REWARDS FOR HIGH STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PERSISTENTLY LOW STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

A comprehensive education accountability system has three necessary components:

1) **Goals** for student learning.

2) A process and infrastructure for **measurement** of individual student, teacher, school, and system progress toward meeting those goals, and an easily accessible system of reporting such results to the public.

3) **Rewards** for progress toward meeting the goals and **interventions** to rescue children from low performing schools and systems.

Within an accountability system, the purpose of rewards and interventions is to motivate school personnel and the wider community to provide each child with the highest level of learning possible. Rewards and interventions give educators an incentive to work together to find and implement the best ways to offer an education to each child. Thus, the purpose of a system of rewards and interventions is not to be punitive; the purpose is to increase the quality of education offered to each child.

This paper presents:

**Issues** that must be addressed in the design and implementation of a system of rewards and interventions.

**Alternative rewards** for performance beyond expectations and **interventions** for persistently low performance.

**Alternatives for student accountability, parent accountability, and community and state accountability.**

**Issues in the Design and Implementation of an Accountability System**

The issues considered in the paper are listed below. A discussion of each issue can be found in the body of this report.

- Should the test be the curriculum?
- Does a CRT adequately measure student learning of quality content standards?
- Should Georgia base rewards and interventions on student learning or student learning and other things?
- Should rewards be given on the basis of absolute performance or improvement or both?
- Will the benefits of motivation exceed the costs of negative unintended consequences of accountability?
- Will rewards be meaningful?
- How can the negative consequences of rewards be minimized?
- Does the state of Georgia have the constitutional authority to take over schools and dismiss low performing principles and/or teachers?
By defining a performance standard, will the state of Georgia open itself up to litigation based on failure to provide some children with an "adequate" education?

How will the state deal with governance issues under increased school-based management?

School choice: should parents be empowered to hold their children’s schools and school personnel accountable?

**Alternative Rewards for School and School Personnel**

Alternatives for rewarding schools and school personnel for student learning beyond expectations are listed below. A discussion of each alternative reward can be found in the body of this report.

1. Recognition of successful teachers and/or recognition of successful schools.
2. Pay for performance to individual teachers.
3. Financial bonuses to schools and/or financial bonuses to all personnel in successful schools.
4. Giving successful schools and systems even greater flexibility over their resources, curriculum, and personnel—beyond any increase in flexibility given to all schools.

**Alternative Interventions For Persistently Low Performance**

Alternative interventions for rescuing children from persistently failing schools and school personnel are listed below. A discussion of each alternative intervention can be found in the body of this report.

1. Voluntary or mandatory state assistance from an intervention team.
2. Requiring all schools to draft an improvement plan—especially low performing schools.
3. Giving exemplary teachers and administrators financial incentives to serve in low performing schools.
4. Requiring staff development tailored to specific needs for all staff—especially low performing staff.
5. Giving parents/caregivers the option to enroll their children in a charter school(s).
6. Giving parents/caregivers the option to enroll their children in another public school.
7. Offering parents scholarships that can be used to offset tuition payments at private schools for continually low performing schools.
8. Dismissing low performing personnel (using a results-based evaluation system to assess performance).
10. State takeovers/annexation.
11. State mandated reconstitution.
12. Opening state schools in neighborhoods of low performing schools.
13. Year round school.
14. After-school remedial academic programs.

**Student Accountability**

Alternatives for holding students accountable are listed below. A discussion of each alternative can be found in the body of this report.

1. Ending social promotion.
2. Making promotion contingent on passing state CRTs, including high school graduation tests.
3. Recognition.
4. Tiers for HOPE Scholarships.
5. Student support teams (SST’s).

**Parent Accountability**

Alternatives for holding students accountable are listed below. A discussion of each alternative can be found in the body of this report.

1. Making student report cards available via parent-teacher conferences only.
2. Making their children’s school and/or public privileges depend on good behavior and attendance.
3. Citations and/or fines for neglect and/or bad attendance records of their children.
5. Give parents more authority and responsibility over their children's education.

Community and State Accountability

Alternatives for holding the community and state accountable are listed below. A discussion of each alternative can be found in the body of this report.

1. Publicizing the level of student achievement in Georgia.
2. Publicizing the levels of state funding that each district and school receives.
3. Making schools and parents more aware of available social services.
4. Breaking the monopoly over technical assistance and professional development.
5. Providing technical assistance to schools to support school improvement planning.
7. State road and infrastructure money.
8. Leadership definition and development.

Conclusion

Progress and innovation only come through controversy and deliberation. To reform its public education system through accountability, Georgia must debate alternatives for the future. In his book A Way Out of No Way, Ambassador Andrew Young writes,

The irony of strong personalities is that God needs them. In a world where God is making all things new, the men and women who dare to serve God and do things in a different way from their fellows are often chosen for special blessings of service and opportunity.

