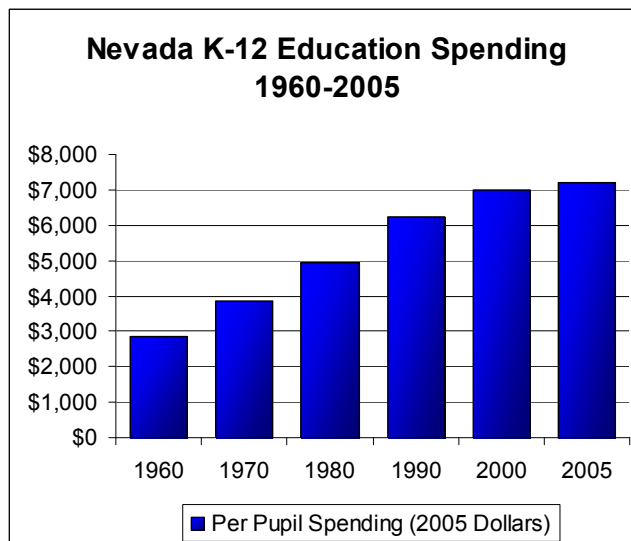


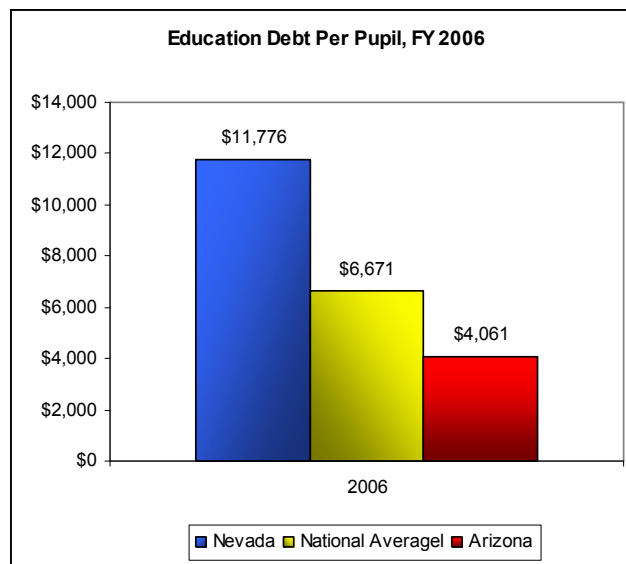
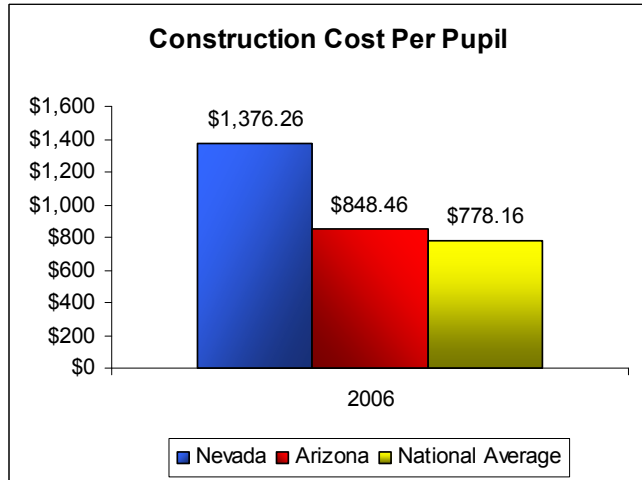
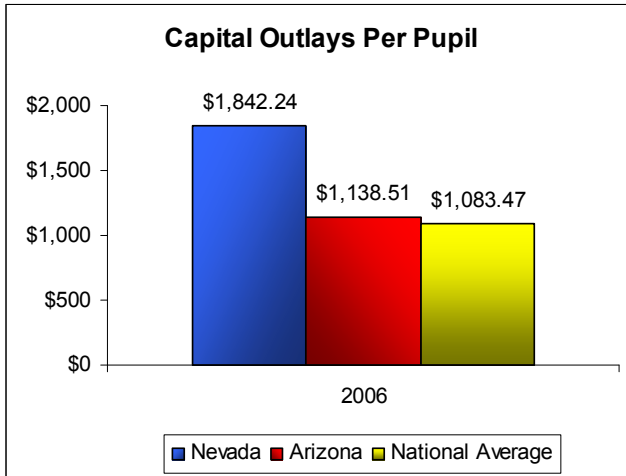
## Nevada Policy Research Institute

