



# Legislative Impact Report

2022





**ExcelinEd**  
*in Action*

# Legislative Impact Report

**2022**

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A MESSAGE FROM

## Our Chairman

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More than two years after the pandemic began, our nation's students continue to feel the ripple effects of policies that left far too many children, for far too long, without access to a quality education. It is why education remains the most important issue facing our country, specifically state leaders.

The remedies aren't simple because there is no single solution. Enacting a variety of policies is required, ranging from expanding educational options, creating more flexible learning environments, embracing research-based literacy policy, bridging the digital divide, modernizing school funding and strengthening career and college pathways.

This year we saw tremendous success across this spectrum with 94 policies passed in 21 states across the country. These accomplishments would not have been possible without tremendous state partners, but it begins by applauding the parents who spoke up and the policymakers who stepped up.

As we look ahead, it's critical we use this year's progress to set next year's ambitious goals, because every student is deserving of a quality education that respects their dignity and unlocks their pathway to opportunity and lifelong success.

Together, we must commit to a relentless pursuit of excellence for every student, every family, every educator, in every school and in every state.

On behalf of our nation's students being helped through this work, thank you—and onward!

A handwritten signature of Jeb Bush in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Jeb Bush  
Chairman, ExcelinEd *in Action*

A MESSAGE FROM

# Our Executive Director



We believe in transforming education to unlock opportunity and lifelong success for each and every child by enacting quality education policy. This year, we made major strides toward this vision, including historic wins in literacy policy in Alaska, modernizing education funding in Tennessee, improving career & technical education in Mississippi (including a return-on-investment analysis), creating innovative teacher-parent compacts in Indiana and much more. None of this would have been possible without so many state partners, policymakers, governors and, of course, parents.

State legislatures and governors from every party and every part of the country delivered exciting wins for students this year. Their bold work is creating broader access to school options, science-based instruction in early literacy, flexibilities for schools to innovate and more equitable investments in public charter schools.

This diversity of policies reflects our view that delivering a better education for every student requires a three-prong approach: fixing the existing system, expanding options for all families and reimagining education for the future. There's no one best solution, no single best legislative action, but instead a continual effort to help all students access the best education possible.

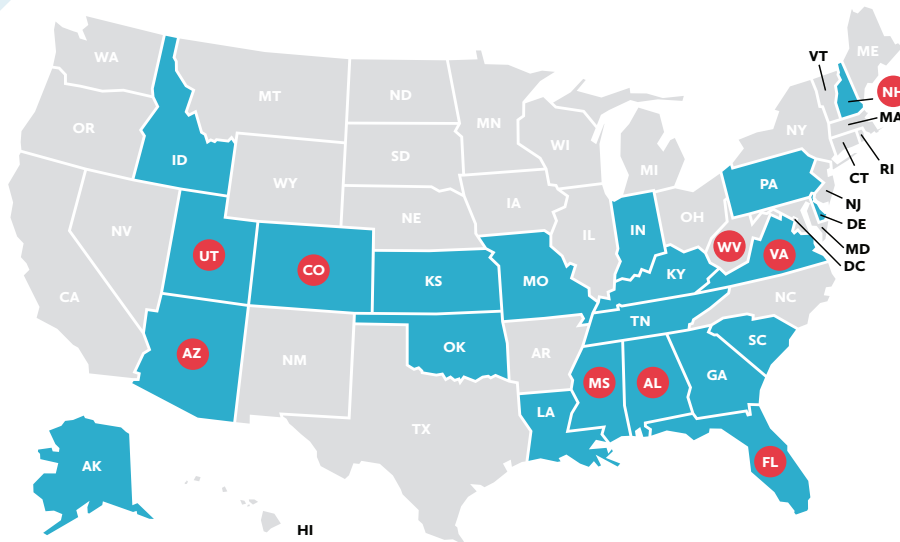
In all of this work, *ExcelinEd in Action* is honored to partner with so many visionary leaders and coalition partners. We value your support and appreciate your commitment to students, which we share so deeply.

On behalf of our entire team, thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Levesque". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia Levesque  
Executive Director, *ExcelinEd in Action*

# National Landscape



**50**  
Policies Passed  
and **44** Improved in  
21 States

**14**  
Policies Protected  
in 9 States



**1.3 Million Students**  
Newly Eligible for Private School  
Choice in 7 States



**\$142 Million**  
Serving **119,300 Students** with  
Microgrants in 5 States



**\$352.5 Million**  
Funding for Charter Schools  
or Public School Choice in 5 States



**177,300 Students**  
Benefiting from Expanded  
Public School Choice and Microgrants



**Financial Literacy**  
High School  
**Graduation Requirement**  
(Florida)



**1st**  
Teacher-Parent Compact Policy  
in the Nation (Indiana)



**15 States**  
Improved Early Literacy with  
**\$229.8 Million** in New Funding  
in 5 states



**6 States**  
Reimagined Learning



**\$512.5 Million**  
New Funding for Workforce Training  
and College Acceleration



**9 States**  
Strengthened College & Career  
Pathways Policies



17 Expert Testimonies in  
**9 States**



**177 Bills**  
Engaged in 26 States



# Alabama



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Alabama Literacy Taskforce Improvements

Governor Kay Ivey signed legislation to improve the Alabama Literacy Act. The literacy taskforce no longer operates independently but instead falls under the State Superintendent of Education’s review. The law also requires the state superintendent to appoint a national literacy expert to sit on the taskforce.

Additionally, the law requires that the state superintendent must report the number of teachers, administrators and other personnel at each school and local education agency who have started or completed an approved **training program in the science of reading**, as well as the training program used.

### ● PROTECTED Early Literacy – Third-Grade Retention

ExcelinEd in Action worked to amend legislation delaying the implementation of third-grade retention requirements, reducing the implementation time by half, from 4 years to 2 years.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Alabama Tax Credit Scholarship

Policymakers passed legislation to amend the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 to increase the income tax credit claimed by taxpayers who donate to scholarship granting organizations.

The legislation increases the cap on individual and corporate donations from 50 percent of their tax liability **to 100 percent, up to \$100,000**. These changes are anticipated to increase donations to the program, allowing as many as **2,000 additional students** to receive a scholarship.

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Parent’s Choice Act

Legislation to create the Parent’s Choice Act failed to make it to Governor Kay Ivey’s desk. The bill would have expanded schooling opportunities by creating an education savings account to cover qualifying educational expenses of participating students.

“The Alabama Accountability Act creates life-changing situations for students and their families, enabling an opportunity for school choice and enhancing the quality of life and learning for so many Alabamians.”

- Senator Dan Roberts





## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● DEVELOPED College & Career Pathways – Credential Quality and Transparency

Policymakers failed to pass legislation to create the Alabama Workforce Council Committee on Credential Quality and Transparency Act and the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways Act, which would have advised the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways. The bill also would have required every student to earn by the 2023-24 academic year one or more college or career readiness skills before they graduate.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Kay Ivey, A+ Education Partnership, Alabama Department of Education, Alabama Opportunity Scholarship Fund





# Alaska

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Alaska Reads Act

Alaska passed **landmark reading legislation**, creating a comprehensive literacy policy for the state. The legislation, which passed with bipartisan support in both chambers, will ensure teachers statewide are trained in research-backed reading practices and provides reading specialists to support their work in the classroom.

The Alaska Reads Act also provides an early literacy screening tool to help teachers identify students with reading difficulties in grades K-3 and ensures parents receive timely notification of any reading difficulties and equips them with tools to support reading at home. Another provision provides more intensive reading interventions and progress monitoring for students who are struggling to learn to read.

“Childhood literacy is not a partisan issue. It’s critical to the strength of our economy, the health of our communities and the endurance of our democracy.”

