

Fifth Presentation

THE ECONOMICS OF FEDERAL  
EDUCATION POLICY REFORM

# Self-Directed Education, Social Mobility, and Employment

Gregory F. Rehmke  
EconomicThinking.org

ANNOUNCING THE MACKINAC CENTER  
**HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE**  
WEB RESOURCE CENTER

**MACKINAC.ORG/DEBATE**

## FACULTY

**Greg Rehmke** is program director of Economic Thinking and a member of the Mackinac Center Board of Scholars. He has more than 30 years of experience in leading high school debate programs and workshops.



The Mackinac Center is a nonprofit research and education institute headquartered in Midland, Mich.

We believe that free, vigorous and civil debate is critical to progress as a society.

## Policy Debate – 2017-2018 Topic

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its funding and/or regulation of elementary and/or secondary education in the United States.

MACKINAC CENTER  
FOR PUBLIC POLICY



# HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE 2017/2018



**Policy Debate Topic**

<https://www.mackinac.org/debate>

To access this at no charge  
(a \$15 value!), use this code:

**MCPP2018**

**Click here to register for a FREE online debate workshop with additional resources**

## Interested in FREE Debate Training?

Economics in a Cloud is hosting an online workshop covering this year's federal education policy debate. Led by **Gregory F. Rehmke**, this workshop includes free articles, video and book recommendations, plus live Skype sessions with Greg.

To access this at no charge  
(a \$15 value!), use this code:

**MCPP2018**

**Click here to register for a FREE online debate workshop with additional resources**



**Gregory F. Rehmke**, a Mackinac Center Board of Scholars member, is editor of [www.EconomicThinking.org](http://www.EconomicThinking.org) and program director for Economic Thinking. He has directed high school speech and debate programs since the 1980s. Rehmke has directed educational programs at the Free Enterprise Institute, The Reason Foundation and the Foundation for Economic Education.

# Education Policy

[Home](#) / [Courses](#) / [Education Policy](#)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Economics of Federal Education Policy Reform

Additional topic articles:

<http://economicthinking.org/category/federal-education-policy>

Welcome to the Economic Thinking Online 2017-2018 ...  
**Federal K12 Education Reform**

For over twenty years Greg Rehmke has been a speaker at University Intercollegiate League fall speech and debate conferences, provided economic commentary at the Kansas State Fair Demonstration Debates, and given topic presentations at debate camps on the economics of debate topics, including the Mackinac Center Debate Workshops.

Federal government funding and regulations of education have increased significantly over the last fifty years. Federal spending for elementary, secondary and vocational education increased from \$4.5 billion in 1965 to \$46.2 billion in 2014 (in constant 2014 dollars).

Other Federal K12 funding comes from the Department of Agriculture budget: \$2 billion in 2016 for school lunches and related programs.

The 2017-18 NSDIA resolution calls for increasing federal funding and/or regulation of elementary and/or secondary education in the United States.

The Trump administration supports charter schools and school choice, but so did the Obama and Bush Administrations. Public charter schools operate within school districts but have additional flexibility to offer targeted or specialized programs for students. Private charter schools, active in some states, receive state funding through vouchers.

Efforts to expand charter schools are controversial, as some see them as draining funds, reform energy, and high-achieving students from existing schools.

Another area of controversy are national testing and curriculum mandated by the federal government, from No Child Left Behind in the Bush Administration to Common Core in the Obama Administration.

<http://economicsinacloud.com/index.php/product-detail/k12>

## COURSE SECTIONS

**The Economics of Federal Education Policy Reform**

**The Informal Education Revolution**

**Magnets, Charters, Vouchers, Tax Credits, and the School Choice Debate**

**Education on the Job and Online**

**Self-Directed Education, Social Mobility, and Employment**

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The Mackinac Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, and color. Debates are limited to programs as a priority.

Policy Debate - 2017-2018 Topic  
Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its funding and/or regulation of elementary and/or secondary education in the United States.



