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Accountability for Resources and Outcomes:
An Introduction

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Abstract: This special issue furthers the conversation begun in the August 2014 of edition of *Education Policy Analysis Archives* in the article [Accountability for College and Career Readiness: Developing a New Paradigm](#) by Linda Darling-Hammond, Gene Wilhoit, and Linda Pittenger. That paper posits that as schools across the country take on the challenge of preparing all children for success in college, career, and life, states must in turn move toward creating more aligned systems of assessment and accountability. The authors recommend, “an accountability approach that focuses on meaningful learning, enabled by professionally skilled and committed educators, and supported by adequate and appropriate resources, so that all students regardless of background are prepared for both college and career when they graduate from high school” (p. 1). In this, the third of three

focused volumes of EPAA, we hope to further that discussion and debate by focusing, one issue at a time, on each of the three elements of a truly responsible accountability system: 1) meaningful learning, 2) professional capacity and accountability, and 3) equitable and wisely used resources.

Keywords: Resource accountability, professional capacity and accountability; meaningful learning; new paradigm; educational accountability; college readiness; professional readiness

Responsabilidad Educativa Recursos Adecuados y Resultados: Una Introducción.

Resumen: Este número especial continua la conversación iniciada en el 08 2014 de la edición de la Archivos Analíticos de Política Educativa (EPAA) [Accountability for College and Career Readiness: Developing a New Paradigm by Linda Darling-Hammond, Gene Wilhoit and Linda Pittenger](#). Ese artículo planteaba que mientras las escuelas de todo el país asuman el reto de preparar a todos los estudiantes para ser exitosos tanto en los estudios universitarios, carreras profesionales, y la vida, los Estados deben a su vez avanzar hacia la creación de sistemas alineados de evaluación y de responsabilidad educativa. Los autores recomiendan “un enfoque de responsabilidad educativa que se centra en aprendizajes significativos, apoyado por educadores profesionales cualificados y comprometidos, con el recursos adecuados y apropiados, de manera que todos los estudiantes independientemente de su origen se estén adecuadamente listos para completar los estudios universitarios, y carreras profesionales, cuando se gradúan de la escuela secundaria” (p. 1). Esta tercera parte de una serie de tres, quiere fomentar la discusión y el debate, centrándose en cada uno de los tres elementos de un sistema de responsabilidad educativa más auténtico: 1) el aprendizaje significativo, 2) capacidad profesional y la responsabilidad educativa y 3) recursos equitativos y utilizados de manera eficaz.

Palabras clave: capacidad profesional y responsabilidad educativa; aprendizaje significativo; nuevo paradigma; responsabilidad educativa; preparación universitaria; preparación profesional

Responsabilidade Educacional, Recursos Adequados e Resultados: Uma Introdução.

Resumo: Esta edição especial continua a conversa começada em agosto 2014 na Arquivos Analíticos de Política Educativa (EPAA) [Accountability for College and Career Readiness: Developing a New Paradigm by Linda Darling-Hammond, Gene Wilhoit and Linda Pittenger](#). O artigo argumenta que, enquanto as escolas de todo o país assumem o desafio de preparar os alunos para ser bem sucedidos, tanto na universidade, as carreiras profissionais e a vida, os Estados devem virar-se para a criação de sistemas alinhados avaliação e responsabilidade educativa. Os autores recomendam “abordagem de responsabilidade educativa que se concentram em aprendizagens significativos apoiado por profissionais qualificados e educadores comprometidos, com recursos adequados e apropriados de modo que todos os alunos, independentemente da sua origem estejam devidamente preparados para completar os estudos universitários e carreiras profissionais quando se formarem no ensino médio” (p. 1). Esta terceira parte de uma série de três, se propõe fomentar a discussão e o debate, centrando-se em um dos três elementos da responsabilidade educativa: 1) a aprendizagem significativa, 2) capacidade profissional e responsabilidade educativa, 3) financiamento distribuído de forma igualitária e utilizado de maneira eficaz.

