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Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education

Michael Hout, Stuart W. Elliott, Committee on Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Public Education, Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council

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In recent years there have been increasing efforts to use accountability systems based on large-scale tests of students as a mechanism for improving student achievement. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a prominent example of such an effort, but it is only the continuation of a steady trend toward greater test-based accountability in education that has been going on for decades. Over time, such accountability systems included ever-stronger incentives to motivate school administrators, teachers, and students to perform better.

Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education reviews and synthesizes relevant research from economics, psychology, education, and related fields about how incentives work in educational accountability systems. The book helps identify circumstances in which test-based incentives may have a positive or a negative impact on student learning and offers recommendations for how to improve current test-based accountability policies. The most important directions for further research are also highlighted.

For the first time, research and theory on incentives from the fields of economics, psychology, and educational measurement have all been pulled together and synthesized. *Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education* will inform people about the motivation of educators and students and inform policy discussions about NCLB and state accountability systems. Education researchers, K-12 school administrators and teachers, as well as graduate students studying education policy and educational measurement will use this book to learn more about the motivation of educators and students. Education policy makers at all levels of government will rely on this book to inform policy discussions about NCLB and state accountability systems.

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