## Policy Debate Topic

### NEW: Recess Is Not A Luxury

by Christine Organ

Recess and free play shouldn't be treated as a luxury; they're a necessity. Without recess, kids will continue to have a hard time paying attention and sitting still in class.

[READ MORE](#)

### NEW: When Diploma Mills Give Innovation, and School Choice, a Bad Name

by Michael Petrilli

As in: go to a college campus while still in high school, take real college courses, and find some

### NEW: Why There is So Much Sugar in Your Kid's School Breakfast?

by Bettina Elias Siegel

Students select a minimum of three of the offered items (which also include milk); depending on what a child picks, it's possible to create a meal with up to 39 grams, or almost 10 teaspoons, of added sugar. (The American Heart Association says children should have no more than 3-4 teaspoons a day.) If apple juice's naturally-occurring sugar is included in the calculation, that number can shoot to 51 grams, or almost 13 teaspoons.

[READ MORE](#)

<https://www.mackinac.org/debate#topic>

**Debate\_Central** @Debate\_Central · 16h

"...Chicago students learned significantly faster from grades 3 to 8 than did students in nearly all other U.S. districts—gaining about six years' worth of learning in five years."



**Chicago Schools Lead Country in Academic Growth, Study Finds**  
Stanford University research shows Windy City schools show "striking" learning gains.  
blogs.edweek.org

**Debate\_Central** @Debate\_Central · Nov 10

"Even the brains of young adults who had only played high-school football showed mild cases of the disease, leading to pronounced changes in behavior, mood, and cognitive function: hopelessness, impulsivity, memory loss..."



**The Rising Fear of Concussions in Youth Sports**  
Recent research makes clear the drastic effects of head injuries on young athletes, and advocates are asking states and schools to do more.  
theatlantic.com

**Debate\_Central** @Debate\_Central · 19h

"Waldorf School...has no computers, no iPads, no iPhones. They try to minimize tech altogether... What's interesting about this school is 75% of the students there are the children of Silicon Valley tech execs"



**This Silicon Valley school shuns technology – yet ...**  
NYU professor Adam Alter, author of "Irresistible," discusses the Waldorf school in San Francisco and how it shuns technology.  
businessinsider.com

**Debate\_Central** @Debate\_Central · 18h

Not so much "teacher talk" in debate classes and clubs... "Brain research tell us direct instruction for grades 9-12 should not exceed 15 minutes."



**Why Does Teacher Talk Still Dominate High School Classrooms?**  
Teacher talk still dominates high school classrooms, but it doesn't have to, and here are a few reasons why.  
blogs.edweek.org

[https://twitter.com/Debate\\_Central](https://twitter.com/Debate_Central)

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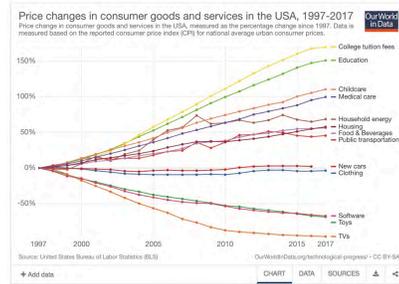
While we know learning occurs in the time when student make sense of something for themselves, we persist in telling students things for most of each period, then get frustrated when the new information is not absorbed. **Brain research tell us direct instruction for grades 9-12 should not exceed 15 minutes.**

**Educ. reform is the debate topic, but including debate in classroom instruction could be the most effective reform.**

[https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding\\_common\\_ground/2017/05/why\\_does\\_teacher\\_talk\\_still\\_dominates\\_high\\_school\\_classrooms.html](https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2017/05/why_does_teacher_talk_still_dominates_high_school_classrooms.html)

