Policy analysis and documents

(Click on the title to open the full PDF for each document.)

P-20 Governance
This StateNote identifies states in which K-12 and postsecondary governance has been fully or partially consolidated in a single entity. The report also identifies where early learning falls under the purview of an entity that administers both K-12 and higher education. (January 2011, Jennifer Dounay Zinth)

Accountability & Continuous Improvement in Remedial Education
Getting Past Go (GPG) analyzed accountability and continuous improvement policies for remedial education in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in a new policy brief. To give context to the policy research, GPG analyzes four state efforts to implement a cohesive and aligned accountability system. Each of the four states—Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee and Washington—leveraged research and existing resources to align strategies with goals and measures. Although each state approaches accountability from various angles, the initiatives share a similar goal: improving college readiness and increasing completion rates. (January 2011, Matthew Smith)

What Policymakers Need to Know:
Highlights of State Charter School Laws
This ECS StateNote provides information on seven key areas of charter school policy: (1) Charter School Caps; (2) Charter School is its Own LEA; (3) Source of Charter School Funding; (4) Charter School Facilities Assistance; (5) Charter School Teacher Certification; (6) Charter School Bound By Collective Bargaining Agreements; and (7) Charter School Renewal Appeals Process. (March 2011, Molly Ryan)

State Policy Approaches to Reducing Truancy
This ECS StateNote examines state truancy policy to determine: (1) When an “absence” becomes “truancy”; (2) Distinctions between early grades upper grades; (3) Consequences for parents and secondary-level students; (4) How schools are being held accountable for encouraging and enforcing attendance; and (5) How schools are being more proactive to end truancy. (March 2011, Dinah Frey)

Governors: Seeking Greater Control over Education
The past year has seen a variety of proposed legislation or gubernatorial actions to give governors a greater role in education policymaking. This paper contains a summary of completed or proposed action in this vein, followed by a discussion on the political and education policy impacts such changes may have. (Updated April 2011, Jennifer Dounay Zinth)

Truancy and Habitual Truancy Examples of State Definitions
For the most part, compulsory attendance laws do not specify the number of times a student must be truant before sanctions (also part of the compulsory attendance laws) are enforced. This ECS StateNote provides examples of states where truancy and habitual truancy are defined at the state level. (Updated April 2011, Dinah Frey)

Legislative Commissions & Task Forces: Developing Strategies to Meet Completion & Workforce Challenges
This policy brief studies task forces and commissions with college completion, workforce and economic development charges. More than 35 states have established at least one such commission since 2006. ECS identified common elements of these bodies, including purposes, charges and authority, membership and deliverables, and found that legislatures are using task forces to develop and implement college completion strategies. (April 2011, Matthew Smith)

Kindergarten Entrance Ages: A 35-Year Trend Analysis
There has been a trend in the states over the last 35 years to establish a cutoff date earlier in the year for children entering kindergarten. This ECS StateNote examines the trend, providing changes for each state since 1975. (Updated May 2011, Melodye Bush and Kyle Zinth)

Kindergarten Entrance Ages: Highlights
Over the past 35 years, there has been a definite trend in state policy support for a September or earlier cutoff date for kindergarten entrance. Charts included in this document show: 1) The 35-year trend for policy adoption by month; 2) The current popularity of specific cutoff dates within the month of September; and 3) Which states have adopted a September or earlier start date since 1975. (May 2011, Kyle Zinth)

What Savings are Produced by Moving to a Four-Day School Week?
Because of the economic downturn more districts than ever are moving to a four-day school week, but the question still exists — what cost savings, if any, will this move produce? Making use of national and local spending data, this report shows what savings a district might realistically expect to realize when moving to a four-day week. (May 2011, Michael Griffith)

A State Policymaker’s Guide to Expanding Learning Time
A joint project between the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL). (Summer 2011)

