



Florida Formula for Student Achievement ***Lessons for the Nation***

I really appreciate the opportunity to share the story behind Florida's steady climb in student achievement during the last decade.

Florida's progress during the last decade has proven what I have always believed – that all students can learn.

Let's face it, you can't help how you came into the world. You can't choose your parents or what language is spoken at home. You can't choose your nationality or your race. You can't choose your socioeconomic status.

Education is the one thing we can control that can make a huge difference in a child's life.

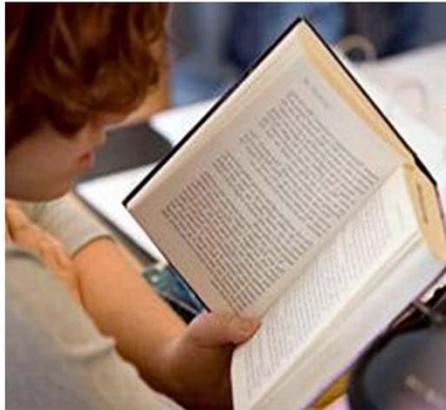
That makes education extraordinarily powerful.

And if we get education right, all of the other challenges we face – crime, environment degradation, unemployment – become easier to solve.

National Assessment of Educational Progress



THE NATION'S REPORT CARD



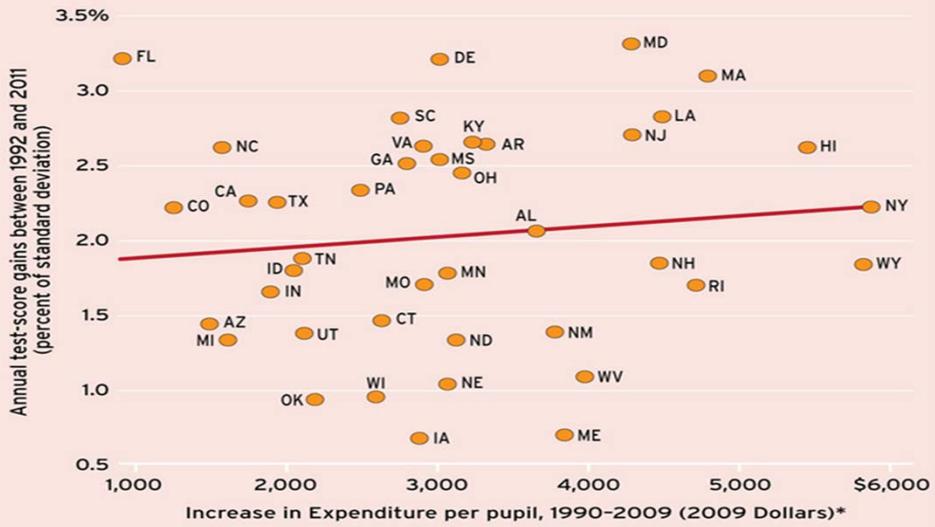
NOW AVAILABLE.

The results of the 2009 reading assessment for our nation's 4th- and 8th-graders have just been released.

[View results, data from your state, sample questions, and more.](#)

Money Is Not the Answer (Figure 4)

Spending more does not necessarily lift test scores.



*Expenditure increments are adjusted for inflation

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on National Assessment of Educational Progress and Digest of Education Statistics

Florida Student Population

- 2.7 million students
- Majority minority student population – 56%
- Large population of students learning English as a second language
- Majority of students are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch – 57%



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First, let me tell you a little about Florida. Florida has a large and diverse student population.

We have 2.7 million students.

Our public schools are majority minority. We have a large population of students learning English as a second language. And 57% of our students are living in or near poverty.

Maine Student Population:

Student Characteristics:

Number enrolled: 189,077

Percent in Title I schools: 83.4%

With Individualized Education Programs (IEP): 15.6%

Percent in limited-English proficiency programs: 2.5%

Percent eligible for free/reduced lunch: 43.0%

Racial/Ethnic Background:

White: 92.5%

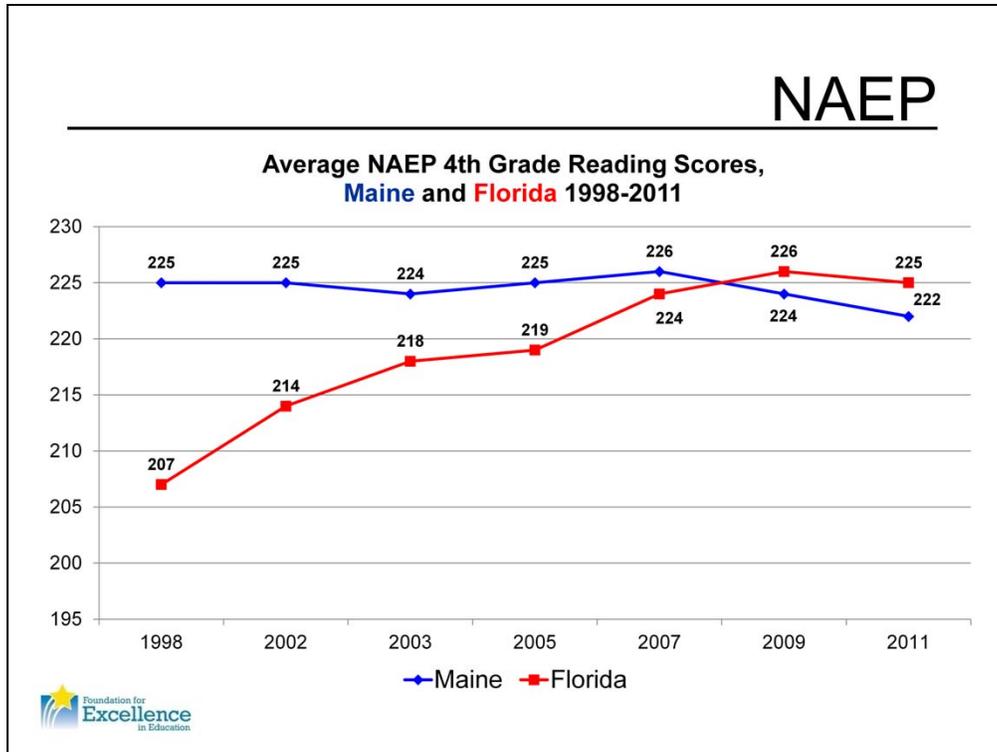
Black: 1.8%

Hispanic: 1.5%

Asian: 1.1%

Pacific Islander: 0.1%

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 0.7%



The National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP is one of the tools we use to measure our progress.

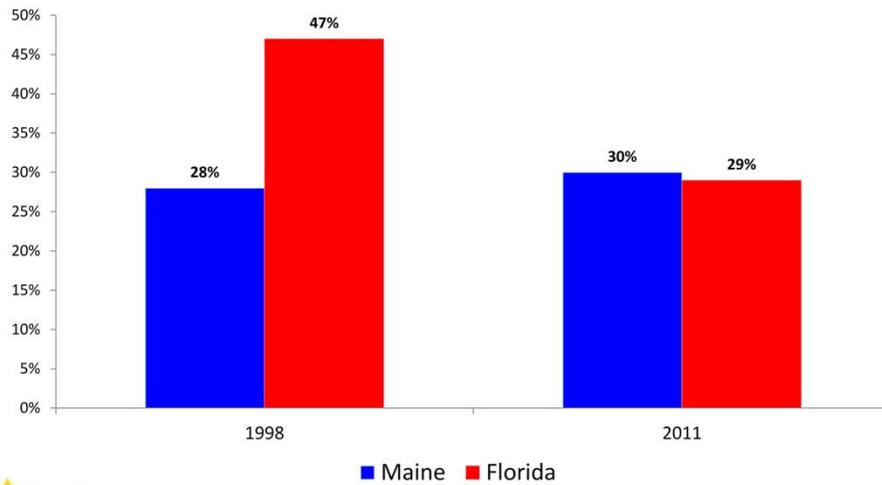
The test is taken by a representative random sample of 4th and 8th graders in all 50 states, every other year.

