



# **Florida Formula for Student Achievement:** *Lessons for the Nation*



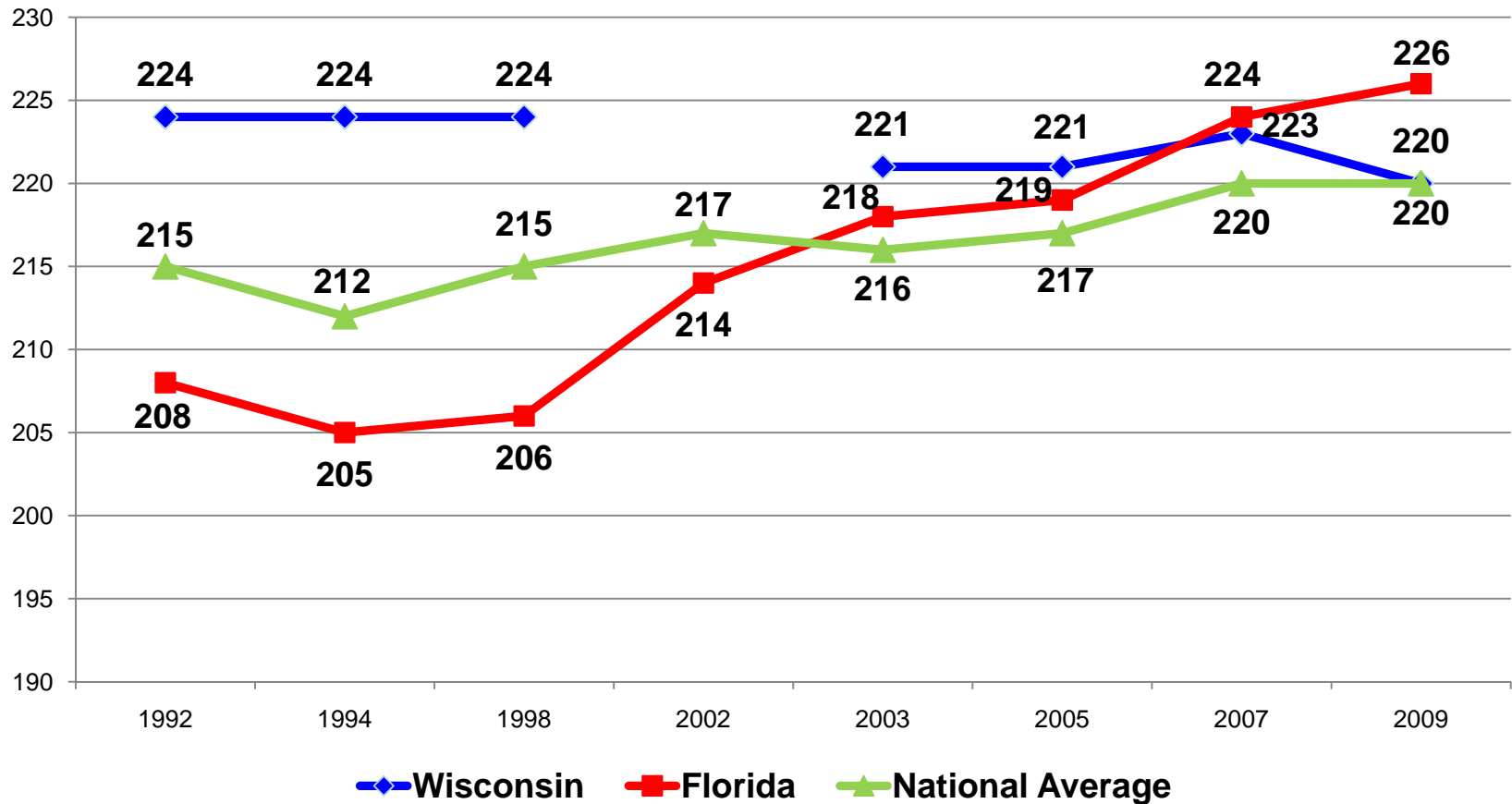
# Florida Student Population

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- 2.7 million students
- Majority minority student population
- Large population of students learning English as a second language
- About half of students are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch

