



**EDUCATION** 12/20/2010 09:34 pm ET | **Updated** May 25, 2011

# Students Sound Off: Ninth Grader Jingwei Zhang Proposes Cash Rewards To Help His Classmates Graduate

By Victoria Fine



*"Students Sound Off," is an ongoing student blogger contest aimed at providing students a loud and clear voice in the education debate presented by HuffPost Education and Get Schooled. As the second post in the series, ninth grader Jingwei Zhang of Oakland, Calif. answers the question:*

### **If you were given the chance, how would you help kids at your school graduate?**

School is this time in everyone's lives when they undergo the earliest, major changes. Education,

the primary concern why students even go to school, is the key to the future. Unfortunately, not many students grasp this concept. As a result, some students are uncaring about education, which means that they don't care if they will graduate. Unfortunately, that will be one of the worst ideas ever, one that will cost them wealth in the long run. Therefore, if I could help my classmates all graduate, I would propose a reward system based on cash.

Some schools do have reward systems, but not many schools even put cash as a reward. That is ineffectual in motivating students to work hard. Money can literally translate to whatever a student wants. To help my classmates graduate, I will propose a reward system based on cash which will motivate them to earn good grades, which should be more than enough to allow them to graduate. The system will force students to try their best in order to get the reward. Passing isn't difficult at all in high school, and if students try their hardest, they should graduate, if not succeed.

The reward system I will propose will only work for schools in California. The cash reward will be based on STAR test results, and STAR is designed to test the education level of California students. In 9th grade, if a student scores 550-600 on ALL their subjects, they will receive 50 dollars in cash. Only if a student receives the reward for 9th grade will they be able to get the \$100 reward for 550-600 in 10th grade. Once a student receives both of those awards, only then will they be eligible for the \$150 reward for 550-600 in 11th grade. Then, if a student manages to get 550-600 again in 12th grade, they shall receive 150 dollars in addition to a certificate stating their hard work and dedication throughout the years, greatly improving their chances of being accepted into a famous college.

If a student fails even once, they can't have the additional increases in reward. Rather, they will only receive \$50 for their 550-600 scores, even if they are in 11th or 12th grade. This will



Even if a student doesn't understand the concept of "education is key," hopefully they will want

the money. This reward system is designed to teach the importance of education to those students. For those that want the money, this will make them focus hard. As students learn more and more, this will naturally teach students that hard work is important.

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The money being used as reward may seem a lot initially, because the population of California is

relatively huge. However, we must think about the positive effects. When a student becomes educated, they will become an asset to our state, to our country. They will want to get a job with a high salary. Later, they will be taxed, meaning profit for our state. Of course, the more educated one is, the more likely it is that one will get a better job. In addition, if we consider the dreams of every person, one of those dreams is to buy a house. In order to buy a house, one would need money.

This will also mean a profit to state because of the taxes. Which is more profitable, an initial payment of 450 dollars or taxes that are more than likely to rise over a thousand dollars? Besides, there are taxes on a person's monthly income. The more educated we make a person, the more likely it is that taxes are higher.

I propose a reward system based on STAR to help classmates graduate and succeed. It is, simply, a reward system with cash involved and certificates demonstrating a person's dedication.



*“The best means of forming a manly, virtuous, and happy people will be found in the right education of youth. Without this foundation, every other means, in my opinion, must fail.”*

- George Washington, letter to George Chapman

By rewarding students, we shall create a foundation to ensure success of students in California-no, all of America AND the world. We shall create a light, one that has never shone so brilliantly before. We shall make ourselves known in history textbooks in the future, so that future generations will be able to prosper, thus making humanity prosper and thrive in the future.

Are you a high school student who wants to sound off to the HuffPost community and win a chance to blog with a celebrity, politician or activist? [Find out how on our contest page](#) or [read other essays by high school students](#).

This contest is brought to you by [Waiting For “Superman”](#).

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