The NAEP gives a snapshot of the quality of education across the country, which is why it is often referred to as the Nation’s Report Card.

10 points on the scale is equivalent to one grade level.

NAEP

Percentage of Florida and Maine Students Scoring Below Basic on the NAEP 4th Grade Reading Test, 1998 and 2011

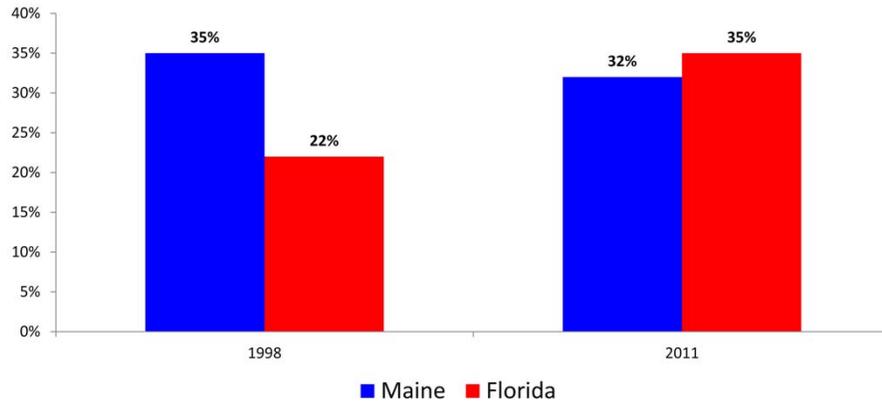


From 1998 to 2011, Florida reduced the number of functionally illiterate students from 47 percent to 29 percent – that is 18 percentage points.

During the same time, the percent of functionally illiterate students in Maine actually increased by 2 percentage points.

NAEP

Percentage of **Florida** and **Maine** Students Scoring at the **Proficient Level or Above** on the NAEP 4th Grade Reading Test, 1998 and 2011



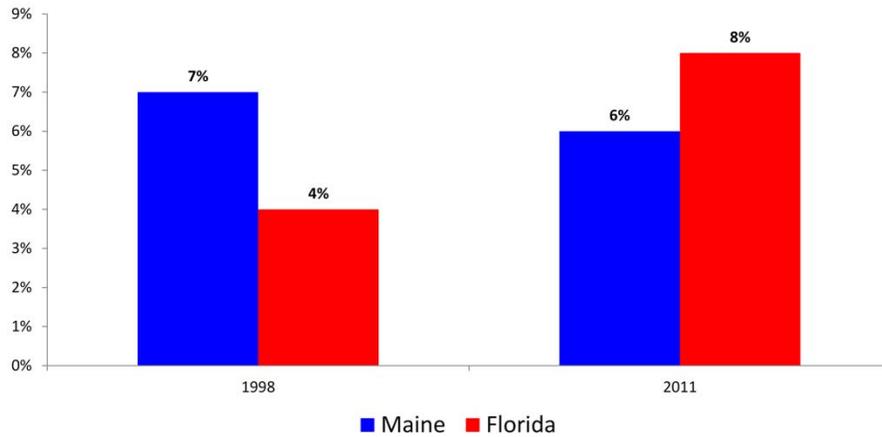
Florida didn't stop with basic literacy. We also moved students beyond grade level.

From 1998 to 2011, Florida increased the population of proficient students by 13 percentage points.

By comparison, Maine saw a 3 percentage point decrease in proficiency during the same time period.

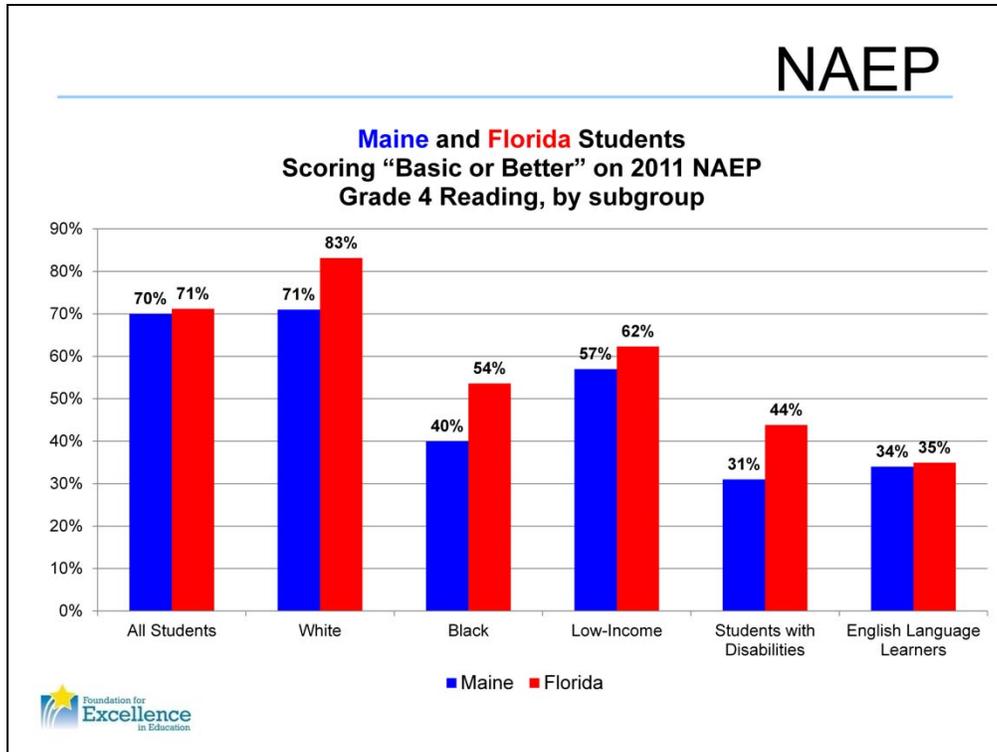
NAEP

Percentage of **Florida** and **Maine** Students Scoring at the Advanced Level on the NAEP 4th Grade Reading Test, 1998 and 2011



Again during the same time frame, Florida doubled the number of students performing at the highest level from 4 percent to 8 percent.

Maine had a two percent increase in the number of advanced students.



This is a snapshot comparison of performance of Maine students and Florida students scoring “Basic or Better” on the NAEP 4th grade reading exam in 2011, broken down by student demographics.

In every subgroup, Florida students are outperforming their peers in Maine.

Hispanic student data wasn’t available for Maine students in 2011 for this report.

The reason this slide is important is because of its relationship to our averages. (Remember, 4 slides ago, Florida 4th graders were scoring 3 points above Maine’ 4th graders in reading).

That 3 points may not seem significant, except when you see it in context with these figures.

