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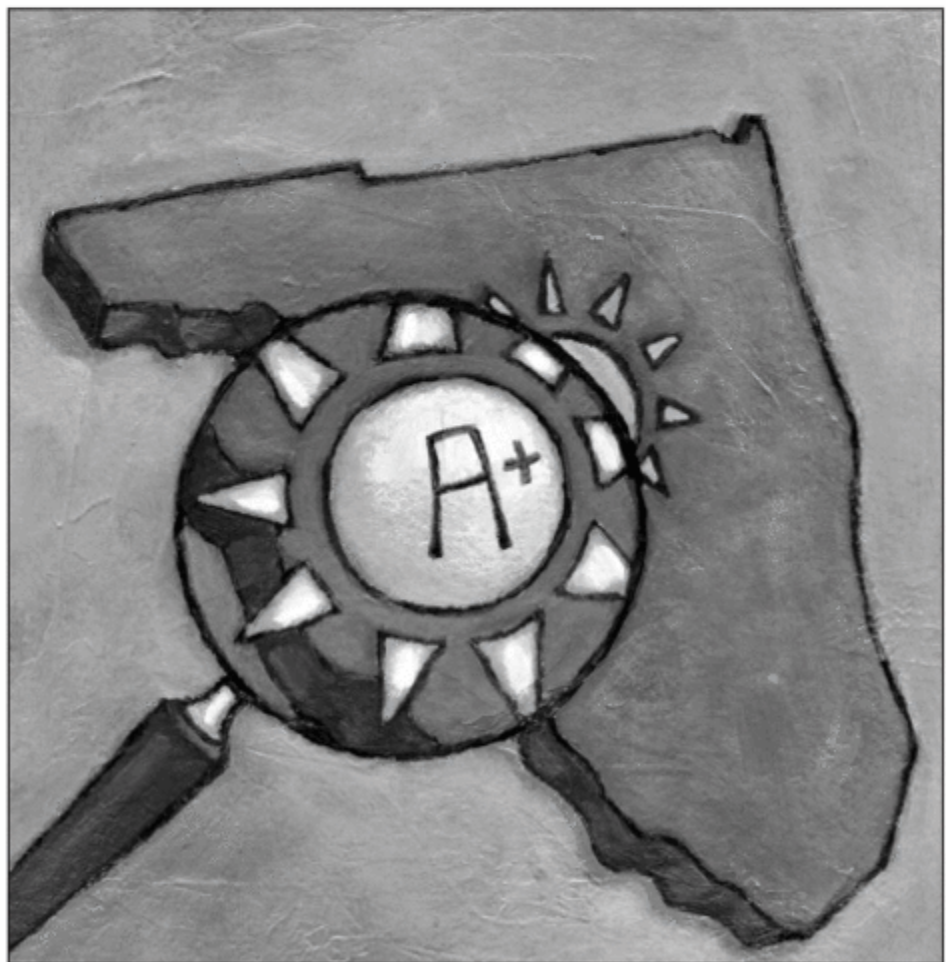
Accountability with a Kicker: Observations on the Florida A+ Accountability Plan

The A+ Accountability Plan in Florida predated NCLB but has similar provisions. Thus, the authors realized, a study of how the system has played out in Florida might allow us to see where NCLB is leading us.

BY DAN GOLDHABER AND JANE HANNAWAY

IN 1999, FLORIDA implemented a major reform of its accountability system, called the A+ Accountability Plan. A unique aspect of the A+ Plan is its explicit attempt to invoke market forces by allowing students in low-performing schools that meet specified criteria to receive vouchers that can be redeemed at an eligible public or private school. It is this “opportunity scholarship” (the portion of the A+ Plan that allows for vouchers) that set the accountability system in Florida apart from that of any other state at that time.

Since then, the Supreme Court’s *Zelman* decision ruled that using vouchers for religious private schools is permissible.¹ In addition, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires that all schools failing to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) implement a program similar to the opportunity scholarships in that it would



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Biographies

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