

The Laws of Education Policy in America
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1. Adult self interest (the payroll) is the single most important determinant of any decision.
2. American has the schools it wants. Especially for children from low-income families, we are not willing to pay for anything else.
3. Schooling is not education and vice versa.
4. What is not pedagogy will be politics.
5. Single projects are trivial fixes but comprehensive programs are unrealistic.
6. Any school building can defeat any central office. Any faculty can defeat any administrator. All permanent insiders can defeat any temporary outsider.
7. All education theories, programs, policies can be proven wrong.
8. Education technology: old equipment or programs don't work; new ones are unproven.
9. Incentives in education reward amiable mediocrity and guarantee that no good deed goes unpunished.
10. The responsibility of leadership is to understand the inexorability of these laws and act anyway. Action creates understanding.

Source: Dale Mann, Killing School Reform, unpublished ms., 11/91. Teachers College, Columbia University