

BREVARD COUNTY SCHOOLS

As a product a public school myself, teacher at the college level since 1993 and a parent whose children attend Brevard County public schools, I believe that supporting our schools is one of my highest responsibilities as an elected official. Since I was elected in the fall of 2000, I have visited our public schools over 400 times and have worked hard to understand the concerns of our teachers, students and parents.

During challenging economic times, the Legislature is committed to providing the available financial resources for our students. One must also accept that our Florida Constitution requires that the Legislature maintain a balanced budget, and unlike Washington, D.C, we simply cannot spend money that we do not have.

During this economic downturn, in which 8% of Floridians are out of work, we have prioritized our budget adjustments to protect vital programs. In the last two years, our budget has gone from \$73.9 billion to \$63 billion (15%). This is not a Washington, D.C. version of a cut (a slowdown in the increase), but a real cut, like the ones Florida families are making right now.

Since I began my tenure in the Legislature, Brevard County schools have seen a major increase in funding. From the 2001-02 school year to the 2008-09 school year, the district's operating budget grew from \$5,681 per student to \$7,563 per student. Currently, a class of 20 students receives \$151,260 in operating funds.

To meet the challenges ahead we have heard the vocal call for higher taxes from the school board, teachers union, and superintendent; however a tax increase will NOT be our first option. It will only be our last. We truly believe that if we are creative, show leadership, and allow flexibility in how our schools spend money, we can fill the \$80 million dollar gap and NOT raise your taxes. It will not be easy, but we are committed to fighting for our kids and for all Floridians who are struggling to pay their bills.

We applaud the school board for following our lead to cut their pay as we did last year. It was a true sign of leadership by example. We pledge to regularly communicate with our educational leaders in Brevard. We need their expertise and input as we fight for our kids in Tallahassee.

We are so proud of our schools here in Brevard. I applaud the hard work of our teachers, principals, school board, superintendent and our awesome students. Brevard County students are graduating at a rate of 93% and performing better than ever when compared with their peers around the state and nation. Florida students now rank in the top 10 in performance and lead the nation in overall improvement.

Please see the information and graphs on the following pages. All of the budget numbers were taken from the Brevard County Public Schools website or from the Florida Department of Education. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at mike@senatormike.com, or contact my office at (321) 752-3131.

