



Legislative Impact *In Brief*

2023



Read the full
2023 *Legislative
Impact Report.*

A MESSAGE FROM

Our Executive Director



Across the nation, state leaders took bold action this year to help students, schools and education systems recover from pandemic impacts, with significant focus on the foundations of learning, parental choice and career pathways.

Legislators responded to troubling trends in the [2022 Nation's Report Card](#) with early literacy policies grounded in the science of reading. They realigned classroom curriculum and teacher professional development, eliminated the harmful instructional practice of three-cueing and held firm on third-grade promotion. Florida led by example by also prohibiting three-cueing instruction in educator preparation programs. Several states passed evidence-based math policy, with West Virginia's Third Grade Success Act, Arkansas LEARNS and Florida addressing both early literacy and math to improve student achievement.

Many states significantly expanded parental choice. Florida made its robust education scholarship account (ESA) program universal; Arkansas, Iowa and Utah created new ESAs with pathways to universal eligibility; Ohio created universal eligibility for private school vouchers, while Indiana expanded its program to nearly universal; South Carolina passed its first ESA program; Nebraska adopted its first-ever private school choice program; and Oklahoma became just the third state in the nation to enact a refundable tax credit for school choice.

Fair funding for public charter schools gained momentum through revenue sharing, revolving loan programs for facilities and more equitable funding formulas that, collectively, will benefit more than 735,000 students.

To support student success beyond K-12, Indiana legislators created first-in-the-nation career scholarship accounts, providing Hoosier students with flexible funds for work-based learning, apprenticeships and other postsecondary opportunities. Texas adopted legislation to reward community colleges for successful student outcomes, serving as a model for other states.

One state stood out with a comprehensive approach to transforming education. Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders championed the Arkansas LEARNS Act, which aligned early literacy with the science of reading; established a universal ESA program; supported charter schools; provided performance-based raises for teachers; and strengthened education and career training programs.

ExcelinEd *in Action* is grateful to the visionary leaders and coalition partners who championed transformational policy. Changing policy is changing lives.

Patricia Levesque

Patricia Levesque
Executive Director, ExcelinEd *in Action*

[excelinedinaction.org](https://www.excelinedinaction.org)

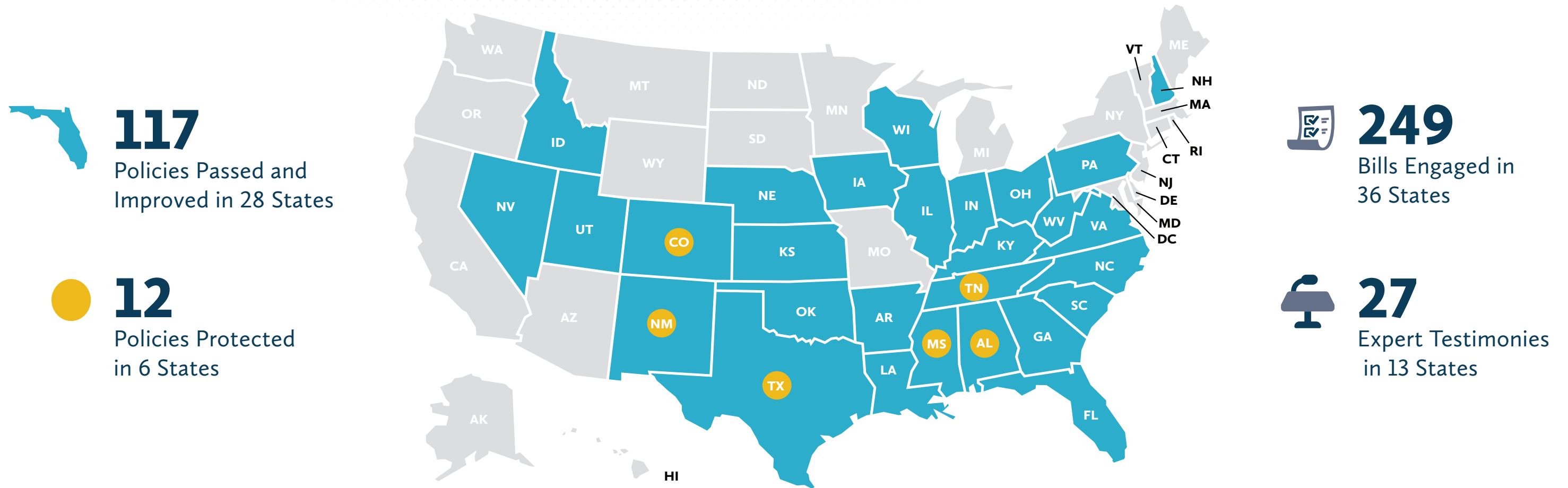
 [@ExcelinAction](https://twitter.com/ExcelinAction)

