Grade Retention: A Three Part Series. Policy Briefs.

Grade Retention: A Flawed Education Strategy [and]

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Grade Retention [and]

Grade Retention--The Gap between Research and Practice

By: Claire Xia and Elizabeth Glennie

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Policy Brief

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Bridging the gap between research and public policy to improve the lives of children and families

Part One of Three Part Series on Grade Retention

Grade Retention:
A Flawed Education Strategy

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Other Policy Briefs in the three part series on Grade Retention by Claire Xia and Elizabeth Glennie:

- Grade Retention: *Cost-Benefit Analysis*
- Grade Retention: *The Gap Between Research and Practice*

In the past century, educational professionals and policymakers have continued to debate whether grade retention or social promotion should be used as an intervention strategy to bring under-achieving students up to standard. The most recent trend clearly favors the use of retention in an attempt to maintain high academic standards and educational accountability. However, a careful investigation of this policy's effects and costs suggests that it is ineffective and expensive. Policymakers and educational professionals should move beyond retention and social promotion by developing and adopting alternative intervention strategies proven as successful and cost-effective.

Effects

Decades of research suggest that grade retention does not work as a panacea for poor student performance. The majority of

research fails to find compelling evidence that retention improves long-term student achievement. An overwhelmingly large body of studies have consistently demonstrated negative academic effects of retention. Contrary to popular belief, researchers have almost unanimously found that early retention during kindergarten to grade three is harmful, both academically and emotionally.[1] Many studies find that retention does not necessarily lead to increased work effort among students as predicted.[2]

In a few studies reporting positive academic outcomes for retention, the gains typically disappear several years later, and the retained students eventually fell behind again.[3] Moreover, these retained students generally received targeted interventions such as personalized education plans, smaller class sizes, summer school, and tutoring programs, designed to help them overcome individual problems.[4] It is unclear whether the positive outcomes come from retention or the other supportive components. In general, simply repeating a grade does not improve student achievement in most cases.

In terms of socio-emotional development, students do not benefit from retention either. Researchers find that retention lowers children's self-esteem and causes emotional distress.[5] Retention has been shown to be associated with increased rates of behavior problems and higher levels of drug and substance use due to the effect of being older in grade.[6]

Grade retention has been shown to have negative long-term consequences. Literature on dropout and retention has documented the connection between retention and dropping out of school prior to high school graduation. Research has consistently found that retained students are at a higher risk of leaving school earlier, even after controlling for academic performance and other factors such as race and ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, family background, etc.[7] Grade retention has been shown to increase the risk of dropping out by 20% to 50%.[8] It has also been reported that grade reten-

tion is associated with decreased lifetime earnings and poorer employment outcomes in the long run.[9]

Costs

It is estimated that nationally 5% to 9% of students are retained every year, translating into over 2.4 million children annually.[10] With an average per pupil expenditure of over $7,500 a year,[11] this common practice of retention costs taxpayers over 18 billion dollars every year.

Other fiscal costs associated with retention include decreased lifetime earnings among retained students, foregone earnings due to delayed entry into the workforce, and decreased government tax revenues associated with the decreased earnings of retained individuals. Overall, the retention practice costs the society billions of dollars, and is far from cost-effective as compared to alternative interventions.

Practice

Although retention is proved to be ineffective, unproductive, and costly, it persists as one of the frequently employed methods of remediation. Investigating the apparent gap between research and practice indicates that the public and practitioners are unaware of the findings of retention literature.[12] Popular belief in the efficacy of retention creates a powerful mandate to hold both schools and students accountable to ensure educational quality. The demand for high educational accountability put schools under considerable political pressure to hold back students. Research showing the drawbacks of retention easily gets lost in a sea of prevailing appeals to maintain high academic standards.

