HOT TOPIC: Education

Finding Balance
First Lady Michelle Obama

“More than anything else, we try to teach our girls about balance. You don’t have to worry about having pizza and cake when you go to a birthday party. It’s just not a good idea to eat that way for every meal.”

—First Lady Michelle Obama

Teachers Who Made a Difference
Creative Ways to Fund Higher Ed
Arne Duncan on the Issues
States Find Common Ground

PLUS: 2010 Toll Fellows

www.csg.org
At a time when health care reform and midterm elections will have state governments in the midst of major transition, it has never been more important for state leaders to come together and begin deciphering what lies ahead on the political horizon. We invite you to attend the 2010 CSG National Conference in Providence, R.I., Dec. 3–6 as we take a look at what’s next for state governments.

DAVID GERGEN | Sunday, Dec. 5, 8-9:30 a.m.
Commentator, editor, teacher, public servant, best-selling author and adviser to presidents for 30 years, David Gergen has been an active participant in American life. He served as director of communications for President Reagan and held positions in the administrations of Presidents Nixon, Ford and Clinton. Gergen currently serves as editor-at-large at U.S. News & World Report and as a regular television commentator on CNN.

GWEN IFILL | Sunday, Dec. 5, 3:30-5 p.m.
Gwen Ifill is moderator and managing editor of Washington Week and senior correspondent for The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. Ifill joined both in 1999, interviewing newsmakers and reporting on issues ranging from foreign affairs to politics. She is also frequently asked to moderate debates in national elections, most recently the vice presidential debate during the 2008 election.

Register at www.csg.org/events with promo code CAPIDEAS10 and receive a 20% discount off attendee registration. Full conference agenda will be available at www.csg.org/events. Please check back often for updates and added host state events.
First Lady Michelle Obama has set an ambitious goal—to solve the problem of childhood obesity within a generation. Her “Let’s Move” initiative targets the obesity epidemic, and strives to enlist the help of schools, families and communities in the effort.

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A Bumper Sticker Issue

You may have seen the popular bumper sticker that reads, “If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.” It makes a good point. States and territories have been grappling with providing a world-class public education as well as the high price that results from the downstream costs of schools that fail.

Every day, almost 7,000 students become dropouts. That means about 1.2 million students annually will not graduate as scheduled. The average annual income for a high school dropout is about $17,500, compared to $27,000 for a high school graduate. Each dropout costs the nation approximately $260,000 over his or her lifetime. Every state has a vested interest in the success of its schools. We know that high school graduates live longer, are less likely to be teen parents, are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children, are less likely to commit crimes, rely on government health care, or use other public services such as food stamps or housing assistance. We also know high school graduates engage in voting and volunteering in their communities at higher levels. Currently, about three-quarters of the nation’s freshman class will graduate on time with a regular diploma.

Education is a major segment of every state’s budget. Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools are about $543 billion. The national average spent to educate one student was just over $10,800 per year. State budgets support approximately 100,000 public elementary and secondary schools where nearly 50 million students attend and 3.3 million teachers teach. Demands on schools will only grow as the school-aged population grows.

Higher education is also a major investment for most state governments. Public postsecondary institutions are seeing record enrollments driven by both an increase in the traditional college-age population and a higher percentage of those students attending college. From 2000 to 2008, undergraduate enrollment in postsecondary institutions increased 24 percent and is expected to reach 19 million students in 2019.

Given the stakes in educational outcomes, it is no surprise state leaders continue to be innovators in education. The most recent wave of innovations have been fostered by the efforts of some states to compete for a share of the $4.3 billion federally funded “Race to the Top” grants. The National Governors Association and The Council of State Governments have also been active in helping states develop and implement common core curriculum standards to propel educational achievement forward.

In this issue of Capitol Ideas we share the challenges and celebrate the success states are experiencing in their quest to adequately fund and effectively design high performance educational experiences for today’s students.

This issue also features an interview with First Lady Michelle Obama in which she discusses her goal of ending childhood obesity. This issue is timely given recent research that suggests for the first time the generation growing up today will have a shorter life expectancy than the previous generation of Americans. Just as First Lady Laura Bush brought a needed focus on the importance of reading, Michelle Obama is drawing our nation’s attention to the epidemic of obesity in our children and encouraging all of us to move on the issue.

We also share with you our interview with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in which he discusses his plan, in partnership with the states, for improving schools and student performance. With the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind pending in Congress, states can potentially expect significant changes in the way the federal government defines and funds its education priorities. The Council of State Governments is prepared to follow the action in Washington and keep state leaders informed as the debate moves forward.

As the nation heads back to school, we want to commend state leaders for their leadership in education. While much remains to be accomplished, state leaders have shown a remarkable willingness to innovate in their quest to build successful futures for the next generation. Just as the bumper sticker says, they realize the price of ignorance is one we simply cannot afford to pay.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

David Adkins
“The achievement gap is unacceptable. Education is the civil rights issue of our generation. It is the only way to make good on the American promise of equality.”

—U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan in his “Quiet Revolution” Speech to the National Press Club in July

“We owe it to the children who aren’t reaching their potential because they’re not getting the nutrition they need during the day.”

—First Lady Michelle Obama, in a Washington Post editorial supporting reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Bill

“If we’re not seeing results in the classroom, then let’s work with teachers to help them become more effective. If that doesn’t work, let’s find the right teacher for that classroom.”

—President Obama, during a speech July 29 to the National Urban League Centennial Conference in Washington, D.C.

“You need to look at us differently. We are not black, we’re not white, biracial, Hispanic, Asian, or any other nationality. We are the future.”

—Na’Dreya Lattimore, 10, of Covington, Ky., in a letter to President Obama that he read during a speech July 29 to the National Urban League Centennial Conference in Washington, D.C.

“Success is never final and reform is never complete. If you’re involved with education reform, you need to stay with it for the long haul. It’s a process, not an event.”

—Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, addressing the National Conference of State Legislatures in July
The East

CHARTER SCHOOLS
Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell recently announced nearly $1.7 million in funding for two charter schools, according to the New Haven Register. Nearly $190,000 will replace windows at Elm City College Preparatory Middle School and $1.5 million will go to expanding and improving Common Ground Charter School. Two more charter schools are in line for state money, the newspaper reports.

LOW-INCOME SCHOOLS
Five elementary schools in Delaware received grants from the state for closing achievement gaps and scoring well on federal benchmarks under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, according to a press release. The schools each won $150,000 from the state’s new Academic Achievement Award, for academic excellence with low-income student populations, the press release said.

TEXTBOOK RENTALS
As tuition at many public colleges and universities is increasing, the University of Vermont Bookstore will begin renting textbooks this fall to students looking to save hundreds on buying books, according to the Burlington Free Press. For example, a physics book that costs $209.35 rents for $78, the newspaper reports.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
A New Jersey appeals court rejected a claim by a New Jersey school administrators’ group that new regulations limiting administrator compensation are unconstitutional, according to The Associated Press. The restrictions in question were imposed under former Gov. Jon Corzine.

RACE TO THE TOP
Pennsylvania was one of the 16 finalists invited to present its federal Race to the Top grant application in Washington, D.C., and its application was rated seventh out of the 41 states that applied in the first round, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Higher Education. Pennsylvania’s record of seven years of gains in student achievement gives the state an edge in the second round contest for up to $400 million in Race to the Top funds, Gov. Ed Rendell said in a press release.

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50TH ANNUAL MEETING
Read more about the CSG/Eastern Regional Conference 50th Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum at www.csgeast.org.

Maryland Receives Good Grades for School Nutrition

You could say the Maryland State Department of Education made the honor roll for its summer nutrition program. In fact, the program ranked second in the nation for its increase in the number of children participating for the 2008–09 school year, according to a press release. The state’s summer nutrition program offers children from low-income families and neighborhoods nutritious meals and snacks during the summer, according to the press release. Many of the children participating in the summer food program also participate in the school lunch programs during the year receiving free or reduced-price meals.

“The state’s summer nutrition program serves as building blocks for children so that they can continue to grow and return to school ready to learn.”

To learn more about these and other developments in the Eastern Region, visit: capitolideas.csg.org and www.csgeast.org.
North Carolina Drives Clean School Buses

This school year the wheels on a clean diesel bus will go round and round in North Carolina. The state received six new environmentally friendly children-haulers to replace older school buses in Wilson, Edgecombe, Pitt and Nash counties, according to a press release.

“We already know that school buses are the safest way for children to get to and from school,” said State Superintendent June Atkinson. “We are pleased to be able to do our part in also helping to make the air healthier for students and grateful to the EPA for sharing the cost of these new clean diesel buses.”

Stimulus funds helped make the switch possible and came from Recovery Act dollars funneled through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program. The six new school buses feature the latest in clean diesel technology and emit 20 times less harmful exhaust emissions than 1998 engines, the press release reports.

“These new buses will be healthier for the students and people in these counties,” said Sheila Holman, director of the North Carolina Division of Air Quality. “By emitting less nitrogen oxide, the new buses also will better position the state to meet its goals and the possibility of stricter air quality standards from the EPA.”