- former Senate President  
Cathy Giessel



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Mike Dunleavy, Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development, Commissioner Michael Johnson, Alaska Policy Forum





# Arizona

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Literacy Improvements

New screening and progress monitoring are in place for students in kindergarten through third grade to better identify and help those who have deficiencies in reading.

Previously exempt, A and B letter-grade school districts and charter schools are now required to update their K-3 reading program plans annually. They must specify promotion and retention procedures for any 3rd grade student who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills.

### ● IMPROVED Teachers & Leaders – Teacher Certification; Leadership Preparation Programs

Lawmakers passed legislation to address the talent pipeline for educators by making it easier for professionals to enter the teaching profession. It creates new flexibility in teacher training and licensing for specialized teachers.

“Arizona’s historic expansion of ESAs is not just a win for school choice, it’s a win for every single Arizona student.”

- Governor  
Doug Ducey



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public and Private Education Choice – Arizona Empowerment Scholarship Account

The Arizona Legislature sent Governor Doug Ducey a bill that expands the Arizona Empowerment Scholarship Account into a universal program for all Arizona students, becoming **the most expansive K-12 education savings account program in the nation.**

The program will allow more than 1 million students to use scholarships toward tuition or fees, supplemental education materials, tutoring and other educational purposes.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Transportation

Lawmakers passed legislation to modernize transportation options for schools by allowing additional transportation resources to be used to transport students, beyond the traditional yellow bus. This provides greater flexibility to transport students on more direct routes to and from the public school of their choice. In addition, the legislature continued to invest in the Arizona Transportation Modernization grant program by allocating **\$20 million** in this year’s budget.



## **A** STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – CTE Funding Improvements

Governor Ducey signed legislation to improve funding for career and technical education (CTE) districts. The bill changes how students in CTE districts are counted for funding and allows for flexible seat-time calculation.

“We’ve been using the ESA for four years now, and it’s been amazing for our family.”

- An Arizona Parent

### **🤝** STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Doug Ducey, Great Leaders Strong Schools, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity Arizona, Arizona Charter School Association, Goldwater Institute, Yes. Every Kid.



# Colorado

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Administrators Science of Reading Training

Colorado improved its early literacy policies by requiring elementary principals and other school administrators to receive training on early reading instruction. The state previously mandated that the elementary curriculum be based on the science of reading, elementary teachers be trained in the science of reading and teacher candidates pass an exam that includes components of the science of reading.

### ● PROTECTED School Accountability – Pre-Pandemic Accountability

ExcelinEd in Action worked with state partners to help pass legislation to ensure Colorado’s pre-pandemic accountability practices and timelines stay in place, despite data discontinuity concerns created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Transportation Grants

Although policymakers failed to pass state legislation to create a transportation innovation grant program, the State Board of Education dedicated **\$3 million** in unspent Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds toward a scaled-down version of the program. The funds are serving students in the Adams 14 school district who are experiencing reduced bus routes and other barriers.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Special Education Charter Students

Charter schools can now be designated as Individual Education Plan (IEP) administrative units, allowing the schools to better serve students with special needs.

“We want [students] to be able to come in, get a credential that helps them upskill or re-skill or move up on their career ladder, and we want it to be in alignment so that they’re not wasting their time.”

- Senator Rachel Zenzinger



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Cross-Agency Partnership

Colorado passed legislation to establish a cross-agency secondary, postsecondary and work-based learning integration taskforce. The taskforce is charged with analyzing data and **developing recommendations on expanding pathways programs** that integrate high school, college and work-based learning to expand opportunities and access for students.

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Stackable Credentialing

Policymakers passed a bill to strengthen Colorado’s school-to-career pipeline. The bill directs the Department of Higher Education to develop stackable **credential pathways for three high-growth industries** in the state and to work with higher education colleges to implement the pathways. The stackable credentials are a combination of industry and academic credentials that reflect pathways to advanced learning and employment, improving flexibility for students who may not have the time or money to commit to long-term programs.

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Higher Education Support For Foster Youth

Governor Jared Polis signed legislation to create a targeted “last dollar” **scholarship program for foster youth** to help increase the number of students earning a postsecondary credential. All public higher education institutions will be required to provide Colorado foster youth with enough financial assistance to cover any remaining costs of attendance after private, state and federal aid are applied. The legislation also requires the **state to cover 50 percent of the cost** of providing this assistance.

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Regional Talent Development Initiative

Policymakers created a grant program to fund talent development initiatives across the state. The bill establishes a **\$91 million** regional talent initiative program focused on workforce development. The initiative will address regional labor market needs and support recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Postsecondary Student Success Data Dashboards

The state’s postsecondary data collection system was expanded to create new statewide and institution-specific data dashboards that can be used by students for making career decisions and by institutions for assessing and improving their programming. Colorado is required to measure the progression of students through postsecondary education, assess the impact of postsecondary pathways on students’ career opportunities and success, and provide information on these measures to the public.

### ● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Work-Based Learning Employer Incentives

The state Department of Labor is required to work with a broad group of stakeholders to provide financial incentives to eligible employers to create work-based learning opportunities for youth and adults.



## REIMAGINE LEARNING

### ● IMPROVED Next Generation Learning – Innovation Zones Autonomy

Legislators protected innovation zones—which give educators autonomy and **flexibility to develop new approaches to teaching and learning**—by preventing school boards from changing an innovation school’s plans, unless the majority of teachers and administrators in the school approve the changes. If a district tries to limit an innovation school’s flexibility, the school can bring the dispute to the state Board of Education.

 **BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

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● **PASSED Digital Access and Equity – Digital Navigator**

Policymakers passed legislation to create the Statewide Digital Navigator program, administered through the Office of Future Work. The program will **address digital inequalities**, including access to digital technology and computer skills training, cybersecurity and affordable internet service as well as assisting with digital skill development and job access. “Digital navigators” will personally reach out to adults and youth who have been historically disengaged from work-based learning opportunities and connect them to available opportunities.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

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Governor Jared Polis, Senator Jeff Bridges, Senator Bob Rankin, Representative Colin Larson, State Board of Education Member Joyce Rankin, Colorado Children’s Campaign, Colorado League of Charter Schools, Colorado Succeeds, Democrats for Education Reform, Ready Colorado, Stand for Children





# Delaware

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading Instruction, Teacher Professional Development, Screeners, Parent Notification

Delaware is working to improve the state’s literacy policy. A bill unanimously passed both chambers of the Delaware General Assembly to require school districts and charter schools serving K-3 students to adopt a reading instruction curriculum from a list compiled by the Department of Education grounded in the science of reading. Teacher professional development in the science of reading is required, and schools will identify a supervisor to oversee and assist with curriculum implementation. This legislation awaits signature by Governor John Carney.

A companion bill aims to ensure that struggling readers are identified early and monitored throughout third grade. Parents will be notified and engaged in the interventions for these struggling students. This legislation passed unanimously in both chambers and awaits signature by Governor Carney.

“More than ever, it is important for us that we provide teachers with the right curriculum, the right training and the right resources to do their jobs.”

- Caroline O’Neal, CEO of Reading Assist



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senator Laura Sturgeon, Representative Kimberly Williams, DelawareCAN, Reading Assist, Rodel Foundation





# Florida

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED – Financial Literacy Instruction

Governor Ron DeSantis signed the Dorothy L. Hukill Financial Literacy Act, requiring all high school students to pass a **financial literacy course** to receive a high school diploma. The requirement will take effect for students who enter high school in the 2023-24 school year.

*The Foundation for Florida’s Future, the in-state advocacy organization for ExcelinEd in Action, played a leading role in improving the state’s **accountability system** through several pieces of legislation:*

### ● IMPROVED School Accountability – Student Assessments

Florida made changes to its assessment and accountability system. Florida’s assessment system now consists of **two diagnostic progress monitoring assessments and a new end-of-year summative assessment**. The tests, for grades 3-10, will become “computer adaptive,” providing added clarity to students’ knowledge while reducing testing time.

