



**ExcelinEd**  
*in* Action



# Legislative Impact Report

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**2023**



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*in Action*

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**2023**

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## A MESSAGE FROM

# Our Chairman

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This year's progress in states speaks to a growing consensus that America's students—and our education systems—need help. After two years of pandemic impacts and documented declines in student achievement in both reading and math, lawmakers, policymakers and advocates stepped up and continued the urgent work to address this pressing challenge. Together, they delivered legislation to strengthen early literacy and numeracy, massively expand parental choice, build pathways to in-demand jobs and more.

I deeply appreciate this work and am grateful that, because of student-centered policies, lives are being changed. That's the vision that, year in and year out, keeps me committed to our mission of transforming education. Instead of failing school systems and lost learning, it's the vision of a brighter future where children, families and communities thrive.

The good news is that we've seen firsthand what exceptional ideas and extraordinary leadership can accomplish: Young kids once struggling to read now graduating with honors and heading to college. Underserved families now able to send their child to the school of their choice. Students who once lacked options for 21st-century coursework now excelling in computer science. Children with unique abilities now able to access the services, therapies, resources and learning environments that best meet their needs.

That's what drives our work, and I know it's what drives the work of our many partners, advocates and friends in this education space. Thank you for your relentless dedication to this cause. I applaud the progress and, at the same time, challenge each of you—and myself—to never let up. America's kids need us, and we at ExcelinEd *in Action* remain uncompromising in our goal to deliver a great education to every one of them.

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



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.

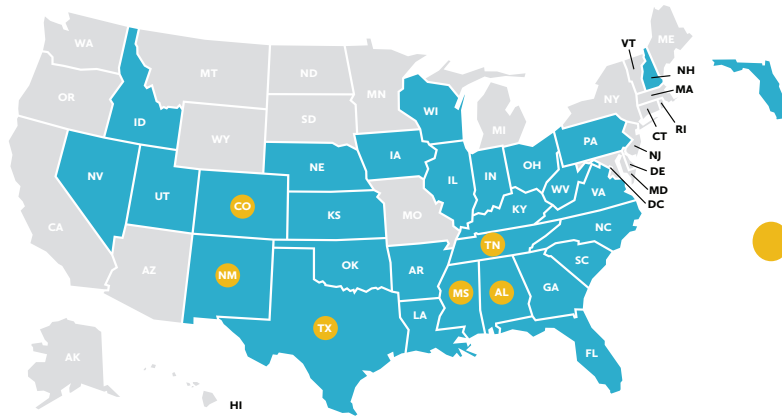
One state stood out with a comprehensive approach to transforming education. Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders championed the Arkansas LEARNS Act, which aligned early literacy with the science of reading; established a universal ESA program; supported charter schools; provided performance-based raises for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

# National Landscape



**117**  
Policies Passed and Improved in 28 States

**249**  
Bills Engaged in 36 States

**12**  
Policies Protected in 6 States

**27**  
Expert Testimonies in 13 States

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

**8 States**  
Expanded or Adopted New ESAs

**1st-of-its-Kind**  
Career Scholarship Accounts (Indiana)

**\$652.1 Million**  
New Funding for Early Literacy in 10 States

**\$238.4 Million**  
New Funding to Strengthen the Teacher Pipeline in 6 States

**\$170.5 Million**  
for Workforce Readiness in 4 States

**4.07 Million Students**  
Eligible for Universal ESAs in 5 States

**Financial Literacy**  
New Graduation Requirement in 4 States

**\$214.6 Million**  
New Funding for Charter Facilities in 6 States

**Arkansas**  
Comprehensive Education Reform

**8 States**  
Banned Three-Cueing Literacy Instruction

**280K+ Students**  
Supported by New Math Policy in 3 States

**\$240.4 Million**  
for Microgrants & New ESAs in 5 States



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Teachers & Leaders – Interstate Mobility Act

Alabama was one of the original 10 signers of The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC). The ITMC allows current teachers with an unencumbered license to receive a similar teacher’s license in another ITMC member state without needing to complete additional tests, professional training or administrative tasks. By removing these obstacles, the ITMC aims to increase the number of available licensed teachers working in member states.

### ● PROTECTED School Accountability

ExcelinEd in Action successfully protected Alabama’s A-F rating system and accountability framework by helping to ensure proposed legislation to alter the rating system did not pass.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools

To improve accountability and transparency, legislative leadership will now have appointment authority to the Alabama Public Charter School Commission, instead of the State Board of Education making the appointments.

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Tax Credit Scholarships

The Alabama Accountability Act, the state’s current **tax credit scholarship** program, was **expanded** to include all students with unique needs and abilities. It also gives parents of those students the option to spend funds on tutoring, therapies and other education expenses. More than **150,000** Alabama K-12 students are listed as special education students, according to the Alabama Department of Education. Further, the cap of low-income families eligible for the program was raised to include those who earn up to 250% of the poverty line (\$93,750 for a family of four).

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

Legislation to create the Parental Rights in Children’s Education (PRICE) Act, a universal education savings account program, failed to receive final passage. The bill would have granted Alabama families up to \$6,900 in a scholarship for approved education expenses. A similar bill, the Students for Unique Needs (SUN) Act, would have provided an ESA for students with unique needs and abilities and would be capped at 500 students annually. Instead, this provision was folded into the Alabama Accountability Act expansion bill.

“ I was proud to put my signature on HB363 [supporting charter schools] and SB263 [expanding tax credit scholarships], so that more students have an opportunity for a strong educational experience. To help support high quality education and create more choices for parents, I have prioritized improving school choice.”

- Governor Kay Ivey





## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Financial Literacy

Alabama strengthened its **financial literacy** instruction requirement, requiring all high schools to offer a financial literacy course and make it a condition for graduation. The legislation will take effect for students who enter high school in the 2024-2025 school year. Content covering bank accounts, principles of money management, credit, insurance, contracts, investments and other financial issues will be taught.

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Alabama Credential Quality and Transparency Act

Working alongside the Alabama Workforce Council and the Business Education Alliance, *ExcelinEd in Action* supported the efforts to codify three longstanding recommendations: 1) a longitudinal data system to allow multiple agencies to share information for **career pathways**; 2) an annual public list of valuable **credentials tied to in-demand jobs**; and 3) the requirement to close the gap of graduation rate and college and career readiness rate by requiring that each graduate earn a **college and career readiness indicator** starting with the class of 2026.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Kay Ivey, Senator Arthur Orr, Senator Larry Stutts, Representative Allan Baker, Representative Terri Collins, Representative Danny Garrett, A+ Education Partnership, Alabama Department of Education, Alabama Families for Great Schools, Alabama Workforce Council



Patricia Levesque  
@LevesquePat

Proud of [#Alabama](#) lawmakers for passing legislation to expand the state's Education Scholarship & making funds flexible for students with special needs.



# Arkansas



## PASSED Arkansas LEARNS Act

ExcelinEd in Action worked with Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders to champion an all-encompassing education bill to reimagine learning in the Natural State. Arkansas LEARNS, sponsored by Senator Breanne Davis and Representative Keith Brooks, received overwhelming legislative support. It will transform learning opportunities for nearly half a million students.



