
Uniting for a Broader and Bolder Vision of Quality Education

**Unite for Quality Education Conference
Montréal, Canada
28 May 2014
@pasi_sahlberg**

Myth:

A widely held but false belief or idea

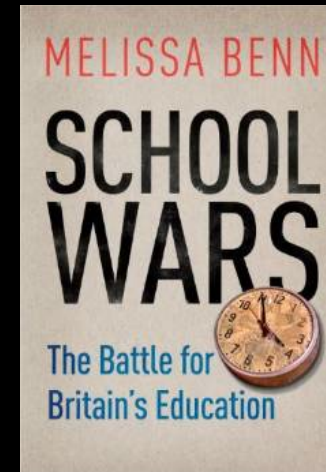
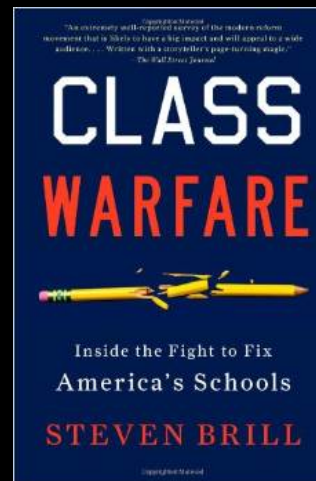
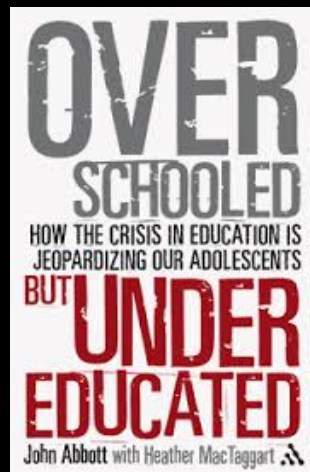
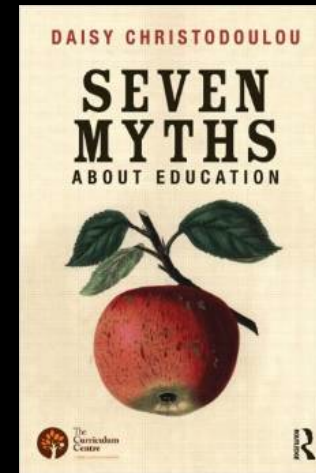
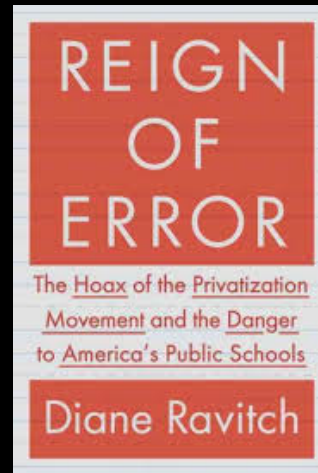
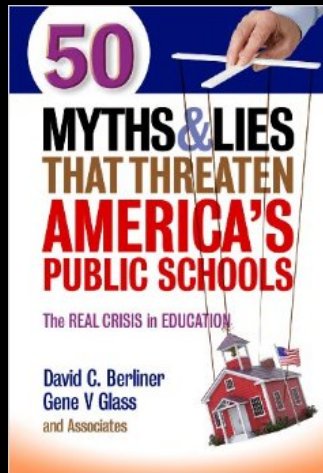
Fact:

A true piece of information

Research:

Investigation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts

People gravitate toward information that confirms what they believe, and they select sources that deliver it.



Global Educational Reform Movement



Competition

Standardization

Testing

Numeracy/Literacy

Choice

Accountability

GERM spread in 2014



Competition and choice

Myth

“When schools compete over enrolment, the quality of education improves.”
– Education Reform Act 1988

Fact

There is **no evidence to suggest that private schools help to raise the level of performance** of the school system as a whole.
– PISA in Focus, 2011

“School choice and competition **are not related to improved** performance”
– PISA 2012 vol IV, p. 133

Research

The Swedish experiment (using for-profit private providers) **has proved expensive and has not led to significant learning gains overall**. At the same time the Swedish reforms, albeit on a small scale, appear to have increased inequality, even in the context of this very egalitarian system.”
– Wiborg 2010, p. 19

“School choice may lead to the unintended **segregation of schools**.”
– Heyneman, 2009

Competition and choice

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Research

Competition—as perceived by teachers—generated **negative effects on the quality of student learning and other aspects of schooling** in New Zealand’s elementary schools.
- Ladd & Fiske, 2003

Test-based accountability

Myth

“With sharper accountability ... we can create an education system which can compete with the best in the world.”

