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How Does Education in My State Compare?

What every Governor, Chief, Legislator, or Other Elected Official Needs to Know?

Updated by Julie Rowland - November 2014

This report serves as a quick reference guide for elected officials to compare key education policies and data in their states to the rest of the nation. The first section highlights major state policies for all 50 states in both table and chart formats (see [Summary Charts](#) below). The second section provides key state data, such as per-student spending and the percent of students from traditionally underserved groups in each state (see [Table 2](#) below).

Table 1: Major State Policies

State	Districts Must Offer Kindergarten – Full-Day or Half-Day	Compulsory School Ages (in years)	State Charter School Laws: Initial Term/ Renewal Term (unless the same)	Retention Required if Reading Below Proficiency at End of 3 rd Grade	Mandatory Interdistrict Choice of Schools ¹	Who Selects State Superintendent/ Commissioner of Education?	Who Selects State Board?	Seniority as a Factor in Teacher Cutback Decisions	Publicly Available High School Feedback Report ²
Alabama	Yes - full day	6-17	No law	No	No	State board	Elected	Not specified ³	Yes
Alaska	No	7-16	10 years	No	No	State board	Governor	Not specified	No
Arizona	Yes - half day	6-16 ⁴	15/20 years	Yes	Yes	Elected	Governor	Prohibited	No

¹ Includes those states that limit transfer to low-performing schools and who have very limited statutorily outlined provisions.

² Some states produce high school feedback reports that are not publicly available. For example, Pennsylvania produces reports that are available only to local education agencies. Alaska, Arizona, and New York did not report producing high school feedback reports. California did not participate in the source’s survey.

³ Must be based on “objective criteria.”

⁴ Or completion of 10th grade.

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Arkansas	Yes - full day	5-17	5 years	Yes	Yes	State board	Governor	Not specified ⁵	Yes
California	Yes - half day	6-18	5/5 years	Yes	No	Elected	Governor	Primary factor	No
Colorado	Yes - half day	6-17	4 years	No	Yes	State board	Elected	Secondary factor	Yes
Connecticut	Yes - half day	5-18	5 years	Yes	Yes	State board recommends to Governor	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Delaware	Yes - full day	5-16	4/5 years	Yes	Yes	Governor	Governor	Not specified	Yes
District of Columbia	Yes - full day	5-18	15 years	Yes	N/A	Mayor	Elected; advisory only	Not specified	Yes
Florida	Yes - half day	6-16	4 or 5/ 15 years	Yes	No	State board	Governor	Prohibited	Yes
Georgia	Yes - half day	6-16	Up to 5/10 years	Yes	Yes	Elected	Governor	Prohibited	Yes
Hawaii	Yes - half day	6-18	NA/5 years	No	No	State board	Governor	Primary factor	Yes
Idaho	No	7-16	3/5 years	No	Yes	Elected	Governor	Prohibited	Yes
Illinois	Yes - half day	7-17	5 to 10/up to 5	No	No	State board	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Indiana	Yes - half day	7-16	3 to 7 years	No	No	Elected	Governor	Secondary factor	Yes
Iowa	Yes - half day	6-16	At least 4 years	Yes	Yes	Governor	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Kansas	Yes - half day	7-18	5 years	No	No	State board	Elected	Not specified	Yes

⁵ Must be based on “objective criteria.”

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Kentucky	Yes - half day	6-16 ⁶	No law	No	Yes	State board	Governor	Primary factor	Yes
Louisiana	Yes - full day	7-18	4 to 5/ 3 to 10 years	No	Yes	State board	Elected and appointed	Not specified	Yes
Maine	Yes - half day	7-17	5/5-15 years	No	No	Governor	Governor	Secondary factor	Yes
Maryland	Yes - full day	5-16 ⁷	Not specified	Yes	Yes	State board	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Massachusetts	Yes - half day	6-16	5 years	No	No	State board	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Michigan	Yes - half day	6-16	Not specified ⁸	No	No	State board	Elected	Prohibited	Yes
Minnesota	Yes - half day	7-16	Up to 5 years	No	Yes	Governor	No board	Primary factor	Yes
Mississippi	Yes - full day	6-17	Not specified ⁹	Yes	No	State board	Governor and other authorities	Not specified	No
Missouri	Yes - half day	7-16	5 years	Yes	Yes	State board	Governor	Tertiary factor	Yes
Montana	Yes - half day	7-16	No law	No	Yes	Elected	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Nebraska	Yes - half day	6-18	No law	No	Yes	State board	Elected	Not specified	Yes
Nevada	Yes - half day ¹⁰	7-18	6 years	No	No	Governor	Elected and appointed	Secondary factor	Yes
New Hampshire	Yes - half day	6-18	5 years	No	No	Governor	Governor	Prohibited	Yes

⁶ Effective 2015-16, local boards may raise upper age from 16 to 18. Once (and if) 55% of all districts have done so, all districts would be required to raise the age to 18.

