

**Production Transcript for Panel 4.mp4**

[00:00:06]

>> Raphael Bostic: The next panel is really a continuation in some regards of the conversation that we've just been having, which is a focus on special populations and how should we think about the poverty problem. And can we think of it in a monolithic way, or do we need to introduce some nuance into how we address it depending on who the people we are focused on are. And to manage this next panel is a good friend of mine, Sheryl Whitney. She is a partner at Whitney Jennings Consulting. Sheryl and I have had the good fortune to work together for the past five and a half years on-- at both at HUD and beyond, really trying to lift up policies and programs designed to help broaden access to opportunity for households, in particular low-income households and minority households.

[00:01:08]

So Sheryl has a world of experience. Her value is in being grounded in the practicalities of politics. She's-- She was the Chief Of Staff for King County--

[00:01:22]

>> Sheryl Whitney: Deputy County Executive.

[00:01:23]

>> Raphael Bostic: I'm giving you a raise.

[00:01:24]

>> Sheryl Whitney: That's all right. Good. Yeah.

[00:01:25]

>> Raphael Bostic: -- promotion. Deputy County Executive and really has had to grapple with the practicalities of doing things. And as I said at the very outset, academic solutions are nice, academic solutions that can be done are better. And so we definitely want to get there. So Sheryl thank you and panel is yours.

[00:01:45]

>> Sheryl Whitney: Thank you. I love this panel. I love the topics on this panel. So I'm going to speak as little as possible so that we can hear from our friends and colleagues. I have been working in anti-poverty and community development issues from the local government's perspective for almost 20 years. And the more I know, the more I realize I don't know. So being here on this room and reading these incredible papers is giving me a north star that has really inspired me in a number of ways. So I thank all of you and particularly thank this panel. The issues that we're going to be talking about here this afternoon, the issues of early childhood development and the criminal justice system, when you're in local government and you are metering out your budget and your funds, these issues are straight dead at the heart of what you're talking about every single day. What kind of investments can you make in the prevention end of things to keep people from having difficult lives?

[00:02:51]

Because we know that works. But on the other hand, a criminal justice system that's often spiraling out of control, particularly for people of color, and investments must be made in those systems as well. So we're going to be talking about that. This is real and we have some great papers and presenters. I think that we're going to start off-- because we're going to go chronologically, I think we're going to start off hearing from Greg Duncan and his paper on early childhood development.

[00:03:23]

>> Greg Duncan: Thinking of populations, subpopulation was a challenge. I decided on young kids. So I overlap a little bit with Heather's presentation this morning. My point of departure in thinking about the birth to five interval is this enormous gap on school entry that Heather talked about. If you look, for example, at the differences in math skills between the top and bottom quintiles of the income distribution, it's 1.25 standard deviations, just an enormous amount. It's equivalent to a full year of learning in kindergarten, and kindergarten is the year when kids learn the most by far. It's substantially bigger, 50 percent bigger than it was 40 years ago. That's something that Sean Reardon showed. And we know furthermore that if you look at skills and behaviors that kids bring to kindergarten, including academic skills, including executive functioning, including antisocial behavior.

[00:04:25]

The skills or behaviors that are most predictive of future success in school are actually the concrete academic skills. Math, first and foremost, reading, attention executive function skills are statistically significant. But they're considerably less predictive of how kids do in school than math and reading. So my two proposals focus on ways in which we can both provide direct services to kids as well as support families in ways that appear to be helpful for making them more school ready in closing this gap in school entry between high- and low-income kids. So the first program that I want to talk about is a particular pre-K program that has been proven in a rigorous evaluation and also scaled up to a significant level. It's the Boston pre-K program.

[00:05:25]

It's been implemented pretty much Boston-wide, Boston public schools, serve a quite low-income population, 40 percent African-American, 25 percent Hispanic. So it's a poor urban school district. And yet it's been able to put together a very successful pre-K program. The paper has a lot of history about the various kinds of early childhood education programs. We have these models of Perry Preschool and Abecedarian, very expensive researcher-run programs, done at very small scale that are producing long-term effects. We have early evidence that Head Start can produce effects into adulthood. The paper argues that it's very hard to draw lessons from these older interventions because the control group was so-- you know, it went from five to two in one minute, all right. OK.

[00:06:23]

[ Laughter ] OK. And all of this doesn't count. So I think it's hard to draw lessons from these earlier programs. But what Boston does is combine a proven math curriculum, a proven literacy curriculum, a proven behavioral development curriculum. It manualizes it. It has extensive professional development. It has an extensive coaching system. I've written about this with Dick Murnane in the book called "Restoring Opportunity" that just came out in our website [restoringopportunity.com](http://restoringopportunity.com). We actually have a six-minute documentary of what Boston pre-K classrooms look like. It's been evaluated. It's a proven impact program. So you get impacts on early math and reading at kindergarten entry that are-- that close about half the gap between the high- and low-income kids. It's set up with a behavioral curriculum as well and has impacts on executive functioning measures as well.

[00:07:31]

They measure those kinds of things. So it's a-- it's done in a play-based kind of setting because 4-year-olds learn best through play. It's a model kind of program and I think in contrast maybe quality improvement systems. Heather and I talked about this at lunch. There's very little evidence that going from a four to a five on one of these scales of quality have any significant effect at all on how kids do academically. So I would try to put money in the model programs like the Boston pre-K system. It has some scale now that it needs to be an exportable version of this that is tried out in different other kind of pre-K settings. But in my mind, the focus on implementation quality, as well a rigorous kind of curriculum, is very important. The second half, which I'll do very briefly, is an income support idea that capitalizes on the fact that if you look at the evidence, there seem to be larger impacts for kid's achievement on income at early childhood compared to income in later childhood.

[00:08:43]

Makes sense, families are all important for young kids, brain is developing very quickly, whatever reason. And when you discover what those reasons are, there seems to be more of an impact of income on early childhood, and early childhood is a time when family income's the lowest, right, Because families are younger than when kids are older. So the second idea is to take, if we don't want to be more generous, existing programs and reallocate benefits, so that you're paying twice as much in the way it benefits to families with kids under the age of five, compared to families with kids above the age of five. And of course if we can get new money, we can think of expanding existing programs in ways that first increase the payments to low-- to families of young kids. Thank you very much.

