

FCAT AND RETENTION : Does it Work?

Is retention effective?

- Over 80 years of research concludes no educational gain. Any short-lived gains disappear in 2-3 years.
- Retention is the single best predictor of school dropout
- Students with multiple retentions are more likely to experience shame, stress, and negative feelings towards themselves and school.
- Children rank failing only slightly less stressful than going blind or losing a parent to death.
- Retention is linked to health-compromising behaviors (substance and alcohol abuse, early onset of sexual activity, suicidal intentions, violence, etc.)
- Retained students are more likely to be unemployed, living on public assistance, or incarcerated.

Are we in good company?

- 14-15% of Florida's third graders are retained.
- Japan, Denmark, Sweden, UK, and Norway have 0% retention rates.
- Only undeveloped countries (Rwanda, Congo, Chad) have higher retention rates than the U.S.
- The National Association of School Psychologists does not support retention as an effective intervention strategy.

Are minorities affected equally?

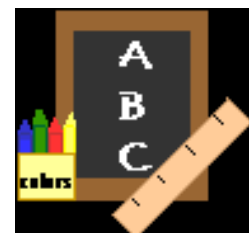
- African-American and Hispanic students twice as likely to fail graduation tests
- Retention rates are higher for African Americans, Latinos, and children from low-income families.

Is retention cost-effective?

- \$6,500 per student X 28,000 failed 3rd graders = \$182 million
- Include Pre-K through 12th grade, and the cost of retention exceeds \$1 billion.

Scientificallly-supported interventions:

- Reduced class size for grades K-3.
- Greater emphasis on Student Services personnel.
- Increase early intervention/early reading funding.
- Tutoring



Retention is not an intervention.