Jeb Bush  
@JebBush

From pre-K to postgraduate, #ArkansasLEARNS has the potential to transform education for nearly 500,000 students. This comprehensive approach to reimagine learning serves as a model for other states! Bold leadership @SarahHuckabee @BreanneDavis @babblingbrooks5! #ARpx #ARleg

## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy and Math Policy – Arkansas LEARNS Act

To ensure students are **reading proficiently by the end of third grade**, schools will now use literacy screeners, individualized reading plans, parental notification, high-impact tutoring and additional time for promotion. **Literacy coaches** will be provided to low-performing schools. The law also ensures that the curriculum is aligned with the **science of reading**. Further, **math intervention plans** will now be required for grades 3-8 for students performing below grade level. Arkansas LEARNS specifies that a highly effective math teacher, tutoring and parent notifications are provided.

### ● PASSED High-Quality Teacher Professional Development and Recruitment – Arkansas LEARNS Act

Within LEARNS, Arkansas has placed a strong emphasis on recruiting and maintaining high-quality teachers by providing for increased starting teacher salaries, expansion of maternity leave and a newly created **Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Program** that will offer bonuses for demonstrative growth in student performance.

“We cannot allow a child’s destiny to be determined by their zip code, race or income. We will empower parents to choose whatever school is best for their child, recruit and retain great teachers by rewarding them with higher pay, and give every kid access to a quality education.”

- Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Private Education Choice – Arkansas LEARNS Act Education Freedom Accounts

Arkansas streamlined its current voucher law into a multi-use **Education Freedom Account**, a parent spending program that will reach universal eligibility by the 2025-2026 school year. In a special legislative session, lawmakers increased EFA funding for students in foster care, students with disabilities and children of uniformed service members.

### ● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Tax Credit Scholarships

In a special legislative session, the state’s tax credit scholarship program was expanded to allow students with a disability to receive a scholarship.



● **PASSED Public Education Choice – Arkansas LEARNS Act Charter School Expansion**

**Charter schools** in Arkansas can **expand** because policymakers removed the cap on how many can be authorized in the state. The legislation also created a revolving loan fund for charter school facilities.

● **PASSED Public Education Choice – Arkansas LEARNS Act Course Choice**

Arkansas created a new **course choice program** that allows students to take classes from an online provider, higher education institution or an approved business that offers vocational classes.

● **PASSED Public Education Choice – Arkansas LEARNS Act School Transportation**

A **Transportation Modernization Grant** program was established to improve access for students attending a public school outside their traditional attendance boundaries. This will be achieved through resource sharing with neighboring districts or schools, contracting rideshare programs or using carpool strategies, addressing personnel shortages and reevaluating bus routes.



**A STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER**

● **PASSED College & Career Pathways – Arkansas LEARNS Act Education to Workforce**

A dashboard will be developed to showcase important workforce data, trends, pathways and outcomes to develop **individualized career plans** in preparation for graduation.

**A BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

● **PASSED Bridging the Digital Divide – Arkansas LEARNS Act**

The LEARNS Act **expanded high-speed internet** to make educational and career opportunities accessible. In order to continue to increase access to high-quality internet for Arkansas students, the Arkansas Department of Education has committed to deliver twice as much bandwidth to every student in the state. For the 2023-2024 school year, the Arkansas Public School Computer Network is setting a target goal of 2 Mbps per student broadband speed, which is double the federally recommended bandwidth.

**A STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Senator Breanne Davis, Representative Keith Brooks, Education Secretary Jacob Oliva, American Federation for Children, EdChoice, Yes. Every Kid.



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Reciprocity

Colorado was the first state to sign The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC). The ITMC allows current teachers with an unencumbered license to receive a similar teacher’s license in another ITMC member state without needing to complete additional tests, professional training or administrative tasks. By removing these obstacles, the ITMC aims to increase the number of available licensed teachers working in member states.

“Transforming public education through school choice is THE key of successful public policy.”

- Senator Paul Lundeen



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Transportation

ExcelinEd *in* Action worked with Colorado policymakers to create a school transportation modernization task force. This entity would study and provide recommendations to **improve public school transportation services** for students.

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

Colorado now requires that charter school students receive the same per-pupil funding as traditional public schools.



 publiccharters.org  
@charteralliance

Congratulations to Colorado State Senators @Paul\_Lundeen and @Zenzinger\_AtoZ for being named 2023 Champions for Charter Schools! Thank you for your support for public charter schools!

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Career Pathways

Beginning in the 2023-24 budget year, funding for the state’s career development success program will significantly increase, from \$1 million to \$9.5 million. Other changes to the program included removing requirements for an industry pre-apprenticeship program or apprenticeship and increasing the funding a school receives when a qualifying student completes certain components of the program.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Jared Polis, Senator Jeff Bridges, Senator Paul Lundeen, Senator Bob Rankin, Senator Rachel Zenzinger, Representative Colin Larson, Representative Meghan Lukens, Representative Don Wilson, 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



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading

The [Foundation for Florida's Future](#) worked **to prohibit the use of the three-cueing model of word recognition** and require reading instruction to be grounded in the **science of reading**, including classroom instruction, instructional materials/strategies, interventions, curriculum, teacher preparation programs and professional learning systems.

Policymakers also improved funding by **\$5 million** for Regional Literacy Teams, **\$170 million** for the Reading Allocation program as well as **\$16 million** for New Science of Reading Tutoring programs to provide additional support to K-5 students performing below grade level in reading.

### ● PASSED Math Policy – Student Supports

Florida now requires the identification of any student in grades K-4 who exhibits a substantial deficiency in mathematics or the characteristics of dyscalculia. It requires parents of identified students to be immediately notified and tasks the Department of Education with developing a framework for **increasing mathematics proficiency** and identifying state-approved mathematics intervention programs, curricula and high-quality supplemental material.

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Training

A **Teacher Apprenticeship Program** was established as an alternative way to enter the teaching profession. This would result in a five-year, non-renewable temporary apprenticeship certificate. After the teacher apprentice spends two years shadowing a mentor teacher in a classroom setting and completing coursework, the apprentice may apply for a professional teaching certificate.

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Transparency

A new law **protects 175,000 teachers** by prohibiting public school teacher unions from automatically deducting union dues from paychecks as well as revoking membership without due notice and cause. This law ensures greater transparency and accountability from public sector unions by increasing reporting requirements and requiring annual financial reports to be audited by an independent, certified public accountant.



Jeb Bush  
@JebBush

Historic day in the #SunshineState! Thank you @GovRonDeSantis, @Paul\_Renner, @Kathleen4SWFL for making Florida the #1 state for educational freedom. #HB1 gives families and students unprecedented choice, transforms education.

“Florida is number one when it comes to education freedom and education choice, and today’s bill signing represents the largest expansion of education choice in the history of these United States. When you combine private scholarships, charter schools, and district choice programs, Florida already has 1.3 million students attending a school of their choosing.”

- Governor Ron DeSantis



ExcelinEd in Action does business in Florida as the [Foundation for Florida's Future](#).



● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Reciprocity

Florida was one of the original ten signers of The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC). The ITMC allows current teachers with an unencumbered license to receive a similar teacher’s license in another ITMC member state without needing to complete additional tests, professional training or administrative tasks. By removing these obstacles, the ITMC aims to increase the number of available licensed teachers working in member states.



● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Educator Professional Development

Florida invested **\$1 billion** to increase **teacher salaries**, with \$9 million for a new **Teacher Apprenticeship Program** to attract individuals interested in the profession and \$3.5 million for a new **Dual Enrollment Teacher Training Scholarship** for prospective dual-enrollment teachers.

“Florida has delivered the greatest expansion of educational freedom in the nation and will unleash a wave of opportunity for millions of families.”

- House Speaker Paul Renner



● PASSED Accountability – School Performance-Based Funding

Florida policymakers invested **\$200 million** for School Recognition Funding to reward schools that demonstrate sustained or significantly improved student performance.



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY



● PASSED Private Education Choice – Universal Family Empowerment Scholarships

Florida lawmakers passed the most expansive parental choice bill in the nation, creating **universal empowerment scholarships** and extending school choice eligibility to all **3.2 million K-12 students**.

● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools Funding

The Foundation for Florida’s Future supported the expansion of charter school capital outlay funding by requiring local funding be shared with charter schools. Next year, **\$56 million** in local funds will support charter school **capital projects** and will increase annually over the next five years so that districts will be sharing 100 percent of their discretionary 1.5 milage revenue. Additionally, **\$1.5 million** is allocated for the Florida Institute for Charter Innovation to **improve authorizing practices** in the state.

ExcelinEd in Action does business in Florida as the **Foundation for Florida’s Future**.



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Work-Based Learning

Florida strengthened its workforce development system to provide students with high-quality career and technical education (CTE) and other workforce programs.

The legislation created weighted funding for credentials based on workforce demand and wages potential associated with the credential. It invests **\$100 million** for a new **Workforce Development Grant** program to serve high school students in high-performing, high-demand CTE programs.

Further, the law incentivizes students earning three courses in a single program of study or who complete a career course with dual enrollment, with a higher incentive for CTE students. All public schools are now required to ensure students have access to work-based learning opportunities. Additionally, tax credits were expanded for employers who provide pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships to students.



### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Dual Enrollment Scholarships

The Foundation for Florida’s Future worked to secure an additional **\$18.05 million for Dual Enrollment Scholarships** that help students accelerate their path to higher education.



## BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

### ● PASSED Bridging the Digital Divide – Social Media Access and Devices in Schools

Florida banned students from using phones and other wireless communication devices during instructional time; districts can decide how to implement the new rules. Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms through the school’s wi-fi except when directed by a teacher for educational purposes.

Florida students in grades 6-12 will be taught about the social, emotional and physical effects of social media, and schools must create and implement internet safety protocols for student access to the internet. Additionally, students are never permitted to access the social media platform TikTok.

“Florida will always make good on our promise to ensure every single child has access to a world-class education.”

- Commissioner of Education  
Manny Diaz, Jr.



ExcelinEd in Action does business in Florida as the **Foundation for Florida’s Future**.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Commissioner of Education Manny Diaz, Jr.  
House Speaker Paul Renner  
Senate President Kathleen Passidomo  
Senator Alexis Calatayud  
Senator Travis Hutson  
Senator Corey Simon  
Representative Karen Gonzalez-Pittman  
Representative Lauren Melo  
Representative Dana Trabulsy  
Representative Kaylee Tuck  
Academica  
Agudath Israel  
American Center for Transforming Education  
Americans for Prosperity  
Arbor School of Central Florida  
Apple  
Association of Christian Schools International  
AT&T  
Big Brothers, Big Sisters Florida  
Charter 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 District School Superintendents  
Florida Association of Post-Secondary Schools and Colleges  
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 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  
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  
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.

ExcelinEd in Action does business in Florida as the **Foundation for Florida's Future**.



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – The Georgia Early Literacy Act

Georgia passed comprehensive literacy legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support. The Georgia Early Literacy Act will require districts to adopt high-quality literacy curriculum and instructional materials aligned to the science of reading, universal reading screeners, individual reading plans for students, parental notification and teacher training aligned to the science of reading.

Until this year, Georgia did not have a comprehensive early literacy law on the books, and it had implemented less than half of the recommended policies in ExcelinEd's [Early Literacy Matters Toolkit](#). The Peach State will now be implementing additional early literacy policies to improve literacy rates through phonics and the **science of reading** to support students, teachers and families.



Thanks to the leadership of @GovKemp and the GA legislature, the Georgia Early Literacy Act is now law! This legislation will transform the lives of early readers in the Peach State and pave the way for stronger literacy outcomes for all students. #GaPol

“The Georgia Early Literacy Act is a giant step forward in literacy education and will be life changing for our state’s children. I am proud that the General Assembly has made childhood literacy a priority, and I am proud we have decided to take a stand to ensure our children will receive literacy instruction based on foundational, evidence-based and back-to-basics principles.”

- Representative  
Bethany  
Ballard



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – The Georgia Promise Scholarship Act

Legislation to create the state’s first Education Scholarship Account program passed the Senate but failed to pass through the House before the 2023 session adjourned. The bill is still alive and eligible for a vote when lawmakers return in 2024 for the second year of the two-year session. The bill would provide \$6,500 to public school students in the state’s lowest performing (bottom 25%) public schools.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

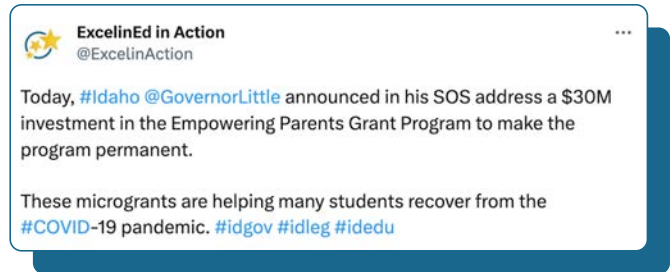
Governor Brian Kemp, Senator Greg Dolezal, Speaker Pro Tem Jan Jones, Representative Will Wade, Representative Bethany Ballard, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity-Georgia, Decoding Dyslexia Georgia, EdChoice, GeorgiaCAN, Georgia Center for Opportunity, Georgia Public Policy Foundation, Heritage Action for America



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Private Education Choice – Microgrant Program

Governor Brad Little was one of two governors to use stimulus dollars to establish the Empowering Parents Strong Families, to help low-income families purchase devices and connectivity in the pandemic. This year, a **\$30 million** appropriation extended the goal of the Empowering Parents program to enable families to purchase laptops, desktops and tablets and other approved educational items to support learning at home.



“The Empowering Parents grants are effective, popular, and worthy of continued investment. Most importantly, they keep parents in the driver’s seat of their children’s education, as it should be.”

- Governor Brad Little



### ● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter School Facility Revolving Loan Program

Policymakers passed a measure to create a Public School Revolving Loan Fund to assist charter schools in obtaining financing at a lower interest rate for facility construction or renovations. A **\$50 million** revolving loan fund was established to level the playing field for these high-demand schools, giving charter schools access to all the financial tools that traditional public schools have.