TEACHER PENSIONS
Alabama’s pension costs for active and retired teacher pensions and other employees could increase $745 million—a 77 percent jump—by decade’s end, according to The Birmingham News. “The problem is that the cost of the retirement system is exceeding the amount of money the legislature has to appropriate for it,” Teachers’ Retirement System board Chairman Paul Hubbert told the newspaper.

PRIVATIZE HIGHER ED?
Virginia Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling said privatizing public colleges and universities is not likely and not practical—even if the system faces budget cut after budget cut. “Public universities are also there for a purpose and the primary purpose of which is being able to control cost and being able to make sure that education remains available and affordable for every child who wants to pursue higher education,” Bolling said.

SCHOOL MILK
Only fat-free milk and low-fat 1 percent milk will be served in Mississippi schools this school year, thanks to a new standard approved by the State Board of Education. “By lowering the fat content of school milk, children get the nutrients they need without extra fat and calories that can contribute to weight gain,” Shane McNeill, director of the Office of Healthy Schools in the Mississippi Department of Education, said in a press release.

TEACHER LAYOFFS
Florida cut university budgets and community college funding, which led to teacher layoffs, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The University of Florida will slash 150 positions this year, including 50 staff and faculty layoffs, and Florida State University is laying off up to 200 faculty and staff, the center reports.

TUITION HIKES
Georgia’s four public research colleges—Georgia State, Georgia Tech, the Medical College of Georgia and the University of Georgia—increased tuition by $500 per semester after the state cut funding for higher education by 7 percent, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Community colleges will increase tuition by $50 per semester, the center reports.

64TH ANNUAL MEETING
To view photos and presentations, and read policy positions from the 64th Southern Legislative Conference in Charleston, S.C., visit the SLC website at www.slcatlanta.org.

To learn more about these and other developments in the Southern Region, visit: capitolideas.csg.org and www.slcatlanta.org.
The Midwest

**SCHOOL FUNDS UP**
Iowa Gov. Chet Culver said in August the state’s economy would rebound enough to support a 4 percent spending increase for schools, according to the Des Moines Register. The proposed increase could amount to more than $100 million but must still be approved by the legislature next year, the newspaper reports.

**MICHIGAN SCHOOLS**
More Michigan high schools are meeting state goals for improvement, according to the Detroit Free Press. Nearly 82 percent are meeting the state’s goals, compared with nearly 71 percent during the 2008–09 school year, the newspaper reports. The number of elementary schools meeting the standards held virtually steady while the number of middle schools meeting the state’s standards dropped.

**TUITION HIKES**
South Dakota slashed its higher education budget by $6.5 million. To make up the difference in state funding, the South Dakota Board of Regents increased tuition at the state’s public universities by 4.6 percent and cut university programs by $4.4 million, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

**FINANCIAL AID**
Michigan is cutting financial aid by more than 61 percent, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The cuts mean a 50 percent decrease in competitive scholarships, a 44 percent decrease in tuition grants and elimination of nursing scholarships, work-study, the Part-Time Independent Student Program, Michigan Education Opportunity Grants and the Michigan Promise Scholarships, the center reports.

**ONLINE LEARNING**
The Kansas Department of Education approved Kansas Online Learning to offer a statewide, online learning program for students, beginning this school year, according to a press release. The program is a public school option for kindergarten through 12th grade students. The virtual educational portal allows students to work at their own pace from any location, the press release said.

**65TH ANNUAL MEETING**
Visit the CSG Midwest website at www.csgmidwest.org to view presentations and read a meeting summary. Also check out the next issue of Stateline Midwest to read more about the meeting.

**Illinois Education Cuts Eat into School Transportation, Sports**

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn’s latest budget cuts will hit school transportation budgets, the Chicago Tribune reported in early August.

Quinn’s budget cuts mean education funding from preschool through high school will be cut by another $70 million, the newspaper reports. That money will come primarily from school transportation funds, according to the newspaper. In some cases, school districts were already trimming transportation budgets and directing children in subdivisions to be picked up in more central or alternate locations rather than near their doors, according to the Chicago Tribune.

The new budget brings the total cuts in school spending to $311 million, the newspaper reports. Budget cuts are also cutting money from arts and foreign language funding, according to the newspaper.

In Chicago public schools, school officials were trying to close a budget gap by cutting non-varsity sports, according to another article in the Chicago Tribune.

The district last spring originally eliminated all sophomore sports to help, but revoked those cuts after public protest and action at the state level, the newspaper reports.

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley praised the state Board of Education for its action on the cuts.

“The Board of Education, that’s an example of doing an effective job and putting it back into effect, because the sports program is very important for thousands and thousands of young men and women here, both in elementary and high schools,” Daley said at a press conference, according to the newspaper.
Montana Needs to See ID Before You Get Medicinal Marijuana

After health officials found several out-of-state patients on the patient registry for medical marijuana, applicants now will have to prove they are Montana residents with a valid driver’s license before being added to the registry for medical pot, according to the Billings Gazette.

The state’s health officials decided to tighten the policy after finding an undisclosed number of nonresidents on the registry for medical marijuana cards, the newspaper reports.

Health officials decided to change their policy after discovering that several people whose permanent residences were outside Montana, such as college students and snowbirds, had applied for medical marijuana cards. It is unclear just how many such applications were received.

“It was enough that it was a concern,” Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services spokesman Chuck Council told the Billings Gazette.

“When the law was created, it was meant that Montana citizens were the ones who were (supposed to be) getting medical marijuana cards,” Council said.

By the end of July, approximately 23,500 medical marijuana patients were listed on the state’s registry, the newspaper reports, representing an increase of nearly 4,000 people in just one month.
10-year Graduation Trend

While graduation rates slipped slightly in 2007—69 percent of students nationally received a diploma that year—the **10-year trend** showed an increase of **3.1 percent** in graduates nationwide. Some states made big gains over that decade, while other states fell back, according to “Diplomas Count 2010,” released in June by the EPE Research Center, a division of the nonprofit Editorial Projects in Education.

**Fast Facts: Nongraduates**

1 of 5 nongraduates attend 25 individual school districts.

11,000 school districts in the U.S. issue diplomas.

1.3 million students failed to graduate in 2010.

Source: EPE Research Center
The Class of 2007

How many graduated?

- Males: 66 percent
- Females: 72.9 percent
- American Indian: 50.7 percent
- Asian: 80.7 percent
- Hispanic: 55.5 percent
- Black: 53.7 percent
- White: 76.6 percent

Source: EPE Research Center

Top 10 States for 8th Grade Reading & Math Scores

8th Grade Reading
1. Connecticut
2. Massachusetts
3. New Jersey
4. Vermont
5. Wisconsin
6. Pennsylvania
7. Minnesota
8. Montana
9. Michigan
10. South Dakota

8th Grade Math
1. Massachusetts
2. Connecticut
3. Vermont
4. New Hampshire
5. Colorado
6. New Jersey
7. Virginia
8. Maryland
9. Minnesota
10. Pennsylvania

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress

Relationship between per pupil expenditures and graduation rates

Source: New America Foundation
‘MY ONLY GOAL IS SUCCESS’

Capital Ideas Interviews Education Secretary Arne Duncan about Issues Facing Education

The Obama administration is taking steps to engage the states in a new dialogue to address issues facing education in the U.S. today. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, a former Chicago school superintendent is leading the charge to spark reform in the nation’s schools. He’s open to anything that will address underperforming schools and close the achievement gap, and that includes altering the way education funding is awarded as well as supporting changes states are already making. “My only goal is success,” he said. Capital Ideas visited with Duncan about the issues.

by Mary Branham

Federal Role in Education
“Our role in Washington is to support reform by encouraging bold approaches to addressing underperforming schools, closing the achievement gap, strengthening the field of education, reducing the dropout rate, and boosting college access and success. Historically, the department has been an agency that monitored compliance with federal regulations. I want the department to become an engine of innovation. I want the department to provide powerful incentives to states, districts and nonprofits to innovate—but at the same time leave most of the entrepreneurship for achieving our common goals in local hands. People want national leadership but not at the expense of local control.”

No Child Left Behind
“No Child Left Behind (NCLB) helped to expose the achievement gap by requiring reporting of test scores by all students and all subgroups. It made sure that schools were accountable for the performance of all students, including those that were previously excluded from accountability. It required that we measure our efforts to improve education by looking at outcomes and it helped create a national conversation about student achievement.

“On the other hand, NCLB unfairly labeled many schools as failures even when they were making progress. It placed too much emphasis on standardized tests, and didn’t account for students’ academic growth in its accountability system.

“NCLB’s biggest mistake was that it didn’t encourage high learning standards. By letting each state define ‘proficiency,’ it encouraged states to lower standards. The net effect is that we told parents and kids they were succeeding when, in fact, they were not.”

Elementary and Secondary Education Act
“The (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) needs a fair system of accountability that—instead of labeling schools as failing but not providing support to improve—will focus the most intensive interventions and resources on the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools and those with persistent achievement gaps. Rather than dictating one-size-fits-all solutions, we want to give the vast majority of schools flexibility to improve. We want to reward schools that accelerate student achievement, and identify and reward outstanding teachers and leaders. We also want to support students most at risk in low-performing schools and schools with large, persistent achievement gaps. But we need to focus on turning around the bottom 5 percent of schools so they give students the world-class education they deserve.”

by Mary Branham
“States have responded to the financial incentive of Race to the Top to build their capacity for reform. In 46 states and the District of Columbia, governors, educators, parents, union leaders and community activists worked together to create bold, comprehensive plans for reform. Every state that applied will benefit from this consensus-building process. They have bold plans for reforms with statewide buy-in. Beyond Race to the Top, other federal dollars will support their plans to raise standards, improve teaching and use data more effectively to support student learning and turn around underperforming schools.

