

Educational Choice & Accountability

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What Is Accountability?



THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The Power of a Great Education

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Unproven, unaccountable voucher plan could cost taxpayers \$1 billion



[Home](#) / [Articles](#) / [Original Commentary](#) / [Fitzsimon File](#) / [The predictable push to expand unaccountable v](#)

The predictable push to expand unaccountable voucher scheme

By [Chris Fitzsimon](#) - 6/18/2014 - in [Fitzsimon File](#), [Uncategorized](#) [Print This Article](#)



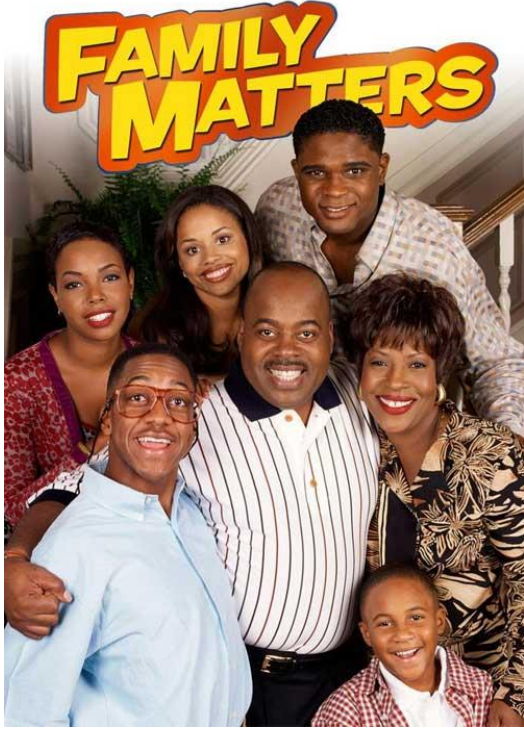
LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN: Don't Send Public Money to Unaccountable Private Schools

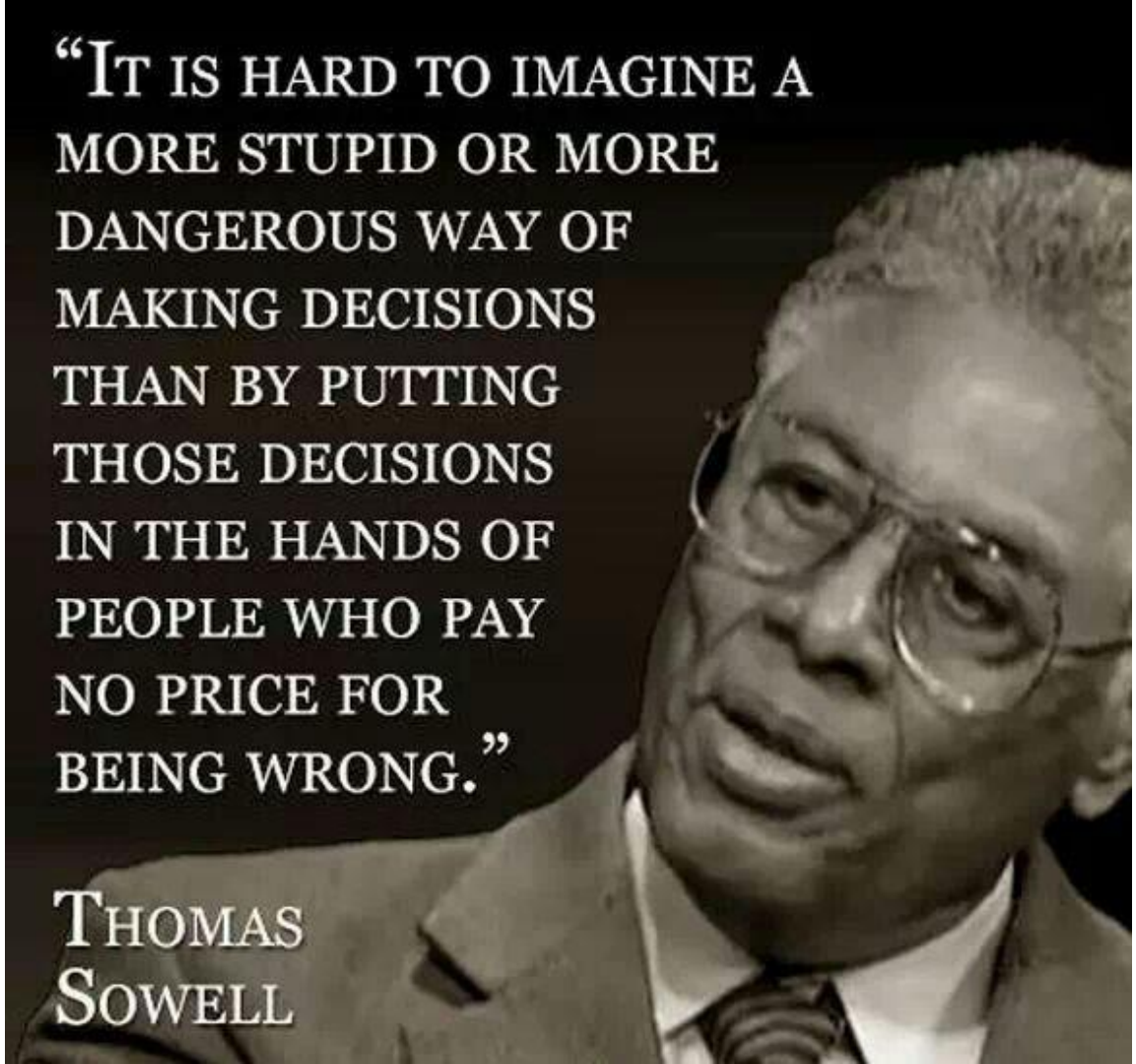
What Is Accountability?

