



**EPSL** | **EDUCATION POLICY STUDIES LABORATORY**  
Education Policy Research Unit

**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

**from the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU)  
and the Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL)  
at Arizona State University**

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Find the report at:

[http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/epru\\_2004\\_Research\\_Writing.htm](http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/epru_2004_Research_Writing.htm)

Find the Chatterji brief on Florida student achievement at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-105-EPRU.doc>

Find the Abrams brief on teachers' views on high-stakes testing at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-104-EPRU.doc>

Find the Smith brief on retaining students in grade at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-114-EPRU.doc>

Find the Harris brief on funding Florida's schools at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-110-EPRU.doc>

Find the MacDonald brief on English language learners at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-113-EPRU.doc>

Find the Harris brief on putting a high quality teacher in every classroom at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-111-EPRU.doc>

Find the Glass brief on teacher evaluation at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-112-EPRU.doc>

Find the Hacs brief on vouchers, charter schools, and “virtual” schools at:  
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EP/PRU/documents/EP/SL-0401-109-EP/PRU.doc>

Find the Dorn brief on reforming the structure of Florida’s accountability system at:  
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EP/PRU/documents/EP/SL-0401-106-EP/PRU.doc>

Find the Dorn brief on alternatives for Florida’s assessment and accountability system at:  
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EP/PRU/documents/EP/SL-0401-107-EP/PRU.doc>

Find the Harris brief on costs and funding of class size, pre-K, and educational adequacy at:  
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EP/PRU/documents/EP/SL-0401-108-EP/PRU.doc>

## **NEW REPORT ON FLORIDA EDUCATION REFORM ILLUMINATES STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF STATE AND FEDERAL REFORM EFFORTS.**

TEMPE, Ariz.—A series of policy briefs examining education reform in Florida finds that the results of the state’s aggressive school-reform program have been mixed, and that the state’s actions often do not match its rhetoric when it comes to implementing reforms.

*Reform Florida* was produced by the Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University for the Florida-based think tank Civic Concern.

Although the report focuses on Florida, it has national significance. Florida’s reforms have served as *de facto* models for federal education policy, particularly laws signed by Governor Bush that stress high-stakes testing and market-based competition, the report notes. In addition, voters have put guarantees of adequate funding, smaller class sizes, and universal pre-Kindergarten into the state’s constitution.

The report finds that the state consistently fails to meet the goals it has set for itself. While the state’s reforms require accountability for public schools, this requirement does not extend to charter and voucher schools. While the state has called for higher quality teachers, it has not funded programs intended to improve teacher quality. While state policy makers have demanded high quality education, it has not fulfilled constitutional mandates for adequate funding or smaller class sizes.

“In general, the briefs paint a decidedly mixed picture of Florida’s record of success at meeting the ambitious agenda for improving student achievement that the state has set for itself,” writes Alex Molnar, director of the EPSL, in the introduction to *Reform Florida*.

*Reform Florida* contains the following 11 briefs:

1) Madhabi Chatterji (Columbia University) *Good and Bad News About Florida Student Achievement: Performance Trends on Multiple Indicators Since Passage of the A+ Legislation*.

**Key recommendation:** Provide local support and evaluation training opportunities to help teachers and school leaders make better use of data to reduce achievement gaps in reading and mathematics, particularly at the secondary level.

2) Lisa Abrams (Boston College) *Teacher’s Views on High-stakes Testing: Implications for the Classroom*.

**Key recommendation:** Make Florida testing policy adhere to the recognized professional standards regarding test development and to the appropriate use of test results as described in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, published jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.

3) Mary Lee Smith (Arizona State University) *Retaining Students in Grade: Consequences for Florida*.

**Key recommendation:** Repeal the relevant section of Statute 1008 so that pupils’ progression from grade to grade is disconnected from their FCAT scores.

4) Douglas Harris (Florida State University) *Funding Florida’s Schools: Adequacy, Costs, and the State Constitution*.

**Key recommendation:** Establish and fund a bipartisan commission of key education experts and stakeholders to oversee a cost study to determine what constitutes an adequate education based on Florida’s Constitution and the state’s unique circumstances.

5) Victoria-Maria MacDonald (Florida State University) *The Status of English Language Learners in Florida: Trends and Prospects*.

**Key recommendation:** Enhance teacher education programs at the in-service and pre-service levels by mandating that ESOL teachers be certified in the areas they teach,

recruiting high quality (particularly minority) teachers, and removing exemptions for Consent Decree-mandated ESOL training of teachers.

6) Douglas Harris (Florida State University) *Putting a High Quality Teacher in Every Florida Classroom*.

**Key recommendation:** Reduce restrictions on colleges of education that limit innovation and create an uneven playing field in relation to the alternate certification system.

7) Gene Glass (Arizona State University) *Teacher Evaluation*.

**Key recommendation:** Oppose any attempt to substitute test performance for college degree requirements in the teacher certification process.

8) Tim Hacsí (University of Massachusetts Boston) *Innovations and Accountability: Vouchers, Charters, and the Florida Virtual School*.

**Key recommendation:** Require the FCAT to be given to all students receiving publicly financed vouchers, and to have the results made public.

9) Sherman Dorn (University of South Florida) *Reforming the Structure of Florida's Accountability System*.

**Key recommendation:** Create a uniform system of accountability that allows the accurate assessment of, and comparison among, all schools receiving direct or indirect financial aid from the state.

10) Sherman Dorn (University of South Florida) *Alternatives for Florida's Assessment and Accountability System*.

**Key recommendation:** Institute a moratorium on monetary rewards and then reform the rewards system.

11) Douglas Harris (Florida State University) *Class Size, Pre-kindergarten, and Educational Adequacy: Costs and Funding Options for Florida*.

**Key recommendation:** Fund an independent, external review of CSR costs and benefits to provide a steady source of objective information as the amendments are implemented.

In describing the purpose of the “*Reform Florida*” briefs, Education Policy Studies Laboratory director Alex Molnar commented, “We hope the *Reform Florida* briefs help Florida citizens and policy makers better understand how education reform in

the state is faring. Taken together, we believe these briefs can help Floridians make sound decisions about where to go from here.”

The Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU) conducts original research, provides independent analyses of research and policy documents, and facilitates educational innovation. EPRU facilitates the work of leading academic experts in a variety of disciplines to help inform the public debate about education policy issues.

Visit the EPRU website at <http://educationanalysis.org>

The Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University offers high quality analyses of national education policy issues and provides an analytical resource for educators, journalists, and citizens. It includes the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), the Education Policy Analysis Archives (EPAA), the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU), and the Language Policy Research Unit (LPRU). The EPSL is directed by Professor Alex Molnar.

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