

- In *Waiting for "Superman"*, we travel with five families on their journey to enroll their children in public schools where students are challenged and supported in programs that prepare them for college. What is your vision of a great public school? What are the key characteristics of a great school? Give examples
- In the film we see several examples of schools characterized by a culture of low expectations and low achievement. Are there schools in your community of origin that fit this description? What do you believe are the root causes of these chronically low-performing schools? What is being done to improve them? What should be done?
- Research shows that what happens outside of school – such as neighborhood violence or inadequate health care or housing – has a significant impact on classroom learning and student achievement. In your experience, what is the relationship between neighborhood quality of life and student achievement?
- *Waiting for "Superman"* illustrates the challenges of having each state set its own often-conflicting standards. The Common Core State Standards Initiative (a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers) establishes national standards for what K-12 students are expected to learn and be able to do in order to graduate from high school prepared for college and career. What do you think are the essential skills that a young person needs to prepare for a full and productive life after high school?
- Many students enter kindergarten without the early literacy skills – such as knowledge of the letters of the alphabet and their sounds – necessary to be successful in school. Research shows that a high-quality preschool experience provides children with a strong start and prepares them for academic success. Not all families can afford a high-quality preschool for their children, however. Do you think universal preschool should be a priority for districts and states? How is your state supporting the availability of high-quality preschool opportunities for all children?