

Crucial Conversations About America's Schools

Presented by Dr. John Draper

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The Talk: Too many of our high schools are dropout factories—and little progress is being made to improve the graduation rate.

The Truth: Schools are making changes and graduation rates are at an all-time high.

The Crucial Conversation: How do we remove the obstacles, identify early, engage at-risk students, provide multiple options, and bring other stakeholders into the effort?

The Talk: Charter schools do a better job of educating students than do regular public schools.

The Truth: There is mixed research on charter schools and it's difficult to do equal comparisons but, as a group, they are no more effective than regular schools.

The Crucial Conversation: Choice is a new American value and it is reflected in the public support for charters. If schools would benefit from greater flexibility, how can we bring this freedom to all public schools?

The Talk: ACT/SAT test scores are declining—and have been for decades.

The Truth: Average SAT test scores have declined but in every subgroup scores are up!

The Crucial Conversation: As more lower-performing students take standardized tests, the average will go down. If every child is to graduate, you should expect lower average scores.

The Talk: America's Schools are falling behind on International Test Scores.

The Truth: America's schools are doing slightly better or about the same as they ever have—about average.

The Crucial Conversation: International test scores are not a valid predictor of a nation's success. The highest scores are negatively correlated with patents, copyrights and Nobel Prize winners. In short, the high score doesn't win!

Use the TLC formula to counter the myth of failing public schools. **Talk** about what you believe and why you believe it. **Learn** to use language that reframes the discussion. **Connect** your community to your students using stories.

In addition, Dr. Draper challenges all educators to commit to the Four Fundamentals of Public School Success:

1. Be positive—times are hard but we are doing the most important work of our nation. Negativity brings us all down—stop complaining!
2. Never criticize any fellow educator in public—doing so only provides false credibility to those who would undermine our schools.
3. Share one positive story each week—miracles happen every day in public schools. Stories convince without confrontation.
4. Honestly evaluate yourself each week and, if necessary, re-commit to sharing one positive story each week. Together we can change the way a community feels about our public schools.

For copies of this presentation or to schedule Dr. Draper to motivate and uplift your team contact him at John@JohnDraper.org