



ExcelinEd
in Action



Legislative Impact Report

2025



excelinedinaction.org



ExcelinEd
in Action

Legislative Impact Report

2025

excelinedinaction.org

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

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

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

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

Contents

Our Chairman.....	3	Nevada.....	33
Our Executive Director ..	4	New Hampshire	35
National Landscape	5	New Mexico.....	37
Alabama.....	6	North Dakota.....	38
Arizona.....	8	Ohio	39
Arkansas.....	10	Oklahoma.....	41
Colorado.....	12	South Carolina.....	43
Florida.....	14	Tennessee.....	45
Georgia	19	Texas.....	48
Idaho	22	Utah.....	50
Indiana	24	Virginia	52
Iowa.....	27	West Virginia.....	54
Louisiana.....	29	Honorable Mentions.....	55
Missouri.....	30	Our Advocacy Team	57



A MESSAGE FROM

Our Chairman



Across the nation, state policymakers continue their work to improve students' lives and give them access to a quality education. Each year brings both progress and new challenges. I remain optimistic about the future we are building together for families, students and educators.

One of the most urgent challenges our students face today is distracted learning. Cell phones and social media have reshaped our classrooms, making it harder for teachers to teach and students to focus, putting them at risk of falling behind. At the same time, artificial intelligence is opening new opportunities for educators to personalize instruction and use their time more efficiently. Thoughtful state policymaking is critical to ensure technology enhances learning by supporting focus, protecting students and preparing them to use new tools responsibly.

States continue to focus on quality, evidence-based instruction in math and reading in the early grades, but we know that a quality education must extend well beyond these years. Students deserve clear, rigorous college and career pathways that equip them with the skills, credentials and experiences they need to succeed after high school. States are making strides to expand access to these pathways, but more work remains to connect every student with meaningful skills and options that match their ambitions. Finally, none of this progress is possible without strong systems of accountability. School accountability gives parents, educators and policymakers the data and transparency they need to understand student outcomes and act on them. It ensures that schools remain focused on delivering results by consistently measuring progress and holding students to high expectations. Policymakers must resist efforts to dismantle these systems, which lowers the bar for all students.

I am grateful to the state lawmakers, policymakers and education champions who continue to tackle these tough and important issues that ensure families have access to high-quality schools and teachers. Year after year, leaders are advancing student-centered policies to improve education in the states—transforming outdated systems into trustworthy, student-focused frameworks for success.

This work changes lives, strengthens families and communities and secures a brighter future for our students. Your support makes it possible. Let's keep moving forward. Together.

Onward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeb Bush". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jeb Bush
Chairman, ExcelinEd in Action

A MESSAGE FROM

Our Executive Director



Transformative policies in education are designed to accelerate student achievement. From improving students' skills in reading and math to ensuring graduates are college, career or military ready, dozens of states this year took action to achieve just that.

The most notable was the groundswell of bipartisan support for creating distraction-free learning environments. More than a dozen states passed policies this year establishing phone-free schools or classrooms, enabling children and teens to focus more fully on their teachers, their assignments and, ultimately, their academic success.

That success is grounded in reading and math, performance in which is stagnant or declining in far too many states. Following January's release of NAEP results, states responded with a continued focus on literacy policy and, thankfully, stronger attention on math policy. One component of *ExcelinEd in Action's* comprehensive math policy accelerates progress for high-performing students by auto-enrolling them in advanced math courses. Indiana and Virginia took the lead this year by enacting an auto-enrollment policy, while Maryland advanced both math and literacy comprehensive policies through its executive branch.

Indiana also created value for its new high school diploma by providing students who earn diploma seals with automatic admission to all seven of the state's universities, a faster path into the Indiana National Guard or guaranteed interviews and apprenticeship opportunities among Indiana's largest employers. These high-value incentives are tied to the state's groundbreaking redesign of the high school experience. Indiana also broke ground with an improved funding mechanism for charter schools, requiring local dollars to support charter operations, not just the school's facilities as other states do.

Highlights of 2025 would not be complete without recognizing the work in multiple states to protect school accountability. Despite efforts to tear down standards, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia stood firm in protecting this foundational policy, which is essential to student academic growth and success. Further, Iowa improved protocols for student assessments, a key element in accountability systems, and Oklahoma's Office of Educational Quality and Accountability reinstated stronger assessment cut scores that had been weakened by the Department of Education last year.

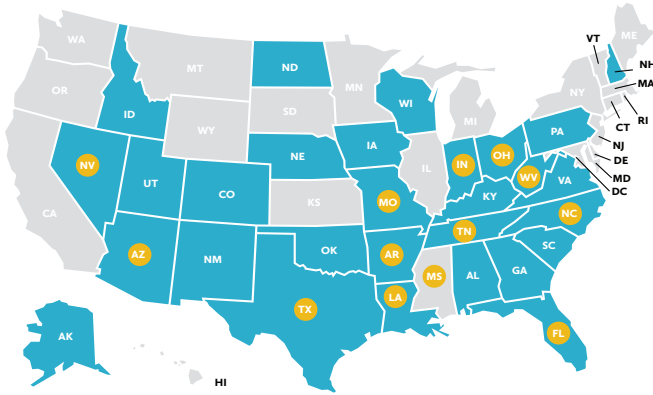
We continue pushing forward on every front to advance student-centered policy. Your support is invaluable, keeping our mission on track and helping transform education in states nationwide. I'm deeply grateful to all who partner with us as we continue to make education reform a reality.

Patricia Levesque


Patricia Levesque

Executive Director, *ExcelinEd in Action*

National Landscape



 **126**
Policies Passed or Improved in **29** States

 **294**
Bills Engaged in **33** States

 **39**
Policies Protected in **13** States


 **89**
Expert and Legislative Testimonies in **23** States

 EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY  CLOSE LEARNING GAPS  STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER  BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



\$1.7 Billion
New Funding for ESAs
(8 States)


\$76 Million
New Funding for Math
(AL, FL, SC, TX)



22.5 Million Students
Benefit from Phone-Free
Classrooms/Schools (24 States)


4.3 Million Students
Benefit from Early Literacy
Policy (9 States)



855K Students
Expanded Access to Pathways
Programs (AR, IA, GA)


3.9 Million Students
Benefit from Math Policy
(6 States¹)



\$62 Million
New Funding for Early Literacy
(7 States)


290K Students
Newly Eligible for Private Choice
(10 States²)


12 States
Strengthened
College & Career Pathways


\$251 Million
New Funding for Charter
School Facilities (5 States)


161K Teachers
Improved Benefits &
Incentives (5 States)


47th State
Allowing Charter Schools
(North Dakota)

¹Includes non-legislative action in MD

²Includes non-legislative action in UT



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Paid Parental Leave

Alabama passed a law granting up to eight weeks of paid parental leave for female state and education employees, two weeks for male employees and up to eight weeks for adoptive parents of children aged three or younger. The state allocated \$9.6 million to support implementation. This policy strengthens the educator pipeline by supporting teacher retention and sustainability, especially for the state's more than 43,000 public school teachers.

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Funding and Support

Lawmakers continued their investment in early literacy by maintaining \$36 million in funding for K–3 reading coaches and appropriating an additional \$10 million to support struggling readers beyond third grade. These funds will help expand the state's middle grades literacy initiatives and ensure more students build the foundational reading skills they need to succeed.

● IMPROVED Education Funding – Weighted Student Funding

The RAISE Act revised its resource-based funding formula to add “weights” for higher-need students. These new supplemental dollars target support where it's needed most, creating a step forward in making funding more student-centered.

● IMPROVED Math Policy – Numeracy Act Funding

Alabama allocated \$95 million to support continued implementation of the Numeracy Act, furthering the state's commitment to strengthening math instruction across grades. This increased investment will fund professional development, additional math coaches and resources that help educators improve student outcomes in mathematics.

● DEVELOPED Early Literacy – Ban on Three-Cueing

Lawmakers introduced a bill to ban the discredited three-cueing method from public K–12 classrooms and teacher preparation programs. While the legislation did not pass, it reflects growing support for aligning reading instruction with evidence-based practices.

“ In my state of the state, I repeated the requests of Alabama teachers and parents in calling for a ban on student cell phone use in our schools. I thank Rep. Hulse and Sen. Chesteen for championing this commonsense legislation that puts our students first.”

- Governor
Kay Ivey



ExcelinEd in Action in the field [@MirandaWil82096](#), our legislative director for the Southeast, ran into Anthony Owen from [@codeorg](#) in [#Alabama](#) this week! [#AL](#) continues to be a leader in computer science education, we'll be watching to see what's next for the state.





EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● IMPROVED Private School Choice – Education Scholarship Accounts

Alabama significantly increased support for private education choice through Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs). Lawmakers appropriated \$80 million for the 2025–26 school year and added \$101 million in the general budget plus \$50 million in supplemental funding for the current year—bringing the total investment to \$231 million. This funding will empower thousands of families with flexible education options tailored to their children’s needs.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

Alabama created a statewide bell-to-bell policy prohibiting student cell phone use during the school day, with reasonable exceptions. The law also promotes digital literacy by requiring students to complete a course on social media safety, equipping them to navigate technology responsibly and stay focused on learning.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Kay Ivey, AL Department of Education, Senator Donnie Chesteen, Senator Arthur Orr, Representative Terri Collins, Representative Leigh Hulsey, Representative Alan Baker, Representative David Faulkner



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

A+ Education Partnership, Americans for Prosperity, American Federation for Children, EdChoice





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading and Dyslexia Training

Arizona expanded their science of reading policy by requiring all K–5 special education teachers to earn a literacy endorsement grounded in the science of reading by 2028. This change reflects a long-term commitment to ensure every student receives high-quality, research-backed reading instruction.

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Dyslexia Identification in IEPs

Lawmakers strengthened support for students with dyslexia by requiring that Individualized Education Plans clearly indicate whether a student has a formal dyslexia diagnosis. This update promotes better intervention planning and ensures that educators are aware of and can address students' unique learning needs.

● PROTECTED School Accountability – Assessments

A proposal to allow local school districts to replace the statewide assessment with a menu of tests was ultimately defeated. *ExcelinEd in Action* and our sister organization helped preserve Arizona's statewide assessment and accountability system—ensuring families, educators and leaders continue to have consistent, transparent and comparable data about student learning and school performance.

“Legislators unanimously voted to require individualized education programs (IEPs) to specifically denote dyslexia as a disability instead of a generic ‘specific learning disability.’ Bringing more awareness to dyslexia requires us to SAY IT!”

- Representative
Matthew Gress



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PROTECTED Private School Choice – Education Empowerment Accounts

Multiple bills were introduced to impose new burdens on Arizona's universal Empowerment Scholarship Accounts ranging from limitations on curriculums, modifying allowable expenses and restricting the number of qualifying schools. *ExcelinEd in Action* and our sister organization helped defeat and protect Arizona's universal ESAs to ensure families continue to have robust options to select the best education that fits their child's needs.