Teachers and other educational professionals often mistakenly claim positive effects of retention. Their perspectives are generally restricted by analyzing short-term student performance and failing to compare retained students to their peers. Teachers usually only know of student achievement in the immediate years following retention, and typically can not follow the long-term student trajectories after retention. Since many retained children make some progress the second year, retention may appear effective to educators.[13] Furthermore, teachers often compare the retained student's achievement the second time in that grade with the achievement the first time. These comparisons lead to the false conclusions that children benefit from retention. In contrast, studies comparing the retained student to a similar student who was promoted suggest that retained students would have made just as much or even more progress without retention.[14]

Policy Implications

Educators and policymakers should caution the use of grade retention as a remedy for poor student performance. As concluded by the majority of past studies, grade retention is a failed and expensive strategy to increase academic achievement. Research evidence has shown a number of negative side effects of retention, including increased likelihood of dropping out, emotional distress, behavior problems, and substance use. Until further proof of its efficacy is found, retention should only be used as a last resort. Alternative remediation strategies should be explored and used to bring under-achieving students up to standard. Such alternatives could include, but are not limited to, early identification of and targeted assistance for low-achieving students, individualized student instruction, parental involvement, curriculum development, school restructuring, summer school, and personalized tutoring programs.

Measures should also be taken to bridge the gap between research and practice. Research findings must be effectively, efficiently and clearly com-

municated to educational professionals, policymakers, and the public. Schools should implement staff training in which teachers and other educational professionals involved in the decision-making process are presented with research evidence about the academic and socio-economic effects of retention. Teachers should be offered alternative remediation tools, preferably school-wide intervention strategies. ■

NOTES

[1] Deborah A. Byrnes, and Kaoru Yamamoto, 1985, "Academic Retention of Elementary Pupils: An Inside Look," *Education, 106*(2), 208-14; Peg Dawson, 1998, "A Primer on Student Grade Retention: What the Research Says," *NASP Communique, 26*(8); Shane R. Jimerson et al., 1997, "A Prospective, Longitudinal Study of the Correlates and Consequences of Early Grade Retention," *Journal of School Psychology, 35*(1), 3-25; Panayota Y. Mantzicopoulos, 1997, "Do Certain Groups of Children Profit from Early Retention? A Follow-Up Study of Kindergartners with Attention Problems," *Psychology in the Schools, 34*(2), 115-27; Samuel J. Meisels and Fong-Ruey Liaw, 1993, "Failure in Grade: Do Retained Students Catch Up?" *Journal of Educational Research, 87*(2), 69-77; Judy Temple, Arthur Reynolds and Suh-Ruu Ou, 2001, "Grade Retention and School Dropout: Another Look at the Evidence," *The CEIC Review, 10*(5), 5-6 & 21; Charles L. Thompson and Elizabeth K. Cunningham, 2000, "Retention and Social Promotion: Research and Implications for Policy," *Eric Clearinghouse on Urban Education Digest, 161,* 1-5; Deneen M. Walters and Sherry B. Borgers, 1995, "Student Retention: Is It Effective?" *School Counselor, 42*(4).

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[5] Gabrielle E. Anderson, Angela D. Whipple and Shane R. Jimerson, 2002, *Grade Retention: Achievement and Mental Health Outcomes,* Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists; Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 1990, *Repeating Grades in School: Current Practice and Research Evidence,* CPRE Policy Brief No. RB-04-1/90; C. Thomas Holmes and Janice Saturday, 2000, "Promoting the End of Retention," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 15*(4), 300-14; Jimerson et al., 1997; Pam McCollum et al., 1999, *Failing Our Children: Finding Alternatives to In-Grade Retention,* San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association; Meisels and Liaw, 1993; Michael D. Resnick et al., 1997, "Protecting Adolescents from Harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health," *Journal of the American Medical Association, 278*(10), 823-32; Shepard and Smith, 1990.

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[7] Dawson, 1998; Hauser, 1999; Holmes and Saturday, 2000; Shane R. Jimerson, 1999, "On the Failure of Failure: Examining the Association between Early Grade Retention and Education and Employment Outcomes during Late Adolescence," *Journal of School Psychology, 37*(3), 243-72; Shane R. Jimerson, Gabrielle E. Anderson, and Angela D. Whipple, 2002, "Winning the Battle and Losing the War: Examining the Relation between Grade Retention and Dropping out of High School," *Psychology in the Schools, 39*(4), 441-57; Shane R. Jimerson et al., 2002, "Exploring the Association between Grade Retention and Dropout: A Longitudinal Study Examining Socio-Emotional, Behavioral, and Achievement Characteristics of Retained Students," *The California School Psychologist, 7*, 51-62; Johnson, 2001; Melissa Roderick, 1994, "Grade Retention and School Dropout: Investigating the Association," *American Educational Research Journal, 31*(4), 729-59; Roderick, 1995; Russell W. Rumberger and Katherine A. Larson, 1998, "Student Mobility and the Increased Risk of High School Dropout," *American Journal of Education, 107*(1), 1-35; Shepard and Smith, 1990; Temple, Reynolds and Ou, 2001; Thompson and Cunningham, 2000.