Additionally, the state will require results from the progress monitoring tests to be returned to teachers within one week and to parents within two weeks. End-of-year results must be returned by the end of May.

Florida also passed a school grade escalator that establishes a system of continuous improvement by gradually **raising the bar on school grading criteria over time**.

### ● IMPROVED School Accountability – School Recognition Funding

Florida funded the School Recognition Program at a record level of **\$200 million**. The program gives financial awards to schools that have improved or maintained high student achievement.

### ● PROTECTED School Accountability – Student Assessments Overall Threats

To protect school accountability policy in Florida, the Foundation for Florida’s Future worked to ensure legislation related to assessments maintained the end-of-year summative assessment, despite attempts to remove it.

“Financial literacy is an important life skill for a student to have. Ensuring our students have the skills to manage their finances and perhaps one day own a business will pay dividends for our state. I am proud to sign this bill to support the future of Florida’s students and ultimately their families and communities.”

- Governor Ron DeSantis





## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Florida Institute for Charter School Innovation

Policymakers passed a bill to establish the Florida Institute for Charter School Innovation at Miami Dade College. The institute will gather and share **best practices and data to help charter schools** manage their resources.

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Driving Choice Grant Program

Florida created and funded a **\$15 million transportation grant program** to improve access to reliable and safe transportation for students. The bill encourages districts to create innovative approaches for school transportation, including carpooling and ride sharing apps, for school choice families as well as those in traditional schools.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools Intent Clarification

Lawmakers passed legislation to clarify the intent of charter schools by codifying in law that charter school students are public school students and should be funded as such. Additionally, the bill requires the state’s Office of Program Policy and Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA) to study the distribution of capital outlay funds and federal funds provided to charter schools and to make recommendations for a **more equitable allocation to all public schools**.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools Renewal Improvements

Florida passed a bill that will **guarantee a 15-year renewal** for high performing “A” or “B” rated charter schools. Additionally, charter schools will now be automatically renewed if the district fails to follow the proper procedure, limiting disruptions to charter school students. Charter school contracts are now allowed to be changed at any time rather than only during the renewal process. The bill will also simplify the process for charter operators to consolidate multiple charters into a single charter.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – New Worlds Reading Scholarship Expansion & Reading Scholarship Funding

Legislators appropriated **\$29 million** for the New Worlds Reading Scholarship program, which provides \$500 scholarships to students who are struggling with reading in grades K-5. This replaces the Reading Scholarship Accounts, previously limited to students in grades 3-5.

“It is important that our students are given the tools and knowledge to make basic and well-informed financial decisions in the future. Understanding concepts such as opening up a savings or checking account, buying a first home, or planning for retirement at a young age will pay off for students in the long-run as they begin their careers and families.”

- Commissioner of Education  
Richard Corcoran





● **IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Open Enrollment Capacity Transparency**

Schools will now be required to determine enrollment capacity at each grade level, update the capacity information every 12 weeks, create a waitlist for each grade level, notify parents when space becomes available and enroll students throughout the year. Additionally, school districts must publish information on open enrollment on their websites and also direct parents to transportation resources that are available.

● **IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Family Empowerment Scholarship Process Improvements**

Policymakers improved the Family Empowerment Scholarship by streamlining the student verification process and removing bureaucratic hurdles that delayed funding from reaching families.

● **IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Family Empowerment Scholarship Educational Options: Expansion to Law Enforcement Families**

The legislature expanded eligibility for the Family Empowerment Scholarship Educational Options program to include **dependents of law enforcement officers, regardless of income**. Additionally, it excludes these dependent children of law enforcement officers from the statewide cap on the program, meaning they are eligible at any time during the year with no wait list.

● **IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Family Empowerment Scholarship Unique Abilities Waitlist**

The base eligibility for the Family Empowerment Scholarship for students with special needs was increased from 20,000 to **26,500 students**.

● **IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter Facilities Funding**

Lawmakers passed a budget that provides charter schools with **\$196 million** for facilities.

● **IMPROVED Developmental Delays**

The bill changes Florida’s definition of developmental delay to match the flexibility provided by federal law. The change increases the maximum age allowed for students to receive special education services under this diagnosis, from age 5 to age 9 or through completion of second grade, whichever comes first. The legislation will also allow for additional support services to continue for these students through age 9.

● **IMPROVED Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children**

The bill extends Florida’s participation in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to July 1, 2025. The compact streamlines transitions between schools across states to **ease the burden of frequent moves and deployment of military families**. The compact governs member states in numerous areas, including school placement, enrollment, records transfer, participation in academic programs and extracurricular activities, and graduation.

“Progress monitoring is going to help drive instruction and keep parents informed in real time. We should know how the students are doing, and we should be able to provide opportunities for acceleration while reducing testing time in the process.”

- Senator  
Manny Diaz  
Newly  
appointed  
Commissioner  
of Education  
(June 2022)





- **DEVELOPED Public Education Choice – Part-Time Enrollment**

The Foundation for Florida’s Future continued to grow the discussion on a part-time enrollment policy that would allow school districts to provide private and homeschool students with the opportunity to take public school courses on a part-time basis. Additionally, the proposal clarifies that students will not lose their Family Empowerment Scholarship if the parent decides to pay for public school courses out of pocket.

- **VETOED Public Education Choice – Schools of Hope Funding**

Although lawmakers provided a \$40 million increase in funding to the Schools of Hope charter school program, Governor Ron DeSantis vetoed the new funds.



## **STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER**

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- **PASSED College & Career Pathways – Work-Based Experience**

State and local governments can now consider substituting relevant work experience in place of postsecondary educational requirements for an open position, if all other requirements are present.

- **IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Workforce Training and Industry Credentials Funding**

The Foundation for Florida’s Future worked to help secure funds for improving workforce education. Legislators directed **\$70.5 million** to schools to support workforce training and student attainment of industry credentials.

- **PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – Dual Enrollment Funding**

The Foundation for Florida’s Future played an active role in helping to protect Dual Enrollment funding. The funding allows private and homeschool students to **enroll in college or university coursework for free**, with the state reimbursing these institutions. Colleges can also receive reimbursements for public school students for summer terms.

- **PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – Computer Science Teacher Bonus**

Florida included funding in its budget that will continue to provide money to school districts to **train computer science teachers**. If teachers are effective in teaching these courses, they are also eligible to receive annual bonuses.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

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Senator Manny Diaz, Jr.  
House Speaker Chris Sprowls  
Academica  
Agudath Israel  
American Center for Transforming Education  
Americans for Prosperity  
Arbor School of Central Florida  
Apple  
Associated Industries of Florida  
Association of Christian Schools International  
AT&T  
Big Brothers, Big Sisters Florida  
Center Academy  
Charter Schools USA  
Children's Home Society of Florida  
Children's Network of Southwest Florida  
Children's Services Council of Broward County  
Christ Classical Academy  
Christian Schools of Florida  
Code.org  
College Board  
Dyslexia Research Institute  
EduServe Solutions  
Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools  
Florida Association of Post-Secondary Schools & Colleges  
Florida Cable Television Association  
Florida Catholic Conference  
Florida Chamber of Commerce  
Florida Charter School Alliance  
Florida Coalition of School Board Members  
Florida Council of 100  
Florida Council of Independent Schools  
Florida Department of Education  
Florida Office of Broadband  
Florida Realtor Association  
Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association  
Florida School Board Association  
Florida School Districts (multiple)  
Florida SouthWestern State College  
Florida State University  
Florida TaxWatch  
Florida Virtual School  
Graduation Alliance  
Home Education Foundation  
IDEA Public Schools  
Kid's Community College Schools  
KIPP  
LIBRE Initiative  
Lumen Technologies  
Mater Academy  
McKay Coalition  
North Florida School of Special Education  
OptimaEd  
Passport School  
PK Yonge Lab School  
Project Lead the Way  
PS 305  
Step Up For Students  
Teach Florida at Teach Coalition  
Teach for America  
The Children's Movement of Florida  
The James Madison Institute  
The Optima Foundation  
Unidos US  
University of Central Florida  
Yes. Every Kid.