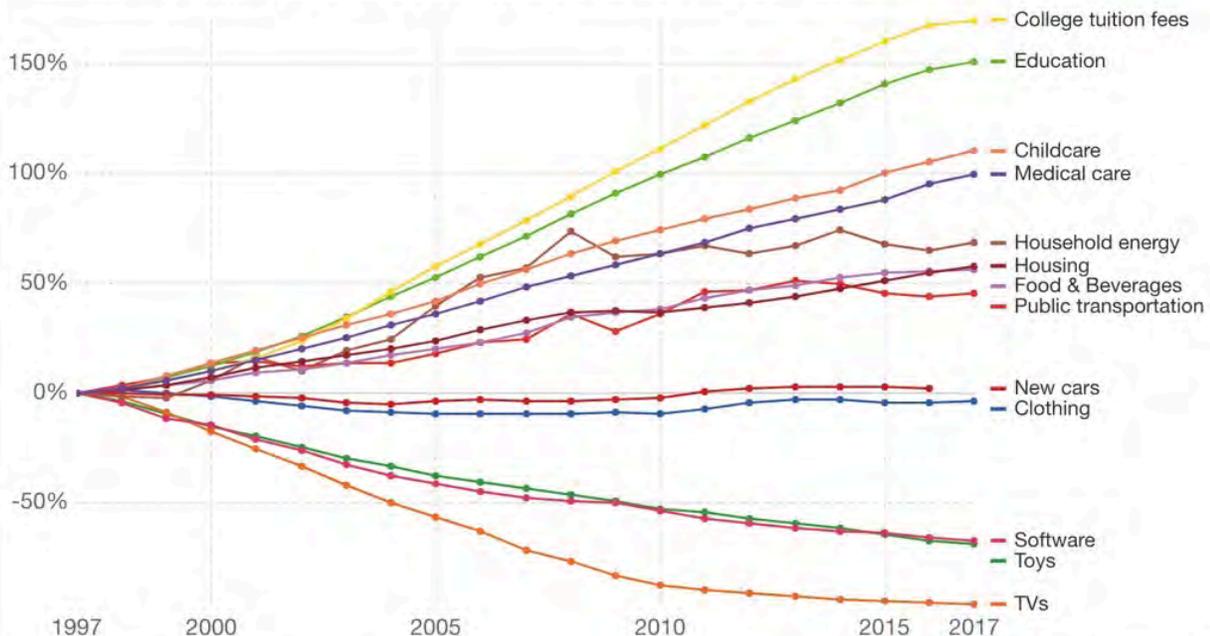
# Federal Involvement in Higher Education?

- 🌐 Economics of government funding for higher education.
- 🌐 Goals of higher education? Job training or...
- 🌐 Justice? Why tax middle and lower income families to subsidize college for those who will earn higher incomes? (*Reply...*)
- 🌐 Federal grants and guaranteed loans for college students raise tuition costs.
- 🌐 Huge student loan debt...



## Price changes in consumer goods and services in the USA, 1997-2017

Price change in consumer goods and services in the USA, measured as the percentage change since 1997. Data is measured based on the reported consumer price index (CPI) for national average urban consumer prices.



Source: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

OurWorldInData.org/technological-progress/ • CC BY-SA

+ Add data

CHART

DATA

SOURCES



# The Economic Way of Thinking



economicthinking  
Understanding and Creating Prosperity

- *The Economic Way of Thinking*
  - Scarcity, choice, and opportunity cost
  - Supply and Demand. Substitutes
  - Entrepreneurship and Enterprises
  - *Incentive* problems and *information* problems
- *Food and food for thought: Innovation and competition with restaurants and schools...*
- Applying economic concepts to debate topics.
- Education as investing in **Human Capital**

## Hour by Hour

The credit hour wasn't supposed to be a standard without leading to abuse

INSIDE  
HIGHER ED

By **Paul Fain** // September 5, 2012

- *Andrew Carnegie never intended for the time-based credit hour to be used to measure student learning...*
- *But it has become a measure and a proxy for what students are supposedly learning.*
- *An over-reliance on the credit hour, which links the awarding of academic credit to hours of contact between professors and students, has led to many of higher education's problems, according to the report.*
- *"There is pretty compelling evidence that what we have right now isn't working," said Amy Laitinen...at the New America Foundation and the report's author.*

