

POLICY BRIEF

Volume 2, Issue 2

April 1, 2005

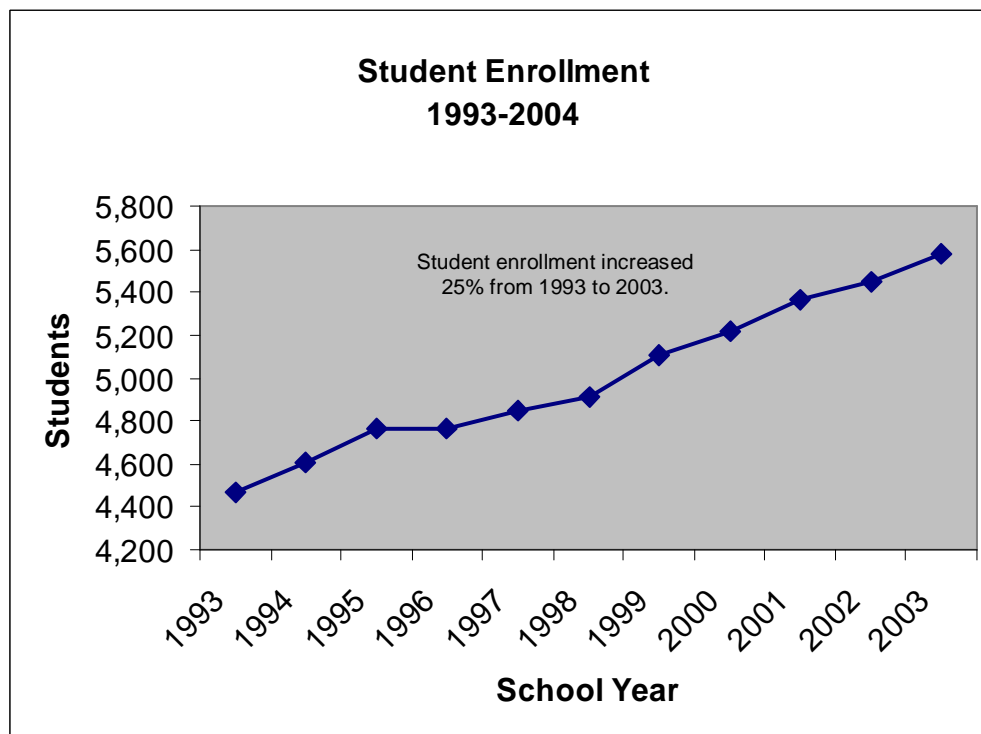
FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION SPENDING IN KANSAS: DODGE CITY

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.¹ But what has happened to Dodge City Public Schools (USD 443) during that time?

Strong enrollment growth since 1993

The primary factor driving the need for school funding is the number of students. During the 1993-1994 school year, USD 443 enrolled 4,470 students. That number has steadily risen since then. For the 2003-2004 school year, there were 5,580 students enrolled—an increase of 25 percent from 1993.