# National Assessment of Education Progress

## NAEP Grade 4 Reading Scores Wisconsin, Florida & National Average 1992-2009





# A-F School Grades

*“What gets measured, gets done.”  
– Jeb Bush*



# Measuring Student Learning

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## Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

- Aligned with state academic standards
- Subjects: Reading, Math, Writing and Science

## Testing expanded from 3 subjects in 3 grades to:

- In 2001, Reading and Math expanded to all grades 3 to 10
- In 2003, Science added to grades 5, 8 and 11
- Writing in grades 4, 8 and 10

## Performance Levels

1	2	3	4	5
Below Grade	Below Grade	<b>Grade Level</b>	Above Grade	Above Grade



# History of School Grades

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1995: Florida began “grading” schools:

- High Performing
- Performing
- Low Performing
- Critically Low Performing

1998: Moved to Performance Levels: I, II, III, IV, V

1999: Adopted Letter Scale of A to F



# School Grades: A - F

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- **School Grade is based solely\* on students' performance on the FCAT.**
- **Proficiency / Achievement:** 50% of the grade
  - Percent of all students performing on grade level
- **Progress / Learning Gains:** 50% of the grade
  - Percent of students learning a year's worth of knowledge, regardless of whether they are on grade level
  - Percent of lowest performing 25 percent students who are making a year's worth of progress

\*In 2010, high school grades began including graduation rates, at-risk student graduation rates, acceleration rates, college readiness rates



# Defining Progress

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- **Progress is when a student:**
  - Increases a performance level  
(example: move from level 3 to level 4)
  - Stays at same level -- levels 3, 4, or 5 – from one year to the next  
(example: same level in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade)
  - Moves up sufficiently within the lowest two levels

1	2	3	4	5
Below Grade	Below Grade	<b>Grade Level</b>	Above Grade	Above Grade



# School Grades

*Each category has 100 possible points (percent of students)*

Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Proficiency	Proficiency	Proficiency	Proficiency
Progress (all students)	Progress (all students)		
Progress (lowest 25%)	Progress (lowest 25%)		

# Sunshine Middle School

Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Proficiency 63%	Proficiency 59%	Proficiency 90%	Proficiency 51%
Progress (all students) 66%	Progress (all students) 68%	508 points = B	
Progress (lowest 25%) 57%	Progress (lowest 25%) 54%		

# School Grades

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Points*</b>	525 or more	495 – 524	435 – 494	395 – 434	Less than 395
<b>Percent of Eligible Students Tested</b>	At least <b>95%</b>	At least 90%	At least 90%	At least 90%	Less than 90%
<b>Adequate Progress with Lowest performing students In Reading and Math</b>	Within one year	Within two years	Within two years		

\*Beginning in 2011-12, if at least 75% of elementary, middle or high school statewide are As or Bs, the point scale will increase by 5% for that school type statewide the following year.



# Grading Florida High Schools

## *Next Generation of Education Reform*

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Starting in 2010 school year, high school grades calculation also includes:

- Graduation rates for all students
- Graduation rates for at-risk students
  - Graduation rates for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students entering high school below grade level in reading and math
- Acceleration rates (both performance & participation)
  - Number of students taking and passing Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit or industry certification courses
- College readiness rates
  - Based upon SAT or ACT