 [/ExcelinEdinAction](https://www.facebook.com/ExcelinEdinAction)

 [@ExcelinAction](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ExcelinAction)

 [/ExcelinEdinAction](https://www.instagram.com/ExcelinEdinAction)

Our National Impact



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY
 REIMAGINE LEARNING
 CLOSE LEARNING GAPS
 STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE + CAREER

<p>8 States Expanded or Adopted New ESAs</p>	<p>1st-of-its-Kind Career Scholarship Accounts (Indiana)</p>	<p>\$652.1 Million New Funding for Early Literacy in 10 States</p>	<p>Financial Literacy New Graduation Requirement in 4 States</p>	<p>\$214.6 Million New Funding for Charter Facilities in 6 States</p>	<p>Arkansas Comprehensive Education Reform</p>
<p>\$238.4 Million New Funding to Strengthen the Teacher Pipeline in 6 States</p>	<p>\$170.5 Million for Workforce Readiness in 4 States</p>	<p>4.07 Million Students Eligible for Universal ESAs in 5 States</p>	<p>8 States Banned Three-Cueing Literacy Instruction</p>	<p>280K+ Students Supported by New Math Policy in 3 States</p>	<p>\$240.4 Million for Microgrants & New ESAs in 5 States</p>



Arkansas Leads the Way with Comprehensive Education Reform

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders introduced and championed the Arkansas LEARNS Act, which will transform education for Arkansas’s nearly half a million students. The comprehensive legislation—the most far-reaching of the 2023 legislative sessions—includes a focus on **early literacy** to ensure students are reading proficiently by the end of third grade and that curriculum is aligned with the **science of reading**; strategies to expand and replicate effective **public charter schools**; a universal **education scholarship account** program that allows parents to customize their child’s education; performance-based pay raises for teachers; and stronger education and **career training programs** to ensure students are prepared for in-demand jobs.



Indiana Adopts First in the Nation Career Scholarships

Making history, **Indiana** is the first in the nation to create flexible spending accounts for high school students to accelerate their post-secondary path to a meaningful career. Students in grades 10-12 can now use \$5,000 **career scholarship accounts** for work-based learning, apprenticeships and other postsecondary acceleration opportunities.



A Year for the Science of Reading

Legislatures across the country advanced **early literacy** grounded in the **science of reading**. Inspired by ExcelinEd’s policy solutions framed in *Early Literacy Matters*, more than 20 states engaged ExcelinEd in Action to strengthen existing or adopt new programs. Early literacy policies specifically grounded in the science of reading were adopted in 10 states (**Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, New Mexico, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia** and **Wisconsin**), with 8 additional states (**Illinois, Kentucky, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee** and **Texas**) adopting other early literacy improvements.

Third-grade retention policy—a proven strategy for improving literacy outcomes—was added or protected in **Arkansas, Nevada, Tennessee** and **West Virginia**. Eight states—**Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia** and **Wisconsin**—invested in teacher professional development focused on training in evidence-based instructional practices aligned to the science of reading.