# Georgia



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter Open Enrollment

ExcelinEd in Action worked with state partners to pass legislation expanding learning opportunities for students. The bill allows students to transfer to a charter school during the school year without penalty when an enrollment opportunity becomes available. Local school boards are also required to adopt a universal, streamlined transfer process.

All Georgia public charter schools will continue to undergo an annual financial audit, and state charter schools will still receive an annual financial evaluation from the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia.

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Tax Credit Scholarship Improvements

The session ended with Governor Brian Kemp signing into law legislation that increases the amount donors can contribute to the Georgia Tax Credit Scholarship program, raising the program’s annual total to **\$120 million** per year. Additionally, the bill eliminates the sunset provision, making the program permanent.

The bill also adds new oversight measures, which are in response to a recent state audit of the program that called for more transparency. The measure requires schools and organizations in the program to complete and submit an audit to the Georgia Department of Revenue six months after each fiscal year ends.

“We must focus on funding students and not systems because one size does not fit all, especially as it comes to education.”

- Representative Wes Cantrell



### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter Facilities Funding

Policymakers increased funding in the state budget for charter school facilities, resulting in an **additional \$3 million**, for a program total of \$7.5 million. According to the Georgia Charter Schools Association, this is enough to provide all eligible charter schools a grant award of **\$75,000** per year to help offset significant facility costs.

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Savings Account Program

ExcelinEd in Action and coalition partners made significant legislative progress on an education savings account (ESA) bill that would have created a program to give the parents of underserved Georgia students a \$6,000 ESA to individualize their education, qualified expenses included private tuition, tutoring, online courses, books and other education related expenses.

The legislation also would make students eligible for the program if their local school did not offer face-to-face instruction 100 percent of the time. The legislature failed to act, and coalition members are eager to revisit this program in 2024.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● DEVELOPED College & Career Pathways – Computer Science Funding

Policymakers passed a budget to establish a **\$600,000** rural program expansion study to research and provide professional development and student support for a computer science pilot program in rural Georgia.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senator Chuck Payne, Representative John Carson, Representative Will Wade, Americans for Prosperity, Code.org, College Board, Computer Science for Georgia, GeorgiaCAN, Georgia Center for Opportunity, Georgia Charter School Association, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce





# Idaho



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Early Literacy Intervention Funding Formula

ExcelinEd in Action helped to secure a major increase in the state’s annual early literacy spending, more than doubling the funding, from \$26 million to **\$72 million**.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY



### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Empowering Parent Grants

Legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support to create the Empowering Parents Grant Program to help families pay for a variety of education needs, from internet connectivity to tutoring. The **\$50 million program** gives families **\$1,000 per student**, with a maximum of \$3,000 per family.

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter School Teaching Certificates

Policymakers passed legislation to modify charter school teacher certification guidelines. The bill **gives charters greater flexibility in finding teachers** who can fulfill instructional needs for the unique education programs and students in their schools.

### ● DEVELOPED Public Education Choice – Charter School Facility Revolving Loan

Policymakers failed to pass legislation that would have created a Public Charter School Revolving Loan Fund to assist charter schools in obtaining financing at a lower interest rate for facility construction or renovations. A charter school would have been required to meet several financial conditions to qualify, including having 20% of the project financing committed from a Community Development Financial Institution and a demonstrated ability to pay.

“The Empowering Parents grants reinforce this fact – a person’s education starts in the home. Parents are in the driver’s seat, as they should be and always will be in Idaho. The Empowering Parents grants put families in control of their child’s education and helps set them up for success.”

- Governor Brad Little



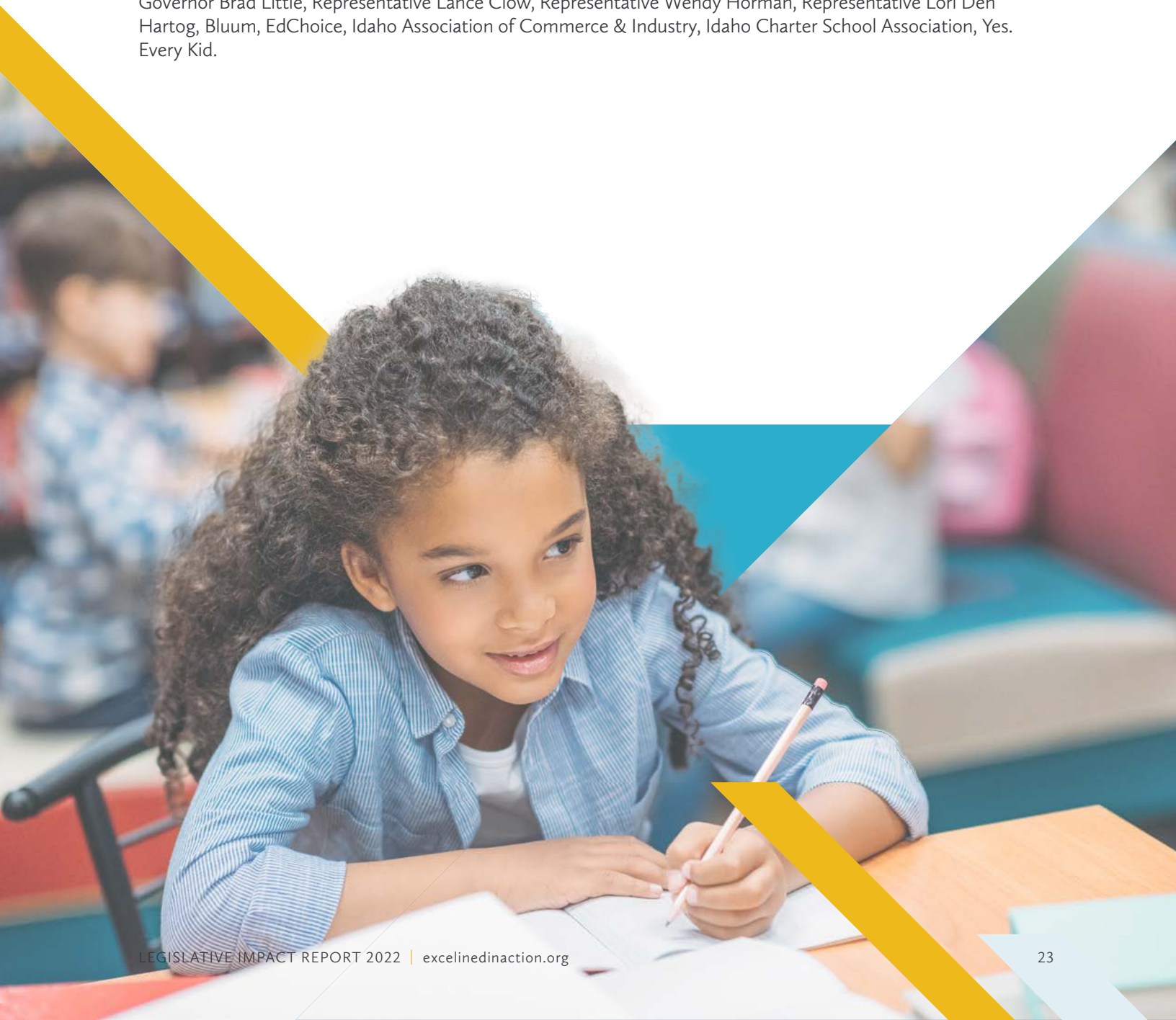
 **REIMAGINE LEARNING**

- **PASSED Next Generation Learning – Mastery-Based Education**

Legislation to allow K-12 schools to designate students as “self-directed learners” passed both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Brad Little. The bill gives students added flexibility by allowing them to **pursue learning opportunities in and out of the classroom**. Teachers can offer or rescind the designation to a student based on the child’s self-motivation, academic growth and other criteria agreed upon by the teacher, student and parents.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Governor Brad Little, Representative Lance Clow, Representative Wendy Horman, Representative Lori Den Hartog, Bluum, EdChoice, Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry, Idaho Charter School Association, Yes. Every Kid.