# New HS Components (50% of HS Grade)

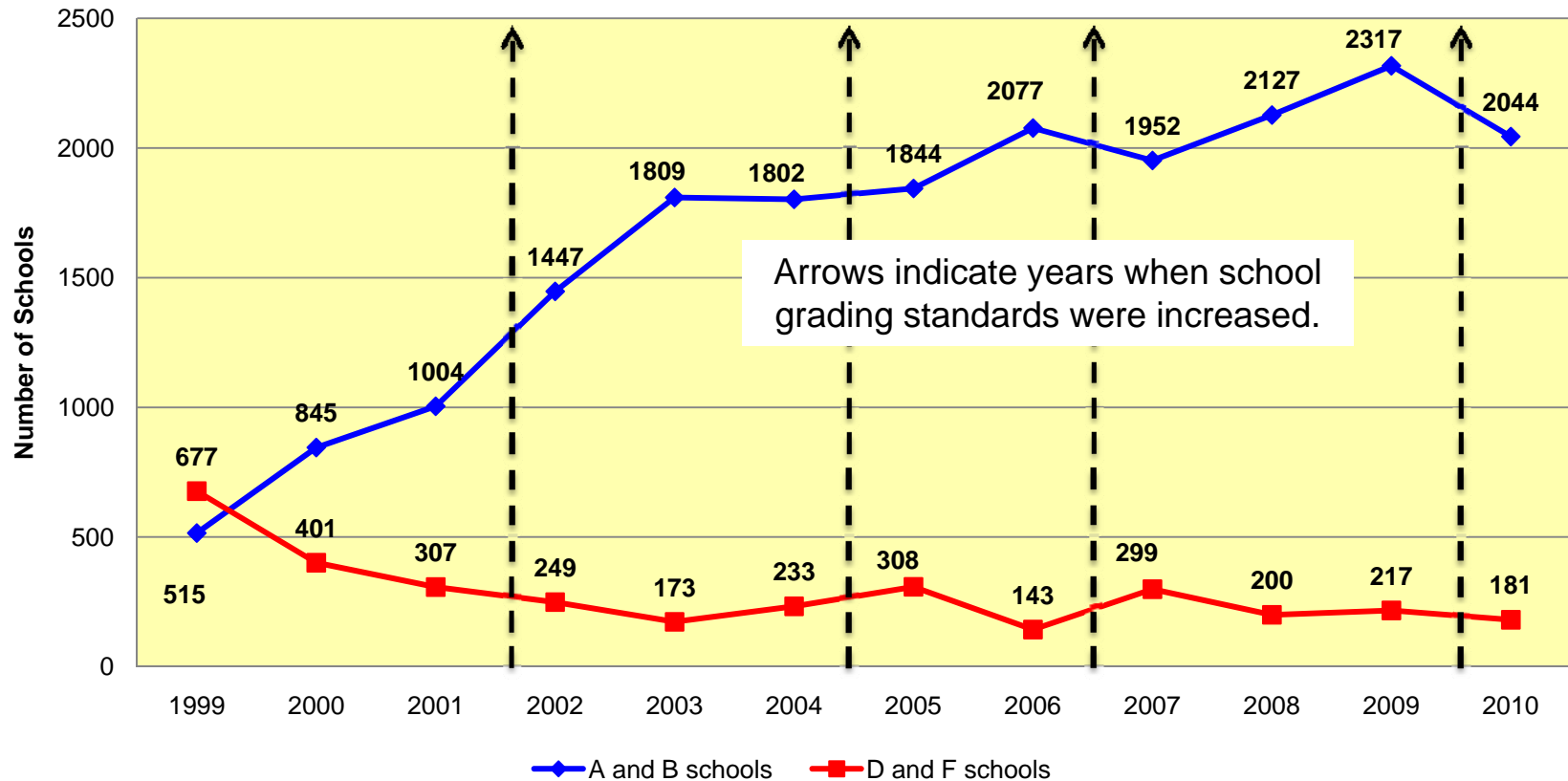
GRADUATION	ACCELERATION	READINESS	GROWTH/DECLINE
<b>Overall Rate</b> <b>200</b>	<b>Participation</b> <b>200 (in 2009-10)</b> <b>175 (in 2010-11)</b> <b>150 (in 2011-12)</b>	<b>Performance on Reading</b> <b>100</b>	<b>For each component schools may earn up to 20 additional points for GROWTH (40 points for factors worth 200 points)</b>
<b>At-Risk Rate</b> <b>100</b>	<b>Performance</b> <b>100 (in 2009-10)</b> <b>125 (in 2010-11)</b> <b>150 (in 2011-12)</b>	<b>Performance on Math</b> <b>100</b>	<b>For each component schools may lose 5 additional points for DECLINE (10 points for factors worth 200 points)</b>
<b>Total Graduation Points</b> <b>300</b>	<b>Total Acceleration Points</b> <b>300</b>	<b>Total Readiness Points</b> <b>200</b>	<b>Total NEW HIGH SCHOOL Points Possible</b> <b>800</b>

- All components are percentages. Those components weighted twice as much as others reflect a calculated percentage that is doubled (ex. HS X has a 75% graduation rate, HS X earns 150 points).
- All component values are capped at their maximum values. That is, if a school earns points in excess of the total for a particular component – through the growth adjustment or the escalating weights in the acceleration components – the school will receive the maximum points for that component.

