

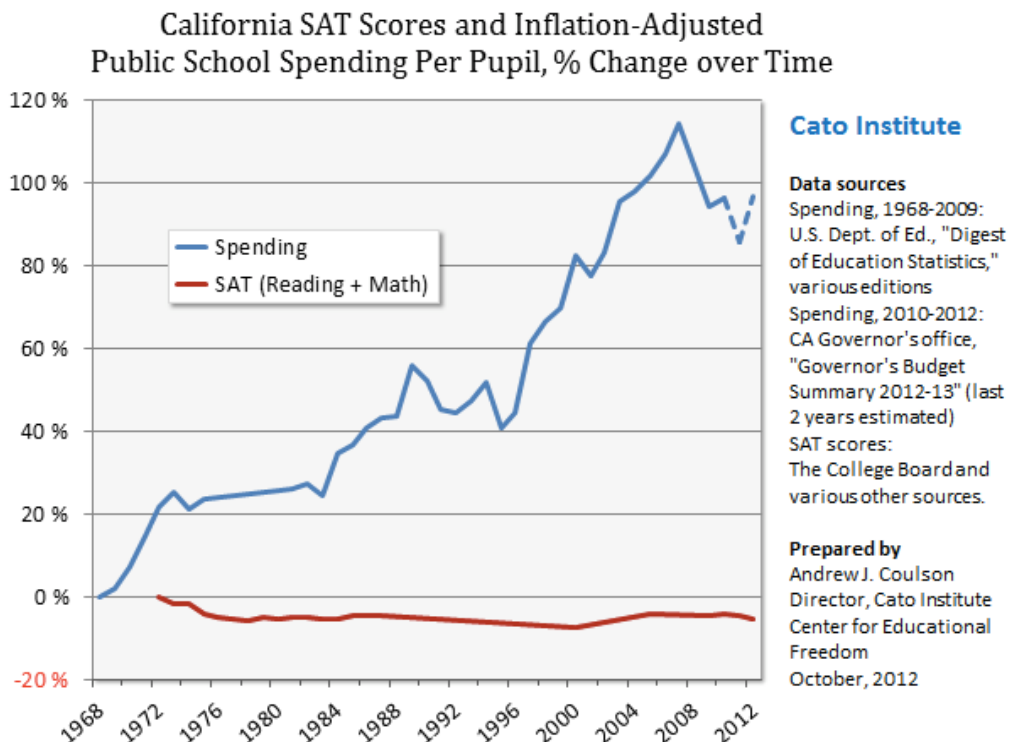
# The Washington Post

## No more tax hikes for education until SAT scores improve, says Cato

By: Allen McDuffee - October 25, 2012

On Election Day, California voters are being asked to consider two propositions that would raise between \$6 billion and \$10 billion dollars in tax revenue for education. However, Andrew Coulson, director of the Cato Institute's Center for Education Freedom, says that SAT scores in California have essentially remained stagnant while spending has roughly doubled over the last 40 years.

Coulson concludes that "there is no evidence that the fantastic spending increases of the past have done anything to improve student achievement."



But are SAT scores enough of an indicator (and is there an alternative explanation for the state of California's scores)?

Coulson says that's all we have to go on:

The only state-level achievement data we have that go back this far are the SATs, and, taking into account the renorming that occurred in the mid 1990s, they have actually declined by five percent. None of the customary excuses can explain away this dismal record. A larger share of students participated in 1972 than do so today, so if a shrinking test-taking pool is the sign of a more elite subset of students taking the test, then scores should be higher today, not lower. And while state-level breakdowns by race and ethnicity are not available that far back, the national trend is similar and it shows stagnation in the scores of majority white students—which excludes changing demographics as an explanation.