

POLICY BRIEF

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FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION SPENDING IN KANSAS

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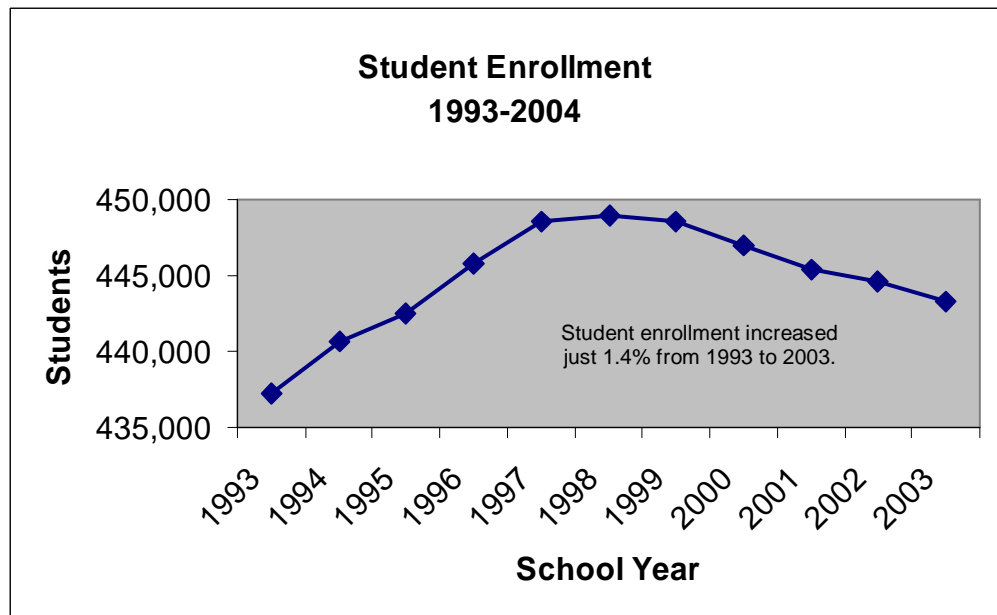
Have Kansas legislators shirked their responsibility to fund public education? It's hard to say that is the case, since education funding has gone up over 50 percent since 1993, and per-pupil spending now approaches \$10,000 each year.

A report by the Kansas Legislative Research Department, entitled *School District Financing Data by District (School Years 1993-2004)*,¹ paints a picture of significant increases in public spending on education.

Student enrollment growth is weak

The primary factor driving the need for school funding is the number of students. In the 1993-1994 school year, there were 437,210 students. That number increased for several years until it peaked at 448,926 during the 1998-1999 school year.

Since then, enrollment has been on the decline, reaching 443,302 for 2003-2004, the last complete school year. As a result, the number of students in 2004 exceeded the number from 1993 by just 1.4 percent.