# Wanted for any job: A bachelor's degree. Is that smart?

The Washington Post  
Democracy Dies in Darkness

By Jeffrey J. Selinger October 27

- *Economists refer to this phenomenon as “degree inflation,” and it is spreading across all kinds of industries and jobs.*
- *Among the positions never requiring a college degree in the past that are quickly adding that to the list of desired requirements: dental hygienists, photographers, claims adjusters, freight agents and chemical equipment operators.*
- *Once hired, college graduates have higher turnover rates and lower levels of engagement in jobs that never before required a college degree.*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2017/10/27/wanted-for-any-job-a-bachelors-degree-is-that-smart/>



25 OCT 2017

## **New Report: Degree Inflation Hurting Bottom Line of U.S. Firms, Closing Off Economic Opportunity for Millions of Americans**

*BOSTON—The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports over 12 million Americans are either unemployed or underemployed, while new research finds that 3 in 5 employers report difficulty in filling middle-skills jobs...*

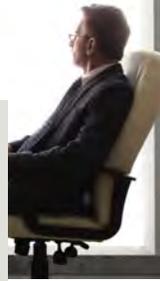
*— positions that require more education than a high-school diploma, but less than a four-year college degree.*

*According to new research released today, more than six million middle-skills jobs in the U.S. are now at risk of “degree inflation”—the practice of preferring or requiring a college degree for jobs that were traditionally held by middle-skills workers.*

<http://www.hbs.edu/news/releases/Pages/degree-inflation-us-competitiveness.aspx>

## Dismissed by Degrees

How degree inflation is undermining U.S. competitiveness and hurting America's middle class



Degree inflation—the rising demand for a four-year college degree for jobs that previously did not require one—is a substantive and widespread phenomenon that is making the U.S. labor market more inefficient. Postings for many jobs traditionally viewed as middle-skills jobs (those that require employees with more than a high school diploma but less than a college degree) in the United States now stipulate a college degree as a minimum education requirement, while only a third of the adult population possesses this credential.

Instead of relying on a college degree to access hard and soft skills, companies can widen their search to include non-graduates with relevant work experience or consider partnering with local community-based organizations to tap populations like Opportunity Youth. Such partnerships can put young adults on the pathway to a lifetime career or provide new opportunities for experienced, older workers displaced by factors beyond their control.



*network, Cristo Rey New York combines a rigorous college-prep curriculum, a culture of high expectations, the support of a nurturing school community, and a unique work-study experience, in which students spend one day a week laboring in corporate settings.*

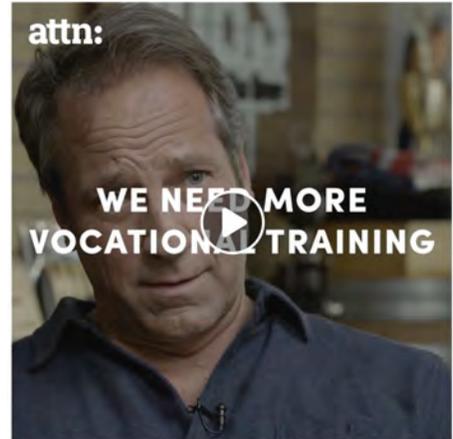
- *Cristo Rey high school opened in Chicago's low-income Latino neighborhood of Pilsen, in 1996, it included a work-study program designed to help students cover part of their tuition.*
- *Soon, however, the school discovered that **providing work experience brought benefits beyond money**: test scores rose, as did the percentage of students applying to college.*
- *More than 20 years later, with 32 schools nationwide*

## After decades of pushing bachelor's degrees, U.S. needs more tradespeople

 **BY MATT KRUPNICK, THE HECHINGER REPORT** August 29, 2017 at 1:40 PM EDT

-  *High schools and colleges have struggled for decades to attract students to job-oriented classes ranging from welding to nursing.*
-  *They've tried cosmetic changes, such as rebranding "vocational" courses as "career and technical education," but students and their families have yet to buy in...*

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/decades-pushing-bachelors-degrees-u-s-needs-tradespeople/>



2,256,059 Views

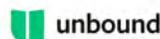
In Germany, learning a trade is just as valuable as a college education. -- [Mike Rowe](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/attn/videos/1481545225214265/>

[lumeriteducation.com](http://lumeriteducation.com)

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## Cut the Cost of Your Degree

Take low-cost courses & save hundreds of dollars per credit hour. [getunbound.org](http://getunbound.org)

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OVERHEAD

COURSE

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OVERHEAD

COURSE

Traditional College

## Hidden Costs of Courses

Colleges and universities have more expenses than just your course materials. Campuses, sports teams, and tenured professors don't come cheap. We provide college courses without burdening you with additional costs.

