

**FLORIDA 2001:  
EDUCATIONAL POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

**Editors**

**Carolyn D. Herrington  
Learning Systems Institute  
Florida State University**

**Katherine Kasten  
College of Education and Human Services  
University of North Florida**

**Prepared under the auspices of the  
Andrew A. Robinson Chair  
in Educational Policy and Economic Development  
at the University of North Florida  
Jacksonville, Florida  
August 2001**

FLORIDA 2001: EDUCATIONAL POLICY ALTERNATIVES

ISBN: 0-9714678-0-3

Copyright © 2001 by Florida Institute of Education

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

*For copyright information contact:*

Cheryl Fountain, Executive Director, Florida Institute of Education  
University of North Florida, University Center  
12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224  
(904) 620-2496, fountain@unf.edu

*For other information:*

Carolyn D. Herrington, Director, Florida Education Policy Studies  
Florida State University, Learning Systems Institute  
4600 C University Center, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2540  
(850) 644-2573, cherrington@lsi.fsu.edu

Katherine Kasten, Dean, College of Education and Human Services  
University of North Florida, Schultz Hall, Room 2543  
4657 St. Johns Bluff Road South, Jacksonville, FL 32224  
(904) 620-2520, kkasten@unf.edu



FLORIDA INSTITUTE  
OF EDUCATION

Printed in the United States of America

## **FOREWORD**

**Adam W. Herbert**  
**Regents Professor and Executive Director**  
**The Florida Center for Public Policy and Leadership**

**Former Chancellor**  
**State University System of Florida**

One of the greatest challenges confronting Floridians is the critical need to clarify our vision of what we want this State to become over the next decade and beyond. Such a vision must establish economic growth and community development directions for the state as we respond to the exciting opportunities which await us in the 21st century. It must define more clearly the expectations we should have of both our educational systems and governmental agencies at all levels. It must suggest the levels of innovation, technological capacity, infrastructure, and intellectual capital needed to foster the achievement of our highest aspirations.

Through its Strategic Planning process, the Board of Regents of the State University System of Florida articulated such a vision and set forth a plan through which the System's ten universities can be active partners in addressing Florida's needs and aspirations. That plan is based upon several fundamental assumptions:

We have entered a knowledge age in which brain power is more critical than brawn;

Rapid advances in technology will keep the demand for highly skilled workers at a premium while forcing undereducated workers into increasingly more insecure jobs with diminishing hopes for advancement;

Increased diversity of the workforce demands that our social, communication and team-building skills become more sophisticated; and

---

We now are competing within the context of a global economy, which demands higher levels of productivity, creativity, and timeliness

With the many challenges confronting us at this critical point in history, Florida must evolve as a national leader in providing high-quality education at all levels. We must maintain our seamless system of public education that provides a well-integrated curriculum from pre-kindergarten experiences through university studies and beyond. We must operate at the cutting edges of innovation through a wide array of special programs and creative initiatives which tap the deep pool of intellectual capital on university campuses and in the school districts of the state. I believe that Florida is strategically positioned to respond successfully to each of these challenges.

Research being conducted in the State University System offers educators and public policy makers important insights into the effectiveness of both local and statewide efforts to enhance public education. The chapters in this book are illustrative of the benefits which such research can provide.

The publication of this book is but one of several current activities designed to bring expertise available in multiple university disciplines into the ongoing dialogue on how to enhance public education throughout Florida. I commend Katherine Kasten, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services at the University of North Florida, and Carolyn Herrington, Director of Florida Education Policy Studies in the Learning Systems Institute at Florida State University, for conceptualizing this book and identifying the distinguished faculty who have written the essays contained herein.

It is my hope that this and other efforts over the next few years will forge a stronger alliance among both faculty and administrators in our public schools and universities and policy makers at all levels. They clearly share the common goal of preparing a better educated citizenry that can respond successfully to the exciting vision for Florida we all share.

## CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b> .....	iii
<i>Adam W. Herbert, Chancellor, State University System of Florida</i>	
<b>Tables and Figures</b> .....	vii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<i>Katherine Kasten, University of North Florida</i>	
<b>Part One: Framing the Issues</b>	
Chapter 1 Accountability as a School Reform Strategy:	
A 30-Year Perspective on Florida.....	7
<i>Carolyn D. Herrington and Victoria-Maria MacDonald, Florida State University</i>	
Chapter 2 Tracking Student Achievement in Florida .....	35
<i>Ada Puryear Burnette, Florida A&amp;M University; Carolyn D. Herrington and Christine E. Johnson, Florida State University</i>	
<b>Part Two: The Contested Role of the State in Educational Policy</b>	
Chapter 3 Assessment in Florida Schools .....	57
<i>Willa Wolcott, University of Florida</i>	
Chapter 4 Educators and the A+ Plan: Voices from the Field.....	87
<i>Deborah Inman, University of North Florida</i>	
<b>Part Three: Transformation of Policy into Practice</b>	
Chapter 5 Educational Technology Policy in Florida.....	111
<i>Kara Dawson and Colleen Swain, University of Florida; Donna Baumbach, University of Central Florida</i>	
Chapter 6 The Influence of Class Size on Student Achievement in Florida’s Elementary School .....	137
<i>Ronald C. Nyhan, Florida Atlantic University</i>	
Chapter 7 Teachers’ Experiences with the Florida Reading Initiative .....	167
<i>Anne McGill-Franzen, University of Florida</i>	