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Open Enrollment

ExcelinEd in Action worked with state partners to provide the first comprehensive update to the **Idaho Open Enrollment** statute in 30 years. With this legislation, all school districts shall adopt both inter- and intra-district open enrollment policies to ensure that families can easily send their children to the public school of their choice.



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Scholarships

Governor Little’s **Idaho Launch scholarship program**, a vehicle to help young adults move into high-demand careers, provides \$8,500 to qualifying Idaho high school seniors starting in 2024. These scholarships will help pay for enrollment in an Idaho-based education or training program for various in-demand professions. The program scholarships can be redeemed at approved workforce training providers, career technical programs or community college or college of the student’s choice.



- **PASSED College & Career Pathways – Financial Literacy**

Idaho now requires all high schools to offer a financial literacy course and make it a requirement for graduation. The legislation will take effect for students who enter high school in the 2023-2024 school year.

- **PASSED College & Career Pathways – Capital Project Funding**

ExcelinEd *in* Action supported the creation of the Career Ready Students Program to fund capital projects for **Career and Technical Education**. The legislation creates a council to vet proposals from school districts to direct additional funding to help districts cover the costs for upgrading their programs.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

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



# Indiana



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Science of Reading

All literacy curriculum and supplemental materials are now required to be **aligned to the science of reading** while **prohibiting the use of the harmful three-cueing model of instruction**. Funding was also included to help schools pay for literacy coaches, purchase curriculum aligned to the science of reading and provide professional development for teachers.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ★ ★ ★ ● PASSED Private Education Choice – Choice Scholarship Program

ExcelinEd in Action supported Representative Jeff Thompson’s biennial budget proposal that expanded the state’s Choice Scholarship voucher program. This legislation brings Indiana to **near-universal school choice**, with 97% of students now eligible, while eliminating burdensome eligibility pathways and raising the income eligibility requirement.

### ● IMPROVED Private School Choice – Special Education ESA Program

Indiana expanded the income eligibility and funding for its Education Scholarship Account program to ensure families of students with unique abilities have funds to craft an individualized education that best meets their needs.

### ● IMPROVED Public School Choice – Charter School Funding

The Charter School Capital Grant received additional funding resulting in each student now being allocated \$1,400 toward facility needs.

“Whether our high school graduates want to further their education or enter the workforce, they’ve got to be ready to hit the ground running. We need to align our local employers’ needs with our students’ needs.”

- Speaker Todd Huston



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ★ ★ ★ ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Career Scholarship Accounts

Speaker Todd Huston established Indiana as the first in the nation to provide students in grades 10-12 with a \$5,000 flexible spending account for work-based learning experiences. The pilot program will serve 5,000 students in the first year and 10,000 students in the second year. **The Career Scholarship Account Program** will give students a jumpstart on their career for when they graduate high school.



Patricia Levesque  
@LevesquePat

This year, Indiana enacted the first-in-the-nation \$5,000 Career Scholarship Accounts for students to spend on work-based learning, apprenticeships & postsecondary acceleration. @Excelined [excelined.org/2023/05/15/the...](https://excelined.org/2023/05/15/the...) @tmhuston @ChuckGoodrich24 @GovHolcomb

● **PASSED College & Career Pathways – Financial Literacy Legislation**

Indiana now requires all high schools to offer a financial literacy course and makes it a requirement for high school graduation.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

House Speaker Todd Huston, Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bay, Senator Jeff Raatz, 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





## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ★ ★ ★ PASSED Private Education Choice – Students First Act ESA Program

Under the leadership of Governor Kim Reynolds, Iowa passed the Students First Act, a **universal education savings account program** that will provide families the freedom, flexibility and resources needed to customize their student's education. The ESA program will phase in over several years, initially targeting underserved families and extending eligibility to all **485,000** Iowa students starting in the 2025-2026 school year.

“We have to set aside this us-versus-them mentality. If you want to pretend that this is a war between two different school systems, then you're not focused on our children.”

- Governor Kim Reynolds



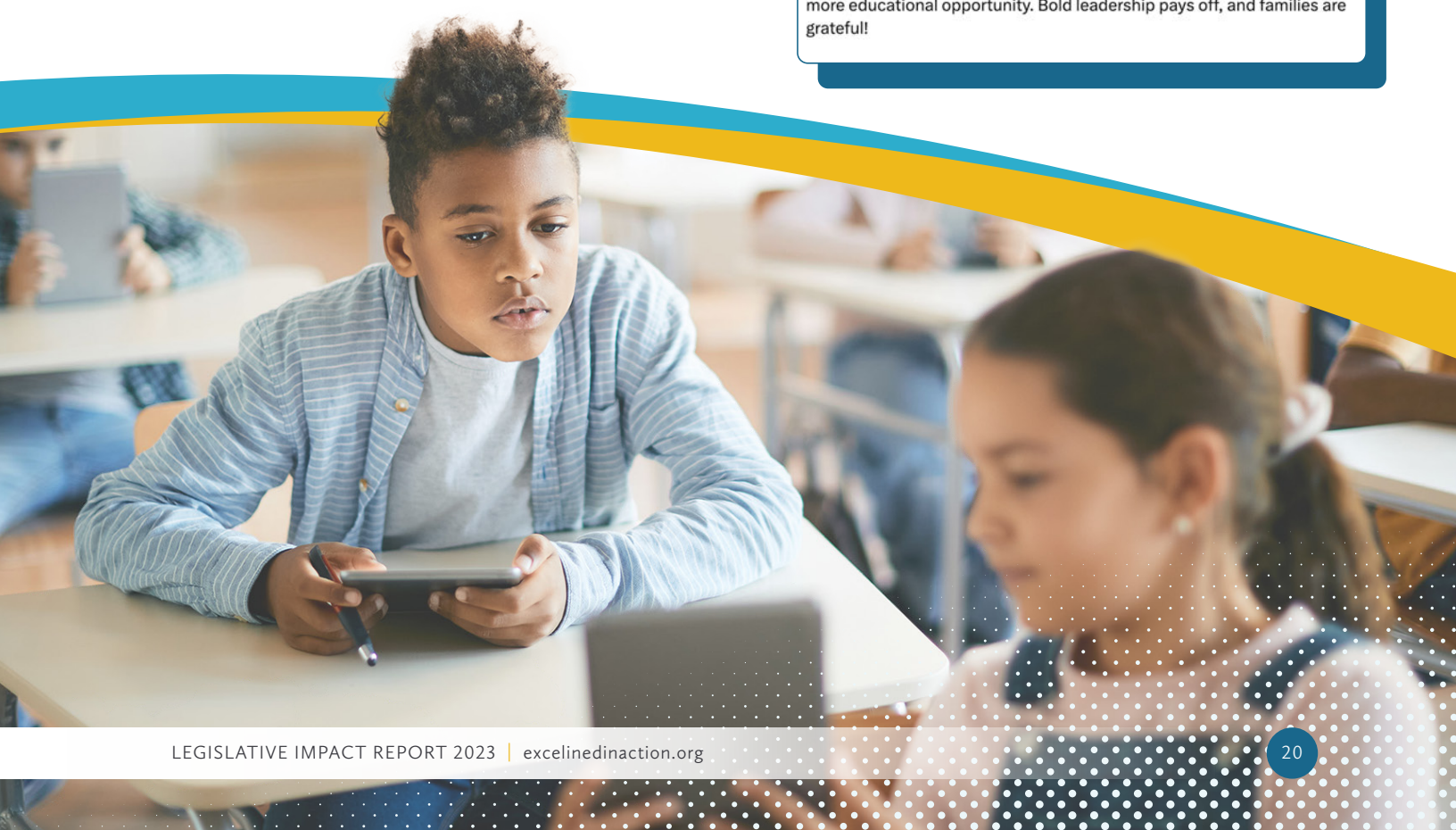
## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Kim Reynolds, 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



Jeb Bush  
@JebBush

Gov. @IAGovernor and leaders throughout Iowa went to bat for students —ensuring the legislature is firmly focused on families who are eager for more educational opportunity. Bold leadership pays off, and families are grateful!