– Michael Gove, 2013

Fact

“School systems that grant **more autonomy to schools to define and elaborate their curricula and assessments** tend to perform better than systems that don’t grant such autonomy.”

– PISA 2012, vol. IV, 52.

Research

“The research to date suggests that **the benefits of test-based incentive programs** over the past two decades **have been quite small.**”

– Hout & Elliott, 2011

Schools may coach students for assessments, manipulate the population of students tested, or even **alter students answer sheets between assessment and grading.**

– Neal & Whitmore
Schanzenbach, 2008

Parental involvement

Myth

“Higher expectations from ‘tiger parents’ in the UK could boost school performance.”

- Sir Michael Barber, 2014

Fact

“Parents’ engagement with their 15-year-olds **is strongly associated with better performance** in PISA.”

– PISA in Focus #10, 2011.

Research

“**No clear connection** exists between parental involvement and improved student performance.”

– Robinson & Harris, 2014

Teacher quality

Myth

“The most important single factor in improving quality of education is teachers.”

- Michele Rhee in ‘Waiting for Superman’, 2011

Fact

“The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.”

– PISA 2012, vol. IV, 96.

Research

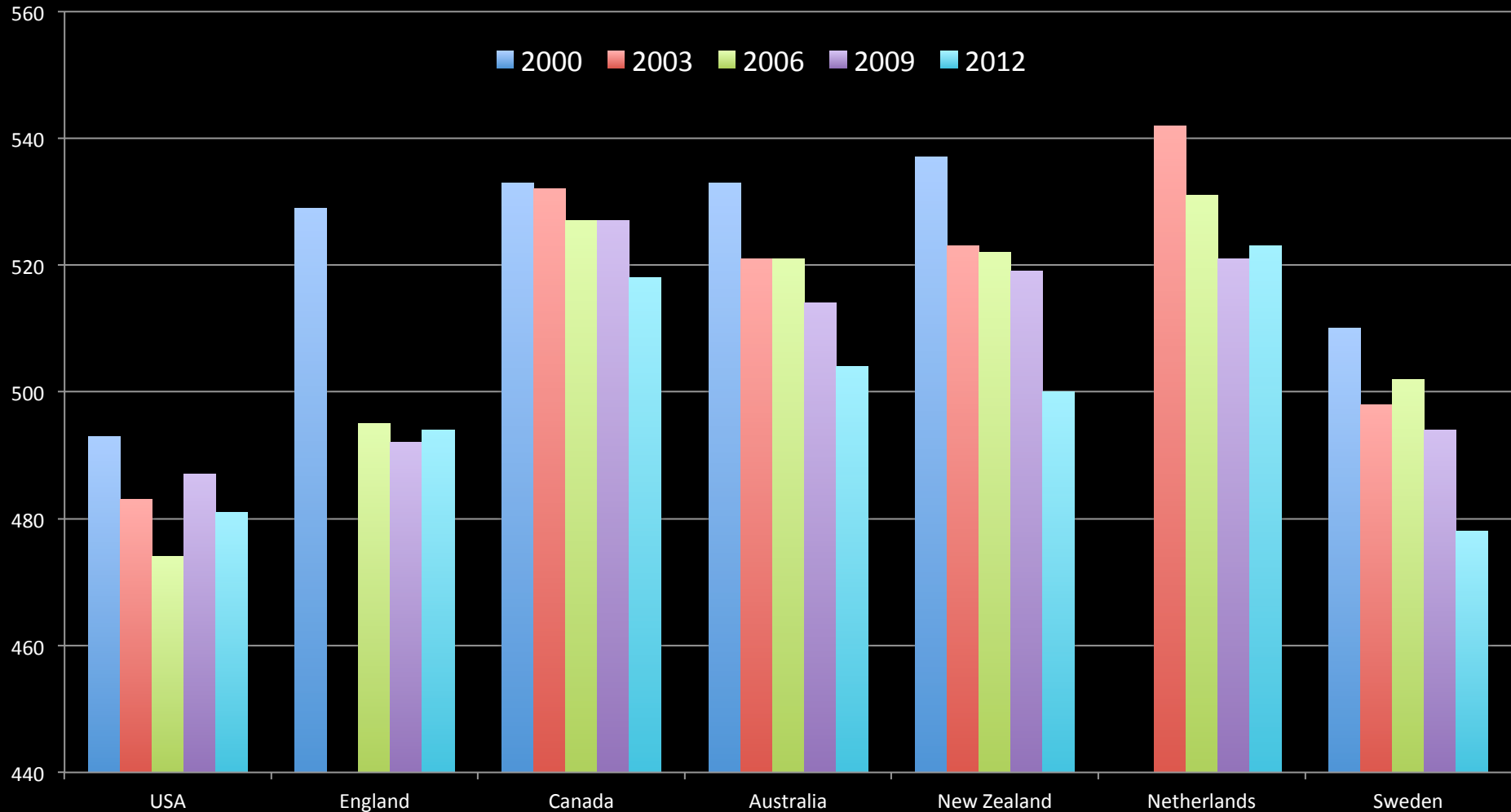
“Around 9 % of variation in student achievement is due to teacher characteristics.