“President Obama has indicated that he wants to keep the momentum of Race to the Top going. He is proposing to make Race to the Top a permanent part of the Department’s budget—requesting $1.35 billion in fiscal 2011. In our Blueprint for Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we have proposed expanding Race to the Top to include both state- and district-level competitions.”

“i have often said this isn’t just about the money. Real change is driven by people willing to give their lives to a cause. States, districts, teachers and school leaders are fed up with schools that don’t work. They know that changing our schools is about working together and putting the needs of children ahead of everyone else. The entire (Race to the Top) process has moved the nation and already dramatically accelerated education reform. I’m confident that our nation’s leaders are committed to continuing reforms.”

“Through the Title I School Improvement Grants program, states are identifying almost 5,000 schools that need to be turned around. They have been chronically underperforming and need to be fundamentally changed. With grants from this program, we are supporting local efforts to adopt proven turnaround strategies. These schools will need to make tough choices about improving their leadership and teaching to accelerate student achievement.”

“We don’t want to get sidetracked in a false choice between competitive and formula funding—we need them both. Formula programs provide important foundational support for the education of students with unique needs, such as disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. Competitive programs provide incentives for reform that will help all students and they will reward proposals that give priority to high-need students. Our Blueprint and our 2011 budget request both call for maintaining funding formula programs. In our proposed 2011 budget, 80 percent of the funding for K–12 programs is formula funding.”

“Charter schools are public schools. They serve our children with our money. They are accountable to taxpayers—just as traditional public schools are. One big difference is that they have more autonomy. The best of them go beyond the regular school day and provide social services such as parenting classes for young moms. They stay with students every step of the way—from pre-k through college. I have said repeatedly that I am not a fan of charters—but I am a fan of good charters—just as I am a fan of good traditional schools. My only goal is success.”

“our nation’s leaders are committed to continuing reforms.”

“In America, we have had 50 different standards and 50 different goalposts. In basketball the basket is always 10 feet high. In football the field is always 100 yards long. A 3-pointer is always worth three points and a touchdown is always worth six. Only in education do we have 50 different goalposts. When parents are told their children are ‘meeting a state standard,’ they assume that their child is on track to be successful. But in states with low standards, that’s not true. The state-led effort to adopt common standards that are designed to prepare students for college and careers will give parents an honest report of their children’s progress.”

“Collaboration and linkages between early learning, K–12, higher education, and adult education can be game changing for our children and our country. Their mutual self-interest will drive the development of rigorous standards, enhance the profession of teaching, and improve the data systems that will drive reform. Three areas are ripe for collaboration: the development of rigorous, college- and career-ready standards; rethinking teacher preparation programs and professional development; and developing comprehensive cradle-to-career data systems that incorporate strong safeguards to protect student privacy.

“To reach the president’s goal that America should once again have the highest college graduation rate in the world by the end of the decade, K–12 and higher education must become synergistic—working together to accomplish much more than working apart. If they continue to expand their collaboration, align their work and share their resources, they can produce meaningful agreements that have the authority to impact the way the education system actually works.”

Read the full interview with Duncan at capitolideas.csg.org.
Prudent financial management is the heart of a state treasurer’s job. Making informed choices is critical to protecting public funds. Unfortunately, many of our citizens lack the tools to make good decisions about their personal finances. The difficulties many Americans face—home foreclosures, credit card debt, inadequate retirement savings—are due in good part to a lack of money management skills. More than two-fifths of U.S. adults gave themselves a grade of C or worse on their knowledge of personal finance, as measured by a recent Harris Interactive poll.

If we as state leaders want to help people overcome economic difficulty, one thing we must do is help our citizens become more financially literate.

And financial education should begin at a young age.

The Jump$tart Coalition, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization focusing on financial literacy, conducted a survey of more than 6,000 high school seniors in 2008 in which the students were asked basic money management questions. The average score was a woeful 48 percent.

Treasurers and other state leaders are addressing this problem by bringing money management education into elementary and high schools. They sponsor programs such as “Bank-at-School” that teach children how to manage their money with real accounts.

These state leaders also form partnerships to bring resources into the classroom. For instance, several treasurers work with VISA to offer “Financial Football,” an online game that uses National Football League teams and rules to engage students on money management topics.

In West Virginia, State Treasurer John Perdue, working with the state Department of Education and the legislature, recently launched an initiative to teach financial skills in every public school. The program, called “Net Worth,” seeks to seamlessly integrate personal finance education into the core curriculum taught throughout the state.

Finance concepts are being integrated into math, language arts and social studies classes so students can learn how they apply to many subjects. The level of difficulty is also matched to the appropriate age level, so students acquire skills at a gradual pace throughout their school years.

By the time students graduate from high school, they will understand concepts like compound interest, taking on debt cautiously and saving for the future. This knowledge is crucial for young people and adults to achieve an improved standard of living for themselves and their families.

State treasurers are joined by many others in government, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector in the effort to promote financial literacy. This is truly an area where we can cross political and state lines to make a difference for many Americans.
Former West Virginia Gov. Bob Wise likens American students’ academic performance to the recent Winter Olympics.

“What if I told you these were the results—15th in speed skating, in bobsledding 21st, skiing at 24th and luge 25th. Anybody remember it happening that way?” said Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education, a nonprofit group dedicated to all children graduating high school ready for college or a career.

“That, of course, is not what happened at the Winter Olympics. It is what happened in 2007 for the academic Olympics. That is when our 15-year-olds, in a demographically weighted sample, took the same test as did 15-year-olds in the 30 most developed nations in the world. … This is how we came out—15th in reading, 21st in science, 24th in problem-solving and 25th in math.”

The college graduation rates aren’t much better for the U.S.

In 1995, the U.S. was second of developed nations in students graduating high school and going on to receive four-year degrees, Wise said. In 10 years, the U.S. dropped to 15th, he said. The U.S. is a little better on two-year programs, but has dropped from second to 10th place.

Raising Standards

So how does America compete in the global marketplace when its students are performing at about the same level—or worse—as former Soviet bloc nations on international tests? One possible answer getting a lot of play nationally is Common Core State Standards.

Each state has its own set of academic standards, which generally are adopted by the
状态和课程评估。

在过去，每个州都制定了自己的标准，而且这些标准各不相同。当学生从一个州转移到另一个州时，往往会出现问题，即哪些课程可以转移到新州，而哪些课程需要重新学习，因为不同的标准。大学、学院甚至雇主也无法确定内华达州的高中毕业生是否具有与俄亥俄州相同的技能。

这就是“共通核心”州立标准运动所起的作用。由美国国家州长协会和国家州长委员会共同领导的专家们在过去两年中，就数学和英语语言艺术共同制定了标准。尽管在1990年代初期曾尝试过全国性标准，但艾格尔认为，当大多数州的标准如此庞杂时，教师在一年内是无法覆盖所有内容的。因此，更少、更聚焦的标准意味着教师可以深入教学并促进更深层次的理解。

“更清晰意味着更显而易见的学习期望。”艾格尔说。目前的标准往往很模糊。例如，标准可以是“理解”。“那么，你如何向学生展示这种理解？在课堂教师？如果你想确保它是可教授和可评估的，这是一个问题。”

更高的标准与大学和职业准备有关。学生应该准备好通过基础课程数学或英语语言艺术课程，他说道。“这就是通常所说的大学准备，”艾格尔说。

州的运动

一项最大的障碍是人们认为华盛顿正在干预教育。伊尔泽说：“…在德克萨斯州，人们看到联邦政府的影响力，他们没有看到很多好处。如果这甚至有点接近，它就没有机会。”

艾尔泽看到了“共通核心”的积极方面——效率、资源和技术材料。“还有很多好的事情可以做，但德克萨斯州并不信任华盛顿。”他说。

格拉汉姆表示，州对“共通核心”的采用有发言权。“你的州是否想去做，是自愿的。……人们不喜欢联邦政府告诉他们做什么。这使联邦政府的部分作用消失，因为它是由州驱动的。它是自下而上，而不是自上而下。”

采用是简单部分

虽然超过一半的州已采用“共通核心”，但实施过程远未结束。新的标准预计需要两到三年的时间。教师教育项目需要根据“共通核心”进行调整。
People don’t like for the federal government to tell them what to do in education. This takes that part of the equation away because it is state-driven. It is bottom up, not top down.”

—Rebecca Garland, chief academic officer
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

the new standards, professional development for current teachers will have to take place, new curricula must be written and textbooks adopted, as well as new assessments developed to measure how well students are learning.

But even with that added workload, states can expect to save money in the long run. Two national consortia of states have formed to compete for federal money to develop common assessments, which are expected to be in place by the 2014–15 school year. States spend $1.3 billion each year for assessments that fit their own standards; Illinois alone spends $60 million annually. By sharing those costs with a common assessment, states could potentially save millions.