 ExcelinEd in Action
@ExcelinAction

#Arizona is prioritizing student focus and academic success! 📖 ✨
@GovernorHobbs has signed HB2484, which will limit digital distractions in classrooms across the state. A big win for cultivating learning environments that support student engagement and achievement! arizonadailyindependent.com/2025/04/14/new...

 **BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

- **PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools**

Arizona took action to limit classroom distractions by establishing phone-free school policies statewide. The new law requires schools to restrict student cell phone use during instructional hours, while allowing exceptions for emergencies or educational purposes. This reform supports focused learning environments and responds to growing concerns from parents and educators about digital distraction.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Senator Lauren Kuby, Senator Dave Farnsworth, Senator Brian Fernandez, Representative Beverly Pingerelli, Representative Matt Gress, Representative Lisa Fink, Representative David Livingston, Arizona Education Association, Read on Arizona, Helios Foundation, Arizona Charter Association

 **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK**

Stand for Education



Arkansas



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PROTECTED School Accountability – A–F School Grading

Arkansas lawmakers proposed a two year pause on A–F school letter grades as part of a broader shift toward a new accountability system under which the Department will issue A–F grades for the 2024–25 school year. *ExcelinEd in Action* worked closely with partners to amend the legislation to a single year pause and *ExcelinEd in Action* will continue to advocate for a strong accountability system as the work moves to the State Board.

EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Public Education Choice – Open Enrollment

Arkansas expanded public school choice by making it easier for students to transfer to another public school within their home district. The new law also enhances transparency by requiring school districts to publicly post school-level capacity and transfer policies and mandates an annual statewide report on program participation.

● PROTECTED Private Education Choice – Education Freedom Accounts

Lawmakers passed key updates to Arkansas Education Freedom Account Program, including clarifying eligible expenses and adjusting the application timeline. *ExcelinEd in Action* helped lawmakers amend language that would have imposed burdensome requirements on participating families. These updates ensure the sustainability of the program while supporting continued access and flexibility for families using EFAs to meet their children’s unique learning needs.

STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Arkansas ACCESS Act

Gov. Sarah Sanders championed and signed the Arkansas ACCESS Act to align K–12 and higher education and expand access to college and career pathways. The law expands dual credit opportunities, simplifies credit transfer through common course numbering and streamlines scholarship programs and application processes. Together, these provisions will strengthen Arkansas’ future workforce and help more students earn the degrees and credentials needed for success in Arkansas’ most promising careers.

“ Kids enter elementary school learning to read. By the time they’re in the third grade, they’re reading to learn. The LEARNS Act is helping students at schools like Pangburn meet that critical milestone—and it’s transforming Arkansas education for the better.”

- Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders



 **BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

- **IMPROVED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools**

Arkansas lawmakers established the Bell to Bell, No Cell Act to create distraction-free schools statewide. This new law requires public schools to prohibit student cell phone use throughout the instructional day, with exemptions for emergencies and medical needs. The law builds on a 2024 pilot that empowered schools to use state funds to purchase phone pouches or lockers and will restore student attention and focus in the classroom.

- **DEVELOPED Digital Policy – Digital and AI Literacy Standards**

Lawmakers introduced legislation to create new K–12 digital literacy standards including internet safety, social media literacy and the responsible use of artificial intelligence. While the bill did not pass in 2025, it sparked productive dialogue about preparing students to navigate an increasingly digital world. *ExcelinEd in Action* engaged with state leaders and will continue to support efforts to modernize Arkansas digital literacy standards.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Governor Sarah Sanders, Arkansas Department of Education, Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva, Commissioner of Higher Education Ken Warden, Senate President Bart Hester's Office, Senator Jane English, Senator Jonathan Dismang, Senator Tyler Dees, Senator Breanne Davis, Representative Jon Eubanks, Representative Matthew Shepherd, Representative Austin McCollum, Representative Keith Brooks, Arkansas Education Advocates Coalition

 **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK**

yes. every kid.





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Early Literacy – Universal Dyslexia Screening

Colorado took a major step to improve early reading outcomes by mandating universal dyslexia screening for students in grades K–3. The new policy also strengthens the state’s existing READ Act by enhancing instruction and interventions for students demonstrating reading difficulties, including those at risk for dyslexia. These changes will ensure that more students are identified early and receive timely, evidence-based support. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this effort to improve literacy outcomes statewide.

● IMPROVED Education Funding – School Finance Act

Lawmakers began implementing Colorado’s new student-centered funding formula, delivering more resources based on student needs. The updated approach phases in over multiple years and requires annual reviews by the Joint Budget Committee to ensure long-term sustainability. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this shift toward fairer, more predictable funding that prioritizes students, especially those requiring additional support.

● ENGAGED School Accountability – Education Accountability System

Lawmakers introduced a bill requiring the adoption of broad recommendations from a recent accountability task force. *ExcelinEd in Action* engaged with partners to express concern over the lack of clarity and transparency in the proposed changes. We will continue working to ensure accountability policies have rigorous expectations and provide meaningful and actionable information.

“Exciting news for Colorado students & educators! I just signed new laws that boost classroom funding, including \$412 more per student with a bipartisan school finance formula—the first major update in 30 years!”

- Governor
Jared Polis



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

Colorado established a new requirement for charter schools and local school boards to develop policies limiting student use of personal communication devices during the school day. These policies aim to reduce distractions and help restore focus in classrooms. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this step to create healthier, more engaged learning environments across the state.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Senator Chris Kolker, Senator James Coleman, Senator Paul Lundeen, Representative Eliza Hamrick, Representative Matthew Martinez, Representative Anthony Hartsook, Representative Sean Camacho, Representative Manny Rutinel, Representative Ryan Armagost, Representative Meghan Lukens, Representative Mary Bradfield, Representative Shannon Bird, Representative Julie McCluskie, Senator Scott Bright, Representative Lindsay Gilchrest, Senator Janice Marchman, Colorado Education Initiative, Ready Colorado, Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative, Advance Colorado, Colorado Succeeds, Colorado Kids

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

Empower Schools





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Math Policy – Regional Math Coaches and Directors

Florida invested \$1 million to launch a network of regional math directors and coaches. This initiative provides teachers with high-quality, job-embedded support to strengthen math instruction and raise student achievement statewide.

● PASSED Early Literacy – High-Quality Instructional Materials

Florida appropriated \$3 million to develop or purchase open education resources for K–2 reading instruction. This investment expands access to evidence-based, high-quality instructional materials aligned with the state’s early literacy goals.

● PASSED Teachers & Leaders – Teacher Pathways

Florida improved its teacher pipeline by aligning educator preparation programs with evidence-based reading and math practices and requiring the use of high-quality instructional materials. The state also simplified alternative pathways into the profession to ensure more qualified teachers enter the classroom.

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Strengthened District Reading Plans

Lawmakers raised expectations for early literacy by requiring districts to prioritize the assignment of highly effective teachers in grades K–2 and ensure reading interventions are delivered by credentialed or endorsed staff. These changes improve instructional quality in the most critical years of learning.

● PROTECTED Early Literacy – Fourth-Grade Promotion

Lawmakers defeated a proposal to weaken Florida’s longstanding promotion requirements for third-grade reading. These protections ensure schools maintain high expectations for students and continue to close learning gaps with urgency.

“Florida is empowering parents to make the best educational decisions for their children and many Florida families are taking advantage!”

- Ben Gibson
Member of
the Florida
State Board of
Education



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



● **PROTECTED School Accountability – Assessments**

Legislation that would have eliminated the requirement to pass Algebra I and 10th-grade English language arts assessments to graduate was stopped. The Foundation for Florida’s Future helped preserve these critical benchmarks for student readiness and postsecondary success.

● **PROTECTED Education Funding – School Recognition Awards**

Florida continued to reward results through \$135 million in the School Recognition Program. These bonuses reward and support a culture of academic excellence in schools that demonstrate strong outcomes.

● **DEVELOPED Early Literacy –Reading and Interventions for Grades 4–12**

The Foundation for Florida’s Future worked with state lawmakers on a policy that, if it had passed both chambers, would have improved reading outcomes for students in grades 4-12 by providing job embedded training for school staff and reading coaches.

● **DEVELOPED Math Policy – Teacher Preparation**

Lawmakers took steps to improve math instruction by aligning minimum instructional hours for elementary math content in teacher preparation programs with national averages. If the legislation had passed both chambers, these changes would have strengthened educator readiness and ensured students receive high-quality, content-rich math instruction from the start.



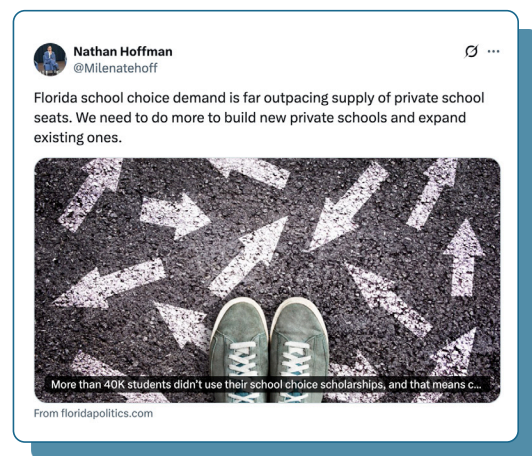
EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● **IMPROVED Public School Choice – Schools of Hope Program Improvements**

Policy updates to the Schools of Hope program guarantee participating charter schools access to all or part of underused, vacant or surplus district facilities. The law also expands eligibility criteria to capture more students in under-performing schools and establishes a performance-incentive program.

● **PASSED Public School Choice – Charter Schools**

New legislation gives charter schools greater autonomy in key operational areas, including increasing enrollment, and student data sharing. Legislation will also allow high-performing charter schools to assume the existing charter of another school in the same district. These flexibilities strengthen the ability of public charter schools to serve students effectively.



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



- **IMPROVED Public School Choice – Charter School Conversion and Work-Based Learning**

Florida streamlined the charter school conversion process and allowed municipalities to convert certain public schools to work-based learning focused charter schools. These improvements expand opportunities for students to gain real-world skills.

- **IMPROVED Public School Choice – Charter School Facilities**

Lawmakers improved protections for charter schools from local zoning and development actions that would unfairly restrict charter school operations and expansion. These changes help public charter schools increase access and maintain safe, quality learning environments.

- **DEVELOPED Private and Public School Choice – Virtual and Hybrid School Expansion**

Florida developed legislation that would have expanded learning opportunities by allowing students participating in the Family Empowerment Scholarship program to include full-time virtual private school under certain conditions. The legislation would have also allowed public and charter schools to operate as hybrid models, offering families greater customization in education delivery.