About 60 % of variation is explainable by individual student characteristics, family characteristics, and such variables. **All school input combined (teacher quality, class variables, etc.) account for approximately 21 % of student outcomes.”**

– Goldhaber et al., 2010

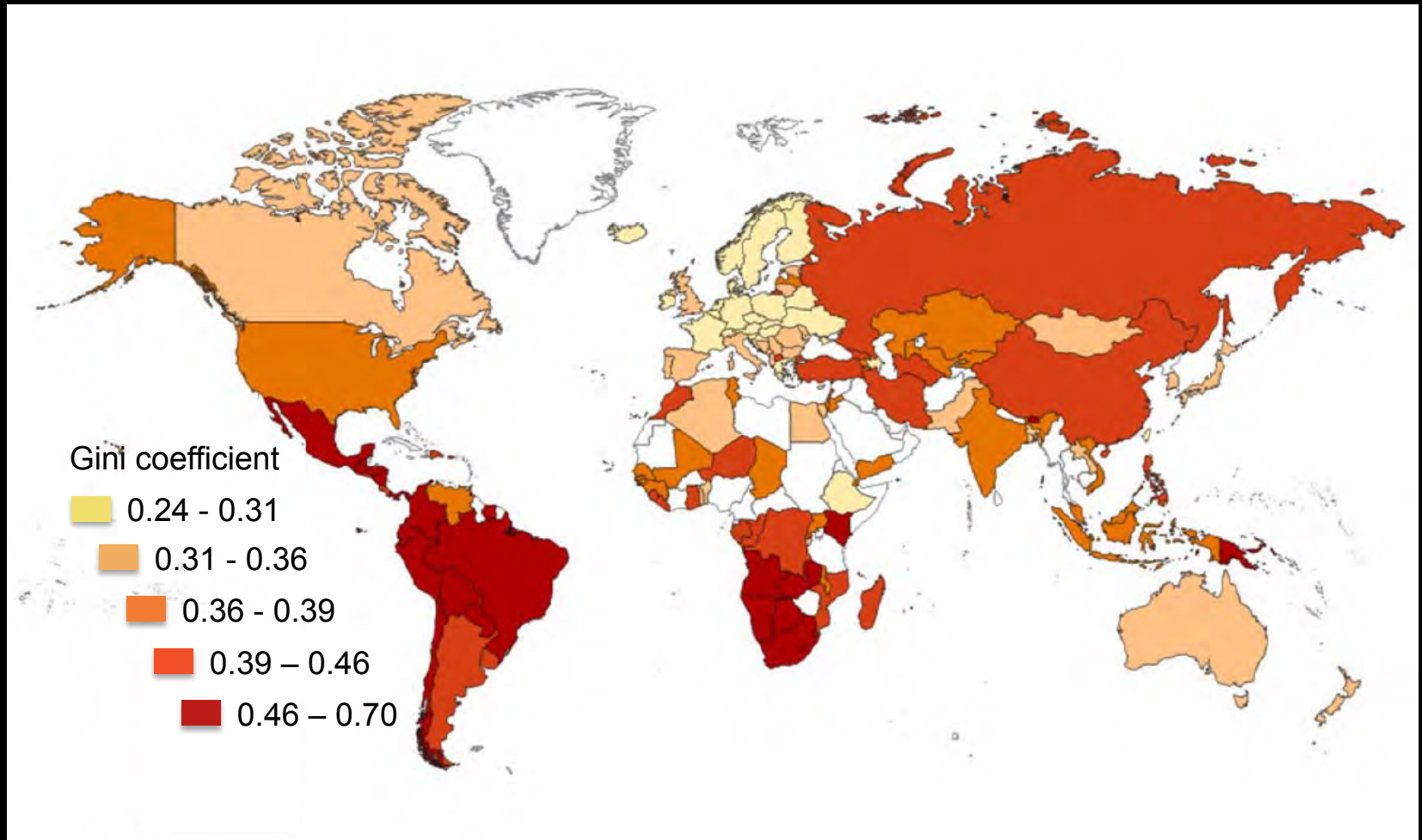
What do we know?