[00:09:30]

>> Cynthia Miller: I'm actually talking about two populations so I think I should get two extra minutes. So--

[00:09:35]

>> Greg Duncan: No way.

[00:09:36]

>> Cynthia Miller: No way. So for former prisoners, I want to talk about three promising strategies that I think should be combined. The first is transitional jobs. MDRC just finished evaluating two TJ programs for former prisoners; one in New York City and the other that had four sites in the Midwest. It offered people placement in jobs in repair, maintenance, janitorial, Goodwill, recycling, things like that. And the average time in the TJ for participants lasted 8 to 10 weeks. We evaluated that using a randomized control trial and what we found, it led to very large increases in employment in the three or four quarters after study entry on the order to 20 to 30 percentage points. But after the first year, all of the employment impacts went away. So they seem to be due entirely to the TJ. The program in New York also reduced recidivism in all three years. So this is not very encouraging, but I think it's worth building on. I think the big question is why the transition to unsubsidized work was so difficult.

[00:10:36]

There're several possibilities. The jobs were too short. They didn't include skill building. They were just meant to demonstrate employability. Some of the agencies had trouble finding employers who are willing to hire a former prisoner-- prisoners. And then there're a lot of individual barriers that the men face themselves, like substance abuse, mental health issues. So I think this points to the importance of maybe making the program longer, making the jobs more substantive. The second policy is programs to help them change the way they view and interact with the world. There's a lot of evidence by Jim

Heckman and others that the importance of these noncognitive skills on adult outcomes, even when measured as early as childhood. There's also growing evidence that these things are changeable, particularly in youth and young adults. In the criminal justice field, there's growing evidence that these types of interventions called cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, can lead to big effects, big reductions in recidivism. And the curricular vary includes things like anger management, impulse control, interpersonal problem solving and things like that.

[00:11:47]

So many in the criminal justice field would argue that it doesn't make sense to change opportunity with something like a TJ without first changing the way they viewed this. They think about these opportunities and I think that makes a lot of sense. I think the argument goes in the other direction as well. So I would argue to combine those two. And the TJ provides a good platform for providing CBT services. It's something to do. It's a source of income. And when it's done well, it can lead to unsubsidized job. The final policy is earning supplements. I think if they make it through the program and land in an unsubsidized job, it's likely to be very low-paying. There a variety of ways to supplement earnings. One is an expanded EITC, and a number of people including Sheldon and Harry had been calling for a more generous EITC for many years. MDRC just embarked upon an evaluation of such an expansion in New York City for singles, for childless adults. The maximum is 2,000. The maximum benefit is 2,000 compared to 490 under the current system.

[00:12:48]

We've just finished enrolling about 6,000 people into the random assignment evaluation. So we won't have results for a couple of years, but we do have a fair number of former prisoners in our sample. So for disadvantaged youth, I was trying to think about what a connection might be between the two groups other than the fact there's a fair amount of overlap in the populations. And MDRC is in the middle of the national YouthBuild evaluation. YouthBuild provides vocational training, mostly in construction, education and other services to disadvantaged youth ages 16 to 24. And there are two things about YouthBuild that I think are relevant here. The first thing is that YouthBuild sometimes-- along with other youth programs-- sometimes gets criticized for the amount of screening they do upfront. And one part of that screening is called mental toughness orientation. And it can last from anywhere from one to four weeks. And a lot of youth self-select out before they actually make it to the program. The staff will tell you that they're not screening based on things like test scores or educational attainment or even arrest records.

[00:13:51]

What they're screening for is something that they call readiness to change. And so they-- you know, they'll tell you that they've run the program for many years and they know the kind of kid who's going to make it through. And that's-- You're not ready to take advantage of these opportunities until you're ready. But the second thing about YouthBuild is that it tries to further this attitude and change in the program. On paper it looks a lot like other programs for youth, but what make this different is its culture and its focus on youth transformation. There's a lot of emphasis on youth leadership, civic engagement, taking responsibility for yourself, your family and your community. So I think this relates back to the discussion of former prisoners because in terms of the importance of creating a change in the mind set at the same time as changing opportunity. So I would say one promising strategy is YouthBuild or a YouthBuild-type model that tries to do both things. The final strategy is the stronger connection to post-secondary ed. A lot of YouthBuild programs are moving in this direction as well recognizing that a GED is not enough.

[00:14:55]

And MDRC recently evaluated such a program. It's called GED Bridge at LaGuardia Community College, and Harry mentioned that in his talk as well. It was a contextualized curriculum, in this case, for the fields of health and business. It was taught more like a college course. It had professors from the college come in and talk about what it takes to move on from the GED to college enrollment. And using a randomized control trial again, we found that compared to regular GED prep, it led to very large increases in GED pass rates and large increases in college enrollment. It was one program and a small sample, but I think it's worth replicating. And I'll end there.

[00:15:35]

>> Thank you.

[00:15:37]

>> Daphna Oyserman: So I want to thank you both, for this has been an amazing day. And I think I speak for everyone. Oh, Mr. IBM is not here?

[00:15:46]

>> Kabira Stokes: I know I want him too.

[00:15:50]

>> Daphna Oyserman: I'm delighted to be here because these are things that I think about a lot, and it's very rare to be in a room where you don't know a lot of people. And that means you're getting to hear really new ideas. And I'm delighted to be here for that reason. I'm here at USC in psychology. Before that I was at the University of Michigan for 22 years. And the work that I did was really based in Detroit. And in Detroit, a quarter of kids finish high school on time, more girls than boys. And what I found in talking to kids in Detroit is that no one says, "I don't care about school. School is not important. I don't want to go to college." And when you talk to their parents, they are vociferously not interested in vocational training. They think their kids should go to college. And they don't want any educational system that doesn't get their kids to college. So the problem isn't a problem of low hopes. There're plenty of high hopes. But the other thing I found in Detroit is that kids believe that the future starts later, right. So there's just-- why would it matter I want to be a veterinarian, a basketball player and later Supreme Court judge.