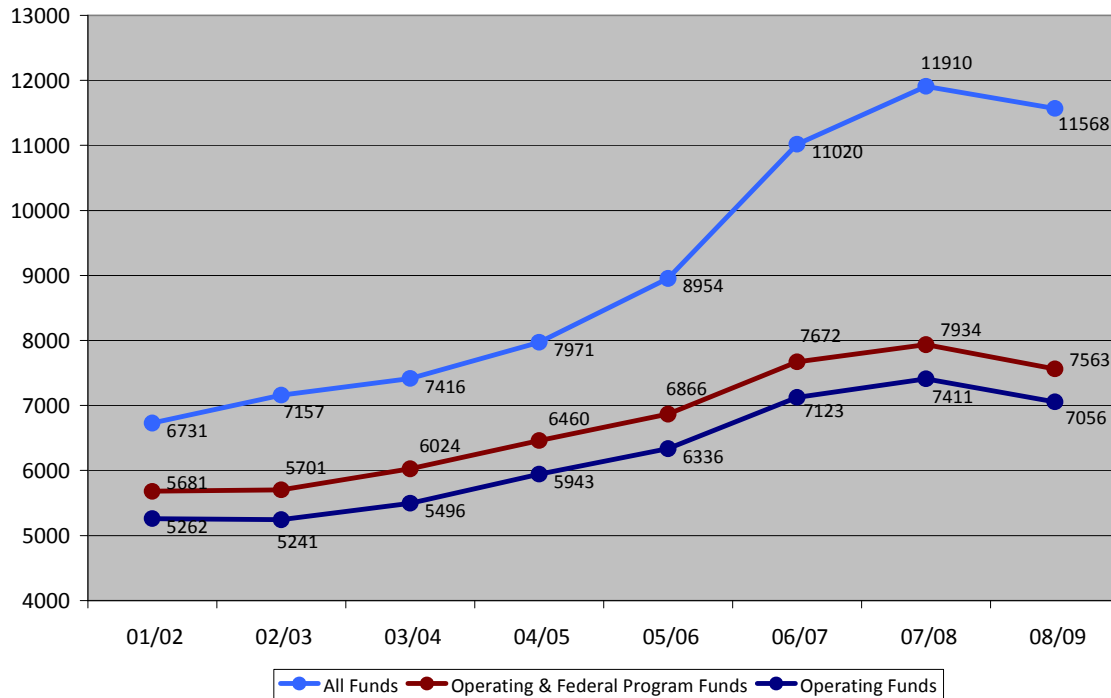
Sincerely,



Mike Haridopolos

School funding in Brevard County has increased since I was first elected in the fall of 2000. From the 2001-02 school year to the 2008-09 school year, the total budget per student grew by 71.8% and operating spending grew by 34.1%.

Brevard County Per Student Spending



Source: <http://novusites.brevard.k12.fl.us/finance/financials.html>

The graph above was taken from a report by Brevard County Public Schools Associate Superintendent for Financial Services Judy Preston. According to the report, these three lines can be described as follows:

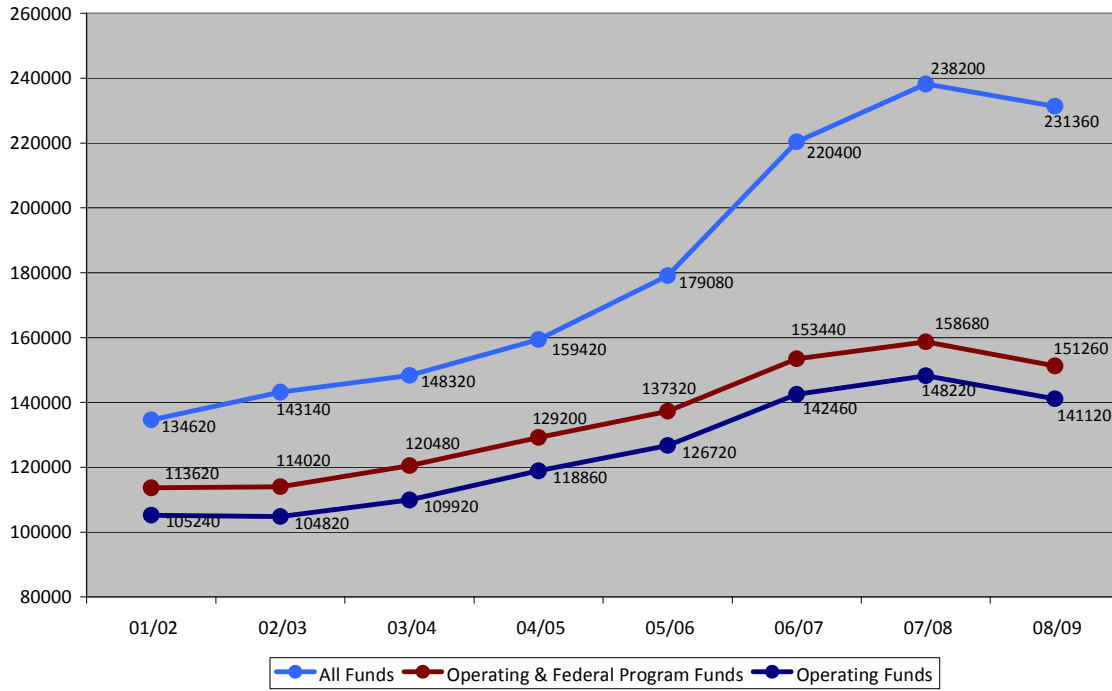
All Funds – Includes all expenditures within the four funds referenced above: operating, capital, debt service and special revenue (both federal programs and food services). These numbers reflect the total expenditures within those funds and have not been adjusted (even though they legitimately could be) for the duplication of debt payments and construction programs as described in #2 above. Note that the spike in expenditures indicated by the graph line for the last three years was caused by the School Board borrowing money to fulfill their commitment to the community for the long range facility renewal program. It had nothing to do with funding that the State or Legislature provided to the district.

