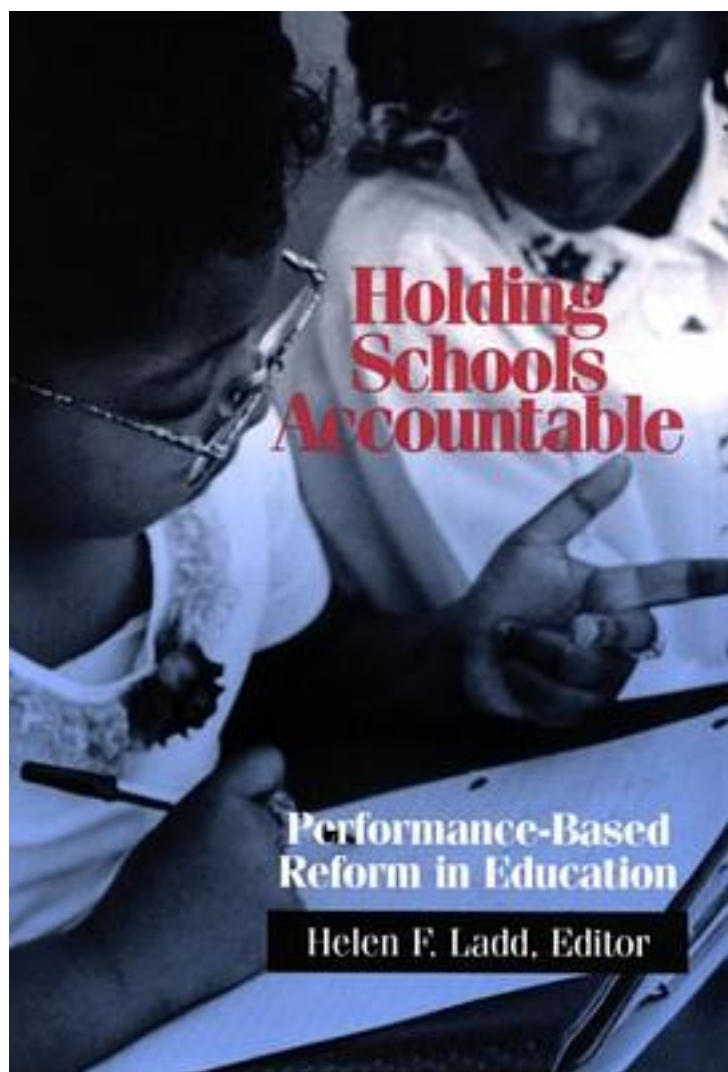


Holding Schools Accountable



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Perhaps the most urgent--and complex--task facing American education today is to figure out how to hold schools accountable for improved academic achievement. In this important new work, Helen Ladd and her colleagues describe the options available to policymakers, weigh their respective strengths and pitfalls, and lay out principles for creating schools where learning is the number one objective. This book should be at the top of the reading list for anyone seriously interested in transforming the quality of American schools." Edward B. Fiske, Former Education Editor, The New York Times

A central theme of current efforts to reform elementary and secondary education in the United States is a more explicit focus on the outcomes of the educational system. This volume examines efforts throughout the country to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of their students. Researchers from various disciplines--most notably, economics, educational policy and management, and political science--address a range of questions related to performance-based strategies for reforming education. The authors describe and evaluate programs that recognize and reward the most effective schools, discuss the costs of achieving high performance, summarize what is known about parental choice as an accountability mechanism, and provide new evidence on the relationship between school inputs and educational outcomes. Grounded in the actual experiences of various states and school districts, the book provides a wealth of new information and provocative insights. Contributors argue that programs to hold schools accountable for student performance must be carefully designed to assure that schools are treated fairly; that vouchers, if used, should be directed toward low-income families; that resources do indeed matter--poor school districts may well require additional funding to increase student learning. In addition to the editor, the contributors include Charles T. Clotfelter, David K. Cohen, Richard F. Elmore, Ronald F. Ferguson, Susan H. Fuhrman, Eric A. Hanushek, Caroline Minter Hoxby, Richard J. Murnane, John F. Witte, and John McHenry Yinger.

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