[00:16:57]

Why would it matter, by the time I'm 25, why would it matter if I do my homework tonight, if I memorize my spelling words tonight? I'm 12, and we've-- I've done this as young as, you know, 8. Kids, when you ask them what they want to be when they grow up, one of the more annoying questions grown ups ask. They'll tell you and they give you a job and it is not a low-paying minimum wage job, right? But if-- and-- so that's not the issue. But, if the future feels far, then there's no need to get going now. And that's extremely rational. There's nothing weird about that. It's true in all of our lives. We apportion of our attention to the things that are relevant in the moment. And so what we need to ask ourselves when we're thinking about these kinds of programs is how do we get kids to feel that their future starts now, that-- I feel I'm getting-- I'm hearing myself. Are you hearing me? Yes. OK, good. The future starts now. So it's not that later I'll be something wonderful but it's not relevant to now, that that thing is relevant to right now here in school.

[00:18:03]

Even kids who are failing school know exactly what you would need to do to do well. You're supposed to raise your hand, you're supposed to do your homework and hand it in. You're supposed to study for exams and you're supposed to come after school and get help from your teacher. The problem is all of those are public behaviors. And if you think that kids like you don't do it, you're not going to do it. So those strategies—we don't need to teach these strategies. We need kids to feel that their identity congruent, boys do them if they're boys, Latino do it if you're Latino, and so forth. So the future has to start now, the strategies have to be things that people like me can do, and it's hard. We don't talk about that. We act as if As descend upon you. Kids want to get As, right, they'll sprinkle on you. And I also would like to get JPSPs and you know-- I want-- you know, somehow I walk outside they don't fall on me. And we don't teach kids that doing-- that working on your goals is difficult and that you are likely to fail.

[00:19:06]

We teach that in sports, right, there, the no pain, no gain. We talk about that there. We don't talk about it in academia in America Other countries do, which means that when kids experience failure they have to ask themselves-- where are you miss meta-cognitive experience? One of the executive functioning things, there you are, right. How do I interpret my experience of failure, what does that mean? There are two logical things that it could mean. It could mean who was I kidding, this is not for me, right. Difficulty sometimes means that likelihood of success is low. And other times difficulty means that it's important. Difficult things are important things to do. OK. Both of these are plausible interpretations. Unfortunately, in school systems, often kids too quickly shift attention to something else as if what difficulty means is impossible for me, I should pay attention to something else. I should do something else. Rather than, it's important I should keep working. And I think one of the things-- it is definitely important to provide kids as they eagerly arrive in school.

[00:20:11]

The tools to learn well because kids, like all of us, look around in our social context. And we ask ourselves, "Do people like me learn? Can we do it?" And if the instruction does not provide a way for kids to move forward, if it isn't structured so that failure is a learning experience, if it's not structured such that it's an us-thing to do, then rapidly kids begin to feel that apparently it's not for kids like me. And what's interesting I think in the Boston experience, and often when we imagine schools-- the schools we imagine, the schools kids actually go to are different. We imagine schools in which there are-- there's a majority of white wealthy kids and there's a few poor kids of color. But mostly kids go to schools with lots of other kids like them. So kids do not know that they are failing, they think they're doing just fine. And the teacher says do these 17 problems. And they say to themselves, no one is going to do all 17, if I do three I'm doing more than everybody else.

[00:21:12]

And they're right, except that then they're going to live to a bigger world outside. So I think one of the things that's useful about the-- a program like that is that it raises the level for all across settings. Because if it only raises in some settings. And if it's only an issue of social comparison, then we're going to be in trouble, on the one hand. On the other hand, I just finished doing a series of studies looking at metaphors. We talked about the path of life, the road of life. I have all sorts of papers about seeing the destination, the possible selves and not the path, how do you actually get there. And then it occurred to me that's metaphor, why won't I test-- and see if metaphors work. And it turns out that they do, not only for very low-income kids, but actually for college students at the University of Michigan who are hardly low-income and deprived young people. If you give people a metaphor, you ask them to think

about their possible selves at the same time they're looking at a path, which is one way of thinking about how you move on the road of life, you locomote, right?

[00:22:15]

No one sits down on the road of life. You don't say, oh, there's a stone, oh that's the end of that. You know, I'm 22, I'll just wait for a while, right? So once you have a path metaphor, it teaches you nothing about how to actually do your homework. But it does tell you that apparently you need to keep going, that it's a step by step thing. You can't get there if you haven't gone here, first, right? That works for college students. It improves their grades. If you give a different metaphor, which we think about time over the summer, then I will, right. So time is a container during that box, then it'll happen. Yeah, that's a real loser for doing that thing. Because, you know, later I'll be wonderful it doesn't move elevator but there's no need to get going if it's in a box, OK. We did a randomized clinical trial in Detroit public schools way later than Greg feels that we should ever do these things. I said, I would like to know how do I stop the pile up in 9th grade. Kids get out of 8th grade, which is middle school. They get to 9th grade.

[00:23:15]

And in Detroit public schools, there's three times as many kids in 9th grade as there are in 12th grade. And that is not because kids are getting As until they get to 12th grade and then they say they don't feel like it anymore. It's because they thought they were doing well in middle school because you get that nice smiley face feedback. And then you get to high school and it turns out, unbeknownst to you, it's a complete different game and you never get enough credits to get out of 9th grade and then you're 16. So you quit. And so what we said is, can I take just activity-based, the kind of way that you're talking about teaching. Can I take fun activities, group-based activities that give you the sense, the future starts now, not later? It's on a timeline, but there are forks in the road and there are stumbling blocks, everyone fails but no one sits down. And we're all doing it. So I don't need to tell you this. But apparently we all care about school. We're all interested in it. And those strategies, they're things that we do because we're all talking about it. And can I just do those kinds of activities in the beginning of 8th grade and then leave?