National averages of 15-year-old students learning outcomes in mathematics (2000-2012)



Source: OECD

Divided We Stand



Increasing Inequality

Income of the richest 10 percent of the population in OECD countries is about **10 times higher** than that of the poorest 10 percent.

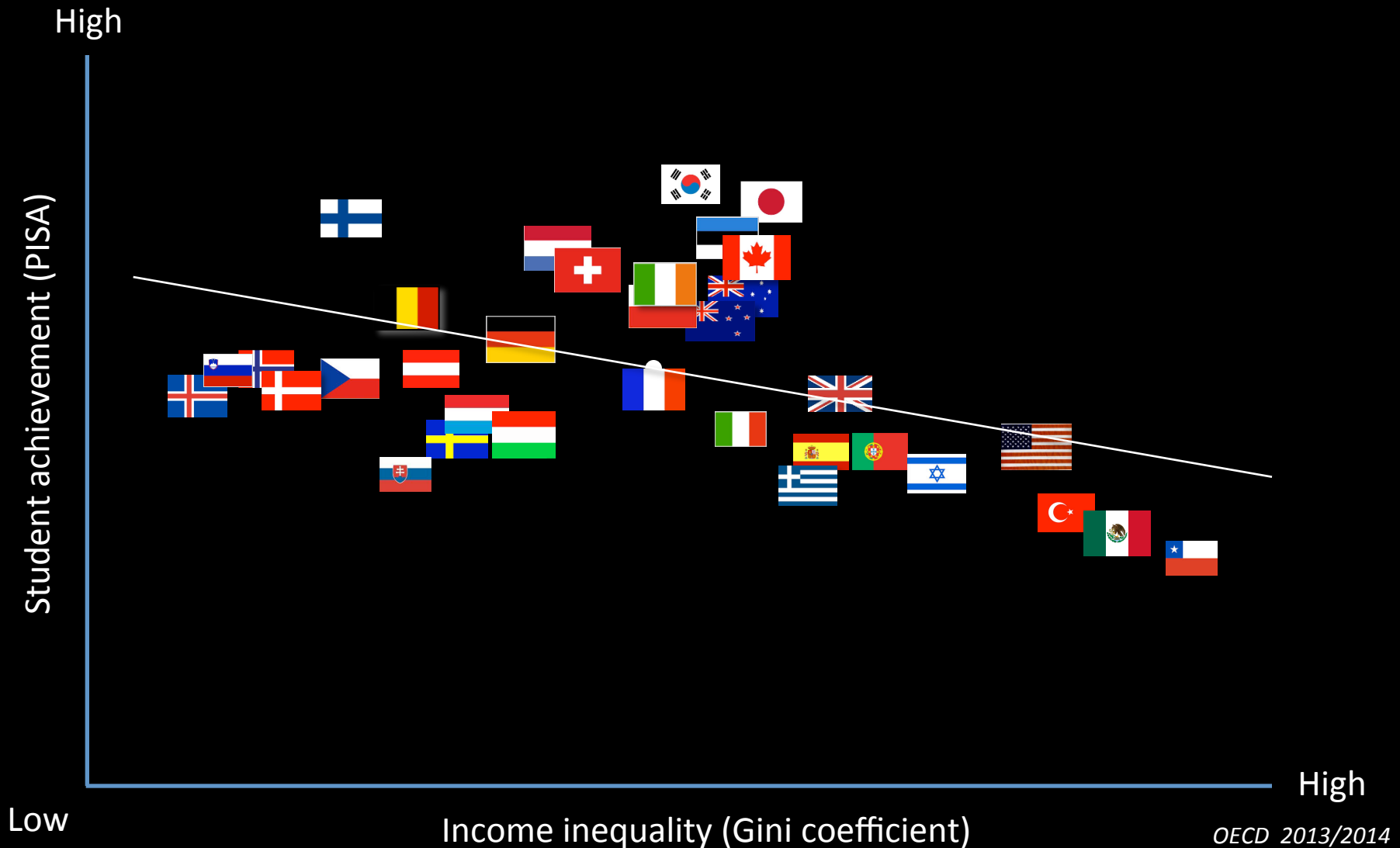
- *OECD: All on Board – Making inclusive growth happen (2014)*