Accountability:

“the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies... the obligation to report, explain and be **answerable for resulting consequences.**” (Wikipedia)

Regulatory Compliance ≠ Accountability



A black and white portrait of Thomas Sowell, an older African American man with glasses, wearing a suit and tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a thoughtful expression. The background is dark.

“IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE A
MORE STUPID OR MORE
DANGEROUS WAY OF
MAKING DECISIONS
THAN BY PUTTING
THOSE DECISIONS
IN THE HANDS OF
PEOPLE WHO PAY
NO PRICE FOR
BEING WRONG.”

THOMAS
SOWELL

Real accountability means being directly accountable to those who bear the consequences of your performance.

Educational Harms of Mistaking Regulatory Compliance for Accountability

- Narrow focus on tested items in math and reading
- Focus on “bubble” kids, cheat, avoid challenging kids
- Drive out good schools (the unintended damage of LA voucher regulations)
- Early gains are fade as schools discover “double secret probation” bluff
- Can’t manage what you can’t predict

The Test Score -- Later Life Outcome Disconnect

Study	Test Effects	Later Life Outcomes
Boston Charters (Angrist, et al, 2014)	Huge gains	No increase in grad rate or post-secondary enrollment
Harlem Promise Academy (Dobbie and Fryer, 2014)	Huge gains	No increase in grad rate or post-secondary enrollment
KIPP (Tuttle, et al, 2015)	Large gains	No or small grad rate effect
High Tech High (Beauregard, 2015)	Large gains	No increase in college
SEED Boarding Charter (Unterman, et al, 2016)	Huge gains	No increase in grad rate or post-secondary enrollment
TX No Excuses Charters (Dobbie and Fryer, 2016)	Significant gains	Higher college enrollment but no increased earnings

The Test Score -- Later Life Outcome Disconnect

Study	Test Effects	Later Life Outcomes
Florida Charters (Booker, et al, 2014)	No gains	Large increase in grad rate, post-secondary, and earnings
DC vouchers (Wolf, et al, 2013)	Little or no gains	Large increase in grad rate
Milwaukee vouchers (Cowen, et al, 2013)	Little or no gains	Large increase in grad rate
New York vouchers (Chingos and Peterson, 2013)	Modest gains	Large increase in college enrollment

Political Harms of Mistaking Regulatory Compliance for Accountability

- Education politics is dominated by middle and upper-middle class parents – even more so than unions
- Regulations/accountability restrict suburban parent options and control. There has never been a rally for more testing.
- The winning political strategy is to offer middle and upper-middle class parents more options. Imitate Social Security not Food Stamps.

Experimentation, Evaluation, Evolution



Freedom to try new ways of doing things



People directly affected decide which ways they like best



**KEEP
CALM
AND
EVOLVE
ON**

Consumer responses inform which ways are kept or left behind

Thank you!