Building 21st-Century Skills: Financial Literacy

With more than 20 states now guaranteeing a standalone personal finance course for all high schoolers, ExcelinEd in Action supported four states—**Alabama, Idaho, Indiana** and **Louisiana**—in joining this nationwide trend. These states also made it a graduation requirement, empowering students with lifelong money management skills.



Eliminating the Harmful Practice of Three-Cueing

To further strengthen early literacy policy, legislators took action to include an outright ban on three-cueing. This is a harmful instructional practice that teaches young students to guess at words rather than learning letter-by-letter processing, which is essential to build sound reading and spelling skills. **Florida, Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia** and **Wisconsin** all banned the practice and required its elimination from school curricula. **Florida, North Carolina, Texas** and **Wisconsin** also banned it from teacher preparation programs.



Strengthening Teacher Pipelines: Apprenticeships, Scholarships, Bonuses

Legislative leaders took action to strengthen teacher pipelines. Notably, **Florida** established a Teacher Apprenticeship Program and mentor teacher bonus program, allocated bonuses for retired law enforcement personnel who pursue teaching, and created scholarships for educators who want to teach dual enrollment. **Nevada** created grant programs to support teachers in career & technical education and in earning advanced degrees. **Arkansas** allocated \$12 million annually to its Teacher Academy Scholarship Fund; **Colorado** created a teacher-degree apprenticeship program as an alternative path to licensure; **Tennessee** created the Future Teacher Scholarship; and **Pennsylvania** added stipend funding and a vacancy database for student teachers. **North Carolina** provided \$10 million in salary supplements for teachers in its Advanced Teaching Roles initiative.



Policymakers Double Down on Math

Following troubling trends on the *Nation’s Report Card*, three states doubled down on math to address the needs of students. As the first major piece of legislation to take aim at both early literacy and math, **West Virginia’s** Third Grade Success Act supports the state’s more than 68,000 K-3 students with evidence-based mathematics instruction to ensure they are proficient by the end of third grade. The **Arkansas LEARNS Act** requires progress monitoring and intervention plans for students who are performing below grade level and requires instruction from a highly effective math teacher and tutoring for struggling math students. **Florida** also adopted similar policy to identify, intervene and support students struggling in math.



Funding Charter Schools More Equitably

Fair funding for charter schools gained momentum this year. **Indiana’s** property tax and new referenda dollars will now be shared proportionally in four counties, home to 80% of the state’s charter students. **Arkansas** and **Idaho** created a revolving loan program to help high-performing charters secure facility loans. **Florida** now requires school districts to share local revenue fairly with charters, giving the state’s 700+ schools access to \$56 million in local facilities funding in the first year. **North Carolina** will allow counties to appropriate property taxes to fund charter school capital needs. **Ohio** and **Colorado** increased per-pupil funding for charter students and added \$175 million and \$12.5 million, respectively, for charter school facilities.



Taking Parental Choice Universal

States took monumental action to offer school choice to all, or nearly all, students statewide. **Florida** made its already robust education scholarship program universal, making all 3.1 million students eligible for an education scholarship account (ESA) and guaranteeing funding through the state’s education funding formula. **Arkansas, Iowa** and **Utah’s** brand new programs also provide for universal eligibility, with an initial phase-in approach or funding caps. **Indiana** massively expanded its voucher program, lifting income limits and extending choice to 97% of Hoosier families. **Ohio** created universal eligibility for its private school voucher program, and **North Carolina** expanded its Opportunity Scholarship voucher program to all students eligible to attend public school, without income eligibility requirements.



Empowering Families with Opportunity

Education opportunity advanced in many states, with **Nebraska** adopting its first ever private school choice program. **Oklahoma** leaders created a universal refundable tax credit program to support families opting for private school or homeschool. **South Carolina** adopted an ESA program for the first time in state history. Private school choice programs also expanded in **Alabama** (tax credit scholarships), **Kansas** (low-income students scholarships), **New Hampshire** (Education Freedom Accounts), **Pennsylvania** (tax credit scholarships), **Tennessee** (ESAs) and **Wisconsin** (K-12 vouchers).

