

POLICY BRIEF

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FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION SPENDING IN KANSAS: SHAWNEE MISSION

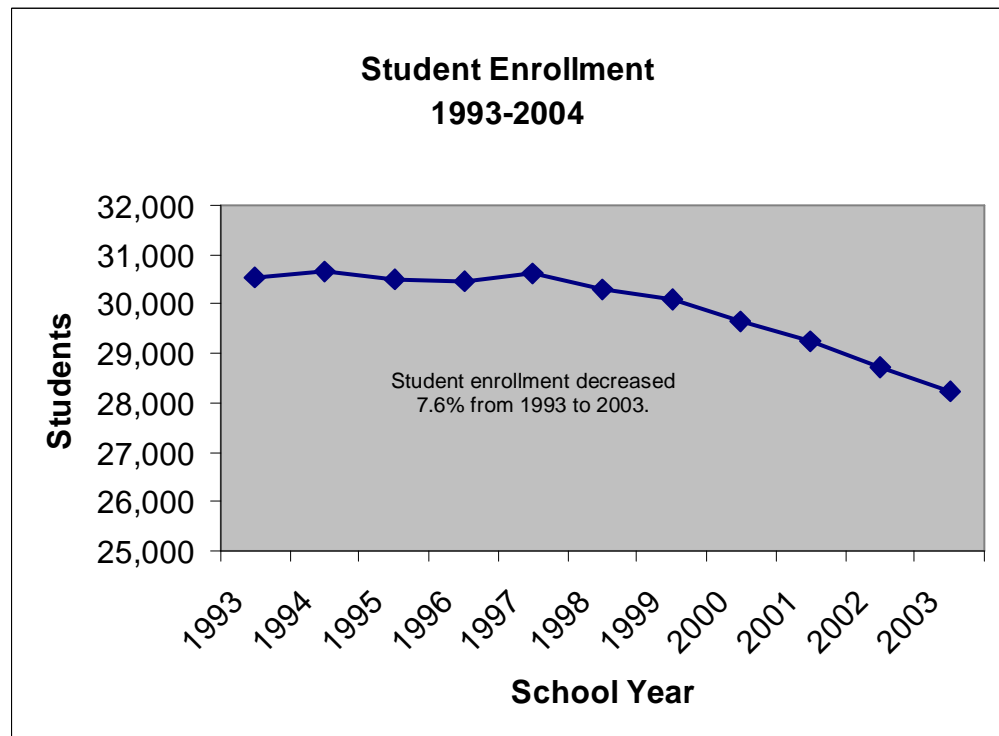
BY JOHN R. LAPLANTE

A report from the Kansas Legislative Research Department reveals that statewide, education funding has gone up 56 percent since 1993.¹ But what has happened to Shawnee Mission (USD 512) during that time?

Student enrollment has declined 7.6 percent since 1993

The primary factor driving the need for school funding is the number of students. USD 512 has seen a trend of falling enrollment for years. During the 1993-1994 school year, USD 512 enrolled 30,537 students. Since the start of that school year, enrollment has risen two years and fallen eight years. The two increases were barely visible, at 0.4 percent each. Twice, year-to-year enrollment fell 1.8 percent. During other years, enrollment fell anywhere from 0.1 to 1.5 percent.

For the 2003-2004 school year, there were 28,218 students enrolled—a decrease of 7.6 percent from the 1993 level.

