

2014

2014



Annual Report

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A Message From Our President, José Muñoz

As I step into the role of President at Education Commission of the States, I am filled with a profound sense of honor and humility. It is a privilege to join a remarkable team of dedicated individuals including Commissioners, education professionals, Partners, funders — and most of all — our ECS staff. I'm joining ECS with an unwavering faith in our ability to effectuate the purpose of our founding document, The Compact for Education: "that a partnership between the political and profession forces in education could stimulate the kind of cooperation that could be crucial to the future of American education."

Since assuming the role as President at the beginning of 2024, I've been submersed in building relationships across the aforementioned roles to listen for our greatest attributes, discover aspirations and seek opportunities to build upon ECS's policy proficiency. I've been deeply inspired to learn of — and witness — the dedication and "can do" attitude of our team and the impact they've had on education policy in the past, during 2023 and the present.

ECS has served as a catalyst by creating collaborative spaces to spread success by bridging bipartisan partnerships within and across states. Our belief in learning from one another's experiences will continue to guide our work as we continue moving forward forging cohesion between policy and practice.

I have high hopes of working in unison, commensurate of our awesome responsibility, to build a dynamic and responsive system where education produces the evidence that enhances everyone's opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'José Muñoz', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

José Muñoz

Your Trusted Education Policy Team

In 1965, Dr. James B. Conant, a president emeritus of Harvard University, recognized the need for a more unified direction for education policy. He identified the challenging task states were faced with in guiding effective education policy and knew they needed a mechanism to work together. Following many meetings among state leaders came the goal: create a partnership between education leadership and political leadership for the advancement of education through information sharing and collaboration.

This has been our guiding light ever since. Our mission is to help education leaders gain the insight and experience needed to create effective education policy. Since 1965, we've been committed to supporting states by providing personalized services and creating connection opportunities for education leaders to learn from one another.

Initiatives

Education Commission of the States proudly supports special initiatives such as, the Arts Education Partnership and Strong Start to Finish — initiatives that work to advance arts education and developmental education respectively.



Arts Education Partnership is a national network of more than 200 organizations dedicated to advancing arts education. AEP is the nation's hub for arts and education leaders, building their leadership capacity to support students, educators and learning environments. Through research, reports, convenings and counsel, leaders gain knowledge and insights to ensure that all learners receive an excellent arts education.



Strong Start to Finish is a network of policy and research partners, institution and systems leaders and foundations advancing system reforms in developmental education. SStF works to reform development education in higher education systems by scaling policies and practices that remove barriers to success and ensure Black, Brown, Asian American and Indigenous students; students with low incomes; and returning adults are supported to succeed in their first year of college.

[Communications](#) | [Convene](#) | [Operations](#) | [Policy](#) | [State Relations](#)

Four Pillars of Our Work

Our team works across the education spectrum by providing nonpartisan insight on issues from early care and education to workforce development. Our resources and services equip policymakers with the insight and experience needed to create effective education policy.



Research

Legislative tracking of state education policies from early care and education to workforce development.



Report

In-depth policy reporting on education policy trends, legislative examples and key context to help policymakers gain insights and address issues.



Counsel

Assistance to states including information sharing, testimony, technical assistance, presentations and engagement with our in-house experts.



Convene

Events, virtual and in person, that prioritize bringing together policymakers from across states to learn from each other.



Personalized Service to States

Connecting state education leaders from across the nation is at the heart of our mission. Our supports and services further equip state education leaders in their decision-making on policy issues, connect them with states working on similar goals and aid them in movement on legislation. We provide personalized support because we understand that no two states approach policy the same way.

TESTIMONY FOR LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES, TASKFORCES AND WORKING GROUPS |

Our policy experts provide nonpartisan and evidence-based information when states need research and a trusted understanding of policy trends and solutions.

STATE INFORMATION REQUESTS | Our staff provide tailored responses to questions from state policymakers and their staffers during the policymaking process.

EVENTS | We organize annual events to share education policy expertise and elevate connection opportunities for state policymakers to learn from one another. Our events range from small-group strategy sessions to large events with over 500 attendees.

Pertinent Education Policy Resources

We publish timely and accessible education policy resources that address education issues from early care through workforce development. We take pride in being a trusted resource for state policymakers wherever they are in addressing an education issue.