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[14] Fager and Richen, 1999; Holmes and Saturday, 2000; Shepard and Smith, 1990. ■

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Despite decades of research, the issue of grade retention remains controversial and has been hotly debated among researchers, educators, and policymakers. Previous studies have mostly focused on the effects of grade retention on students' academic adjustment and socio-economic outcomes. This brief provides a possible economic framework to quantitatively evaluate the costs and benefits to society of retaining one student in a grade level for an additional year. Using the standard criteria for looking at the costs and benefits of social programs, costs and savings are identified in three areas: education costs, costs associated with economic well-being, and costs associated with crime (see Appendix).

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Education

Grade retention incurs education expenditures for school services during the retention year. In theory, students who are retained will consume an extra year of education because they are going through one grade twice. According to National Center for Education Statistics, the average education expenditure per pupil is estimated to be $7,524 for the school year of 2001-2002.[1] So, for every retained child, the cost of retention in grade for one year is $7,524.

Past research shows that prior retention experience is associated with higher rates of retention in later grades.[2] Costs associated with retention in later grades can be estimated by: the increased probability of retention in later grades times the average annual expenditure per pupil. A few studies have shown the correlation between prior retention experience and special education placement.[3] However, no causal links between the two has been identified. If causal relationship can be identified in future research, costs of retention associated with special education placement can be estimated by: the increased probability of special education placement times the difference between the average annual expenditure per pupil attending special education and average annual expenditure per pupil attending regular schools.

Research has consistently found that retained students are at a higher risk of dropping out of school.[4] It has been reported that retained students are two to eleven times more likely to drop out.[5] All things being equal, a student retained for one year in the third grade and who drops out in the 10th grade will consume fewer educational resources than a non-retained student who completes all twelve years of school. A student, who drops out of school, consumes fewer educational resources, saving the amount of annual education expenditure times the number of grades left until the graduation of high school. Education savings associated with a higher rate of dropout among retained students can be estimated by: the increased probability of dropout times the average savings in education expenditures due to dropout.

Economic Well-being

Some research has shown a negative relationship between grade retention and later employment.[6] Grade retention may lead to decreases in lifetime earnings and compensation either directly, or through the higher probability of dropping out of school among retained students.[7] The costs/benefits of retention policy on economic well-being can be quantitatively evaluated from two perspectives: from the individual's perspective and the taxpayer's perspective.

First, from the retained student's perspective, individual loss of a retained student in lifetime earnings and compensation can be estimated by: the increased probability of dropout times the individual loss of a dropout student in lifetime earnings and compensation for ages 18 to 65. Individual loss of a dropout student in lifetime earnings can be measured by the average earning difference between those with high school diplomas and those having less than high school education by using Census data.

Second, from the taxpayer's perspective, retention policy should be evaluated in terms of its effects on tax revenues. Individual loss in lifetime earnings will lead to a proportional decrease in tax revenues to the state and federal governments. Loss in government tax revenues can be calculated by: the loss of individual lifetime earnings times the estimated tax rate.[8]

Crime

Many studies have shown the negative effects of retention on behavior problems, substance use, and earlier age of sexual debut.[9] However, little has been written on the impact of grade retention on youth crime. Conventional wisdom predicts that retention is associated with a higher rate of crime, because old-for-grade students are more likely to engage in substance abuse and risky behaviors.

The costs/benefits of retention policy on crime can be quantitatively evaluated from two perspectives. First, from the taxpayer's perspective, retention policy should be evaluated in terms of its effects on criminal justice costs, including criminal justice costs for juveniles and adults. For youth crime, criminal justice costs can be estimated by: the increased/decreased probability of having juvenile arrests times the average expenditures for juvenile criminal justice.

