



New study, new confirmation that dumping money into schools doesn't fix them

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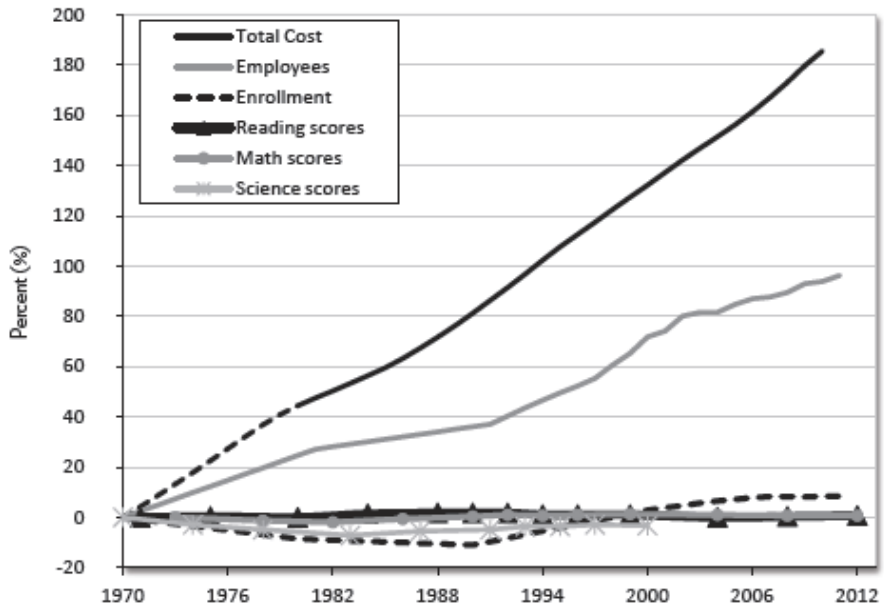
So many progressive “solutions” to public policy problems simply involve dumping money into a hole. Education is no different. From teachers’ unions to New York Times pundits, the answer is always “[more money](#).” Conservatives doubt that solution – that just dumping money into the education system doesn’t actually improve student outcomes. [This isn’t a new argument](#), but [a new study out from the Cato Institute](#) [pdf] finds that not a single state was able to improve their education outcomes by increasing the amount of taxpayer money they spent on education.

Author Andrew J. Coulson writes:

Not only have dramatic spending increases been unaccompanied by improvements in performance, the same is true of the occasional spending declines experienced by some states. At one time or another over the past four decades, Alaska, California, Florida, and New York all experienced multi-year periods over which real spending fell substantially (20 percent or more of their 1972 expenditure levels). And yet, none of these states experienced noticeable declines in adjusted SAT scores—either contemporaneously or lagged by a few years. Indeed, their score trends seem entirely disconnected from their rising and falling levels of spending.

Overall, this can be summed up in one damning chart:

Trends in American Public Schooling Since 1970



Sources: U.S. Department of Education, "Digest of Education Statistics"; and NAEP tests, "Long Term Trends, 17-Year-Olds."

Note: "Total cost" is the full amount spent on the K-12 education of a student graduating in the given year, adjusted for inflation. In 1970, the amount was \$56,903; in 2010, the amount was \$164,426.

Don't expect this to halt the advocacy from progressives for more money for education. Proper reforms focus on how current spending levels are distributed – not just pouring more into the hole.