# Kentucky



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Recruiting and Retaining Teachers

Kentucky was one of the original 10 signers of The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC). The ITMC allows current teachers with an unencumbered license to receive a similar teacher's license in another ITMC member state without needing to complete additional tests, professional training or administrative tasks. By removing these obstacles, the ITMC aims to increase the number of available licensed teachers working in member states.

In additional action, Kentucky strengthened its teacher pipeline by offering easier access to job postings, data collection from teacher exit-interviews and direction for the state to review and improve alternative teacher licensure pathways.

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy

Lawmakers passed legislation that will create a new statewide reading research center. The new center will focus on evidence-based practices and improving state reading proficiency levels. The law also requires superintendents and public charter school boards to adopt a common comprehensive reading program.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNER

House Speaker David Osborne, Senator Stephen West, Representative James Tipton, Kentucky Department of Education



Patricia Levesque  
@LevesquePat

This is a step in right direction for Kentucky families. I am hopeful that legislators in the Bluegrass state adopt policy to require the use of curriculum grounded in the #scienceofreading.  
[wdrb.com/news/kentucky-...](https://wdrb.com/news/kentucky-...)  
[@kymyona\\_burk](https://twitter.com/kymyona_burk)

“The pandemic was very difficult for our kids and educators, and the test scores indicate we have a lot ahead of us to tackle. One of our top priorities is helping all children catch up in the classroom and reach their full potential.”

- Representative  
James Tipton





## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● DEVELOPED Early Literacy – K-3 Reading

While not fully aligned with *ExcelinEd in Action*'s recommendations, Louisiana passed a retention process for students in third grade who need additional time to become skilled readers. Additionally, the bill requires parental notification and intensive instructional services for retained third graders. Implementation will begin in the 2024-25 school year.

“Reading is a fundamental skill. Nothing is more important for Louisiana’s future than ensuring every child can read.”

- Representative  
Richard  
Nelson



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

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

The Sunshine Scholarship Program, proposed as a phased-in **universal education freedom account program**, was approved by the House but failed to receive final passage. A similar bill that would have granted education savings accounts focused on low-income special needs students also failed to advance this year.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● IMPROVED Financial Literacy

Louisiana strengthened its financial literacy instruction by requiring all high school students take a standalone **financial literacy** course as a graduation requirement. The legislation will take effect for students who graduate in the 2026-2027 school year.

## BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

### ● PASSED Bridging the Digital Divide

Louisiana passed a law to develop and implement pilot programs to provide no-cost digital textbooks, study tools, online homework and open educational resources that can be used to improve student outcomes. The law prioritizes pilot programs that provide the most benefit to socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented students.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senator Sharon Hewitt, Representative Rhonda Butler, Representative Richard Nelson, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Louisiana Department of Education, Pelican Institute

# Mississippi



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PROTECTED School Accountability – Assessments

ExcelinEd in Action worked with lawmakers to **protect assessments and the state's accountability system** and defeat bills that would have eliminated end-of-course assessments, the state's A through F school grading designations and certain standardized tests as well as created other potentially problematic changes.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

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

Lawmakers provided charter school teachers with the same debit cards provided to teachers in traditional district public schools to help pay for classroom supplies. **Public school teachers are being treated equally**, whether they teach in a traditional or public charter school.

“Charter school teachers play a major role in their communities, often with less resources. This is why I was especially proud to sign legislation that gives these teachers greater resources to improve their classrooms.”

- Governor Tate Reeves



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

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



# Nevada



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading

Nevada reinstated its **Read by Third Grade** program, which requires schools to retain students who are not reading on grade level by the end of third grade. Additional legislation that would have strengthened literacy by banning the harmful practice of three-cueing failed to receive final passage.

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Teacher Pipeline

The Nevada Teacher Pipeline Account will provide grants to schools with teacher-focused **career technical education** programs. The Nevada Teacher Advancement Scholarship allows current teachers to receive aid for earning their master’s degree in education.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools

Nevada cities and counties now have the ability to apply to the Department of Education for authorization to sponsor charter schools.

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice

Legislation to increase funding for the state’s Opportunity Scholarship Program by \$50 million failed to advance. As a result, Governor Lombardo requested \$3.2 million of unspent stimulus funding to fund 350 student scholarships for the 2023-2024 school year. An interim finance committee denied the request, forcing one of the six scholarship granting organizations to use its reserve funding to cover the cost of the scholarships. It is estimated the reserves can support the program’s 1,400 students for one more fiscal year.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Work-Based Learning

Nevada students now have easier access to obtain **workforce skills** needed for in-demand careers as well as essential legal protection. Policymakers authorized the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a charter school to obtain liability insurance against potential legal challenges with a student participating in a work-based learning program.

## STATE LEADER AND COALITION PARTNER

Governor Joe Lombardo, American Federation for Children

“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.”

- Governor Joe Lombardo





# New Mexico



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy

New Mexico allocated funding to assist school districts in purchasing high-quality instructional materials aligned to the **science of reading**.

### ● PROTECTED Graduation Requirements – Financial Literacy

Legislation that would weaken school accountability by removing Algebra II as a graduation requirement passed the legislature. However, ExcelinEd *in* Action worked with state partners to ensure the bill was amended to allow an alternate course, including financial literacy, to be offered as an alternative.

“We have so many students that are disengaged as they get to the high school level, and we need to reengage them.”

- Representative G. Andrés Romero, who is also a high school teacher



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PROTECTED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools

Legislation that would have extended a 10% cap on charter schools in small districts was defeated, in large part due to the work of ExcelinEd *in* Action and coalition partners.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

House Minority Leader Ryan Lane, Representative Andrés Romero, Excellent Schools New Mexico, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, New Mexico KidsCAN, Public Charter Schools of New Mexico, Teach Plus New Mexico



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading

Ohio invested \$160 million in high-quality literacy instructional materials aligned with the **science of reading** as well as strengthened teacher professional development, added literacy coaches and enhanced literacy standards by **banning the harmful practice of three-cueing instruction**.

### ● IMPROVED School Funding Formula

Ohio strengthened its new funding formula by incorporating more recent teacher salaries. ExcelinEd *in* Action worked with various partners to ensure that the state did not backtrack.