### Fast Facts 2009: K-12 Education

#### *K-12 Education Funding*

- Current K-12 per-pupil spending (excluding debt payments and capital outlays) in Nevada rank 41<sup>st</sup> highest in the nation, according to the U.S. Department of Education.
- Current K-12 per-pupil spending was \$7,345 in 2006 (and is approximately \$7,800 today).<sup>1</sup>
- Nevada's total K-12 per-pupil spending (including debt payment and capital outlays) ranks 31<sup>st</sup> highest in the country.
- Nevada's total K-12 per-pupil spending in 2006 was \$10,020 (in 2008 dollars).<sup>2</sup>
- Since 1960, per pupil spending has risen 153 percent after adjusting for inflation.<sup>3</sup>
- When including capital outlays and school debt, Nevada's inflation-adjusted per-pupil spending has more than tripled since 1960.
- Nevada's total K-12 funding per resident ranks 26<sup>th</sup> highest in the country (\$1,740).
- Nevada's school debt ratio is the largest in the country at over 120 percent of yearly education expenditures.
- Nevada's total education debt was \$4.9 billion in 2006.
- Nevada's K-12 education debt per student ranks third highest in the nation (\$11,766).
- Nevada's capital outlays per student rank third highest in the nation (\$1,842).
- Nevada's (new school) construction costs per student rank third highest in the nation (\$1,376).
- If Nevada were as efficient and pennywise as Arizona (the nation's second fastest growing state, after Nevada) with capital costs, it would have saved more than \$320 million in FY2006 alone.
- In the "Handbook of Economics of Education," Eric Hanushek reviewed 91 studies on student performance related to school facilities and found that 86 percent of the studies discovered no statistically significant relationship between the quality of the school facility and the student's performance.
- There is also little to no evidence that increasing per-pupil spending increases student achievement. Most research finds no statically significant relationship between spending and student achievement. It may be more important to ask how the money is spent than to ask how much we should spend.<sup>4</sup>



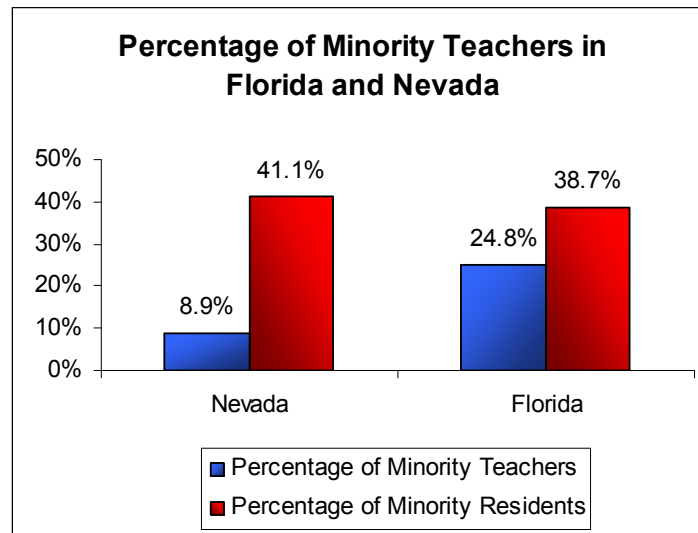


### *Teacher Pay and Certification*

- According to the National Education Association, Nevada's teacher pay ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> highest in the nation, with the average teacher earning \$50,067.<sup>5</sup>
- Teacher pay in Nevada ranks 17<sup>th</sup> highest in the country when adjusting for experience, cost of living and benefits, according to the John Locke Foundation.<sup>6</sup> The average adjusted salary and benefits amount to \$57,983 per year.
- Dale Ballou and Michael Podgursky, authors of *Teacher Pay and Teacher Quality*, have found that increasing teacher pay does not increase teacher quality.
- Research by the Brookings Institution has shown that there is virtually no difference between the effectiveness of a certified teacher and an uncertified teacher.<sup>7</sup>
- Research by Paul Peterson of the Hoover Institution found that states with real alternative teacher certification programs saw significant gains in student achievement, and that the percentage of minority teachers increased as well.<sup>8</sup>