STATE EDUCATION POLICY TRACKING TOOL |

Our policy team tracks all state education legislation across the nation on a range of education topics and issues. Our [interactive map](#) allows users to search enacted and vetoed education bills from the past few years. We also maintain an archive of legislation dating back to 1996.

50-STATE COMPARISONS | [50-State Comparisons](#)

offer a comprehensive collection of information that allows users to compare how states are approaching key issues and answers common questions on the topic.

POLICY REPORTS | We use our expertise, research and policy tracking to dive deep into every angle of education policy to best support state policymakers in decisions for their states. We publish a [variety of reports](#) that assist state leaders at all levels, no matter their experience.

ED NOTE BLOG | Our [blog](#) offers with quick, easy-to-read posts on trending education policy issues and highlights of state work.




3,875
attendees
at our events




89%
of Commissioner
appointments filled




25 events
in person
and virtual




7,406
legislative bills
tracked



421
information
requests
answered



1,476
legislative bills
summarized



**58 media
mentions**
in major outlets



17 visits
to states



52
reports and
blog posts

Our Work at a Glance

Delivering Key Insights on Education Policy Issues

Our mission is fueled by the in-depth reports we publish to help state policymakers learn important context and strategies to address pressing education policy issues in their state.

In 2023, we published:

- **Fifteen policy reports** diving into current legislative context on education issues spanning the education spectrum.
- **Eight 50-State Comparisons** providing a comprehensive look at how all 50 states and the District of Columbia approach a specific education issue in law or statute.
- **Thirty Ed Note blog posts** highlighting timely issues, innovative state examples and guest author contributions in an easy-to-read format.

We also offer annual coverage of key happenings like [governors' State of the State addresses](#) and [state elections](#) to deliver insights that keep our constituents in the know.

Also in 2023, we had the pleasure to publish three blog posts and a [Policy Outline](#) for our Immediate Past Chair's Initiative on equitable computer science education access under the leadership of former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson. We thank Gov. Hutchinson for his time as Chair and his role in elevating this pertinent issue.

Welcome to Our New Chair, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly



Every two years, a new governor serves as our Chair and establishes an education policy initiative for our organization to report on for states. We were honored to welcome our current Chair, Kansas Gov. Laura

Kelly, at our 2023 National Forum on Education Policy in Minneapolis. Under Gov. Kelly's leadership, we have started work on her 2023-25 Chair's Initiative on Education Access for Justice-Impacted Individuals. In Dec. 2023, we released the first of many resources on this topic: a [Policy Outline](#) that highlights three levers policymakers can use to increase access to higher education for people who are incarcerated.

“

I always enjoy working with Education Commission of the States on how states can increase opportunities for all students in achieving their life goals.”

- State SHEEO Office

CONVENE

Connecting State Policymakers From Across the Country

This year, we offered 25 virtual and in-person events to bring together state policymakers for collaboration and innovation.

National Forum on Education Policy is our signature, annual event that helps build relationships and knowledge among state leaders. We were thrilled to host **500+** attendees in Minneapolis full of insightful education policy sessions, expert speakers and networking opportunities. We coordinated panel discussions and dynamic presentations to support policymakers' most significant areas of focus:



This year's National Forum included:

- Representatives from 48 states and the District of Columbia.
- Experts in topics across the education spectrum.
- Private seminars for crucial role groups in state policy:
 - Governors' education policy advisors.
 - Legislative Education Staff Network.
 - Strong Start to Finish Learning Network.
 - STEAM policy academy.

“
Serving [with] ECS
has been an honor.
But, the best part
has been meeting
and working with
wonderful folks ...
associated with
ECS.”

- ECS Commissioner



Community of Practice

Our team is always working on bringing in new opportunities for state policymakers to strategize and collaborate on education policy issues. At our annual Winter Commissioners Meeting, we debuted a **Community of Practice workshop** to provide a new type of learning experience for attendees. This brought together a diverse set of experts and practitioners to highlight our Chair's Initiative on expanding education access for individuals impacted by the justice system. The Community of Practice gave attendees the unique opportunity to hear from experts in different roles who are invested in this issue, ask questions about their experiences and learn about opportunities to expand education access to people impacted by the justice system across states.