Operating Fund and Federal Programs – Includes most day-to-day operations along with the federal programs portion of the special review budget, such as Title I and IDEA (special education), but excludes the food services portion of the special revenue budget.

Operating Fund – Includes most day-to-day operations.

This growth translates into a significant increase for an average classroom. During the 2008-09 school year, a classroom of 20 students would receive \$151,260 in operating and federal program funds (up \$37,640 from \$113,620 in 2001-02) and \$231,360 in total funds (up \$96,740 from \$134,620 in 2001-02).

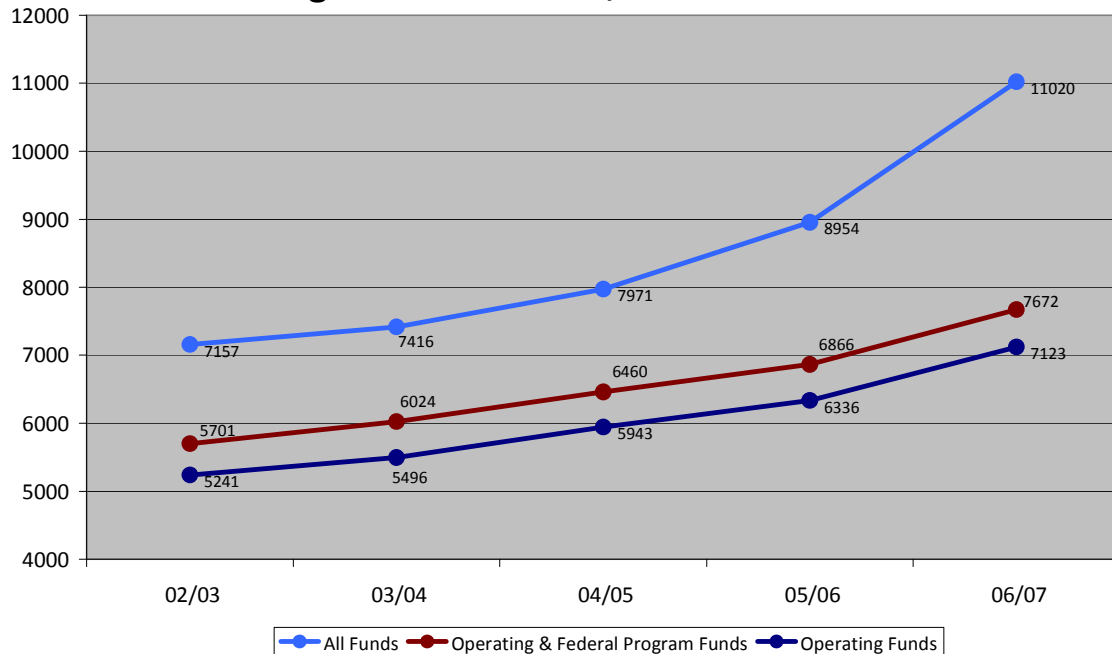
Brevard County Classroom Funding



Source: <http://novusites.brevard.k12.fl.us/finance/financials.html>

During the period from 2002 to 2007, when Florida’s economy was experiencing rapid growth and state tax revenues were up, education funding in our state dramatically increased. Your Legislature has remained committed to expanding funding for education whenever we can afford to do so.

