



# EDUCATION TRENDS



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## 2016 State of the State Addresses: Governors' top education issues

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Each year, governors take the stage to highlight accomplishments and outline policy priorities for their states.

**"I BELIEVE IN THE PROMISE OF EDUCATION AND ITS POTENTIAL TO SERVE AS THE DOORWAY TO OPPORTUNITY"**

**- NEW YORK GOV.  
ANDREW CUOMO**

In an effort to provide up-to-date information on education policy trends, Education Commission of the States tracks all education policy proposals and accomplishments featured by governors in these State of the State addresses.

At the top of the agenda for governors in 2016 is the continued

focus on increasing education funding without raising taxes or cutting other services. Governors also seek to provide additional compensation to teachers while developing strategies to recruit and retain instructors. Additionally, governors are working to coordinate initiatives that make college more affordable and draw residents to degree and training programs for high demand sectors.

This report provides a summary of the top education issues highlighted by the 41 governors who have delivered their 2016 State of the State addresses to date. A full summary of the education policy highlights within each address is available on Education Commission of the States [website](#).

**Increasing teacher compensation and developing strategies to recruit and retain teachers was a common theme in the State of the State addresses.**

**Postsecondary affordability is a key issue in many states. Governors are recommending that states work to reduce student loan burdens and manage cost increases.**

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## THIS EDUCATION TRENDS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE TOP SEVEN EDUCATION PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNORS IN 2016:

- **School Finance:** As states continue to bring funding back to pre-recession levels, new investments in K-12 education were highlighted by at least 21 governors.
- **Teaching Quality - Compensation, Recruitment and Retention:** At least 16 governors are focused on ensuring that high-quality teachers are recruited, retained and better compensated.
- **Postsecondary Affordability:** Strategies for mitigating the potentially prohibitive costs of postsecondary education are on the minds of at least 12 governors.
- **Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development:** Meeting the needs of the state's employers by increasing the availability of a skilled workforce was addressed by at least 15 governors.
- **School Choice:** Choice policies were mentioned in at least seven of the governors' addresses.
- **Early Learning:** Improving long-term student success by providing high-quality early learning opportunities is a priority of at least nine governors.
- **High School Transitions - Career/College Counseling and Dual Enrollment:** At least six governors expressed interested in students' ability to enter college or the workforce well prepared.

## SCHOOL FINANCE

As states recover from the recession, governors have pledged to work with legislatures to develop creative ways to increase or maintain education spending levels without cutting services elsewhere. Governors across the country announced new education spending programs that directly address the needs of their states while outlining strategies to ensure their states increase spending responsibly.

The top priorities for governors were updating state funding formulas and using increased funding to directly improve conditions for teachers and students. The top spending items for many governors were teacher compensation, recruitment and retention programs and improvements to school building infrastructure.

At least 21 governors directly addressed education spending plans for the 2016 legislative session.

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**“I’VE BEEN CLEAR ABOUT MY POSITION: IF YOU USE THE ROADS, YOU SHOULD HELP PAY FOR THEM. WHAT I DON’T SUPPORT IS TAKING MONEY THAT SHOULD GO TO SCHOOLS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH, AND USING IT TO PATCH POTHOLES.”**

**- MISSOURI GOV. JAY NIXON**

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## HIGHLIGHTS: SCHOOL FINANCE

<b>ARIZONA GOV. DOUG DUCEY</b>	Highlighted his office's work developing a financing structure with credit rating agencies that will allow the state's best public schools to finance expansion projects at a lower cost. Proposed that this would be accomplished with dollars from the Arizona Public School Achievement District and other non-general fund dollars.
<b>GEORGIA GOV. NATHAN DEAL</b>	Requested that lawmakers implement a per-pupil funding formula for public schools.
<b>IDAHO GOV. BUTCH OTTER</b>	Requested a 7.9 percent increase in total education spending for the new state budget.
<b>IOWA GOV. TERRY BRANSTAD</b>	Proposed an increase in annual funding for school infrastructure, from \$458 million in 2016 to \$788 million in 2029, providing a total of \$20.7 billion.
<b>KANSAS GOV. SAM BROWNBACK</b>	Asked the legislature to design a new education funding system that puts more money into instruction and provides bonuses for exceptional teachers.
<b>MISSOURI GOV. JAY NIXON</b>	Requested a \$150 million increase in the budget for public education, including funding for the foundation formula, transportation, special education and struggling schools.
<b>NEW YORK GOV. ANDREW CUOMO</b>	Proposed a \$2.1 billion increase to school funding and an end to the Gap Elimination Adjustment, which divides a portion of state's funding shortfall among school districts and reduces aid accordingly.