# Indiana

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● IMPROVED Teachers and Leaders – Filling Teacher Vacancies

Policymakers passed legislation to require the Indiana Department of Education to establish an online adjunct teacher portal on the department’s website or incorporated into the teacher referral system. This will allow more potential teachers to access and fill open teacher positions. *ExcelinEd in Action* also worked closely with the Institute for Quality Education (IQE) to support a provision to allow professionals to enter the classroom and provide instruction as adjunct teachers.

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Dyslexia Screening Improvement

Lawmakers supported struggling readers by passing legislation that requires all public schools to **screen students for dyslexia** (closing a loophole in law that allowed some schools to opt-out) and to provide additional interventions and supports.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Enrichment Scholarship Accounts

Indiana’s new Enrichment Scholarship Program was established for students who experience learning loss in reading or math. The **\$25 million program** will provide up to **\$1000 per student**, in which funds can be used for tutoring, supplemental instructional services and educational supports.



### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Teacher-Parent Compact Report

The Department of Education will create a report around implementing and establishing a new Teacher-Parent Compact program. The report will lead to proposed legislation for the 2023 legislative session. This would be the **first program of its kind in the nation**, allowing parents to enter into agreements with teachers to provide flexible learning environments for students.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Transportation Improvements

Indiana’s education package includes a provision to cut red tape and allow for approved vehicles other than yellow buses to transport students. This change sets the stage for future transportation legislation to create innovative solutions that better **help students attend schools of their choice**.

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – SPED ESA Administration

Indiana lawmakers passed legislation to improve the current Special Education ESA program by establishing a fund to support administration of the program and pushing back the application deadline. The new deadline will **allow parents more time to apply** for the program.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Work-Based Learning Liability Insurance

Indiana improved its work-based learning program, directing the Department of Education to provide participating employers with access to workers compensation insurance for participating students. The legislation will help **incentivize employers** to provide more work-based learning opportunities for students.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray, Senator Jeff Raatz, House Speaker Todd Huston, House Education Committee Chairman Bob Behning, Institute for Quality Education, Americans for Prosperity, Arc of Indiana, Career Academy Charter School, City Fund, Christel House Charter Schools, EdChoice, Indiana Catholic Conference, Indiana Charter School Network, Indiana Non-Public Education Association, Indianapolis Mayor's Office of Education Innovation, Mind Trust, Purdue Polytechnic Charter Schools, Signature School, Stand for Children





# Iowa



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

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- **DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Savings Account Program**

ExcelinEd in Action worked to pass a new education savings account program this session. Ultimately, the program’s legislative champions were unable to gain the necessary House votes, and the bill failed to advance this year.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

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Senator Amy Sinclair, Senator Brad Zaun, Representative John Wills, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity, EdChoice, Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education, Iowa Catholic Conference, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Reaching Higher Iowa



# Kansas

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Every Child Can Read Act

The law requires school districts to provide opportunities for underperforming students to participate in **targeted educational interventions**. It also requires reading comprehension to be included in all literacy instruction. Additionally, schools must measure student achievement via participation in the state assessment program and through other approved universal screening and assessment tools.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Mandatory Part-Time Enrollment

Kansas lawmakers clarified through legislation that all school districts must adopt part-time enrollment policies that accommodate students who attend “unaccredited private schools,” which includes homeschool students.

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Mandatory Open Enrollment

Kansas passed legislation to ensure parents can more easily enroll their child in **any public school of their choice**. School districts are now required to set policies for identifying available space for nonresident students and enrolling them according to a lottery.

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Tax Credit Scholarship Expansion

Kansas policymakers’ efforts to improve the state’s Tax Credit Scholarship program failed to pass in the legislature. The updated program would have expanded student eligibility for the state’s low-income tax credit scholarship by eliminating requirements, such as having to attend one of the state’s lowest 100 performing schools or receiving free lunch.

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Savings Accounts

The session ended without policymakers passing legislation to create the Student Empowerment Program. Students who receive free or reduced-price lunch or attend a school in an at-risk school district would have been eligible for scholarships to supplement their education. The scholarships would have been equal to the base per-pupil amount each student would have received in a traditional public school setting.

“ [Open enrollment] gives some of the kids in the urban community a better chance to get a good education.”

- A Kansas Parent

 **REIMAGINE LEARNING**

- **PASSED Next Generation Learning – Learn Everywhere**

The state will now allow school districts to adopt a policy to allow students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 to **earn course credits through alternative education opportunities**. These can be with sponsoring organizations or individuals, such as a parent, teacher or administrator who partners with a school district.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Senator Molly Baumgardner, Representative Renee Erickson, Representative Susan Estes, Representative Kristey Williams, Americans for Prosperity, EdChoice, Institute for Justice, Kansas Policy Institute, Yes. Every Kid.





# Kentucky



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS



### ● PASSED Early literacy – Establishing the Read to Succeed Act

Governor Andy Beshear signed legislation to create a new literacy program for the state. Read to Succeed strengthens the quality of reading instruction for students in kindergarten through third grade and provides teachers with new, high-quality professional development focused on early literacy. It also requires local school boards to adopt and implement a universal reading screener and reading diagnostic assessment for students. Further, it permits local school districts to adopt a shared comprehensive reading program for K-3 to help improve student literacy outcomes.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter School Funding Fix

Lawmakers passed legislation to put in place permanent per-pupil funding for charter schools that will come from federal, state and local sources. The law also creates a pilot program to require Louisville and Northern Kentucky to approve a charter school in their districts by 2023.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senator Stephen West, Representative Chad McCoy, Representative James Tipton, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity Kentucky, Catholic Conference of Kentucky, EdChoice Kentucky, Institute for Justice, Kentucky Opportunity Coalition, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

“The Read to Succeed Act strengthens the quality of reading instruction for kids in school from kindergarten up to third grade to give our youngest Kentuckians the foundational skills needed to have the best shot at educational success and high quality of life.”

- Dr. OJ Oleka  
President,  
Association  
of the  
Independent  
Kentucky  
Colleges and Universities





# Louisiana



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Screeners, Parent Notifications

Policymakers passed the Earl Michael Willis Early Literacy Act to improve the state’s early literacy structure, which was established through bills passed in 2021. This bill mandates that the state screen students in grades K-3 three times a year to identify those with reading deficiencies.

The legislation also requires individual **reading improvement plans** for students reading below grade level to now include students in grades K-3; requires **literacy coaches** in schools for on-site teacher training; establishes **summer camps for literacy** learning; and requires biannual **parent notifications** on student literacy.

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Teacher Certification

Policymakers passed legislation to require passage of a reading instruction test as a condition of teacher certification for kindergarten through third grade.

### ● DEVELOPED Early Literacy – Retention

Policymakers failed to pass legislation that would have prohibited the promotion to the fourth grade of certain students whose reading deficiencies were not remedied by the end of third grade.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senator Sharon Hewitt, Representative Rhonda Butler, Representative Phillip DeVillier, Representative Jason Hughes, Representative Scott McKnight, Representative Richard Nelson, Representative Laurie Schlegel, American Federation for Children, Code.org, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Pelican Institute



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● VETOED Private Education Choice – Education Savings Accounts

Governor John Bel Edwards vetoed two bills that would have created new Education Savings Account programs for students in Louisiana. One would have been available for students with special needs; the second one would have been available for students identified as having reading deficiencies.



