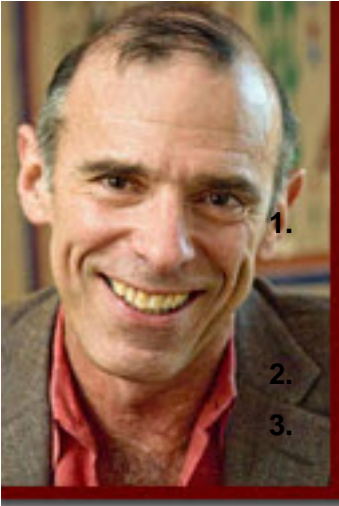


Discussion questions for May, 2009

Main interview:

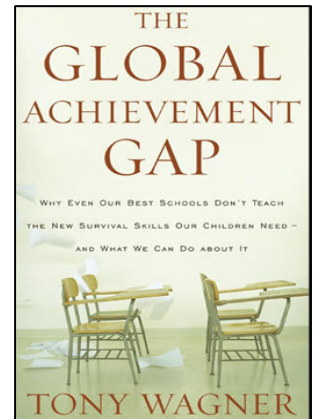


1. The premise behind Tony Wagner's book, The Global Achievement Gap, is that education must make much more of an effort to teach "21st Century Skills. Do you agree? How well do the students learn them now? How do you know?

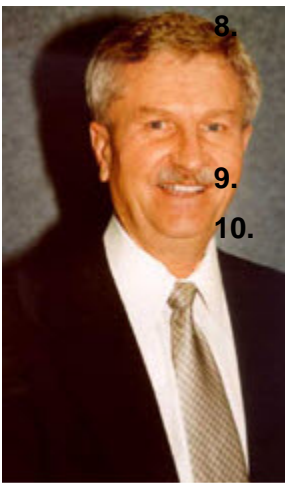
2. The interview discusses the controversy about teaching 21st Century Skills versus teaching the core curriculum and content. What is your opinion about the controversy? Who is right?

3. Tony Wagner repeats the familiar complaint that we are teaching to the test, to the detriment of creativity, love of learning and motivation. Do you see your students today as less motivated to learn and less creative than generations past? If true, is that the fault of the emphasis on testing?

4. Tony Wagner lists seven essential 21st Century skills (listed in the printed interview and audio) Do you agree with them?



Updates:



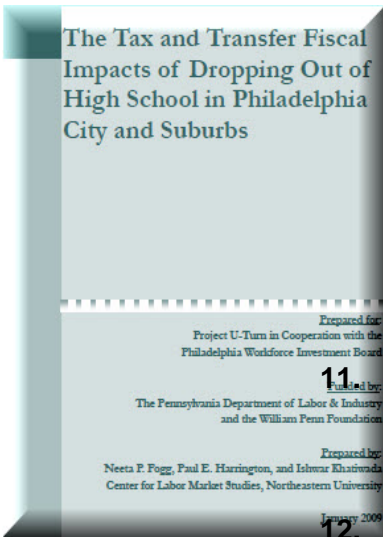
5. Bruce Hunter from AASA updates us on the details of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. What difference is that going to make in your school district for next year?

6. The National Joint Powers Alliance connects purchasers with vendors and delivers the best price through negotiation and volume purchases. Is this organization something your district uses?



briefing items:

7. A new report confirms that a third of the nation's teachers will leave within the next four years. How many teachers are retiring from your district in the next four years? How are you preparing for this? The



report urges the district to adopt "learning teams" as one alternative. Discuss.

8. Pre-K programs work as well or better than any other educational prevention program. Does your district have a good pre-K program? What can you learn about the profiles of these three successful pre-K programs identified in the report?

9. Members of the community complain about the cost of education. How many know the true cost of dropping out? How can you change their minds with reports such as the Philadelphia drop out report?

10. The Nurse-Family Program matches a visiting nurse with a first time, low income mother-to-be. The long term results are amazing according to a new study. Is this something you would like to see for your district?

Articles:

11. The April *School Administrator* discusses goal directed schools. The authors of the article recommend tapping into teacher's strengths to scale up positive change. How does your district do with scaling up?

12. The second article discusses the tipping point in promoting change. The authors offer several strategies to bring system wide change. Review the article and the strategies and identify one goal for next year, using these strategies.



Final Word:

13. Malcolm Gladwell suggests that the predictive measures we use to employ new teachers or reward currently employed teachers is not valid and is irrelevant. Do you agree? In your mind, from your experiences, what "behaviors" or past experiences can predict classroom success for a new teacher.