Achieving Flourishing City Schools and Communities—Corporate Reform, Neoliberal Urbanism, and the Right to the City

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This essay critiques the ideological assertions of corporate school reform and discusses how these logics perpetuate failure in urban education. Drawing on theories of neoliberal urbanism, the right to the city, and the commons, the essay argues that educational researchers and advocates need to reframe the values of urban education in line with a conception of human flourishing and democratic potentiality.

Introduction

Perceptions of the city have always been contradictory. The urban has historically been imagined as a space of decay, vice, and moral corruption. At the same time, the urban has always been viewed as an inherently creative space, generative of new patterns of thought and ways of living and being. Like the city, notions of *urban education* reflect various social tensions. In the United States, urban education increasingly circulates as an embodiment of urban failure—a racialized euphemism for "broken" public schools that mostly serve working class and African American, Latino, and immigrant communities. This deficit image of urban education is now dominant in elite educational policy circles as almost all urban social ills—flagging economic growth, unemployment, drug use, family breakdown, teenage pregnancy, and violent crime—are said to derive from the "inefficiencies" and "low-performance" of urban public schools and teachers. In this short essay, I want to advocate for an alternative view of urban education. This is an image of urban education defined not as an irredeemable set of deficits or defects, but rather as an open and affirmative set of values and ideals rooted in the right to participate in urban life and the democratic potentiality of the city itself.

Corporate Reform—Producing Urban Educational Failure

The notion that urban public education is a hopelessly failing enterprise has provided legitimacy for what many now refer to as the corporate school reform movement—a loosely

aligned set of free market policies championed by billionaire venture philanthropists, Wall Street financiers, corporate executives, hedge fund managers, and both major political parties. The corporate reformers claim that endemic problems in urban schools—dysfunctional learning environments, high drop-out rates, low test scores— stem from a lack of market competition and corporate oversight. Corporate school reformers thus advocate for educational privatization through the expansion of charter schools, vouchers, virtual learning, and direct for-profit models of schooling. They also advocate for remaking educational leadership and teacher education through alternative certification programs like the Broad Foundation's New Leaders for New Schools and Wendy Kopp's Teach for America. Finally, corporate reformers suggest that to adequately train youth for the global economy we need to transform teaching and learning through standardized "common core" curriculum and through "value-added" metrics for judging teachers and schools on the basis of high-stakes testing. Each of these measures, it is argued, will transform urban public educational systems by ensuring accountability, cutting excess costs, and by spurring entrepreneurial innovation.

These strategies have been understandably appealing to many communities and to lawmakers who are confronting the very real and challenging problems within inner-city public schools. However, as a growing number of educational scholars and journalists have documented, the corporate school reform movement has not led to the improvement of urban public school districts, and instead has contributed to exacerbating many of the underlying problems that have afflicted urban schools and communities for decades (Berliner, 2012; Fabricant & Fine, 2013; Lipman, 2011; Ravitch, 2013; Saltman, 2012).

We now know that much of what is driving the reform agenda has little to do with altruism and more to do with opening up a vast new arena for profit making. Just to get a sense of the scale, in 2007 there was $77 billion in venture capital invested in educational start-up companies. In 2011, the figure had risen to a staggering $452 billion (Harpers Index, 2012). There is an estimated $600 billion dollars at stake each year in the educational market and Wall Street firms like Goldman Sachs, who were at the center of the criminality and predation responsible for the 2008 financial crisis, have enthusiastically moved into the educational sector where there is potential for enormous profits in testing and remediation services, technology contracts, and the direct for-profit management of schools and districts. Today, for instance, 80 percent of Michigan's charter schools are now run directly for-profit, reflecting a growing

national trend (Ravitch, 2013). This profit model operates by cutting costs and skimming per pupil tax money that would be allocated to educational services to pay the salaries, bonuses, and dividends of executive managers and investors. Within the corporate school reform perspective, urban public educational systems should thus be converted into "portfolio" districts, which mimic the speculative logic of the stock market (Saltman, 2012). The idea is that financial investments should only be made in those schools and models of schooling that produce a high return on investment as measured through high-stakes test scores. Those public schools with poor test scores must be subjected to the "creative destruction" of the market by closing them altogether and replacing them with charters and other privately operated school experiments.

