



PRESS KIT

Foundation for Florida's Future

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About the Foundation for Florida's Future

Our Vision

An education system that allows each child achieve his or her God-given potential and prepares all students to succeed in the 21st century economy.

Our Mission

To make Florida's education system a model for the nation.

Our History

The Foundation for Florida's Future is a not-for-profit public policy organization dedicated to keeping the promise of quality education by advocating reforms that raise standards, increase accountability, provide incentives for success and offer choices – key factors for improving quality in any system, including public schools.

Florida is delivering on the promise of a better education. Bold reforms, backed by unprecedented increases in funding for schools, are transforming our schools into world-class learning institutions that challenge students to strive for excellence. School boards, principals and teachers across our state are embracing the challenge with energy and creativity. And students, not surprisingly, are rising to the challenge and exceeding expectations.

But the work is only beginning. To keep our promise, Florida must constantly challenge the status quo. A perpetual cycle of reform will continually improve quality. Without reform, our state will lose ground and miss opportunities that could prevent millions of students from realizing their full potential. The Foundation works with parents, educators, business leaders, policymakers and others who share a passion for quality education to foster awareness and adoption of reforms.

We can't turn back the clock to the failed policies of the past. These are our children... how can we do anything less?

Press Contact

All press inquiries should be directed to Jaryn Emhof at jaryn@floridapromise.org or (850) 391-3070.



About our Founder: Governor Jeb Bush



Jeb Bush is Founder, Chairman of the Board and President of the Foundation for Florida's Future. He served as the 43rd governor of Florida, from 1999 through 2007.

During his two terms, Bush championed major reform of education. Florida raised academic standards, required accountability in public schools and created the most ambitious school choice program in the nation. The transformation is underway and the progress is measurable. More students are reading, writing and doing math and science on or above grade level. More high school seniors are earning a diploma and fewer students are dropping out. Florida's third through 10th grade students are outscoring 60-70 percent of their peers in all other states in both reading and math.

Under his leadership in the late 1990s, the Foundation for Florida's Future joined forces with the Greater Miami Urban League to establish the state's first charter school, Liberty City Charter School, in one of the most underserved parts of Miami-Dade County. He also co-authored Profiles in Character, a book profiling 14 of Florida's civic heroes—people making a difference without claiming a single news headline.

Bush took time out of his successful business career to serve as Florida's secretary of commerce under Bob Martinez, Florida's 40th governor, where he promoted the state worldwide.

Bush earned a bachelor's degree in Latin American Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin. Bush and his wife Columba live in Miami and have three grown children. Bush is the son of President George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush.

Our Board of Directors

Jeb Bush, Chairman
Brian Yablonski, Secretary
Dr. Zachariah P. Zachariah
F. Phillip Handy
John Winn
Toni Jennings
Susan Pareigis

Florida's Education: A Model for the Nation

Since 1999, Florida has gone from the bottom of the nation to a model for the nation in the quality of education. Under the Sunshine State system of high expectations, data-driven accountability and unprecedented choices, more students are reading on grade level, passing rigorous college-preparatory courses and graduating from high school than a generation ago.

Placing a Command Focus on Reading

Fourth grade is a bellwether year in a student's academic career. Through third grade, students "learn to read." In the fourth grade, students are expected to "read to learn." Students who are unable to read independently in that pivotal year are more likely to fall behind in more subjects in subsequent grades. By making reading a requirement for promotion to the fourth grade, Florida is ensuring students have the skills to succeed in later grades.

In 1998, nearly half of Florida's fourth graders were functionally illiterate, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card. Today, Florida's fourth graders, on average, are outperforming the national average in reading and the greatest gains are occurring among minority students, according to the latest NAEP.



According to the Nation's Report Card, Florida's fourth grade Hispanic students read as well or better than the average student in 31 states and the District of Columbia.



Comparing States to Florida's Hispanic Students
Hispanic Students in Florida now outscore or tie the statewide reading average of all students in 31 states.





In Florida, 40% of the graduating class of 2009 took at least one AP Exam during high school, compared to just 26% nationally.



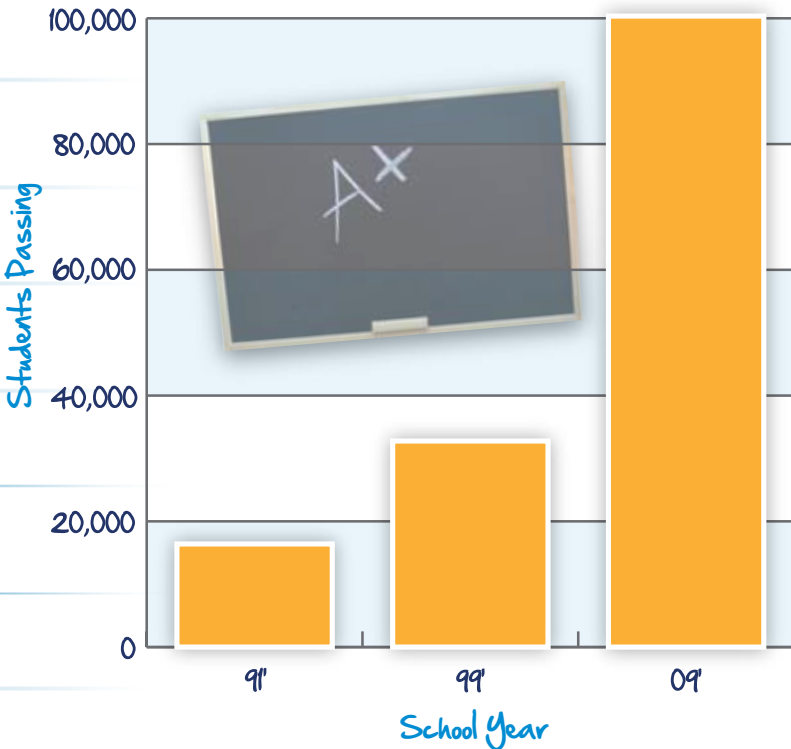
Students Passing Advanced Placement Exams
1991 – 2009

Rewarding Teachers for Student Achievement

For more than a decade, Florida has rewarded teachers for student achievement.