# Results of Florida A+ Plan

## School Grades in Florida 1999-2010

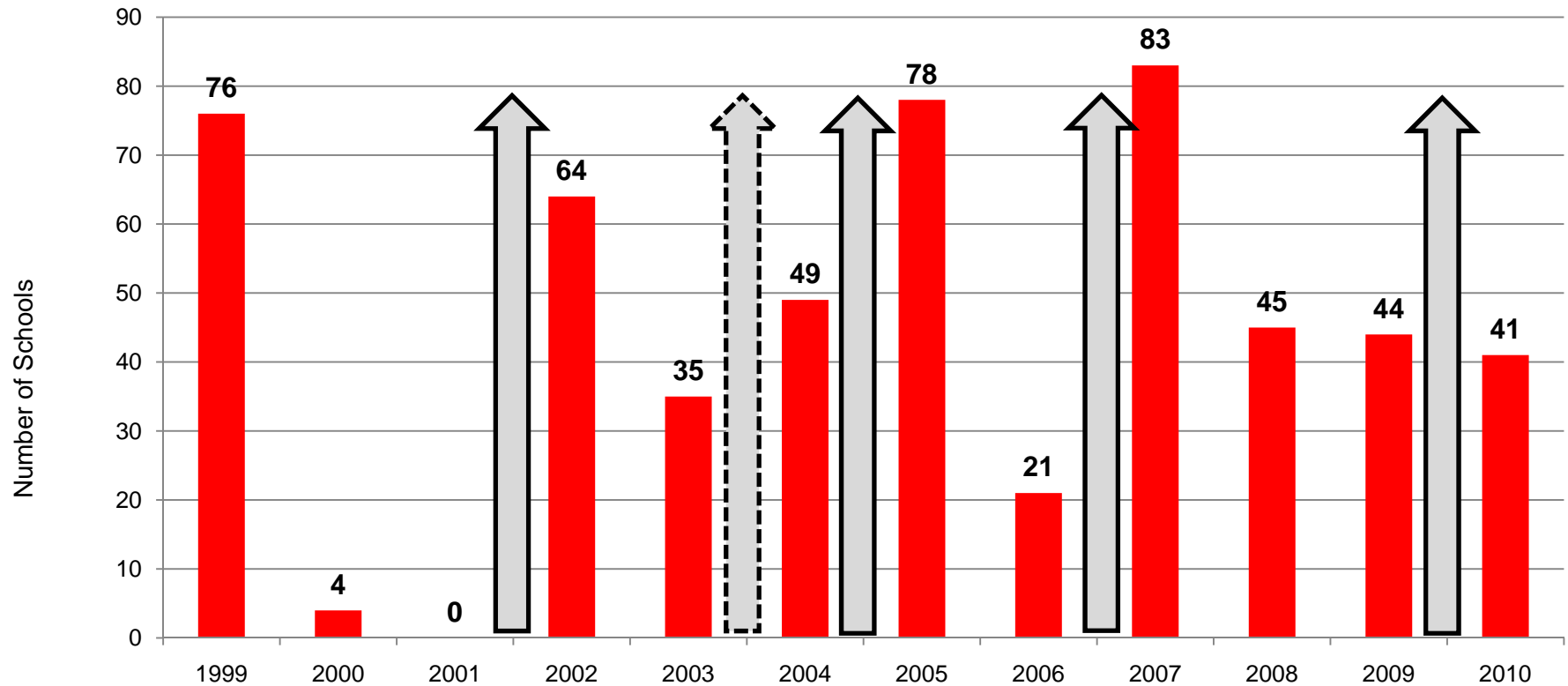
Number of A & B versus D & F schools



# Continually Raising the Bar

## Raising Standards Leads to Higher Performance

*When standards are raised, there is an increase in F School Grades followed by a decline as performance rises to meet the new standards*





