

December 2, 2016

Ms. Ivanka Trump  
721 Fifth Avenue  
New York  
New York 10022

Dear Ms. Trump,

You asked via Twitter recently: "What do you think we can improve in our schools?" I'd like to share a partial answer.

In today's economy, traditional K-12 education is simply not enough to meet the demands of the future. Our current public and private education systems do very little to solve entrenched urban and rural economic stagnation. To make real and lasting improvement in struggling economies, we must begin to equip our students with practical entrepreneurial, technical, and life skills, and provide them the mentorship they need, to succeed in building their own businesses and comfortable futures in their communities.

Frankly, if we educators don't help kids build these essential financial, entrepreneurial, and life skills, it's unlikely anyone else will.

Can we reimagine our mission to truly make American education great again?

As CEO of my own company, I wish I'd been taught business math, practical economics, and accounting in my rural Pennsylvania classroom, instead of the Algebra and Trigonometry I never used again. I wish I'd learned to collaborate in dynamic teams, to communicate my ideas succinctly, to tease out solutions and engage in projects where my newly honed business skills would translate into real-world successes. That's one of the reasons I wrote *Who Moved My Standards?* I wanted to show teachers there's a way to get students thinking and working creatively and critically, to take full advantage of technology, and to develop the growth mindset and the interpersonal skills they need to build a solid platform for financial prosperity.

At Learning Sciences International, we believe that what's explicitly missing from K-12 education is a focus on real world applied skills that support entrepreneurship and business acumen, and that build the competencies students need if they choose to go straight from the high school graduation ceremony to building thriving businesses that will create jobs, improve lives, and bolster the economies of their local communities.

Teachers are already telling me that *Who Moved My Standards?* has helped them find renewed purpose and reconnected them to the joy and creativity in their mission as

educators. It has helped them create rigorous, student-centered classrooms where kids are highly engaged in *real work*. And our readers tell us the book is an excellent, accessible resource for parents, who may struggle to understand why teachers and students need to shift away from traditional, lecture-style teaching and classroom management and embrace vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

At Learning Sciences we've had a great deal of success turning around struggling schools in urban and rural districts by addressing core instructional weaknesses. But we believe there are key aspects of school and district turnaround that have not been addressed by federal and state policy—places where entrepreneurship, applied economics, and American education can achieve real synergy. We would appreciate the opportunity to share our ideas and provide policy support to your team in Washington and New York. Please feel free to contact me any time—I look forward to speaking with you about our work and your mission.

Sincerely,

**Michael Toth**, CEO  
**Learning Sciences International**