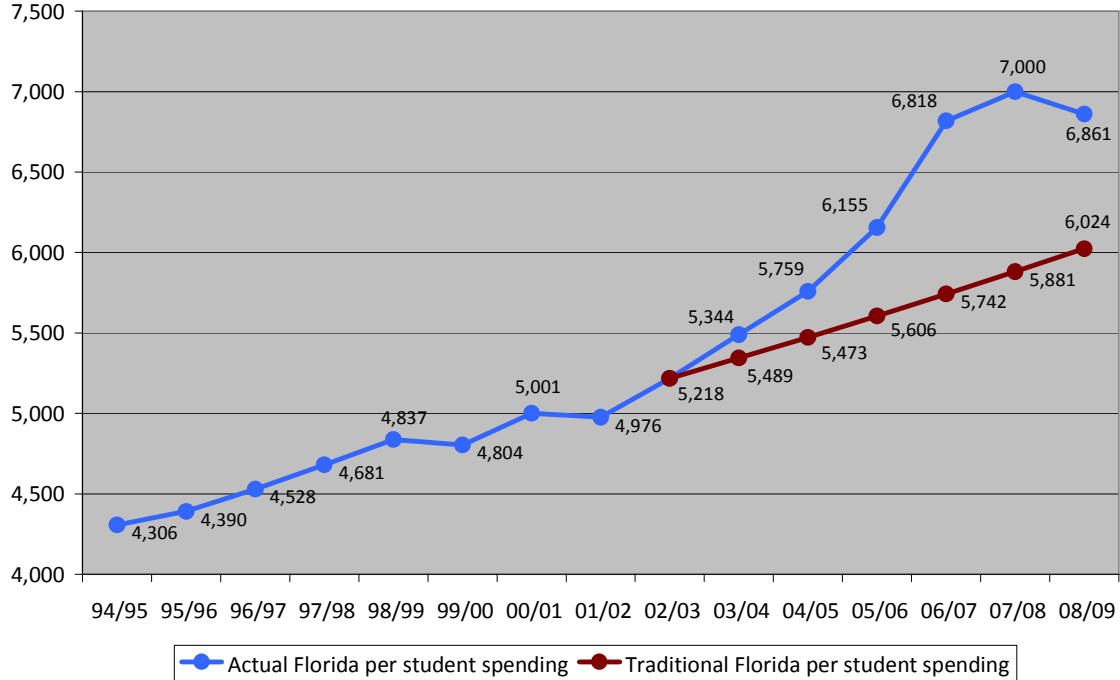
Brevard County Per Student Spending in Strong Economic Times, 2002-03 to 2006-07



Source: <http://novusites.brevard.k12.fl.us/finance/financials.html>

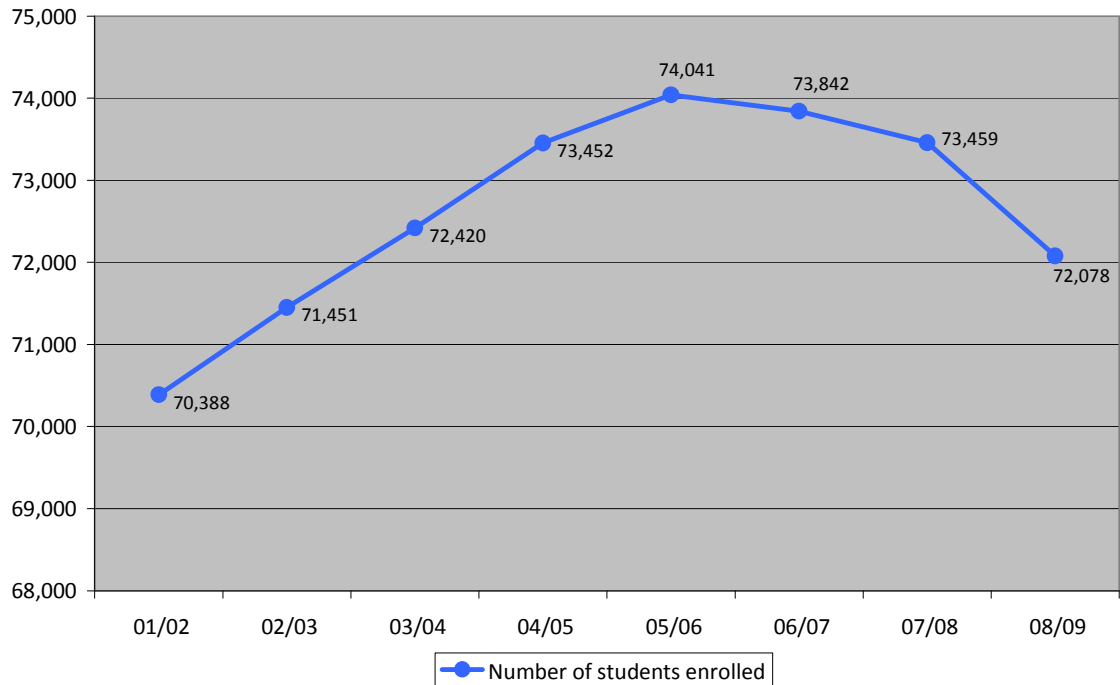
If not for the major increases in education dollars committed by the Legislature during the period from the 2002-03 school year to the 2007-08 school year, per student education funding would be much less today. If the Legislature had increased education funding at traditional rates during this period, education spending would be over \$800 less per student this year, or about \$16,000 less for a class of 20.