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Florida Formula for Student Achievement:
A Roadmap of Reform

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So why think big and act bold?

Big reforms are like rocks – rocks create ripples, the bigger the rock the bigger the ripples. Big reforms create ripples of more reform.



A-F School Grades

*“What gets measured, gets done.”
– Jeb Bush*

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Perhaps more than any other reform, grading schools on a scale of A – F changed the culture of education in Florida. It shined a bright light on quality and that, in itself, created a catalyst for change.

What gets measured, gets done.

Florida Reforms 1999-2011

- A – F School Grades
- Rewards schools and teachers for success
- Command Focus on Early Literacy
- Quality Educators
- Choices, Choices, Choices (charter, private, digital)



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Here is how we did it:

We started grading schools on a scale of A – F, just like students.

We established rewards and consequences for results.

We ended social promotion in the third grade for students who couldn't read and we raised the bar for earning a diploma from high school.

We modernized the funding model to create financial incentives for student achievement.

And we created an unprecedented array of choices for parents and students.

History of School Grades

1995: Florida began “grading” schools:

- High Performing
- Performing
- Low Performing
- Critically Low Performing

1998: Moved to Performance Levels: I, II, III, IV, V

1999: Adopted Letter Scale of A to F



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In 1999, we started grading schools on a scale of A – F.

As you can see, we weren't the first to measure the quality of education in Florida. But we were the first to do it in a way that parents and the general public could actually understand.

Before the letter scale, Florida schools were graded on a scale of 1 – 5, but no one knew if a five was the best or the worst.

Before the number scale, we used fuzzy descriptors. But what is the difference between low performing and critically low performing? Bad and really, really bad?

The simple beauty of the A – F scale is that no one has to explain what the grade means. Everyone knows the difference between an A and an F.

School Grades

Each category has 100 possible points (percent of students)

Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Proficiency	Proficiency	Proficiency	Proficiency
Progress (all students)	Progress (all students)		
Progress (lowest 25%)	Progress (lowest 25%)		



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So here is how it works. Proficiency plus progress equals the school grade.

If a school has 63 percent of its students reading on grade level, the school earns 63 points. Add up the points in each category and you get the school's grade.

It is very simple for a principal each year to look at his/her school's grade and determine where they did well and where they were deficient in order to make staffing, professional development and resource decisions.

Grading Florida High Schools *Next Generation of Education Reform*

In 2010, high school grades calculation also included:

- Graduation rates for all students
- Graduation rates for at-risk students
 - Graduation rates for 8th grade students entering high school below grade level in reading and math
- Acceleration rates (both performance & participation)
 - Number of students taking and passing Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit or industry certification courses
- College readiness rates
 - Based upon SAT or ACT and the common placement test for college



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In addition to the criteria I just showed you, our high schools are also graded on some additional criteria.

Graduation rates for all students (NEW: 300 points – no change in total points, just change in how the points are allocated/grad rate calculated)

Graduation rates for “at-risk” students – which basically is a measure of how many students who entered 9th grade below grade level graduated 4 years later.

Four Year Graduation Rate:

All students: Federal uniform rate, four year, standard diploma only – 100 points

At-risk: Federal uniform rate, four year, standard diploma only – 50 points

Five Year Graduation Rate:

All students: Five year modified Federal uniform rate includes standard and special diplomas – 100 points

At-risk: Five year modified Federal uniform rate includes standard and special diplomas – 50 points

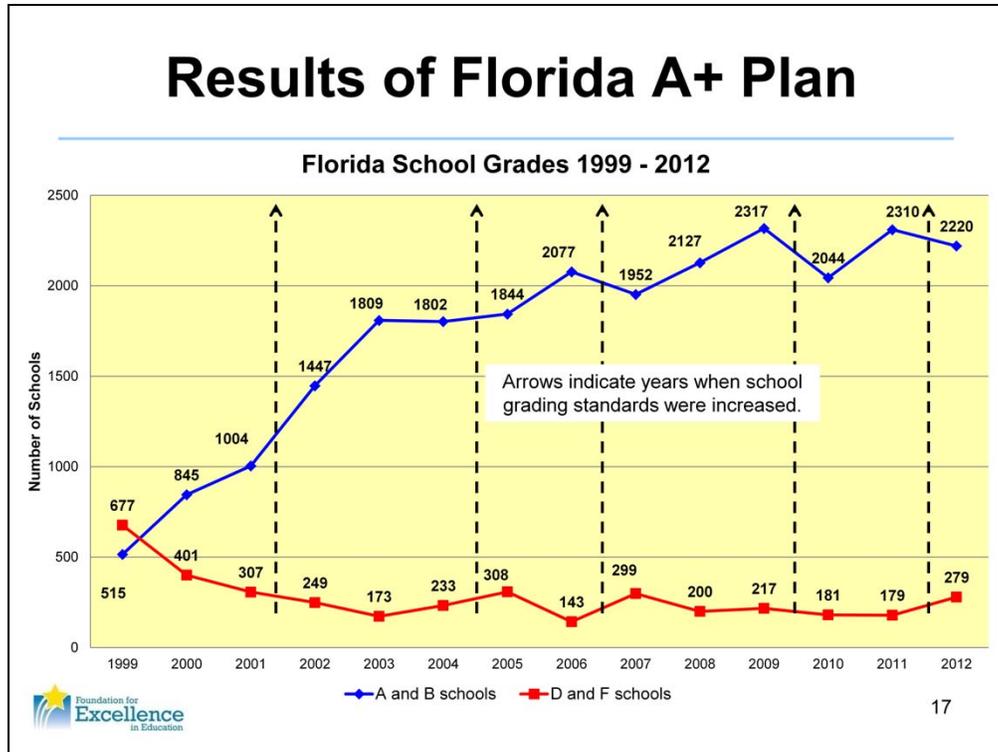
We also measure acceleration rates. This is basically a measure of the participation and performance rates of students taking Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit or industry certification courses. (no change in total points 300, but 2012 is the first year that participation and performance are weighted equally, 150 points each.)

Finally, we look at college readiness rates (based upon the SAT or ACT or common placement test {either the CPT or PERT until transition to PERT is complete}).

NOTE: Science will not be included for HS in 2012 because of the transition to End-of-Course exams, instead FLDOE will mathematically alter school grade points earned to be on a 800 point scale rather than a 700 point scale for 2012 only

NOTE: 2013-14 US history is being added to the graduation/readiness rate side of the equation, participation and performance will go to 100 points each instead of 150 to 'free up' the 100 points for US History performance

Results of Florida A+ Plan



Remember, Florida has a large and diverse student population.

Like Texas, our public schools are majority minority. And nearly 50% of our students are living in or near poverty.

In 1999, we had more D&F schools than A&B schools. Now we have 10 times as many AB vs. DF.

The power of that label is a game-changer on its own.

The next step, however, is every bit if not more powerful. You have to get the calculation of those grades right to push student achievement, that is absolutely critical.

The 5 dotted lines indicate times when we raised the bar on what it means to be an A or B school.

