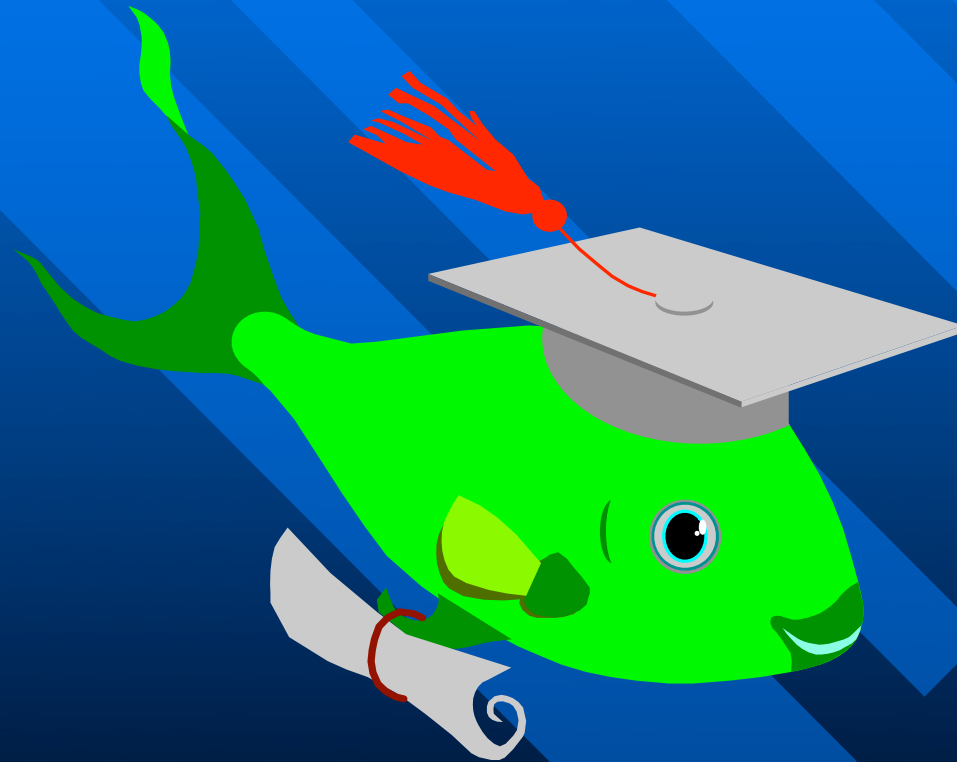


Education Policy



Outline

- Introduction and government involvement
- Education funding
- Education policy issues
 - quality of education and how to address
- Other education issues
- Focused discussion: School Testing and Quality

Education Policy

- U.S. has been a world leader in public education
- Interaction has occurred at the state and local levels
- During 1990s federal government became more involved through expenditures and other mechanisms
- Question of education quality remains increasingly important

Why has gov't been so involved?

- Education
- Ensures continuation of democracy
- Gives people chance to better themselves – social mobility
- Social integration and assimilation
- Provides an emphasis on governance at the state and local levels

Government Involvement

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) began 1965-now-2005 (\$25 billion)
- Goal – to secure more extensive funding from the federal government
 - concern that local gov't would lose control
 - funding of parochial schools
- No Child Left Behind Act
- Higher Education
- Federal gov't historically more involved in higher education
- land-grant college system (Morrill Act 1862)-Cornell, Rutgers, U. Kentucky, U. Wisconsin, service academies, direct grants, funding for individual students, research grants-NIH, NSF; GI Bill; Pell Grants; Guaranteed Student Loans

Issues in Education

- Funding
- typically occurs through local property taxes.
- two significant problems
 - property tax revenues not “buoyant”-lag behind inflation
 - Proposition 13-California (1978)
 - equity issues – tax base varies
 - NY (\$12k) Utah (\$5.1K) per student
- raises issues of quality

Issues in Education (cont'd)

- Separation of church and state
- two clauses: Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause
- two major issues
 - school prayer
 - government funding of religious institutions

Quality of Education

- “A Nation at Risk” 1983-an Act of War?
- evidence points to declining scores and poor comparisons to international test results
- how can you define quality?
 - basics? memorization?-methods?
 - What do you need to know?
- possible causes of poor education quality

How Do We Improve Quality?

- Make schools more student centered
- teach how to think; be sensitive to needs
- Improve teachers (testing, etc.) Pay?
- Raise standards/institute testing for students

Issues in Higher Education

- Affirmative action
 - reasons for it
 - concerns about it
 - what criteria should be used to evaluate programs
- Cost of higher education
 - what should gov't role be? Does this issue arise in other countries?

Education Policy Reforms

- Merit pay (will teachers cheat?)-funding cut?
- Teacher standards-competency test
- Funding and salaries-teacher shortage?
- School choice, vouchers, charter schools
- Give parents and administrators more local control
- School choice--"Zero Sum"?
 - allow people to choose schools; will promote competition that will lead to improvement

School Vouchers

- Provide parents with money that they can use toward the education of their children
- Current uses are limited-means tested
- Charter Schools-state pays; but less regulated

Focused Discussion: School Testing and Quality

- No Child Left Behind (NCLB-2002)
- More federal involvement-Fed share up to 8% of total cost of k-12; but was only a 2% increase
 - Measure of accountability
 - Issues of testing
 - teaching to the test
 - biases in the exam
- Economic issues
 - Cost of testing and who bears the costs
 - Increase in federal dollars; is it sufficient?
- Political issues
 - Initially strong bipartisan support
 - Less so now due to funding issues

Testing & Quality (cont'd)

- Major teaching interest groups oppose it
- Effectiveness
 - Importance of definition and measurement
 - Different results
- Equity and Ethical Issues
 - Achievement gaps
 - Federal government intruding on state policies