Transformational Progress in 24 States

ALABAMA

- Protected A-F school grading
- Adopted financial literacy as a graduation requirement
- Provided new start-up funding for new charter schools in their first year of operation
- Expanded eligibility for tax credit scholarships to all special needs students, additional low-income families and students in D- or F-rated public schools
- Increased tax credit scholarships to \$10,000 and raised the budget cap to \$40 million, serving up to 4,000 additional students
- Created cross-agency collaboration and connected data on career pathways to improve outcomes of K-12, postsecondary and workforce programs
- Joined the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

ARKANSAS

- Adopted comprehensive education reform to support +500,000 students, including:
 - Comprehensive early literacy policy
 - Math intervention plans for 50,000+ struggling students in grades 3-8
 - +476,000 students eligible for universal Educational Freedom Accounts
 - \$10 million revolving loan for public charter school facilities
 - Career pathways aligned to in-demand jobs
 - \$12 million for Teacher Academy Scholarships

ExcelinEd in Action @ExcelinAction

Our team was proud to join @SarahHuckabee as she signed the #Arkansas LEARNS Act. Well done, Governor, Sec. Oliva, @BreanneDavis @babblingbrooks5 and the members of the Legislature. Tremendous achievement for students! #arpx



COLORADO

- Equalized per-pupil funding for +125,000 charter school students
- \$12.5 million for charter school facilities and operational needs
- \$27 million to further equalize funding for +20,000 students in state-authorized charter schools, increasing to \$43 million in 2024-25
- Created a school transportation task force to improve services for students
- Increased funding for career development from \$1 million to \$9.5 million
- Joined the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact
- Created a teacher apprenticeship program

GEORGIA

- Improved early literacy through:
 - High-quality curriculum and instructional materials
 - Universal reading screeners
 - Teacher training aligned to science of reading

IDAHO

- \$30 million for microgrants to serve 10,000+ families
- Improved funding equity for charter school facilities
 - \$50 million revolving loan fund
 - Expanded access to state's financial backing
- Strengthened open enrollment
- Created \$8,000 scholarships for training for in-demand professions



FLORIDA

- +3.1 million students eligible for universal Family Empowerment Scholarships
- +10,000 ESAs for students with unique abilities
- 20,000 new Personalized Education Program scholarships for homeschooling families
- Elimination of three-cueing instruction in classrooms and teacher preparation programs
- \$16 million for Science of Literacy & Tutoring program for K-5 struggling readers
- New framework for identifying and supporting K-4 students struggling in math
- Facilities funding equity for 700+ charter schools.
- \$269 million state and local funds for charter school facilities
- Paycheck protection for 175,000+ teachers
- \$9 million for teacher apprenticeship and mentor teacher bonus programs
- Streamlined certification, flexibility and reciprocity for teachers
- \$200 million in School Recognition funds to reward high-performing schools
- \$100 million to create or expand high school and technical college career & technical education

Thank You Florida Legislators

HB1 = Florida is #1 in the Nation for School Choice

- ✓ Gives all K-12 students access to scholarships to receive the education of their choice
- ✓ Eliminates waiting lists for students with unique abilities
- ✓ Reduces red tape for public schools

INDIANA

- First in the nation Career Scholarship Accounts for work-based learning, job training or youth apprenticeships
- \$15 million to serve 3,000 high school students with Career Scholarship Accounts
- Expanded Choice Scholarship vouchers to serve 97% of Indiana families
- Expanded eligibility for Special Education ESA

IOWA

- Created the state's first ESAs, with universal eligibility for +485,000 students

KENTUCKY

- Created a reading research center
- Required a comprehensive reading program in all public schools
- Strengthened the teacher pipeline
- Joined the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

LOUISIANA

- Strengthened financial literacy with a standalone course requirement
- Joined the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

Richard Nelson @NelsonforLA

HB12 is headed for the Governor's desk. This is a huge win for our children and our future. We must make sure that every child can read.



