



Fact Sheet

Who is Angela Engel?

- Author of *Seeds of Tomorrow, Solutions for Improving our Children's Education*.
- Advocate for children, families and the advancement of education for more than 15 years.
- Extensive experience in the education system as a teacher, school administrator and parent of two school-age children.
- Solution -based thinker, articulates complex issues in concrete, meaningful ways that connect with the diversity of stakeholders in the education system.

Angela's credentials:

- Teacher for Douglas County Schools
- Founded mentoring and tutoring program for at-risk youth
- High school instructor and academic director for Denver Street Schools
- Facilitator for Family Leadership Institute
- Trainer and presenter for Motivational Media Assemblies
- Former project director for Children's Action Agenda
- Bachelor's degree in communication from University of Denver
- Master's degree in curriculum and instruction from University of Colorado - Denver

Education milestones:

- 1991 National Assessment of Educational Progress first administered
- 1994 Goals 2000 (Standards adopted in all 50 States)
- 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- 2009 Colorado revises state standards
- 2010 Common Core Initiative - National standards voted to replace Colorado standards
- 2010 Colorado revises state standardized test, the Colorado Student Assessment Program, CSAP
- 2010 Race to the Top Initiative - CO downgraded for economic inequities
- 2010 Senate Bill 191 passes the Colorado Legislature - Pay for performance tying teacher compensation to student test scores

Significant statistics:

- \$6,000 is spent every year in Colorado to educate one child, \$30,000 is spent every year to incarcerate one inmate
- Colorado is one the most educated states in the nation, but is 47th in education funding.
- Colorado has spent more than \$500 million to administer and evaluate the CSAP every year producing only damaging outcomes - wider achievement gaps and increased segregation

Other key statistics:

- 756,912 Colorado students in public schools
- 1,734 public schools statewide



- Nearly 40 percent of Colorado's students are minority students
- 38 percent of Colorado students are eligible for free or reduced lunch
- Colorado has the fastest rising increase in childhood poverty of any state
- High schools serving white high-income students average graduation rates are 90 percent and higher
- High schools serving minority and low-socio economic students average graduation rates are 70 percent and lower

Additional information:

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** Data sourced from EducationBug.com, Colorado Department of Education



Biography



Angela Engel, author of *Seeds of Tomorrow; Solutions for Improving our Children's Education*, has been an advocate for children, families and the advancement of education for more than 15 years. Clear and direct, she writes from her extensive experience in the education system as a teacher, school administrator and parent of two school-age children. Her writing brings solution-based thinking and a gift to articulating complex issues in concrete, meaningful ways that connect with the diversity of stakeholders in the education system.

Currently, her work includes empowering teachers, parents, and students in civic engagement and leadership as a facilitator for the Family Leadership Training Institute, and as a trainer and presenter for Motivational Media Assemblies. She is also engaged in the development of state and national education policies.

Previously, she served as project director for the 2008 Children's Action Agenda, organizing children's advocacy groups from around the state on a common legislative platform with many of the initiatives being adopted by the Colorado legislature. In 2006, Engel was a candidate for the Colorado House of Representatives, earning 49 percent of the vote and bipartisan support.

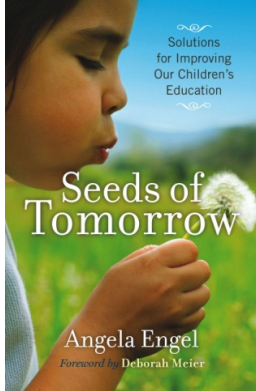
Engel has taught in public and private schools for elementary to high school age students. She served as a high school instructor and academic director for the "Denver Street Schools," a privately funded, alternative high school providing "last chance" education to inner-city schools.

She has appeared on radio, television and in print media, and regularly participates in panel discussions about improving our children's education. She is a powerfully inspiring speaker and activist, and moves all ages to advocate on behalf of children, public education, and a free and just society.

She received her bachelor's degree in communication from the University of Denver and her master's degree in curriculum and instruction the University of Colorado – Denver.



Book Synopsis



Seeds of Tomorrow: Solutions for Improving our Children's Education
By Angela Engel
Forward by Deborah Meier
Paradigm Publishers (Released March 2010)
ISBN: 978-1-59451-779-2, \$19.95
Length: 160 pages

Synopsis:

This inspiring author moves beyond criticism of public education uniting readers toward a vision of educating children that is holistic, intelligent and empowering. *Seeds of Tomorrow: Solutions for Improving our Children's Education* offers reasonable alternatives to high-stakes testing. Engel promotes educational philosophies in support of differentiation and personalization rather than uniformity and conformity. She introduces school collaborative accountability models ensuring academic integrity and excellence on behalf of students, teachers and our communities.