“We know this work isn’t going to be cheap; it isn’t simple,” Gayler said. “But it’s work that states do all the time. They revise their standards. If they don’t revise their standards, they’re irrelevant. So these costs are going to come up for you in the future as standards get revised. This might be a way to share some of those costs.”

Garland agrees there are economic benefits. “If publishers know these standards are being used across a variety of states, they can spend more in the development of resources because the potential market for those resources will be larger. They can put more into making them higher quality and we can benefit from economies of scale,” she said.

Economy is the Challenge

But perhaps the biggest challenge to adopting and implementing common core has nothing to do with education—it’s the economy.

Pennsylvania Rep. James Roebuck, who chairs the House Education Committee and serves on the state’s board of education, views the common core as a positive, but, “again, there’s a resistance (by local school districts) to being told what to do. … Also the perception of when you’re telling people what to do, it has a price tag with it. If there’s no money to go with it, there’s also resistance. Everything we do, there’s always the question of how much is it going to cost.”

Illinois Rep. Roger Eddy, chair of the House Public Education Committee and superintendent of a small school district for 15 years, agrees. “The big concern is the climate, the recession, the way funding is affecting current programs,” he said. “I don’t care what it is, it’s hard to talk about something new except how we’re going to get through the next year, year and a half.”

Regardless of the poor economy, Eddy noted, moving ahead with implementing common core is important. “The key reason it’s a good thing is it … emphasizes career readiness,” Eddy said. “Right now, people look at the standards and say, ‘If I’m not going to college, why are they important to me?’ It’s because of the career readiness.”

The Council of State Governments’ Education Policy Group is playing a key role in helping states begin the discussion on implementing Common Core State Standards. CSG has conducted five regional meetings across the country to inform legislators about what common core is—a Common Core 101 discussion. It also is working on 16 state-specific meetings this summer to get all stakeholders in a particular state involved in planning how best to implement the new standards.

The meetings are possible through educational support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Teaching Common Core 101 »

For More on the Core »

• Common Core State Standards Initiative: http://www.corestandards.org/


• National PTA’s work on the Common Core State Standards Initiative: http://www.pta.org/common_core_state_standards.asp

• Council of Chief State School Officers’ cost analysis of the economic impact of Common Core State Standards will be posted this fall. http://www.ccsso.org/
Transforming Education

Kentucky was the first. Even before final educational standards were released, Kentucky signed up for the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The legislature enacted Senate Bill 1 Feb. 10, revising the assessment and accountability system for K–12 education in Kentucky.

The legislation connected standards to national and international benchmarks in order to increase the rigor of K–12 education and increase the number of college-ready students. It included a directive for the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Kentucky Department of Education to collaborate throughout the process.

“Involving ourselves in this initiative allowed us to rely on the expertise that (the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers) brought to the table and reduce costs,” said Michael Miller, director of curriculum at the Kentucky Department of Education.

The bill called for the agencies to revise the state’s academic content standards. Under the legislation, the revised content standards must meet the following requirements:

- Focus on critical knowledge and skills needed for success in the global economy;
- Result in fewer, but more in-depth standards to ensure students grasp and master the required skills;
- Communicate expectations more clearly and concisely to teachers, parents, students and Kentucky residents;
- Be based on evidence-based research;
- Consider international benchmarks; and
- Ensure the standards are aligned from elementary to high school to postsecondary education so students can be successful at each educational level.

The state provided training this summer and teachers began instruction related to the standards this fall. Students will be assessed on the standards in spring 2012.

A Common Message

The Illinois State Board of Education adopted the common standards for K–12 education June 24 as a means to better prepare students for success in college and careers.

“The goal is to have fewer, clearer and higher standards focused on college and career expectations,” state school board Chair Jesse H. Ruiz said in a press release from the Illinois State Board of Education. “Our board supports these new standards because they are essential for our students, for their futures and for the future economy of Illinois.”

During a discussion with The Council of State Governments, Illinois officials said messaging and communication will be vital to the success of effective implementation of the standards. Officials’ suggestions included:

- Use state terminology of “Illinois standards of learning” so all parties understand what academic standards have been revised;
- Focus on the aspect of college and career readiness when speaking to parents and stress the importance of reducing remedial education needs once students are in college;
- Emphasize the fact that students, who may not all be headed for postsecondary education, will be prepared for non-degree certification programs and have the skills needed in the work force; and
- Reaffirm the idea that career is the final outcome whether a student attends college or enters the work force after high school and the common standards will prepare them with the necessary skills.

“(The adoption) is critically important for the future of Illinois students, our economy and our state,” State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch said in the press release. “It is vital that we establish clear, consistent and rigorous learning standards to ensure our students, teachers and parents have a clear understanding of what students need to know and be able to do to be prepared for success after high school.”

The Illinois State Board of Education will host a series of regional informational meetings to officially launch the Common Core State Standards in conjunction with the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.
New Hampshire

Preparation is Key to Success

The New Hampshire Department of Education took the message of the common core state standards on the road.

The department held 14 two-hour feedback sessions across the state to gauge reaction to the common core standards in February and March. More than 200 teachers and curriculum leaders from more than half the school districts in the state came together to discuss the clarity and appropriateness of the common core standards in English language arts and mathematics.

“Teachers and specialists have informed us that the Common Core State Standards appear to align closely with our current New England Common Assessment standards,” said New Hampshire Commissioner of Education Virginia M. Barry.

But even though the standards make a good fit for the state, that doesn’t mean all the work will come easy or fast.

“My overall message is don’t panic,” said Deb Wiswell, administrator of curriculum, assessment, accountability and school improvement at the New Hampshire Department of Education. “This is a long project. It’s had its beginnings over the past year, but it will be around for a while so there’s no need to do anything rash this summer. There is time to be deliberate and thoughtful.”

With that in mind, the state board of education also hosted two public hearings to receive direct feedback from the public. Additionally, staff created and distributed a written feedback form to gather comments to pass along to state board members for consideration.

The New Hampshire State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards July 8. From there, the department of education created a timeline that stretches to 2015 for assessing the new standards. It includes:

- Fall 2010—testing as usual; review of standards ongoing
- Fall 2011—traditional state testing with possible field testing of new items
- Fall 2012—traditional state testing with transitional test items aligned to the common core standards
- Fall 2013—final administration of traditional state test with infusion of transitional test items for students
- Fall 2014—no test given to New Hampshire students with U.S. Department of Education approval to align with other state testing that is given in the spring
- Spring 2015—new state assessment based on the Common Core State Standards

Florida

Combining Legislative, Executive Branch Strategies

In Florida, legislators have long taken an interest in setting educational standards.

It is, after all, part of their responsibility. And long before the Common Core State Standards Initiative started taking shape, legislators were working with the state Board of Education to create more rigorous standards for students.

In 2006, the Florida legislature enacted House Bill 7087, which required the state Board of Education to periodically review the state’s content standards. That same year, the board adopted a six-year cycle to schedule regular reviews and revision of content standards, including necessary alignment with assessments, instructional materials, professional development and teacher licensure exams.

Building on that effort, the Florida legislature enacted Senate Bill 1908 in 2008 instructing the state Board of Education to create the next generation of standards. Stakeholders at the time deemed the mathematics standards acceptable, but decided the reading and language arts standards needed revision, and the state board began a revision process to comply with the legislation.

So it seemed like a natural progression when the board adopted the common core standards July 27 to replace earlier standards.

“I’m very pleased with the tremendous amount of work that has gone into developing these standards and am appreciative of all the individuals involved in producing a draft that truly seeks to make our children highly competitive in these critical subject areas,” Commissioner of Education Eric Smith said in a statement to the Orlando Sentinel.
Dangling the Carrot in Education

by Jonathan Watts Hull

The race to education reform in Tennessee was several years in the making, but broke into a sprint at the end.

The Tennessee General Assembly convened for a special session Jan. 12 to consider education reforms in advance of an application deadline for the federal Race to the Top competition, a $4.35 billion education grant program included in the 2009 stimulus package.

Three days later, legislators approved the governor’s changes to improve the state’s chances for a first round award. The changes affect teacher evaluation and tenure, teacher preparation programs and the state’s authority to intervene in poorly performing schools.

“We had set our state’s own course, under the Tennessee Diploma Project and the State Collaborative on Reforming Education, before Race to the Top was conceived,” said Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, chair of The Council of State Governments’ Southern Legislative Conference.

But the potential to reap hundreds of millions of dollars for schools at a time of extreme fiscal stress proved to be a strong catalyst for moving the legislation forward, and not just in Tennessee. Many states passed legislation to improve their chances to win a slice of the grant process, making changes to state education policy not in exchange for federal funds, but rather to be eligible to receive funds.

In these tight fiscal times, the shift from mandates to competitive grants has accelerated the pace at which states have approached reform. And this has, in turn, shifted the nature of the state-federal relationship with respect to schools in a fundamental way, giving states more flexibility but without the assurance of funding.

“The relationship between state and federal governments in education is fluid and continues to evolve,” Norris said. “For those of us who champion states’ rights and oppose nationalization of our local schools, the potential incentive grants offer for freedom and collaboration is significant.”