⁷ Effective 2015-16, age 17; effective 2017-18, age 18.

⁸ Authorizing bodies determine the length of charter terms.

⁹ However, the law includes a sunset clause that repeals all provisions July 1, 2020.

¹⁰ In certain school districts, the lowest performing schools with the highest numbers of limited English proficient students offer full-day kindergarten and free prekindergarten programs.

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New Jersey	No ¹¹	6-16	4/5 years	No	No	Governor	Governor	Primary factor	Yes
New Mexico	Yes - half day	5-18	6/up to 5 years	No	Yes	Governor	No board; advisory commission	Not specified	Yes
New York	No	6-16	Up to 5 years	No	No	State board	Legislature	Primary factor	No
North Carolina	Yes - full day	7-16	Up to 10 years ¹²	Yes	No	Elected	Governor	Not specified	Yes
North Dakota	Yes -half day	7-16	No law	No	Yes	Elected	Governor	Not specified	No
Ohio	Yes - half day	6-18	7 years	Yes	No	State board	Elected and appointed	Prohibited	Yes
Oklahoma	Yes - full day	5-18	Up to 5 years	Yes	No	Elected	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Oregon	Yes - half day	7-18	Up to 5/ 5 to 10 years ¹³	No	No	State board ¹⁴	Governor	Primary factor	Yes
Pennsylvania	No	8-17	3 to 5/ 5 years	No	No	Governor	Governor	Primary factor	No
Rhode Island	Yes - half day	6-16 ¹⁵	5 years	No	No	State board	Governor	Primary factor	Yes
South Carolina	Yes - full day	5-17	10 years	No	No	Elected	Legislature; 1 by Gov.	Not specified	Yes
South Dakota	Yes - half day	6-18 ¹⁶	No ¹⁷	No	Yes	Governor	Governor	Not specified	Yes

¹¹ The Abbott Districts are required to offer Full-Day Kindergarten.

¹² However, reviews are required every 5 years.

¹³ The first renewal of a charter must be for the same time period as the initial charter. Subsequent renewals of a charter are for a minimum of 5 years but may not exceed 10 years.

¹⁴ The Oregon Education Investment Board appoints the chief education officer, who is responsible for directing broad systems and policy. By state law, the governor is the superintendent. The governor appoints a deputy superintendent for day-to-day management.

¹⁵ Age 16 if a student has an alternative learning plan for obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent.

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Tennessee	Yes - full day	6-17	10 years	Yes	No	Governor	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Texas	Yes - half day	6-18	5/10 years	No	No	Governor	Elected	Not specified	Yes
Utah	Yes - half day	6-18	Not specified	No	Yes	State board	Elected	Prohibited	Yes
Vermont	Yes - half day	6-16 ¹⁸	No law	No	Yes	State board recommends to Governor	Governor	Not specified	Yes
Virginia	Yes - half day	5-18	Up to 5 years	No	No	Governor	Governor	Prohibited	Yes
Washington	Yes - half day ¹⁹	8-18	5/5 years ²⁰	No	Yes	Elected	Elected and appointed by multiple authorities	Not specified	Yes
West Virginia	Yes - full day	6-17	No law	No	No	State board	Governor	Primary factor	No
Wisconsin	Yes - half day	6-18	Up to 5/5 years	No	Yes	Elected	No board	Primary factor	No
Wyoming	Yes - half day ²¹	7-16	Up to 5/5 years	No	No	Elected	Governor	Not specified	Yes

¹⁶ Age 16 if a child enrolls in a general education development test preparation program that is school based or for which a school contracts, and the child successfully completes the test or reaches the age of 18 years.

¹⁷ However, state law allows for charter schools that serve only American Indian students from federally recognized tribes and meet specific criteria.

¹⁸ Or completion of 10th grade.

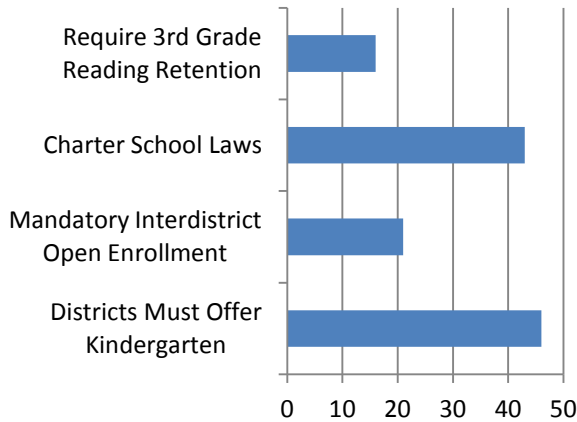
¹⁹ Full-Day K is being phased in beginning in the 2012-13 school year, beginning with the highest poverty schools. Statewide implementation will be achieved by 2017-18.