- **PROTECTED Public School Choice – Charter School Facility Funding**

Florida increased charter school capital outlay funding to \$248.6 million—up from \$230 million the previous year. This ensures support for facilities where more than 400,000 Florida students attend school.

- **PROTECTED Public School Choice – Schools of Hope Fund**

Lawmakers maintained \$6 million in dedicated funding for the Schools of Hope program, supporting high-quality operators that expand options for students in struggling schools.

- **PROTECTED Public School Choice – Charter School Title I Funding**

The Foundation for Florida’s Future helped defeat legislation that would have removed protections requiring equitable sharing of Title I funds with charter schools, ensuring students in public charter schools continue to receive their fair share of federal support.

- **PROTECTED Private School Choice**

A proposed bill that would have imposed new, onerous requirements on private schools and parents accepting education choice scholarships was defeated. The Foundation for Florida’s Future worked to protect school autonomy and preserve clear, streamlined communication between families and schools.

- **PROTECTED Private School Choice – Education Scholarship Accounts**

Lawmakers rejected proposed changes to Florida’s education scholarship account program that would have altered the definition of home education, which would have prevented microschool development and other innovative learning options for students.

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



STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Workforce Readiness/Career and Technical Education

New policy allows charter schools to participate in key workforce education startup and expansion grants and expands the number of Florida College System programs that offer money-back guarantees tied to job placement. These reforms increase access to high-value career pathways for more students.

● PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – Workforce Grant Program

Florida maintained at least \$40 million for the Workforce Capitalization Incentive Grant Program. This program supports startup and expansion costs of high-demand CTE offerings across districts, colleges and charter schools.

● PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – College Acceleration

Lawmakers preserved \$597 million for school-based incentives tied to successful completion of AP, IB, dual enrollment and industry certifications. This investment rewards schools for helping students access and succeed in advanced coursework.

● PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – Computer Science

Florida continued its commitment to computer science education by funding \$5 million in certification and bonus incentives for teachers. This fund supports teacher professional learning and student course offerings.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● IMPROVED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

A new statewide policy requires all K–8 public schools to implement a bell-to-bell, distraction-free learning environment. A pilot program will also launch in select high schools. This move responds to growing concerns from parents and educators about digital distractions during class.

● PROTECTED Digital Policy – Artificial Intelligence in Schools

Lawmakers protected \$2 million for the licensing of Khan Academy’s Khanmigo AI platform to provide personalized math and reading tutoring to students in grades K–8.

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.	Florida Charter School Alliance
Senator Alexis Calatayud	Florida Council of 100
Senator Corey Simon	Florida Council of Independent Schools
Representative Karen Gonzalez-Pittman	Florida Department of Education
Representative Lauren Melo	Florida School Board Association
Representative Dana Trabulsy	Florida SouthWestern State College
Christian Schools of Florida	Florida State University
Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools	Florida Virtual School
Florida Association of District School Superintendents	Mater Academy
Florida Catholic Conference	Step Up For Students
Florida Chamber of Commerce	Teach Florida at Teach Coalition

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

Academica	IDEA Public Schools
Americans for Prosperity	KIPP
Apple	OptimaEd
Association of Christian Schools International	Project Lead the Way
Charter Schools USA	Teach for America
Code.org	The James Madison Institute
College Board	The Optima Foundation
Home Education Foundation	yes. every kid.

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



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Literacy Coaches and Reading Reform

Georgia lawmakers approved \$18.5 million to fund 116 literacy coaches in grades K–5, helping to expand reading support and improve student outcomes. The state also passed legislation to ban the ineffective three-cueing method in reading instruction and require dyslexia support plans for at-risk students. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported both efforts, providing feedback to strengthen the science of reading provisions and advocating for coach investments as a key strategy to improve early literacy.

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Teacher Preparation Alignment

To ensure consistency in how educators are trained, Georgia aligned educator preparation programs with the science of reading. This reform prohibits the inclusion of the three-cueing method in structured literacy coursework, ensuring all new teachers are equipped with evidence-based reading practices. *ExcelinEd in Action* helped shape the original bill language and worked with partners to keep these reforms strong and inclusive.

● DEVELOPED Math Policy – Accelerated Math Pathways

Lawmakers introduced a proposal to create automatic pathways into advanced math for high-performing students in grades 3–8. While the bill did not pass, the State Board of Education has been reviewing a similar rule for adoption. *ExcelinEd in Action* provided key feedback and will continue supporting policies that expand access to rigorous coursework.

● DEVELOPED Teacher Policy – Retiree Reemployment & Workforce Study

To address ongoing staffing shortages, legislators introduced proposals to expand retired teacher reemployment programs and directed a state agency to provide recommendations on recruitment and retention, which includes teacher pathways, data collection and mentorship programs. The resolution to direct the state agency passed, while the proposal to expand retired teacher reemployment is expected to be considered in the next legislative session. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported both initiatives and continues to promote strategies that build a strong educator pipeline.

“We’re not resting on our laurels when it comes to keeping Georgia No. 1 for Business. We’re innovating and maintaining our competitive edge by also becoming the Top State for Talent! That’s why I signed legislation today to enhance our workforce pipeline and further align our education pathways with the needs of

- Governor
Brian Kemp





EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Private Education Choice – Education Scholarship Accounts

Georgia invested \$141 million in its ESA program, enabling thousands of students—particularly those in low-performing schools—to access customized education options. Families can use up to \$6,500 per student for tuition, tutoring, transportation and more. *ExcelinEd in Action* worked closely with state leaders to support this historic investment in education opportunity.

● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter School Authorization and Oversight

Georgia strengthened local charter school authorization by creating greater transparency and incentives for districts to approve high-quality charter applications. The law also provides funding for local boards of education to authorize charter schools directly. *ExcelinEd in Action* collaborated with the Governor’s Office and education leaders to shape and pass this policy.



● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Foster Family Eligibility Expansion

A proposed expansion of Georgia’s ESA program would have extended eligibility to biological and adoptive children of foster parents. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this approach to empowering more families with flexible learning options.



STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Top State for Talent Act

Georgia passed a bold workforce readiness package that aligns career-tech and academic credentials with the state’s high-demand career list. The law creates more seamless transitions from high school to postsecondary education through a direct admission program, expands articulation agreements and requires a regular return-on-investment analysis of programs included in the High-Demand Career List. *ExcelinEd in Action* provided model language, advised the Governor’s Office and supported the bill from drafting through final passage.

● DEVELOPED College & Career Pathways – Financial Literacy in Elementary Grades

A proposed bill would have integrated financial literacy instruction into elementary schools, helping students build life skills early. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported the initiative and will continue working to strengthen foundational financial education.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

Georgia passed the Distraction-Free Education Act, which prohibits the use of phones and other personal devices during the school day for students in grades K–8. The new law reflects growing concerns from parents and educators about the negative impact of digital distractions on learning and behavior. *ExcelinEd in Action* led the effort behind this legislation—helping to draft policy, deliver testimony, lobby key members and build broad coalition support.

● DEVELOPED Digital Policy – AI Accountability in Public Agencies

Lawmakers introduced a forward-looking proposal to ensure responsible use of artificial intelligence in government, including public education agencies. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this effort and continues to engage with state leaders on the future of technology and learning.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Brian Kemp, Lt. Governor Burt Jones, Speaker Pro Tempore Jan Jones, Senator Jason Anavitarie, Senator Billy Hickman, Senator Greg Dolezal, Senator Clint Dixon, Senator RaShaun Kemp, Senator John Kennedy, Representative Scott Hilton, Representative Matthew Gambill, Representative Bethany Ballard, Representative Miriam Paris, Representative Lydia Glaize, Representative Matt Dubnik, Representative Brad Thomas, GeorgiaCAN, Professional Association of Georgia Educators, AFC-GA, Georgia State Board of Education, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Professional Standards Commission, Georgia Charter Schools Association (GCSA), State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

Decoding Dyslexia





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Early Literacy – K–3 Reading Interventions

Idaho strengthened its early literacy policy by requiring all publicly funded schools to provide extended-time, evidence-based interventions for K–3 students who score below grade level on reading screeners. These supports aim to ensure students who struggle with reading get the time and instruction they need to catch up—helping more children read proficiently by third grade.

● DEVELOPED Education Funding – Student-Centered Funding

Lawmakers proposed shifting from an input-based to a student-centered school funding formula that provides base funding for each student with supplemental funds for academically at-risk students. While the bill did not pass this session, *ExcelinEd in Action* supported efforts to make Idaho’s funding system more flexible and supportive of school choice for all students.

EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Private Education Choice – Parental Choice Tax Credit

Idaho enacted its first private education choice program, providing refundable tax credits of up to \$5,000 per student for eligible educational expenses like tuition, textbooks, tutoring and other learning resources. Families of students with special needs may receive up to \$7,500. This tax credit program empowers parents with greater control over their children’s education while preserving the independence of non-public schools. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this milestone achievement and applauds state leaders for making Idaho a national example in parent empowerment.

● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Opportunity Fund

Legislation was introduced to establish the Idaho Education Opportunity Fund, a near-universal education scholarship account program. While the bill did not pass, *ExcelinEd in Action* supported the proposal and will continue working with policymakers to expand flexible funding options for families in future sessions.

“With the passage of the \$50 million Parental Choice Tax Credit program, Idaho boasts even more abundant schooling options for Idaho students and families. Combined with the continuation of Idaho’s astoundingly successful LAUNCH program, Idaho has become the first state to offer education freedom from kindergarten through career.”

- Governor
Brad Little



- **IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter School Facilities Access**

Idaho increased the capacity of its highly successful charter school facilities program so that more public charter schools can access affordable facility financing and concentrate more of their resources in the classroom.

- **DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Empowering Parents Microgrant Expansion**

Lawmakers considered an expansion of Idaho’s Empowering Parents Microgrant Program to reach more families and cover additional educational expenses. The proposal aimed to prioritize low- and middle-income households, building on a successful foundation laid in 2022. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this effort to extend critical resources to families navigating learning loss and academic recovery.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- **PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools**

Idaho enacted a statewide distraction-free learning policy, requiring school districts and charter schools to adopt rules that limit the use of personal electronic devices during school hours. This new law helps educators create focused classroom environments and addresses growing concerns about the impact of smartphones and other technology on student learning.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Gov. Brad Little, Sen. Lori Den Hartog, Sen. C. Scott Grow, Sen. David Lent, Rep. Wendy Horman, Rep. Lance Clow, Sen. Camille Blaylock, Rep. Douglas Pickett, Rep. Jason Monks, Sen. Van Burtenshaw, Rep. Dan Garner, Rep. Marco Erickson, Rep. Rick Cheatum, Rep. Stephanie Mickelson, Sen. Doug Ricks, Bluum, Idaho Freedom Foundation, Idaho Charter School Network, Idaho School Boards Association, Idaho State Board of Education, Idaho State Department of Education, Office of the Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

American Federation for Children, EdChoice



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Math Policy – Screenings and Acceleration

Indiana lawmakers approved new math policies to improve student outcomes and close learning gaps. The state now requires math screenings for students in grades K–8 and targeted interventions for students at risk of falling behind. Additionally, high-performing students must be automatically enrolled in advanced math courses. These reforms will ensure more students build strong math foundations and stay on track for long-term success.