## TEACHING QUALITY – COMPENSATION, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Plans to increase compensation for, recruit and retain teachers were at the top of many governors’ priority lists as a number of states continue to grapple with persistent teacher shortages. To address teacher needs and attract new talent, governors called for teacher mentoring programs, college tuition payment for future teachers and student loan repayment for current teachers. Proposals related to teacher compensation, recruitment and/or retention were prioritized by at least 16 governors.

“THINK ABOUT THE TEACHERS WHO CONTINUALLY RISE TO THE CHALLENGES THEIR STUDENTS MIGHT BRING THROUGH THE DOOR EVERY DAY. TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ARE DOING MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS MUST BE RECOGNIZED.”

– TENNESSEE GOV. BILL HASLAM

### HIGHLIGHTS: TEACHER COMPENSATION

<b>GEORGIA GOV. NATHAN DEAL</b>	Proposed adding \$300 million to the K-12 budget to provide a 3 percent salary increase for teachers and to reduce or eliminate furlough days.
<b>NEW MEXICO GOV. SUSANA MARTINEZ</b>	Called for an increase in current teacher salaries as well as an increase in starting teacher salaries to \$36,000 per year from \$34,000 per year. Recommended providing stipends to teachers who agree to teach hard-to-staff subjects such as math, science and special education. Asked the legislature to provide additional money to help teachers cover the cost of classroom supplies.
<b>OKLAHOMA GOV. MARY FALLIN</b>	Called for an additional \$178 million for a permanent \$3,000 teacher pay raise for every teacher in the state.
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD</b>	Recommended an increase in the state’s average teacher salary from just over \$40,000 per year to a target salary of \$48,500 per year.
<b>TENNESSEE GOV. BILL HASLAM</b>	Proposed investing an additional \$414 million in K-12 education, \$200 million of which would be for teacher salaries. Proposed offering year-round insurance to teachers by including nearly \$30 million for the 12th month of health insurance.
<b>WASHINGTON GOV. JAY INSLEE</b>	Requested an increase in the beginning teacher salary from \$36,000 per year to \$40,000 per year, as well as a minimum 1 percent raise to all other teachers.



## HIGHLIGHTS: TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

<b>IDAHO GOV. BUTCH OTTER</b>	Requested an allocation of \$38 million for teacher career ladder implementation, \$1.8 million for non-instructional career ladder implementation and \$5 million for new teacher development.
<b>INDIANA GOV. MIKE PENCE</b>	Called for the approval of a Next Generation Scholarship that would cover \$7,500 per year in tuition for students who are in the top 20 percent of their class and commit to teaching in Indiana for at least five years.
<b>NEW MEXICO GOV. SUSANA MARTINEZ</b>	Proposed an expansion of the loan repayment program and the teacher mentoring program. Proposed \$15,000 scholarships for college students who enter a college of education and commit to teaching in New Mexico.
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA GOV. NIKKI HALEY</b>	Recommended providing benefits to those who agree to teach in a challenged district for at least eight years, including college tuition payment, student loan repayment and graduate coursework payment. Requested the implementation of mentorship programs for all teachers.

## POSTSECONDARY AFFORDABILITY

Obtaining a postsecondary education is more important than ever before as students enter the workforce and compete for jobs. For many, however, the cost of pursuing a postsecondary degree is prohibitive. State leaders continue to search for solutions to make postsecondary education more affordable for all students. Alleviating the high cost of postsecondary education was a priority of several governors, with at least 12 addressing the issue in their State of the State speech. Proposals range from tuition freezes to the implementation and expansion of scholarship programs.

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**“MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, IT’S IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL. ... STUDENTS NEED TO BE ABLE TO ATTEND COLLEGE OR TECH SCHOOL AND FINISH IN A REASONABLE TIME WITHOUT AN UNREASONABLE DEBT.”**