Early Warning Indicator Systems
Boosting high school graduation rates is a growing concern to educators and policymakers. Research shows that students who fail to graduate high school exhibit clear signs of dropping out. Access to student data has prompted state and school district officials across the country to develop “early warning indicator systems” to efficiently identify students who are at risk of dropping out and provide targeted supports to get them back on track and graduate. This Statenote highlights the statewide early warning indicator systems in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Alabama and the Philadelphia Public Schools district-wide system. (July 2011, Molly Ryan)

State Anti-Bullying Policies: A National Landscape
This PowerPoint presentation outlines anti-bullying policies in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Presentation was made to the 2011 National Conference of State Legislators Legislative Summit in San Antonio, Texas on August 9, 2011. (August 9, 2011, Jennifer Dounay Zinth)

Number of Instructional Days/Hours in the School Year
This ECS StateNote answers: How long is the school year? When does school begin? How long does a day need to be to count as a “full day” of instruction? (Updated August 2011, Melodye Bush, Molly Ryan and Stephanie Rose)
Teacher Tenure or Continuing Contract Laws
More state legislatures are beginning to embed teacher performance evaluation in decisions to grant tenure or to explicitly state the terms of contracts. And an increasing number of states are distinguishing between renewal at the end of a teacher’s contract and dismissal during the term of a contract. This document updates ECS’ 50-state look at teacher tenure and continuing contract laws. (Updated August 2011, Kathy Christie and Jennifer Dounay Zinth)

State-Set Limits on Superintendent Contracts
Costly superintendent contract buy-outs and early terminations are increasingly in the news. This compilation captures both the landscape of current state policy and new elements that could help limit potential taxpayer liability and promote transparency in district leader contracts. (August 2011, Kathy Christie)

Estimating the Impact of the American Jobs Act
On September 12, President Obama submitted the “American Jobs Act of 2011” (AJA) to the U.S. Congress. The AJA contains $450 billion in tax cuts and spending programs designed to spur employment. This alert discusses the details of the proposal. (September 2011, Michael Griffith)

Pre-K-Grade 3 Reading and Literacy Practices That Matter
This Research Review is a snapshot of five recent research studies that address reading and literacy in the early grades. The studies examine topics such as: parental investment in education, instructional practices in a balanced literacy approach, late-emerging reading difficulties, phonics and integrated language arts, and family literacy programs. (October 2011, Molly Ryan)

Choosing How to Lead: A Transfer Agenda for the 21st Century
The agenda document proposes five steps to improve student mobility and progression through the postsecondary system. The agenda is so fundamentally important because it opens a dialogue on how legislators might lead on the issue of transfer. Whether a legislature mediates, coordinates, evaluates, or adopts, it is important that policymakers choose how to lead to initiate a broader reform of transfer and articulation practice. (October 2011, Matthew Smith)

Bullying and Open Enrollment
Some state anti-bullying policies require districts to adopt strategies to protect students who have been bullied from further victimization. A few states go one step further, adopting specialized interdistrict transfer policies to allow victims of bullying to enroll in another school district, or allowing for the transfer of bullies themselves. This report describes state policies to allow bullying victims, or bullies themselves, to transfer to another school or district. (November 2011, Jennifer Dounay Zinth)

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault Policies
ECS recently compiled a table of state policies relating to sexual abuse or sexual harassment. While not a comprehensive listing, it provides a good snapshot of how states are addressing this issue. (ECS Information Clearinghouse, November 15, 2011)

Appeal Processes: State Teacher Evaluation Systems
With a new generation of higher-stake teacher evaluations, pressure for checks and balances is growing. This document highlights provisions that allow for some level of appeal of a teacher’s evaluation. (November 2011, Kathy Christie)

State Responses to the Increasing Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders
Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are the fastest growing developmental disorders. In recognizing the increasing needs of children affected by ASDs as well as the associated financial implications for local governments, some states have begun re-assessing their current systems of support and looking for better and more efficient ways to serve individuals with ASD and their families. This ECS StateNote presents examples of initiatives states have taken to better serve this growing population. (November 2011, Emily Workman)