[00:24:19]

I did not train you in how to do math. I'm expecting that if you keep raising your hand, you keep coming after class, you keep trying again, your teacher will be able to do a better job than if you don't come to class and if you don't do your homework and you're not asking. OK. And sure enough, what we found is that you can improve standardized test scores, grade point average, attendance, failure rates, standardized test scores. And as an added bonus, reduce depressive symptoms. 'Cause if you're not doing well in school, you are not a rock star. OK. You are sitting home. So, I think these things are really important. I think it's the exact same pathway when we're thinking about what happens to kids as they get a little older. And they realize-- the reason I wanted to catch kids as they're piling up in 9th grade is that the train left the station, you didn't even know there was a train. And then there you are and you've aged out and suddenly there aren't many opportunities for you.

[00:25:21]

And I think one of the things that's really important to think about is how do we do these things at each of the points in people's lives? Not that we decide that if we haven't hit-- if we haven't hit our stride at zero to five, that somehow this is too late for people. But I do think it's really important to think about what are the active ingredients? How do we do in a that's age appropriate, that fits people's life phase and that is robust and cheap and quick? Because people move in Detroit, it was a third of kids who are

in school at the beginning of the year were there at the end of the year. And I think it's true for employment programs, it's true for all the various things that we're talking about. People can't-- We can't wait for long complicated programs to work. So thank you.

[00:26:02]

>> Kabira Stokes: I am really honored to be here. I am a graduate of a school that no longer exists, which is SPPD. Do I have a price degree? I don't-- OK, fantastic. Yes, I do. I had Professors Painter and Mazmanian, it's nice to see you all. So this is actually-- I'm really happy to be here because I finished with my policy degree, my MPP, about three years ago. And about two and a half years ago, I decided to start a social enterprise. And, well, my background is in government. I worked for Mayor Garcetti who was Council member Garcetti at that time. I worked in the field. I had the opportunity to see sort of where the rubber meets the road of government. But also really what communities in the northeastern region of Los Angeles we're up to. The 13th council district where I worked is the third poorest in the city. So this is where you ran into gangs and all the things that you think of when you think of poverty and sort of young people. I very quickly realized that I was more obsessed than I ever thought I would be with what are the alternatives here, how do we create opportunities for people that are not a life of gang violence and ending up incarcerated?

[00:27:14]

So when I came to USC, I loved coming as an adult 'cause I pretty much was able to laser-focus my studies on the criminal justice system here in California. And what opportunities-- what sort of job training programs were out there, best practices in how do you train someone who's coming out of the criminal justice system to be employed? What does that look like? I was also looking at the sustainable cities department at what-- thanks Zach that's such a nice smile. Like beaming at me. Anyway, I was looking at the sustainable cities department to see what industries could we be building here in Southern California that would actually be appropriate for the population coming out of prison? What is this-- appropriate skill level-wise? What industries could be actually be built? I stumbled on the electronics recycling industry. It is the fastest growing waste stream in the world. It is a completely underdeveloped industry here in Southern California. If you're recycling electronic please do, although less than 25 percent are recycled. It is being shipped away and along with it-- along with those items are jobs.

[00:28:17]

Jobs are being shipped out of the region because we just don't have the infrastructure to be recycling here. So I graduated, apparently had some screws loose, I decided I'll create some jobs, how hard could it be? It's seemed when-- I mean I love public policy. And I sort of weighed my options and thought I could either bang my head against the DOJ for the next few years trying to create a policy that can make jobs or something like that. Or maybe I could just convince people to give me e-waste. Where is Mr. IBM? Oh you're back. Hi Mr. IBM, I have a way we could work together.

[00:28:50]

[ Laughter ] So I thought maybe I could convince people to give me their electronic waste so I could put people to work recycling it. So we're two years old, Isidore Electronics Recycling. This is my pitch. If any of you have e-waste in this room, your organization or you as an individual, please recycle with me. I will-- I promise I will put it to good use. We are a start-up, it's scrappy and I thought the best use of my time today would be to-- I have a very small sample size. But let's use it. I have seven folks who are previously incarcerated that have worked for me. And in reading-- I'm only going to speak to Claudia paper-- Cynthia, sorry. Sorry, Cynthia. Cynthia's paper because I don't know much about the early

childhood bit. But I certainly know about employing the previously incarcerated bit. It was a pleasure to read the paper because it was just sort of a yes, yes, yes. This is correct. What I have found, and let me look at my notes here.

[00:29:55]

Absolutely-- Oh, let me say one more thing. While doing my research into the sort of best practices around and being able to employ this population, you know, I don't have a social work degree, I have a policy degree. I probably should have an MBA, but I do have a policy degree. I was looking at programs like we have in Los Angeles like Homeboy Industries or like Chrysalis or like some of the YouthBuild programs that are here. You see that some of them are doing the real work, right. They're getting people-- they're doing-- getting them job-ready for real. They're for real getting them job-ready. They're making sure that their housed and their mental health is considered and their sobriety is supported. But then there's this gulf, right. There's this-- You can have-- someone have transitional job, but right, how do you get to the on the unsubsidized employment? There's the-- the job market is over and there's like three people who get to go over there every once in a while. So I thought what is that valley and how could we actually fill that place. So that is what Isidore is. That's what we're-- that's what I'm trying to do.

[00:30:57]

So, in the two years of recycling this e-waste and just a quick thing, we take it in and we triage it. It's either end-of-life or it's not. If it's at the end of its life, we can employ people to actually take things apart with a screw driver. We are not an end-of-life recycler. That's where I want to get. I want to get the machinery to be able to employ more people in that. But essentially it's a screw driver. You are separating out components, the circuit boards, the processors, the glass, the plastic. And we're sending that off to people who could actually extract metals from this and recycle the plastic et cetera. On the other side though, about 10 percent of what we get in is reusable. So this-- you know, people throw away the most amazing things, old iPhones and things like that. So we're teaching people to wipe data, to refurbish and repair, to fix screens, and we resell that. That's the actually the main bulk of our revenue. It's one thing to teach someone to take apart a computer. It's a totally another thing to teach them to put them back together. And that's what-- the skills that we're really trying to build at Isidore. OK. So let's talk about the seven.