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Computer Science

Policymakers passed legislation to establish a comprehensive statewide computer science plan. The plan will ensure the state has a policy and implementation roadmap to increase opportunities for all K-12 students and teachers to have **access to computer science coursework and training**.

● **IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Cross-Sector Partnerships**

Policymakers passed legislation that will allow the state to include student outcomes (postsecondary, employment and wage data) in the evaluation of state and federal programs that prepare high school students for college and careers. Specifically, the bill requires public schools to collect and share student information with the Louisiana workforce commission (with informed student/parent consent). This will allow the state to understand where students end up and whether the programs prepared them for a successful future.





# Mississippi



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PROTECTED Early Literacy – Threats to Third-Grade Retention

ExcelinEd in Action worked with coalition partners to defeat a bill that would have allowed third-grade students who fail the reading assessment for the 2021-22 school year to be promoted to fourth grade with remediation.



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER



### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act

The Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act passed the legislature unanimously. It establishes an **annual inventory and return-on-investment analysis** of CTE programs across K-12 and postsecondary systems. These will be used to evaluate and improve CTE program quality, maintain alignment with business/industry needs and measure student outcomes. Additionally, the bill streamlines the state’s approach to industry-recognized certifications by consolidating multiple lists (currently used for different purposes) and adding flexibility for school districts’ reimbursement of industry certification incentive funds. Additionally, the bill establishes a career coaching program for K-12 students.

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope Scholarship Program Act

Policymakers passed legislation to create the *Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope* (FAITH) Scholarship Program Act. The bill allows current and former foster students who entered the program on or after age 13 to receive a scholarship for postsecondary education after graduating high school.

The program also provides services to guide students as they apply for college. The program’s inaugural year will cover **up to 150 students** and eventually expand to up to **900 students**.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNER

Governor Tate Reeves, Speaker Philip Gunn, Senator Nicole Boyd, Representative Richard Bennett, Superintendent of Education Carey Wright, Accelerate Mississippi, Mississippi First



I authored HB 1388 to support workforce development. It puts private-sector career coaches in K-12 schools to prepare students for today’s careers, streamlines our WFD efforts, and aligns them with employers’ needs. Thx to @DonnieBellMS for his leadership in passing this bill.”

- Philip Gunn, Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives



# Missouri



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Early Literacy Improvements

The Missouri legislature passed legislation that directs the State Board of Education to create a literacy advisory council to review best practices in literacy instruction. Additionally, the bill requires all public and charter schools to **establish a reading program for K-3 that is grounded in evidence-based reading instruction**. It also requires teacher training and certifications for phonics-based instruction and requires K-3 student assessments.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY



### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter School Funding

Legislators successfully passed legislation to **update the funding model** that dictates how much school districts must give to charter schools within their jurisdiction. Charter school students will now be allocated the same amount of per-pupil funding as their surrounding public schools.

“It is refreshing to see the Missouri Legislature come together to equitably fund all public schools. Make no mistake, this is not just a ‘win’ for charter public schools, but for all students across Missouri.”

- Douglas Thaman, Executive Director, Missouri Charter Public School Association



## REIMAGINE LEARNING

### ● PASSED Next Generation Learning – Show Me Success Diploma

Missouri is building a strong foundation to spur innovation to help inspire students to graduate early and use their school funds for college. The new diploma program is an **alternative pathway to graduation** for high school students, allowing them to graduate as early as the end of 10th grade.

Students who earn a Show Me Success Diploma may remain in high school or may instead enroll in a qualifying postsecondary institution. Students enrolled in postsecondary school will receive **90%** of the proportionate share of state, local and federal funds the district or charter school receives for each student. The money is deposited into an education account, with the student named as the beneficiary.

### ● PASSED Next Generation Learning – Competency-Based Education

Missouri established a grant program to create a competency-based curriculum to help students learn and master skills in line with their abilities. The bill also establishes the Competency-Based Education Task Force to study and develop competency-based education programs.



● **PASSED Next Generation Learning – Innovation Waivers**

Policymakers passed a bill to allow schools to apply for innovation flexibility waivers to help improve student readiness.



**STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Senator Cindy O’Laughlin, Representative Doug Richey, Aligned, American Federation for Children, Children’s Education Alliance of Missouri, EdChoice, KIPP-St. Louis, Missouri Charter Public School Association, Missouri Education Reform Council, Opportunity Trust, Quality Schools Coalition, School Smart Kansas City, Show Me Institute



# Nebraska



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

- **DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Opportunity Scholarship Program**

Legislation was proposed to establish the state's first education savings account program, with \$10 million to start the program. The bill did not pass by the end of session. *ExcelinEd in Action* and coalition partners will continue efforts to provide more educational opportunities for students.

- **DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Tax Credit Scholarships**

A proposal to create the state's first tax-credit funded scholarship program to allow children to attend private schools was blocked by the legislature. The bill would have given up to 1,500 children the opportunity to attend a private school that better meets their needs.

- **DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Family-Directed Education Recovery Accounts**

Governor Pete Rickett's budget request for a \$60 million, three-year pilot program for Family-Directed Education Recovery Accounts to assist low-income K-12 students who experienced learning loss during the pandemic was not approved by the legislature. The program would have been completely funded by stimulus dollars and would have given families of each eligible child up to \$2,000 per school year for educational services, such as tutoring, digital learning subscriptions or private school tuition.



**COALITION  
PARTNER**

American Federation for  
Children





# New Hampshire



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PROTECTED Private Education Choice – Freedom Scholarship Accounts

ExcelinEd in Action supported state coalition partners in defeating legislation that threatened the Education Freedom Accounts Program. This program provides parents with education funding to use for their child’s private school or home-schooling expenses, including tuition and educational materials.



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Guaranteed Transfer Pathways

Policymakers passed legislation to allow community college students who wish to **earn bachelor’s degrees** in the state’s public higher education system to transfer credits to state public colleges to earn their degree. The bill was signed into law by Governor Christopher Sununu.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

House Education Committee Chairman Rick Ladd, House Education Committee Vice Chair Glenn Cordelli, Representative Oliver Ford, Americans for Prosperity New Hampshire, Children’s Scholarship Fund New Hampshire, EdChoice, Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy, Respect NH, Yes. Every Kid.

“To repeal the program would send the message to families that New Hampshire supports a one-size-fits-all education system and children must struggle within a system that causes them to experience negative psychological and educational outcomes.”

- Representative Glenn Cordelli



# Oklahoma

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Teacher Empowerment Fund

Lawmakers created the Teacher Empowerment Revolving Fund to provide the department with funds for creating paths for teaching certificates, establishing salary increases for certificates, prescribing awards for certain teachers and other initiatives to support teachers in advancing their careers.

### ● IMPROVED Teachers and Leaders – Adjunct Teacher Limitation Removal

Governor Kevin Stitt signed legislation to lift time limits on adjunct teachers. The new law removes the 270-clock-hour limitation on the amount of time adjunct teachers may teach per semester in a classroom.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Savings Accounts

Oklahoma policymakers considered legislation to create a universal education savings accounts program for qualified expenses to support the education of eligible students. As the proposal moved through the legislature, eligibility was narrowed to students in a household with a total annual income that does not exceed 300 percent of the income qualification for reduced-price lunch. The bill failed to pass the Senate.