In a time of political transition and optimism, Americans are looking for the means to improve our nation's schools. Engel acknowledges the interdependence between education, democratic citizenship, the global work force, the economy, the individual and the community. She seeks not to create consensus on a singular model but rather to build a common framework. New decisions necessitate a clear understanding of where we've come from and where we're headed.

Written for parents, teachers, administrators, students and policy makers committed to children and change, the book is hopeful in its analysis of our current challenges: poverty, inequity and budget shortfalls. It is also sensible in its examination of today's proposals including performance pay, magnet schools, charter schools and vouchers. Uniquely engaging and surprisingly entertaining, Engel's combination of storytelling and research data offers a comprehensive guide to cultivating future generations of problem-solvers and leaders.



Dear Mr. Guggenheim:

All week I've been thinking about the film you are promoting, "Waiting for 'Superman.'" While I applaud your effort to shine a light on our education system and bring the discussion to the forefront, I am profoundly sad.

You missed the point this time. You failed to acknowledge neighborhood schools everywhere are not failing. Public schools that serve middle and upper-class white students are actually doing quite well. America has the most original patents, the most scientific discoveries in the 20th Century, and the largest economy in the world. Countries like Asia, India and China continue to send their best and brightest to be educated in our colleges and universities. Some 34 percent of natural science and 56 percent of the engineering doctoral degrees are awarded to foreign-born students.

Where neighborhood schools are failing is in the poorest inner-city areas. Had you only done your homework or some more research, you would have realized two things: 1) Corporate and political interests are using inner-city playgrounds as a battlefield to exploit America's public education trust; and, 2) Teachers are not the enemies.

If you think those private dollars are going to continue to flow to those tender brown faces shown in the movie after this fight to corporatize our children's education is won, then you don't understand the world or the history of its people. What is at stake here is not only billions of public tax dollars, but the minds and hearts of innocent children.

Do you really think that Bill Gates and Michelle Rhee were more interested in the well-being of children than the Mrs. Jones who has been teaching for 20 years with long hours and moderate pay? Do you believe you have a better understanding of the challenges of educating children living in severe poverty and hopelessness – after only a few months in the hood – than David Berliner, an education researcher for Arizona State University? Or Jonathon Kozol who has spent a lifetime teaching and documenting the complex cultural, political and economic conditions of impoverished schools?

You have made a mistake, a terrible mistake. You think you are representing kids, but you aren't. Our children, especially the poor ones, need safe healthy schools led by experienced, educated and caring teachers. Their best hope is strong, organized neighborhoods where parents and citizens are engaged in the teaching and learning happening in those schools. The solutions are simpler than you think: small class sizes; preventive healthcare; nutritious meals; safe places to play and experience the joys of childhood, books, computers, educational resources; and real-life opportunities to learn and grow - not obstacles like standardized tests. These things don't come from a lottery. They come from people who make children a priority.



Corporate charter schools have been sold as the alternative to great neighborhood public schools, not because they are better, but because they are more profitable. Only it's not the children who benefit. Please look again at the money being spent on the charter school movement and who is getting rich here. When you are done looking at charter schools, look closely at Teach for America and the New Teacher Project. Both of these organizations have been tied to Performance Pay legislation. The trap or gimmick is to tie teacher pay to test scores.

Socio-economic status being the greatest correlating factor to test scores ensures that veteran teachers serving high-poverty students can be legitimately pushed out and systematically replaced with temporary non-teachers. This is big money for these alternative certification businesses and offers a cost savings incentive for revenue-strapped districts. It is bad for children, especially those depicted in the film. The research proves it, but we don't need numbers to tell us that placing non-teachers in challenging schools on a two-year rotational basis is a bad idea.

Unfortunately, you are not alone; some people will watch the films "The Lottery" and "Waiting for 'Superman'" and fall prey to the rose-colored stage lights and touching song lyrics. They will see the one million dollar gift checks and the billionaire business men with their big wallets and think maybe we're on to something. There is another story.

It is the reality of a large, permanent underclass whose condition is worsening as the economic inequities in our country widen, particularly through failing education reforms like the corporate run charter schools, high-stakes testing and teacher punishments. There are others working from the inside to strengthen their neighborhoods, lead their communities and protect the interests of their children from those who seek to exploit them. I hope you will tell their story too.

Sincerely,
Angela Engel