[00:31:58]

So absolutely what I have found is that the older folks have a higher chance of success. So I would say out of the seven that we've taken in, three have really been successes. These are folks in their 30s and 40s. These are people who have perhaps been to prison 12 different times. They've kicked-- done things like kicked heroine, they come out, they're like, no I seriously don't want to go back to jail. And if this lady is going to give me a job, I'm going to show up early for it and I'm going to do it right and I'm going to be good at it. So we actually recently—we were able to give a promotion to someone to assistant warehouse manager. It's like the most proud any of us ever had been. It was a very cool moment. He literally-- He could not believe that someone had given him a promotion. And we-- He said to us once, you know, "This is the most honest I've ever been at a job in my life. And this is like by far the most successful I've even been in my life." It seems to me that the older folks get it. But then there's the young ones.

[00:33:00]

So we're talking about three-- a young woman and two young men, both of young men are-- were-- they came from a YouthBuild program in their early 20s. One had serious substance abuse issues, meth, he

fell off the wagon while he was with us, incredibly insecure sort of housing-wise. And that is-- What I've really come to see, is that if you have a secure place to live, particularly if you have substance abuse problem, if your sobriety is not supported in that place where you live, you will not show up to work on time. You're not going to be able to hold a job if those two things are not supported for you. And the other one too, in his early 20s also graduate from the YouthBuild program. He was an interesting case. And I think this is where the CBT comes in. This-- The really the cognitive base therapy. He was set to be sort of our first graduate, right? Like we haven't been around that long, we don't really know what-- we're trying to still-- to be very honest, what is it this model that we're building.

[00:34:00]

Is this a transitional job program? We are a for-profit company. We're not a social service agency. Do we move people through? So Eric, I think he was the first, we were going to move him through. He had cleaned up his record. He had gotten his driver's license while with us. He cleaned up all his tickets. Can't believe how many tickets these kids have. He was living with the mother of one of his children. He was on track. And he wanted to become an electrician, and he had enrolled in LA Trade Tech to do just that. But somehow when he sort of realized that he was about to leave us, it just fell apart for him. He stop showing up. He start showing up late. In the end I had to fire him, which I still can't believe we did. But I actually think that it was the greatest gift because it was like actually if you want to have a real job, that's the consequence. That is the consequence of showing up late. I think that therapy somewhere-- behavioral modification somewhere along the way earlier for him could have made him make a better decision there. He is going to go to school and he is working at another job. So maybe it sort of worked for him.

[00:35:02]

But just-- I know I don't have that much time left. So Crystal another one, she was from a juvenile program in prison, again, housing just so insecure. She never knew where she was going to sleep. You cannot have a job if you don't know where you're going to sleep. And then just another gentleman who had come from Homeboy Industries, this is where I really think that earning supplements could have made a difference. He was amazing at taking apart computers. He had spent about 11 years in solitary confinement, that gives you a real laser focus of-- focus on things. He could rip apart computers so quickly. But we took him on-- he was part-time with us. We didn't have quite enough work to bring him on full-time. And you get about 600 dollars before you have to declare someone who's an independent contractor and sort of-- you can go under the table for about 600 bucks and then beyond that, you have to make it all above the board. And he wouldn't want to come on above the board because it was going to eat into his unemployment benefits. And we said, we totally get that, and he's like-- you know, he's like, "Why would I work when I get money for free?"

[00:36:07]

And we said, sure, totally. But if you stay with us, you will have full-time employment and we can get you off those benefits. We'll give you a job, you know, you want to learn how to fix iPhone screens. We'll teach you how to do that. He wasn't biting and he didn't do it. He wouldn't stay with us. I think he also had sort of some supplementary income whether or not that was legal, I don't know. But if there had been a more meaty thing for him to grab on to, maybe he would have let that go. I offer all of this as again an incredibly small sample size. I don't mean to make any judgments about the organizations that we have brought these folks through in general, this is just my experience. And it's really, really nice to have a chance to just stop and think about coming at this from the policy side of wanting to help a specific population. To have my nose to the grindstone for the last years, I just need

to get electronics through my door, to be able to step back and think how have we help and what can we offer.

[00:37:09]

So thank you.

[00:37:10]

>> Sheryl Whitney: Well I'd first like to invite Greg and Cynthia any comments or thoughts after you've--

[00:37:19]

>> Cynthia Miller: Yeah, I'll go, I just want to mention. I think I didn't have time to-- it's in the paper but not in the talk about the importance of these wraparound additional services for substance abuse, for mental health. When I was doing the paper, I looked in the surveys of the institutionalized population, and it said one in two have symptoms of a mental health disorder including, you know, psychosis, many are depressed. And at first I couldn't believe that that was right. But it's-- there's a very high rate of mental health problems, also physical health. So, those should also be there as well I think. And the other thing is, when I was getting into this, the whole issue of the systems with age, you know, people talking about expunging records after you've been clean for a while or for older because somehow they get it, you know, once you age. But I think the question is, how do you get the younger people to start thinking that way earlier.

[00:38:13]

>> Greg Duncan: So let me take off on Daphna's implicit observation that one size doesn't fit all. And I think that's very important. Because we know that if you offer a certain program it work for some people and not others. It works on certain ages and not others, right. That preschoolers by and large are very eager learners, right? They enjoy the kind of activities. They think they're really good at it. You know, you ask them how good are they at multiplication and they say, "I'm really good, really good." And they have been-- never done it but they think they're really good. So the kind of play-based programs, right, that just keep them engaged in a support learning while they're playing I think is the kind of best model. As kids go through the adolescent transition, right, all the issues that you talk about become much more important. The intervention you describe is very exciting.

[00:39:15]

We're going to talk more about this. I want to find out exactly what makes it tick. But I also think it can't be just that for exactly the reasons that you talk about. Kids come into 8th grade or in the 9th grade, you know, years behind them grade level for reading for example. One of the interventions that Dick Murnane and I focus on in this book are the Small High Schools of Choice in New York City. And one of the schools we visited is a high school open enrollment, you know, kids come in with 3rd grade reading level, 5th grade reading levels. And it's—they've set up their 9th grade with this full-court process to try to bring up literacy levels to decent levels. And so they just-- they have two periods of literacy. They have literacy pervading math. Literacy pervading science. All the teachers get together and coordinate their literacy activities.

[00:40:18]

They talk about individual students all the time. So in the process of getting to the kind of motivation components that you talk about, I think it's also important not to neglect the kind of fundamental skills and the deficiency in those skills that kids have by the time they get into middle school or high school.