---

**Part Four: Institutionalizing Educational Quality**

Chapter 8 The Untapped Promise of Educational Research and Development ..... 191  
*Robert K. Branson, Florida State University*

**Final Thoughts**

Chapter 9 Rethinking the Role of the State: Accountability and Large-Scale,  
Systemic Reform ..... 227  
*Carolyn D. Herrington, Florida State University*

**About the Authors** ..... 233

## TABLES AND FIGURES

### Tables

Legislative History of Accountability in Florida / 10

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Percentage of Students Scoring at or Above Each Achievement Level / 38

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Percentage of Students Scoring at or Above “Proficient,” by State / 39

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT): Percentage of Florida Students Scoring at Each Achievement Level / 42

Average Score on the Florida Writes! / 43

High School Competency Test: 11<sup>th</sup> Graders Passing on the First Try / 44

Percentage of Enrolled Students Who Were Not Promoted to the Next Higher Grade in Florida Public Schools, by Grade / 45

Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT): Average Combined Scores / 46

Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT): Average Combined Scores by Income Level, 1999 / 46

Florida Public High School Graduates Entering Community Colleges Who Passed Entry Level Tests: 1998-99 / 48

Percentage of K-12 Students in Florida Public Schools Not Promoted to the Next Higher Grade, by Race / 48

---

**Tables (continued)**

Average Score on the 1999 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), by Race / 49

High School Competency Test: 11<sup>th</sup> Graders Passing Both Tests on the First Try, by Race/Ethnicity / 51

College Students Who Scored above Cut-off Scores on State Required Entry-Level Tests, by Race/Ethnicity: 1998-99 / 51

Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT): Average Combined Scores in Florida by Race/Ethnicity / 52

Essential Conditions for Use of Technology / 121

District Technology Plans Guidelines as Outlined by Florida's Office of Educational Technology / 122

State, Regional, and National Stakeholders / 130

Descriptive Statistics: Study on Effect of Class Size on Student Achievement / 146

Reading Model Results: Study on Effect of Class Size on Student Achievement / 148

Mathematics Model Results: Study on Effect of Class Size on Student Achievement / 149

Writing Model Results: Study on Effect of Class Size on Student Achievement / 151

Results Summary: Study on Effect of Class Size on Student Achievement / 151

**Tables (continued)**

R&D Investment as a Percentage of Sales for Selected Industries /  
210

**Figures**

Public Opinion: Favorable Rating of Local Public Schools in Florida  
/ 30

Hypothetical Upper Limit of Productivity of the Teaching-Centered  
Model as a Function of Time / 202



## INTRODUCTION

**Katherine Kasten**  
**College of Education and Human Services**  
**University of North Florida**

*Florida 2001: Educational Policy Alternatives* began in a conversation between the editors at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association in spring 1999. Why, we asked each other, aren't educational researchers in Florida having an impact on the policy making process? What could we do, we wondered, to ensure that policy makers are familiar with the research on educational reform, aware of the complexities inherent in institutional change, and astute about the hazards of unintended effects? How could we stimulate faculty in the State University System to tackle the sticky issues of educational standards and accountability?

We capitalized on an opportunity. A search to fill the Andrew A. Robinson Chair in Educational Policy and Economic Development at the University of North Florida had been unsuccessful, and the chair would be vacant in 1999-2000. For the previous three years, after the retirement in spring 1996 of Leon Lessinger, holder of the chair from 1989 to 1996, distinguished scholars such as Michael Kirst, Stanford University; Richard Murnane, Harvard University; and Ann Lieberman, the Carnegie Foundation and Stanford University, had visited Northeast Florida and the UNF campus under the auspices of the chair. But no visiting scholars were scheduled for 1999-2000. We would, we decided, focus attention on Florida's own scholars and gather together their work in a volume published under the auspices of the Robinson Chair.

