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Dedication:

This film is dedicated to parents, children, and educators everywhere who work tirelessly for equity and quality in our public education system.

The members of the Grassroots Education Movement would like to thank our loved ones for their support and understanding.



Will the *Real Reformers* Please Stand Up?

**A Grassroots Education Movement
Production**

gemnyc.org
www.waitingforsupermantruth.org

**Presented and Produced By
Real Reform Studios:**

Julie Cavanagh, Darren Marelli
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Real Reform #1: Small Class Sizes

Real Reform #2: Excellent Community Public Schools for ALL Children

Real Reform #3: More Teaching – Less Testing

Real Reform #4: Parent and Teacher Empowerment and Leadership

Real Reform #5: Equitable Funding for ALL Schools

Real Reform #6: Anti-Racist Education Policies

Real Reform #7: Culturally Relevant Curriculum

Real Reform #8: Expand Pre Kindergarten and Early Intervention Programs

Real Reform #9: Qualified and Experienced Educators and Educational Leaders

Real Reform #10: Democratic and Social Justice Unionism



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Some Inconvenient Truths Behind Waiting for Superman...

The business model will improve education.

The Inconvenient Truth: Free market business principles have taken center stage in our country's education reform debate. Increasingly, our nation's school districts are run, not by educators, but by lawyers and corporate executives who push accountability and competition as the way to improve education. In a competitive business system, the real needs and voices of students and educators are ignored or minimized. Instead, the focus turns to cost containment and profit. Finland's education system, which is ironically touted in *Waiting for "Superman"*, does not follow this model. In Finland, class sizes are low, teacher experience is highly valued, the students are not measured by high-stakes standardized tests, and most importantly, parents, teachers and students have a voice.

Charter schools are a silver bullet.

The Inconvenient Truth: Charter schools are not public schools. They are defined as "education corporations," and operate with little or no oversight. Charter schools hold lotteries for enrollment, but have the ability to counsel out students. They drastically under serve children with special needs, children who receive ELL services, children who are homeless or in foster care, and children who receive reduced and free lunch. In addition, charter schools tend to have disproportionately high student and teacher attrition rates. According to a study conducted by Stanford University, only one in five charters are more successful than their public counterparts. Charter schools are not outperforming our public schools.

Teachers and their unions are the problem.

The Inconvenient Truth: Teachers and their unions advocate for children and their families and for better conditions in our public schools. Tenure and seniority rights are currently under attack, however they are nothing more than due process protections that all workers should have. Without these rights, teachers could not advocate for their students. While *Waiting for "Superman"* claimed teachers and their unions are to blame for our country's educational challenges, the film also held up Finland's system as a model. Yet, in Finland, 98% of the teaching force is unionized, educators are treated as professionals and are included in the decision-making process.

Poverty doesn't matter.

The Inconvenient Truth: Poverty is not an excuse; it is a reality. No matter how extraordinary an educator is, without necessary supports such as parent involvement and community and health services, the effects of poverty will have a negative impact on student achievement. Well over 20% of our nation's children currently live in poverty. Instead of attacking educators and ignoring the needs of our children, we should be working to reduce poverty and correct the policies that reinforce it. Ignoring the effects of poverty and blaming teachers is a convenient way of doing nothing at all.