²⁰ Authorizer may vary the renewal term based on the performance, demonstrated capacities, and particular circumstances of a charter school and may grant renewal with specific conditions for necessary improvements to a charter school.

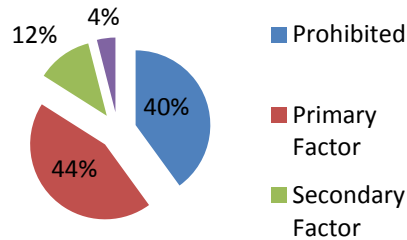
²¹ Statute requires one Full Day program per district.

Summary Charts of Table 1 Policies

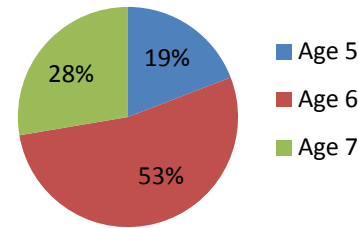
States with Selected Policies



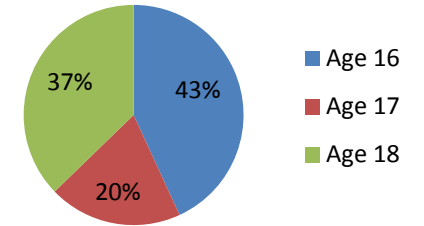
Teacher Seniority as a Consideration in Reduction of Force (Layoff) Decisions



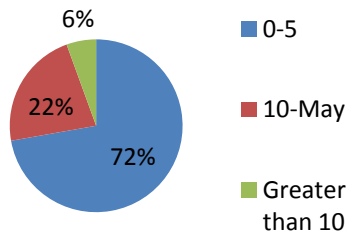
Compulsory School Age - Lower



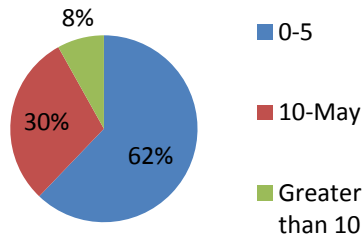
Compulsory School Age - Upper



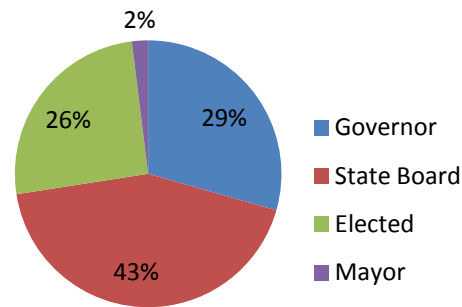
Initial Term of Charter (maximum in years)



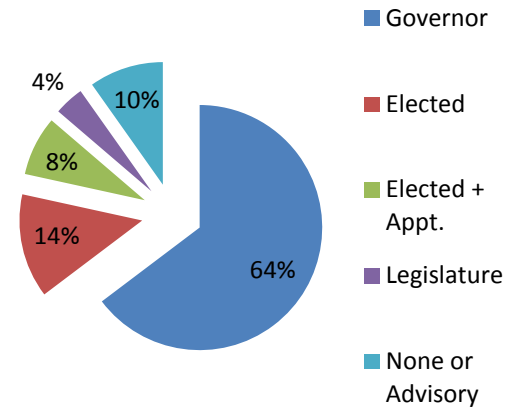
Renewal Term of Charter (maximum in years)



Who Selects Superintendent?



Who Selects Board?



