

Education Commission of the States' 2025-27 Policy Priority Areas at a Glance



Creating Accessible, Affordable and High-Quality Early Care and Education Systems (ECE)

Many families lack opportunities to enroll their children in high-quality early care and education programs, and state leaders seek solutions to improve program affordability, accessibility and quality. ECS can support states in creating innovative funding mechanisms and program structures designed to operate a mixed-delivery system to sustainably serve families in the environment and schedule that works best for them.

Selected ECS Resources: [50-state Comparison: State K-3 Policies](#) and [Early Care and Education Governance Models](#)



Improving Student Attendance, Engagement and Wellbeing

States have been looking at ways to combat chronic absenteeism, including providing health resources and services to students in school settings and ensuring students feel safe and engaged at school. ECS can support states as they take a more holistic approach to student attendance, engagement and wellbeing so schools can focus on ensuring students are present for learning opportunities and well-positioned to make the most of their time in school.

Selected ECS Resources: [Elements of Student Health Support](#) and [State Information Request: Chronic Absenteeism](#)



Strengthening the Educator Pipeline

States are experiencing persistent teacher shortages due to compensation, difficult working conditions and a lack of effective professional development. ECS can support states in starting, continuing and strengthening the teaching profession from preparation to recruitment through retention in ways that include how best to leverage AI-powered tools to improve working conditions.

Selected ECS Resources: [50-State Comparison: Teacher Recruitment and Retention](#) and [State Policy Levers to Address Teacher Shortages](#)



Reforming and Refining K-12 Finance

Economic conditions will inevitably shape school finance conversations in years to come and these conditions vary from state to state. ECS can support states in exploring and expanding strategies for leveraging state revenues along with alternatives to local property taxes to fund public education — all while considering the dynamic changes in enrollment and economic conditions.

Selected ECS Resources: [50-State Comparison: K-12 Funding](#) and [50-State Comparison: K-12 School Construction Funding](#)



Building Holistic Skills and Aligned Pathways

Anticipating the skills and pathways necessary for the future citizenry and workforce is key for education leaders. Students will need to build literacies across domains from traditional subjects like reading and math to cross-cutting topics like artificial intelligence (AI) and media literacy. ECS can support states in creating and aligning policies to prepare students for citizenship, college and career while removing barriers to personalized and adaptable pathways to economic opportunity.

Selected ECS Resources: [State Policies to Advance Student-Centered Pathways](#) and [50-State Comparison: High School Graduation Requirements](#)



Enhancing the Value of Postsecondary Education by Preparing for the Future of Work

As demands and perceptions shift, there is a need for postsecondary education systems to define value in the evolving context. ECS can support states in developing policies that affect institutions' and systems' ability to adapt to new demands in the workforce and build robust processes that deliver meaningful economic opportunities for students. Strategies include incentivizing and supporting institutional innovation, supporting students with the resources they need to attain valued credentials and creating data systems to inform students, programmatic needs, policy and robust evaluations of return on investment.

Selected ECS Resources: [50-State Comparison: Postsecondary Education Funding](#) and [Lessons in Data Governance for State Education Leaders](#)