# Impact of an A – F School Grading System

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- **Excellence v. Complacency**
  - School grading brought a **Command Focus on Learning**.
  - Administrators, educators and parents aren't satisfied with "C" grades, or even "B" grades. Everyone strives for **Excellence**.
- **Media & Public Attention**
  - Transparency in evaluating school performance attracts more attention to education, from extensive media coverage on the quality of education in individual schools to even realtors and realtor guides highlighting good school grades as a selling point on the housing market.
- **Statewide Competition to be the "Best of the Best"**
  - Based on their grades of their schools, each county district in Florida earns a single letter grade, creating added competition.
- **Community Support**
  - Low performing schools are easily identified and communities rally around them. Florida has witnessed countless stories of communities coming together to improve schools and raise student achievement.
- **School Pride**
  - Grading schools establishes public perception of both high performing and low performing schools, creating more ownership at the local level and added incentive to achieve or maintain excellence.

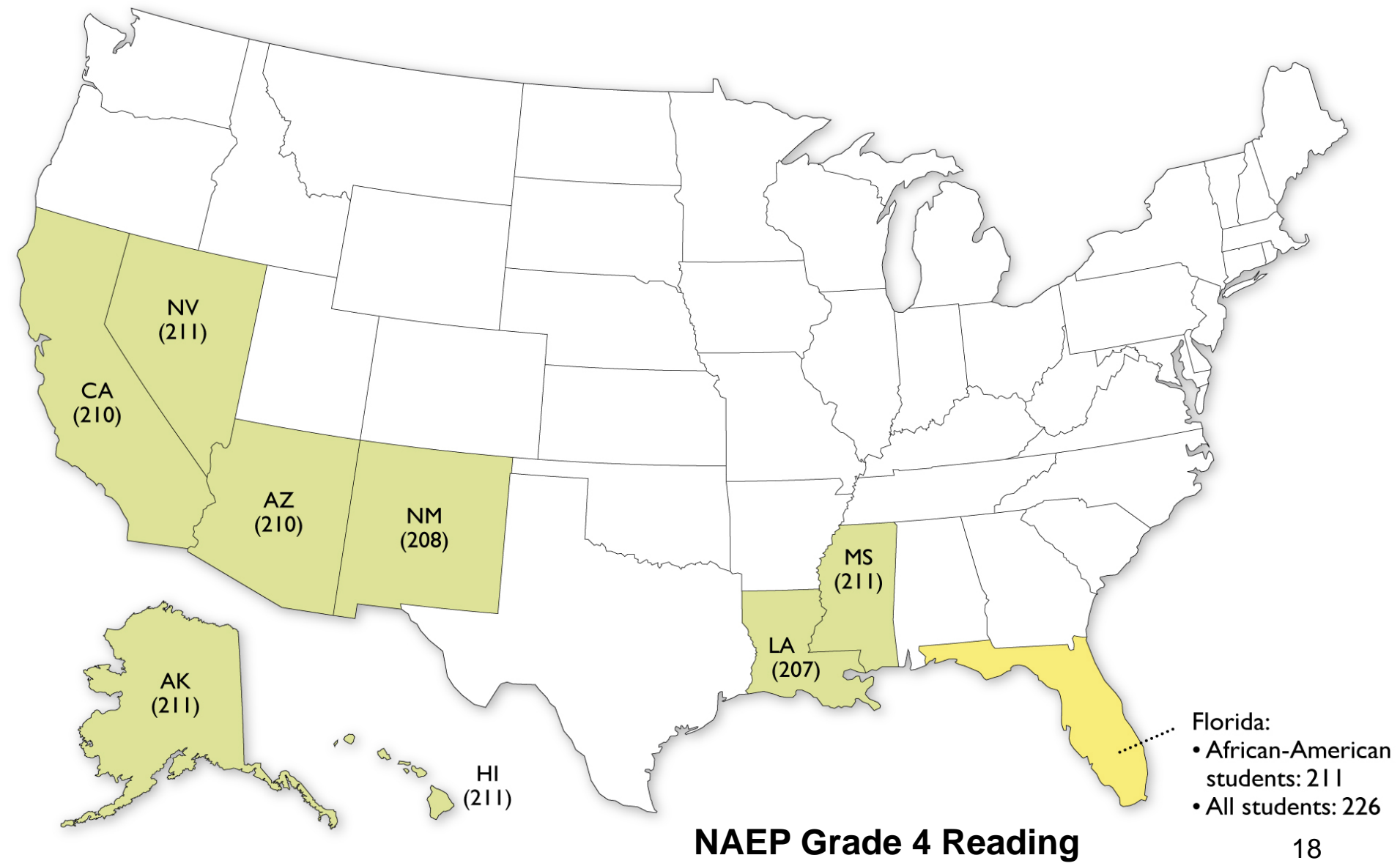
# What They're *Really* Saying About School Grades