“

We are grateful for the opportunity afforded our small policy team to attend the policy workshop in Denver last October. It was a tremendous help and, I would add, a source of real encouragement for us to get this done.”

- State SHEEO Office

Supporting States With Personalized Services

The core of our work is our individualized education policy service to states. We know that state leaders need different kinds of supports depending on their context. In 2023, our team connected with policymakers in all 50 states, territories and the District of Columbia to support key policymaking work in a number of ways:

- Fifty-eight testimonies or presentations given in 26 states, with 21 being to a national audience.
- Fifty-eight technical assistance opportunities provided to policymakers in 34 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Thirty-eight policy consultations provided to policymakers in 21 states.
- Direct connections made between state policymakers in 11 states for one-on-one learning opportunities.

Additionally, we answered **421** requests for information. This is one of our most popular services, because of our nonpartisan analysis, trusted research and timeliness in response. The topics we received the most questions on were:





“
... [ECS’ response] to our information request led to legislation that was signed by our Governor last Friday. Thanks to each of you for contributing to this bill!”

- legislative staff member

State Education Policy Tracking

Our [State Education Policy Tracking tool](#) is the foundation of our research and trends work; it informs our analyses and the information we provide states. In 2023, Our Policy Team tracked **7,406** bills in 40 distinct policy issue areas. The high-volume policy areas were:

- Teaching
- Student Health
- K-12 Finance
- Postsecondary Affordability and Finance

Meet Our 2023 Executive Committee Members

The Executive Committee is made up of a bipartisan group of state leaders who provide strategic direction and oversight for the management, operations and financial policies.



CHAIR
Laura Kelly
*Governor
Kansas*



VICE CHAIR
Don Schaible
*Senator
North Dakota*



TREASURER
**Charlene
Russell-Tucker**
*Commissioner
of Education
Connecticut*



**ECS INTERIM
PRESIDENT**
Matt Padilla
*Interim President
Education Commission
of the States*

MEMBERS



Madeleine Bayard
*Senior Vice President,
Rodel Foundation
Delaware*



Stephanie Bell
*Member
State Board
of Education
Alabama*



Peter Blake
*Director
State Council of
Higher Education
Virginia*



Sydnee Dickson
*State Superintendent
of Public Instruction
Utah*



Aaron Thompson
*President, Counsel
on Postsecondary
Education
Kentucky*

Meet Our Funders

We believe that systemic changes in education come from collaboration. Partnerships strengthen our ability to help state policymakers address education challenges in strategic and collaborative ways. We're grateful for the support and collaboration from each of our Partners. We couldn't do our work without them!

Diamond

BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation*

Wallace 

Platinum

 CLASSWALLET

Curriculum
Associates®

 Pearson

 TEXAS
INSTRUMENTS

Gold

ACT®

Renaissance

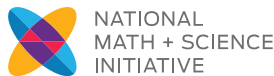
 sas

SAVVAS
LEARNING COMPANY

Silver



Bronze



2023 Foundations Support:

- Ascendium Education Group
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- ECMC Foundation
- The Kresge Foundation
- Lumina Foundation for Education Inc.
- Heising-Simons Foundation
- Hewlett Foundation
- John M. Belk Endowment
- The Joyce Foundation
- National Comprehensive Center
- National Endowment for the Arts
- U.S. Department of Education
- William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- The Wallace Foundation
- The Walton Family Foundation
- Walton Personal Philanthropy Group

Financial summary for the fiscal year ended Dec. 31, 2023.

Statement of Activities

Revenues

Grants/Contracts	3,713,902
Sponsorship Funding/Registration	647,110
State Fees	3,739,835
Gain/Loss - Investments	757,104
Other	412,813

Total Revenue **\$9,270,764**

Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	6,806,837
Other Operating Expenses	4,732,234

Total Expenses **\$11,539,071**

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Current Assets	10,656,620
Lease Asset	214,802

Total Assets **\$10,871,422**

Liabilities

Current Liabilities	468,320
Accruals	158,872
Lease Liabilities	215,544

Total Liabilities **\$842,736**

Net Assets

Operating Reserve	1,869,918
Donor Restricted	4,403,131
Undesignated	3,755,637

Total Net Assets **\$10,028,686**

Total Liabilities and Net Assets **\$10,871,422**