Average criminal justice expenditures for juvenile delinquency include two parts: administrative expenditures associated with arrest, and cost of juvenile delinquent treatment. In Aos et al.'s study, the administrative expenditures[10] associated with arrest ranges from $1,100 for misdemeanor to $109,585 for murder per arrest in Washington D.C. in 1995 dollars.[11] Cost of juvenile delinquent treatment can be measured by the weighted average of costs for residential treatment, community treatment or probation services, and release.

According to Reynolds et al., expenditures to the criminal justice system for juveniles in Chicago are estimated to be $13,690 per person in 1998 dollars.[12] Aos et al. estimated that, in Washington D.C., operating cost per unit of crime ranges from $1,928 for juvenile local probation to $36,000 for residential treatment in juvenile rehabilitation facility in 1995/1996 dollars.[13]

Since juvenile delinquency is the strongest predictor of adult crime, projection of juvenile arrests can be used to estimate the probability of adult crime. The criminal justice costs for adult crime can be calculated by: the increased/decreased probability of adult crime times the average expenditures for adult criminal justice.

The method to estimate the criminal justice expenditures for adult crime is similar to that of the juvenile costs. Reynolds et al. estimated expenditures to the criminal justice system for adults in Chicago to be $32,973 per person

in 1998 dollars, including the costs of arrest, judicial processing, and treatment.[14] Aos et al. estimated that, in Washington D.C., the operating cost per unit of crime is $17,047 for adult jail with local sentence, $2,688 for adult community supervision with local sentence and post-prison supervision by the Department of Corrections, and $18,400 for residential treatment in the Department of Corrections in 1994/1995 dollars.[15]

The second perspective to evaluate the effects of retention on crime is from crime victim's point of view. The effects of retention on crime victim costs can be estimated by: the increased/decreased probability of having juvenile and adult arrests times the average victim costs per crime. Examples of victim costs include loss of lives, direct personal or property losses, and psychological consequences. Since some victim costs are intangible, it is very difficult, sometimes even impossible, to quantify the magnitude.

Recent studies divide crime victim costs into two types: direct, monetary costs incurred as a result of delinquent or criminal behavior, including medical and mental health care expenses, property damage and losses, and the reduction in future earnings incurred by crime victims; and quality of life cost which quantifies the value of the pain and suffering incurred by crime victims.

Miller, Cohen and Wiersema estimated that, in 1993 dollars, tangible losses per crime range from $370 to $1,180,000.[16] Their estimates for quality of life cost, in 1993 dollars, range from $0 to $1,995,000 per crime.[17] Aos et al. estimated that, in 1995 dollars, monetary costs per crime range from $0 for misdemeanor to $1,098,828 for murder and the quality of life cost ranges from $0 for misdemeanor to $2,038,965 for murder.[18] However, the quality of life victim cost calculations are controversial for use in the public policy analyses.

As a result, some researchers only include the tangible costs of crime in the calculation of victim costs. Reynolds et al. excluded the victim costs associated with pain and suffering, and estimated the direct expenditures per person to

victims of juvenile and adult crimes to be $14,354 and $34,572 respectively in 1998 dollars.[19]

Future Research

Past research has documented the effects of grade retention on educational outcomes including academic achievement, dropout, and retention in later grades. However, it is unclear whether there's a causal relationship between grade retention and special education placement. Moreover, little is known about the impact of retention on crime. Well-designed experiments are essential in order to understand the links, and to estimate the costs and benefits of grade retention associated with special education placement and crime. ■

Appendix

Costs and Benefits of Grade Retention

		Costs	Benefits
Education	Expenses in the Retention Year	Average annual expenditure per pupil ($7,524)	N/A
	Retention in Later Grades	Increase in the probability of retention in later grades x average annual expenditure per pupil	N/A
	Special Education	Increase in the probability of special education placement x (average annual expenditure per pupil attending special education – average annual expenditure per pupil attending regular schools)	N/A
	Early Dropout	N/A	Increase in the probability of dropout x (average annual expenditure per pupil x average number of grades left until the graduation of high school among dropout students)
Economic Well-Being	Life Time Earnings	Increase in the probability of dropout x individual loss of a dropout student in lifetime earnings and compensation for ages 18 to 65 = Increase in the probability of dropout x average earning difference between those with high school diplomas and those having less than high school education	N/A
	Government Tax Revenues	Lifetime earnings loss x estimated tax rate	N/A
Crime	Juvenile Delinquency	Increase/decrease in the probability of having juvenile arrests x average expenditures for juvenile criminal justice	
	Adult Crime	Increase/decrease in the probability of adult crime x average expenditures for adult criminal justice	
	Crime Victims' Costs	Increase/decrease in the probability of having juvenile and adult arrests x average victim costs per crime	

NOTES

[1] U.S. Department of Education, 2002, "Table 166: Total and Current Expenditure Per Pupil in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1919-20 to 2001-02," *Digest of Education Statistics, 2002,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d02/tables/dt166.asp.

