

# Midwestern Higher Education Compact

**Member States (12):** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

## Introduction

In March 2019, Education Commission of the States released a comprehensive summary of the postsecondary governance landscapes in each state and the District of Columbia. The [interactive data visualization](#), individual state profiles and 50-State Comparison capture state governance ecosystems that consist of coordinating boards/agencies and governing boards, administrative/service agencies, advisory groups and membership organizations. These resources are intended to assist policy and education leaders in understanding postsecondary governance systems in their states and others.

In partnership with the regional higher education compacts, Education Commission of the States is providing an analysis of their member states' governance systems and individual profiles.

## State Postsecondary Governance Models

Higher education governance systems across the states and District of Columbia are varied and complex. The structures are a mix of coordinating and governing boards at the state, system and institutional levels; and other agencies and organizations may play important roles in the postsecondary landscape.

While no two states have the same postsecondary governance system, the structures fall within general models — even though the categorization is not a straightforward process.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the basic approaches, numerous boards also govern other postsecondary systems, multi-campus institutions and individual institutions.

**Single, Statewide Coordinating Board/Agency:** Twenty states have a single coordinating board and/or agency that is responsible for key aspects of the state's role with public postsecondary institutions and, in some cases, independent colleges.

*MHEC states:* Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska and Ohio.

**Single, Statewide Governing Board:** Eight states have a statewide governing board that manages and oversees most functions of the public higher education system and typically has broad authority over institutions.

*MHEC states:* Kansas and North Dakota.

*Note:* The Kansas Board of Regents serves governing and coordinating roles for different institutions; however, the board typically is categorized as governing.

**One or More Systemwide Coordinating or Governing Board:** Nineteen states have one or more coordinating or governing boards that oversee institutions within a postsecondary system. These states do not have statewide coordinating or governing boards.

*MHEC states:* Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

**Administrative/Service Agency:** At least 11 states and the District of Columbia have higher education administrative agencies that may oversee financial aid and specific academic programs, institutional licensure approval and information/data services. The agencies' authority varies across the states and with respect to different types of institutions. These states also have system-level coordinating or governing boards and/or governing boards for individual institutions.

*MHEC states:* Iowa and Minnesota.

*Note:* Michigan does not have a state-level board or agency, and the postsecondary systems and institutions are governed by individual boards.

## Coordinating Boards/Agencies, Governing Boards and Administrative/Service Agencies

The following chart summarizes the number of statewide and major, systemwide coordinating boards/agencies and governing boards, as well as administrative/service agencies for MHEC member states. See Notes 1 for further explanation of the boards and agencies. The numbers in parentheses indicate states with more than one board.

Type of Board	Number of States	Number of Boards or Agencies	States
Single Statewide Coordinating Board/Agency	5	5	Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska and Ohio
Single Statewide Governing Board	2	2	Kansas and North Dakota
One or More Major, Systemwide Governing Board	2	3	Iowa and Minnesota (2)

One or More Major, Systemwide Coordinating Board	0	0	N/A
Major, Systemwide Coordinating and Governing Board	2	4	South Dakota (2) and Wisconsin (2)
Administrative/Service Agencies	2	2	Iowa and Minnesota

## Appointing Authority of Higher Education Executive Officers

The following table summarizes the authority or entity that appoints, approves or hires the higher education executive officers for statewide and major, systemwide coordinating boards/agencies and governing boards, as well as administrative/service agencies for MHEC states. See Notes 2 for further explanation of the appointing authority of boards and agencies, including some of the states marked with parentheses.

Appointing Authority	Number of States	Number of Boards or Agencies	States
Agency Board or Agency Committee	0	0	N/A
Coordinating Board	6	6	Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota (1) and Wisconsin (1)
Coordinating Board, With Approval of Governor	0	0	N/A
Governing Board	6	7	Iowa (1), Kansas, Minnesota (2), North Dakota, South Dakota (1) and Wisconsin (1)
Governing Board, With Approval of Governor and Senate	0	0	N/A
Governor	0	0	N/A
Governor, With Approval of Senate or Legislature	2	2	Minnesota (1) and Ohio
Governor, on Recommendation of Coordinating Board	0	0	N/A
State Board of Education or Commission/Secretary of Education	1	1	Iowa (1)

### Notes 1

Iowa has a governing board for the four-year institutions, and a division within the state education department provides services and oversees some programs for community colleges. The Kansas Board of Regents serves governing and coordinating roles for different institutions; however, the board typically is categorized as governing. Minnesota has governing boards for the two postsecondary systems and a statewide office of higher education. Ohio's Board of Regents serves an advisory role to the executive director of the department of higher education, which is a coordinating agency. South Dakota and Wisconsin have one governing board for the four-year systems and one coordinating board for the two-year systems.

### Notes 2

The Iowa Board of Regents appoints the system's executive director, and the K-12 commissioner of education appoints the director of the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation. Minnesota's governing boards for the two systems appoint the executive directors, and the governor appoints the state higher education office's executive director. In Ohio, the governor appoints the executive director of the department of higher education, with approval by the Senate. South Dakota and Wisconsin's coordinating and governing boards appoint their systems' executive directors.

## Regional Compact Analyses and State Profiles

The analyses and state profiles for each regional higher education compact can be accessed from this [link](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Aims C. McGuinness, *State Policy Leadership for the Future: History of state coordination and governance and alternatives for the future* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 2016), <https://www.ecs.org/state-policy-leadership-for-the-future-history-of-state-coordination-and-governance-and-alternatives-for-the-future/>, 46-47.