Florida Per Student Spending



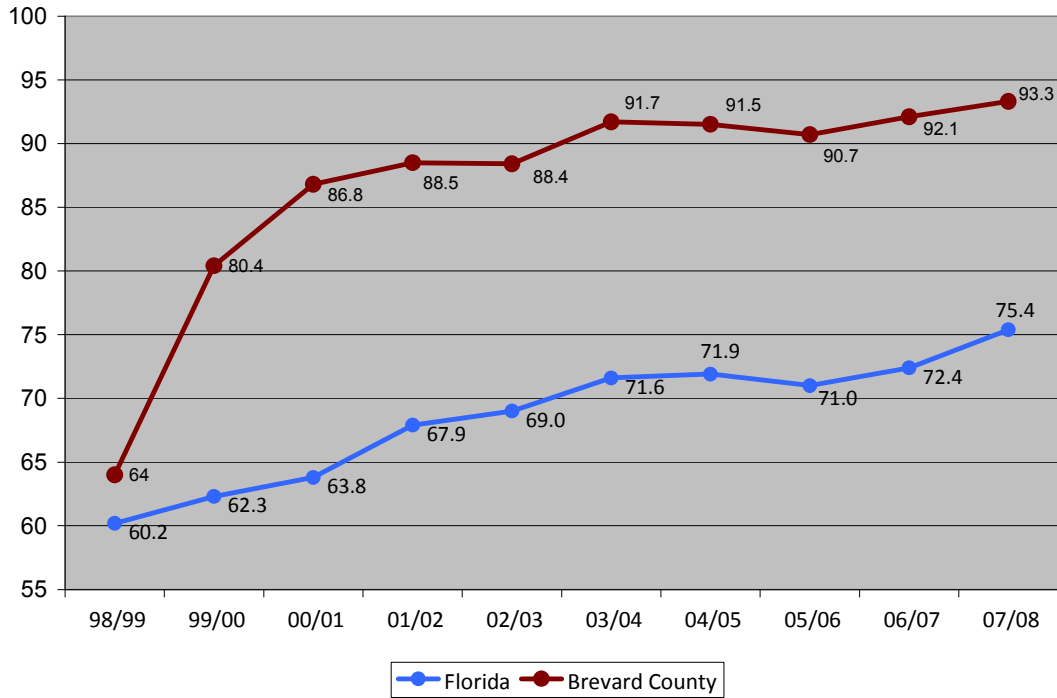
From the 2001-02 school year to the 2008-09 school year, when the district’s operating budget spending grew by 34.1% and the total budget increased 71.8%, enrollment in Brevard County Public Schools grew by only 1,690 students or 2%.