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- **ST. PETERSBURG TIMES:** “Katie Lail's phone kept ringing Thursday with calls from excited teachers who couldn't stop screaming. Their school — Mary Giella Elementary — had overcome the odds of serving a high-poverty area to earn an A in the Florida grading system and also make "adequate yearly progress" under federal accountability guidelines.”
- **ORLANDO SENTINEL:** “A record number of Florida public schools received A's and B's on the state's 2009 school report card... Statewide, 78 percent of schools got A's or B's this year, up from 74 percent in 2008. The Orange County school district had more A-rated schools than ever and -- for the first time -- will have no schools with F's.
- **MIAMI HERALD:** “After all the preparation, test-taking and months of finger-crossing, it was time to break out the bubbly -- grape juice, of course -- at Larkdale Elementary Thursday morning. "High C! High C!" shouted a group of staffers as principal Valoria Latson poured glasses of Welch's sparkling grape juice. The school, under orders from the state to move up from a D to at least a C or face severe sanctions, made the cut by garnering a few points shy of a B.”

# COMPARING STATES TO FLORIDA'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

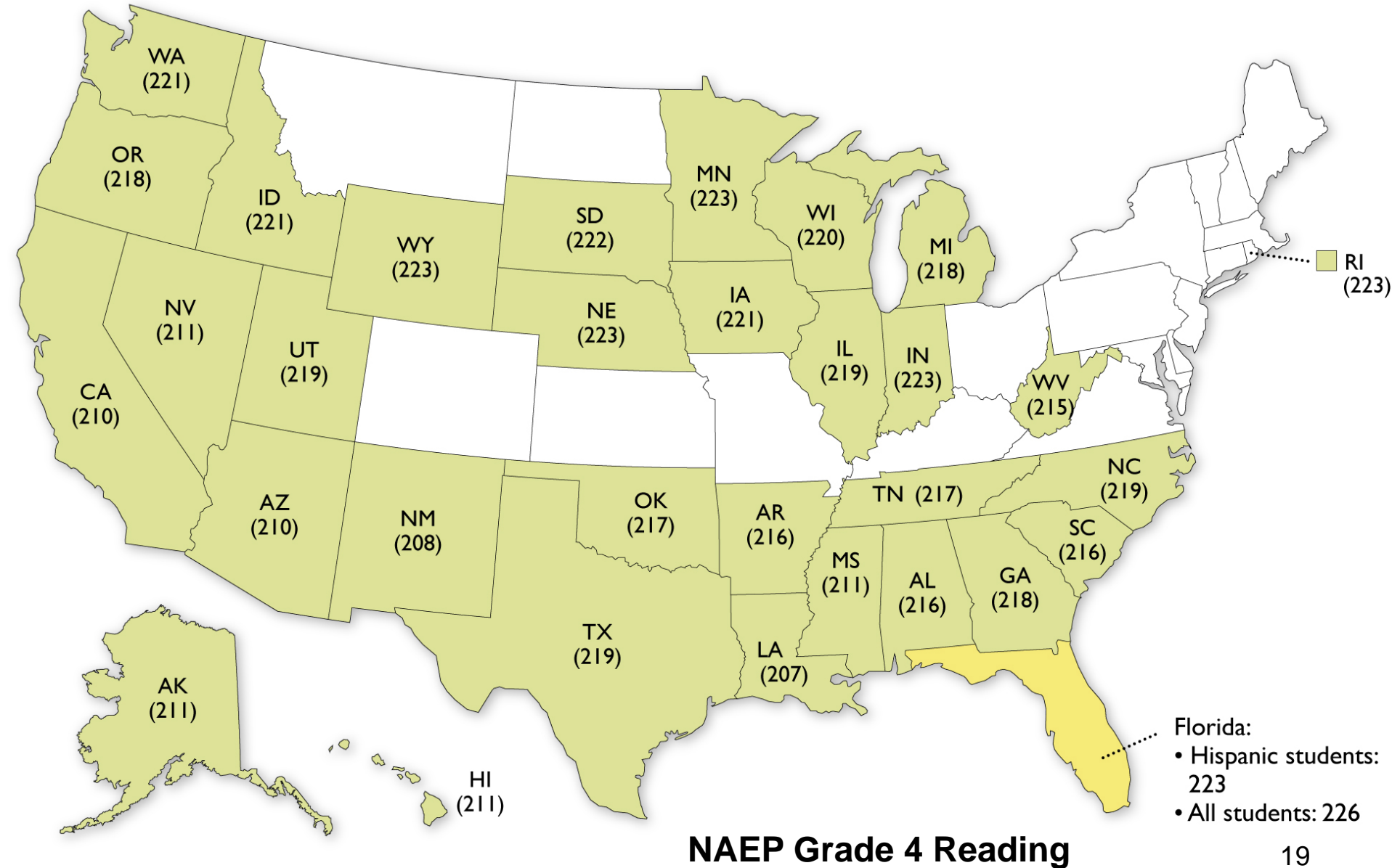
African-American students in Florida now outscore or tie the statewide reading average of all students in eight states.



Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress.

# COMPARING STATES TO FLORIDA'S HISPANIC STUDENTS

Hispanic students in Florida now outscore or tie the statewide reading average of all students in 31 states.



Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress.



# Florida Rising in Ranks

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- Florida is now **#5** in *Education Week's Quality Counts* Report – based upon standards, accountability, teacher quality and student achievement.
- Goldwater Institute analysis of grade 4 NAEP Reading scores identifies Florida's Hispanic students outscoring statewide average of all students in **31 states** and the Districts of Columbia.
- Florida's African American (86%) and Hispanic (96%) students lead the nation among their peers on the NAEP math.
- Florida was one of 3 states recognized as closing the achievement gap between affluent and low-income students.
- Florida was one of 3 states recognized as closing the achievement gap between white and African American students in reading and math (4<sup>th</sup> grade).



# Florida's Minority Students Rising in Ranks

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- Florida's Hispanic, African American, English Language Learner, Students with Disabilities and Low-income students outperform their peers on NAEP, ranking in the top 10 in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading, 4<sup>th</sup> grade math and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading.
- Florida Hispanic students outperform or tie their peers in all but one state on 4<sup>th</sup> grade math.
- Florida African American students outperform or tie their peers in all but 3 states on NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade math.
- Florida students with disabilities outperform or tie their peers in all but 4 states on NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade math.
- Low-income students outperform or tie their peers in all but 4 states on NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade math.



# Rewards for Results and Options out of Failure



# Rewards for Successful Schools

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## School Recognition Program

- Schools receive \$100 (\$70 for FY 11-12) per student for:
  - Improving a letter grade
  - Earning or maintaining an “A”
- Money goes directly to principals, teachers and parents (bypasses collective bargaining).
- Majority of funds – historically more than 85% - used for teacher and staff bonuses.
- We repurposed existing funds.



# Options Out of a Failing School

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## Opportunity Scholarships (1999 – 2006):

- Eligibility: students in schools that earned an F for 2 out of 4 years
- Choices:
  - A higher performing public school within the district
  - A higher performing public school in an adjacent district, with space available
  - A participating private school
- Funding: scholarship equal to public school funding or private school tuition and fees, whichever is less.
- Status: Ruled unconstitutional by the Florida Supreme Court in 2006 – that year 753 students participated