1999 – moved to A, B, C, D, and F grades

2002 – added in student learning gains to the calculation

2005 – added in students with disabilities and English language learners to the calculation and raised the writing standard

2007 – added in science and math lowest 25% gains into the calculation

2010 – added high school accountability:

- Graduation rates for all students
- Graduation rates for at-risk students
- Acceleration rates (both performance & participation)
- College readiness rates

2012 – increased cut scores on new FCAT 2.0 test, inclusion of students with disabilities and English language learning students into the proficiency components of the grade calculation

Impact of an A – F School Grading System

- **Excellence v. Complacency**
 - School grading brought a **Command Focus on Learning**.
 - Administrators, educators and parents aren't satisfied with "C" grades, or even "B" grades. Everyone strives for **Excellence**.
- **Media & Public Attention**
 - Transparency in evaluating school performance attracts more attention to education, from extensive media coverage on the quality of education in individual schools to even realtors and realtor guides highlighting good school grades as a selling point on the housing market.
- **Statewide Competition to be the "Best of the Best"**
 - Based on their grades of their schools, each county district in Florida earns a single letter grade, creating added competition.
- **Community Support**
 - Low performing schools are easily identified and communities rally around them. Florida has witnessed countless stories of communities coming together to improve schools and raise student achievement.
- **School Pride**
 - Grading schools establishes public perception of both high performing and low performing schools, creating more ownership at the local level and added incentive to achieve or maintain excellence.



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This aptly-named "A+ Plan" of original reforms gave us hard-edge reforms with accountability and choice. That led to a change in people's mindset, which changed behavior and spurred innovations.

Everyone – from school boards to district superintendents to principals to parents – rallied around the central organizing principle, which was student achievement.

Leon County School board dedicated an entire meeting on how to be the first county with no "C" schools. This never would have occurred if C schools were called "satisfactory" or "making progress."

Our back to school newspaper editions focus on more than just bus route locations and lunch times. They highlight the grade of the school and what the grade means.

Our districts are graded A-F as if they were a single school. There is competition among district to best their neighboring district.

Low-performing schools get support needed. Evans High School in Orlando was low performing 20 years ago, but no one did anything about it. When it started receiving F grades, the school board members on the north side of town starting paying attention to what was going on at the southside school.



Promotion and Graduation Requirements

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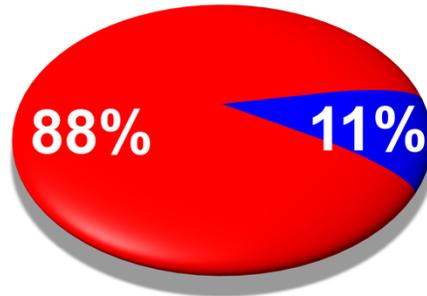
We also added quality controls or safety nets to make sure students were prepared to succeed in the next level.

These hard-edged policies came in the 3rd and 12th grades.

Predicting Dropout Rates by 3rd Grade Reading Performance

19 Year Old Dropouts by 3rd Grade Reading Scores

-- Annie E Casey Foundation



■ Non Proficient Readers in 3rd grade

■ Proficient Readers in 3rd grade



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We also added quality controls or safety nets to make sure students were prepared to succeed in the next level.

An Annie E Casey Foundation report based on an analysis of reading scores and graduation rates of 3,975 students over ten years showed that students who could not read by the end of the third grade were four times more likely to drop out of high school. In fact, 88 percent of students who failed to earn a high school diploma were struggling readers in third grade

State Reading Activities

- Test-based promotion policy
- Leveraged federal reading and state funds
- State-approved K -12 district reading plans
- Reading Coaches
- Florida Center for Reading Research
- Individual Student Intervention Plans
- Early Literacy screening in kindergarten – 2nd grade



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So, Florida ensured there was a hard-line test-based promotion policy for students to enter 4th grade.

We also leveraged the use of our federal reading funds and didn't just formula fund them to every county, but instead we made them competitive grants so districts that wanted to implement what the research demonstrated was important to teach reading were the first to get the funds.

The state had to approve the reading plans which had to include k-3 reading coaches. Reading coaches were individuals who worked with teachers to teach reading.

We used the Florida Center for Reading Research to review curriculum and guide state policies.

We didn't just retain students for the sake of retention, but ensured they each got an individualized intervention plan to improve their reading.

Finally, we started early literacy screenings in grades k-2. Within first 30 days a student enters kindergarten they are screened on their recognition of letters and sounds. This helps teachers tailor instruction and keep students on track.

An End to Social Promotion

- Emphasis on reading as a gateway to learning.
 - K - 3rd grade: students are *learning to read*.
 - 4th grade: students are *reading to learn*.
- An end to social promotion in 3rd grade.
 - Students who score the **lowest level** (level 1 out of 5) in reading on the 3rd grade FCAT **must be retained** unless the student meets good cause exemptions.

1	2	3	4	5
Insufficient	Below Grade Level	Grade Level	Above Grade Level	Advanced



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Reading is the foundation of learning. When you can read, you can learn.

3rd and 4th grades are critical years because that's when students transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

Fact is, students who can't read in the 3rd grade don't typically "catch up" in later grades. Instead, they fall further and further behind.

Promoting students who don't have the grade level skills to succeed also creates huge challenges for teachers.

Until 2002, teachers typically made the recommendation whether to retain at student. That year, we decided we needed to require retention for students who were functionally illiterate at the end of the 3rd grade.

Students who scored the lowest level are retained unless the student meets some good cause exemptions.

A Command Focus on Reading

Year	Percent of 3rd graders level 1 on reading FCAT	Percent of 3rd graders retained
2000-01	29%	3.0%
2001-02	27%	3.3%
2002-03	23%	14.4%
2003-04	22%	11.1%
2004-05	20%	9.8%
2006-07	19%	8.1%
2007-08	16%	6.6%
2008-09	17%	6.4%
2009-10	16%	5.9%
FCAT 2.0 (more rigorous test, with higher cut scores in 2012)		
2010-11	16%	7.1%
2011-12	18%	7.9%



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Our 4th graders continue to thrive because of our hard line in the sand in third grade.

And our K-3 kids are thriving, too.

Look at the results of that hard-edge policy:

In 2000 – 2001 school year, nearly one-third of 3rd graders (29 percent) couldn't read, but only about 3 percent were retained.

When we ended social promotion, retention skyrocketed to more than 14 percent. Talk about a tough year. Sadly, a 14 percent retention rate caused more outrage than a 29 percent illiteracy rate.

But we stuck with it and, as you can see, we cut illiteracy by nearly half in the last decade. And as literacy rates increase, retention rates decrease.

What happened? The policy placed a command focus on reading by a date certain. As a result, schools organized themselves around that goal and, when necessary, started intervening earlier, sometimes as early as kindergarten.

Short-Term Effect

Manhattan Institute researcher Jay Greene did a study on Florida's third grade retention policy, after two years of the policy, and found:

- Retained third graders made significant gains compared to socially promoted students.
- These gains actually grew substantially from the first to the second year after retention.
- Students who are socially promoted appear to fall farther behind over time, while retained third graders are able to catch up and succeed in later grades.
- Retention policies have had greatest impact on minority student learning.



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The research confirms our results.

