

Kansas Association of School Boards

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The Lesson Learned? Study the Data

Calls for school reform from those who believe they have the answer are more prevalent than ever. Education reformer Dr. Matthew Ladner will speak at three events this week – Wichita, Topeka and Overland Park – at the invitation of the Kansas Policy Institute. Dr. Ladner of the Goldwater Institute in Arizona is the author of the “Report Card on American Education,” in which Kansas scored a D+ for education reform.

His message this time is entitled “Good to Great – Lessons for Kansas from Florida’s education revolution.” According to information distributed by the Kansas Policy Institute in publicity for Dr. Ladner’s presentations, five topics will be covered:

- What lessons can Kansas learn from other states around the country to ensure we deliver the right educational opportunities to every Kansas student?
- Kansas needs change to help ensure an effective and challenging education is available to every Kansas student.
- Student achievement in Kansas has been flat for the better part of the last decade while other states are showing marked improvement.
- Kansas is still better than average, but other states are implementing proven solutions and are showing dramatic gains.
- Florida implemented a variety of reforms and has seen their achievement levels increase at the same time they are raising standards.

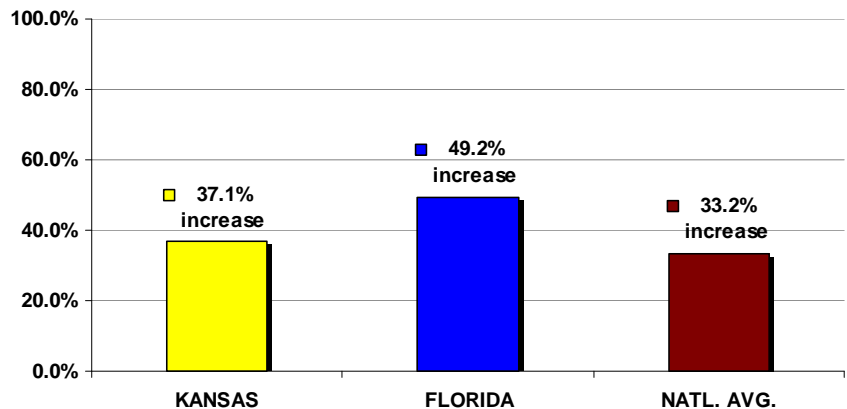
Comparisons of Kansas and Florida

According to several national measures of educational achievement, Florida has improved at a faster rate than Kansas in recent years, **but still ranks well below Kansas.**

Per Pupil Spending

According to the US Census reports, Florida’s spending per pupil increased more than Kansas over the same period, while still below spending by Kansas. Between 2002 and 2008, Kansas spending per pupil increased from \$7,052 to \$9,667, or 37.1 percent. Florida’s spending per pupil rose from \$6,056 to \$9,035, or 49.2 percent. Both were below the U.S. average, which increased from \$7,701 to \$10,259, or 33.2 percent.

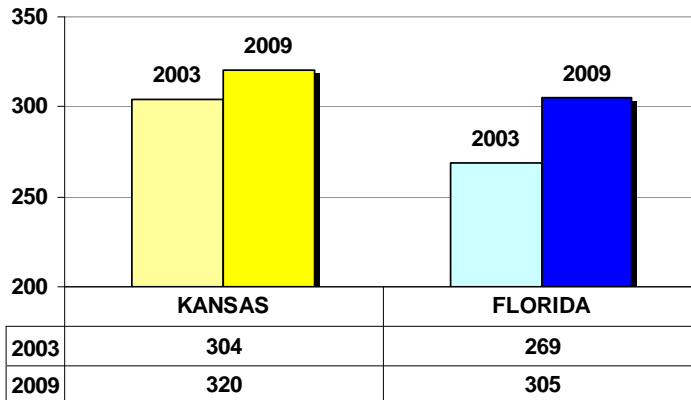
Percent of Increase in Per Pupil Spending
2002-2008
US Census Bureau Statistics



National Assessment of Education Progress

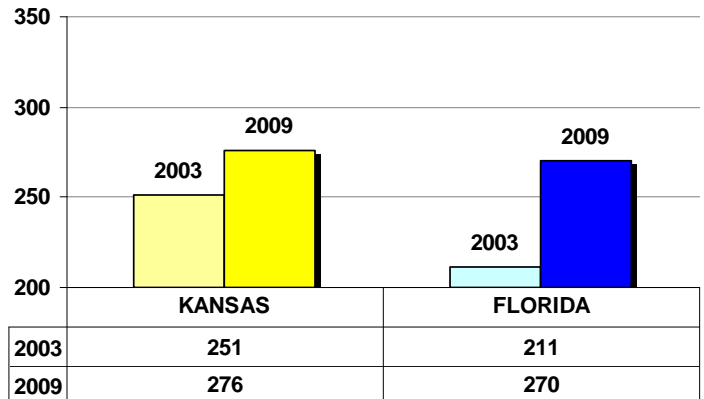
Using the combined percentage of students scoring basic or above on the four NAEP tests (4th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading and math), the Kansas score for all students increased from 304 in 2003 to 320 in 2009. Florida increased from 269 to 305. **In 2009, Kansas ranked 9th in the U.S., while Florida ranked 26th.**

**All Students
NAEP 2003/2009 Combined Score
(4th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading and math)**



The combined NAEP score for economically disadvantaged students in Kansas rose from 251 to 276. Florida's score for the same demographic rose from 211 to 270. **Kansas ranked 5th in the nation for economically disadvantaged students; Florida ranked 9th.**

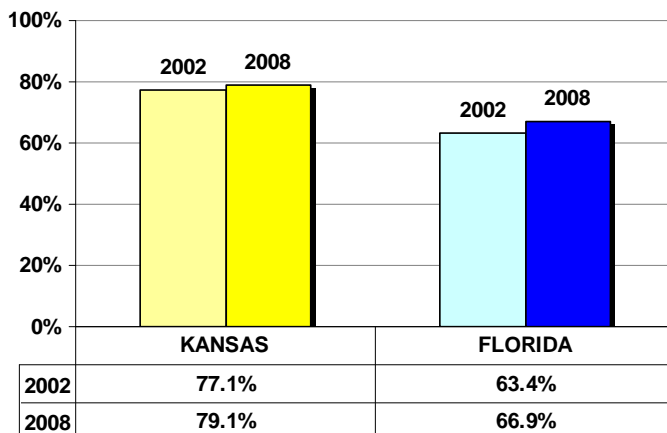
**Economically Disadvantaged Students
NAEP 2003/2009 Combined Score
(4th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading and math)**



Graduation Rate

Florida increased from 63.4 percent in 2002 to 66.9 percent in 2008. **Kansas had a slightly smaller increase but ranked higher, increasing from 77.1 percent to 79.1 percent.**

**Freshmen (Four Year) Graduation Rate 2002/2008
US Census Bureau Statistics**



Drop-Out Rate (Event)

Florida's drop-out rate improved from 4.4 percent in 2002 to 3.3 percent in 2008. **The Kansas drop-out rate improved from 3.2 percent to 2.5 percent.** Both states did better than the US average, which fell slightly from 3.6 percent in 2002 to 3.5 percent.

High School Completion Rate, age 18 to 24, Average for 2005-2007

Florida's high school completion rate was 80.2 percent, or 42nd in the nation. **The Kansas high school completion rate was 85.6 percent, or 13th in the nation.**

In Conclusion

A recent article in "Education Week" looks at the [current status of education policy changes in Florida](#). (You will need a subscription to read the full article or you can buy a copy of the article online from their website.)

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