Increasing Inequality

22.5 percent of U.S. personal income goes to the top 1 percent.

- *Thomas Piketty: Capital in the 21st Century (2014)*

Increasing Inequality



Poverty explains up to 46%
of the PISA mathematics score
in OECD countries.

- PISA 2012, Vol III, p. 35-36

What should we do?

**Don't build on what
hasn't worked**

Competition

Standardization

Test-based accountability

Human capital

Choice

**Do what we know has
worked**

Collaboration

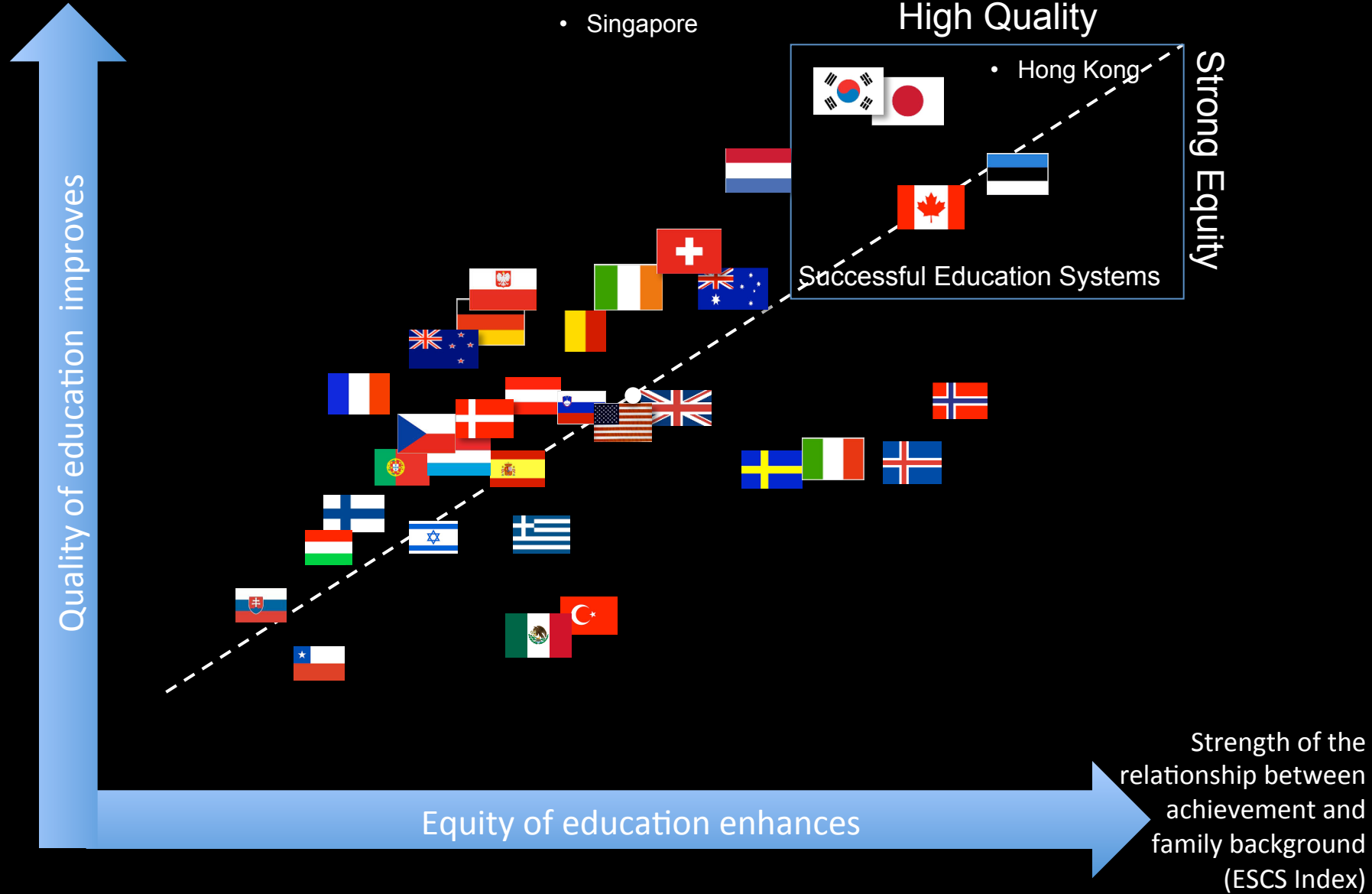
Personalization

Trust-based responsibility

Professionalism

Equity

Student achievement in reading, mathematics and science (PISA)



Source: OECD (2013)


Conclusion

"Okay, so people gravitate toward information that confirms what they believe, and they select sources that deliver it. Same as it ever was, right? Maybe, but the problem is arguably growing more acute, given the way we now consume information—through the Facebook links of friends, or tweets that lack nuance