# Opportunity Scholarships (1999 – 2006):

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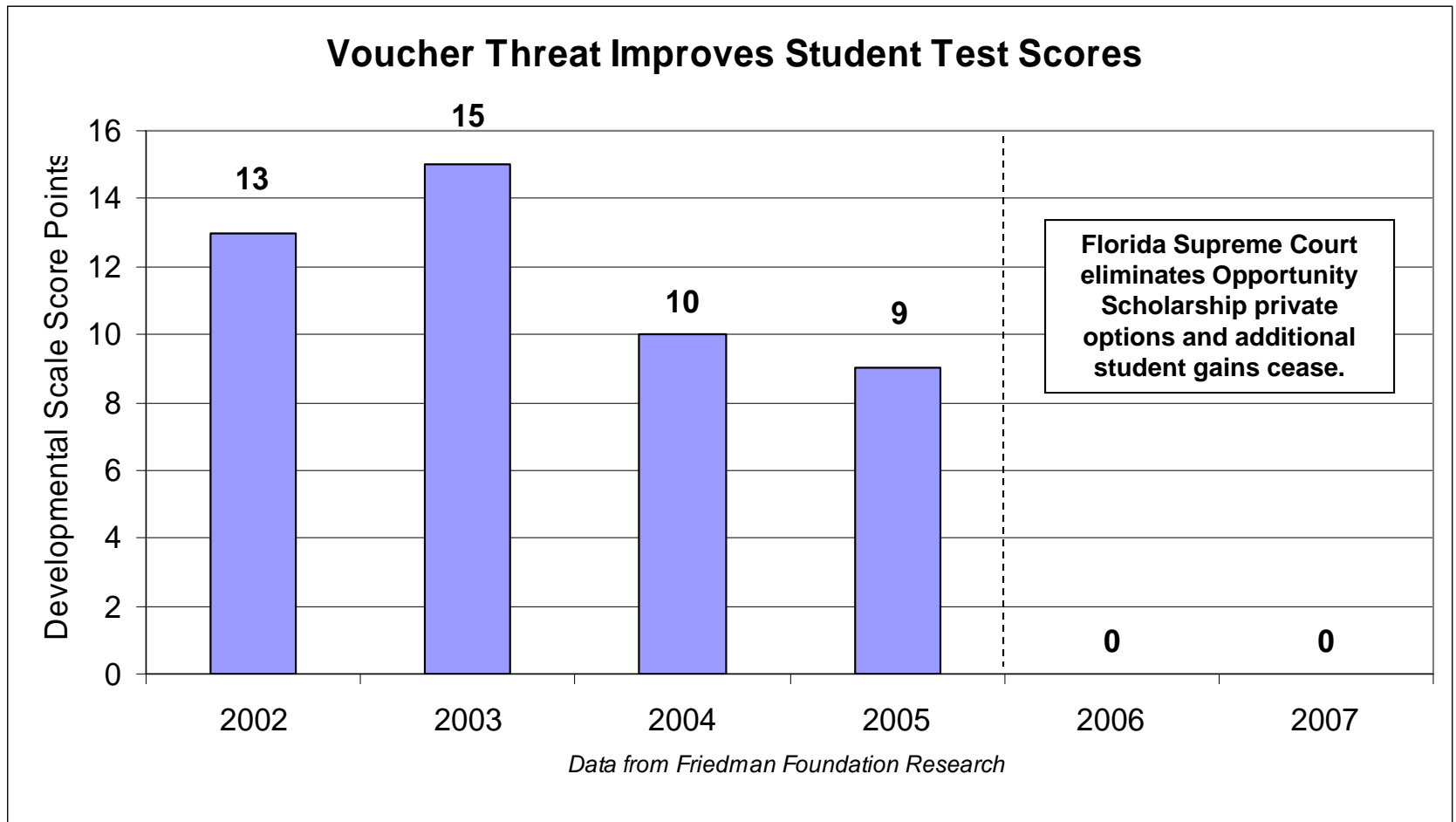
## ***Research concludes competition fuels achievement in public schools:***

- **Manhattan Institute:** Threat of vouchers improved student performance.

*“Florida’s low-performing schools are improving in direct proportion to the challenge they face from voucher competition. These improvements are real, not the result of test gaming, demographic shifts, or the statistical phenomenon of ‘regression to the mean’.”*

- **Cornell University:** Failing schools respond to threat of vouchers by raising student achievement.
- **Harvard University:** Choice provisions of Florida’s A+ Plan leveraged student achievement gains.

# Impact of School Choice on Student Performance



# Contact Information

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