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[11] Estimates vary depending on the type of crime convicted.

[12] Reynolds et al., 2002.

[13] Estimates vary depending on the type of crime and type of treatment; Aos et al., 2001.

[14] Reynolds et al., 2002.

[15] Aos et al., 2001.

[16] Estimates vary depending on the type of crime and severity of the consequences; Ted R. Miller, Mark A. Cohen and Brian Wiersema, 1996, *Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look,* Research Report, Washington D.C.: National Institute of Justice.

[17] Estimates vary depending on the type of crime and severity of the consequences.

[18] Estimates vary depending on the type of crime convicted; Aos et al., 2001.

[19] Reynolds et al., 2002. ■

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Bridging the gap between research and public policy to improve the lives of children and families

Part Three of a Three Part Series on Grade Retention

Grade Retention: *The Gap Between Research and Practice*

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The majority of published studies and decades of research indicate that there is usually little to be gained, and much harm that may be done through retaining students in grade. Yet, many educators continue to use retention as a way to improve student achievement and claim that it produces positive results. The consequence is while a growing body of studies show that retention does not improve academic performance and has a number of negative side effects, more and more states and school districts have adopted retention policy in an effort to enhance the educational accountability. This brief examines the apparent gap between research findings and retention practice and discusses reasons for its existence in four aspects: public belief, teachers' perspectives, research issues, and politics.

Other Policy Briefs in the three part series on Grade Retention by Claire Xia and Elizabeth Glennie:

- Grade Retention: *A Flawed Strategy*
- Grade Retention: *Cost-Benefit Analysis*

Public Belief

To the public, grade retention seems to make sense — one more year in the same grade would help children to catch up. Conventional wisdom predicts that grade retention will help students gain academically, improve social skills, and become more motivated to work hard. At the school level, retention is expected to reduce the skill variance in the classroom to better meet student needs and enhance educational accountability. The findings that retention is ineffective or even harmful in the long run seem counterintuitive.

The results of the 31st Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools[1] indicate that many people support higher standards for promotion and retention decisions regardless of the consequences. According to the poll, 72% of the respondents favor stricter standards for promotion even if it means that "significantly more students would be held back."[2] Other studies also reveal that the public in general views the practice of social promotion as detrimental to low-achieving students because such students, once promoted, are presumed to fall further behind their more academically prepared classmates.[3] In contrast, studies that compare low-achieving students who are retained with those who are promoted, find that the promoted students generally do as well or better academically[4] and have fewer socio-emotional and conduct-related problems.[5]

Moreover, it appears that the general public outside of academic circles is not aware of the potential long-term consequences of grade retention. The results of the 22nd Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools[6] indicate that many people do not understand the link between retention and school dropout rates. When asked whether retained children or low-achieving but socially promoted children are more likely to drop out of high school, 54% of the respondents believe that socially pro-

moted students are more likely to drop out and only 32% view the retained students as more likely to drop out.[7] However, this popular public perception about the relationship between grade retention and high school dropout is directly contradicted by research on this subject. Prior studies have consistently shown that retained students have a higher probability of dropping out of school than their promoted counterparts.[8]

Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers' views regarding the efficacy of grade retention are generally based on short-term student outcomes. Teachers usually only know of student achievement in the immediate years following retention. They often have limited knowledge of the long-term student trajectories after retention. Since many retained children make some progress the second year, retention may appear effective to educators.[9]

Furthermore, teachers typically compare the retained student's achievement the second time in that grade with the achievement the first time. These comparisons lead to the false conclusions that children benefit from retention. In contrast, studies comparing the retained student to a similar student who was promoted suggest that retained students would have made just as much or even more progress without retention.[10]

Moreover, teachers often view retention as a means of reducing the range of abilities and achievement levels in classrooms. They believe that a more homogeneous grouping of students within grade allows a better use of educational resources and helps to achieve higher educational outcomes. Low-achieving students will be more confident and less frustrated in learning, once retention brings them closer to their peers in terms of academic preparedness.[11] According to an elementary school principal in Wake County, North Carolina,[12] teachers, especially those who are receiving under-achieving but promoted students, often favor the use of retention in an attempt to reduce the skill

variance in the classroom.