or context, or 'narrowcast' and often highly ideological media that have relatively small, like-minded audiences." – *Mooney, C. (2011). The science of why we don't believe science.*

Broader and Bolder Vision

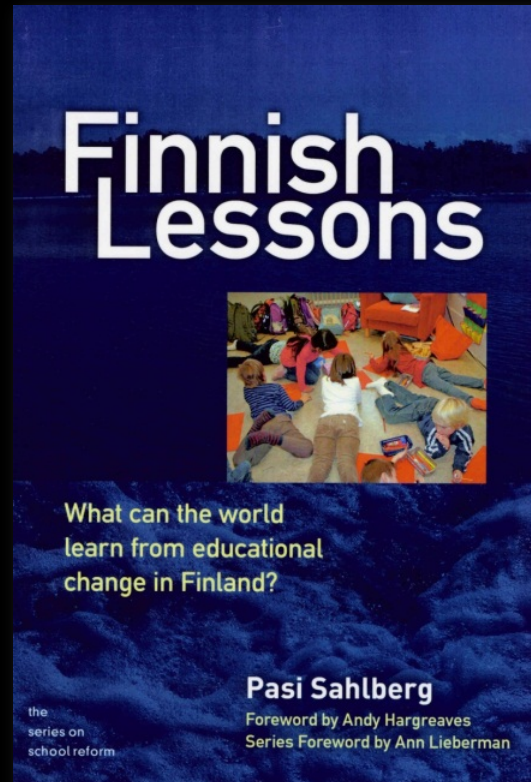
A man with a white beard, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a yellow shirt, and a colorful patterned tie, stands against a black background. He is holding a large grey rectangular sign in front of his chest with both hands.

**We will have the best school
system in the world by year
2025!**

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light beige blazer over a dark top, stands against a black background. She is holding a large grey rectangular sign in front of her chest with both hands. Her right hand is pressed against the sign, and her left hand is also holding it.

**We will have a
great school for
every child!**

THANK YOU!



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pasisahlberg.com