



As governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I have worked hard to implement targeted, innovative reforms to improve our schools. In our modern economy, educational achievement is probably the single greatest predictor of prosperity, a more stable family life and good citizenship. With a good education, every child has a passport to economic opportunity. We know good schools create new opportunities for children who too often are caught in the grip of poverty and despair. Education is the great “equalizer” that renews the promise of our democracy.

This is why, as chairman of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), I am proud to issue the following *ECS Report to the Nation: State Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act*.

Although the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has demanded much of states, it also has served as a constant reminder of how necessary it is to keep moving ahead with state reforms. Given the extensive nature of NCLB, it is not surprising that many legislators, policymakers and researchers are now asking how we, as a nation, are doing.

The following ECS report attempts to provide an answer by examining state progress, highlighting state approaches, describing emerging issues and identifying what’s been learned. As an independent, nonpartisan organization, ECS is uniquely qualified as the only organization that serves every major policymaking group: governors, state boards, chief state school officers and legislators. ECS has focused on what it knows best: state policies.

Policymakers long have responded to the problems facing our schools, and the results have plainly been mixed. More than 20 years ago, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published an important report entitled *A Nation at Risk*. Twenty years later, while progress has been made, we are still at risk. And the urgency of eliminating that risk is greater than it ever has been before. As reflected in the following pages, states are working in partnership with other states and with the federal government to meet these challenges and make our schools work for all students.

I encourage you to read and consider the implications of the ECS report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark R. Warner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark R. Warner
2003-04 ECS Chairman
Governor of Virginia