### ● DEVELOPED Public School Choice – Statewide Charter Authorizer

Oklahoma policymakers considered a new system to authorize charter schools, but the bill did not pass the legislature. The legislation would have created a new statewide charter board to be the sole authorizer of charter schools. Currently, school districts, universities in high population counties and tribal communities can authorize charters. The bill also would have increased weighted funding that goes to charter schools, creating greater equity among all Oklahoma students no matter where they attend school.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Kevin Stitt,  
Senate Education  
Chairman Adam Pugh,  
Senator Julie Daniels,  
Senator Jessica Garvin,  
Senator Greg Treat, House  
Speaker Charles McCall,  
Representative Rhonda  
Baker, Representative  
Chad Caldwell,  
Representative Jon Echols,  
Representative Kyle  
Hilbert, Representative  
Mark McBride, American  
Federation for Children,  
Americans for Prosperity,  
EdChoice, Every Kid  
Counts Oklahoma,  
Oklahoma Public School  
Resource Center, Yes.  
Every Kid.

# Pennsylvania



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Teacher Professional Development Pilot

ExcelinEd in Action played a leading role in supporting early literacy legislation that creates a teacher professional development pilot program. Schools choosing to participate in the program can receive a grant to support implementation of a teacher professional development program grounded in the science of reading.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Course Access

ExcelinEd in Action supported efforts to establish a state-level course access program, providing online supplemental options to all students across Pennsylvania. With the goal of increasing equity and access when it comes to courses, the legislation will also provide increased flexibility and opportunity for students.

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Education Improvement Tax Credit Scholarship

Building on the success of the 21-year-old Educational Improvement Tax Credit program, the state budget increased the amount of available tax credits to **\$226 million**, a nearly 30-percent increase from the previous level of \$175 million. The EITC programs provide scholarships to students from low- and middle-income families who desire a choice in education.

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program

The state budget increased the budget cap for the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program for students attending an economically disadvantaged school, from \$55 million to **\$65 million**.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Dual Enrollment

ExcelinEd in Action helped gain passage of legislation that provides an expansion of the state's dual enrollment program to students attending charter schools.

“[The course access program] will create more equitable choices for students across the state. This is really helpful in leveling the playing field and gives them all the same opportunities.”

- Representative Jason Ortity



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senator Ryan Aument, Representative Jason Ortity, Representative Martina White, Commonwealth Foundation, PA Families for Education Choice



# South Carolina



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● DEVELOPED Early Literacy

House Speaker Jay Lucas sponsored early literacy legislation that would have codified the need to teach based on the science of reading. It would have provided numerous improvements, including teacher support with embedded science of reading training, teacher preparation programs, parent notification, summer reading camps, in-class and supplemental reading intervention and valid early literacy and numeracy screening assessments. The bill passed through the House but ultimately stalled in the Senate Education Committee at the close of session.



### STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Henry McMaster, Senator Larry Grooms, Representative Neal Collins, Americans for Prosperity, Palmetto Promise Institute, South Carolina Catholic Conference, South Carolina Department of Education



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Savings Account Program

Lawmakers failed to pass legislation that would have established an education savings scholarship account program. The program would have allowed K-12 students from low-income families and children of active-duty military members to access \$5,000 to be used toward educational expenses such as textbooks, private school tuition and education therapies. The bill limited the number of annual enrollees to 5,000 students for the first three years and 15,000 students thereafter.



## REIMAGINE LEARNING

### ● PASSED Next Generation Learning – Flexibility Waivers

Policymakers included provisions in the budget that give districts and schools greater flexibility to make a shift toward personalized, competency-based learning. Competency-based education refers to a comprehensive learning approach for a student to master competencies and related standards along a personalized, self-paced and flexible pathway.

# Tennessee

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Education Funding – Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act

Policymakers passed significant legislation transitioning Tennessee’s K-12 public schools to a student-based funding approach. The legislation replaces the state’s existing Basic Education Program to create a simpler and improved way to meet individual student needs.

Starting in the 2023-24 school year, the new Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act (TISA) invests an estimated **\$9 billion** in education funding for the state. TISA provides funding for schools to provide equal opportunity to low-income students and students with disabilities. The law also includes direct funding for public charter schools, early literacy, and career and technical education, and it establishes bonus funding based on student outcomes.

“The Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act represents an exciting opportunity to improve educational outcomes, strengthen our workforce and propel Tennessee forward.”

- Governor  
Bill Lee



### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – TISA Early Literacy Funding Improvements

TISA also invests more than **\$150 million** in direct funding to help schools improve kindergarten through third grade literacy rates and offer tutoring to fourth graders who need more support.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● UPHELD Private Education Choice – Education Savings Accounts

The **Tennessee Supreme Court ruled in favor** of the state’s creation of the Education Savings Account Act, after Davidson and Shelby County public school districts sued the state to block the law. The program allows eligible students to use public education funds to attend private schools.

Over the next five years, up to **15,000 students** could become eligible for these funding benefits in the Metro Nashville Public School system, Shelby County Schools and the Achievement School District.

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – TISA Charter Funding Improvements

TISA gives funding to public charter schools to help support facility needs.

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Education Savings Account Dyslexia Expansion

The current eligibility of the Individualized Education Act was expanded to include students with dyslexia. The legislation will expand eligibility to an estimated **35,000 additional students**.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – TISA College and Career Readiness Funding

TISA will award school districts with **performance-based funding** when students demonstrate success in college and career readiness. Bonus amounts will be higher for students who are economically disadvantaged, have disabilities or are English learners.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Bill Lee, Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn, Tennessee SCORE, TennesseeCAN, Tennessee Chamber, Tennesseans for Student Success, Tennessee Charter School Center, The Beacon Center of Tennessee

“We believe and are hopeful the new funding formula will help target the additional student-centered resources that local educators need and can use to accelerate the academic growth and success we want to see all across Tennessee.”

- Janet Ayers, ExcelinEd Board Member, and President, The Ayers Foundation





# Utah



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Comprehensive Early Literacy

Utah passed a new, comprehensive approach to early literacy, which includes the following student-centered supports: creates a panel to give teachers advice in reading instruction and curriculum; requires schools to use diagnostic assessments to target interventions for students with literacy deficiencies; and establishes a program to provide books to support students outside the classroom.

### ● PROTECTED School Accountability – Threats to A-F Accountability

ExcelinEd in Action worked with state partners to prevent lawmakers from introducing and passing bills that threaten the current A-F assessment-based accountability system.

“Utah investing in early literacy goals by paying for statewide, ongoing training PLUS coaching is one of the most interesting and hopeful system-level moves I’ve seen.”

- Brooke Anderson, Utah Teacher Specialist



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Special Needs Opportunity Tax Credit Scholarship Eligibility

ExcelinEd in Action made significant progress to improve the state’s Special Needs Opportunity Tax Credit Scholarship program. The program now **expands eligibility** to include siblings of scholarship students and allows donors to give money directly to certain schools. Additionally, the law requires scholarship-granting organizations to publish more detailed information about the program to parents and the public.

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Hope Scholarship Program

ExcelinEd in Action and coalition partners fought hard to introduce legislation to give students more access to educational opportunities and learning programs. However, Utah’s Hope Scholarship bill did not receive enough support in the legislature this year. ExcelinEd in Action and the coalition will continue to work on expanding educational opportunities for students and families.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senate President Stuart Adams, Senate Education Chair Ann Millner, Libertas Institute, Robyn Bagley, Sutherland Institute, Utah State Board of Education, Utah Association of Public Charter Schools



# Virginia

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Virginia Early Literacy Act

Governor Glenn Youngkin signed the Virginia Early Literacy Act of 2022, which was passed unanimously by both chambers of the Virginia General Assembly and championed by Delegate Carrie Coyner and a large coalition of supporters. The bill prioritizes strong early literacy supports for all Virginia teachers, students and parents. The comprehensive legislation requires training in the science of reading for teachers, ensures struggling readers are identified and directs school boards to draft and implement literacy plans with intervention services for struggling students.

