

# POLICY BRIEF

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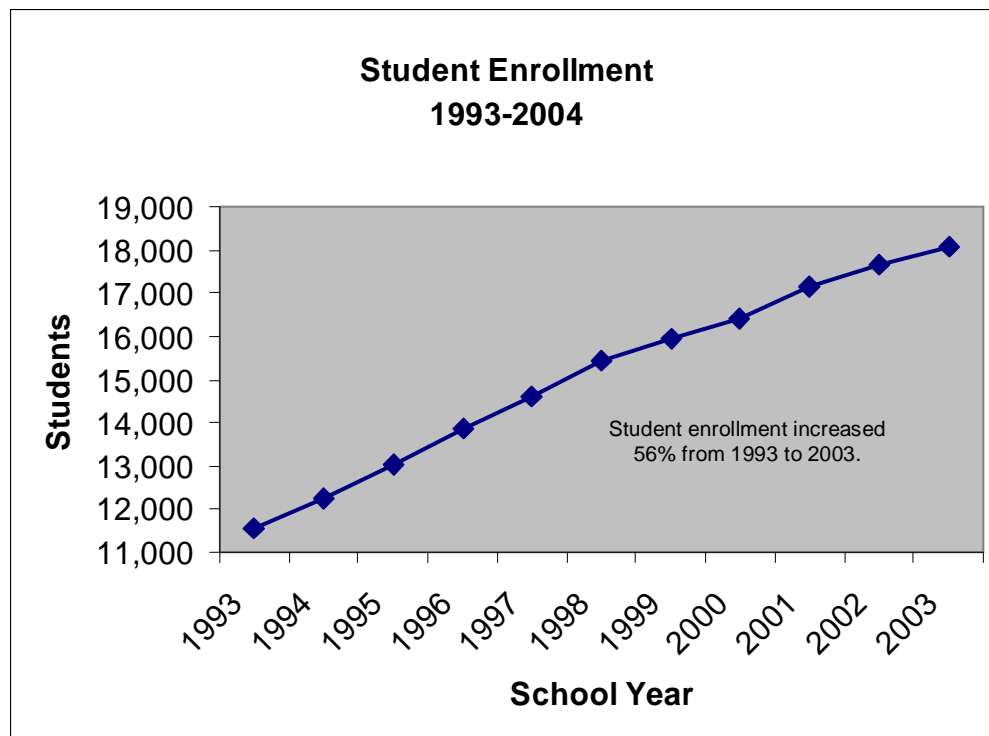
## FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION SPENDING IN KANSAS: BLUE VALLEY

BY JOHN R. LAPLANTE

A report from the Kansas Legislative Research Department reveals that statewide, education funding has gone up 56 percent since 1993, with per-pupil spending now approaching \$10,000 per year.<sup>1</sup> But what has happened to Blue Valley District Schools (USD 229) during that time?

### **Student enrollment has grown over 50 percent from 1993**

The primary factor driving the need for school funding is the number of students. During the 1993-1994 school year, USD 229 enrolled 11,569 students. That number has steadily increased each year. For the 2003-2004 school year, there were 18,080 students enrolled—an increase of 56 percent from 1993.

