Debate

Pay Kids for Good Grades?

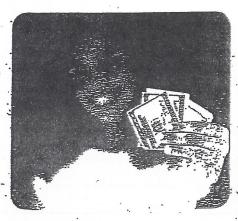
NEWS FACT: Up to 5,000 freshmen at 20 public high schools in Chicago, Illinois, will get cash for their grades this year. They will be tested every five weeks in math, English, social sciences, science, and physical education. Each student will eam \$50 for an A, \$35 for a B, and \$20 for a C.

ince the fall of 2006, some public schools in New York City and Washington, D.C., have paid their students for good grades, and even average ones. In New York, there is a considerable racial achievement gap in schools. In D.C., a district with a large number of minority students, fewer than 13 percent of middle school students meet reading and math standards. Chicago is adopting the incentive program because a high percentage of ninth-graders there are being held back:

Roland G. Fryer Jr., a Harvard economist, came up with the idea of offering "financial incentives" to improve student

Iriama Balbian, 14, who attends ninth grade in Chicago, approves of the program. "Students should get paid for good grades but not for C's," she says. "Schools should encourage students to get good grades."

Kelsey Christian, 13, an eighthgrader in Mansfield, Massachusetts, also likes the idea. "A little bit of money would motivate me a lot," she tells JS. "It would give students something to work for."



achievement. Fryer, who heads Harvard's American Inequality Lab, says that the program is designed to make school "tangible" (real; easy to grasp) for kids with few successful role models.

Thomas Toch of the Education Sector, a nonpartisan think tank in Washington, D.C., doesn't like the idea of paying kids to achieve. "Small rewards aren't suddenly going to transform... unproductive classrooms," he says.

What Do You Think?
Should students be paid for good grades?

Jamie Sanders, 14,
a New York City ninthgrader, sees a downside
to the plan. He says that
it's a "clever thought, but there are
a high number of lazy students who
would not keep up their work ethic if
they stopped receiving money."

Makagia Reuppels: Lis a sixthgrader number Memes loweshe
thips that the program may cause
financial pressures Schools won't have
enough money to pay their students if
a locor students get good grades."

NUMBERS IN THE NEWS

1 in 25

Number of Colorado homes expected to go into foreclosure in the next two years.

90,000

Number of New York City elamentary school students who missed at least a month of classes last year.

\$4,600,000

Amount a judge ordered two New York restaurants to give 36 delivery workers who were illegally underpaid. The workers had earned less than S2 an hour.

532 grams

Carbon emissions per mile for sending a ton of cargo by air [es compared with 12 grams per mile if shipped by sea].

2,000 to 2.800

Estimated age of "Britain's oldest toy," a hedgehog carved from chelk that was recently found buried near Stonehenge.

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