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Instructional Materials and Supports

To advance early reading skills, Indiana now requires schools with fewer than 70% of students passing the state’s third-grade reading exam to join the Indiana Literacy Cadre. The law also directs the state to publish a list of high-quality English Language Arts instructional materials, helping schools choose resources aligned to evidence-based practices and the science of reading.

● IMPROVED Teacher Policy – Teacher Compensation and Pathways

Indiana took several steps to strengthen its teacher pipeline. Lawmakers raised the minimum teacher salary to \$45,000 and now require districts to allocate at least 65% of state funding toward teacher compensation. Additional changes allow STEM professionals to earn teacher licensure with targeted instructional training, and the state will begin ranking educator preparation programs. New flexibility also allows school leaders to award performance-based bonuses without collective bargaining requirements.

● PROTECTED School Accountability – Proficiency-Based Ratings

Lawmakers tasked the Indiana State Board of Education with developing a new A–F school accountability system based on multiple indicators of student success including proficiency, growth and post-high school readiness. ExcelinEd in Action supports this move to ensure the state continues to provide transparent, meaningful data to drive school improvement.

“Happy Teacher Appreciation Day! In just our first 100 days, we passed legislation to raise teacher base pay, expanded school choice, launched direct college admissions for honors plus diplomas, took steps to grow teacher health plan options, and reinvested in Indiana’s Teacher Recruitment Programs. Proud to stand with our educators, and we’re just getting started.”



- Governor
Mike Braun



● PROTECTED Early Literacy – Science of Reading Investments

Indiana preserved \$50 million annually for the Freedom and Opportunity in Education fund, giving the Department of Education flexible support to expand early literacy initiatives. These dollars will be used to advance instruction grounded in the science of reading and ensure more students build strong foundational literacy skills.



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter School Facilities and Transportation

Charter schools will now benefit from shared revenue through local property tax levies—starting in 2028—and a new pilot program that allows third-party management of transportation and facilities. These updates give public charter schools access to more resources to better serve families and students.

● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools

Lawmakers strengthened Indiana’s public charter school framework by repealing outdated policy requirements, including minimum operational year and annual performance thresholds. These updates will reduce unnecessary red tape, allowing high-performing charter schools to focus on serving students and expanding access to quality options for families.

● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Universal Choice Scholarships

The state remained committed to providing options for all students by removing any income barriers to the Choice Scholarship Voucher program in FY 2027, along with investing an additional \$90 million to education funding.

● PROTECTED Private Education Choice – Special Education ESA Program

Indiana preserved and improved its Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program for special-needs students by maintaining \$10 million in annual funding, removing income limits. These changes ensure more families can access flexible education options tailored to their child’s needs.



STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Return on Investment

Indiana will now conduct annual return-on-investment analyses of its career and technical education programs, providing valuable data on participation, cost, completion and employment outcomes. The state will also implement a new career coaching system to guide students through available pathways to college and career success.

● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Stackable Credentials

New legislation directs the Department of Education to develop a framework for stackable, market-driven credentials. These will ensure students can build career-ready skills over time while aligning coursework with real-world labor demands.

● **PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – Career Scholarship Accounts**

Lawmakers continued funding for Career Scholarship Accounts at \$10 million per year. This ensures sustainable support for students seeking workforce-aligned learning experiences.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Governor Mike Braun, Department of Education Secretary Katie Jenner, House Speaker Todd Huston, Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray, Senate Education Committee Chairman Jeff Raatz, Senator Linda Rogers, House Education Committee Chairman Bob Behning, Ways and Means Chairman Jeff Thompson, Representative Julie McGuire, Representative Jake Teshka, Indiana Department of Education, Institute for Quality Education (IQE), Indiana Catholic Conference, Indiana Charter School Network, Indiana Non-Public Education Association, Mind Trust, Purdue Polytechnic Charter Schools

 **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK**

EdChoice, Americans for Prosperity, Stand for Children, Project Lead the Way, Teach Plus





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Math Policy – Proficiency Assessments and Teacher Preparation

Iowa lawmakers strengthened early math instruction by requiring administration of a math screener to all K–6 students and updating educator preparation programs to include additional math-focused training. These changes will help schools better identify and support struggling students while ensuring new teachers are equipped with the tools to teach foundational math effectively.

● IMPROVED School Accountability – Assessments

The state improved flexibility in its assessment system by allowing students enrolled in virtual learning to complete statewide summative assessments online, with appropriate verification measures in place.

● DEVELOPED Math Policy – Advanced Math Pathways

Legislation introduced this year would have required public schools to automatically enroll qualified students in grades 5–7 into accelerated math courses. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this proposal to expand access to rigorous coursework and ensure high-achieving students are challenged and prepared for advanced math in middle school and beyond.

“Iowa students deserve the freedom to be fully engaged in their education, not distracted by cell phones. Thank you to the Senate and House for passing the cell phone bill, sending it to my desk and prioritizing our students!”

- Governor
Kim Reynolds



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● DEVELOPED Private Education Choice – Education Scholarship Accounts

Lawmakers proposed an improvement to Iowa’s education scholarship account program by adding a midyear application window. This change would have allowed eligible students to join the program in December and receive prorated funding, providing greater flexibility to families seeking to make a change during the school year.





STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Credentials and Career Exploration

Iowa expanded access to meaningful college and career preparation by codifying a statewide list of industry-recognized credentials for students in grades 9–12. School districts are now required to report student attainment of these credentials to improve transparency and data-driven decision-making. The law also introduces early career exploration opportunities for students in grades 5 and 6. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this legislation to help students find clear, credentialed pathways to success beyond high school.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

Iowa enacted a law requiring school districts to adopt policies limiting student use of personal electronic devices during classroom instructional hours. Exemptions are provided for students with an individual education plan or 504 plan. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this measure to promote focused, distraction-free learning environments while maintaining flexibility for individual student needs.

STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Kim Reynolds' Office, Education Department Director McKenzie Snow, Iowa Department of Education, Senate President Sinclair, House Education Chairman Skyler, Representative Dan Gehlbach, Iowa Association of Christian Schools, Inspired Life, Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

Anxious Generation Team



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● IMPROVED Math Policy – Professional Development for K–8 Teachers

Louisiana took steps to improve student math outcomes by requiring all K–8 teachers to complete an approved professional development course in mathematics. This new policy ensures educators are equipped with the tools, knowledge and instructional strategies needed to deliver high-quality math instruction aligned with state standards—helping to close persistent learning gaps in foundational math skills.

EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PROTECTED Private Education Choice – LA GATOR Program

A legislative proposal sought to weaken Louisiana’s GATOR program by requiring participating private schools to administer public school assessments and be assigned a state-issued letter grade. *ExcelinEd in Action* helped defeat this burdensome proposal, protecting private school autonomy and encouraging robust participation in the program.

“The high demand for the LA GATOR Scholarship Program shows the value this program provides to families across our state. Expanding school choice and ensuring parents are in charge of their child’s education will continue to be our top priority!”

- Governor Jeff Landry



STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – ROI Analysis of Industry-Based Credentials

Louisiana lawmakers approved a new measure requiring the state’s Workforce Commission to conduct an annual return on investment (ROI) analysis of industry-based credentials earned by K–12 students. The law also removes longstanding barriers to connecting data on K–12 student experiences with postsecondary, employment and wage outcomes. This is an important step toward ensuring all students have access to high-quality pathways that lead to valued postsecondary credentials and high-wage, high-demand careers.



Great news! The [#Louisiana](#) legislature has passed HB 373, which would establish a return-on-investment process to evaluate the effectiveness of the state’s K-12 CTE programs and ensure they lead students toward self-sufficiency and long-term financial success.

STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Louisiana Governor’s Office, Louisiana Department of Education, Senator Beth Mizell, Representative Jason Hughes, Representative Laurie Schlegel, Representative John Wyble, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Pelican Institute, Louisiana Workforce Commission, Louisiana CTE planning group, Louisiana Kids Matter



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Teacher Pathways, Teacher Licensure and Teacher Development

Several proposals will support Missouri’s teacher pipeline by expanding externship opportunities, allowing retired teachers to return to the classroom as substitutes and expanding teacher preparation scholarships to cover educational expenses. These efforts underscore the state’s commitment to supporting teacher recruitment, preparation and retention.

● DEVELOPED Early Literacy – Ban on Three-Cueing

Missouri lawmakers considered legislation to strengthen reading instruction by banning the harmful three-cueing method and requiring the use of evidence-based literacy practices grounded in the science of reading. Though the proposal did not pass this session, the push reflects growing momentum to ensure all students receive effective early literacy instruction.

● ENGAGED School Accountability – Assessments

Missouri lawmakers proposed eliminating statewide assessment requirements beyond those mandated by federal law, weakening transparency and accountability in schools. *ExcelinEd in Action* opposed this effort and successfully protected Missouri’s statewide assessment system. However, as part of an omnibus bill, the Department is now required to report two scores on the statewide assessment: the current achievement level score of “below basic,” “basic,” “proficient” and “advanced” as well as a new “grade level” score that is a less rigorous expectation than proficient. The new grade level score will cause confusion by reporting a higher percentage of kids who are “on grade level” than are actually proficient.



“It’s simple—cell phones have no place in Missouri classrooms. To support stronger academic performance and protect the mental health of students statewide, Missouri needs distraction-free classrooms. That’s why I am urging the General Assembly to pass Senator Henderson’s SB 68 to ban electronic communication devices from the beginning to the end of the school day.”

- Governor Mike Kehoe



Thank you to #Missouri lawmakers for prioritizing education with the recently passed state budget, which includes \$50M of funding for the MOScholars ESA program, and another \$10M for charter school facility funding.

● PASSED Private School Choice – MOScholars Funding

For the first time since its creation, Missouri’s Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program (MOScholars) received dedicated state funding. Lawmakers included \$50 million in the state budget to expand access to this income-based program, which has previously relied solely on charitable donations to fund education scholarship accounts. This historic investment represents a major milestone for families seeking educational options that best meet their children’s unique needs.



