



## The Nevada Policy Research Institute

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### **Reforms, not more funding, needed in education**

With school back in session, the Nevada Policy Research Institute is urging policymakers to reject cries for tax increases as a solution to the state's educational woes, saying they should instead consider several market-based reforms that have been effective elsewhere.

“Those who say Nevada’s education system is in need of drastic improvement are right,” said Andy Matthews, NPRI’s vice president for communications. “But those who argue that more funding is the road to improvement ignore the fact that real per-pupil spending in Nevada has more than tripled since 1960, and we have little to show for it.”

Matthews cited recent findings by NPRI researcher Patrick R. Gibbons showing Nevada has received a poor return on its already considerable investment in education:

- Nevada spends more than \$44,000 on a single child’s education through the fourth grade, yet 43 percent of Nevada fourth graders score as functionally illiterate on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP).
- According to official U.S. Census Bureau education expenditure figures, Nevada actually spent \$8,926 per pupil in 2006, not \$7,345, as is usually reported.
- Florida, which faces many of the same demographic challenges as Nevada, has vastly improved its education system, quite cost-effectively, through a series of market-oriented reforms. For more information on Florida’s success, see <http://npri.org/publications/how-much-for-a-gallon-of-education>.

“Increasing taxes now to fund education, given our sluggish economy, would be a disastrous move,” Matthews said. “It would not only slow our economic recovery, but history shows that increasing education funding is unlikely to lead to improved performance. To truly improve education, Nevada must embrace genuinely progressive reforms.”

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