[00:40:38]

>> Daphna Oyserman: So this is not a rebuttal for albeit for me to say that being able to read and do math is a bad idea. So I just want to make sure that no one walks out and says, "Oh, I just heard someone say that you don't need to know anything and you're just need to care." But that's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that teachers can do a lot more with kids who think that this message is for me and right now is the time to pay attention. And so, there was a-- first thing in the morning, we heard, can we just reduce class sizes? And class sizes, the interesting thing is that internationally all those people who are beating their pants off of us have 40 and 60 kids in class. So culturally, in America, we believe that if it's one on one, it's a value because we're highly individualistic. And somehow the teacher's knowledge, by the time it reaches you in the third row, it's stuck on to the kids in the first and second row and you don't get as much.

[00:41:40]

There's a very different-- and I'm saying this in a silly way. But I do think there's a high cultural belief that if it's not one on one it's no good. And I think there's a lot of power in group processes in looking around you and seeing that it's hard for other the kids too, but they're still struggling with it. And I'm just like-- I'm an average kid. And if average kids can do it, probably I can too. So I do think there's something about group process. And we showed in the same kind of really hard schools where kids are not doing well. We could improve kids' standardized the MEAP, the reading-- I'm sorry-- the writing MEAP, we could improve their ratings which is considered fluid intelligence. Just by reframing what does it mean when it's hard? Just literally, we gave them a bias scale and they had to circle how much they agree with four items. They either framed, when it's hard for me, it means it's really important for me. Or when it's hard for me, it means it's just impossible or we gave them no message. And across studies, we never make things worse by telling you if it's hard, it's probably not for you.

[00:42:44]

We do not make things worse. That is the message that apparently kids come to the door with. We make things better if we frame it when it's hard, it means it's important. And the interesting thing is it is not an explicit message because if you just ask kids, everyone tells you, "Oh, yes, I agree, when it's hard I should work harder." That the explicit level, they're really high in that skill. And the explicit level, when you ask them when it's hard does it mean it's not just not for you. Oh no, no, no that's not true. So explicitly everybody has heard that. But you act with your hands, with your feet, with your mouth, what are you doing? You're acting as if it's just not for you. So I don't think that it means that we can give up on teaching. And I do think there's a lot of be done in a more effective strategies for teaching. And I think that's the important investment. But at the same time, it's really important for kids to feel that this right now, this is for me. And when it's hard, that's OK, that just means it's important. And we do that in our own lives and we should be making sure that kids get it. But I also think it's important for teachers to get it. So the intervention that we did was we just took undergrads or people with undergraduate degrees.

[00:43:47]

'Cause this was-- and actually national student mental health funding, so it had to be really clean. It couldn't be, you know, soiled by their actually teacher touching them. It had to be strangers come in do a thing and leave. So there's no further influence. But we touch what-- I think we're getting money from the Department of Education now to do this as a teacher-led, teacher-trained. So it would be run in homeroom. And the beauty of that is our trainers across the years, the training helped the trainers. They all walked out afterwards saying-- they go, I'm stuck on all sorts of things on their life 'cause this is a really powerful message. And I'm hoping that the same thing will happen. If your homeroom teacher

feels that way, she not a subject class but she's going to teach a subject and she's going to-- that'll be infused in a way that she teaches that subject, the way she engages her life with her family, with other things. So I don't think it's one or the other. And I don't think that these executive function kinds of things as you're calling them. I'm calling it identity-based motivation, but they are underlying at the same thing. The future starts now, when it's hard, you just got to keep going, and those types of things you can use.

[00:44:49]

They're not instead off. They're the way that you actually get the information.

[00:44:56]

>> Kabira Stokes: There's such a tie in there too. The part-- Also part of Cynthia's paper that we didn't discuss which is the mentorship aspect of transitional jobs for previously incarcerated people, right. So that's one thing for them to come to work and see me, an upwardly mobile blonde lady and it's another thing for them to have a supervisor who is previously incarcerated because they've been through it all. They have kicked whatever drug they were on. They've been through the system. It's such an important piece to-- I don't know the fancy psychological term but to-- you know, to being able to identify with that someone else did this, I can do this too because it is hard. It's incredibly hard. I just can't hammer home the CBT how much that seems appropriate enough because even for the ones who are work ready, there's still decision-making that's hard for them. Some sort of like basic kind of logic things sometimes are hard for them. And for the younger ones just the-- again it's a different sort of decision-making.

[00:45:58]

But that's sort of like life decisions about whether or not I would show up to work. But every-- But that range of do I should have to work to-- is this OK for me to make a decision without asking my boss? That agency piece of decision-making. So I don't know just the paperwork.

[00:46:18]

>> Sheryl Whitney: Greg-- please.

[00:46:19]

>> Nate Kaplan: Hi good afternoon. Good afternoon my name is Nate Kaplan I'm district director for LA Councilmen Mike Bonin and we represent the west side of Los Angeles. Also a proud Trojan alumni and the same program as Kabira, so yay go Trojans. In our district, we have this anomaly that you might have heard of called Venice Beach. Venice Beach has an ongoing, irretractable population of youth, mostly teenagers and youth in their 20s, that are very service resistant that are very transient and come from all different part of the country, from Oregon, from Maryland, from Massachusetts and from California itself. And it's a struggle that the city has had for years and for the past three or four council members at least. How do you suggest you approach these youth-- these children to improve their lives and is there hope when they are so service resistant.

[00:47:14]

>> Cynthia Miller: Well, I'll try to answer this. I think other people are-- also chime in. But I think YouthBuild is hard because you do have to-- you know, you have to be ready to take advantage of the services. And I think there are other programs out there that I don't know a lot about. But one for example is called Roca. And I think it's in Boston and I think what they're shtick or maybe not shtick, but they really go after the hardest to serve youth. And they'll pursue. You know, in YouthBuild, if you don't

show up for the second day of mental toughness orientation, you're out. So-- But in Roca they'll pursue you, you know, multiple times to try to get you to come in. And so that's a program that I think goes after these hardest-to-serve-youth. And I'm not sure there's been an-- I think there might have been an evaluation of that one as well. But that's one program that might be promising.