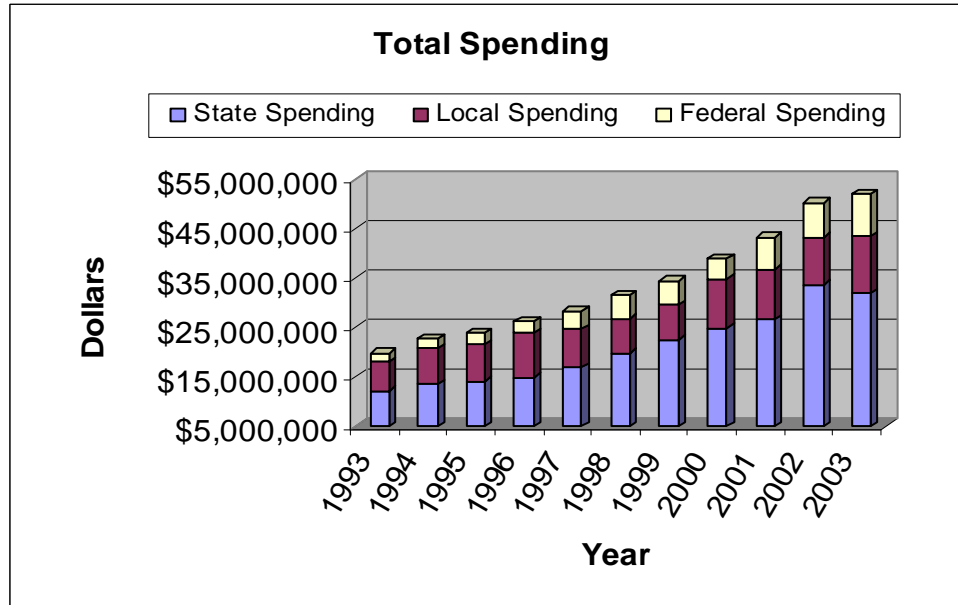


State Funding

Starting from a base of \$12.1 million in 1993-1994, state aid for USD 443 reached \$31.9 million in the 2003-2004 school year—an increase of 163 percent.

Local Funding

Local funding for USD 443 has also grown significantly. From a base of \$5.8 million in 1993, local school aid rose to \$11.4 million in 2004—an increase of 96 percent.

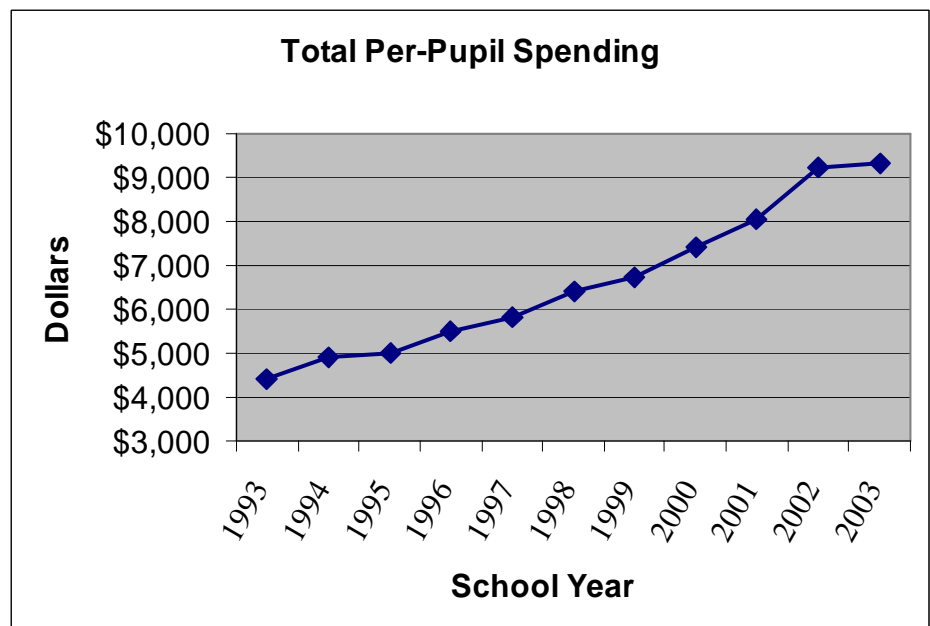


Total Funding

Combined with federal funding, total spending on K-12 education in USD 443 rose from \$19.7 million in 1993 to \$51.8 million in 2004—an increase of 163 percent.

Per-Pupil Spending Nears \$10,000

Though student enrollment in USD 443 has increased, taxpayer funding has increased much more. While enrollment has increased 25 percent, per-pupil spending increased 111 percent. In the 2003-2004 school year, per-pupil spending was \$9,299. Even after the effects of inflation are considered, per-pupil funding increased 66 percent from 1993 to 2004.



Summary

While student enrollment in USD 443 grew by almost one quarter, its funding increased even more. Even so, USD 443 was one of the plaintiffs in the recent lawsuit against the State of Kansas. Given an after-inflation, per-pupil increase of 66 percent since 1993, it's hard to say that the commitment of new, additional resources has been meager.

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.



John R. LaPlante is a Flint Hills Education Policy Fellow. He holds an M.A. in political science from The Ohio State University

Notes

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

MORE ABOUT THE FLINT HILLS CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

The Flint Hills Center for Public Policy is a Kansas think tank created as an independent voice to help political decision makers make informed choices. The Flint Hills Center for Public Policy is a non-profit, nonpartisan policy think tank. While not involved in the implementation or administration of government policy, our goal is to inform and raise public awareness of policy issues. For more information, visit our web site at www.flinthills.org.

Flint Hills Center for Public Policy

P.O. Box 782317
Wichita, KS 67278-2317
(316) 634-0218
inquiries@flinthills.org
www.flinthills.org

