

## PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education has the constitutional responsibility for the general control and supervision of public education<sup>1</sup>, including standards of accountability and methods of school evaluation based on these standards; and

WHEREAS, Systems of accountability, based strictly on student proficiency demonstrated on tests, result in narrowing of the curriculum and emphasis on tested subjects<sup>2,3</sup>, in spite of other education values<sup>4</sup>, and

WHEREAS, All models used in systems of accountability have inherent statistical margins of error<sup>5</sup>, which must be considered and can make ranking of schools on a bell curve unreliable<sup>6</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Academic proficiency correlates closely to socio-economic status<sup>7</sup> unless costly interventions are provided and poor academic performances can be a result of insufficient funding for intervention<sup>8</sup>; and

WHEREAS, In order to distinguish strong schools, independent of student demographics, systems of accountability should include measures of service to students, their families, and the community<sup>9</sup>, as well as measures of organizational health and leadership quality<sup>10</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Stakeholders of all kinds recognize the inadequacy of a single letter grade for schools<sup>11</sup>; nevertheless, citizens' perceptions of their schools' quality are impacted by schools' accountability ratings, such as school grades<sup>12</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Perceptions of school quality have consequences for the economy of the schools' community<sup>13</sup>, making it crucial that the ratings be as accurate and fair as possible; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Utah PTA support systems of accountability for public schools that take into account qualitative characteristics, including a welcoming environment, family engagement efforts, administrative leadership, and community collaboration; in addition to quantitative measurements, such as educator qualifications, student absenteeism, average student tested proficiency and student academic growth; and be it further

Resolved, That Utah PTA advocates against the implementation of any accountability system that reduces the evaluation of a school to a single grade or score, that ranks schools beyond statistical confidence, and that grades on a bell curve; and be it further

Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent bodies support increased funding to assist schools with their plans for school improvement; and be it further

Resolved, That Utah PTA recognize the State Board of Education as the appropriate body to form standards of accountability and methods of school evaluation based on these standards; and that any legislative requirements should be made collaboratively with the State Board of Education and the expertise of the State Office of Education.

## Documentation:

<sup>1</sup>Constitution of the State of Utah, Article X Section 3.

<sup>2</sup>Loeb, S., & Figlio, D. (2011). School accountability. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, Vol. 3 (p. 390). San Diego, CA: North Holland. <http://cepa.stanford.edu/content/schoolaccountability#sthash.pTFez6cv.dpuf>.

<sup>3</sup>Bond, Lloyd (2004). *Teaching to the Test*”, *Carnegie Perspectives*, *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*. <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/perspectives/teaching-test>.

<sup>4</sup>Loeb, Op. Cit. (p. 387)

<sup>5</sup>Loeb, Op. Cit. (p. 393)

<sup>6</sup>Schochet, Peter Z. & Hanley S. Chiang (2010). *Error Rates in Measuring Teacher and School Performance Based on Student Test Score Gains* (NCEE 2010-4004). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104004/pdf/20104004.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup>Reardon, S.F. (2011). *The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: New evidence and possible explanations*. In R. Murnane & G. Duncan (Eds.), *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality and the Uncertain Life Chances of Low-Income Children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press. <http://cepa.stanford.edu/content/widening-academic-achievement-gapbetween-rich-and-poor-new-evidence-and-possible#sthash.d1AIdSS.dpuf>.

<sup>8</sup>Loeb, Op. Cit. (p. 393)

<sup>9</sup>Sanders, Mavis G. (2002) *Community Involvement in School Improvement: The Little Extra That Makes a Big Difference*. School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Joyce Epstein, et al (p. 33) Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

<sup>10</sup>Mintrop, Heinrich & Tina Trujillo. *The Practical Relevance of Accountability Systems for School Improvement: A Descriptive Analysis of California Schools*. National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, CSE Report 713. April 2007. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503296.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup>Various news articles, including: <http://archive.sllib.com/article.php?id=27067310&itype=storyID>, <http://archive.sllib.com/article.php?id=28155975&itype=storyID>, and <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865587749/Gradingschool-grades-Parents-speak-out-on-accountability-scores.html?pg=all>.

<sup>12</sup>Chingos, Matthew M., Michael Henderson, Martin R. West (2010). “Citizen Perceptions of Government Service Quality: Evidence from Public Schools” Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard Kennedy School Cambridge, MA. <http://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/4460856/WEST%202012%20QJPS%20article.pdf?sequence=3>

<sup>13</sup>Weiss, Jonathan D., (2004) *Public Schools and Economic Development: What the Research Shows*. Knowledge Works Foundation: Cincinnati, OH [http://www.meo.org/tef/pdf/public\\_schools\\_development.pdf](http://www.meo.org/tef/pdf/public_schools_development.pdf).