[00:48:09]

>> Daphna Oyserman: But choosing a path of poverty under the assumption that anytime I would like to, I could just change. This is the issue of youth. Is that the future fears never ending, your teeth will never fall out. You know, nothing-- no bad things will happen to you. And so, you know, one of the issues then I think is to look at the community health models there. The ACT programs, Assertive Community Treatment programs where they do go out to find people who are not coming into treatment. You know, if they would be needing to have stabilizing medications, they're not on medications. And that really has been very much sort of a going out to find people. And the-- so that's-- it seems like one model. The other model seems to be the issue of people who are-- didn't want to be in shelters but they would want to be housed. And so to try and understand, there were somebody earlier today who was talking about that. But try to understand what it is that people actually want. What is the future they think they might be having? And what is it that you're offering that's congruent with the future they imagine they might be having. 'Cause if you're not congruent with it, why should they talk to you?

[00:49:09]

>> Martin Friedman: Number one, I want to thank you all so much for not using the word offender and instead saying formally incarcerated and former prisoners. Offender is something that when we're doing re-entry work, we get-- it's so dehumanizing. It's like-- it'll never leave you. A lot of us have done offenses we just were never caught. So thank you for that, number one. Number two, I just put forth to Kabira and anyone on the panel the idea that maybe it's not about time or age but it's about transformative processes. What are the transformative processes that people that are incarcerated can go through that will allow them to be successful in employment, in housing and other areas? That's not just-- and CBT is part of it probably. But there's got to be more. And then, the last question is about transferable skills. I'm sure folks do a good job tearing computers apart. But these are also people that were very good at marketing, branding, microeconomics when they were standing on the corner making 500 dollars a day. And the idea of transferable skills was introduced to us by somebody that had done that and he said, "You can put me to work on an assembly line, but what I'm really good at is marketing and I'm really good at branding."

[00:50:17]

So I'm wondering if people can get into that level of your organization as well, or is it all just ground level.

[00:50:23]

>> Kabira Stokes: Well, I speak to-- so at the federal level and in California facilities, they actually teach folks to both tear apart and rebuilt computers. And I'm on the hunt for anyone who has done that, because if that the skill that they were given while incarcerated I would like to put them to use with that. Now they may not want to do the on the outside, I get that, but it is so cool to find people who really like, "I just want to fix computers. No one will hire me because of my record," and I'm like come here. We literally are looking for you. Yes, we have transferable skills and that we do warehouse work, you can work in other recycling facility, et cetera. I mean us moving Shade into a—to an assistant

warehouse manager position was us saying what talent do we have here? But I think-- I'm not opposed to marketing and all that stuff-- if anyone has an idea we-- like we have all-hands meetings every week.

[00:51:25]

If anyone has an idea, we'll listen to it. But the main thing we are trying to do is find people who have the acumen and interest to be in this field of repairing and refurbishing electronics and we want to those skills to work. Yeah. That's it. We're trying to like help people's dreams come true through electronics with Isidore. I think one of the other goals is, you know, if-- we're teaching people how to fix iPhone screens and iPad screens, if they want to start their own iPod repair company, great. If that-- If they can launch off of us to do that, that's-- we're so down. We're really into that. What was your other question? That was it. And, yeah, formerly incarcerated this-- the ex-felon thing is bonkers.

[00:52:10]

[ Inaudible Remark ] Well-- OK. I will say one thing to that which is-- there is-- I mean I have really have taken my academic hat off. But when I put it on for a second ever, I-- there is a part of me that sort of like, well, now we really know who's making people job-ready, right. I mean everything comes down to the individual, but specific to my place of employment-- who's getting people ready? And what transformation is gone in the social services agency. We're not a social service agency. We are real employer. And we're trying to be transformative from the private sector to do that to say, "I'm a private sector, for-profit company, that wants to hire this population." So hopefully we can move the needle on that a little bit. But yeah, maybe we're offering to the social service agencies we're doing that work to say, how is it going, like who's it working for, from a very understanding employer.

[00:53:10]

>> Sheryl Whitney: So balance, I'm going to come to the right side of room.

[00:53:18]

>> Carla Javits: Hi, Carla Javits with REDF. I just, you know, really inspired by Kabira's story. And I guess, I just wanted to maybe make note of the fact of how unusual our friend from IBM is in this particular crowd. I don't know if we had a raise of hands. So how many people are in the business community who are here today?

[00:53:38]

[ Inaudible Remark ]

[00:53:39]

[ Laughter ] You know, so, I guess I would challenge us, that, you know, I've heard a lot today about the need for learn and earn strategies. About the need for integration of supportive work environments that care about these other needs that people may have, however we are thinking of addressing transformation. But we don't-- we have a few hundred examples around the country employing thousands of people in this arena, but we need thousands of examples employing hundreds of thousands of people. And we don't, I think, engage the business community in a serious way in discussions like this, and challenge them and challenge ourselves about creating jobs and jobs intentionally for people who really need to have a job. And then I think-- I just wanted to mention this 'cause I was thinking about it. You know, how powerful obviously their voice is in the kinds of things that we're talking about.

[00:54:42]

And I think there is an interest certainly in individuals within some of these businesses in hire-- in finding ways to hire, finding channels for hiring and finding ways to use their power of procurement to create these kinds of jobs and to deal with these issues. And when they do, maybe just tying back to another theme we had earlier on immigration. I heard a story just recently that 60 of the largest businesses in Arizona wrote a definitive letter to the legislature. They're telling them to stop with the anti-immigration policies 'cause it was killing the economy in Arizona and it stopped. And, you know, it's very powerful. Business is very powerful. And we need jobs and we need a whole other tier, I think, of entrepreneurs like Kabira who are willing to create those jobs. There are many public policies we can advance to do that. I just wanted us to challenge ourselves to take that side of creating jobs a little bit more seriously. Thank you.

[00:55:36]

>> Heather Schwartz: I wanted to take up your earned income tax credit idea, which mechanically seems so appealingly simple. Politically, I have no idea if it's a non-starter or not. Have you given this, you know, more thought and thought about the practicalities of getting it done 'cause it sure seems to make sense logically?