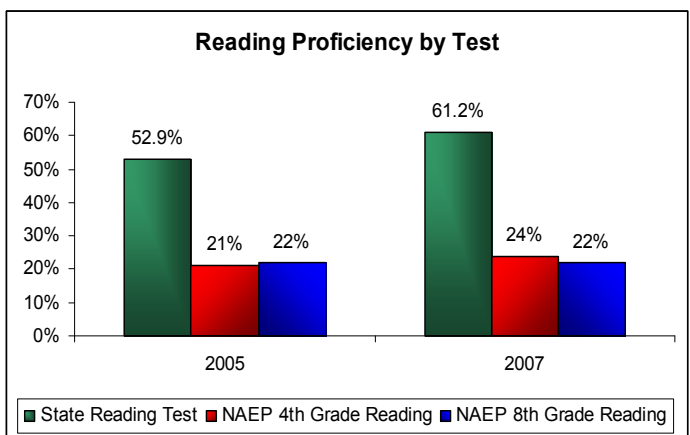
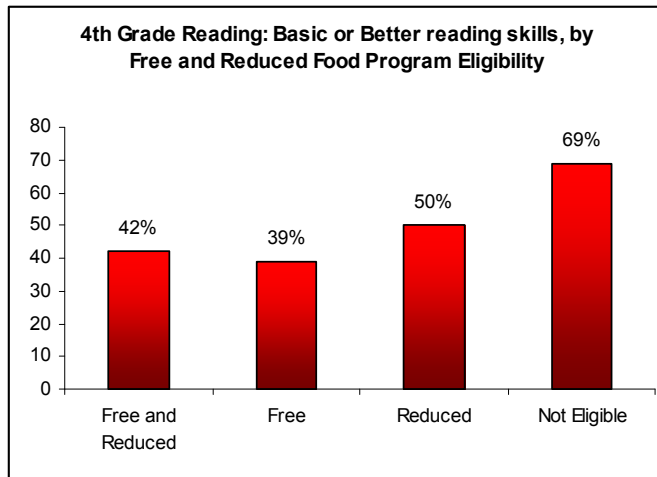
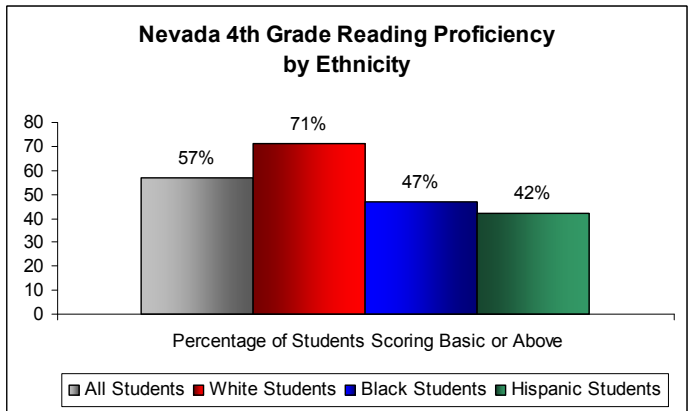
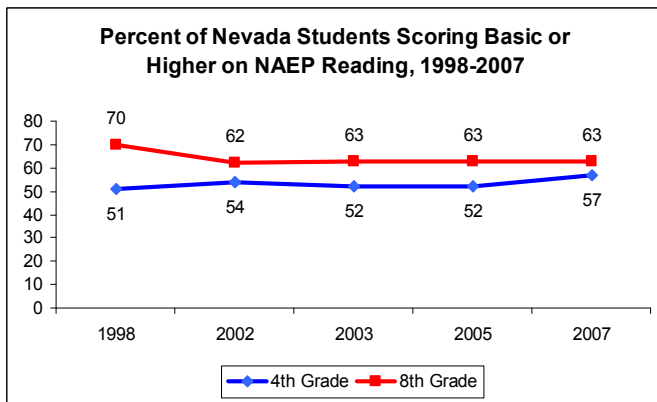
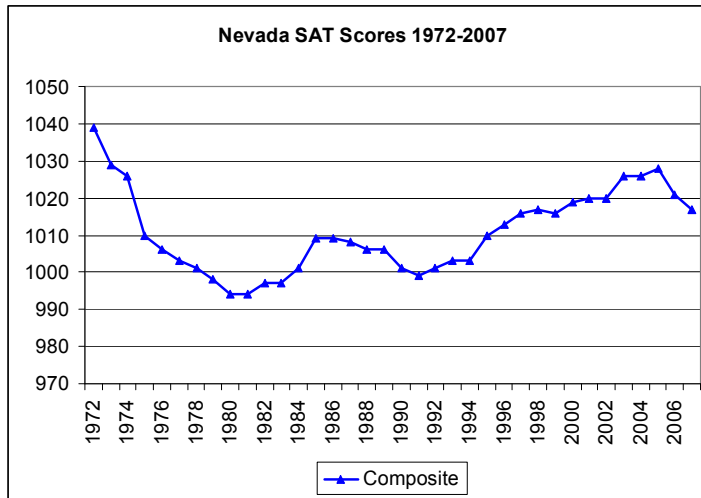
### Education Demographics