Palavras-chave: capacidade profissional e responsabilidade educativa; aprendizagem significativa; novo paradigma; responsabilidade educativa; preparação universitária; preparação profissional

Introduction

In August 2014, the Education Policy Analysis Archives (EPAA) published *Accountability for College and Career Readiness: Developing a New Paradigm* by Linda Darling-Hammond, Gene

Wilhoit, and Linda Pittenger. That paper posits that as schools across the country take on the challenge of preparing all children for success in college, career, and life, states must in turn move toward creating more aligned systems of assessment and accountability. The authors recommend “an accountability approach that focuses on meaningful learning, enabled by professionally skilled and committed educators, and supported by adequate and appropriate resources, so that all students regardless of background are prepared for both college and career when they graduate from high school” (p. 1).

For an accountability approach to be truly responsible for the outcomes our children deserve and our communities require, it must support a system that is cohesive, integrative and continuously renewing. It should enable schools to offer high-quality education, reduce the likelihood of harmful or inequitable practices, and have means to identify and correct problems that may occur. It must also provide the resources, and assure that those resources are used appropriately in the service of our goals for our children and for the future of our democracy.

The authors suggest that, “While considerable discussion and debate will be needed before a new approach can take shape, this paper’s objective is to get the conversation started so the nation can meet its aspirations for preparing college- and career-ready students” (p. 1).

In this, the third of three focused volumes of EPAA, we hope to further that discussion and debate by focusing, one issue at a time, on each of the three elements of a truly responsible accountability system: 1) meaningful learning, 2) professional capacity and accountability, and 3) equitable and wisely used resources.

In this issue we focus on equitable and wisely used resources. The issue opens with an article by David Sciarra and Molly Hunter of the Education Law Center. The authors explore the urgent need to broaden the formulation of state public education finance to focus on both the provision of fair and equitable funding as well as the effective use of those funds to enable students to achieve their goals for their futures and the collective goal of the successful future of our country’s experiment in democracy.

The next three articles add to the conversation from three different perspectives. David Menefee-Libey and Charles Kerchner provide an “insider educator” perspective on the same California policy initiatives addressed in John Affeldt’s article. They highlight the radical nature of the policy changes and explore the implications of those changes for teaching, curriculum, and assessment. In the third article, Affeldt reviews and analyzes recent school funding and accountability reforms in California from the perspective of a civil rights advocate and as president of a local school board. He concludes with a discussion of critical next steps for the reforms to meet their goals. In the final article in this volume, Joe Bishop and John Jackson hearken back to LBJ and the beginnings of the war on poverty and offer a “modern rethinking” of the relationship between equity and education. They offer eight recommendations for an accountability system that lives up to, as Abraham Lincoln put it, “the better angels of our nature.”

The issue also includes five brief videos to bring both different perspectives and a different medium to add to the conversation. In alphabetical order:

- Zakiyah Ansari, Advocacy Director of the New York state Alliance for Quality Education, eloquently reminds us that schools represent communities and that when schools and communities are abandoned, the demographics of those schools and communities are not an accident. She concludes by pointing out that parents and communities must be present at the creation, and central throughout, in any system of accountability.
- John Jackson, President and CEO of the Schott Foundation for Public Education, argues that common core standards mean nothing without common core supports. Such supports must be learned from listening with students and parents and what they need and to provide

such supports will require clear roles and responsibilities at all levels of the educational ecosystem from the street corner to the Supreme Court.

- Michael Rebell, Professor of Law and Educational Practice at Teachers College, Columbia University, opens with a review of the progress of resource accountability litigation in the states and then offers five principles for “resource accountability for the long term.”
- Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island argues that, for ethical and economic reasons, an accountability system requires an equal emphasis on equity and excellence.
- Leticia Smith-Evans, Interim Director of Education Practice with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, brings the dual perspectives of a legal advocate and a classroom teacher to a reflection on the effects of the disparate allocation of educational resources in the United States.

Together this set of articles and commentaries offers perspectives from policymakers and practitioners working at the federal, state, and local levels to transform the narrow test-and-punish accountability of the NCLB era into an accountability system that develops and supports a teaching profession that is truly responsible for the growth and development of each and every one of our children.

We look forward to continuing this essential set of conversations with you in these three issues of EPAA.

References

- Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(86).
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