**-SOUTH DAKOTA GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD**

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## HIGHLIGHTS: POSTSECONDARY AFFORDABILITY

<p><b>IDAHO GOV. BUTCH OTTER</b></p>	<p>Recommended implementing a tuition lock to ensure students at public universities pay the same tuition rate all four years they attend school. Requested \$5 million for the Opportunity Scholarships program, a need-based award for high school students, and \$5 million for the Completion Scholarships program for students with some postsecondary education to go back and finish their degree/certification.</p>
<p><b>MISSOURI GOV. JAY NIXON</b></p>	<p>Requested an additional \$56 million in the budget to provide colleges and universities with performance funding and a tuition freeze. Proposed an increased investment in A+ Scholarships, which provide reimbursements for qualified students in two- or four-year state schools. Proposed an increase in the number of Access Scholarships to reduce college costs for more low-income families.</p>
<p><b>RHODE ISLAND GOV. GINA RAIMONDO</b></p>	<p>Proposed an expansion of the Wavemaker fellowship program, a loan assistance program aimed at keeping STEM scholars in Rhode Island. Asked for continued funding for the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship, a program that provides financial assistance to students who have the greatest need and have demonstrated their academic promise. Proposed that the state not raise tuition at state colleges and universities.</p>
<p><b>SOUTH DAKOTA GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD</b></p>	<p>Proposed to freeze college tuition by using one-time funds to repay debt.</p>
<p><b>VERMONT GOV. PETER SHUMLIN</b></p>	<p>Recommended seeking funding for universal college savings accounts, which would provide \$250 for every child born in the state and \$500 if the child is from a low-income area. Announced the Step Up program, which will provide a free semester of college for first-generation, low-income residents, and requested \$2 million to fund the program.</p>
<p><b>WISCONSIN GOV. SCOTT WALKER</b></p>	<p>Proposed lowering the cost of higher education and easing the burden of student loan debt by passing legislation with the following components: 1) allow for the full deduction of student loan interest on state income taxes, 2) increase state grants for technical colleges to enroll another 1,000 students into high-demand career programs, 3) expand the emergency grants program for students at technical colleges and two-year University of Wisconsin Colleges, 4) increase internships within the University of Wisconsin system to help prepare students for future careers and 5) look to expand transparency by sending information to students each year about their current and projected student loan debt levels and education costs.</p>



## CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Fostering an environment that is conducive to economic growth is important for the long-term health of states. One way state governments can directly support growth is by ensuring a steady supply of workers trained to meet the needs of employers.

Governors in at least 15 states are seeking to connect residents to educational programs that provide marketable skills. Proposals include creating new workforce development policies to address a specific deficiency or expanding successful career programs that provide training or job connections.

### HIGHLIGHTS: CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

<b>IDAHO GOV. BUTCH OTTER</b>	Asked for support advancing a goal of 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds completing a college degree or professional certification by 2020 and requested \$3.8 million to address training backlogs for high-paying tech jobs.
<b>MISSOURI GOV. JAY NIXON</b>	Requested training funds for those seeking careers in high-demand areas of healthcare.
<b>MASSACHUSETTS GOV. CHARLIE BAKER</b>	Promoted an economic development bill that will invest \$75 million toward career/technical schools.
<b>NEW YORK GOV. ANDREW CUOMO</b>	Requested \$15 million to fund a Clean Energy Opportunity Training Program so State University of New York and community colleges can train workers in solar technology and installation.
<b>TENNESSEE GOV. BILL HASLAM</b>	Requested \$10 million to fund the second round of Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) grants, translating into more opportunities for communities to align degree and course offerings with the needs of their local workforce.
<b>WEST VIRGINIA GOV. EARL RAY TOMBLIN</b>	Promoted redirecting \$300,000 to expand the “Learn and Earn” career technical program that matches students with employers.

## SCHOOL CHOICE

School choice policies offer students and parents the opportunities to seek out schools and programs that better meet their needs. These policies seek to create a more competitive environment that improves learning conditions. School choice has expanded to include options such as charter, magnet and home school options, as well as vouchers, open enrollment policies and tax credits.

This year, governors are giving close attention to charter school policies. Several governors have asked that caps on new charter schools be removed in order for more students to have access to these options. School choice policies were discussed in at least seven addresses.

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**“BUT A STATE THAT PLACES SUCH HIGH VALUE ON EDUCATION SHOULD NOT PLACE ARBITRARY LIMITS ON HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOLS. AND IT SHOULD NOT SIT IDLY BY WHILE SO MANY PARENTS FEEL THE PAIN OF MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR THEIR CHILDREN.”**

**- MASSACHUSETTS GOV. CHARLIE BAKER**

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### HIGHLIGHTS: SCHOOL CHOICE

<b>MASSACHUSETTS GOV. CHARLIE BAKER</b>	Requested an expansion of charter school enrollment by lifting the cap on new charter schools to accommodate close to 37,000 students on waiting lists.
<b>MISSISSIPPI GOV. PHIL BRYANT</b>	Proposed allowing parents to use their tax dollars to send their children to a school of their choosing and removing some charter school attendance barriers to allow more students to attend charter schools.
<b>NEW JERSEY GOV. CHRIS CHRISTIE</b>	Called on the state to prioritize greater freedom and flexibility for charter schools by: 1) exploring ways to create greater flexibility in teacher certification, 2) exploring ways to make it easier for charter schools to find facilities and 3) pursuing regulatory reforms to encourage development of more charter schools to serve at-risk youth, including students with autism or developmental delays.
<b>OKLAHOMA GOV. MARY FALLIN</b>	Promoted legislation creating an education savings account program for the state that will allow students to personalize learning while protecting state education finances.
<b>RHODE ISLAND GOV. GINA RAIMONDO</b>	Proposed leveling the playing field between district schools and charter schools by revising the funding formula.