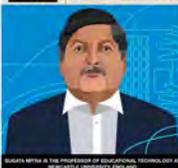
# Five Finalists Global Learning XPrize

- \* ...increase the learning of children, with limited access to schooling, within the 15-month field-testing period.
- \* ...design...is easy to use and engaging for children, so they can operate it alone and/or in self-organized groups.
- \* Creation of open source software...



**Sugata Mitra: Challenging Traditional Education with Technology**

- \* If you allow the educational process to self-organize, then learning emerges. It's not about making it happen. It's about letting it happen.
- \* The School in the Cloud is like a sixth sense. It's a combination of a human and tech, a composite entity.
- \* This kind of learning will drive classrooms and education as we know it into museums.



<http://blog.lenovo.com/en/blog/challenging-traditional-education-with-technology>

big think

VIDEOS ▾ ARTICLES ▾ PLAYLISTS ▾ EXPERTS ▾ PODCAST EDGE

## Some Schools Are Abolishing Homework In Favor Of Reading, And That's A Good Thing

August 5, 2017 by TEODORA ZAREVA

15.2k Shares



- 🌐 research that shows that homework does not improve achievement for younger students,
- 🌐 but time free from school type activities is important for their development. ...
- 🌐 In Finland...students have consistently been amongst the top performers... homework is not considered an important tool for academic success...

<http://bigthink.com/design-for-good/why-reading-to-a-kid-about-anything-is-better-than-homework>

## Recess: It's important. Does your child get enough of it?

## Recess & Outdoor Education

Yet, up to 40% of U.S. school districts have reduced or eliminated recess time for kids.

- 👉 Out of school free Physical activity...linked to better academic performance, and many kids use their recess time to run around.
- 👉 But even those who choose to rest or socialize get a boost from recess, suggests a burgeoning...research on play.
- 👉 Free time helps kids develop communication skills and strengthen self-control, studies show. They learn to cooperate, negotiate, share, solve problems & cope with stress...

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/recess-its-important-does-your-child-get-enough-of-it/2015/11/09/ab610866-8180-11e5-9afb-0c971f713d0c\\_story.html?](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/recess-its-important-does-your-child-get-enough-of-it/2015/11/09/ab610866-8180-11e5-9afb-0c971f713d0c_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-schools%3A-recess%3A-story%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-schools%3A-recess%3A-story%3Ahomepage%2Fstory)

## How to improve the school results: not extra maths but music, loads of it

- 👉 at Feversham...headteacher, Naveed Idrees, has embedded music, drama and art into every part of the school day, with
- 👉 ...up to six hours of music a week for every child, and with remarkable results.
- 👉 Seven years ago Feversham was in special measures and making headlines for all the wrong reasons.
- 👉 Today it is rated "good" by Ofsted and is in the top 10% nationally for pupil progress in reading, writing and maths, according to the most recent data.

A Bradford primary school wants the world to know its newfound Sats success is down to giving all children up to six hours of music a week



Maths lessons have been transformed since Feversham primary integrated music throughout the curriculum. Photograph: Christopher Thomond for the Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/oct/03/school-results-music-bradford>

REPORT

## A counterintuitive approach to improving math education: Focus on English language arts teaching

Susanna Loeb · Thursday, April 6, 2017

BROOKINGS

- *...research on the long-term effects of teachers finds that English teachers have at least as much of an effect as math teachers.*
- *...same study following 2.5 million students found that an English teacher who raises students' reading test scores by the same amount as a math teacher raises students' math test scores has an impact on long-term life outcomes approximately 1.7 times that of the math teacher.*

