



MYTHS VS. FACTS

The Lottery pays for public education in Florida.

Voters passed the Florida Lottery to be a supplement to the existing state education budget. It has since served to supplant money from the state. This year, the Lottery will not pay for even a single day of K-12 education. It now pays for college Bright Futures scholarships.

We're not 50th

According to the US Census Bureau and Education Week's Quality Counts Report, Florida ranks 50th in per capita spending on K-12 education and 39th in per pupil spending.

Florida's education system is 10th in the nation according to Education Week.

Education Week magazine rated states on six "key dimensions of educational policy and performance." Three of the six criteria grade Florida on standards- not actual performance. The other 3 "dimensions" use hard data: high school graduation rates (45th in nation) and per student funding (39th in nation), for example. Education Week's report represents a snapshot of selected indicators- not an endorsement of Florida's education work. It's far from a justification for shortchanging Florida's schools and children.

We've increased education funding year over year.

Florida has increased education funding by \$8 billion over the last 10 years. The costs of class size requirements, inflation, and the increase in student population total \$9 billion. As a result, education has experienced a \$1 billion net loss.

We increased per pupil funding by \$30 last session.

For the first time in the history of the state, we required a handout from the Federal government in the form of education stimulus funds. Due to our shamefully low levels of funding- Florida did not qualify for these funds and had to apply for a waiver. This year, they constitute nearly 10% of our total funding, saved nearly 20,000 education jobs, and are scheduled to run out next year. Our legislature has no current plan to replace this money.

We are only in this situation because of the recession.

Florida has chronically underfunded public education. At the peak of our state's dollar earmarked for education (2006), our per pupil funding was approximately \$7,000 while the U.S. average was over \$10,000.

Our schools are successful without funding. We do more with less.

We as parents and teachers have enabled this broken system for too long. Our legislature demands more and more from children and their teachers with standardized tests, more accountability and many unfunded mandates. Parents hold fundraisers and bake cupcakes to replace 10 year old computers and our teachers dig deeper into their own pockets to pay for classroom necessities. We have reached critical mass- the tipping point. It's not just about the money but you can't bake the cake without the flour and the eggs.

Your school board/superintendent is just trying to scare you

It is the local School Boards' job to uphold the law of the State of Florida. They in conjunction with their Superintendents are bound by mandates and a budget handed to them by the state. They have a responsibility to the parents of their districts to keep us informed of potential impacts to the school budgets and ultimately to anything that will effect the delivery of a "high-quality education" to our children.

Your school board/superintendent is inefficient with their money

There are inefficiencies in all organizations and measures should always be taken to reduce waste. However, Florida is one of the few states with school districts that are concurrent with county boundaries. As such, we have 5 of the top 12 largest school districts in the nation. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Florida spends more than 65% of funds on "classroom instruction" and is well below the national average for spending for administration.

We can't raise taxes in a down economy

Florida lawmakers continue to raise local property taxes and fees to pay for the state's education obligation. Meanwhile, they give \$xx billion in sales tax exemptions to special interests and \$xx billion in corporate tax breaks to large businesses that are not based in Florida.

Taxes would hurt business

Large, multi-state corporations are paying very little in taxes while smaller businesses located only in Florida pay an unfair share. A broadening of the tax base would make our taxes more equitable and would actually reduce the taxes of the average Florida business. In October 2009, a national tax