In 1999, Florida began grading schools based solely on student scores on the FCAT. Schools that earn an A or improve a letter grade receive a per student cash bonus. Since then, more than \$1 billion has been awarded to schools with approximately 85% of that money going to bonuses for educators and school staff.

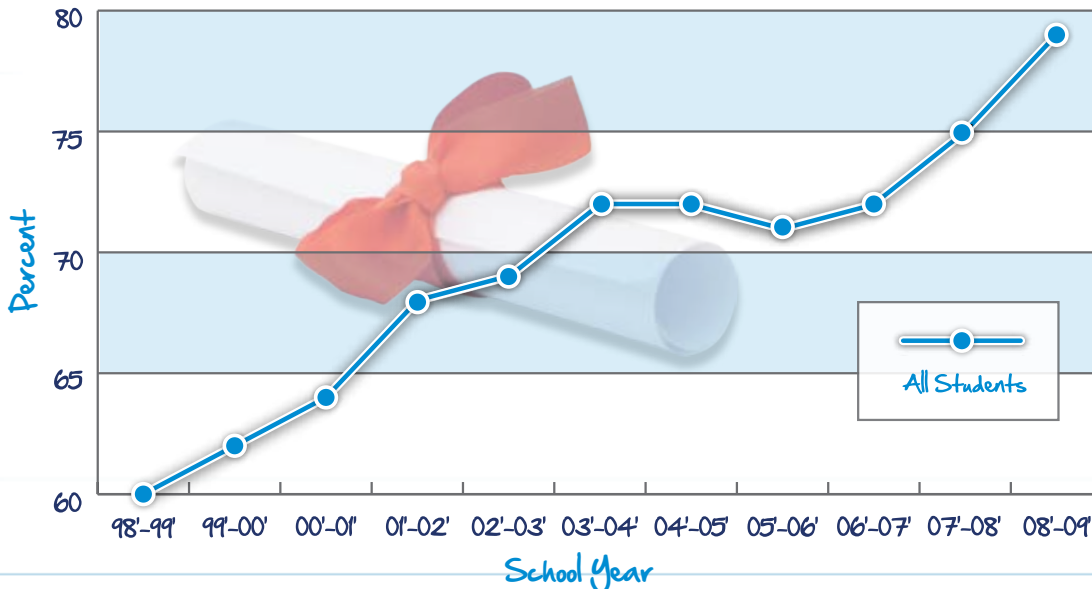
In 2000, Florida launched a strategic partnership with the College Board to better prepare students for college and careers. Under the program, teachers earn \$50 for every student who passes an Advanced Placement exam, up to \$2,000 annually. Since then, the number of students taking and passing these rigorous courses has surged to historic levels.



Busting the Myth about Higher Expectations

For more than a quarter century, Florida has required students to pass a reading and math test to earn a high school diploma. For years, the test was based on the knowledge and skills learned in the 8th grade. In 2002, Florida raised the rigor of the test to the 10th grade level. Contrary to dire predictions about the consequences of the tougher test, more students are actually passing the exit exam and earning a diploma.

Florida Graduation Rates
1998 – 2009





Frequently Asked Questions

What do you do?

The Foundation for Florida’s Future is committed to keeping the promise of a quality education in Florida. The Foundation advances policies that challenge the status quo – policies that will ensure Florida remains at the forefront of the national movement for education reform. The Foundation works with students, parents, educators, business leaders, and lawmakers to foster awareness about and adoption of reforms.

How are you related to the Foundation for Excellence in Education?

The Foundation for Excellence in Education, also founded by Governor Jeb Bush, is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization whose sole mission is to ignite a movement for education reform throughout the nation. Florida’s education system is a model for the nation, and the Foundation for Excellence in Education is working to spread the Florida Formula for Student Achievement to other reform-minded states.

What is “The Florida Promise?”

The Florida Promise is the State of Florida’s commitment to providing a quality education to each and every Sunshine State student. In today’s 21st century economy, knowledge is the primary commodity. To succeed in the global marketplace, Florida’s students will need the benefits of a quality education. The Foundation for Florida’s Future is working to keep the promise of a quality education by continuously challenging the status quo and advocating a perpetual cycle of reform.

What is the Florida Formula for Student Achievement?

The Florida Formula for Student Achievement is a combination of education reforms that have produced a dramatic transformation in educational quality and student achievement. Since enactment of the A+ Plan in 1999, Florida has risen from the very depths of the national ranking to a top-ten ranking in education quality today, according to Education Week. The Florida Formula centers on seven core principles, including high academic standards, standardized measurement, data-driven accountability, teacher excellence, outcome-based funding, school choice, and disruptive innovation.