[00:55:57]

>> Greg Duncan: No.

[00:55:59]

[ Laughter ] But in this case, there's a version of it that's revenue neutral, right, where you could just reallocate existing benefits, you could think about the child tax credit in the same kind of way. And it's a matter of selling the idea and, you know, who knows how to translate research into actual policy. But in this case, it's not as though it's some big new program. It's a matter of trying to make the case about how important early childhood is. How sensitive kids are at that point, the family influences, you know, how brain architecture gets set up. I think people are predisposed to thinking about the early years now as being very, very important. I think that didn't used to be the case. So, you know, it's-- I can see this as an easier sell than most. But it's never an easy sell.

[00:56:58]

>> Jessica Ludhat: Good afternoon. Jessica Ludhat [assumed spelling], First Five 5, LA. My question is for Dr. Duncan. The-- I'm really excited about the pre-K findings from Boston. But I've seen that within the early childhood sector, there has been an increasing kind of shift to farther and farther down the line, so pre-K is too late, you know. And I think a lot of this is based on the 30 million word gap that came out quite a while ago but has really gained a lot of notoriety recently, that by the age of three, low-income children already know 30 million words less than their affluent counterparts. So how do we really start to work on bringing groups together and let's stop thinking about, well, let's fund pre-K versus no, it really needs to start earlier. And thinking about it as a system which I think K through 12 kind of suffered from in the past where everyone pushes on the people that were below them. So it's not really their fault. It was the people that taught the kids before. And ultimately ends up with poor parents is the people that were pushing this back down on.

[00:57:58]

>> Greg Duncan: Right. That's a great and very difficult question. As you probably know, earlier programs-- center-based programs early Head Start, for example, are basically twice as expensive, right, as programs for 4 and 5-year-olds because you need twice the staff per pupil. And so that-- you know,

I'm an economist, the cost benefit test is much stricter for very early programs. There's only so much money that has to be allocated. You know, I think the idea that allocating some of it toward intensive visitation programs that had proven themselves for the subset of families that are very high risk, first time mothers, young mothers and so forth. That's a model that has proven itself. You still need to scale it up and make sure it gets implemented well. But that's a very selective program for one subset of the population. There was an early Head Start demonstration as you probably know, an experiment which produced a very small effect sizes, much, much smaller than even Head Start and much, much smaller than the programs like the Boston pre-K.

[00:59:15]

So-- And then to do Boston pre-K, that's a 12,000 dollar per child per year program, which is a couple thousand dollars more than full day Head Start. So, how much money are you going to give to me? You know, if, I think it's certainly the case that there are enormous environmental differences in terms of exposure to early math, early literacy, this kind of 30 million words you talked about. But it's very, very difficult to-- for programs to get parents to change that kind of behavior. So I think having programs that are providing services directly to kids, right, like the pre-K program, is probably more effective than thinking that you can change parents who in turn will change kids. You know, I think programs did-- I think programs had been effective in getting low-income parents to do a lot more reading with their kids.

[01:00:16]

I think there's a potential for trying to get more low-income parents to talk more math to their kids, which I think is very important. There are big differences there too. But I wouldn't put a lot of money in those programs. And the big question is, if you have these concentrated programs for the first-- for a subset of families very early on, if kids are in, you know, reasonably safe, decent quality care up until age three, and then you start at age three or age three and four at uniformly high-quality kind of education experiences, can you come close to closing the gap? And that's given all the expenses and all the evidence that-- that's where I would put my money now.

[01:01:09]

>> This is actually for Cynthia. I just had a quick question regarding cognitive behavioral therapies. I imagine that some of the CBTs take place within prisons and some takes place after. For the ones within prisons, has there been any sort of evaluation or looking at if it actually changes the culture within prison? I mean if you're talking about anger management and decision-making, if it actually changes people even while they're on the inside still and sort of changing the overall culture of, instead of perpetuating this sort of hardship and deprivation, victimization.

[01:01:40]

>> Cynthia Miller: That's a good question. I didn't have time in my five minutes to acknowledge my colleague Dan Bloom who's done more work in this area than I have. So I'm not quite sure. What I do know is we're evaluating one such program called the ABLE program at Rikers Island for young offenders. And it's cognitive behavioral therapy within prison. And I think there're a lot of difficulties in delivering it. Because people are moved to various-- you know, and they're put in confinement. And so, I think maybe inside and outside would be better. But I don't know that answered your question about whether it's-- that's a good question-- about transforming the environment as well.

[01:02:18]

>> Kabira Stokes: But in-- so the Men's Central Jail which is just up the 110 here in Los Angeles. It is the largest mental health facility in the state of California. I don't think it's working. I don't think we've change it. That's where poor people get mental health care.

[01:02:34]

>> Sheryl Whitney: I think we're right at our close. So please join me in thanking our tremendous panel.

[01:02:40]

[ Applause ]

[01:02:42]

>> Raphael Bostic: I want to say a couple things on this last panel because I think there are things-- couple things I wanted to mention. I was going to mention that our jail system is our mental health care system in many regards. And it's something that I don't think we have fully internalized in terms of what the costs are, what the alternatives need to look like. The second is, I feel like a lot of this conversation also was a tie back to Richard's story about teacher expectations and about what we project to children about what acceptable is and what it should be. And I think we need to think about that. And then the third thing I wanted to say is I'm so pleased that Kabira was here. Because I do think that we have purposely tried to get an LA person on every panel. And part of it is just to make the point that there's a lot going on in Los Angeles that the rest of the country has no idea about. And it happens in terms of academics. It happens in terms of practitioners.

[01:03:42]

It happens in terms of private sector innovation. So please take that message back with you when you go home. I think that's important. And the last thing, which is thoughtful for me and we're going to think about how to do this is, you know, at the Price School, we talk about multi-sector solutions, public, private and non-profit and philanthropic, all coming together and having the parts of the solutions. And this panel really emphasizes how important it is that we go the extra mile, Carla I really appreciate your comments, to make sure the private sector is engaged and understands what the opportunities and potentials are.

[01:04:21]

[ Silence ]