Manhattan Institute researcher Jay Greene studied Florida's 3rd grade retention policy after just two years and found:

- **Retained 3rd graders made significant gains compared to socially promoted students.**
- **These gains actually grew substantially from the first to the second year after retention.**
- **Students who are socially promoted appear to fall farther behind over time.**
- **Retention policies have had greatest impact on minority student learning.**

Medium-Term Effect

A follow-up study by Marcus Winters examined the performance of the retained and promoted students once they reached 7th grade:

- **Retained students were still outperforming promoted students in reading and math as late as 7th grade**
- **Similar positive effect on 5th grade science test**
- **Results similar on low-stakes standardized test**



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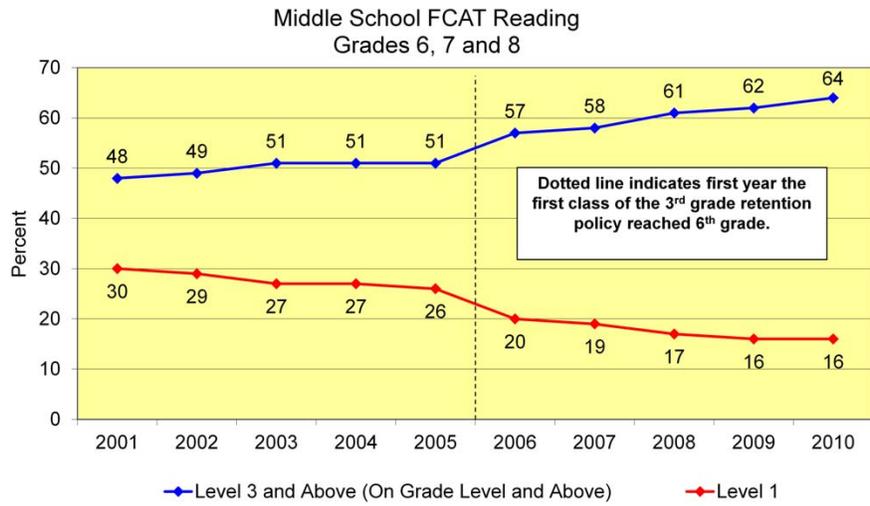
They also conducted a follow-up study, and the results are still compelling.

Once the students who received that extra year of intervention reached 7th grade, they were still outperforming those who had been promoted.

And they had meaningful gains in math and science as well.

Proficiency in reading is critical to success, plain and simple.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)





Funding for Student Success

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We also made changes in the way we fund education.

Incentivize Rigor

Since 1984, Florida provided school district bonus for AP passage: \$700. This bonus more than pays for cost of offering AP and free AP tests.

In 1999, realized few students in F schools taking PSAT.

In 2000:

- Free PSAT or PLAN tests for all 10th Graders
- Professional Development for teachers to teach AP
- Teacher Bonuses:
 - \$50 for every passing student score, up to \$2,000
 - \$500 for first passing score in D or F school, up to \$2,000



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We wanted to create incentives for achievement.

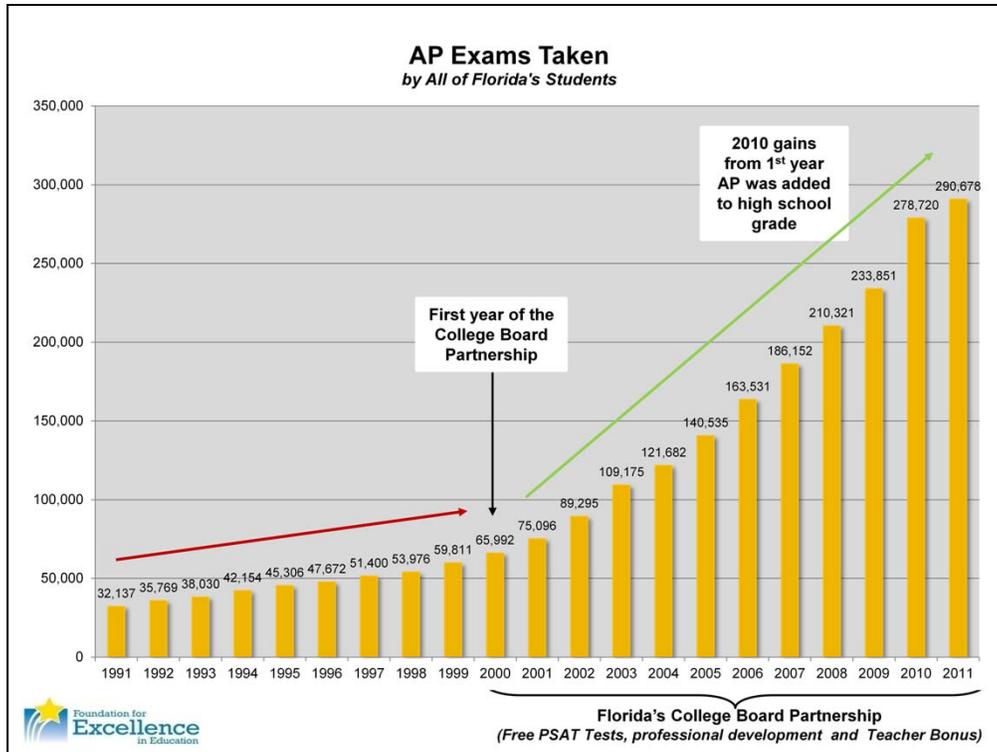
We started a program with the College Board to expand access to rigorous Advanced Placement courses.

Research shows that students who take AP courses are better prepared for success in college.

Under the program, we pay for PSAT and PLAN tests for all 10th graders and then use the results to enroll more students in AP courses.

We trained teachers (with matching funds from the College Board) to better prepare teachers to effectively teach these more rigorous courses.

And we reward teachers for student success. Schools already received \$700 for every student who passed an AP exam. But we started giving teachers \$50 of that \$700 for every one of their students who passed an AP exam for college credit. Teachers in D and F schools earn \$500 for the first student every year who passes an AP exam.

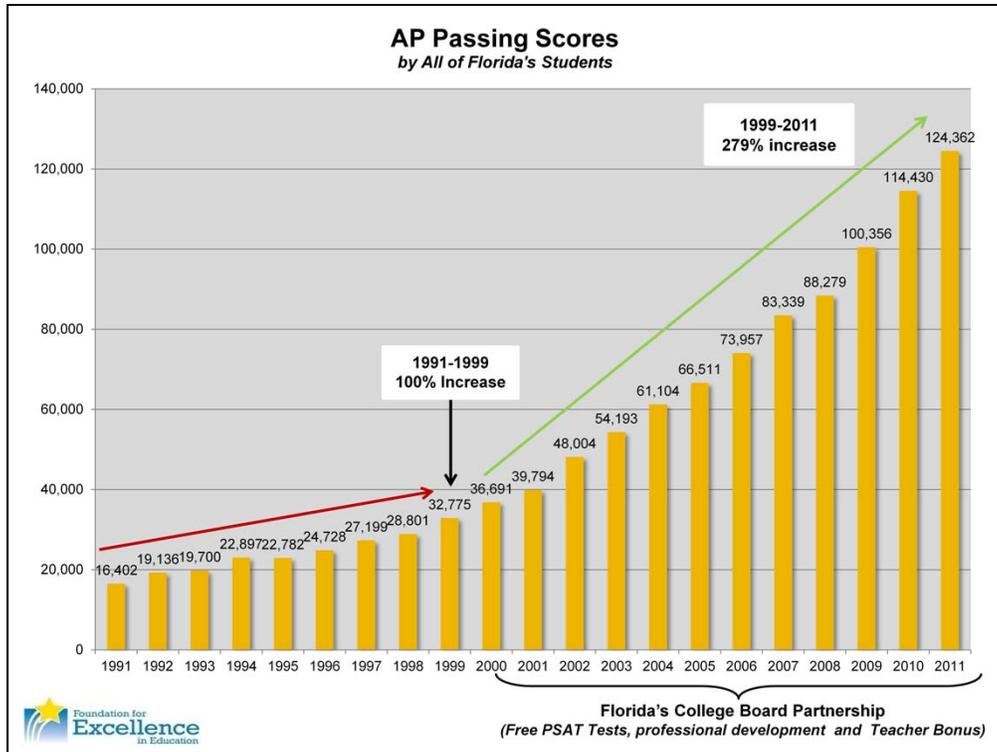


We didn't stop at just getting students to read or to graduate. We wanted more students going to college and succeeding when they got there.