Brevard County Student Enrollment



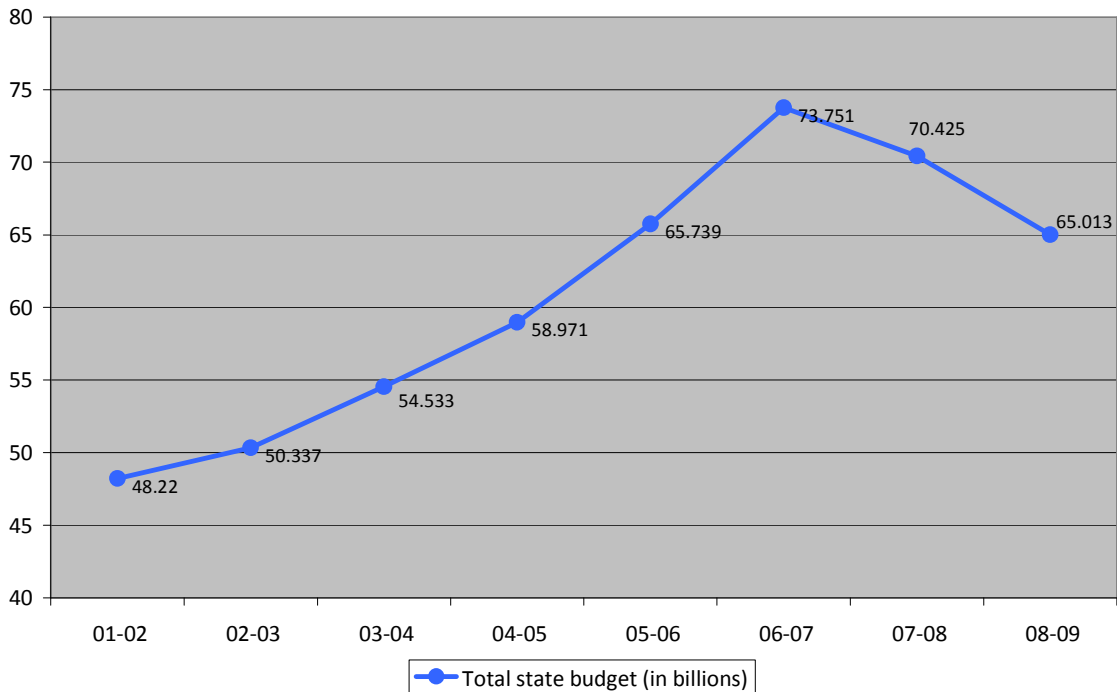
Florida students who now rank in the top 10 in performance and lead the nation in overall improvement have also seen great improvement in graduation rates. Currently, the graduation rate for all Florida students is 75.4%, while Brevard students are graduating at a rate of 93.3%.

Florida Graduation Rates



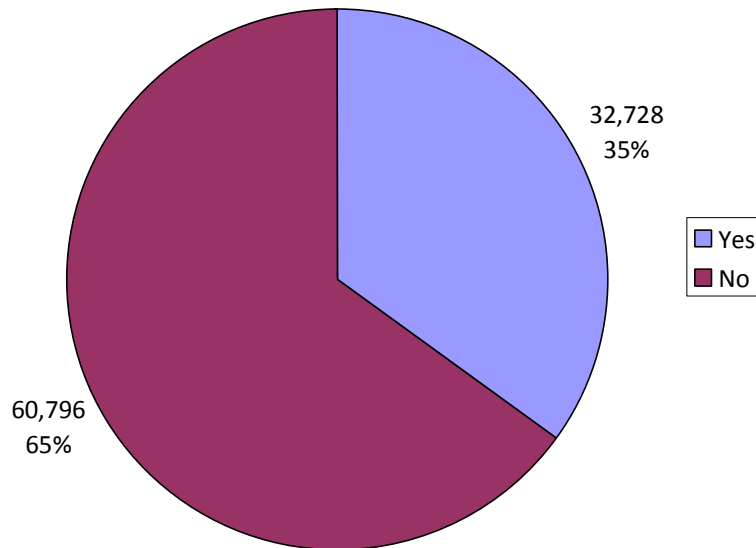
During challenging economic times, Florida's budget is a reflection of the state's economy. Over the last two years, we have made real reductions in the state budget, as Florida families have had to do. Today, the total budget is 15% less than it was two years ago.