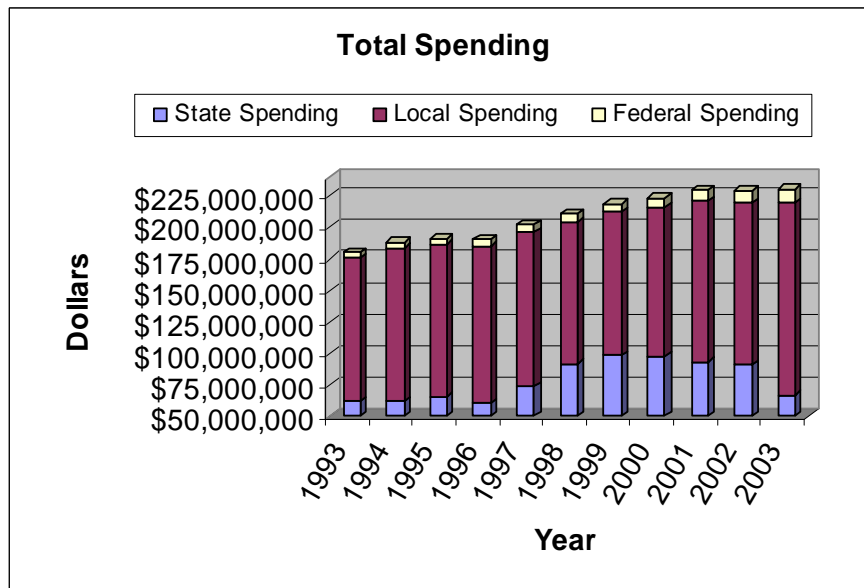


State Funding

Starting from a base of \$61.8 million in 1993-1994, state aid for USD 512 climbed to \$97.9 million during the 1999-2000 school year—an increase of 58.3 percent. Since that time, state aid has fallen every year, along with enrollment. Still, the state aid amount of \$66.5 million in the 2003-2004 school year was an 8 percent increase from 1993.

Local Funding

During the same years, local funding for USD 512 has been on an upward trend, even with a decline during three of the ten years since 1993-1994. From a base of \$114 million in 1993, local school aid increased to \$153 million in 2004—an increase of 34 percent from its starting point.

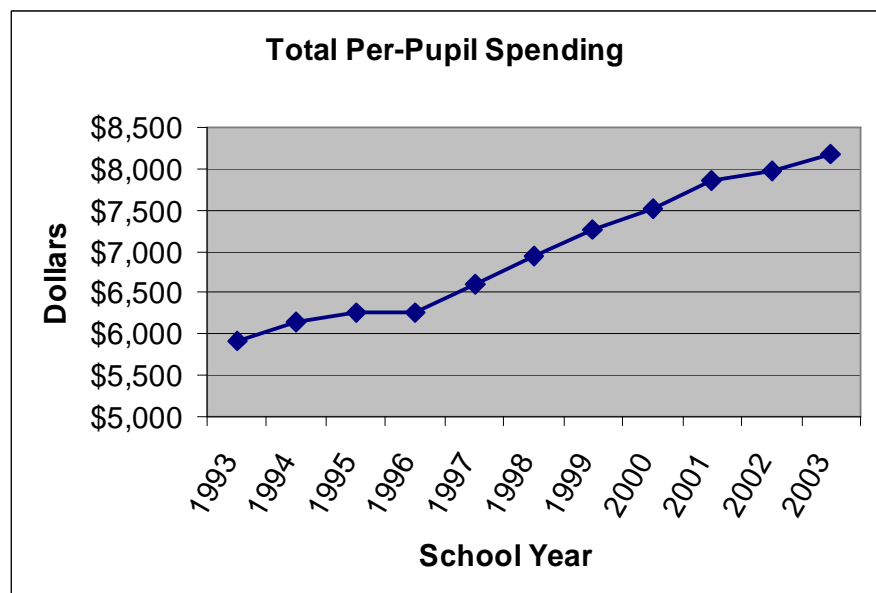


Total Funding

When state and local funding was combined with federal funding, total funding for USD 512 increased from \$180 million in the 1993-1994 school year to \$231 million in the 2003-2004 school year—an increase of 28 percent.

Per-Pupil Spending Up Nearly Forty Percent

The increased amounts of funds spent for USD 512, combined with fewer students to teach, sent per-pupil spending up 38 percent between 1993 and 2004. In the 2003-2004 school year, per-pupil spending stood at \$8,176. Even after adjusting for inflation, per-pupil funding has gone up 9 percent during the time considered.



Summary

Even as student enrollment in USD 512 has decreased, its funding has increased. Further, the increase in the district's per-pupil funding has outpaced inflation.

The problem is not that we aren't spending money on education. 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>

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Flint Hills Center for Public Policy

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

