

New Report Shows It's Not About Money—It's About Making Learning Matter to Students

A Professional Development company shares practical ways to bring curiosity back to classrooms

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, May 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A Texas education company has released an eye-opening report that challenges what we think we know about fixing schools. The message from [Kampus Insights](#) Inc. is simple but powerful: We don't need more money. We need to help students care about what they're learning.

The company's new "[State of American Education](#) 2025 Report" looked at over 20 years of data and found something surprising. Even though schools spent more than twice as much money in 2020 compared to 2000 (jumping from \$373 billion to \$927 billion), student test scores barely moved. Today, only

about 1 in 4 eighth graders can do math at grade level. Reading scores are stuck too—fewer than 3 out of 10 middle and high school students read at grade level.

"We keep thinking if we just spend more money, things will get better," says Olivia Odileke, a longtime teacher who started Kampus Insights. "But the real problem is that we've forgotten to make learning exciting. We're so focused on getting through all the material and preparing for tests that we've lost sight of helping kids actually want to learn."

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*Olivia Odileke, Founder of
Kampus Insights*

What's Really Going Wrong in Our Classrooms?



Olivia Odileke is the author of *Unleashing Curiosity* and Organizer of Spark Curiosity EDU Conference

The report points to four big problems that most schools face:

1. We've traded curiosity for following rules.

Students spend more time sitting quietly and following directions than asking questions and exploring ideas. When kids stop wondering "why" and "what if," they stop really learning.

2. Hard work without meaning leads to giving up.

Teachers are told to have high expectations and challenging lessons. But when students don't see how the work connects to their lives, they tune out. It's like asking someone to climb a mountain without telling them why it matters.

3. Teachers talk, students listen—and that's it.

Most classrooms still work the same way: the teacher explains something, students write it down, then everyone takes a test. But research shows kids learn better when they get to explore, try things out, and figure things out for themselves.

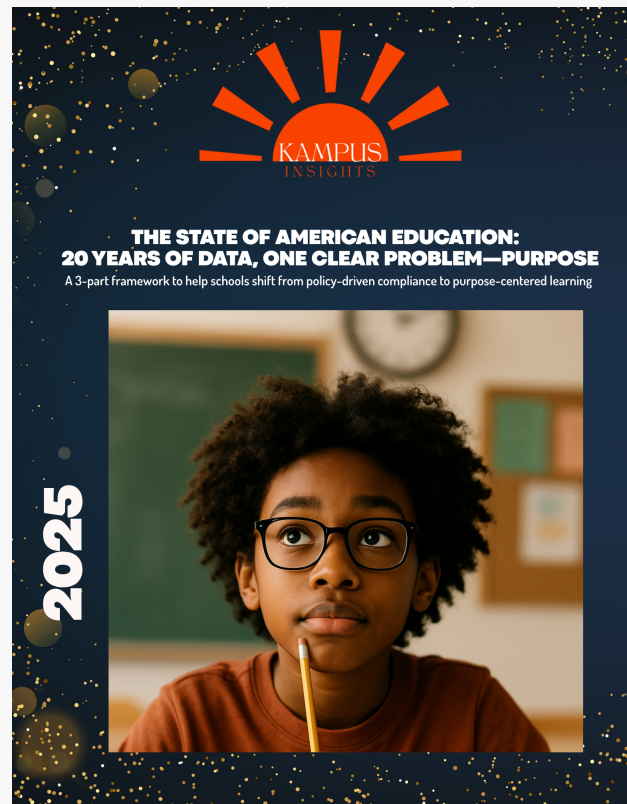
4. Teacher training that doesn't actually help teachers.

Districts spend millions on professional development, but teachers often say these sessions don't help them in real classrooms. It's like teaching someone to swim in a classroom instead of a pool.

These problems matter especially for the people who plan what students learn—the curriculum directors and instructional coaches. As Texas schools work to meet new state standards and use approved teaching materials, Kampus Insights wants leaders to think about this question: Are we just covering material, or are we helping kids think?



Spark Curiosity EDU Conference Logo



State of American Education Report Cover Page

A Different Way: Start With Wonder

Instead of adding another complicated program or expensive technology, Kampus Insights suggests something refreshingly simple: Start each lesson by making students curious.

Here's how it works in real classrooms:

Micro Inquiry Tasks – Before diving into a lesson, spend 5-10 minutes on a thought-provoking question or puzzle. For example, before teaching fractions, ask: "Why do we trust numbers more than words in some situations?" This gets kids thinking before they even realize they're learning.

Discovery Before Delivery™ – Plan lessons so students explore and discover ideas before the teacher explains them. It's like letting kids taste ingredients before telling them they're making a cake—suddenly, they're interested in the recipe.

Curiosity Walks – When principals visit classrooms, instead of just checking if teachers are on schedule, they look for signs that students are engaged and thinking. Are kids asking questions? Are they excited about what they're learning?

"The best part is, teachers don't need new textbooks or fancy technology," explains Odileke. "These strategies work with whatever materials you already have. It's about changing how we start conversations with students, not throwing out everything we've been doing."

Join the Movement: A Special Event for Texas Educators

To help schools try these ideas, Kampus Insights is hosting a special conference called Spark Curiosity EDU on June 19-20, 2025, in Austin. This two-day event is designed for teachers, coaches, principals, and anyone who plans what students learn.

Unlike typical education conferences where experts talk at you for hours, this one is different. Participants will actually practice the strategies, share ideas with other educators, and leave with tools they can use the very next day.

"We want people to remember why they became teachers in the first place," says Odileke. "Not to manage worksheets or race through textbooks, but to light up young minds. This conference is about rediscovering that joy—and sharing it with students."

The Bottom Line: It's Time for Change

The report's message is clear: After 20 years of spending more and more money without seeing better results, it's time to try something different. Instead of asking "How can we cover more material?" we should ask "How can we help students care about learning?"

This isn't about lowering standards or making school easy. It's about making school matter.

For teachers feeling burned out, principals looking for real solutions, and district leaders ready to try something new, Kampus Insights offers hope. Change doesn't have to mean starting over. Sometimes it just means starting each day with a question that makes kids want to find the answer.

Learn More:

Download the full report: State of American Education

Register for the conference: <https://sparkcuriosityedu.com>

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