Research suggests that teachers are often unaware of the findings of retention literature,[13] which indicate that apparent academic gains in the immediate years following retention usually disappear several years later.[14] Even when research findings have been effectively and clearly communicated to teachers, they often are not offered other alternatives for intervention or remediation. Educators may lack the time, resources, programmatic tools, and administrative support to identify and implement other effective intervention strategies.[15] In contrast, retention is relatively easy to implement, provides what looks like immediate gains, and does not require the creation and funding of new programs or services.

Research

Another important reason for the evident gap between research and practice is that researchers do not present clear and consistent messages to help inform policy and practice because research designs may influence the study results. For instance, studies, which compare retained students with same-age, different-grade (usually higher-grade), promoted peers, generally find large negative consequences of retention. Yet, studies, which compare retained students with different-age (usually younger), same-grade, promoted peers, often do not show negative effects.[16] Moreover, while studies examining the short-term effects have shown short-lived gains in student achievement in the immediate years following retention, most research fails to find long-term academic benefits of retention.[17] Also, a limited body of research that finds positive outcomes typically involves the implementation of other intervention programs during the retention year. These programs include early identification of and targeted assistance for retained students, personalized education plans, classes with low student-to-teacher ratios, and tutoring or summer school programs. It is unclear whether the positive outcomes of retention would be sustained without these supportive compo-

nents or whether these programs would benefit students without retention.[18] As a result, policymakers who favor retention can easily find research evidence from existing literature to support their arguments, despite a large majority of research findings against the use of retention.

The fact that most studies are written in an academic format also hinders practitioners from understanding and taking advantage of the research findings. Educators often find it hard and discouraging to read the long, complex research papers. Effective dissemination of research findings requires that "materials be jargon-free, brief and provide concrete illustration."[19]

The quality of some studies is another issue of concern. Some articles have used small sample sizes, so their findings are highly questionable regardless of the use of tight and sophisticated statistical analyses. Many others do not follow a comparison group of socially promoted students. Even studies with comparison groups do not always match students to find a fair comparison of a retained group. For instance, some studies compare a retained group with a sample of never-retained students regardless of their age, grade or academic achievement prior to retention. A fair comparison should at least match retained students with their promoted counterparts of same grade or same age, who have similar academic achievement prior to retention. Other factors that could be considered in selecting a fair comparison group include gender, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, parental participation in school and parental attitudes toward education, maternal level of education, and family size, etc. Unless true field experiments are conducted in retention research, these methodological challenges will continue to undermine the credibility of the research findings.[20]

Politics

The issue of retention has become highly politicized since the 1990s. Popular belief in the efficacy of retention creates a powerful mandate. Policymakers and

politicians at all levels have started to demand high educational standards and accountability. The most recent example is the No Child Left Behind Act signed by President Bush in 2002. As Holmes and Saturday noted, the issue of retention and promotion "provides a popular political platform" and ending social promotion may be "the latest trend in winning political popularity."[21] As a result, schools are under considerable political pressure to appease popular demands, and research showing the drawbacks of retention can easily get lost in a sea of prevailing appeals to maintain high academic standards.

Policy Implications

Investigating the gap between research and practice suggests that (a) research findings must be effectively, efficiently and clearly communicated to educational professionals, policymakers, and the public, (b) schools should implement staff training in which teachers and other educational professionals involved in the decision-making process are presented with research evidence about the academic and socio-economic effects of retention, and (c) teachers should be offered alternative remediation tools, preferably school-wide intervention strategies. ■

NOTES

[1] Lowell C. Rose and Alec M. Gallup, 1999, "The 31st Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan, 81*(1), 41-56.

[2] Ibid, p. 43.

