

schools can definitely change the learning trajectory even of students from low-income families.

Denying any problem, save perhaps the existence of poverty, is a huge mistake. Facing international competition with an increasingly low-skilled population by international standards is the silent crisis that will only be fully apparent some years in the future—when recovery will be very difficult, if not impossible.

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To the Editor:

Iris C. Rotberg said she wanted to do some myth-busting, but instead repeated one of the biggest myths of all: that poor kids in America struggle academically because of "large inequalities in school resources."

This is patently false. According to recent National Center for Education Statistics "Condition of Education" reports, in the 2004-05 school year (the latest with data) the quintile of U.S. districts with the highest concentration of poverty actually had the largest average current expenditure per pupil, at \$9,892. Districts with the lowest concentration of poverty came in a distant second, at \$9,263. Data for total expenditures—current plus capital outlays—reveal that at \$10,768 per pupil, the richest districts did spend the most in 2002-03 (again, the latest year with available data), but the poorest districts spent the second-highest amount, at \$10,191.

Apparently, the "resource inequalities" myth is one that needs a lot more bustin'.

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To the Editor:

Only readers in total denial can fail to recognize that a stealth campaign is being cleverly waged to pave the way for privatization of education in this country. The latest ploy involves invoking the dire threat of global competition to gin up a crisis.

But as Iris C. Rotberg makes abundantly clear, a robust economy has little, if anything, to do with public schools. In fact, corporate malfeasance and ineptitude, coupled with myopic

government policies, have put the United States in the position it finds itself today.

Every charge that critics now make in their indictment of public schools would be immediately dropped if all K-12 education were to be privatized tomorrow, even if no evidence of better educational quality emerged. That's because what readers are being fed is a red herring.

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Vol. 27, Issue 43, Page 33