The purpose of the issues and alternatives presented in this report is to aid Governor Barnes, his Education Reform Study Commission, legislators, and interested parents and other citizens as they debate the issues and make the tough decisions necessary to improve public education for the benefit of students and all Georgians.

References


ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Benjamin Scafidi is an Assistant Professor in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. He has conducted research on education and urban issues, including school choice, contractor management of public schools, housing abandonment, and the causes of neighborhood segregation. He recently served on the staff of Governor Barnes' Education Reform Study Commission.

ABOUT FRP

The Fiscal Research Program is one of several prominent policy research centers and academic departments housed in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. The FRP, directed by Dr. David Sjoquist, provides research and technical assistance in the evaluation and design of state and local fiscal policy, including both tax and expenditure issues. These briefs are published periodically to provide an overview of important public policy issues currently facing the state. The FRP maintains a position of neutrality on public policy issues in order to safeguard the academic freedom of authors. Thus, interpretation or conclusions in FRP publications should be understood to be solely those of the author. For more information on the Fiscal Research Program, contact Jeanie Thomas at 404-651-0518.

For a free copy of the study from which this Policy Brief is drawn, or any of the other publications listed, call the Fiscal Research Program at 404/651-4342, or fax us at 404/651-2737.
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Rewards for High Student Achievement and Interventions for Persistently Low Student Achievement. This report prepared for the Governor's Education Reform Study Commission Accountability Committee (GERSC) discusses issues and design of education accountability programs and a menu of options for education reform. (December 1999)

An Analysis of the Employment Impact of Georgia's Job Tax Credit. This report reviews the literature on job tax credits and presents an analysis of the decision to participate in the Georgia Job Tax Credit (JTC) program and of the effect of the JTC on employment (December 1999)

Limitations on Increases in Property Tax Assessed Value. This report describes how various states limit the growth in property tax assessment and explores the implications of such limitations. (November 1999).


Manufactured Housing in Georgia: Trends and Fiscal Implications. This report discusses the growth of manufactured housing and explores the implications for the property tax base. (September 1999).

An Analysis of Franchise Fees in Georgia. This report examines the current structure of franchise fees, identifies the associated problems, and describes options for addressing the problems. (August 1999).

Road Construction and Regional Development. This report investigates the effect of roads on economic development. (July 1999)

Distribution of Public Education Funding in Georgia, 1992: Equity From a National Perspective. This report compares the inter-district equity of school revenues in Georgia with that of all other states. (April 1999)

The New Local Revenue Roller Coaster: Growth and Stability Implications for Increasing Local Sales Tax Reliance in Georgia. This report examines the relative growth and stability of the property tax and local sales tax rates across counties in Georgia. (March 1999)

Results of Georgia Statewide Poll - Economic Development. This report prepared for the Georgia Economic Developers Association presents results of a survey on economic development activities in the state. (March 1999)

State and Local Government Taxation of Manufactured Housing. This report is a 50 state comparison of property and sales tax treatment of manufactured housing. (February 1999)

Exemptions From Sales and Use Tax: Solid Fuels Used by Manufacturing Firms. This report discusses the issues and revenue loss associated exemptions in solid fuels from sales taxation. (January 1999)

Economic Development Policy. This report addresses five weaknesses in Georgia's economic development program and recommends policies to overcome these weaknesses. (January 1999)

The Manipulation of State Corporate Income Tax Apportionment Formulas As An Economic Development Tool. This paper uses a simulation model to examine the effects of disproportionate sales factor weighting in state corporate income tax apportionment formulas on economic development, tax collections, and regional welfare. (November 1998)

The Impact of House Bill No. 129 on Funding for Central Administration in the School Districts of Georgia. This report presents an analysis of the impact of HB 129 on the funding of the central administration function in Georgia's school districts. (November 1998)

Revenue Losses from Exemptions of Goods from the Georgia Sales Tax. This report presents estimates of the loss of revenue from exemptions of specific goods or classes of goods from the sales tax base. (November 1998)

The Equity of Public Education Funding in Georgia, 1988-1996. A study of the effect of Quality Basic Education on the level of equity of public education funding in Georgia. (October 1998)


The Taxation of Personal Property in Georgia. A policy option for changing how Georgia taxes personal property. (August 1998)

Insurance Taxation in Georgia: Analysis and Options. An overview of issues associated with the taxation of the insurance industry in Georgia. (August 1998)

The Structure of School Districts in Georgia: Economies of Scale and Determinants of Consolidation. This paper suggests policy issues and implications using economies of scale. (July 1999)

Georgia's Job Tax Credit: An Analysis of the Characteristics of Eligible Firms. This report provides a review of Georgia's Job Tax Credit and makes recommendations for improving the JTC program. (June 1998)

Interdistrict School Choice in Georgia: Issues of Equity. This report explores the issue while focusing primarily on equity. (May 1998)


For a free copy of any of the publications listed, call the Fiscal Research Program at 404/651-4342, or fax us at 404/651-2737.