*See Table 2 (below) for key state data

Table 2: Key State Data

State	Number of Regular Districts (2011-12)	Average Number of Students Per District (2011-12)	Per-Student Spending (2011-12)	Percent of K-12 Revenue from State Sources (2012-13)	Average Salaries (\$) for Classroom Teachers (2013-14)	Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (2011-12)	Percent of Students Served under IDEA-Part B (2011-12)	Percent of Students Participating in English-Language Learner Programs (2011-12)	4-year Graduation Rates from Public High Schools (2011-12)
Alabama	133	5,599	8,606	55.1	48,413	57.5	10.6	10.6	75
Alaska	53	2,475	17,032	61.6	66,739	40.6	13.6	13.6	70
Arizona	224	4,823	6,683	53.3	51,109	50.0	11.8	11.8	76
Arkansas	239	2,021	9,440	51.7	46,950	60.9	13.4	13.4	84
California	951	6,612	9,496	57.4	70,126	54.1	10.7	10.7	78
Colorado	178	4,799	10,672	43.4	50,651	40.9	10.2	10.2	75
Connecticut	169	3,281	15,790	36.7	70,584	35.7	12.3	12.3	85
Delaware	19	6,787	14,396	61.9	60,571	48.9	14.7	14.7	80
District of Columbia	1	73,911	13,952	N/A	73,162	62.5	18.1	18.1	59
Florida	67	39,823	8,468	38.3	46,691	57.6	13.6	13.6	75
Georgia	179	9,413	9,373	41.9	52,924	58.7	10.7	10.7	70
Hawaii	1	182,706	11,906	86.8	56,291	49.3	10.9	10.9	82
Idaho	116	2,413	8,323	72.9	50,945	49.0	9.7	9.7	Not avail.
Illinois	866	2,405	12,455	20.5	60,124	49.0	14.0	14.0	82
Indiana	292	3,564	10,820	55.9	50,644	48.0	15.7	15.7	86
Iowa	351	1,413	9,645	46.4	51,662	40.0	13.7	13.7	89
Kansas	309	1,573	9,518	55.3	48,221	48.9	13.6	13.6	85
Kentucky	174	3,919	9,942	55.2	50,705	54.4	14.7	14.7	Not avail.
Louisiana	70	10,048	9,998	45	52,259	67.1	11.8	11.8	72
Maine	237	797	10,275	39.3	49,232	43.0	17.2	17.2	85
Maryland	24	35,587	14,630	44.3	64,868	41.8	12.1	12.1	84
Massachusetts	242	3,940	15,746	39.5	73,736	35.1	17.5	17.5	85
Michigan	550	2,861	13,313	68.3	61,866	48.0	13.4	13.4	76
Minnesota	337	2,492	11,398	81.7	57,230	37.1	14.6	14.6	78
Mississippi	152	3,228	8,274	49.7	42,187	71.5	13.2	13.2	75
Missouri	524	1,749	9,760	29.8	48,329	46.5	13.6	13.6	86
Montana	414	344	10,118	48.1	49,893	40.3	11.3	11.3	84

State	Number of Regular Districts (2011-12)	Average Number of Students Per District (2011-12)	Per-Student Spending (2011-12)	Percent of K-12 Revenue from State Sources (2012-13)	Average Salaries (\$) for Classroom Teachers (2013-14)	Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (2011-12)	Percent of Students Served under IDEA-Part B (2011-12)	Percent of Students Participating in English-Language Learner Programs (2011-12)	4-year Graduation Rates from Public High Schools (2011-12)
Nebraska	249	1,210	9,402	36.1	49,545	43.8	14.9	14.9	88
Nevada	17	25,861	8,247	35.6	57,391	54.1	11.2	11.2	63
New Hampshire	178	1,078	14,587	32.8	57,057	26.3	15.3	15.3	86
New Jersey	616	2,202	18,485	33.1	70,060	35.5	16.2	16.2	86
New Mexico	89	3,789	10,702	67	45,727	68.5	13.7	13.7	70
New York	696	3,886	18,616	44.8	76,566	49.7	16.1	16.1	77
North Carolina	115	13,112	8,492	59.7	45,355	52.4	12.6	12.6	80
North Dakota	179	546	8,757	41.1	48,666	32.8	13.5	13.5	87
Ohio	615	2,829	9,842	46	57,270	43.6	14.9	14.9	81
Oklahoma	522	1,276	7,768	49.5	44,277	61.2	14.9	14.9	Not avail.
Oregon	184	3,088	9,811	49.1	58,597	53.2	14.2	14.2	68
Pennsylvania	500	3,543	13,904	39.6	64,072	40.2	16.5	16.5	84
Rhode Island	32	4,464	16,683	30	64,696	43.9	17.4	17.4	77
South Carolina	86	8,456	9,406	45.6	48,425	56.8	13.7	13.7	75
South Dakota	152	842	9,218	30.8	40,023	38.6	14.3	14.3	83
Tennessee	137	7,297	8,577	48.7	48,049	57.5	12.6	12.6	87
Texas	1031	4,850	8,283	39.7	49,270	51.1	8.8	8.8	88
Utah	41	14,606	6,973	51.2	50,659	47.6	12.4	12.4	80
Vermont	303	297	18,571	87.6	53,656	39.2	14.4	14.4	88
Virginia	130	9,676	10,535	36.8	49,233	39.2	12.8	12.8	83
Washington	295	3,544	9,672	59.5	52,236	44.5	12.3	12.3	77
West Virginia	55	5,143	11,777	59.3	45,583	52.8	15.7	15.7	79
Wisconsin	424	2,054	11,135	43.1	54,717	40.8	14.2	14.2	88
Wyoming	49	1,839	16,165	51.9	57,910	37.1	17.2	17.2	79

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