From my Op-Ed about educational innovation in the Guardian today:

This month, India announced a plan to produce a $10-$20 laptop to boost distance-learning potential and help fulfil the country's overwhelming education needs. While the proposed laptop's processing capacities have been quickly criticised, the effort to make computers more accessible in the developing world is meritorious. The previous attempt by the international community priced the laptop at $200, which leaves the computer out of reach for many poor communities. India's intention to innovate something more affordable is right, and it exemplifies the role government can and should play in stimulating innovative solutions to educational challenges, particularly for those without resources.

India is not alone in facing educational hurdles. While America's challenges may be of a different nature, they are dramatic none the less. As an example, our high school graduation rates have been in steady decline for over four decades. Presently, the US ranks 18th in high school graduation rates among developed countries, and we continue to rank poorly among such nations in key subjects like mathematics (ranking 25th out of 30) and science (ranking 21st out of 30). Perhaps most concerning: only one-third of our high-schoolers will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary for college and career. Of the remaining two-thirds, half will drop out and half will graduate unprepared for college and work.

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