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/a-counterintuitive-approach-to-improving-math-education-focus-on-english-language-arts-teaching/>

## Want Change In Education? Look Beyond The Usual Suspects (Like Finland)

October 4, 2017 · 6:02 AM ET



HOUSTON PUBLIC MEDIA  
NEWS 88.7

- *In the slums of Bogota, Colombia, children play with special board games, dominoes and dice games that can teach them math and reading in a matter of months.*
- *Youth volunteers in the community help bring the games to younger children.*
- *...part of a distinct global effort underway right now to identify important innovations in education and to help them spread.*

<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/10/04/554316261/want-change-in-education-look-beyond-the-usual-suspects-like-finland>

## COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION: Meeting the Needs of Each Student



- *Competency-based education...system of instruction...students advance to higher levels of learning as soon as they demonstrate mastery of concepts and skills regardless of time, place or pace.*
- *A traditional, time-based education...advances students based on their age, regardless of what they...learned.*
- *This outdated model limits student achievement in two fundamental ways: it holds back students who could be excelling more quickly,*
- *and it pushes students forward who are not yet ready, leaving them with gaps of knowledge, skill and understanding that must be filled later.*

<http://www.excelined.org/competency-based-education/>

# What's Wrong with Testing?

- 🕒 *Consider math and science tests. Do they certify that you've learned key concepts?*
- 🕒 *Tests: Is 95% good enough?*
- 🕒 *What if certain math and science concepts are key for understanding at the next level?*
- 🕒 *Khan Academy offers questions for each concept: students move on only after answering ten in a row correctly.*

Let's use video to reinvent education - Salman Khan



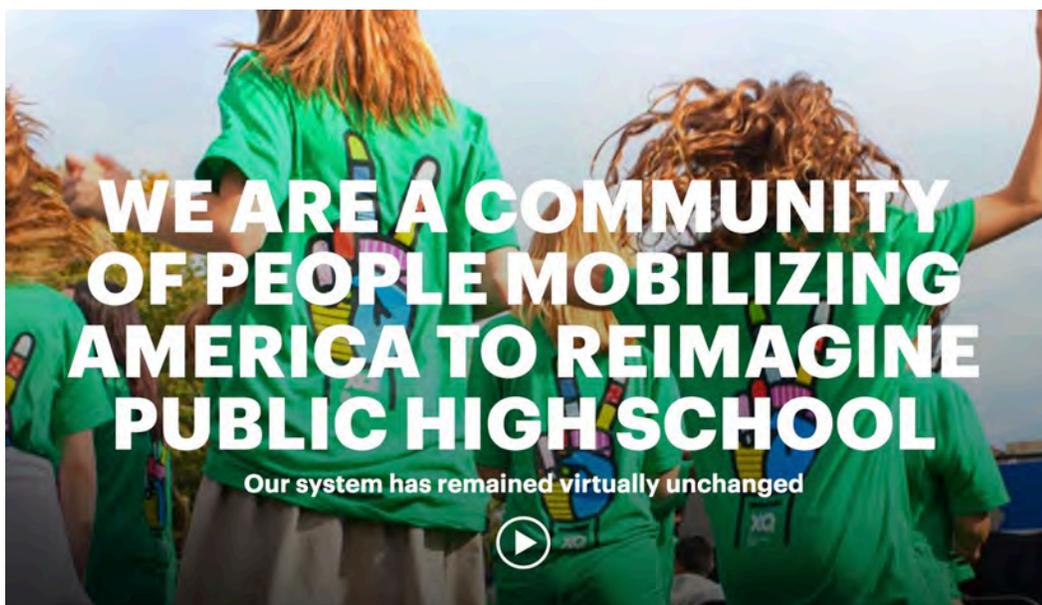
Let's use video to reinvent education - Salman Khan

Let's use video to reinvent education - Salman Khan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC58z4N0IWw>



<https://xqsuperschool.org/>



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_R55Z0OWQU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_R55Z0OWQU)