Beyond the obviously distasteful idea of attempting to turn a core democratic institution like public schooling into an inexhaustible site of profit extraction for Wall Street and monopolistic corporations like Pearson, corporate school reform has functioned to deliberately set urban public schools up for failure. For decades, urban public schools in historically neglected working class and racially segregated communities have been starved of the resources and staff they need to adequately educate and serve all of their students. This has only intensified after a decade of regressive tax cuts for the elite, trillions wasted in war and militarism, and the deepest economic crisis since the great depression. In an environment of unlimited political contributions green-lighted by the U.S. supreme court, corporate and right-wing lobbying groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) have flooded state legislatures with cash in order to induce/bribe them to offset massive budget shortfalls by adopting austerity measures that have dramatically cut funding to public education at all levels. This has meant increasing class sizes, the curtailment of liberal arts and extracurricular programming, and mass teacher layoffs in many urban districts across the country. It has also meant that United States continues to have the most unequally funded and resourced public educational system among all advanced economies (Berliner, 2012).

Corporate reform advocates like Eric Hanushek at the neoconservative Hoover Institute like to trot out graphs and statistics that supposedly show funding to public schools doesn't matter because the U.S. supposedly outspends other nations and ends up with worse results. This is a highly misleading argument. The U.S. only spends more money per student when factoring in that it invests exponentially more money than any other advanced economy on the education of youth in the upper middle class and the elite. Moreover, this argument does not take into

consideration that the U.S. has the highest child poverty rate of any other advanced economy and invests a much smaller percentage of its GDP in social supports to low-income communities in areas such as pre- and post-natal health care for women and infants, childhood nutrition, and early childhood education. In opposition to five decades of social science research, corporate reformers like Hanushek, Arne Duncan, Michelle Rhee, and Rick Hess suggest that poverty and inequities in investment are just "excuses" that private management of schools and "teacher proof" standardized test-based curriculum can overcome. It should be noted that nations that have the highest performing educational systems such as Finland, do not simply invest equitably in all youth—they invest disproportionately more in the schools and communities that are most disadvantaged and in need. They also have strong public institutions, strong teacher unions, rarely if ever use standardized curriculum or give standardized tests, do not hire business leaders to run schools or districts, and treat their teachers as professionals with specialized knowledge and sound independent judgment.

Justifications for corporate school reforms are based heavily on anxieties concerning global economic competition and changing labor market dynamics. It is now broadly recognized that we are living in a moment of rapid global change, where capitalism is increasingly reliant on creative labor, analytical capacities, technology, ideas, and innovation. Within corporate school reform discourse and throughout the corporate media, it is endlessly repeated that we are in the midst of a profound skills/jobs mismatch where youth are said to lack the right high-end analytical and technical capacities to move into the kind of jobs demanded by the new economy. Sluggish urban economic development and high unemployment are positioned here as a failure of urban public schools to adequately produce sufficient quantities/qualities of human capital.

There is growing evidence that we should be deeply skeptical of these narratives. Research suggests that the U.S. economy simply has not been creating enough jobs relative to demand (over 10 million jobs would have to be created just to get back to 2007 levels). Further, the fastest growing job opportunities are in low-wage sectors that do not require advanced educational credentials or training. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), 22 out of 30, and 7 out of 10, of the fastest growing job categories in the U.S. are slated to be in low-wage occupational niches over the next two decades. In the highly touted STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) fields, the U.S. educational system is actually producing far more graduates than there are job openings. The Economic Policy Institute reports that for every two

students graduating with a STEM degree each year, only one is hired into a STEM related job (Salzman, Kuen, & Lowell, 2013). In information science and engineering, the U.S. graduates 50 percent more students than are hired into those fields each year, while real wages for these workers are stuck at 1990 levels (Ibid). This isn't to argue that there are not situations where industry is having a hard time filling positions, but that the reasons, as those like Peter Cappelli (2012) of the Wharton School of business have documented, are not the result of educational dysfunction or a skills shortage. Rather, in the interest of cutting costs, corporations have reduced or eliminated on-the-job training and are often offering such low pay that they cannot find skilled workers willing to take positions. Another issue is the curtailment of vocational education over the last three decades, which has indeed created genuine shortages in the skilled trades in many areas of the country. These problems related to vocational education and training should be addressed. However, we need to be clear that doing so will not resolve the deeper structural problems in the labor market for the majority of workers, which do not stem from the educational system, but from processes related to globalization and outsourcing, temporary contracting and the casualization of work, the decline of unions and bargaining power of workers, and the spread of automation across all sectors of employment (a recent University of Oxford study suggests that 47 percent of all jobs in the United States are at risk of automation over the next two decades including many white collar jobs (Frey & Osbourne, 2013)).