For Tennessee, one of two states to win Race to the Top funding in the first round, the grant process helped to crystallize support for reforms that will steer federal government dollars to the state for education. Other states that also adopted education policy changes for Race to the Top, including Michigan and California, have taken the transformational steps, but without a fiscal reward.

Tennessee Sen. Dolores Gresham, chair of the Senate Education Committee, told the Tennessee Senate Republican Caucus Weekly Review the reforms were good policy regardless of federal stimulus funds. “To think we might have done this just for the money is inconceivable,” she said in the Weekly Review. “The receipt of federal funds is an added bonus to needed education changes that should be passed with or without federal intervention.”

The State of Federalism

The state of federalism in education can be summed up briefly: Schools are a local responsibility, increasingly paid for at the state level, and managed by policies increasingly set at the national level. That national involvement began in the late 1950s when the launch of Sputnik raised worries the U.S. was falling behind on education and brought new federal attention to schools.

Oregon Speaker Pro Tem Arnie Roblan, a former high school principal, recalls it clearly. “In the late 1950s and 1960s, following Sputnik, the federal government’s interactions with schools were to provide teachers opportunities to learn from the very best and build excellence in the system.”

The federal role in education grew again in the 1960s with the war on poverty, as education became part of a broader civil rights agenda to promote equality and opportunity with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964. Over its history, the act has expanded the role of the federal government in education, most markedly in 2001 with No Child Left Behind, its most recent reauthorization.

No Child Left Behind used the federal government’s power of the purse to promote changes in education policy and practice at the state and local level for practically all students. Now the education law is more than two years overdue for renewal and Congress faces a federalism question on the direction of education policy.

Moving the Federalism Debate

Recent steps by President Obama’s administration imply a shift from the current approach of treating all students and schools as equally in need of support and attention. At a news conference announcing the administration’s blueprint for reauthorizing the law, Educa-

“Maintaining our requisite independence from federal overreaching will continue to be each state’s special challenge.”

—Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris
Chair, The Council of State Governments’
Southern Legislative Conference
tion Secretary Arne Duncan said, “for the vast majority of schools, we’re going to get rid of prescriptive interventions.”

The new approach focuses on improving the outcomes at the poorest performing 5 percent of schools, but that focus includes stringent interventions that are more intrusive than any sanctions in No Child Left Behind. And while the reauthorization blueprint remains largely that, the administration’s ambitious Race to the Top fund marks a change in policy and approach at the federal level to allow more flexibility and less control.

West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin is encouraged by this shift. “I applaud and strongly agree with the Obama administration’s position on education and believe they are moving in the right direction,” he said.

Roblan acknowledges the opportunities a new federal approach could have, but remains concerned about the potential for replacing mandates with equally prescriptive grant criteria.

“Race to the Top was a good exercise for the states who participated, in that it brought together the people involved in education to review what they were doing, assess its impact and see if what was being done was what they wanted to be doing,” he said. “But Race to the Top in the end looked like a way to force states to adopt choices that were sought after in Washington, without really funding them.”

The difficulty in achieving the aims of federal policy is on Manchin’s mind as well. “Some of the changes the federal government is proposing are tough lifts,” he said. “States need some assistance and flexibility in finding the solutions that work best for them. In a nation as diverse as ours, one solution does not fit all.”

But that doesn’t mean the federal government can’t play a role. Roblan of Oregon said the federal government can identify and promote what works, but in the end states and local school systems will be the ones to effect change and monitor success.

“The best thing we can do is to provide the best tools to each of our teachers so they can meet the needs of the children who come into their classrooms,” he said.

Defining the roles for each player in the education system has become a major component of resolving deficiencies and expanding opportunities, Norris said.

“Maintaining the requisite independence from federal overreaching will continue to be each state’s special challenge,” Norris said.

As Congress considers reauthorization of the education law, Norris said it should take special care “to respect the special relationship between teacher and student; local, state and federal government; and the importance of autonomy in closing the achievement gap.”

EDUCATION REFORM

TUKWILA, Wash.—Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire shared a laugh with students in a ninth-grade honors biology class at Foster High School in Tukwila, Wash., in April. The governor was at the school to discuss the state’s education reform plan, designed to help the state compete for the Obama administration’s $4.35 billion Race to the Top program. Race to the Top is just one way the administration is trying to prompt states to make changes to their schools. (© AP Photo / Ted S. Warren)
Huntington, W.Va., has more pizza parlors than gyms. That’s one reason the town—which sits in the fourth fattest state, based on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—was labeled the unhealthiest city in America by the CDC and drew the attention of British chef Jamie Oliver.

Oliver worked with lunchroom personnel at Huntington’s Central City Elementary School to cut the amount of processed food they served and featured the process in his “Food Revolution” TV show. Staff made everything served in the cafeteria from scratch during the filming of Oliver’s documentary, according to Principal Patrick O’Neal. O’Neal lost 30 pounds during and after the documentary filming, feels better and has more energy. As a bonus, the food tastes better to him.

“I’ve had a dramatic change in my life getting rid of processed food in my diet,” O’Neal said.

While O’Neal credits Oliver with opening the eyes of adults at the school, he recognizes that only individuals—and that includes children—can decide to make a change for themselves.

By and large, Central City’s students didn’t like the food, and O’Neal believes it’s all in what the students are used to eating. With 80 percent of his students eligible for free and reduced lunch, O’Neal said it’s cheaper—and easier—for parents to buy processed foods.

And that’s just one challenge.

Raising Standards

Central City and other schools throughout West Virginia have been more successful in getting students to eat foods with less fat and sugar, according to a study by West Virginia University’s Health Research Center.

Those changes came after West Virginia’s Department of Education adopted the national Institute of Medicine’s new school nutrition standards, according to Carole Harris, co-director with Drew Bradlyn of WVU’s Health Research Center.

The state legislature included school nutrition in the Healthy Lifestyles Act of 2005, but that piece wasn’t as strong as it could have been, Harris said. And since school breakfast and lunch programs are federal programs, legislators faced money limitations.

But the administrative route opened an opportunity for state intervention. And it seems to be working.

Many schools across West Virginia successfully implemented the new standards in the first year.

“The overwhelming majority of people believe that these standards were good things that would help improve student health and student nutrition and that they would be a benefit to students,” Bradlyn said.

Because many students get as many as two meals a day there, school is a good place to model healthy behaviors, Bradlyn said. The study found that changing the food and curbing access to things like sugary sodas at increase federal reimbursement for school meals, helping schools to offer more fresh produce, whole grains and low fat dairy products, according to Nancy Rice, the association president.

Establish federal nutrition standards for all foods sold during the school day, including vending machines and a la carte lines. “School nutrition professionals believe students should receive the same message about healthy food choices, whether they are purchased from a vending machine or in a lunch line,” Rice said.

Support programs that expand the reach of school meals, such as summer food service to children in high poverty areas.
school also helped to change behaviors outside school. Of West Virginia’s 55 counties, 53 don’t allow soda sales during the school day. “As soda became not available at school, it decreased the amount of soda that kids were going to drink during the day and milk became the primary beverage that was available,” Bradlyn said. The study also found that kids were eating more vegetables than they did the previous year.

But all suggested changes weren’t as easy. School nutrition managers said it was difficult to implement a school wellness policy and decrease the marketing of unhealthy foods on school campuses.

For instance, soft drink manufacturers sponsor many high school sports scoreboards, and groups ranging from the school PTA to athletics teams earn money through sales of such items.

Cost and Availability

And then there are twin challenges of cost and availability.

“Schools must stretch every penny to serve well-balanced, nutritious meals,” said Nancy Rice, director of the Georgia Department of Education’s School Nutrition Division and president of the School Nutrition Association, an organization serving school food service professionals.

The federal government reimburses schools $2.68 for lunch, but the average cost to prepare it is $2.92, Rice said. Choosing healthier foods packs a punch to school cafeteria budgets. In Alexandria, Va., for instance, the 12,000-student district paid an extra $75,000 in a year just to switch to whole grain sandwich buns. And Georgia’s Cobb County schools were out $133,000 more just to switch from 8-ounce drinks containing 50 percent juice to 4-ounce drinks containing 100 percent juice, said Rice.

In Huntington, W.Va., O’Neal’s school will go back to using some processed foods this year simply because the costs for all homemade were unsustainable, he said. Oliver’s production company picked up the tab during filming.

Some states—including California, Colorado and Hawaii—supplement the federal funding by a few pennies per meal, Rice said, and that helps.

“School meals programs operate under extremely tight budgets, so this additional revenue provides critical funds to help schools serve an even wider variety of healthy foods and explore innovative ways to inspire children to make the right food choices at school and at home,” said Rice.

Costs can rise even more in states like mountainous West Virginia, which doesn’t have a large agricultural base, said Del. Bonnie Brown of East Charleston. “It’s tough to get some of those good healthy foods into the schools,” she said.

She acknowledges the lack of availability of healthy foods—and the overabundance of the sugar- and fat-laden counterparts—contributes to the obesity and overweight population, as well as to the development of tastes for healthy foods.

“I think it’s a cultural thing,” she said. “People aren’t used to eating healthy foods.”