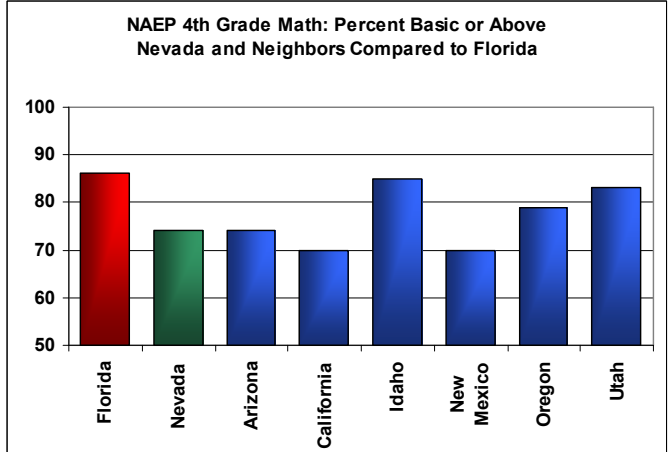
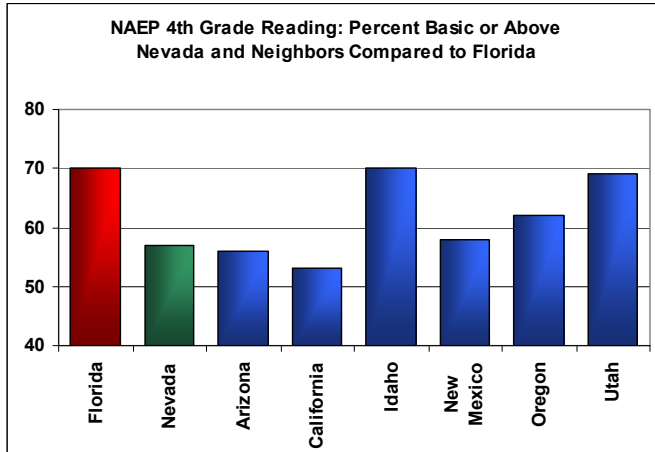
- 91 percent of teachers in Nevada are white.<sup>9</sup>
- 53.6 percent of students in Nevada are minorities.<sup>10</sup> 41.1 percent of state residents are minorities.
- 15.5 percent of Nevada's students have limited English proficiency. The national average is 8.5 percent.<sup>11</sup>
- 11.1 percent of Nevada's students have learning disabilities. The national average is 13.6 percent.<sup>12</sup>
- 41.3 percent of Nevada's students are considered low-income. The national average is 40.9 percent.<sup>13</sup>



### Education Performance

- In 1997 the average ACT score for Nevadans was 21.3. Today it is 21.5 (out of 36 points).<sup>14</sup>
- In 1997 the average SAT score was 1016. Today it is 1017 (out of 1600 points).<sup>15</sup>
- Graduation rates in Nevada plummeted from 72 percent to 57 percent between 2003 and 2004. The national average is 74 percent.
- 43 percent of Nevada's fourth-grade students cannot read at grade level, according to the NAEP.<sup>16</sup>
- 37 percent of Nevada's eighth graders cannot read at grade level, according to the NAEP.
- 53 percent of Nevada's African-American fourth-grade students cannot read at grade level.
- 57 percent of Nevada's Hispanic fourth-grade students cannot read at grade level.
- 58 percent of Nevada's low-income fourth-grade students (students eligible for free and reduced lunches) cannot read at grade level.<sup>17</sup>
- Fourth-grade reading proficiency has seen a modest increase since 1998, but eighth-grade reading proficiency has declined.
- Fourth-grade math proficiency has seen modest improvement since 1998.
- The state's AYP reading proficiency exams may have been watered down to comply with No Child Left Behind. Compared with NAEP data, Nevada's students are not doing as well as the state claims.<sup>18</sup>
- Nevada's large Hispanic population is no excuse for low achievement. New Mexico has a significantly larger Hispanic population than Nevada, yet it outperforms Nevada on the fourth-grade NAEP reading exam. Florida has a Hispanic population similar in size to Nevada's, and it drastically outperforms Nevada's students on math and reading.<sup>19</sup>