By raising these points I do not mean to suggest that we should not think critically about the kind of educational systems we need to adequately prepare youth for the future. All youth deserve an enriching education to develop the full range of their talents and capacities. However, even on its own narrow terms of human capital and workforce training, it is apparent that corporate school reform is a failed project. Starving public schools of resources, limiting the professional judgment of educators, and reducing curriculum to incessant standardized test preparation cannot, and will not, adequately prepare young people for successfully navigating a global economy and labor market that is currently leaving unprecedented numbers of young people behind. In practice, such policies deny the development of precisely the social conditions and creative intellectual, technical, and scientific capacities that are required today, not only to imagine what flourishing communities and dignified livelihoods can and should mean in the years ahead, but also to expand our sense of solidarity and possibilities for democratic life.

Schools for Human Flourishing—From Neoliberal Urbanism to the Right to the City

In order to think differently about urban public education and its vital relationship to the future of youth and communities, we first need to soberly diagnose the core problems we face today. The overwhelming consensus in decades of social science research is that the number one indicator of educational outcomes is the level poverty and inequality within a society (Coleman et al, 1966; Jencks et al, 1972; Rothstein, 2004; Anyon, 2005; Bowles and Gintis, 2011; Berliner, 2012). The social science consensus is also very clear that inequality is largely set external to schools and educational processes, although poverty and inequality do indeed produce toxic social problems that impede educational development. The landmark transnational research of Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009) has conclusively shown that high levels of inequality within a society (regardless of a nation's aggregate wealth) correlate strongly to myriad health and social problems including mental health and addiction, depression and anxiety, low and unequal educational attainments, elevated violence and crime, and the breakdown of social trust and decay of democratic politics. As it stands currently, the U.S. has the highest rates of inequality and poverty of advanced economies and by far the highest levels of health and social problems. This is where we have to look if we want to understand and address the core issues afflicting so many of our urban communities and public schools today.

Many of the current challenges facing urban public schools and communities can be traced to the erosion of the social democratic consensus that emerged in the aftermath of the Great Depression and World War II. During this era, significant pressures from highly organized labor unions, civil rights groups, and various social movements led by students, women, and other disenfranchised groups pushed for fundamental reforms of the U.S. system. While U.S. society was never freed from the historical grip of classism, racism, and institutional forms of sexism, this era nonetheless reflected a period in which average workers gained more power relative to capital and steadily rising wages, poverty and inequality significantly declined, and governmental regulation of the economy and significant social investments promoted a strong middle and working class along with the public institutions necessary to support them. This began to change in the mid-1970s as global economic competition began to fully recover from WWII, and the gains of labor unions began to cut into corporate profits, which caused slower rates of growth in the U.S. economy (this was primarily a problem from the standpoint of capital

rather than workers). In response, U.S. business and political elites began to embrace radical free market strategies as a way of reestablishing high profit margins as well as a perceived loss of authority and control suffered during the civil rights era.