● **DEVELOPED Private School Choice – Tax Credit Program**

Missouri considered establishing a refundable tax credit program to help private and home school families cover educational expenses. If enacted, the policy would provide families with greater financial flexibility to customize their children’s learning experiences. The proposal remains under consideration for future sessions.

● **IMPROVED Public School Choice – Charter School Facilities**

In a significant win for public school choice, Missouri lawmakers appropriated \$10 million to support charter school facility needs. This funding reflects the state’s growing recognition that all public school students deserve access to safe, high-quality learning environments—regardless of the type of public school they attend.

● **DEVELOPED Public School Choice – Open Enrollment**

Lawmakers introduced legislation to expand public school choice by creating a statewide open enrollment program. The proposal would allow students to transfer across district lines, require districts to publicly report available capacity, prohibit tuition charges for transfer students and mandate non-discriminatory access. While not passed this session, the bill signals continued interest in breaking down geographic barriers to educational opportunity.

● **DEVELOPED Public School Choice – Use of District Property by Charter Schools**

A proposal was introduced to prevent school districts from restricting the lease or sale of unused properties to charter schools. This change would expand access to facilities for public charter schools and ensure public resources continue to serve educational purposes. The effort reflects a growing focus on equitable treatment across public school types.

● **PROTECTED Public School Choice – Charter School Authorization**

A proposal to require new charter schools to obtain a certificate of need from the State Board of Education was defeated. This unnecessary barrier would have limited the growth of high-quality public school options. *ExcelinEd in Action* and partners helped ensure families continue to have meaningful access to innovative public education alternatives.



A STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● **PASSED College & Career Pathways – Career-Tech Certificate Program**

Missouri launched a new program to support high school graduates pursuing career and technical education. The Career-Tech Certificate Program reimburses tuition and educational expenses for students enrolled in eligible College Technical Education programs at approved institutions. This investment helps remove financial barriers and connects more students with in-demand career pathways.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

Missouri lawmakers took action to create distraction-free learning environments by requiring public schools to adopt policies limiting student cell phone use during the school day. While the final law includes flexibility for emergency situations, the move responds to growing concern among parents and educators about the impact of personal devices on student focus and mental health.



The #Missouri legislature has passed SB 68, establishing #DistractionFreeSchools statewide! This important step supports focused learning environments that enhance academic achievement, improve student behavior and promote better mental health.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Gov. Mike Kehoe’s Office, Senator Curtis Trent, Senator Cindy O’Laughlin, Senator Rick Brattin, Representative Brad Pollitt, Representative Kathy Steinhoff, Representative Ed Lewis, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Activate STL, The Children’s Educational Alliance of Missouri (CEAM), The Show Me Institute, Herzog Foundation, Aligned, Missouri Charter School Coalition, University of St. Louis – Prime Center, Missouri Century Foundation



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

AFC, EdChoice, yes. every kid.



Nevada



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading

Nevada strengthened its commitment to foundational literacy by requiring all K–3 public school teachers to complete a course of instruction in the science of reading. The law also requires educator preparation programs to include foundational literacy skills instruction aligned with the science of reading to ensure future teachers are equipped to deliver effective reading instruction from day one.

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Teacher Pathways

Lawmakers created the Nevada Teacher Apprenticeship Program to expand and support the educator workforce and an educator workforce supply and demand portal to track and support teacher recruitment and retention. Nevada also approved greater flexibility for charter schools to hire subject-area experts who hold industry-recognized credentials to teach non-core academic subjects, helping schools meet staffing needs while maintaining quality.

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Teacher Compensation

Nevada approved additional compensation for educators teaching in hard-to-staff roles. This targeted support helps attract and retain teachers in the classrooms that need them most and improves student learning.

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Third-Grade Retention

Nevada updated its good cause exemption criteria for third-grade students who do not pass the state reading exam and redefined the classification for long-term English language learners. These updates support a more tailored approach to early literacy policy that balances student support with academic expectations.

“We just passed the state’s first open enrollment system, so kids can attend the school that best fits their needs, not just the one in their zip code. More choice, more accountability, and more opportunity. That’s the Nevada Way.”

- Governor Joe Lombardo



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Public Education Choice – Open Enrollment

Nevada expanded access to more public schools by mandating intra-district open enrollment. The new law allows students to attend public schools outside of their attendance zones and requires schools to accept students where space is available, offering more families meaningful choices within their public school district.



- **PROTECTED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools**

Lawmakers considered a proposal that would have placed new restrictions on charter school growth in Nevada. *ExcelinEd in Action* worked with partners to defeat this measure, preserving the opportunity for families to access high-quality charter options.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- **PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Classrooms**

In response to growing concerns about digital distractions, Nevada adopted a new law requiring school districts to create policies that limit student use of electronic devices during instructional time. This move supports a more focused learning environment and helps schools prioritize engagement and academic achievement.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Joe Lombardo, State Board of Education President Katie Dockweiler, Nevada Board of Education, Senate Committee on Education, Senate Majority Leader Nicole Cannizzaro, Assembly Speaker Steve Yeager, House Education Chair Selena Torres-Fossett, Senator Angie Taylor, Senator Fabian Donate, Senator Michelle Cruz-Crawford, Senator Robin Titus, Senator Carrie Buck, Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Assemblymember Selena La Rue Hatch, Assemblymember Cecelia Gonzalez, Assemblymember Greg Hafen, Assemblymember Alexis Hansen, Nevada Policy Institute, Nevada Charter Association



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

American Federation for Children, Teach for America, Opportunity 180



New Hampshire



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Teachers & Leaders – Adjunct Teachers

New Hampshire expanded local flexibility in teacher hiring by defining new criteria for adjunct teachers. Under the law, individuals employed as full-time or adjunct faculty by a New Hampshire college or university can teach up to 20 hours per week in K–12 schools without needing a credential from the State Board of Education—so long as they pass a background check. This policy gives districts more tools to address staffing shortages and bring real-world expertise into classrooms.

EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Education Freedom Accounts

New Hampshire expanded access to its Education Freedom Account Program by adopting universal eligibility with an enrollment cap. Starting in the 2025–26 school year, up to 10,000 students can participate, with a provision to increase the cap by 25% in any year when applications reach 90% of the limit. This change broadens access to educational choice while ensuring program sustainability as demand grows.

STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Career & Technical Education and Teacher Licensure

Lawmakers opened new pathways for skilled professionals to teach in New Hampshire’s career and technical education (CTE) programs. The new law allows CTE teacher candidates to qualify based on three years of industry experience and an industry-recognized credential—without having to pass traditional academic exams. This reform supports high-quality CTE instruction and helps schools recruit educators who bring real-world knowledge to students.

BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

New Hampshire created distraction-free classrooms by requiring school districts to adopt bell-to-bell phone policies. The law prioritizes student focus, classroom engagement and mental well-being by limiting access to cell phones throughout the school day—echoing growing national momentum to address digital distractions in schools.

“As a Mom, I can’t think of anything more important than making sure children in our state reach their full potential in the classroom. Proud to be expanding education opportunities in New Hampshire!”

- Governor Kelly Ayotte



Jeb Bush
@JebBush

New Hampshire's years of commitment to educational opportunity have paid off. New Hampshire leaders are making Granite State students universally eligible for school choice, underscoring their dedication to expanding educational freedom for each and every family. #NHPolitics

 ExcelinEd in Action @ExcelinAction · Jun 6

The #NewHampshire Legislature has passed a bill to open Education Freedom Accounts eligibility to all families statewide. Read our full statement on this historic step for Granite State families! #NHPolitics
excelsinedinaction.org/2025/06/06/new...



 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Governor Kelly Ayotte, Senator Victoria Sullivan, Representative Valerie McDonnell, Representative Glenn Cordelli, Representative Melissa Litchfield, Americans for Prosperity New Hampshire, Children’s Scholarship Fund New Hampshire, Diocese of Manchester, Josiah Barlett Center

 **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK**

yes. every kid., EdChoice





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Early Literacy – Science of Reading Implementation

New Mexico lawmakers passed a comprehensive education funding package that includes increased teacher salaries and targeted investments in K–3 literacy. The legislation directs resources toward evidence-based reading instruction and requires schools to use science of reading strategies in curriculum and teacher training. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this effort to strengthen early literacy outcomes and ensure students receive high-quality instruction in the foundational years.

● DEVELOPED Early Literacy – Science of Reading Teacher Preparation

A proposal introduced this year would have required teacher candidates to demonstrate competency in the science of reading and mandated the use of high-quality instructional materials aligned to structured literacy. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this effort to align educator preparation with proven reading strategies and ensure consistency in reading instruction across New Mexico classrooms.

● DEVELOPED Math Policy – Statewide Dyscalculia Screening and Support

Lawmakers proposed a major update to New Mexico’s math strategy by incorporating dyscalculia screening tools, establishing a new Math and Science Bureau and creating a math leadership framework to support school improvement. *ExcelinEd in Action* worked with partners and the state department of education to advance this legislation and promote a stronger, more coherent approach to math achievement.

BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

New Mexico enacted a statewide policy requiring school districts and charter schools to implement rules restricting student use of wireless communication devices during instructional hours. The policy must be publicly posted and tailored to each district’s needs. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this effort, which reflects growing momentum among parents and educators to minimize digital distractions and support student focus.

● DEVELOPED Digital Policy – Statewide Device Policy Guidelines

A companion proposal would have directed the state education department to establish minimum standards for school-based device policies. The bill would have ensured consistency across districts while allowing local flexibility. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this effort to further strengthen distraction-free learning environments statewide.

STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

New Mexico Department of Education, New Mexico Kids Can, New Mexico Choice Coalition, Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, New Mexico Public Charters Association

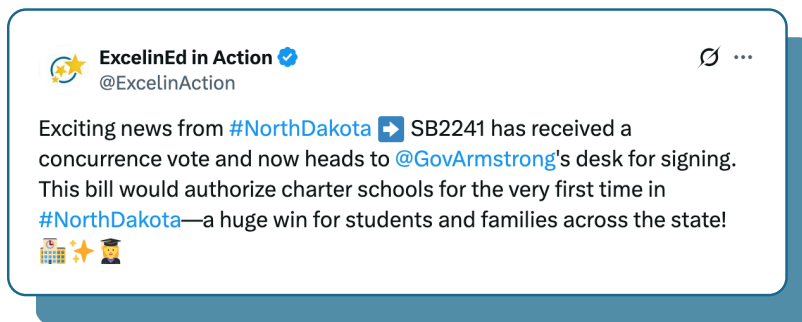
North Dakota



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter Schools Authorization

North Dakota took a historic step forward by enabling public charter schools for the first time. The new law allows charter schools to operate statewide, offering families high-quality public education options outside of traditional district structures. North Dakota law provides for increased flexibility for charter schools, allowing them to innovate and provide an education that is unique as compared to their district peers. This marks a significant expansion of public school choice for North Dakota families.



