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ECS expands research, resources to help states tackle education needs from preschool to college

DENVER – The Education Commission of the States is expanding to meet the needs of state leaders working to improve students’ educational outcomes from preschool to college and beyond.

This effort includes new research on projects such as college readiness and school report cards, as well as bringing together a panel of distinguished experts to help states implement new ideas.

“Education will continue to be a key policy focus for states and ECS is invaluable in helping state leaders sort through what works,” said Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, who is serving a two-year term as ECS chair.

Sandoval, a Republican, succeeded Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, a Democrat, earlier this year. ECS, created by states for states in 1965, is the only national nonpartisan education agency working directly with governors, legislators, chief state school officers, higher education officials and other leaders.

“ECS focuses on objective research and sharing lessons learned from one state to the next,” Sandoval said. “By working together and sharing resources, we can advance the education discussion in our country.”

Beginning this week, ECS is scheduled to release reports on some of the states’ most pressing education questions. Among them:

- **Accountability.** What are the different types of school and district “report cards” being used by states and which specific indicators are being used to measure school performance?
- **Dual enrollment.** More states are expanding programs to bolster the numbers of high school students enrolling in college classes. Which state policies are resulting in higher participation and why?
- **Remediation.** How are states reporting the needs of their high school graduates for remedial work in college? Would more consistent reporting methods be useful for monitoring and comparing progress?

A number of national foundations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation, support ECS in its work. A majority of ECS funding, however, comes directly from the states.

To assist states in putting such research to use, ECS is honored to announce the 2014 ECS Distinguished Senior Fellows. These four education policy
veterans will serve as advisors to ECS and the states in the coming year. Full bios and pictures of the fellows are available here:

- **Christopher T. Cross**, a consultant for the Broad Foundation and the C.S. Mott Foundation, is a former U.S. assistant secretary of education, past president of the Council for Basic Education and past president of the Maryland State Board of Education.
- **Joan Lombardi**, former U.S. deputy assistant secretary and interagency liaison for early childhood development, is senior advisor to the Buffett Early Childhood Fund on national initiatives and the Bernard van Leer Foundation on global child development strategies.
- **Philip “Uri” Treisman** is founder and director of the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin, which focuses on K-16 math and science education as a means of ensuring postsecondary success for all students.
- **Joanne Weiss** is former chief of staff for U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and leader of the department’s Race to the Top Fund, the $4 billion program designed to encourage and reward states making comprehensive education reforms.

On Dec. 10, ECS began its two-day winter conference in Denver. More than 100 state education leaders attended sessions on topics ranging from the political climate for education in 2014 to American competitiveness to differing state standards for achieving college readiness.

Journalists and others were invited to attend these sessions or to listen in via telephone. The conference agenda is posted on the ECS website here.

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**About ECS**

ECS is the only nationwide, nonpartisan organization that works directly with governors, legislators, chief state school officers, higher education officials, and other leaders across all areas of education, from pre-K to college and the workforce. Since 1965, we have tracked policy, translated research, provided unbiased advice, and created opportunities for state policymakers to learn from one another. ECS is located in Denver and maintains the nation’s most extensive clearinghouse on education policy.

*Equipping Education Leaders, Advancing Ideas*