“There is just no dispute anymore that the science of reading, with the use of phonics, is the way to go, and that is the best way to teach children how to read.”

- Governor Mike DeWine



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

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

With support from the House, Senate and Governor Mike DeWine, the state budget provided an additional \$136.5 million for **high-quality public charter schools**, an additional \$650 per student for all public charter schools and \$175 million over two years for charter school facility improvements.

### ● PASSED Private Education Choice – Universal Voucher Program

ExcelinEd *in* Action worked with stakeholders and in-state partners to help establish **universal eligibility** for the EdChoice Scholarship Program so that every student in Ohio can be eligible for a scholarship while still prioritizing low-income families with more funding. Ohio also added an additional year of funding for the Afterschool Child Enrichment (ACE) Educational Savings Account program, which serves more than **25,000** Ohio students.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Grants for Students

Ohio continued its significant investments in providing greater opportunities to students in career pathways. This year, the state created the Ohio Work Ready Grant Program, which provides up to \$3,000 grants to students at community colleges, technical colleges, technical centers or eligible university branch campuses who are enrolled in programs linked to occupations that are in-demand, are in critical need or meet regional workforce needs. The program is funded at \$10 million annually.

## ● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Computer Science Teachers

Policymakers created more opportunities for students to learn computer science by creating the Teach CS program to provide \$4 million annually to increase the number of teachers who qualify to teach computer science. Additionally, the state established the Ohio Computer Science Promise program, which allows students in grades 7-12 to access open enrollment to take an additional computer science course per academic year if the course isn't offered by the student's school.



Patricia Levesque  
@LevesquePat

.@GovMikeDeWine's pledge to make significant investments to close achievement gaps in Ohio—through #earlyliteracy, education opportunity and college and career pathways—will pay off for generations to come.  
[excelsinedinaction.org/2023/02/17/gov...](https://excelsinedinaction.org/2023/02/17/gov...)  
@ExcelinAction #CareerReady #schoolchoice



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor John Husted, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity-Ohio, Buckeye Institute, Code.org, Fordham Institute, Ohio Excels, School Choice Ohio



# Oklahoma



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading

Oklahoma increased funding to provide additional **reading coaches and employ literacy instructional teams** to support school districts in the science of reading.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Private Education Choice – Oklahoma Parental Choice Tax Credit Act

The Oklahoma Parental Choice Tax Credit Act provides parents with up to \$7,500 in refundable tax credits for each child who attends a private school and \$1,000 for each homeschool student to use on educational expenses such as tutoring, instructional materials and after-school programs. The program establishes **universal eligibility** for Sooner State students, regardless of their parents' income.



## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ★ ★ ★ ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Workforce Development

The Oklahoma Workforce Transformation Act established the Oklahoma Workforce Commission to coordinate workforce development activities in the state, including the creation of a public dashboard of those activities. These actions coincide with several opportunities for policy improvements identified in ExcelinEd's [Oklahoma Case Study](#).

“As Oklahoma’s economic outlook continues to expand, it’s pertinent that our workforce grows with the demand...and I’m thrilled about the momentum we’ve made. Through improvements, like creating a Secretary of Workforce and signing SB 621 [the Oklahoma Workforce Transformation Act], Oklahoma can set up the framework for meaningful solutions to grow, develop and maximize our state’s labor pool to expand our state’s economy and create better jobs for Oklahomans.”

- Governor Kevin Stitt





**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.



# South Carolina



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Three-Cueing Ban

South Carolina strengthened its early literacy policy by **banning three-cueing** in literacy curriculum and providing \$39 million for literacy training aligned to the science of reading for teachers.

## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ● PASSED Private Education Choice – Education Scholarship Accounts

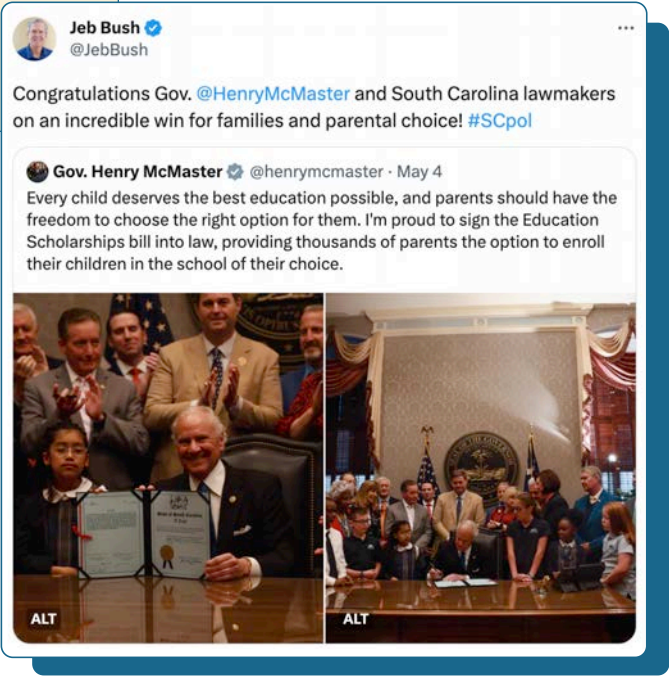
The state's first **education scholarship account** program was created this year, providing \$6,000 for up to **5,000 students** who previously attended public school and have a household income not exceeding 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. Eligibility will expand in the program's second year to 10,000 students and a cap at 300% of the federal poverty guidelines, and in the third year to 15,000 students and a cap at 400% of the federal poverty guidelines. ExcelinEd will support the state with policy implementation, including through its ESA Administrator Network.


### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Tax Credit Scholarships

ExcelinEd *in Action* made progress toward creating a new tax credit scholarship program that would have incorporated the state's current Exceptional Needs tax credit scholarships into a larger program. A dollar-for-dollar tax credit would have incentivized donations for K-12 scholarships to support students with exceptional and special needs, students in economically disadvantaged families, homeschoolers and general scholarship students. The bill passed in the Senate, but with focus on passing the new ESA, it failed to move forward in the House and will be a priority for ExcelinEd *in Action* next session.


“ I pushed the notion that parents ought to be the drivers of their [children's] education, that education shouldn't be divided up over who lives in the best ZIP code and who doesn't.”

- Senator Larry Grooms



Jeb Bush  @JebBush

Congratulations Gov. @HenryMcMaster and South Carolina lawmakers on an incredible win for families and parental choice! #SCpol

Gov. Henry McMaster  @henrymcmaster · May 4

Every child deserves the best education possible, and parents should have the freedom to choose the right option for them. I'm proud to sign the Education Scholarships bill into law, providing thousands of parents the option to enroll their children in the school of their choice.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Workforce Development

New legislation this year created the Office of Statewide Workforce Development to develop and oversee a statewide **workforce development plan**. The plan requires an **annual supply gap analysis** to help evaluate current and future labor market needs while also ensuring greater coordination across agencies to address those needs. Further, the plan requires development of a career pathways tool to inform curriculum, education initiatives and workforce planning.

