

Florida K-12 Funding Since the Recession: Still Not Recovered



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National Reports Show Florida Education Funding Losing Ground

In the four consecutive years leading up to the 2008 recession, Florida raised education spending from 7.5% to 9.7%, making significant progress towards the District's goal of attaining U.S. average education spending. Yet since the recession, Florida has lost more ground on education funding than any other state and rates among the worst in terms of funding fairness, according to recent national analyses.

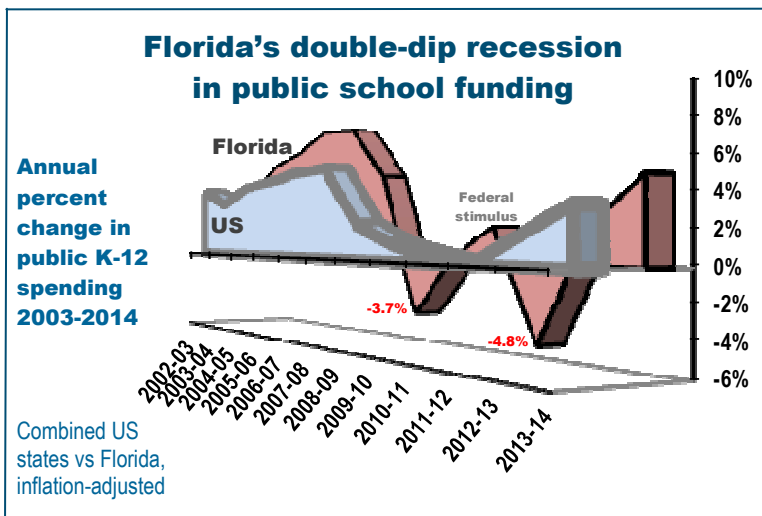
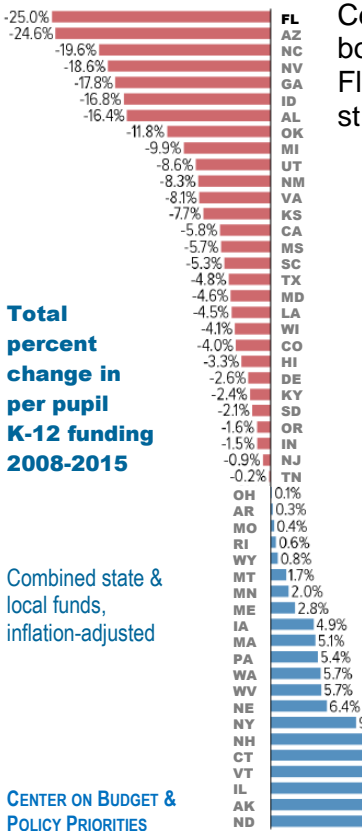
Largest US funding loss. Adjusted for inflation, more than half of the states lost ground in per-pupil spending from 2008 to 2015, but no state fell further than Florida. Florida state funding during that period dropped 22 percent per student, as calculated by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and state and local funds fell a combined 25 percent—the largest inflation-adjusted funding decline among all 50 states. Florida's 2018 education spending per pupil, in constant dollars that reflect the real purchasing capacity of public schools, is now \$1,181 below 2008 levels.

FL per pupil funding	
2007-08 2nd Calc.	\$7,347
2007-08 In 2017 dollars	\$8,634
2017-18 2nd Calc.	\$7,453
GAP	(-\$1,181)

Double-dip education recession. Florida's K-12 budget lags the rest of the country due to a "double dip" recession in total spending that is compounded by rising enrollment. Total U.S. spending never actually receded due largely to federal stabilization funds, staying at or above the inflation level throughout the slowdown. By contrast, Florida enacted absolute funding level drops in both 2009 and 2012 (3.7 and 4.8 percent below inflation), with modest gains in between from the federal stimulus. Over those years, per-pupil funding was further diluted as local enrollment grew 2.7 times faster than the U.S. rate.

Failures in funding effort and fairness. These recessionary declines are reflected in other measures of education funding. Florida is one of two states faring "very poorly" on all four fairness measures in an annual report card by the Rutgers Education Law Center. Controlling for differences, both funding levels and teacher wages rank in the bottom ten, with wage competitiveness slipping from 34th to 40th in the last four years. Florida receives overall grades of C for distribution and F for effort, as the state's strong economy and wealth are not fully reflected in its public educational priorities.

US funding change: Florida ranks last



Florida's ratings

Fairness measures	
⇒ Funding level:	41 st
⇒ Fund distribution:	C
⇒ Funding effort	F
<i>Per capita vs. economy</i>	
⇒ Coverage	43 rd
<i>Disparity between those in public vs. private education</i>	
Other measures	
⇒ Teacher wage competitiveness	40 th
⇒ Teacher-to-student fairness ratio	51 st
RUTGERS EDUCATION LAW CENTER	

SOURCES: LEFT: Figure 8 in M. Leachman, K. Masterson, & E. Figueroa, *A Punishing Decade for School Funding* (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Nov. 29, 2017). CENTER: Based on *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, Table 236.25 (current expenditures for public primary and secondary education for selected years, in constant dollars). RIGHT: B. Baker, D. Farrie, M. Johnson, T. Luhm, & D. Sciarra, *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card* (Education Law Center, Rutgers Graduate School of Education, Sixth Edition, Jan. 2017). ABOVE: Enrollment growth in *Digest* Table 203.20 (1.41% FL increase versus 0.52% total US increase from Fall 2008 to Fall 2011); table data from FL Dept. of Education.