Stuart Hall (2011) has referred to this as the "neoliberal revolution" that began to sweep across societies in the early 1980s. As a concept, neoliberalism is now widely used in the social sciences to describe a new configuration of capital and state power, whereby market values and corporate and financial interests have come to dominate all aspects of state governance and social life. As a number of prominent scholars such as Wendy Brown (2005), Zygmunt Bauman (2001), Henry Giroux (2012), and David Harvey (2005) have detailed, the neoliberal revolution has contributed to extreme inequality and the disintegration of social democratic commitments. This is reflected in three decades of upward wealth redistribution, historic cuts to public institutions and social services, declining wages and security for workers, and growing disparities in wealth, privilege, and power to influence political decision-making. Today, the 400 richest people in the United States now control more wealth than the bottom 154 million Americans combined (roughly half the population) while the top 1 percent in total control more wealth than the bottom 90% of the population (DeGraw, 2011); 97 million Americans are now classified as low-income or near-poverty, while 49 million struggle below the federal poverty line (Yen, 2011); half of all jobs in the U.S. now pay $34,000 dollars a year or less and 20 million people have incomes less than $9,500 a year (half the poverty line) (Edleman, 2012). Additionally, there are 15 million children that live in poverty, while 31 million, or 42 percent, live at the edge of the poverty line (AEC, 2011; Land, 2010). Research has shown that slipping into poverty even for a brief period of time impedes the educational, health, and social development of children (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Engle & Black, 2008). Growing class inequality and child poverty is, of course, inflected by longstanding racial exclusions and disparities. Presently, the median wealth of white households stands at 20 times the rate of African American households and 18 times the rate of Latino households (Kochar, Fry & Taylor, 2011). Moreover, the United States currently has 5 percent of the world's population, but warehouses 25 percent of its prisoners—a majority of whom are young men of color from impoverished urban neighborhoods that have been discarded by the new economy and locked-up for non-violent drug offenses. Michelle Alexander (2010) has evocatively referred to mass incarceration of the racialized poor as the New Jim Crow. She observes that there are now more

African Americans under the direct control of the criminal justice system than there were under slavery in 1850. Taken together, these trends represent a stark erosion of livelihoods and democratic culture under neoliberal governance reflected in growing insecurities in housing, employment, food, debt, family life, and physical and mental health—each of which has been shown to have significant destabilizing effects on communities and educational processes and outcomes (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

In the context of the city, urban geographers and urban sociologists now refer to a distinct form of *neoliberal urbanism* defined by corporate-entrepreneurial forms of urban governance and the transformation of cities based on the demands of transnational finance, insurance, and speculative real-estate markets (FIRE). Brenner and Theodore (2002) argue that "actually existing" neoliberal governance has been applied in uneven ways across metropolitan regions. It thus represents a *context specific process* consisting of a number of *distinct tendencies* including the privatization of urban institutions and services, attacks on public workers and unions (and their earned benefits), extensive tax breaks and incentives for corporate development and investment, and the criminalization of the urban poor. As critical education scholars like Pauline Lipman (2011) have noted, educational privatization and the integration of corporate-driven market logics into the fabric of urban public education are a succinct representation of neoliberal urbanism.

It is important to point out here that the social democratic consensus that held in the postwar era was not a particularly golden period for U.S. cities. The intersection of suburban development, white flight, and deindustrialization crippled the urban tax base and devastated many urban centers, especially in the industrial Midwest and Northeast, where large tracts of abandoned homes and damaged lives came to define the new postindustrial urban landscape. Suburbanization and the urban unrest of the late 1960s also transformed American politics as the white suburban middle classes began to embrace neoconservative anti-urban/anti-public biases and simultaneously reject redistributive responses to urban decline. While significant progress was made in the 1960s and 1970s toward racial integration, poverty reduction, and school improvement through federal educational policies such as the Elementary and Secondary Schools act of 1965 and the War on Poverty, the legacy of the urban crisis continues to cast its long shadow. Today, urban neighborhoods and school districts are *more* segregated by class and race than they were four decades ago (Kozol, 2004). Some cities such as New York, Chicago,

and Pittsburgh have pursued neoliberal development policies that have reclaimed downtown spaces as sites of vibrant economic activity, leisure, consumption, tourism, arts and entertainment, high-end living and real-estate speculation. However, neoliberal development has been highly uneven—the urban labor market and wage structure has rapidly polarized, which has hollowed-out the urban middle class and widened urban inequality, while gentrification has pushed/priced many middle and low-income residents out of cities altogether. It is important to point out, however, that neoliberal urbanism isn't something that has simply been imposed from the top down by economic and political elites, but has rather unfolded in a dialectical relationship with local forms of social engagement and political contestation. Thus while increasingly stratified relations of power and privilege define cities and their complex geographies, cities are also sites of creativity, dissent, and collaboration where grass roots energies have flourished such as in the new urban garden movement and Occupy Wall Street.