“Expanding school choice is a win-win for North Dakota families and for our state’s workforce and long-term success. The public charter schools authorized by this bill can drive innovation, improve student outcomes and increase parent satisfaction. We appreciate the work of Sen. Axtman, the bill sponsors and other supporters for empowering communities to establish customized learning environments that meet the unique needs of students.”



- Governor Kelly Armstrong



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

North Dakota lawmakers acted to reduce classroom distractions and protect instructional time by requiring school districts to adopt policies that minimize student use of personal electronic devices during the school day. Districts may choose to implement bell-to-bell phone-free policies, with exceptions for students with medical needs, IEPs or 504 plans. These changes reflect a statewide commitment to student focus, academic engagement and digital responsibility.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler & Senator Michelle Axtman



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

National Alliance of Public Charter Schools



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Math Policy – Automatic Enrollment

Ohio improved access to advanced coursework by automatically enrolling high-performing students in advanced math classes when available. This policy helps ensure students are challenged academically and supports pathways to college and careers in STEM fields.

● PASSED Early Literacy & Math - Screeners

To strengthen early learning supports, Ohio now requires the use of a universal diagnostic reading tool for grades K–3. The state must also develop a list of approved math diagnostic tools for the same grade levels. These tools will help educators identify struggling students earlier and provide timely interventions.

● IMPROVED Early Literacy – Literacy Coaches

Lawmakers committed \$12 million annually to deploy literacy coaches trained in the science of reading and evidence-based instructional strategies. These coaches will support teachers in schools with the lowest rates of proficiency in delivering effective reading instruction and intervention, especially in the early grades.

“Last night, I signed Ohio’s new operating budget, which continues to focus on the things that matter most: children and families, jobs and our workforce, and strengthening our communities so that all Ohioans can thrive.”

- Governor Mike DeWine



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● IMPROVED Public Education Choice – Charter School Facilities Funding

Ohio increased funding for public charter school facilities by \$1.6 million, bringing the total to \$90.2 million. This investment helps create more access to quality learning environments for students attending charter schools.

● PROTECTED Private Education Choice – EdChoice Voucher Program

Ohio lawmakers maintained funding for universal access to the state’s EdChoice Voucher Program, ensuring families across the state can continue choosing the education setting that best meets their children’s needs—without new eligibility barriers or added restrictions.



Ohio lawmakers are putting students first with a budget that invests in early literacy and the science of reading, expands college & career pathways, opens advanced math opportunities & continues support for both public and private school choice. Read our statement here: excelsinedinaction.org/2025/06/27/ohi... #OHleg



STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Career & Technical Education

Ohio enacted several updates to strengthen its CTE pipeline. All public schools must now inform students of opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials when enrolled in qualifying courses. Middle schools can no longer opt out of offering CTE. The state will also pilot a direct admissions program for high-performing high school students to gain access to Ohio's postsecondary institutions.

● PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – Career Awareness and Exploration

Ohio preserved \$5 million in annual funding for career awareness and exploration programs, ensuring students are introduced to in-demand fields and can explore future career pathways while still in school.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● IMPROVED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

To reduce distractions and boost student engagement, Ohio created cell phone-free instructional days in all public schools starting January 1, 2026. The new law builds on prior digital policy reforms and reflects growing momentum to foster focused, tech-responsible classrooms.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Mike DeWine, Department of Education and Workforce, Speaker Matt Huffman, Senator Andy Brenner, Senator Jerry Cirino, Senator Kyle Koehler, Senator Bill Reineke, Senator Louis Blessing, Senator Jane Timken, Representative Brian Stewart, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Ohio Excels, Buckeye Institute, Center for Christian Virtue, School Choice Ohio, Ohio Association for Colleges for Teacher Education, Ohio Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Greater Cleveland Career Consortium



Oklahoma



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Math Policy – Oklahoma Math Achievement and Proficiency Act

Lawmakers enacted the Oklahoma Math Achievement and Proficiency Act to strengthen early math instruction statewide. The new law appropriates \$1 million in funding for the initiative and requires public schools to screen students in 4th–7th grades three times a year for math proficiency, use evidence-based curricula and offer targeted intervention services. These tools will help students build stronger foundational skills and improve long-term academic outcomes.

● PASSED Math Policy – Math Tutoring Pilot

Oklahoma established a new math tutoring pilot program aimed at ninth-grade students in the state’s largest school districts. By targeting resources to students most in need of academic support, the initiative ensures timely intervention during a critical year of high school math learning.

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Teacher Pathways & Licensure

Oklahoma improved teacher preparation and entry into the classroom by setting new student teaching requirements and recognizing job-embedded, competency-based teacher apprenticeship programs. These changes ensure high-quality pathways for aspiring educators and help strengthen the state’s teacher pipeline.

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Grow Your Own Educator Program

Oklahoma launched the Grow Your Own Educator Program, which provides matching funds to help school districts support employees working toward teaching degrees through tuition assistance or loan repayment, strengthening the local teacher workforce.

“I’ve visited schools all across Oklahoma, and the ones already doing bell to bell, no cell are seeing real results—kids are more focused, less anxious, and performing better. With SB 139, we’re making it the standard statewide.”

- Governor J. Kevin Stitt



The #Oklahoma Senate has passed SB215, the #OK Math Achievement and Proficiency Act. Aiming to strength math proficiency, it includes 3 screeners per year and evidence-based interventions for 2nd – 5th grade to help identify and offer support to struggling students!

EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship Program

Lawmakers removed the public school attendance requirement for students applying for the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship. This improvement ensures students with special needs have more direct and immediate access to the program that supports personalized learning in private settings.

- **IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Parental Choice Tax Credit Act**

Oklahoma made key updates to the Parental Choice Tax Credit Act, including changes to payment timelines and student re-enrollment priority. These changes streamline implementation, provide flexibility for families and ensure continuity of educational choice from year to year.

STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

- **IMPROVED College & Career Pathways – Workforce Readiness**

Oklahoma expanded the role of the state’s Workforce Commission to better align education and career preparation. The changes allow for broader implementation of work-based learning and other workforce development strategies—giving students earlier exposure to real-world career paths.

BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- **PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools**

Oklahoma created distraction-free learning environments by requiring public schools to adopt policies restricting student use of personal electronic devices during the school day instructional time, with exceptions for emergencies. The law helps schools to focus on academic engagement and respond to rising concerns from parents and teachers about digital distraction.

STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

House Speaker Kyle Hilbert, Speaker Pro Tempore Anthony Moore, Senator Adam Pugh, Senator Ally Seifried, Senator Lonnie Paxton, Senator Julie Daniels, Representative Chad Caldwell, Representative Dick Lowe, Representative Mike Kelley, Representative Dell Kerbs, Representative Toni Hasenbeck, Representative Brian Hill, Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Parents for Student Achievement

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

American Federation for Children (AFC), EdChoice, yes. every kid.

South Carolina



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● IMPROVED Teacher Policy – Teacher Pathways and Licensure

Lawmakers advanced key recommendations from the South Carolina Department of Education’s START Report to strengthen the state’s educator workforce. New laws provide greater contract flexibility for teachers, make it easier for retired educators to return to the classroom and launch a five-year pilot enabling districts to fill up to 10% of positions with qualified, non-certified candidates. Another provision enables educators and applicants to earn a year of service credit on the salary schedule for every two years of relevant work experience.

● IMPROVED Math Policy – High-Quality Instructional Materials

The state budget invested \$75 million to help the Department of Education acquire high-quality instructional materials aligned to the state’s updated academic standards. The new resources will support implementation of South Carolina’s revised math standards and strengthen classroom instruction statewide.

EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Public Education Choice – Open Enrollment

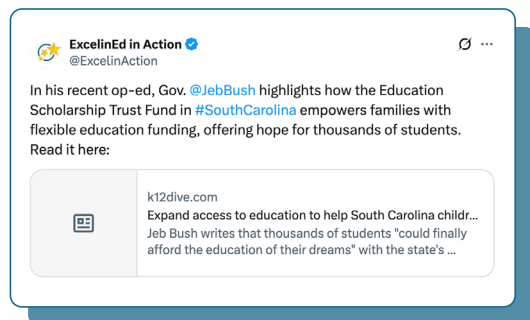
In addition to expanding private education options, the improved Education Scholarship Account (ESA) law also creates a statewide open enrollment opportunity for participating students. All districts are required to establish an interdistrict transfer policy aligned with the South Carolina Department of Education’s model guidelines, further empowering families to find their best public educational fit.

● IMPROVED Private Education Choice – Education Scholarship Trust Fund

Lawmakers reinstated South Carolina’s Education Scholarship Trust Fund, strengthening the state’s ESA program after last year’s partial court ruling. The revised law raises scholarship amounts from \$6,000 to \$7,500, expands eligibility by removing prior public school enrollment requirements and increasing the income cap and enables application cap growth in future years. Oversight of the program now lies with an independent trustee appointed by the state superintendent. The program is funded annually through general or lottery funds.

“I’ve signed the School Choice and Educator Assistance bills into law. Empowering parents and teachers with choice, for their children or for their careers, is another great step toward securing future prosperity for all South Carolinians. I look forward to celebrating these two new laws with a public bill signing in the near future.”

- Governor
Henry
McMaster



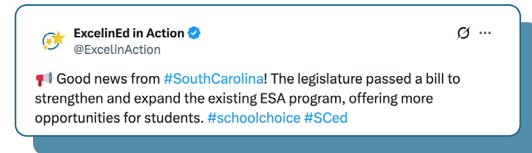
 **BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

● **ENGAGED Digital Policy –
Distraction-Free Schools**

South Carolina continued its efforts to foster distraction-free classrooms by maintaining a budget provision that ties eligibility for certain state funds to implementation of distraction-free school policies. This effort builds on prior year legislative actions to reduce digital distraction and promote safe, focused learning environments.

 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Governor Henry McMaster, South Carolina Department of Education, Superintendent Ellen Weaver, Speaker Murrell Smith, Senator Greg Hembree, Representative Tommy Pope, Representative Shannon Erickson, Palmetto Promise Institute





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● IMPROVED Teacher Policy – Licensure and Pathways

Tennessee lawmakers strengthened the teacher pipeline by revising licensure rules to better support schools facing staffing shortages. The new law updates requirements for emergency, temporary and occupational licenses; prioritizes placement of certified teachers; and provides clear steps for districts when qualified candidates are unavailable. These changes offer schools more flexibility while upholding quality standards and expanding access to the profession.

● ENGAGED School Accountability – Rewarding High-Performing Schools

This year’s state budget allocated \$17 million to financially recognize high-performing local education agencies. *ExcelinEd in Action* engaged with leaders throughout the budget process to support strong accountability by recommending that funding be directed to individual schools instead of districts. Although this improvement was not adopted, the investment still signals Tennessee’s continued commitment to performance-driven accountability.

