

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 13, 2006

Contact: [John R. LaPlante](mailto:John.R.LaPlante@flinthills.org)  
(312) 953-3866

## **Kansas Schools: Better than Average is Not Good Enough**

*Fewer than half of students are proficient; only three in four graduate; competition and choice are called for.*

(WICHITA) – Kansans like to think that their public schools are better than average. They are. But the picture is not so sanguine if you look into the details.

A new policy paper "[Why Kansas Must Improve Its Above-Average Test Scores](#)" recently published by the Flint Hills Center for Public Policy examines the performance of Kansas schools, using data from the Kansas Department of Education as well as the U.S. Department of Education. Kansas has a higher graduation rate than the nation as a whole, but a 77 percent rate means that many students lack even the most basic level of formal education for today's world. Graduation rates for African-Americans and Latinos are even worse, hovering just above 50 percent.

Even if they stay in school, many students are not learning what they should. Fewer than half of fourth and eighth grade students score at the level of proficient or better on state assessments. For three out of four major tests, the percentage is closer to only one-third of all students. Read this policy paper in its entirety at [www.flinthills.org](http://www.flinthills.org).

"Clearly, some students receive a fine education in Kansas. And the state does have graduation and test scores that beat the national average," says John LaPlante, education policy fellow with the Flint Hills Center for Public Policy. "But lawmakers and citizens should not forget that those averages hide some rather unpleasant truths. Skeptics and opponents of vouchers and charter schools say that they are not needed, because Kansas schools are so good. But the record shows that there is a strong need for the benefits of competition and choice."

*John LaPlante is an education policy fellow with the Kansas-based Flint Hills Center for Public Policy.*

# # #

*The Flint Hills Center for Public Policy is an independent voice for sound public policy in Kansas. As a non-profit, nonpartisan think tank, the Center provides critical information about policy options to legislators and citizens. For more information, please visit our web site at [www.flinthills.org](http://www.flinthills.org) or contact us at [inquiries@flinthills.org](mailto:inquiries@flinthills.org) or (316) 634-0218.*