Changing Tastes

But tastes can change, and people can make healthier choices, as seen in the WVU study. Getting kids involved in the decision-making for school meals can aid that change, said Melissa Musiker, director of science policy, nutrition and health for the Grocery Manufacturers Association.

“Once kids are involved in the planning process and decision-making process, they have ownership of it; they want it to work,” Musiker said.

That challenge was clear in the Central City students’ rejection of the new school menu. But the challenge is not so great that it can’t be overcome, according to Yvonne Butler, principal of Browns Mill Elementary and Magnet School just outside Atlanta, the nation’s first sugar-free school.

Adults at the school modeled the behavior they were expecting from kids when the school made the switch 10 years ago. “I don’t really like broccoli, but I did for them,” Butler said.

The change to healthier eating in school, which has been the subject of studies by groups such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, helped improve test scores and cut discipline problems, Butler said.

That’s not surprising, according to Musiker. “Kids who are getting the right nutrition are better learners,” she said.
America’s first lady, Michelle Obama, has an ambitious goal—to solve the problem of childhood obesity within a generation. Her initiative, “Let’s Move!,” builds on promising approaches to provide states, schools, families and communities proven tools to help kids be more active, eat better and get healthy.
Why was reducing childhood obesity in the U.S. and improving childhood nutrition and health an issue you needed to focus on?

“Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. One-third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer and asthma. And a study put the health care costs of obesity-related diseases at $147 billion per year. The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake. This isn’t the kind of problem that can be solved overnight, but with everyone working together, it can be solved.”

What personal experiences in your family helped to shape your desire to create the Let’s Move! campaign?

“It wasn’t that long ago that I was a working mom, struggling to balance meetings and deadlines with soccer and ballet. And there were some nights when everyone was tired and hungry, and we just went to the drive-thru because it was quick and cheap, or went with one of the less healthy microwave options, because it was easy. And one day, my pediatrician pulled me aside and told me, ‘You might want to think about doing things a little bit differently.’ That was a moment of truth for me. So, we made some small but significant changes at home — adding more fruits and vegetables to our meals, for instance, drinking more water, turning off the TV and going for walks after dinner. I saw the difference in my family, not only physically but in how we felt overall.”

One of the four key components of Let’s Move! is improving the quality of the food in the nation’s schools. Why is this so important?

“Thirty-one million American children participate in federal school meal programs — and many of these kids consume as many as half their daily calories at school. What we don’t want is a situation where parents are taking all the right steps at home — and then their kids undo all that work when they get to the school cafeteria. … Let’s help parents help their kids.”

How can states assist in this goal?

“Let’s Move! … will take into account how life is really lived in communities across the country—encouraging, supporting and pursuing solutions that are tailored to children and families facing a wide range of challenges and life circumstances. We need to give parents the tools, support and information they need to make healthier choices for their families. We need to get more nutritious meals into our schools. We need to ensure that kids get 60 minutes of active play a day. And we need to improve access to affordable, quality, nutritious food. … In order to fully address the childhood obesity challenge, we need the support of governors, mayors and other state and local elected officials, as well as other community leaders, to address each of these areas.”

“THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF AN ENTIRE GENERATION AND THE ECONOMIC HEALTH AND SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE.”

—First Lady Michelle Obama

How does the campaign address the challenges of getting kids to eat healthfully all the time, not just at school?

“Parents play an extremely significant role in educating kids on healthy eating and by setting good eating habits early on — habits that will carry into the future. We encourage parents to make small changes at home around the dinner table and during snack time. Small actions like adding more fruits and vegetables to meals can make a big impact for the health of the whole family. One of the things we do with our girls is that we limit television time and computer use during the week so that the girls are spending time engaged in active play.”

How can state officials work collaboratively to help their schools reach the goals of healthier school meals?

“Officials can promote the expansion or improvement of nutrition education in schools, and school gardens and community gardens are a great way to get kids excited about food and nutrition. Additionally, we also need to encourage participation in federal child nutrition programs to address the needs of low-income children. And, many areas can support both schools and farmers by promoting the farm-to-school programs, which will get more fresh produce on the menus.”

How can Let’s Move! work with state campaigns?

“Let’s Move! was designed to work in coordination with all of the efforts going on around the country to address this challenge because there is no one-size-fits-all solution to childhood obesity. In Pennsylvania, for example, folks started a Fresh Food Financing Initiative to bring grocery stores to underserved areas. … In North Carolina, they’ve launched a full-scale effort to help kids eat healthier and to exercise more. … Arkansas started on the issue of childhood obesity way back in 2003. They screened students’ BMIs, they got healthier food into their schools and required regular physical education classes. As a result, that state was able to halt the rise of childhood obesity completely. Let’s Move! is designed to complement and promote these efforts.”

How does the Let’s Move! campaign address the challenges of getting kids to eat healthfully all the time, not just at school?

“Parents play an extremely significant role in educating kids on healthy eating and by setting good eating habits early on—habits that will carry into the future. We encourage parents to make small changes at home around the dinner table and during snack time. Small actions like adding more fruits and vegetables to meals can make a big impact for the health of the whole family. One of the things we do with our girls is that we limit television time and computer use during the week so that the girls are spending time engaged in active play.”

How does the campaign reach out to parents?

“Let’s Move! will offer parents the tools, support and information they need to make healthier choices for their families. For example, the Food and Drug Administration is working with retailers and manufacturers to adopt new nutritionally sound and consumer friendly front-of-package labeling.”

In what ways do you and President Obama strive to set an example of healthy eating for your daughters?

“I think the biggest thing we do is simply to make fruits and vegetables a regular food item for meals and snacks. We also try to limit the amount of sweets in our diets. One of the things I tell my girls is that dessert is not a right. But, more than anything else, we try to teach our girls about balance. You don’t have to worry about having pizza and cake when you go to a birthday party. It’s just not a good idea to eat that way for every meal.”

First Lady Michelle Obama

10 Questions
“After my first year, I saw teachers cry because they didn’t want to teach civics and to me that was really shocking. Other teachers find it boring. That’s when I made it my mission to come up with other teaching methods.”

—Jackie Viana, Hialeah Gardens Middle School Teacher, Florida

LEARN IT, LIVE IT

Civics Education A Key to Promoting Active Citizenship

by Mikel Chavers

It took a group of South Florida middle school students working on a civics class project to convince lawmakers to pass a bill aimed at stopping unscrupulous doctors and pain clinics from dispensing pain medications to addicts from across the nation.

Twice the Hialeah Gardens Middle School students made the eight-hour trip to the capitol to lobby for the controversial pill-mill bill in front of committee, making presentations to legislators.

“When I was working the bill through the process—you know, it wasn’t an easy bill. There were a lot of special interest groups pulling from all different directions,” said Florida Rep. Joseph Abruzzo, one of the sponsors of Senate Bill 2272. “(The students) helped me convince the legislators that this was a very important measure that needed to be passed this year … without their help, I don’t know if this bill would have passed.”

Florida Gov. Charlie Crist signed the bill into law this summer.

Students got involved because teacher Jackie Viana wanted her civics education classes to understand firsthand how government really works. Instead of teaching how a bill becomes a law using colorful flow charts, she wanted students to choose a bill, dissect it and actively get involved.
But civics education success stories like this one are spotty at best and civics education as a whole is declining, said Margaret Markowitz, associate director of the Center for Civic Education. Viana uses the center’s programs in her classroom and won a national award for her efforts this year.

“It has been sidelined primarily because of the No Child Left Behind legislation and our fixation at this point with math, science and marketable skills,” Branson said.

Vermont Secretary of State Deborah L. Markowitz agreed.

“With No Child Left Behind, the focus has been on teaching to the tests and things like civics education fall to the wayside,” she said.

Civics education has become politically incorrect—teachers are afraid to sway children’s opinions, Markowitz said, so a lot of schools dropped it for that reason. Not only that, legislators in the classroom initiatives are also somewhat of a mixed bag. “Schools are somewhat reluctant to have legislators in because they’ve had a mixed experience,” said Markowitz. “Not all legislators are good at talking to 12-year-olds.”

Her office plans to revamp the legislators in the schools program, but will have to wait until a non-election year. Secretaries of state are heavily involved with civics education, particularly with mock vote programs.

In Florida, civics education received favorable treatment compared to most states and is now required in the seventh grade. Civics is still not on the statewide assessment, though, Viana said.

**Hands-On Learning**

“Teaching kids to be active citizens has to start in the classroom,” Viana said. It’s not enough to read about it, either. “The only way kids will like it is when they actually actively participate in it.”

Arkansas Sen. Jimmy Jeffress, a retired teacher and chairman of the Senate Education Committee, agrees. Each year he volunteers for a mock legislature held at the capitol, sponsored by local American Legion chapters for nearly 1,000 students in his state.

This year, Jeffress met a student playing the role of state senator who just happened to be his constituent. After the session ended, the student spoke with Jeffress about a problem—the student’s school district is in financial distress and is at risk of being taken over by the state or consolidated with an adjoining district.

“The fact that he was concerned about his school and wanted to take an active part in doing something just really spoke to me and impressed me,” Jeffress said. “I can’t help but think that that young man has a future … it all happened because of the spark and watching the process. That’s what we’re trying to instill in these young men and women.”

It’s working, at least in Viana’s classes.