● PROTECTED School Accountability – Assessment Standards

Several bills this session attempted to lower expectations for Tennessee’s accountability system by replacing core assessments or weakening school grading criteria. *ExcelinEd in Action* worked to protect key accountability safeguards, ensuring Tennessee continues to measure student readiness for college and career with high standards. We opposed proposals that would have allowed less rigorous career assessments to replace the ACT/SAT and blocked efforts to reduce end-of-course exams and intervention screenings for students in grades 4–8.

“Today, @TNedu received more than 33,000 applications for Education Freedom Scholarships within hours of the program’s successful launch. This remarkable response demonstrates the importance of giving TN parents choices in their child’s education.”

- Governor Bill Lee



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Private Education Choice – Education Freedom Scholarships

Tennessee enacted a new Education Freedom Scholarship program, expanding education savings accounts (ESAs) statewide. The new law creates 20,000 scholarships of \$7,075 each for a wide range of educational expenses, including tuition, tutoring, transportation and technology. Half of the scholarships are prioritized for low-income students, students with disabilities and those eligible under Tennessee’s existing ESA program. The remaining scholarships are open to all other students, significantly expanding access to personalized learning.



● **PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter School Authorization**

New legislation creates a process for high-performing charter schools to replicate in the same district and, in certain circumstances, allows sponsors to apply directly to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission to open a new school.

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

Tennessee expanded support for charter schools by including \$25 million in the state budget to improve access to facilities. This includes \$20 million for per-pupil facility aid and \$5 million to launch the Tennessee Equitable Facilities Fund, which provides revolving loan financing options. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported these investments to ensure more families have access to high-quality public school options.



A STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● **DEVELOPED Postsecondary Credentials – TennesseeWORKS Scholarship**

A proposal introduced this year would have created the TennesseeWORKS Scholarship, a last-dollar scholarship to cover tuition, fees, tools and equipment for students attending Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs). The initiative aimed to streamline financial aid and expand access for students pursuing non-degree credentials at TCATs. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported the proposal and continues to advocate for affordable postsecondary pathways that lead students to high-wage, in-demand careers.

● **PROTECTED Career and Technical Education – Academic Standards for Graduation**

Tennessee lawmakers introduced legislation that would have allowed students pursuing a career and technical education (CTE) elective focus to substitute up to four courses required for graduation (Algebra II, world language, chemistry and computer science) with CTE courses. *ExcelinEd in Action* opposed this effort to lower expectations for core academic rigor and worked with partners to protect graduation requirements that prepare students for a range of postsecondary opportunities and successful careers.

BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● **PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Classrooms**

Tennessee passed a law requiring public schools and charter schools to prohibit student cell phone use during instructional time, with exemptions for learning activities, individual education plan accommodations or emergencies. The new law will help restore focus and engagement in classrooms, ensuring students benefit from dedicated learning time free from digital distractions.



 **STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS**

Gov. Bill Lee, Senator Jack Johnson, Senator Dawn White, Representative Mark White, Representative William Slater, Representative Scott Cepicky, Representative Rebecca Alexander, Representative William Lamberth, Tennessee Charter School Center, TennesseeCAN, Tennesseans for Student Success, Tennessee SCORE, The Beacon Center of Tennessee, Tennessee Department of Education, AFC-TN

 **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK**

AFP, Code.org, EdChoice





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Early Literacy & Math – Screeners, Interventions and Educator Support

Texas strengthened early learning by requiring evidence-based literacy and math screeners for K–3 students and regular progress monitoring. The law also provides for professional development academies for reading and math interventionists to ensure educators are equipped with tools to help every student succeed in foundational subjects.

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Teacher Compensation, Teacher Pathways and Teacher Licensure

Texas expanded its nationally recognized Teacher Incentive Allotment, and built on efforts to recruit, train and retain high-quality educators. New provisions include paid pre-service training, expanded Grow Your Own programs in high schools and improved data transparency on teacher vacancies and credentials. These policies aim to strengthen the teaching profession and reward excellent teachers.

● PROTECTED School Accountability – Assessments

ExcelinEd in Action successfully defeated proposals to replace Texas' summative assessments with a less rigorous norm referenced test and to dilute A–F school grading with additional non-academic metrics. Instead, lawmakers preserved the state's strong assessment and accountability systems—ensuring students, families and educators have access to consistent, transparent data on academic outcomes. However, the call to a 30-day summer 2025 special session includes revisiting the assessment and accountability proposals just defeated.

“For the first time in Texas history, our state has passed a universal school choice bill. This is an extraordinary victory!”

- Governor
Greg Abbott



EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Private Education Choice – Education Scholarship Accounts

Texas passed the largest day-one private school choice program in the country, creating an Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program with universal eligibility and an appropriation of \$1 billion. Families can use ESA funds to cover private school tuition, instructional materials, transportation and other approved educational expenses. This landmark program expands educational opportunities for Texas students—no matter their ZIP code or background—and reflects the state's strong commitment to empowering families.

- **PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter School Facilities**

Lawmakers removed a longstanding cap on facilities funding for public charter schools and dramatically increased the state’s investment to support robust public school choice options. This funding increase ensures public charter schools can continue meeting growing family demand for innovative and effective educational models.



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- **PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools**

Texas lawmakers passed a law requiring districts to implement cell phone-free school day policies throughout the school day. By addressing digital distractions head-on, this measure gives students space to learn without disruption.



STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Greg Abbott’s Office, Lt. Governor’s Office, Senator Brandon Creighton, Senator Paul Bettencourt, Representative Brad Buckley, Representative Harold Dutton, Representative Caroline Fairly, Texas Parent Empowerment Coalition, Texas 2036, Commit Partnership, Democrats for Education Reform Texas, Texas Public Charter Schools Association



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

American Federation for Children





CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Teacher Policy – Excellence in Teaching Incentives

Utah lawmakers passed new reforms to improve systems linking educator bonuses to effectiveness. The policy enhances the state’s teacher recognition system by integrating real-time data to help educators track student progress and monitor their own growth toward bonus eligibility. This approach ensures Utah’s most effective teachers are supported, recognized and retained—improving student outcomes across the state.

EMPOWER FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

● PASSED Public Education Choice – Charter School Facilities

Utah improved charter school funding by replacing the state’s revolving account with a more flexible revolving fund. This update expands access to facilities financing so that more charter schools can grow and meet family demand. It also strengthens Utah’s commitment to access to public school options.

● DEVELOPED Public Education Choice – Charter School Credit Enhancement Program

Lawmakers proposed updates to strengthen Utah’s charter school credit enhancement program, which helps qualifying charter schools secure favorable financing. While the bill did not pass, *ExcelinEd in Action* engaged with state leaders and partners to advance the conversation around sustainable funding options for public charter schools.

● ENGAGED Private Education Choice – Utah Fits All Scholarship Program

Utah lawmakers approved changes to the state’s universal ESA program that reduce homeschool scholarship amounts, limit eligible expenses and move program oversight from a nonprofit to the state board of education. *ExcelinEd in Action* opposed these provisions and worked with partners to protect families’ freedom to customize their children’s education. Despite these limitations, the program remains in operation and continues to serve families while an ongoing legal challenge is resolved.

“Today we celebrated a powerful slate of education bills that expand opportunity for Utah students—no matter their path. Imagine a high schooler graduating with an industry credential and a job offer in hand. Or a student discovering a future in engineering after shadowing a professional through a hands-on catalyst program. That’s the kind of impact these bills are already setting in motion. From civics to career and technical education, we’re investing in flexible, future-ready pathways that connect the classroom to real life. Huge thanks to our incredible bill sponsors and education leaders for helping build a better future for young Utahns.”

- Governor
Spencer J. Cox



STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – First Credential Program

As a part of the First Credential Program, Utah established a statewide master list of approved, industry-recognized credentials to help students pursue pathways that lead to real-world job opportunities. These credentials are now transferable across high schools, technical colleges and higher education institutions, giving students more clarity and confidence in their postsecondary plans.

In addition, Utah is incentivizing districts for students who earn a First Credential Certificate by completing an industry credential, postsecondary enrollment, apprenticeship, technical college certificate or a CTE Pathways program.

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Postsecondary ROI Analysis

State leaders adopted a new policy requiring Utah’s higher education system to review and report on student pathways over the next three years. The law sets clear expectations to identify and phase out underperforming postsecondary programs while directing resources toward those that deliver strong student outcomes and economic value.

BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

● PASSED Digital Policy – Distraction-Free Schools

Utah lawmakers passed a statewide policy to reduce classroom distractions by prohibiting the use of personal devices like phones and smartwatches during instructional time. The new law creates distraction-free classrooms that foster greater focus and engagement—directly addressing concerns from teachers and families about the impact of digital distraction on learning.

STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Spencer Cox, Senate President Stuart Adams, Speaker Mike Schultz, Senator Lincoln Filmore, Senator Ann Millner, Representative Katie Hall, Representative Dan Johnson, Representative Jefferson Moss, Representative Val Peterson, Representative Karen Peterson, Representative Angela Romero, Representative Neil Walters, Utah Charter Schools Association, Sutherland Institute, State Policy Network - Utah

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

yes. every kid., Cato, EdChoice, Stand Together, School Forward, 50Can, Daniels Fund, American Federation for Children, Americans for Prosperity



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Math Policy – Accelerated Math Opportunities

Virginia lawmakers passed a new policy to ensure students in grades 5–8 have access to advanced and accelerated mathematics. The law requires each school board to establish clear eligibility criteria so that high-achieving students can pursue more rigorous coursework. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this important step toward expanding opportunity and maintaining high expectations in math education.



Ashley DeMauro Mullins
@AshleyDeMauro



Virginia is a step closer to providing advanced math opportunities via auto enrollment to eligible students thanks to [@DelegateCallsen!](#) HB2686 cleared the legislature and heads to [@GovernorVA's](#) desk. lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/2...

“Excited to see HB2686 approved today. It will go into effect July 1. Transparent policies, Auto-Enrollment, Evidence-based, [and] Informing Families. Let’s challenge our assumptions about who can excel at math.”

- Delegate Katrina Callsen



● IMPROVED Early Literacy – High-Quality Instructional Materials

Virginia strengthened its commitment to literacy by updating laws that govern textbooks and instructional materials across all subjects. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this bill which emphasizes evidence-based curriculum, particularly in reading and math and improves support for intervention and remediation programs. These changes will ensure students—especially those struggling with foundational skills—receive the tools and support they need to succeed.