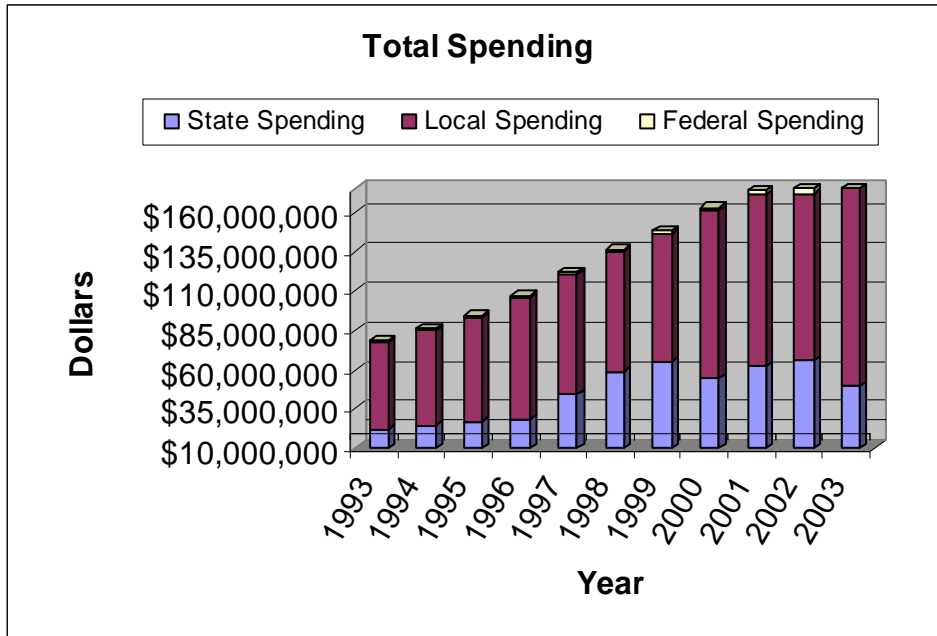


## State Funding

Starting from a base of \$22.0 million in 1993-1994, state aid for USD 229 reached \$49.3 million in the 2003-2004 school year—an increase of 124 percent.

## Local Funding

Local funding for USD 229 has also grown significantly. From a base of \$55.3 million in 1993, school aid rose to \$132.9 million in 2004—an increase of 140 percent.

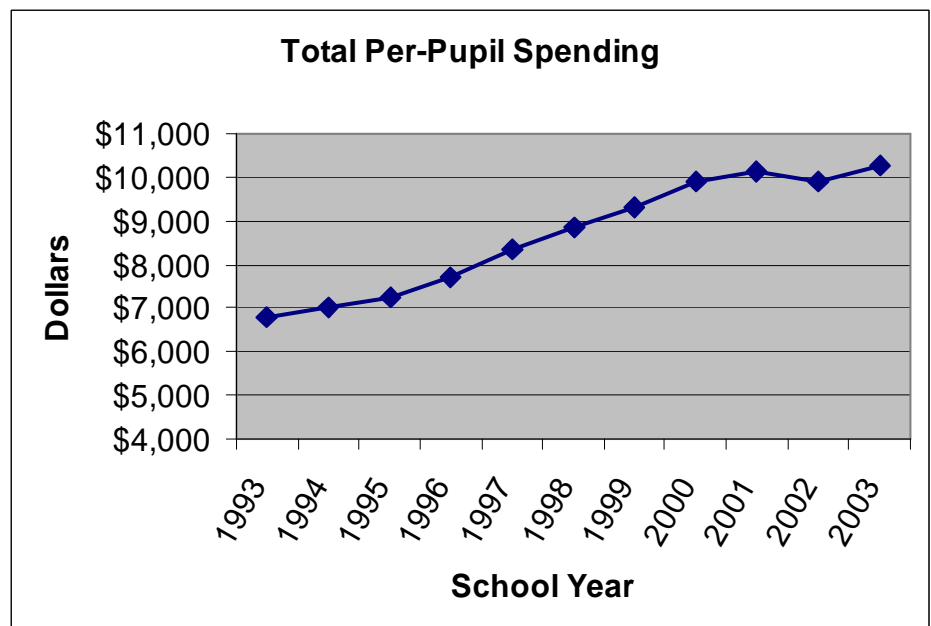


## Total Funding

Combined with federal funding, total spending on K-12 education in USD 229 rose from \$78.3 million in 1993 to \$185.7 million in 2004—an increase of 137 percent.

## Per-Pupil Spending Nears \$10,000

Though enrollment has gone up in USD 229, taxpayer funding has gone up even more, leading to a 52 percent increase in per-pupil spending. In the 2003-2004 school year, per-pupil spending was \$10,275. Even after significant growth in student enrollment that might have diluted financial support, per-pupil funding increased 20 percent in inflation-adjusted terms



## Summary

While student enrollment in USD 229 grew by over half, its funding increased even more. An after-inflation, per-pupil funding increase of 20 percent is a substantial commitment of new resources.

Let's not blame the legislators, then, for not wanting to escalate spending levels even more. The problem with education is not that we aren't spending money. We're spending more of it every year. Instead let's improve schools by introducing market forces that produce higher quality and lower prices through increased competition.



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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>School District Financing Data by District (School Years 1993-2004) is available online at <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/Publications/SchoolDistNum.pdf>

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