The Andrew A. Robinson Chair was established in 1987 through a gift by Frederick H. Schultz, a Jacksonville investor, Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives from 1968 to 1970, former member of the Federal Reserve Board, and chairman of the Governor's Citizens' Committee on Education, a landmark in thinking about the strengthening

of educational institutions and delivery systems in Florida. Mr. Schultz created the Robinson Chair in recognition of education's vital role as an investment in human capital and to underscore the relationship between educational policy and economic well-being. The chair is named for the late Andrew A. Robinson, a distinguished African-American educator from Jacksonville who served as the founding principal of Raines High School, the second dean of the College of Education at the University of North Florida, and, from 1980 to 1982, as interim president of UNF.

The chair provided a fitting context for examination of education policy and economic development issues in Florida in the year of the millennium. Early in the fall 1999, the editors issued a request for proposals to faculty in education, economics, political science, public administration, and related disciplines at the 10 member institutions of the Florida State University System. We are grateful to those who took time to respond to our invitation, as we received more proposals than we could fund or include in a single volume. We selected the chapters with attention to the variety of education issues facing Floridians and the intent that the discussion would be of interest and value to policy makers, educators, and interested citizens throughout the state.

The chapters in this volume examine the history of reform initiatives in Florida over the past 30 years, explore the policies that have been used to support student learning and establish statewide standards, and assess the results of these efforts in Florida's classrooms and school districts. The authors describe policy at a specific moment in time, conscious that policy, particularly educational policy, often shifts as writers try to capture its dimensions and nuances. Each of the authors also points us to the future with recommendations regarding the directions, nature, and costs of quality educational systems for Florida's children. The writers focus on issues particularly relevant to the improvement of Florida's public elementary and secondary schools. Issues specific to private and post-secondary institutions, to vouchers and charter schools, and to for-profit and virtual institutions remain unexplored and provide rich material for future volumes.

The book is divided into four parts. In *Part One: Framing the Issues*, two chapters set the context for discussion of education policy. Herrington and MacDonald examine the changing policy context during the past 30 years and describe the attempts of state-level policy makers to use various accountability levers to improve teaching and learning. Burnette, Herrington, and Johnson look at some of the results of those efforts to date through examination of absolute measures of student achievement and comparisons of Florida with other states.

In *Part Two: The Contested Role of the State in Educational Policy*, two chapters look at specific state policy levers, the testing programs and grading systems that Florida policy makers have selected for ensuring accountability of the public school system. Wolcott provides a careful examination of the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test* and *Florida Writes!* by describing the content and nature of the tests and discussing their strengths and limitations as accountability measures. She examines the possibilities and difficulties inherent in high-stakes testing. Inman examines the results of high-stakes testing at the school and teacher level by reporting the reactions of educators from throughout the state to the first year implementation of the school grading system legislated in the 1999 A+ Plan for Education. As both researchers illustrate, the state's appropriate role is difficult to define.

*Part Three: Transformation of Policy into Practice* includes three chapters that examine the efficacy of three different policy initiatives. Dawson, Swain, and Baumbach explore the policy decisions that made Florida a national leader in educational technology during the 1980s and early 1990s and use this backdrop to examine the current status of educational computing in the state. They describe a plan for development of an on-going statewide vision and consensus about the level and nature of investments in educational technology. The chapter by Nyhan reviews the research on class size reduction as a policy mechanism to increase student achievement and empirically tests the effects of reduced class size using Florida elementary student achievement data. McGill-Franzen describes the Florida Reading Initiative and examines its effects through

the perspectives of policy implementers, reading specialists, and teachers in Florida schools.

*Part Four: Institutionalizing Educational Quality* looks at the larger picture and the future of Florida's efforts to define and develop schools that will serve students well in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Branson argues for investments in educational research and development, drawing parallels between the successes in medicine and other fields to radically change notions of best professional practice and the measures needed to make quantum gains in educational outcomes. Finally, Herrington concludes the volume by reflecting on the legitimate, appropriate, and publicly acceptable roles that the state should have in systemic reform.

Together, the nine chapters provide a snapshot of Florida educational policy at the turn of a new century. Our hope is that each chapter will provide a framework for discussion of the challenges facing Floridians as they seek more from their public schools. Taken together, these chapters deepen our understanding about the possibilities and limitations of systemic educational reform. They also challenge us to support and strengthen our educational system in Florida in ways that will positively impact the lives of children, teachers, parents, and community members; that will produce both excellence and equity in our educational system; and that will result in schools that will rank among the best in the nation and students who can hold their own in international comparisons. Education holds the key to Florida's future—in the lives of individuals and in the quality of life for all of us collectively. Our economic, cultural, and civic destinies rest in the hands of the elected public officials and citizen representatives who make educational policy and the dedicated teachers, school counselors, administrators, and community members through whom policy is enacted in Florida's classrooms, schools, and school districts.