● DEVELOPED Teacher Policy – Paid Parental Leave

Legislation introduced this year would have created a statewide paid parental and family leave program for public school educators. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported the bill, which was based on model policy language and focused on improving teacher recruitment and retention by expanding access to essential benefits. While the proposal did not pass, it would have helped elevate the teaching profession, improve instruction and ultimately enhance student learning.



STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● DEVELOPED College & Career Pathways – Career and Technical Education Review

A proposed policy would have established a biennial review of all K–12 career and technical education courses, pathways, and credentials. This landscape analysis would have ensured that offerings are aligned with workforce needs and designed to prepare students for success after graduation—whether in high-demand careers, postsecondary education or military service. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this forward-looking effort to improve quality, transparency and outcomes in CTE programs.

STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

Governor Glenn Youngkin, Education Secretary Aimee Guidera, Virginia Department of Education, Delegate Carrie Coyner, Delegate Katrina Callsen, Delegate Ellen Campbell, Delegate Sam Rasoul, Senator Schuyler VanValkenburg

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

Collaborative for Student Success



West Virginia



CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PROTECTED School Accountability – Student Growth Assessments

West Virginia added to its assessment program by requiring students in grades 3–8 to participate in two additional benchmark assessments each year in reading and math. The new policy includes regular progress monitoring in reading and math for students in grades 3–8, helping educators identify learning gaps and tailor support throughout the school year. Earlier versions of the legislation

conflicted with federal law and may have weakened accountability. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported the final version of this measure to ensure families and educators have access to meaningful performance data.



● DEVELOPED Early Literacy – Science of Reading Implementation

Lawmakers proposed a statewide effort to improve literacy instruction by requiring all public and charter school teachers to be trained in the science of reading by the 2026–27 school year. The proposal would have also banned the outdated and ineffective three-cueing method, with limited exceptions, from literacy instruction and ensured professional development in evidence-based reading practices. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this bill to bring West Virginia’s reading policies in line with the science of how students learn to read.

● DEVELOPED Teacher Policy – Adjunct Teacher Permits

A proposal introduced this session would have allowed individuals with subject-matter expertise to serve as adjunct teachers when certified teachers are not available. This pathway would have helped schools address teacher shortages while maintaining oversight and quality standards. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported the effort to expand the educator pipeline and increase access to qualified instructors across the state.

STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

● PASSED College & Career Pathways – Computer Science Investment

West Virginia included dedicated funding for computer science education in its state budget. This investment supports the expansion of high-quality computer science programs and ensures more students can develop the skills needed to compete in a modern, technology-driven economy. *ExcelinEd in Action* supported this commitment to future-ready learning and workforce alignment.

STATE LEADERS AND COALITION PARTNERS

West Virginia Department of Education, Speaker Roger Hanshaw, Senator Amy Grady, Delegate Joe Statler, CODE West Virginia, Computer Science Teacher Association, West Virginia, West Virginia Center for Excellence in STEM Education


NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THIS WORK

Code.org, College Board, Kira Learning and Project Lead the Way


Honorable Mentions

CLOSE LEARNING GAPS

● PASSED Early Literacy and Student-Focused Funding


 **Pennsylvania** made a major investment in early literacy and student success as part of its 2025–26 state budget. Lawmakers and the Governor approved a package that boosts school funding and directs significant new resources toward evidence-based K-3 reading instruction, universal screening and targeted support for students who are behind in reading. Pennsylvania’s 2025–26 budget commits \$10 million to strengthen early literacy and \$30 million (an increase of \$10 million over last year) to support the teacher pipeline.

● IMPROVED A-F Accountability

 **Mississippi** reaffirmed its commitment to high expectations by increasing the rigor of its grading scale in its model A-F school accountability system. The new grading scale was approved after a majority of districts and schools met current benchmarks, ensuring rigorous measures continue to drive improvements in student outcomes. This recommitment to high expectations aligns with promoting success for all students by guiding resources to students and schools that need the support.


STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER


● PROTECTED College & Career Pathways – Credentialing System Accountability

 **Mississippi** safeguarded the integrity of its workforce credentialing system by removing harmful language from legislation that would have weakened accountability and credential alignment. The proposed change would have blocked the state’s unified list of industry-valued credentials from use in school ratings—risking misalignment with workforce needs. *ExcelinEd in Action* partnered with AccelerateMS to successfully stop the provision from advancing past the House floor, protecting high-value opportunities for Mississippi students.


BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

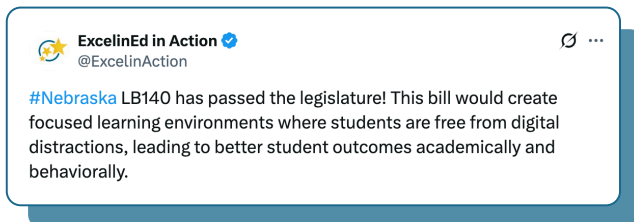
● PASSED Distraction-Free Learning


 **Alaska** took a clear step toward distraction-free learning by requiring all school districts to adopt policies regulating student cell phone use. If a district does not create a policy, student use of devices is automatically prohibited during class time, lunch and passing periods. Schools must share the policy with parents and students, ensuring transparency and consistency. This action supports focus and engagement for 133,000 Alaska students.

 **Kentucky** is restoring classroom focus by establishing cell phone-free classrooms statewide. With strong leadership from state lawmakers, the new policy requires districts to limit student cell phone use during instructional time, while allowing teacher-directed use for instruction. This effort promotes academic engagement and benefits more than 634,000 students across the state.

Honorable Mentions

 **Nebraska** advanced student success by requiring every school district to create distraction-free learning environments. Under the new law, personal device use is prohibited during the school day unless explicitly allowed for instructional purposes. This ensures more focused classrooms for the state's 330,000 students.




ExcelinEd in Action 
@ExcelinAction


#Nebraska LB140 has passed the legislature! This bill would create focused learning environments where students are free from digital distractions, leading to better student outcomes academically and behaviorally.

“We’re never going to give up on Nebraska’s kids. Today I stood with @MikeHilgers and courageous senators to sign a package of transformative bills to protect them. Collectively, this work protects our kids from the harms of Big Tech, addictiveness of social media, and distraction of phones in schools. In Nebraska, we put our kids first.”



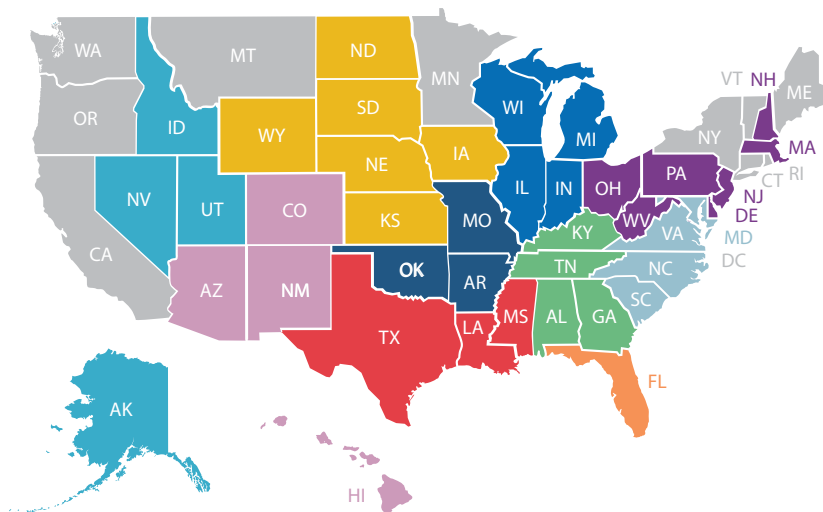
- Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen

 **Wisconsin** joined a national movement to minimize classroom distractions and bolster student focus by enacting a law requiring all public school districts to adopt policies that prohibit students from using cell phones during instructional time. With few exceptions for emergencies or instructional use, this policy supports distraction-free learning environments for students for the state's more than 800,000 students.

 **North Carolina** passed legislation establishing statewide requirements for social media literacy and internet safety instruction in schools alongside policies to regulate student use of wireless communication devices during class. The new law ensures North Carolina's 1.5 million students learn how to navigate digital spaces responsibly and protects learning time by limiting in-class device distractions, equipping young people with critical skills for success in an increasingly connected world.

Our Advocacy Team


ExcelinEd in Action's Advocacy Regions




West	Marcos Lopez
Southwest	Natalie Fausel
Midwest	Michael Chartier
Ozarks	Jordan Zakery
Gulf	James Mosteller
Great Lakes	Evan Eagleson
Northeast	Devin Babcock
Coastal Atlantic	Josh Gershfield
Florida	Nathan Hoffman
Southeast	Miranda Williams

 National

ExcelinEd in Action's Advocacy Team

Ashley DeMauro Mullins 
 Vice President, Advocacy
Ashley@ExcelinEd.org

Devin Babcock 
 Regional Advocacy Director,
 Northeast
Devin@ExcelinEd.org

Ellie Baumgartner ●
 Advocacy Associate, Midwest
Ellie@ExcelinEd.org

Michael Chartier ●
 Regional Advocacy Director,
 Midwest
Jordan@ExcelinEd.org

Catie Cleveland ●
 Senior Advocacy Associate,
 Great Lakes
Catie@ExcelinEd.org

Liz Delegal ●
 Advocacy Associate, Florida
Liz@ExcelinEd.org

Evan Eagleson ●
 Regional Advocacy Director, Great
 Lakes
Evan@ExcelinEd.org

Natalie Fausel ●
 Regional Advocacy Director,
 Southwest
Natalie@ExcelinEd.org

Orlando Garcia 
 Senior Analyst, Policy & Legislation
 Northeast
Orlando@ExcelinEd.org

Josh Gershfield ●
 Senior Advocacy Associate, Coastal
 Atlantic
Josh@ExcelinEd.org

Nathan Hoffman ●
 Senior Director, State Policy &
 Advocacy, Florida
Nathan@ExcelinEd.org

Marcos Lopez ●
 Regional Advocacy Director, West
Marcos@ExcelinEd.org

James Mosteller ●
 Regional Advocacy Director, Gulf
James@ExcelinEd.org

Laura Sheridan 
 Associate Director, Policy &
 Legislation
Laura@ExcelinEd.org

Arman Sidhu 
 Senior Analyst, Policy & Legislation
Arman@ExcelinEd.org

Miranda Williams ●
 Regional Advocacy Director,
 Southeast
Miranda@ExcelinEd.org

Jordan Zakery ●
 Regional Advocacy Director,
 Ozarks
Jordan@ExcelinEd.org



ExcelinEd
in Action

Legislative Impact Report

2025



For highlights from
this report, see our
**2025 Legislative
Impact - In Brief.**

excelinedinaction.org



@ExcelinAction



/ExcelinEdinAction



@ExcelinAction



/ExcelinEdinAction