State Collective Bargaining Policies for Teachers
Collective bargaining for teachers is a contentious issue that promises to grow increasingly complex as governance reform — changing who makes what decisions about public education – takes center stage. Collective bargaining, if a state allows it, always occurs at the school district level. State policy, however, influences the process in a number of ways, from determining the scope of bargaining to dictating the terms of arbitration. This ECS StateNote presents the current collective bargaining state policies across the 50 states. (Updated December 2011, Emily Workman)

The Road to High-Quality Early Education
Quality in early childhood programs will be essential if children are to be proficient readers at the end of 3rd grade. This brief highlights Colorado’s efforts to create structures and governance to support quality. A second part of the brief describes one classroom-level approach to achieving high-quality early education. (December 2011, Karen Schimke and Stephanie Rose)

The Progress of Education Reform

STEM Performance
This issue of ECS’ The Progress of Education Reform identifies promising and research-based approaches for enhancing student interest and achievement in STEM disciplines, including approaches that come with a smaller state-budget price tag. (September 2011, Michael Griffith)

A Promise Unfulfilled
This issue of The Progress of Education Reform examines inequities in how Title I funds are distributed, and proposes changes that address three key factors. (April 2011, Michael Griffith)

Credit Recovery and Proficiency-Based Credit
This issue of The Progress of Education Reform will address the following questions: 1) What is credit recovery? What is proficiency-based credit? 2) How is credit recovery different from traditional remediation? 3) Why does providing for these options matter for high school completion? 4) How widespread are these options across the states? And what do state policies look like? 5) What are the challenges in implementing credit recovery and proficiency-based credit programs? 6) What does the research say on the effectiveness of credit recovery and proficiency-based credit? 7) What are the essential policy components? (June 2011, Jennifer Dounay Zinth)

Higher Education Reform
This issue of The Progress of Education Reform looks at recent research in the areas of assessing student learning, the use of technology in instruction, and models for providing the academic and social support students need to stay on track and earn a postsecondary credential. (August 2011, Bruce Vandal)

More on Pay-for-Performance
This issue of The Progress of Education Reform describes “pay-for-performance” (PFP) models and presents recent research findings and their implications for policy. It looks at PFP systems broadly and includes not only systems that provide rewards for increased student achievement, but also for other tasks such as engaging in professional development and taking on added roles and responsibilities. (October 2011, Barbara Thompson and Paul Baumann)

Pre-K-12 Literacy
This issue examines: 1) low Pre-K-12 literacy levels nationally, especially for low-income and diverse student populations; 2) trends in U.S. students’ reading proficiency since the 1970s; 3) the negative impacts correlated with low reading levels; and 4) policy recommendations for improving literacy instruction and achievement, particularly in the early grades. (December 2011, Karen Schimke)
ECS Newsletters

**e-Clips**
ECS e-Clips gives you the day’s top education news, as well as a link to Education Week’s extensive daily news roundup.

**e-Connection**
ECS e-Connection is a weekly e-mail publication with links to key education information.

**Citizenship Matters**
Citizenship Matters, from the National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) is a bimonthly newsletter that focuses on ECS’ work in improving citizenship education in our nation’s schools.

**Heads Up**
Heads Up comes to you as a complimentary service from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

**Network News**
Network News, a monthly publication for members of the District Leaders and Schools of Success networks, is created by the National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) at the Education Commission of the States (ECS). This publication provides practical strategies for K-12 quality service-learning design and implementation, important dates and events, and news of member advocacy efforts in the field.

**Pre-K-3**
A monthly dissemination of research and policy updates about developments in the Pre-K – 3 field.

ECS Blogs

**ECS Ed Watch**
ECS Ed Watch aims to be your source for innovative, ahead-of-the-curve state policy approaches and the best new research with significant implications for education policy.

**P-20 Blog**
Based on constituent interest in the issue of P-20 alignment, ECS has launched The P-20 Blog – your source for news, policy and research related to state efforts to better align early learning, K-12 and postsecondary education efforts.