Here's what happened when we started to reward teachers for the success of their students. Participation in harder courses soared and student achievement skyrocketed.

This graph shows the increase in the number of AP exams taken since we adopted the policy of rewarding teachers for student achievement.

From 1991-1999 there was an 86% increase in the number of AP exams taken. From 1999-2011 there was a 386% increase.



Not only are more students taking AP exams, but more students are passing the exams, an increase of almost 280%.

And again, minorities are making the greatest gains - 406% increase for Hispanic students, 441% increase for African American students.

And because this statistic is too powerful not to repeat, since our reforms, the number of Florida's African-American students who have taken at least one AP exam in high school has increased 750%. And the number of them passing them has increased 440%.



Quality Educators

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We also made changes in the way we fund education.

Opportunities to Teach

Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification:

- Prior to 2002, Florida state teacher certification was only available to individuals who graduated from approved colleges of education or subject area majors who took 20 credit hours of pedagogy.
- After 2002, Florida opened up multiple routes to teacher certification:
 - Full reciprocity with other state certificates
 - Approval of NBPTS and ABCTE certificates
 - Educator Preparation Institutes (at community colleges and universities for career changers)
 - Local district alternative certification programs (on-the-job training)
 - 2 years of teaching experience in post-secondary education
 - Education minors
 - Adjunct Certification – district-issued certificate for part-time educators



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In Florida we also created opportunities for individuals to be successful by becoming teachers.

Prior to 2002, the only way to teach in Florida was to graduate from a college of education or go back to a college of education.

After 2002, we opened up multiple paths to becoming a Florida teacher:

- We accepted all other states teacher certificates**
- We accept national board and American board certificates**
- We allow our community colleges to compete with our universities to train individuals to become teachers**
- We require every single school district to offer on-the-job training for individuals who do not have education degrees**
- If someone has taught in higher education for at least two years, we recognize their teaching experience to become a public school teacher**
- And we require our colleges of education to offer education as a minor**
- We recognize Teach for America graduates for teacher certification (passed in 2011)**
- Adjunct Certification – district-issued certificate for part-time educators**

Adjunct Certification is a district-issued certificate that allows districts to hire part-time or on-line educators. For example, Brevard County, where the Kennedy Space Center is located has many retired astronauts and engineers. If any of these

scientists would like to teach part-time during their retirement, our school districts could hire them through an adjunct certificate to teach one class of physics or aeronautics.

The law passed in 2000 and most of the alternative paths became effective in 2002 and by 2004 we hired more teachers through these alternative routes than through traditional colleges of education.

Alternatively certified teachers fill more critical teacher shortage areas such as math and science than traditionally certified teachers.

Teacher Effectiveness Reforms

Passed in 2011

- Teacher Evaluations – Beginning in 2013-2014, 50% of a teacher or principal's evaluation will be based upon student progress.
 - The progress for a teacher would be based upon 3-years of data on student progress on state or district-created tests.
 - The progress for a principal would be based upon the overall student learning gains of the students in the school on the state test.
- Teacher Pay – Beginning in 2013-2014, school districts will have to adopt salary schedules that:
 - Provide raises for teachers who are rated effective or highly effective based upon the new student-centered evaluations
 - Provide additional pay for teachers who teach in low-income or low-performing schools or who teach in a high need subject area (i.e., math, science, teacher students with disabilities)



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disabilities)

Teacher Effectiveness Reforms

Passed in 2011

- Teacher staffing
 - Eliminated LIFO (last in, first out) policies. When a district makes a decision on reductions in staffing, they must look at performance, not seniority.
 - Principals have the authority to not accept the placement of any teacher in their school who is not rated effective or highly effective.
 - Parental notification: Parents who are placed in classrooms with teachers who are evaluated as ineffective or needs improvement must be notified of this designation.
- Teacher Tenure Reform:
 - Any new teacher hired after July 1, 2011 is on an annual contract.
 - Existing tenured teachers retain their tenure; however, there is an expedited process for removing a tenured teacher if the teacher is evaluated as unsatisfactory or needs improvement.



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Choices

(Lots and Lots of Choices)

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The last element of our formula is choice. Florida provides an unprecedented array of choices for students.

School Choice

- McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities
- Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships
- Charter Schools
- Vouchers for Pre-Kindergarten
- Digital Learning



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And we offer an array of school choice for families.

When education is that important to determining your destiny, it seems only logical that we give parents and students a choice in where and how they get their education.

Florida offers several educational options:

- McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities
- Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships
- Charter Schools
- Vouchers for Pre-Kindergarten
- Digital Learning

Today, more than 300,000 students participate in some sort of school choice program.

Ironically, the Florida Supreme Court struck down the smallest of our school choice programs – Opportunity Scholarships which gave students a lifeline out of failing schools. Just 753 students participated in the last year of the program.

McKay Scholarships

Participation: 27, 207 students

Eligibility: Students with disabilities who have an active Individual Education Plan or 504 accommodation plan

Choices:

- Another public school within the district
- A public school in an adjacent district with services
- A participating private school

Funding: Scholarships are equal to per pupil funding for public school or the private school tuition, whichever is less



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McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities serve over 27,000 students. About half of them are minority students.

Even when we give choice to all 500,000 of our students with disabilities, less than 5% actually choose to attend a private school.

Research shows that parents of students with disabilities actually are more satisfied just having the choice even if they don't use it.

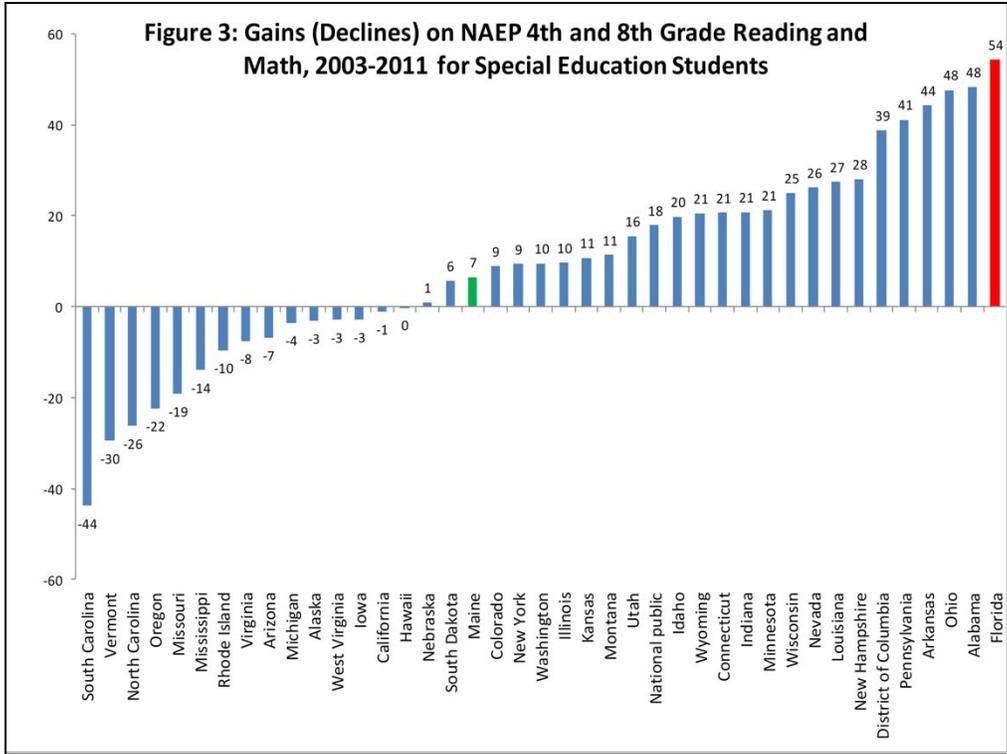
McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