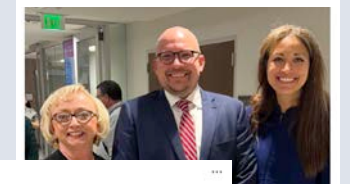
Jeb Bush @JebBush

Thanks to Indiana leaders for passing legislation embracing the #ScienceofReading and banning the harmful three-cueing reading model where students are taught to guess instead of sound out words. #INLegis

- Aligned literacy curriculum and materials with science of reading
- Banned three-cueing
- Adopted financial literacy as a graduation requirement
- Improved charter funding

MISSISSIPPI

- Supported charter school teachers with purchasing cards for school supplies
- Protected pathways alignment
- Protected A-F school grading and assessments



Jack Powers @Jack_Powers_SE

Mississippi and Tennessee are near and dear to my heart! Taught and went to school in both. What an experience to spend time today on behalf of @ExcelinEd and @ExcelinAction with the two state chiefs who have done so much for each. Thank you @SchwinnTeach and Dr. Carey Wright!

NEVADA

- Protected early literacy by ensuring extra time in 3rd grade for struggling readers
- Strengthened teacher retention programs
- Expanded charter school authorizers
- Funded transportation for charter school students
- Strengthened pathways with support for work-based learning programs

Governor Joe Lombardo @JosephMLombardo

Ensuring that Nevada kids can read before leaving third grade is one of the most important things we can do for the future of our state. It's time we take accountability in our schools and fight for the future our kids deserve. Support AB 400.

Transformational Progress in 24 States | Continued

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Expanded **private school choice** to an additional **15,000 students**, with **90,000 students** now eligible for an Education Freedom Account

Strengthened **early literacy** support for students with dyslexia

NEW MEXICO

New mechanism to fund high-quality **reading** instructional materials for school districts

Protected up to **14,000 charter school seats**

OHIO

Improved **charter school** funding parity by increasing per-pupil funding for **+119,000 students** and adding **\$136.5 million** to the Quality Community Schools Fund

Invested **\$175 million** in facilities funding for **+320 charter schools**

Invested **\$28 million** over two years in career & technical education

Created **universal eligibility** for the state's private school voucher program, prioritizing students with the greatest need

NORTH CAROLINA

Banned **three-cueing** reading instruction and eliminated it from teacher prep programs

Created **universal eligibility** for Opportunity Scholarships and extended vouchers to **30,000+ new families**

Strengthened **charter school** growth, funding & admissions policies for **200+ charter schools**

Created \$750 grants for students pursuing industry **workforce credentials**

Empowered highly effective **teachers** to serve as professional mentors

Strengthened 21st-century skills through a **computer science** graduation requirement

SOUTH CAROLINA

Created the state's first **ESAs**, providing **\$6,000** scholarships for **+5,000** low- and middle-income students

Banned **three-cueing** reading instruction and required teacher training in the science of reading

\$39 million to support K-3 teacher literacy training in the science of reading

Improved education to workforce governance through a newly created **Office of Statewide Workforce Development**



TEXAS

Banned **three-cueing** reading instruction

Improved processes for **charter schools** to open or expand

Increased student access to postsecondary degrees through

performance funding for community colleges

Protected school accountability



UTAH

Established the Utah Fits All Scholarship Program, the state's **first ESA**

\$42 million to serve **+5,000** students with **\$8,000** scholarships

VIRGINIA

Extended science of reading instruction to **+470,000** 4th through 8th grade students