Rooted in neoliberal assumptions regarding privatization, deregulation, and perfectly functioning markets, corporate school reforms have done nothing to address structural inequalities and/or the problems associated with concentrated urban poverty and racial segregation. Instead they have perpetuated the shameful legacy of apartheid schooling in American cities. For example, in my book *Schooling in the Age of Austerity* (2013), I detail that despite widespread opposition from the community, 150 public schools have been closed in Chicago over the last decade to make way for educational privatization. This is a school district that serves 400,000 students, close to 90 percent of whom are low-income African Americans and Latinos. As public schools have closed, charter schools and selective enrollment schools have sought to keep out the "low performers" through a variety of exclusionary strategies. According to research conducted by the University of Chicago, only 6 percent of students displaced from public school closures have enrolled in academically strong schools. The rest are reenrolling in the disinvested public schools left standing. Like their counterparts across the urban United States, public schools in Chicago are thus increasingly becoming "warehouses" and "dumping grounds" for the students with the greatest needs, from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, and for whom English is a second language. Teachers and students in my ethnographic study vividly describe an intolerable situation of racial stigma, neglect, strained resources, and mandated failure at their segregated Chicago public high school. A junior named Olivia gives voice to such frustrations:

> When you go to this neighborhood you might see the signs in the yards that say 'Bank of America failed this home and I lost it to foreclosure'. Things like that affect people's mentalities. Again maybe if we were in a suburb where everything was nice and clean and it was low gang violence outside of school then maybe the inside of school would be a less violent place…We just accept the fact that because we are all minorities and we live in this neighborhood that we're treated second rate. There are dirty rotten books and broken desks and graffiti everywhere. It just kind of adds to that. It's like you're looking for someone to blame and you can just go up the ladder but eventually you don't know who else to blame. You can blame your principal, but your principal has someone to blame because she's got a boss, and her boss's boss has a boss. So I don't know. It's a hierarchy. You just have to climb the ladder and ask who is ultimately to blame.

The destabilizing impact of corporate school reform and the inequalities described here by Olivia raise fundamental questions about the type of society and the type of cities we inhabit today. Margaret Thatcher once famously crystallized neoliberal ideology by stating that there is no such thing as society, only private market exchanges, private individuals, and private families. What Thatcher's statement intimates is that neoliberalism is more than simply an integration of corporate-state power that perpetuates inequalities and erodes public institutions and democratic politics. It is also a cultural force that promotes a specific set of values and visions of the social. Within neoliberal thought, human beings are reduced to their economic functions. This means that rather than promote democratic forms social identification rooted in a sense of solidarity and civic possibility, neoliberal rationalities suggest that we are little more than consumers and entrepreneurial warriors pitted against one another in a ruthless struggle over jobs, money, educational credentials, lifestyle distinctions, and social status. Henry Giroux (2012) has been one of the most passionate and consistent critics of this eviscerated sense of the social. He observes that "in the current market-driven society, with its ongoing uncertainties and collectively induced anxieties, disengagement from the demands of social responsibility and the bonds of solidarity has become commonplace" (p. 60). "Consequently," he argues, "our capacity to translate the personal suffering of others into a moral obligation for society as a whole has

diminished, if not disappeared, under the conditions created by neoliberalism" (p.60). As Giroux suggests, we need to reclaim the public values, ethics, and formative cultures necessary to realize a more vibrant and just vision of society. One source of inspiration for such a project can be located in the deeply-rooted progressive traditions in American thought represented by those like John Dewey, George Counts, W.E.B Dubois, Martin Luther King Jr., Jane Jacobs, and others. These thinkers have recognized that democratic societies, cities, and schools are not only constructed out of a totality of integrated relationships, but require a robust *educational culture* that promotes the formative values and democratic principles of critical engagement, debate, diversity, mutuality, contestation, and human rights.