**Percentage Gains in NAEP 4th Grade Reading and Math Scores from 1996-2007**

Ethnicity	Reading			Math		
	National	Nevada	Florida	National	Nevada	Florida
White	3.1%	5.2%	6.9%	6.9%	8.0%	10.1%
African American	6.8%	10.4%	11.8%	12.1%	12.8%	16.6%
Hispanic	7.9%	3.7%	10.1%	9.7%	8.7%	14.4%
All Students	3.8%	2.4%	8.7%	7.1%	6.4%	12.0%

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/viewresults.asp>  
 Note: Reading exam administered between 1997 and 2008. Math exam data collected between 1996 and 2007. Florida did not administer the math exam in 2000.

## Citations

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “2006 Public Education Finances” <http://www2.census.gov/govs/school/06f33pub.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> All per-capita and per-pupil expenditure rankings are calculated through U.S. Census Bureau data.

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Table 175 “Digest of Education Statistics”

[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07\\_175.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_175.asp).

<sup>4</sup> See Heritage Foundation, “Does Spending More on Education Improve Academic Achievement?”

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Education/bg2179.cfm> See also, Eric A. Hanushek, “School Resources and Student Performance,” in Gary Burtless, ed., *Does Money Matter? The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement and Adult Success* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1996), pp. 74–92. See also, <http://npri.org/blog/does-more-spending-increase-student-performance>. NPRI found that there was no statistical relationship between spending and student achievement on the NAEP fourth-grade reading exam. We did find a significant relationship between per-pupil spending and per-capita income—meaning wealthier states spend more on average than poorer states regardless of the quality of education.

<sup>5</sup> National Education Association, “Inflation continues to outpace teacher pay” <http://www.nea.org/home/29399.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> John Locke Foundation, “Annual Report on Teacher Pay” [http://www.johnlocke.org/acrobat/spotlights/spotlight-367\\_teacherpay2009.pdf](http://www.johnlocke.org/acrobat/spotlights/spotlight-367_teacherpay2009.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Gordon, Richard, Thomas J. Kane and Douglas O. Staiger, “Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job,” Brookings Institution, April 2006.

[http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2006/~media/Files/rc/papers/2006/04education\\_gordon/200604hamilton\\_1.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2006/~media/Files/rc/papers/2006/04education_gordon/200604hamilton_1.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Peterson, Paul E. “What Happens When States Have Genuine Alternative Certification?” *Education Next*, Hoover Institution, Winter 2008. <http://www.hoover.org/publications/ednext/34564684.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Peterson, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/ednext/34564684.html>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Education, See “Nevada: Mapping Education Progress”

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/results/progress/nevada.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> ACT “ACT High School Profile Report: Nevada” <http://www.act.org/news/data/08/pdf/states/Nevada.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> State College Board “State Profile Report: Nevada”

[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/about/news\\_info/cbsenior/yr2007/NV\\_07.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2007/NV_07.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> National Assessment of Educational Progress, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/viewresults.asp>. All statistics referencing the NAEP test were discovered via the NAEP Data Explorer.

<sup>17</sup> For more information about the Federal lunch program, see US Department of Agriculture,

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/Default.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> This is a comparison between NAEP and the State’s AYP. For example, according to the state of Nevada, more than 60 percent of students in Nevada are proficient readers. According to the NAEP, a test given across the country, only about 22 percent of Nevada’s students are proficient readers. This suggest the state’s AYP is considerably easier than the NAEP. If the state AYP shows swifter improvement than improvement on the NAEP, then we may assume that the state is dumbing down the AYP in order to give the appearance of an improving system of education.

<sup>19</sup> Gibbons, Patrick R. and Dr. Matthew Ladner (forthcoming, March 2009) “No Excuses: Florida’s Decade of Educational Improvement Proves Reform Works” Nevada Policy Research Institute. See also, Dr. Matthew Ladner and Dan Lips, “Demography Defeated” <http://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/AboutUs/ArticleView.aspx?id=2363>.