## EARLY LEARNING

High-quality early learning continues to be one of the primary strategies for states attempting to narrow the achievement gap. State funding for pre-k programs increased by 12 percent nationwide in the past year, and only five states do not invest state funds into preschool programs. At least nine governors proposed plans related to increasing funding for early learning, expanding access to early learning or improving the quality of early learning.

**“CHILDREN WHO ATTEND PRE-K ARE MORE LIKELY TO READ AT GRADE LEVEL QUICKER, THEIR MATH SCORES ARE HIGHER AND THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES. WE KNOW THIS PROGRAM WORKS - WE’VE SEEN THE STATISTICS - BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY WE’VE SEEN THE RESULTS IN THE LIVES OF OUR STUDENTS.”**

**- ALABAMA GOV. ROBERT BENTLEY**

### HIGHLIGHTS: EARLY LEARNING

<b>ALABAMA GOV. ROBERT BENTLEY</b>	Proposed doubling the amount of funding for the First Class Pre-K program, a voluntary pre-k program based out of the Alabama Office of School Readiness.
<b>GEORGIA GOV. NATHAN DEAL</b>	Recommended a pre-k budget of \$358 million, with \$26.2 million for teacher salary increases and \$7.9 million for 3 percent merit pay increases.
<b>IDAHO GOV. BUTCH OTTER</b>	Called for \$10.7 million in the state budget for pre-k through third grade reading interventions.
<b>MISSOURI GOV. JAY NIXON</b>	Requested that early childhood education be included in the funding formula in order to expand access.
<b>NEW YORK GOV. ANDREW CUOMO</b>	Proposed \$800 million in total funding to local community budgets, bringing the state contribution to 100 percent, in an effort to ensure that participation in pre-k moves from 60 percent to 100 percent.
<b>NEW MEXICO GOV. SUSANA MARTINEZ</b>	Proposed expanding pre-k by building \$5 million worth of new pre-k classrooms.

## HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITIONS – COLLEGE/CAREER COUNSELING AND DUAL ENROLLMENT

Many governors discussed plans to create more seamless transitions from high school to college and the workforce through college and career counseling and dual enrollment. In many cases, high school transition programs were touted as strategies for reducing the cost of postsecondary education and allowing students the opportunity to graduate from high school with college credit. Making the most of the four years students spend in high school was on the minds of at least six governors.

“[T]AKING THE FULLEST ADVANTAGE OF THE INVESTMENTS WE’RE MAKING WILL REQUIRE STUDENTS AND PARENTS TO HAVE MORE AND BETTER INFORMATION ABOUT POSTSECONDARY AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.”

- IDAHO GOV. BUTCH OTTER

### HIGHLIGHTS: COLLEGE AND CAREER COUNSELING

<b>IDAHO GOV. BUTCH OTTER</b>	Recommended \$5 million go to college and career counseling programs for high school students.
<b>IOWA GOV. TERRY BRANSTAD</b>	Proposed that the state advance more effective career guidance within the K-12 system so that teachers, counselors and other school leaders can infuse career information and career-related skills into local curriculum. Recommended that productive partnerships between employers and educators be advanced, encouraging business and nonprofit communities to better articulate key needs for Iowa’s educators.
<b>WISCONSIN GOV. SCOTT WALKER</b>	Requested that students receive guidance at a younger age to prepare them for the careers available in Wisconsin.

### HIGHLIGHTS: DUAL ENROLLMENT

<b>COLORADO GOV. JOHN HICKENLOOPER</b>	Called on the legislature to continue support for dual enrollment programs that improve student outcomes and to build on concurrent enrollment programs to develop a model for college and career readiness, giving students the opportunity to gain professional experience and earn college credit while achieving their high school diplomas.
<b>GEORGIA GOV. NATHAN DEAL</b>	Requested an additional \$58 million for Move on When Ready, a dual enrollment program.
<b>WISCONSIN GOV. SCOTT WALKER</b>	Proposed an additional \$3 million in grants through Wisconsin Fast Forward for dual enrollment programs to help districts partner with local technical colleges and help students get a jump start on their career plans.

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