### ● DEVELOPED College & Career Pathways – College Acceleration

Proposed legislation would have strengthened the state’s career and college pathways system by codifying a statewide workforce readiness goal, providing statewide remediation courses, streamlining college articulation agreements across the state and facilitating reverse transfer options for those seeking to complete their degree. *ExcelinEd in Action* will work to support passage of this priority legislation in the next session.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Henry McMaster, Senator Tom Davis, Senator Larry Grooms, Senator Greg Hembree, Speaker Murrell Smith, Representative Shannon Erickson, Representative Jay West, Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver, Palmetto Promise Institute, South Carolina Department of Education

“South Carolina joins the parental choice revolution with passage of its first education scholarship account program. This approach—the most flexible kind of education choice—will be a game-changer for families in the Palmetto State.”

- Governor Jeb Bush





## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Education Funding – Expanded Investments in TISA

ExcelinEd *in* Action worked last year with a broad coalition of stakeholders to pass the state’s **new K-12 funding formula**, the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act (TISA). The legislation replaced the existing Basic Education Program formula and created a more transparent and **improved way to fund schools based on individual student needs**. The TISA formula also includes direct funding for public charter schools, early literacy, career and technical education and establishes bonus funding based on student outcomes.

This year, lawmakers approved \$750 million to fully fund the base portion of the TISA formula. On top of that, Governor Bill Lee and lawmakers added another \$350 million to the formula—about a \$1.1 billion total increase—which brings the state and local funding total for K-12 education to **\$9 billion** for the 2023-2024 school year.

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Scholarship Program

ExcelinEd *in* Action supported the Tennessee State Collaborative on Education Reform (SCORE) to create the **Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship** to cover the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for eligible juniors and seniors enrolled in an educator preparation program at a public or private postsecondary institution in the state. Prospective teachers agree to teach in Tennessee for at least four years in a high-needs setting.

### ● IMPROVED Early Literacy - Learning Loss Remediation

ExcelinEd *in* Action supported Governor Lee’s office to permanently expand and fund the learning loss remediation supports included in 2021’s Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act. School districts are now required to conduct summer learning camps and after-school learning mini-camps each year for additional at-risk children and students entering certain grade levels.

“Our goal is clear – ensure every Tennessee child is a proficient reader by the time they reach fourth grade. We know what works and we must keep moving forward... Students need to read to succeed. If we stay the course together, our K-3 reading success plan will empower young Tennesseans for generations to come.”

- Governor Bill Lee







- **PROTECTED Early Literacy**

This year’s legislative session featured a concerted effort to undo the literacy-based promotion portion of Tennessee’s comprehensive early literacy laws. Passed in 2021—with policy and advocacy support from *ExcelinEd in Action*—the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act and the Tennessee Literacy Success Act established a comprehensive early literacy policy grounded in the science of reading and a system of interventions and supports for students to mitigate pandemic learning loss, including retention and additional interventions for struggling 3rd grade readers. In 2023, more than 15 bills were filed to weaken the literacy-based promotion portion of the law.

*ExcelinEd in Action* directly lobbied legislators to leave the law unchanged, including providing expert testimony, policy briefs and an op-ed on the success of similar policies in other states. Lawmakers ultimately passed SB300/HB437, which made slight revisions to the 3rd-grade literacy promotion requirements while keeping the integrity of the law’s original intent. These changes include new data and reporting requirements, minor changes to the appeals process and new tutoring requirements.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

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

*ExcelinEd in Action* supported legislation to expand eligibility for the Tennessee Education Savings Account Pilot Program. One bill allowed students who would have been eligible to apply for the program during a three-year litigation period to apply now, even if the student is already attending a private school or the family no longer meets certain eligibility criteria. Another bill expanded eligibility from Shelby (Memphis) and Davidson (Nashville) counties to also include Hamilton County (Chattanooga), covering three of the state’s four largest metropolitan areas. Through these efforts, **tens of thousands** of students are now eligible for school choice in the Volunteer State.



**Patricia Levesque**  
 @LevesquePat

More TN families will soon have access to the #ESA program! Thank you @GovBillLee, @RepMarkWhiteTN, @RepChrisTodd, Sen. @Lundbergjon and Sen. @Todd\_Gardenhire for expanding #parentalchoice so families can personalize education and meet their kids' unique needs. #TNleg

- **PROTECTED Public Education Choice – Charter School Autonomy**

*ExcelinEd in Action* played defense to protect the functions and authority of the Public Charter Schools Commission. Policymakers deliberated a proposal to limit the appellate authority of the Charter Commission and effectively cut off an appeal option for many charter schools in the event their application was wrongfully denied by the local school district. This proposal failed to advance, and the Public Charter Schools Commission’s authority remains intact.

- **IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter School Enrollment**

Working with in-state partners like the Tennessee Charter School Center, *ExcelinEd in Action* supported several technical corrections to the current charter school law. These changes include a cleanup of the current application process and improvements to the enrollment guidance to allow a public charter school to give enrollment preference to students who are economically disadvantaged.



**STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Governor Bill Lee, Senator Jack Johnson, Senator Jon Lundberg, Senator Todd Gardenhire, Senator Dawn White, Representative William Lamberth, Representative Charlie Baum, Representative Chris Todd, Representative Mark White, Representative Kirk Haston, Former Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn, Tennessee SCORE, Beacon Center of Tennessee, TennesseeCAN, Tennessee Charter School Center, Tennessee Department of Education, Tennesseans for Student Success, American Federation for Children, EdChoice, Yes. Every Kid.





## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy – Partial Three-Cueing Ban

Texas now **bans three-cueing** in phonics curriculum, instructional material and in educator preparation programs.

### ● PROTECTED Graduation Requirements

ExcelinEd *in* Action worked with in-state partners to stall a bill that would have eliminated the high school graduation exit exam requirement for earning a standard high school diploma. If passed, the legislation would have granted any former student who did not meet the exit exam requirement a standard high school diploma upon request.

“School choice and parental empowerment doesn’t lead to a decimation of public schools, it leads to an improvement in our public schools.”

- Governor Greg Abbott



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ★ PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools

Texas policymakers codified an opinion from the attorney general ensuring that open-enrollment charter schools and school districts are treated in the same manner when it comes to certain aspects of local government, such as zoning, building regulations and permitting. Lawmakers also gave charter schools more time to prepare and plan for an expansion. Their window for notification and request to the Texas Education Agency was doubled, from 18 months to 36 months, allowing the school to create a better student experience upon opening a new campus.

### ● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Scholarship Account

ExcelinEd *in* Action worked with partners on an education scholarship account proposal that would provide \$8,000 for education expenses to most of Texas’ 5.5 million students, with priority given to students zoned in C, D or F-rated schools. While the legislation stalled during the regular legislative session, Governor Abbott is expected to call legislators into a special session later in the year to finalize the proposal.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Outcomes-Based Funding, College Acceleration

Texas community colleges will now receive state funds through a new formula that includes a weighted base tier and a performance tier. Colleges will generate **performance funding** when students complete 15 credit hours, successfully transfer/co-enroll in bachelor’s degree programs or earn a credential of value—with additional funding for placement in high-demand occupations.