Research concludes school choice for Florida's most vulnerable students provides greater parental satisfaction:

Manhattan Institute, 2003:

- **92.7% of current McKay participants are satisfied** or very satisfied with their McKay Scholarship schools. Only 32.7% were similarly satisfied with their public schools.
- Of former McKay scholarship participants, **62.3% were satisfied** with their McKay school, while only 45.2% were satisfied with their old public school.
- More than **90% of parents who have left the program believe it should continue** to be available to those who wish to use it.

In an initial study by the Manhattan Institute in 2003, they found overwhelming satisfaction with McKay participants and their families.



Florida Tax Credit Scholarships

Participation: 48,938 students (2012-2013 School Year)

Eligibility: Students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch. Students in grades K-5 are no longer required to have been enrolled in a public school the prior year as a condition of eligibility.

Choices:

- \$4,335 scholarship in 2012-13 to a participating school. Starting last year, the scholarship amount increases automatically by 4% per year until it reaches 80% of per pupil funding for public school students.
- \$500 for transportation to a public school in an adjacent district

Funding:

- Program capped at \$229 million in 2012-13. Starting in 2010, the cap increased automatically by 25% if corporate contributions exceed 90% of cap during the prior year



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Over 48,000 students received Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships this year. About 60% are minority and all of the students are poor (free and reduced priced lunch).

The program is designed to give financial freedom to families who can't afford to opt out of public school. When we first pushed for this reform, African American legislators were adamantly opposed. But several years later when legislation was introduced to expand the program, an African-American Senator (Al Lawson) gave the closing arguments in support of the expansion.

This year, the legislature made some incredibly important improvements to the program.

First, scholarships will automatically increase until they reach 80% of per pupil funding. As long as public funding for education increases, so will the amount of the scholarship.

Second, the cap on the program will increase with corporate contributions and student demand. Whenever contributions bump up against the cap, the cap increases.

http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/files/ctc_fast_facts.pdf

Florida Tax Credit Scholarships

Research concludes school choice saves taxpayer dollars and students are performing well:

State of Florida Government Accountability Office:

- For every dollar invested in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, the state saves \$1.49 in education funding, totally nearly \$39 million a year.

Collins Center:

- *“The Corporate Income Tax Scholarship Program has not decreased public education revenues based on the education funding data. . . . In fact, revenue funding levels for public education have increased. As projected by the Collins Center in 2002, there have been statewide accrued net revenues along with yearly increases in K-12 per pupil revenues.”*

David Figlio, Northwestern University:

- Students improved more in public schools that had more competition from private schools.



This program has been researched thoroughly and not only do the low-income students in the program keep pace with their peers, but the students remaining in the public school system actually improve performance as a result of the competition of this program.

The program also saves taxpayer dollars, nearly \$39 million a year according to the State of Florida Government Accountability Office.

Charter Schools

Participation: 203,077 students, 574 schools

Reforms:

- Removed the district cap on charter schools
- Began providing capital outlay funding for charter schools
- Allowed public schools to convert to charter schools
- Allowed municipalities/cities to apply for charter schools
- Allowed community colleges to create charter schools
- Allowed corporations to establish a charter school and give preference to their employees in enrollment – “corporate charter schools”
- Created an appeals process for charters denied by districts
- Created an alternate authorizer – stricken by court in 2008



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(Participation numbers from May 2012)

Florida has created a friendly environment for charter schools.

- **There is no cap on charter schools. The more, the better.**
- **The state provides capital outlay funding for charter schools.**
- **Public schools can convert to charter schools.**
- **Municipalities or cities can apply for charter schools.**
- **Community colleges can create charter schools and most offer dual credit so that students can graduate from high school with an associate’s degree.**
- **Corporations can create charter schools and give preference to their employees in enrollment.**
- **We established an appeals process for charters denied by districts and created an alternate authorizer, which unfortunately was stricken by court in 2008. (Do you sense a trend in the judicial intervention in education in Florida?)**

In 2011, we created “high performing” charters and charter systems that have additional benefits for faster growth and expansion.

Charter Schools

Participation: 203,077 students

Reforms:

- Created “high performing” charters and charter systems that have additional benefits for growth and expansion.
 - Grow enrollment
 - Add grade levels
 - Have a presumption of approval (i.e., fast pass) to open new charters in new school districts)
 - In 2011-2012, there were **116** high-performing charter schools.
- Authorized blended learning charter schools: those that mix traditional and online instruction
- Authorized full-time virtual charter schools
 - There are 8 full-time virtual charter schools authorized to open in the 2012-2013 school year.
- All Charter Schools in Florida are graded A-F and charters that receive two consecutive F’s must be closed.



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Reforms:

Created “high performing” charters and charter systems that have additional benefits for growth and expansion.

Grow enrollment

Add grade levels

Have a presumption of approval (i.e., fast pass) to open new charters in new school districts)

Number of apps in first year: 134

Authorized blended learning charter schools: those that mix traditional and online instruction

Authorized full-time virtual charter schools

Number of apps in first year: 53

Customized Learning

Florida Virtual School

- **Participation:** 300,000 course enrollments
- **Eligibility:** Any Florida student – public, private, or home education – in kindergarten through 12th Grade
- **Funding:** No cost to students, State pays only for completed courses

District Virtual Instruction Programs (passed in 2011)

- Every school district must offer at least 3 options for full-time virtual programs in grades k-12 and part-time virtual programs in grades 9-12.
- **Eligibility:** Any Florida student who previously attended traditional public school, siblings or entering kindergarten and 1st graders
- **Funding:** Funding based upon completion of the course/grade



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Florida launched the Florida Virtual School more than a decade ago. It was the first statewide public virtual school in the country.

Today, students are enrolled in 300,000 courses. Any Florida student – public, private, or home education – in k through 12th grade can enroll in the school. The school is free for students and the state only pays for completed courses.

In 2011, Florida required districts to offer at least 3 options for full-time virtual programs in grades k-12 and part-time virtual programs in grades 9-12. Any Florida student who previously attended traditional public school, siblings or entering kindergarten and 1st graders

Funding for this program is based upon completion of the course/grade This program is still new, so we are

waiting to see the results.

Customized Learning

Public School Choice – at the course level (passed in 2011)

- Florida students are allowed to take any online course offered by any school district within the state, as long as the course is not also offered in the student's home districts.
- The district that offers the course/provides the instruction receives the funding.

