eight weeks — in math, and 28 days of extra classroom learning in reading per student per year.

These are outstanding data points for sure, but the most astonishing accomplishment is the closing of the achievement gap. During the same ten year period that produced meager gains for disadvantaged students nationally, NOPS performance has been dramatic.



These results are proof that transformative reforms can lead to effective systems that provide high quality education for all students. Over the next few months the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate will convene to try and hash out a compromised federal education bill. If they are successful the policies will focus on the replication and expansion of high quality schools like the ones now found in New Orleans.

Fact of the Day

[Consumers have a difficult time understanding the value of high deductible health plans. In a recent experiment, 55 percent of participants chose a plan that was guaranteed to be more costly in order to avoid high deductibles.](#)