Total State of Florida Budget



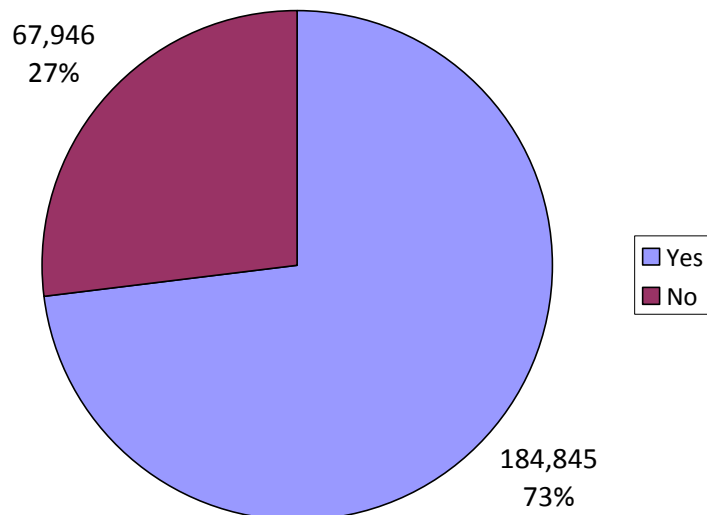
Brevard County voters overwhelmingly voted down a proposal to increase taxes when they were given the option. Rather than ask for additional sacrifices from voters when they are making tough choices to get by with less, the Legislature has done everything it can to prioritize its spending and protect education.

Brevard County Referendum, Nov. 4, 2003 1-Cent Sales Tax Increase



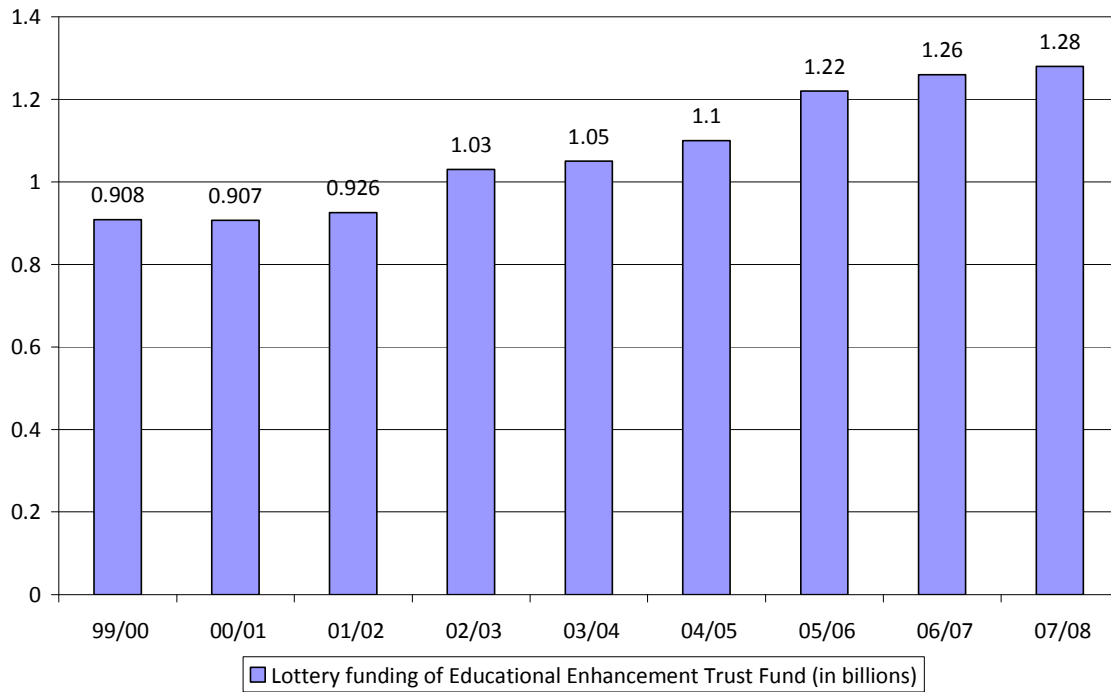
Additionally, Brevard County voters approved a measure to cap annual increases in county tax revenue by a wide margin, approving the proposal 73% to 27% on the November 2008 ballot.

Brevard County Charter Amendment, Cap on Annual Increases in County Tax Revenues, November 4, 2008



Revenues brought in each year by the Florida Lottery are used to supplement the state's education funding. During the 2007-08 school year, the Lottery contributed \$1.28 billion to education in our state.

Florida Lottery Education Funding



In addition to funding Bright Futures Scholarships, school construction, State Universities and Community Colleges, the Lottery provided over \$423 million to public schools for the 2007-08 school year through the state's Educational Enhancement Trust Fund.

Educational Enhancement Trust Fund Appropriations, 2007-08

