High-stakes testing costs up to $50 billion per annum, has no impact on student achievement, and has changed the focus of American public schools. This article analyzes the benefits and costs of the accountability movement, as well as discusses its roots in the eugenics movements of the early 20th century. No caption available. 

Accountability—providing evidence of the performance of teachers, administrators, schools, districts, or states, relative to established standards or benchmarks, or in comparison to others, or both. Decisions about students—providing data that is used in making important decisions about individual students, such as placement in academic programs, grade promotion, or graduation. "High-stakes" testing can potentially deny your child a high school diploma or force your fourth grader to repeat a year in school. These consequences, coupled with the fact that these new standardized achievement tests are often poorly understood by students and parents, can cause anxiety in even the best test-taker. What's the purpose of all of that preparation—and panic? The first thing to keep in mind is that standardized tests are neither good nor evil—according to Mike Haykin director of learning support for the Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences. The pressure can be overwhelming.