

Should Students Be Paid to Do Well?

Recently the mayor of a large city announced a plan to pay students who do well in school. This plan has received a lot of attention. Some people disagree with the mayor. They feel that paying students for doing well is a bad idea. Many students and parents do not think there is anything wrong with giving hardworking students some kind of reward. People on both sides believe they know what is best.

Feeling proud when they do a good job is important to students. There are those who believe that paying students teaches them to try just to get the prize. They think that students who always get paid do not care as much about feeling proud as they do about getting the reward. They point to a study of third graders who were rewarded for reading. The study found that after a while, the students only read if they knew they would receive a prize. The researchers say that this shows that rewards do not contribute to student growth over a long period of time.

People who give rewards for good grades say that students should be rewarded if they work extra hard. The reward gives students a reason to try harder. When they get the prize, then they want to do a good job the next time. They also point out that some research shows that rewards work exactly as intended. Seventh-grade students in one study showed a large improvement after their school started a program of paying for learning. Those in favor of similar programs compare it to adults getting paid for the work they do. They believe that it does not matter why the students are working hard as long as they are learning.

Writing situation:

The editors of a news magazine for young people want to know what students think about getting paid for doing well in school. They have asked people to write letters supporting or opposing paying students to do well in school. Some of the letters will be published in the next issue of the magazine.

Writing directions:

Write a letter to be published in the news magazine for young people. Present an argument as to whether or not students should be paid for doing well in school. Provide reasons and details to support your argument.