The state budget provides nearly **\$10 million** in funding to support implementation of the Virginia Early Literacy Act and science-based literacy instruction beginning in 2025. Additionally, the budget requires the University of Virginia’s Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning to create a technical support center to assist with implementation of the Early Literacy Act. It also requires the Board of Education to start its textbook review process to assist schools in obtaining educational materials required by the act.

Policymakers included more than **\$7 million** in the budget to assist reading specialists in kindergarten through third grade. The funds also assist early reading specialists in schools that rank lowest statewide on the third grade reading Standards of Learning assessment.

Lastly, policymakers added more than **\$1.5 million** to the budget to support development of a pilot school readiness assessment for students in grades 1-3.

“The most important thing we can do, as parents, as educators, and as a community, is ensure our children learn to read, so that they can read to learn. Today is a meaningful bipartisan step forward to give our students the tools they need to succeed not only in the classroom, but in life.”

- Governor Glenn Youngkin



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – College Partnership Laboratory Schools

Policymakers passed legislation to expand the state’s existing law on laboratory schools and included **\$100 million** in the state budget to support this expansion. The law will expand the type of institutions of higher education that can partner with K-12 systems on lab schools to include community colleges and private institutions of higher education. The institutes of higher education will collaborate with local school divisions to set up specialty programs for subjects like STEM, computer science and language arts.

## ● PROTECTED Private Education Choice – Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits Program

ExcelinEd in Action successfully advocated to restore the Education Improvement Scholarships tax credit program to the original amount of **\$25 million** in the budget. The program offers a 65-percent tax credit to individuals and businesses who donate to qualified scholarship foundations. The foundations then provide private school scholarships to students whose families meet the income requirements.

### STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

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Governor Glenn Youngkin, Delegate Carrie Coyner, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity Virginia, The Family Foundation, Heritage Foundation, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, National Alliance of Charter School Authorizers, Thomas Jefferson Institute, Virginia Works, 50CAN





# West Virginia



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PROTECTED Private Education Choice – Hope Scholarship Program

In 2021, *ExcelinEd in Action* worked alongside a large coalition advocating for the Hope Scholarship Program, the state’s first private education choice program and, at the time, the nation’s most expansive education savings account program. Despite litigation by opponents of the program, the Hope Scholarship Program is being implemented with fidelity by the West Virginia State Treasurer’s Office. Since its launch on March 1, 2022, more than **3,000 scholarship applications** have been reviewed and approved.

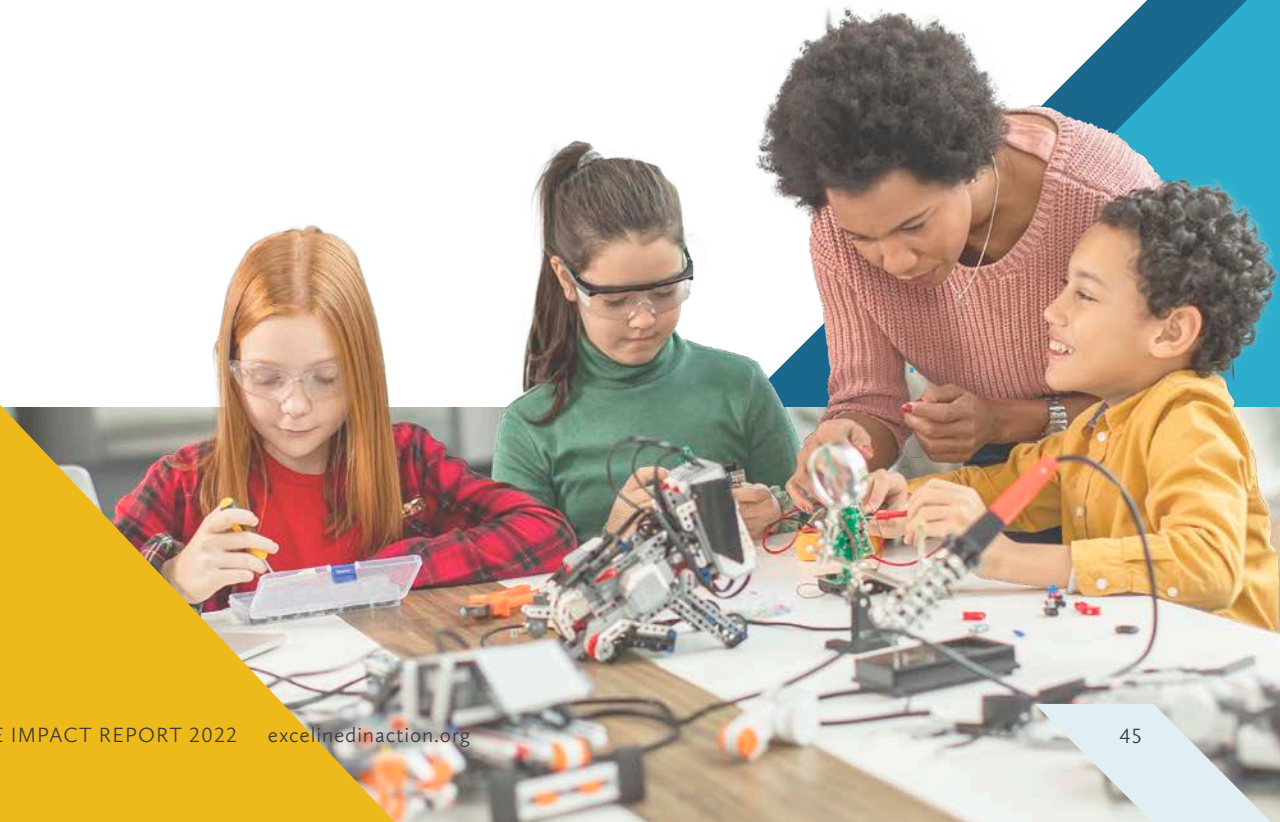
### ● PROTECTED Public Education Choice – Professional Charter School Board

*ExcelinEd in Action* supported efforts to establish the initial charter school law as well as improvements made during the 2021 session, allowing for the creation of the West Virginia Professional Charter School Board to review and approve applications for charter schools in the state. Despite facing ongoing legal challenges to the enabling law, West Virginia is on track to open its first two public charter schools and its first two statewide virtual charter schools in the 2022-23 school year.



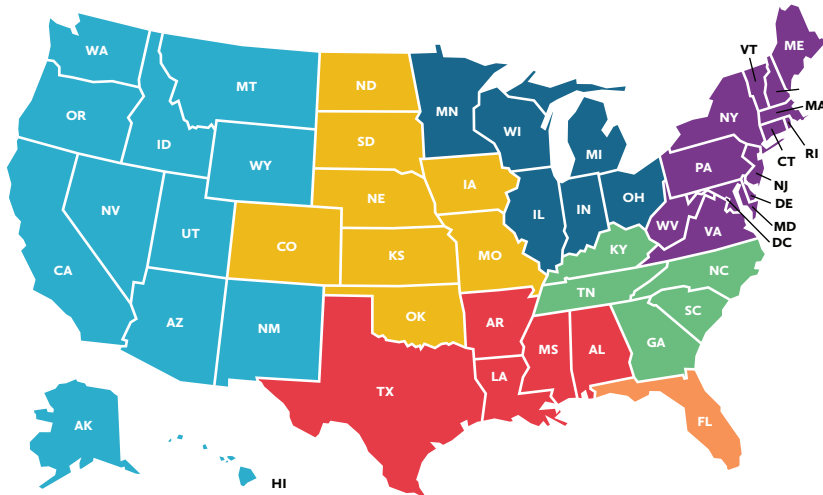
### COALITION PARTNERS

Americans for Prosperity  
West Virginia, Cardinal  
Institute, EdChoice,  
Institute for Justice,  
National Alliance for  
Public Charter Schools,  
Yes. Every Kid.



# Our Advocacy Team

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**ExcelinEd**  
*in Action*

# Legislative Impact Report

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