We need to reclaim and reimagine such an educational culture adequate to the challenges of our own historical moment. One key task, I believe, is too decenter the reductive notion of human capital within contemporary educational debates. As I argued above, corporate school reform for human capital development and its emphasis on privatization, standardization, control, punishment, and testing is fundamentally incoherent. It does not succeed in fostering dynamic school environments or the scientific, technical, imaginative, and critical forms of education required to promote sustainable urban development, thriving communities, and visions of what meaningful and dignified livelihoods might mean in the twenty-first century. For this purpose we need a different set of educational values oriented to the principles of social justice. I would argue rather than *human capital* that imagines students and schools solely in terms of their economic functions, education for social justice concerns *human flourishing.*

The sociologist Eric Olin Wright (2010) has offered a useful way of defining human flourishing and social justice that I have found to be particularly succinct and helpful. For Wright, "in a socially just society, all people would have broadly equal access to the necessary material and social means to live flourishing lives" (p. 12). Schools for human flourishing would thus be schools that are organized around and promote this conception of social justice. Achieving such schools would require a broad effort to realize a new social compact for the twenty-first century that recognizes political rights are largely meaningless without economic rights including universal access to housing, livelihoods, high-quality social services, health care, and an enriching and equitable public education rooted in democratic ideals. My wager is that such commitments would not only function to better prepare students for navigating a rapidly changing and volatile global economic landscape, but also to prepare them for reimagining and

reshaping dynamic and sustainable cities over the decades to come.

At this point it may be useful to the reader to outline what an urban public school for human flourishing would actually look like in practice. In my own experience and extensive reading of educational research, I have come up with five elements common to such schools. Schools that successfully promote human flourishing and social justice are:

1. Places that foster a sense of community where students, teachers, administrators, staff, and parents are joined together through open communication and a sense of shared purpose and values;
2. Places that have the resources and staff they need to provide individual attention, wraparound services, and counseling to students, especially to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable;
3. Places where students perceive their identities, life experiences, language, and cultural knowledge and traditions are respected and where they have voice in shaping school policy;
4. Places where teachers have the support, respect, and professional autonomy to connect learning to the history, culture, community, interests, passions, and aspirations of their students;
5. Places that enhance healthy problem-solving and conflict resolution skills (restorative justice).

These qualities are neither utopian nor are they unattainable. There are already many examples of such schools across the United States, although they are rare and are more likely to be schools that serve the wealthiest and most privileged communities and youth. The question we need to ask then is how can we achieve such schools for all young people in the contemporary city? My response is that we need to re-conceptualize what it means to participate in urban life and to engage with urban space as a commons (by commons I simply mean a shared, yet contested space of democratic potentiality). To this end, urban theorists today speak of a "right to the city" as a radical democratic demand against the enclosure of the social under neoliberalism. David Harvey (2008) observes:

> The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a

> common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.

The right to the city thus describes a fundamental "right" to urban space and to political participation in the key decisions effecting urban communities. This would include decisions over the distribution of resources, the cultural norms, and the forms of pedagogy that underwrite our lives and our educational institutions. The right to the city thus seeks to engage and expand urban education as an affirmative site of democratic contestation and possibility. I believe that we need to take the right to the city seriously and engage with the difficult work of transforming our schools and our cities on the principles of human flourishing and social justice so as to enact such an urban educational commons. It would, of course, be all too easy to dismiss such talk as nothing but abstract academic theorizing removed from the messy and complex realities of our cities and urban neighborhoods. My response would be that these ideas are anything but abstractions today. All across the United States there is a growing and increasingly organized movement against the demonization of our urban public schools and their teachers. It is a movement composed of countless educators, parents, students, citizens, and community activists who are deeply skeptical and disillusioned with current neoliberal market experiments in education and unresponsive state control of public institutions. Uniting this movement is a yearning for public schools responsive to the complex needs and desires of youth and their communities; schools that do not reduce learning to issues of market competition, control, punishment, and standardized test scores; and schools designed to cultivate equitable and sustainable futures for all young people. Signs of this movement are emerging all over the country from the reorganization of unions on the basis of progressive demands in cities like Chicago, to widespread standardized testing boycotts by educators and students in cities from Seattle to Brooklyn, to national protests and rallies by organizations such as the Save Our Schools campaign. These diverse actions are working to make the right to the city and the right to urban educational commons a concrete reality. The ultimate aim of the corporate school reform movement is to dismantle public schools in cities all across the country and create a corporatized for-profit system. For those who believe in democratic control of public schools, we

have no choice but to become politically active in order to enact our right to the city and our right to participate in re/creating our urban educational commons.

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