To date, her students have used that same kind of hands-on learning approach to introduce eight bills to the Florida legislature. Two of them have become Florida laws, according to Viana. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush even came to her class in 2001 to sign a bill the students worked on into law.

**The Age-Old Problem**

With approval ratings from politicians at historic lows, civics education has a hand in informing the next generation of voters.

More than half of voters, 58 percent, say they have just some or no confidence at all in President Obama to make the right decisions for the country’s future, according to the latest Washington Post-ABC News poll. Approval ratings are even lower for Congress—68 percent say they have little to no confidence in Congressional Democrats and 72 percent say they have little to no confidence in Congressional Republicans, according to the poll.

Branson said an uninformed public leads to a lack of understanding about how government works, contributing to low approval ratings and an age-old problem: “On the one hand, they want all kinds of government services and benefits and so on. At the same time, they don’t want to pay for them,” she said. “It’s a failure to appreciate the trade-offs that are involved.”

But Viana’s teaching is helping to combat that problem— it’s also touching parents.

“A lot of my kids teach their parents,” she said. In her school, 99 percent are immigrants or children of immigrants.

Her students’ triumph is due to Viana’s passion for her job as a civics teacher. Originally from Peru, she came to America after a terrorist group took over the city she lived in. Bullets were flying and it just wasn’t safe, she said.

“When I took this job, and they told me that I would be teaching civics, I took it as an honor,” Viana said. “I think it came out of gratitude for this country.”

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**STATE** | **CURRENT & FORMER TEACHERS** | **CURRENT & FORMER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS** | **CURRENT/RETIRED EDUCATORS TOTAL**
--- | --- | --- | ---
MINNESOTA | 32 | 3 | 35
MAINE | 24 | 6 | 30
ARKANSAS | 19 | 6 | 25
INDIANA | 17 | 5 | 22
WEST VIRGINIA | 19 | 2 | 21
ALABAMA | 12 | 8 | 20
NORTH DAKOTA | 16 | 4 | 20
VERMONT | 19 | 1 | 20
NORTH CAROLINA | 13 | 6 | 19
OKLAHOMA | 16 | 3 | 19
More people call in their votes for the top performer on the hit TV show “American Idol” than vote in any election ever held for president of the United States.

So is voting important? Does your vote really matter? If you’re a candidate for public office enduring the uncertainty of election results in November, you know darn well that every vote matters.

Yet these are the questions that educators struggle with answering, often turning to election officials for help. No secretary of state would say no, of course, but conveying real meaning behind the “yes” answers—and ultimately creating engaged citizens who vote—can be a significant challenge. It’s even more daunting when you consider that an increasing number of young people are coming from homes where one or more of their parents do not vote; this remains the single, most important factor in whether they ultimately exercise this right.

Research conducted by CIRCLE, an academic institution that studies civic engagement, indicates that long-term civic development can be boosted by bringing elections into the classroom. One recent study determined that frequent classroom discussion around election issues, teacher encouragement of the expression of opinions, and student participation in a get-out-the-vote or mock election effort can make a significant difference.

Secretaries of state across the country are doing their part to foster these conditions by delivering nonpartisan voting and election information to schools, often in partnership with organizations such as Kids Voting USA and National Student/Parent Mock Election. The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), an affiliate of The Council of State Governments, produces an overview of member outreach programs as part of its biennial New Millennium Survey Update, which can be found online at www.nass.org.

In Maine, my office works closely with schools to coordinate mock elections, voter registration drives, poll worker recruitment programs, and more. We produce a voter guide for new and first-time voters, and we make this available to educators, along with voter registration materials.

What have we learned about voting and civics education? First and foremost, the Internet is the most cost-effective medium for reaching eligible young voters, and the classrooms where such participation is being encouraged.

New for 2010, NASS produced a handy tool for the modern citizen—the Can I Vote widget, which allows anyone with a website or social media page one-stop access to nonpartisan voting information produced by state election offices. The widget is an offspring of our voting website, www.canivote.org. With either one of these tools, a curious young person can quickly learn how to get registered and cast a ballot.

Given the historically high turnout rate among young voters in the 2008 presidential election, state officials and educators have good reason to focus their increasingly limited resources on developing the habit of voting in our children. As research shows, bringing information about elections to our classrooms yields positive results.

If young people think “American Idol” is important, imagine how they’ll feel when they vote for something that really matters.

3 WAYS TO REGISTER VOTERS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 60 million eligible voters went unregistered—and didn’t vote—in 2008. September is National Voter Registration Month. Here are three easy ways to do your part and get involved:

1. BE AN AMBASSADOR
   High schools and colleges are always looking for an effective guest presentation. Visit several classrooms and give a pitch for voting. Take voter registration forms with you.

2. SPREAD THE WORD
   Encourage people to register or update their voter information using tools like the nonpartisan NASS Can I Vote widget—www.canivote.org/widget—which links directly to state and local election websites.

3. PLAN A DRIVE
   Work with your community to plan a voter registration drive. Target eligible voters by going to places where they do their everyday business, such as grocery stores, malls or sporting events.
On Sept. 11, 2001, my son Jonathan Lee Ielpi, 29, a New York City firefighter and the father of two boys, was killed in the collapse of the South Tower during the World Trade Center attack. My mission then—and we all have missions—was to find my son.

It took three months to the day; on Dec. 11, 2001, we were blessed and were able to bring Jonathan home as a whole body. We are but one of the 174 families that were blessed to have recovered a whole body of their loved one. Of the 2,749 people murdered at the World Trade Center, 1,125 are still missing.

My current mission is to keep the stories of Sept. 11 alive, and to educate people about the horror of that day and the overwhelming humanitarian response in the aftermath.

Jennifer Adams and I co-founded a small museum across from the World Trade Center site. We opened in September 2006 to provide people from all over the world who make a pilgrimage to the site a place to meet people whose lives were profoundly changed by the terrorist acts of Sept. 11, 2001. Some 1.7 million visitors have come to our galleries or taken our tours. After experiencing the stories of the thousands of people who helped others during and after the attacks, they have left with an understanding that they, too, can make a difference.

While we are reaching the visitors at the Tribute World Trade Center, we need to go further. I am committed to ensuring every student in the U.S. learns the history of the events that have altered the world’s future in ways we still do not fully comprehend. Although this was a landmark date for today’s generations, not one state in the country mandates the teaching of 9/11 in the classroom, nor is a curriculum in place.

We know the fear and anguish of Sept. 11 are still recent and painful for many teachers, but today’s students are growing up in a world in which they need to understand and learn from these events. Teachers in the U.S. and around the world have the opportunity to guide our young people to realize local and global avenues for change. To this end, the Tribute staff has created a set of educational materials that are available free online to any school or family.

Our materials are designed not only to give the correct facts of the day, but to inspire young people to emulate the thousands of volunteers who rushed forward to help people heal and to rebuild the sites in New York City, the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Penn.

I am strongly committed to talking about the need for education for as long as it takes to motivate our educational professionals to bring the history and lessons of 9/11 into every one of the nation’s schools.

Tomorrow’s world lies in the hands of today’s youth and we have a sacred obligation to teach our young people so they can be better prepared to create a more tolerant and peaceful future.
Charting a Path to School Reform

Many States Turn to Charter Schools for Answers

by Tim Weldon

Vanessa Blanco grew up in a low-income, single-family household in Washington, D.C.

Like many of her friends, Blanco attended a public elementary and middle school. But by the time she reached eighth grade, she had been expelled and forced to enroll in an alternative school because of behavior problems. By ninth grade, she was given two options: attend a private or a charter school.

Blanco’s family couldn’t afford a private school, so they chose a charter school, a decision that, in hindsight, radically turned her life around.

She enrolled in Cesar Chavez High School, a charter school in Washington, D.C., focusing on public affairs. The school’s four campuses serve students in sixth through 12th grades. Ninety-nine percent of the students who attend Cesar Chavez High School are African-American or Latino. More than three-fourths are eligible for free and reduced lunch, and 12 percent receive special education services.

Yet, despite coming from a background many would consider “at risk” for dropping out of school, Blanco graduated and is now a junior at Millersville University in Pennsylvania, majoring in sociology. She believes if she hadn’t attended a charter high school, she would not have been prepared for postsecondary education.

“If I had gone to a (traditional) public high school, I probably wouldn’t have even graduated. I most likely would have dropped out or something,” she said. “In general, if public schools aren’t working, I think anything that works is fine. (Charter schools are) better than doing nothing and having the same thing being done over and over again.”

It’s stories like Blanco’s that charter school proponents tout in their efforts to expand their numbers across the country. More than 5,000 charter schools educate approximately 1.5 million students—3 percent of all students in the U.S.—in 40 states and Washington, D.C.

But even though charter schools have been around since 1991—when Minnesota enacted the nation’s first legislation permitting the creation of these public schools that operate independently of the local board of education and are exempt from certain rules and regulations that apply to other public schools—have been around since 1991 but their effectiveness is a matter of debate.
“a lack of courage” among charter school leadership to eliminate low-performing charter schools. Duncan said about 200 of the 5,000 lowest performing schools in the country are charter schools.