**Boosting College Completion**
Boosting College Completion for a New Economy is a two-year initiative of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) designed to move states from awareness of their college completion challenge to the development, implementation and evaluation of state strategies that increase college attainment rates.

**Getting Past Go**
The Education Commission of the States (ECS), in collaboration with the Project on Education Policy, Access and Remedial Education (PREPARE), seeks to leverage developmental education at postsecondary institutions as a critical component of state efforts to increase college attainment rates through Getting Past Go. The national initiative will help education policy leaders align state and system policy to increase the college success of the large percentage of students enrolled in postsecondary education who require remedial and developmental education.

Databases

**The 2011 State Education Policy Tracking Database**
This database reflects new entries (by keyword) of over 2,600 state education policy enactments on over 300 education issues. It is updated weekly. Overall, this resource consists of over 31,000 records, providing one-of-a-kind trends in education policy enactments since the 1990s. The state education policy tracking database is accessible anytime, anywhere from the ECS Web site. Monitoring policy changes on a national scale every week allows staff to identify ahead-of-the-curve policy approaches for you — before they are broadly disseminated.

Legislative actions on college completion and workforce alignment across all 50 states (Boosting College Completion)
Online profiles and customized data and policy profiles for over 20 states (Boosting College Completion)
Online profiles capturing state and system efforts to reform remedial education policy and practice (Getting Past Go)
State and system policies regarding remedial and developmental education (Getting Past Go)
State charter school laws (50 states)
Open enrollment laws (50 states)
Kindergarten (50 states):
Service Learning (50 states)
Here is a list of the studies we summarized in 2011:

- The Role of Context in Understanding the Contributions of Financial Aid to College Opportunity
- Home-Town Values and High Accountability: A Texas Recipe for Districtwide Success in an Urban School District
- Vocabulary Skills of Spanish-English Bilinguals: Impact of Mother-Child Language Interactions and Home Language and Literacy Support
- Curriculum Differentiation and Comprehensive School Reform: Challenges in Providing Educational Opportunity
- Triangulating Principal Effectiveness: How Perspectives of Parents, Teachers, and Assistant Principals Identify the Central Importance of Managerial Skills
- Teaching Practices and Social Capital
- Toward a More Nuanced Understanding of New Teacher Attrition
- The Relation of Morphological Awareness and Syntactic Awareness to Adults’ Reading
- The Path Not Taken: How Does School Organization Affect Eighth-Grade Achievement
- Urban Principals’ Facilitation of English Language Learning in Public Schools
- Content Coverage Differences across Districts/States: A Persisting Challenge
- Math and Science Academic Success in Three Large, Diverse, Urban High Schools
- The Impact of Induction and Mentoring Programs for Beginning Teachers
- Competing Explanations of Undergraduate Noncompletion
- Common Core Standards: The New U.S. Intended Curriculum
- How Effective Are Family Literacy Programs?: Results of a Meta-Analysis
- A Meta-Analysis of Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Provider Effects
- Evaluating School Improvement Plans and their Affect on Academic Performance
- Focusing on the Participation and Engagement Gap: A Case Study on Closing the Ach. Gap
- The Effects of Charter High Schools on Educational Attainment
- Do Expenditures Other Than Instructional Expenditures Affect Graduation and Persistence Rates
- How Much Do Educational Outcomes Matter in OECD Countries?

Technical Adequacy and Cost Benefit of Four Measures of Early Literacy

Improving Education for English Language Learners: Research-Based Approaches

Tripartite Growth Trajectories of Reading and Math Achievement: Tracking National Academic Progress at Primary, Middle, and High School Level

A Review of Parent Interventions for Preschool Children’s Language and Emerging Literacy

High School Community Service as a Predictor of Adult Voting and Volunteering

Linking Reading Coaches and Student Achievement: Evidence From Florida Middle Schools

Low Birth Weight, Preschool Education, and School Remediation