WISCONSIN

Aligned **early literacy** with the **science of reading**

- Banned **three-cueing** reading instruction
- Added **64 full-time literacy coaches**
- Required **teachers** to be trained in the science of reading
- Added **screeners** to identify young students with literacy challenges
- Mandated **summer school** programs for struggling readers
- Invested **\$50 million** to assist schools with curriculum and interventions

Improved **school choice** by increasing K-8 vouchers to **\$9,874** and high school vouchers to **\$12,368**

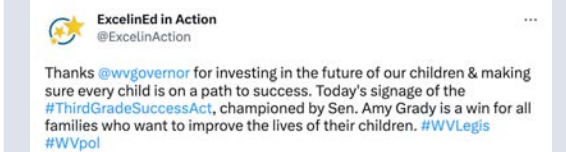
Leveled the playing field for **+50,000 charter school** students by increasing per-pupil funding to **\$11,366**

WEST VIRGINIA

Adopted first-in-the-country comprehensive **early literacy** and **math** policy to support **+68,000** K-3 students through:

- Universal, dyslexia & numeracy screeners
- Banned three-cueing instruction
- Teacher training in the science of reading
- Evidence-based interventions
- Investing in high-quality curricula and classroom aides
- Parent notification and supports

Established dual enrollment pilot program to accelerate college



OKLAHOMA

Expanded reading coaches and literacy teams to support the **science of reading**

Expanded **school choice** by creating a **refundable tax credit** with **universal eligibility** to support families opting for private school or homeschooling

Created a workforce commission to support **pathways** into in-demand careers



Now every parent can send their child to a school that best fits their needs regardless of their background, economic status or zip code!



TENNESSEE

\$350 million for the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act

Expanded access to summer and after-school learning camps to reverse learning loss

Protected third-grade retention and comprehensive **early literacy** policy

Improved **charter school** enrollment for economically disadvantaged students

Expanded eligibility for **ESAs**

Created the Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship to strengthen the **teacher pipeline**



Read the full **2023 Legislative Impact Report** featuring in-depth updates on education progress in states across the nation.



About ExcelinEd in Action

ExcelinEd in Action is the 501(c)(4) sister organization to the Foundation for Excellence in Education (ExcelinEd). ExcelinEd in Action works with state lawmakers and advocacy partners to pass legislation that empowers families with educational choice, prepares students for college and career, prioritizes early literacy, expands innovation and strengthens school performance.

Our Board



JEB BUSH

Chairman of the Board & 43rd Governor of Florida



ERIC CANTOR

Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Moelis & Company & Former House Majority Leader



GARY CHARTRAND

Executive Chairman, Acosta & Board Chair, KIPP: Jacksonville Schools



F. PHILIP HANDY

CEO, Winter Park Capital & Former Chairman, Florida State Board of Education



DEE BAGWELL HASLAM

Owner, Cleveland Browns & Partner, Pilot Corporation & CEO, RIVR Media Companies



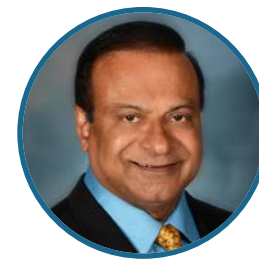
BRUCE RAUNER

42nd Governor of Illinois



WILLIAM S. SIMON

Senior Advisor, KKR



ZACHARIAH P. ZACHARIAH

President, Fort Lauderdale Heart Institute



**ExcelinEd
in Action**

Legislative Impact In Brief

2023



Read the full
*2023 Legislative
Impact Report.*

We Value Your Support

By supporting ExcelinEd in Action, you can help create an education system where every child thrives, and we are deeply grateful to the donors who generously support our work. Together, we are transforming policy, transforming education and transforming lives.

For more information, please contact Jess Langhaim at (702) 277-2637 or Jess@ExcelinEd.org.

excelinedinaction.org

@ExcelinAction

/ExcelinEdinAction

@ExcelinAction

/ExcelinEdinAction