Other provisions of the bill will increase students' access to postsecondary education options; remove financial barriers for low-income students to earn college credit in high school; streamline transfers from community colleges to 4-year institutions; and improve transparency for students and families about the quality, value and employment/wage outcomes of postsecondary programs in Texas' labor market.



## BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

### ● PASSED Bridging the Digital Divide

Texas made the biggest investment for broadband development in state history, allocating **\$1.5 billion** to the Broadband Infrastructure Fund, which is meant to expand internet availability in a state where 7 million people lack access to the service.



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Senate Education Chairman Brandon Creighton, Senator Bryan Hughes, Senator Mayes Middleton, House Education Chairman Brad Buckley, Representative Harold Dutton, Representative Gary VanDeaver, Representative Stephanie Klick, Representative Terri Leo-Wilson, Representative Jacey Jetton, Representative Jarvis Johnson, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity, Texans for Free Enterprise, Texas Public Charter Schools Association, Texas Public Policy Foundation, Texas2036

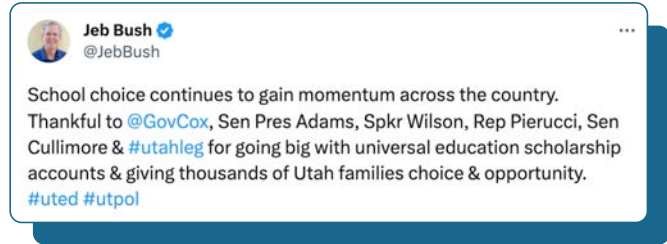




## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Teachers and Leaders – Reciprocity

Utah was one of the original ten signers of The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC). The ITMC allows current teachers with an unencumbered license to receive a similar teacher’s license in another ITMC member state without needing to complete additional tests, professional training or administrative tasks. By removing these obstacles, the ITMC aims to increase the number of available licensed teachers working in member states.



## EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

### ★ ★ ★ ● PASSED Private Education Choice – Utah Fits All ESA Program

Utah created a **universal education scholarship account program** that will provide approximately **5,000** students with scholarships of \$8,000 for qualified expenses, including private school tuition, homeschooling, tutoring and other education-related expenses. The **Utah Fits All Scholarship** will empower families to customize education for their children, allowing them to receive the individualized learning experience they want and deserve.

“School choice works best when we adequately fund public education and we remove unnecessary regulations that burden our public schools and make it difficult for them to succeed.”

- Governor Spencer Cox



## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senate President Stuart Adams, Senate Education Chair Ann Millner, House Speaker Brad Wilson, Senator Kirk Cullimore, Representative Candice Pierucci, Robyn Bagley, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity, Libertas Institute, Sutherland Institute, Utah Association of Public Charter Schools, Utah Fits All Coalition, Utah State Board of Education, Yes. Every Kid.



# Virginia



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ★ ★ ★ ● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading

Virginia legislators expanded the Virginia Literacy Act to ensure the more than **470,000** students in 4th through 8th grade receive **evidence-based literacy instruction** aligned with the science of reading. The legislation provides critical reading preparation for future teachers and professional development for current teachers aligned with the science of reading. It also creates a comprehensive approach to screening, identifying and intervening on behalf of students who are struggling.

“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.”

## STATE LEADERS

Governor Glenn Youngkin, Delegate Carrie Coyner, Senator Louise Lucas



Jeb Bush  
@JebBush

Virginia is doubling down on its commitment to literacy. Good policy that puts reading coaches in middle & elementary schools + evidence-based teaching practices make the difference for struggling readers.



Patricia Levesque  
@LevesquePat

Thank you Del. @CarrieCoyner & @SenLouiseLucas for championing this important legislation. I am grateful to @GovernorVA for his leadership & support for both expanding and faithfully implementing the Virginia Literacy Act.

- Governor  
Glenn  
Youngkin



# West Virginia



## CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

### ● PASSED Early Literacy and Math – Evidence-Based Reading & Mathematics

ExcelinEd in Action supported West Virginia’s efforts to provide the more than **68,000** students in kindergarten through third grade with **evidence-based reading and mathematics instruction** to ensure they are proficient by the end of third grade. The state’s comprehensive approach—including literacy and numeracy screeners, individual reading plans, teacher training and supports, and high-quality, evidence-based instructional practices and materials—will set West Virginia on a strong path for boosting literacy and math skills, recovering lost learning and ultimately closing achievement gaps.

## STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

### ● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Dual Enrollment

A pilot program was created to provide funding assistance to students wanting to enroll in specially identified **dual enrollment** classes at the state’s colleges and universities that lead to certain career pathways. Students in the Mountain State can explore in-demand careers without the burden of financial insecurity.

## STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Jim Justice, House Speaker Roger Hanshaw, Senate Education Committee Chair Amy Grady, House Education Committee Chair Joe Ellington, The Education Alliance

 ExcelinEd in Action  
@ExcelinAction

Thanks @wvgovernor for investing in the future of our children & making sure every child is on a path to success. Today’s signage of the #ThirdGradeSuccessAct, championed by Sen. Amy Grady is a win for all families who want to improve the lives of their children. #WVLegis #WVpol



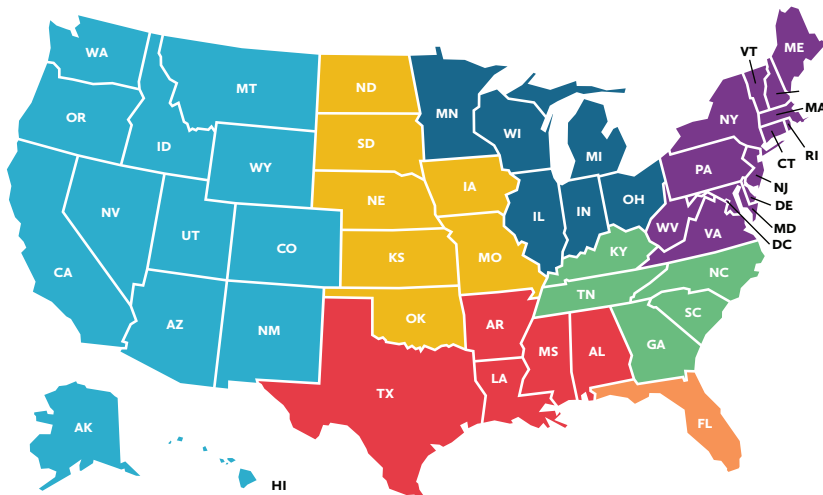
“The Third Grade Success Act will provide teachers, teachers aides and assistant teachers with the tools they need to make sure they’re teaching based on the science of reading and based on evidence that has been proven over and over again to be successful in other states.”

- Senator Amy Grady, West Virginia Senate Education Committee



# Our Advocacy Team

## ExcelinEd in Action's Advocacy Regions



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Midwest	Jordan Zakery
Gulf	Katherine Munal
Great Lakes	Evan Eagleson
Northeast	Ashley DeMauro Mullins
Southeast	Jack Powers
Florida	Nathan Hoffman

 National

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For highlights from  
this report, see our  
**2023 Legislative  
Impact - In Brief.**



**ExcelinEd**  
*in Action*

# Legislative Impact Report

**2023**

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