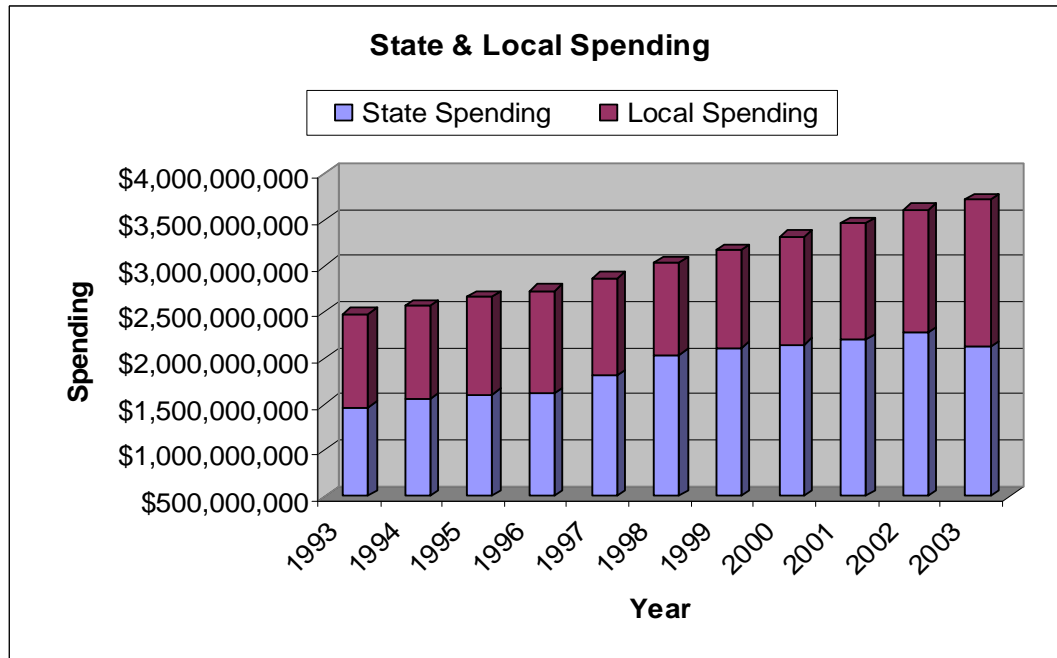


State Funding

Starting from a base of \$1.49 billion in 1993-1994, state aid reached \$2.2 billion in the 2003-2004 school year, an increase of 45 percent.

Local Funding

Local funding has also grown significantly. From a base of \$1 billion in 1993, school aid rose to \$1.6 billion in 2004, an increase of 57 percent.



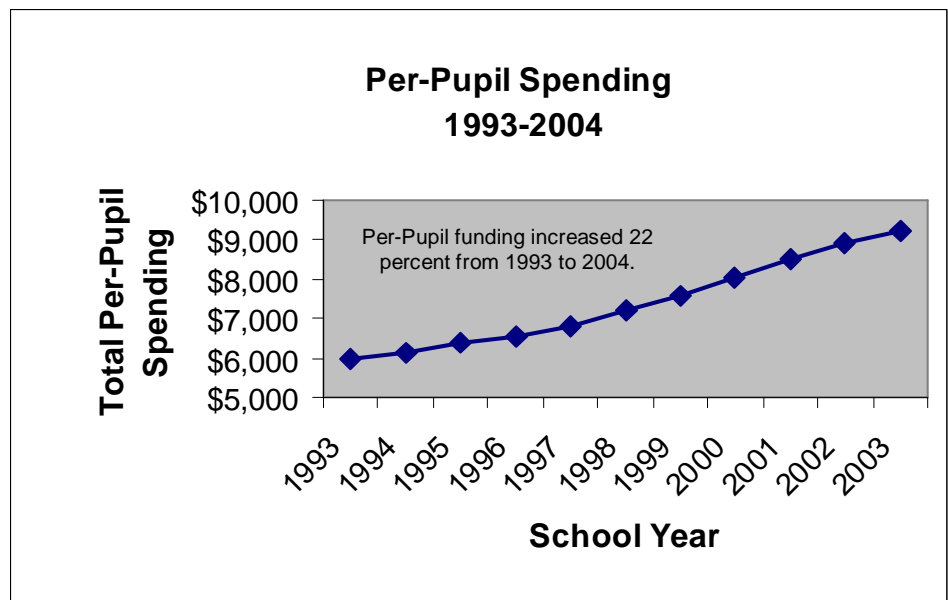
Total Funding

Combined with federal funding (about 10 percent of education dollars), total spending on K-12 education in Kansas rose from \$2.6 billion in 1993 to \$4.1 billion in 2004, an increase of 56 percent.

Per-Pupil Spending Nears \$10,000

Taxpayer funding went up substantially during a time when growth in student enrollment was close to 1 percent. Roughly speaking, even though there are as many students now as there were in 1993, total education funding has increased over 50 percent.

Even after the effects of inflation and enrollment growth are considered, per-pupil funding increased 22 percent from 1993 to 2004. Today, per-pupil spending is nearly \$10,000.



Summary

Despite enrollment increases of only 1.4 percent in a period of modest inflation, education went up 56 percent from 1993 to 2004. In inflation-adjusted terms, spending increased nearly 25 percent. That's 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

¹School 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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