High School Graduation

- Beginning with freshman students in 2011-2012 school year, students will have to take an online course to meeting requirements for high school graduation.



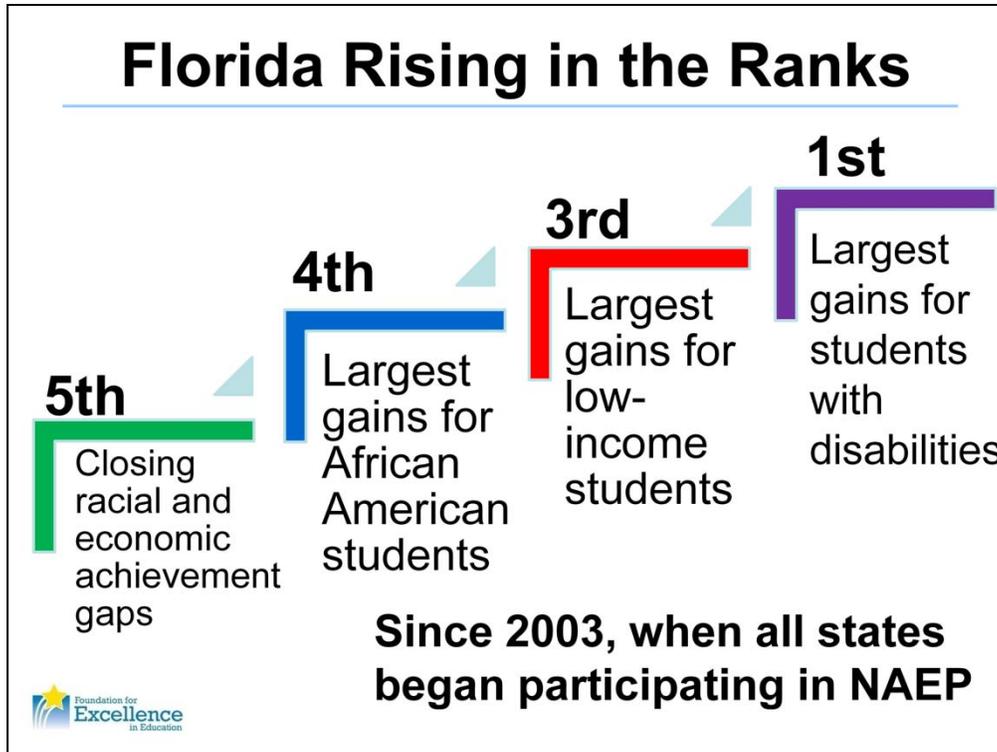
45

In 2011, Florida increased public school choice by allowing any public school student to take any online course offered by any school district within the state, as long as the course is not also offered in the student's home districts.

Funding follows the student so the district that offers the course/provides the instruction receives the funding.

Not a choice issue, but an important requirement to prepare students with the skills they need for college
Florida increased our High School Graduation requirements.

Beginning with freshman students in 2011-2012 school year, students will have to take an online course to meeting requirements for high school graduation.



Florida leads the nation in combined NAEP score gains for children with disabilities, made the third largest gains for low-income students and the 4th largest gains for African American students for the period in which all states participated in NAEP (2003-2011).

Additionally, Florida's African-American students have closed the achievement gap with white students faster than the national average every year since 2003.

**** NOTE:**

States ahead of Florida for closing racial/economic achievement gap: DC, Pennsylvania, Maryland,

Massachusetts (2010 Brookings Institute Report)

States ahead of Florida for gains with African American students: Nevada, Rhode Island, Arkansas

States ahead of Florida for gains with low-income students: DC, Alabama

Florida Students Achieve International Success: 2012 PIRLS



- Florida 4th graders outperformed every country and all but one other jurisdiction in reading
- Florida's score was 13 points higher than the United States average

****NEW SLIDE**

In 2012, Florida was the first U.S. state to take part in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

Florida came in second in the world on this international benchmarking literacy assessment, and scored 13 points higher than the US national average.

After years of trying to figure out
how to get school to do better, we
finally came up with the answer:
Threaten them.

Mike Thomas
June 2000



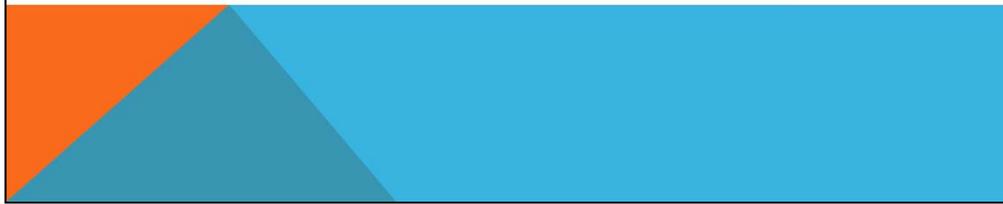
JEB BUSH EARNS AN F FOR HIS SCHOOL REFORMS

Mike Thomas
February 2002



**Children who cannot read will
not be able to heed newspaper
columnists.**

*Jeb Bush
March 2002*



Dear Mike: Every article you write seems to always end on the same note -- regardless of how it begins: Evil Jeb Bush is ruining education in Florida.

*Nancy Johnson
March 2002*



**Dear Nancy: That's because the
evil Jeb Bush is destroying
education in Florida.**

*Mike Thomas
March 2002*



**Before, we had an idea schools
were bad. Now the depth of
their badness has been
quantified.**

*Mike Thomas
September 2002*



**I'd never seen so many people
worried about whether poor
black children could read and
write until Jeb Bush took
office.**

*Mike Thomas
June 2003*



**For all the hype surrounding
them, vouchers were little more
than a mythical boogeyman
used to scare the education
bureaucracy into doing its job.**

*Mike Thomas
January 2006*



**These are substantial, almost
revolutionary, gains. The
problem for Bush is that he is
in the wrong party, serving the
wrong constituency.**

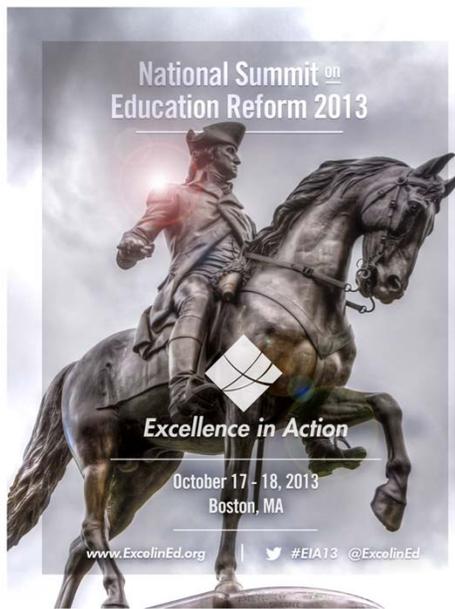
*Mike Thomas
May 2006*



**If Jeb Bush was a Democrat
and achieved these results by
spending another \$100 billion
on schools, he'd be hailed as a
hero.**

*Mike Thomas
December 2007*





National Summit

- 6th Annual Summit in Boston, Oct. 17-18
- Annual forum – variety of reform ideas
- Nonpartisan/Bipartisan
- 860 Attendees in 2012
 - 230 lawmakers / policymakers
- excelined.org/national-summit



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