

Florida Education Reform under Jeb Bush: Miracle or Mirage?

Sherman Dorn, Professor
Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College
Arizona State University

Short answer:

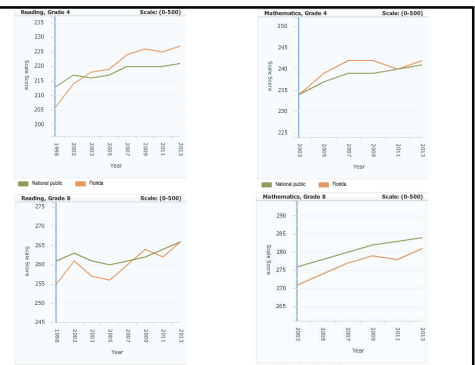
No

Question 1.

For which grade level and subject is there the best evidence of improved Florida student performance during Gov. Bush's terms?

Question 1
answer:

(NAEP)



Takeaway #1:

Best evidence of improved outcomes in 4th grade, especially reading. (Test subject caveat)

Question 2.

What policies have people connected to some of the improved outcomes?

Affecting Florida K-12 through 2007?

- Grade-by-grade testing
- Letter grades assigned to schools
- **\$\$ attached to letter grades**
- • Third-grade reading promotion gate
- Statewide voucher programs
- • Florida Center for Reading Research
- • Reading coaches funded by real-estate boom
- Gov. Chiles' Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies initiative
- Charter-school law
- Late-90s school construction funds plus real-estate boom
- Real-estate boom boosts family economics
- Class-size initiative
- Universal pre-K initiative
- Migration

Green, bold-faced type – dependent on economy/funding

→ What directly influences elementary reading

Takeaway #2A:

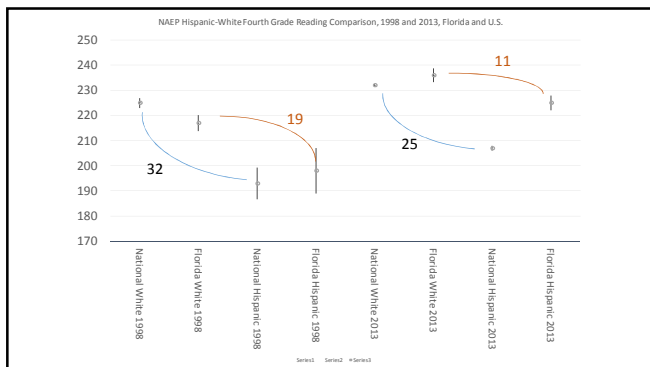
Arguments about **broad** policies do not explain why outcomes were clearly better in 4th grade, especially reading.

Takeaway #2B:

Unclear: the source of differential outcomes. Concentration of resources in elementary grades? Fade-out in middle-school years?

Question 3.

How are Latino/a residents in Florida different from Latino/as in other states?



Takeaway #3:

Achievement-gap changes in Florida have closely tracked national changes.