[3] Donna Harrington-Lueker, 1998, "Retention Vs. Social Promotion," *The School Administrator, 55*(7), 6-10, 12; Jon Lorence et al., 2002, "Grade Retention and Social Promotion in Texas: An Assessment of Academic Achievement among Elementary School Students," In *The Policy of Ending Social Promotion,* ed. Diane Ravitch,13-67, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution; Lorrie A. Shepard and Mary Lee Smith, 1990, "Synthesis of Research on Grade Retention," *Educational Leadership, 47*(8), 84-88.

[4] Peg Dawson, 1998, "A Primer on Student Grade Retention: What the Research Says," *NASP Communique, 26*(8); Jennifer Fager and Rae Richen, 1999, *When Students Don't Succeed: Shedding Light on Grade Retention.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; Robert M. Hauser, 1999, *Should We End Social Promotion? Truth and Consequences,* CDE

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[6] Stanley M. Elam, 1990, "The 22nd Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan, 72*(1), 41-54.

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[8] Dawson, 1998; Hauser, 1999; Holmes and Saturday, 2000; Shane R. Jimerson, 1999, "On the Failure of Failure: Examining the Association between Early Grade Retention and Education and Employment Outcomes during Late Adolescence," *Journal of School Psychology, 37*(3), 243-72; Jimerson, Anderson and Whipple, 2002; Debra Johnson, 2001, "Performance Pentagon: Five Strategies to Help All Students Make the Grade," *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 85*(629), 40-50; Melissa Roderick, 1994, "Grade Retention and School Dropout: Investigating the Association," *American Educational Research Journal, 31*(4), 729-59; Melissa Roderick, 1995, "Grade Retention and School Dropout, Policy Debate and Research Questions," *Phi Delta Kappa Research Bulletin, 15*; Russell W. Rumberger and Katherine A. Larson, 1998, "Student Mobility and the Increased Risk of High School Dropout," *American Journal of Education, 107*(1), 1-35; Shepard and Smith, 1990; Thompson and Cunningham, 2000.

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[10] Fager and Richen, 1999; Holmes and Saturday, 2000; Shepard and Smith, 1990.

[11] Martin Haberman and Vicky Dill, 1993, "The Knowledge Base on Retention Vs. Teacher Ideology: Implications for Teacher Preparation," *Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(5), 352-60; Jimerson, Anderson and Whipple, 2002; William A. Owings and Susan Magliaro, 1998, "Grade Retention: A History of Failure," *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 86-8; Tanner and Galis, 1997.

[12] Based on the interview with Cecilia Rawlins, principal of Wiley Elementary in Wake County, North Carolina on June 28, 2004.

[13] Fager and Richen, 1999; Haberman and Dill, 1993; Jimerson, Anderson and Whipple 2002; Tanner and Combs, 1993; Ellen M. Tomchin and James C Impara, "Unraveling Teachers' Beliefs about Grade Retention," *American Educational Research Journal, 29*(1), 199-223.

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[15] Gerald W. Bracey, 2002, "Raising Achievement of At-Risk Students—Or Not [summary of research by B. A. Jacob; M. Roderick and M. Engel]," *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(6), 431-2; Fager and Richen, 1999; Southern Regional Education Board, 2001, *Finding Alternatives to Failure: Can States End Social Promotion and Reduce Retention Rates?* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

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[17] Hauser, 1999; Jimerson et al., 1997; Johnson, 2001; Roderick, 1995; Thompson and Cunningham, 2000.

[18] Fager and Richen, 1999; Hauser 1999.

[19] Michael W. Kirst, 2000, "Bridging Education Research and Education Policymaking," *Oxford Review of Education, 26*(3/4), 379-91, p. 385.

[20] Alexander, Entwisle and Dauber, 2003; Hauser, 1999; Jimerson et al. 1997; Nancy L. Karweit, 1999, *Grade Retention: Prevalence, Timing, and Effects,* Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk, Report No. 33; Mantzicopoulos, 1997; Ann R. McCoy and Arthur J. Reynolds, 1999, "Grade Retention and School Performance: An Extended Investigation," *Journal of School Psychology, 37*(3), 273-98; Tanner and Galis, 1997.

[21] Holmes and Saturday, 2000, p. 7. ■

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