“Bad charter schools taint all of your reputations and allow your opponents to use those examples,” he told the charter school leadership. “There has not been … courageous leadership from the charter school movement itself to step up and say ‘Here are criteria below which these schools should cease to exist.’”

North Carolina Sen. Eddie Goodall, president of the North Carolina Alliance for Public Charter Schools, disagrees with Duncan. “It doesn’t taint all our other schools,” he said. “What it does is taint that school. You don’t lump all the charter schools together. They’re too diverse.”

Charter School Pros and Cons
North Carolina has become one of the nation’s leaders in the charter school movement since enacting legislation in 1996. More than 30,000 students attend nearly 100 charter schools—mostly in the state’s urban areas. Goodall believes charter schools offer parents choice and public schools competition—two things he believes are necessary to improve education.

Goodall calls public education one of the few monopolies left in America. “Nothing else in America has a one-size-fits-all mentality and structure. Everything else involves competition and choice.”

Not everyone is convinced. While Alaska and South Dakota legislators passed legislation to create charter schools, lawmakers in Kentucky and Nebraska, two states without charter schools, rejected enabling legislation in 2010 that would have allowed them.

Although charter schools often increase educational achievement among racial minorities and low-income students, they are also criticized for taking funds and, in some cases, attracting the highest performing students away from traditional public schools. They are also sometimes accused of failing to serve special education students and of having little or no accountability to taxpayers. Also, because they operate independently, charter schools are not always subject to the same collective bargaining rules that apply to other public schools.

Teacher Association Concerns
While they have concerns, both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have adopted policy statements supporting charter schools in concept, provided they meet certain guidelines. For example, the association recommends charter schools only be granted if the school offers an educational experience that isn’t available in traditional public schools. The organization’s policies also say local school boards should grant or deny charter school applications—and that process should be open to the public.

Goodall, however, fears future reforms to charter schools will lead to them being subject to some of the same rules as traditional public schools.

“What I’m afraid we may see in this country is an association that has some of the exemptions (of charter schools) but still has the union control of teachers and school districts retaining the authority,” said Goodall. “That is not a charter school. (Charter schools have) to have autonomy.”

Ironically, Goodall fears that even successful charter schools could act as a speed bump in their recent growth rate. In effect, he thinks successful charter schools might be seen as a threat to powerful, established education interests and that ultimately charter schools could become victims of their own success.
In a trend sweeping the country, states are again in court, pitted against school districts, parents and education advocates. The current fiscal crisis has generated a new wave of litigation over state budget cuts to education.

In New Jersey, proposed cuts to education spending led to court battles over the constitutionality of those cuts. After New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie slashed $819.5 million in school aid from the 2011 fiscal year budget—a 7 percent decrease in the state’s largest expense—education advocates filed a motion to restore the funding.

Attorney David Sciarra, executive director of the Newark-based Education Law Center, said the governor’s cuts violate the state funding formula upheld by the state Supreme Court in 2008.

“The key point in the New Jersey case is that the court not only ordered a new funding formula, they also set as a condition that the formula be fully funded,” said Sciarra.

In 1973, the New Jersey Supreme Court declared the state’s school funding law was unconstitutional because it violated the “thorough and efficient education” requirement in the state constitution. Since then, the high court has revisited New Jersey school finance more than a dozen times, delivering decisions on equitable financing for students in 30 low-wealth districts.

While in New Jersey litigants are calling for full funding based on formulas already established by the legislature and based on prior court decisions, advocates in other states are now bringing the adequacy of spending on education into question.

The second of two education-funding lawsuits filed in California this year—Californians for Quality Education, et al. v. California—claims the state “is failing to provide all children with an equal opportunity to obtain a meaningful education. It is failing to appropriately and adequately fund the public school system.”

California’s per student expenditures are among the lowest in the nation. According to the National Education Association, the state’s per pupil spending was $8,520 for the 2009–10 year. Compare that to New Jersey and Rhode Island, which spent $16,967 and $18,729 per pupil respectively in the same year. Arizona, Mississippi, Idaho, Nevada and Oklahoma join California with the lowest per pupil funding levels, with Arizona—now also involved in litigation similar to California—spending the least at $6,170. The national average hovered around $10,500 in 2009–10.

In Washington, a lower court ruled in February that the state does not provide ample funding for basic education. Further, the judge directed the legislature to determine the cost of basic education and develop a plan to fully fund education with stable and dependable state sources. The state has appealed the decision and the state Supreme Court is expected...
to hear the case in September.

In the first lawsuit directly calling into question the legality of recent budget cuts, the Kansas Supreme Court in February refused to reopen a school finance case originally settled in 2006. Chief Justice Robert Davis addressed how courts should respond to these cases in his order: “The power to recall a mandate is an extraordinary power to be used as a last resort. It should only be used to accomplish something that, without it, cannot otherwise be remedied.”

Kansas has cut spending on education by $287 million during the current recession.

Given the stress placed on the state to close budget gaps, some lawmakers welcomed the court’s decision. “I do think the decision reinforces the fact the legislature is complying with the constitution in its school funding,” Kansas Rep. Kevin Yoder told the Topeka Capital-Journal.

The current fiscal crisis is hitting education spending hard. Since the beginning of the recession, at least 30 states and Washington, D.C., have cut aid to K–12 schools and other education programs, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. And more cuts may be coming, which could lead to significant layoffs.

“If states don’t find a way to close their budget gaps without cuts to education, we will be losing 157,000 teachers this year—and that’s a conservative estimate,” said Michael C. Petko, senior policy analyst at the National Education Association.

And while teacher layoffs may not be the primary cause of the current stream of litigation hitting states like California, Petko said they are a symptom of more egregious issues.

“The real cause of litigation is the declining revenue streams within the states caused by years of poor tax policies. States are expecting education to produce more with less,” said Petko.

While states are struggling to fund basic programs, if advocates prevail in lawsuits challenging state education budget cuts, state leaders may have to find funding sources regardless of difficult budget conditions.

That may be the case in Arizona, where a coalition of education groups filed a lawsuit in June charging that the state has not fully funded Arizona’s K–12 system for the 2011 budget year, violating the state constitution and a referendum approved by voters in 2000 requiring the state to adjust spending for state aid to education and “other components” by 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower.

If the case moves forward and the court rules in favor of the plaintiffs, it could mean the legislature will be forced to find another $61 million even in the face of budget shortfalls.

The Arizona Supreme Court has scheduled an initial hearing for Sept. 21 to decide whether to accept the special action.
Over the last eight years in Virginia, tuition at public colleges and universities has risen well over 100 percent. That’s a symptom of a larger problem, said Virginia Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling.

“I think what’s happened is the state was unable to provide the historic level of general fund support, therefore universities were forced to raise tuition, and to be honest, it’s just gotten out of control,” Bolling said.

“Not only has tuition gone up, but they’ve also admitted more out-of-state students, which means fewer spots for in-state students. So we just can’t continue on this trajectory—we’ve got to look for ways to reinvest in our colleges and universities.”

Bolling is involved in Gov. Bob McDonnell’s Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment—a fancy name for a commission charged with rescuing the state’s own public colleges and universities from more financial doom and gloom. Solutions to remedy the problem could be as simple as reprioritizing higher education in the state’s budget once again, or as complex as cutting bureaucratic strings the state has tied around its higher education system.

Those symptoms and remedies aren’t unique to Virginia. Public higher education, typically the only area among the largest state budget expenditures that has its own major revenue source—also known as tuition—has been sitting low on the budget totem pole for years.

“Higher education has just been sloughed off as a secondary responsibility or a responsibility not as important as say, public safety or health care or transportation or some of the other priorities in state government,” Bolling said.

The problem isn’t new. “Across America state support for higher education has been declining for a long time,” William & Mary President Taylor Reveley said at the July meeting of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. “Of necessity, Virginia’s funding of higher education has come increasingly to rely on public-private partnerships. The operating budgets of the strongest state universities are now utterly dependent on the private side of the public-private partnerships.”

At William & Mary, the public college got 43 percent of its operating budget from state taxpayers 30 years ago, according to Reveley. Today, state dollars are approaching just 12 percent of the college’s funding, with the bulk of its funding coming from private sources such as tuition, grants and philanthropic gifts.

While states decrease funding for public higher education, state colleges and universities are forced to do more with less. Besides raising tuition to make up the difference, state schools in Wisconsin are calling for more latitude in how they operate. Put simply, schools such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison think they can run more efficiently and save money if they had a little more discrepancy in managing the school’s systems and budget.

“We are in fact asking the state to give us more discretion … and allow us to operate just a little more nimbly in ways that we’re constrained under the current system that force us to operate in a manner exactly like a state agency,” said Darrell Bazzell, vice chancellor for administration at University of Wisconsin-Madison.
1. Differential Tuition
A strategy in Wisconsin is charging students more for certain programs and also for students from certain income levels. For example, tuition would be higher for more expensive programs such as nursing. “Basically the universities are using these dollars to fund need-based financial aid when there aren’t any other dollars available,” said Wisconsin Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, chair of the Agriculture and Higher Education Committee. Vinehout said many constituents are middle income earners and don’t want to pay more in tuition costs, especially when they don’t qualify for financial aid. “It’s a somewhat controversial approach.”

2. Newest Teaching Technologies
Liberty University in Lynchburg, a private university in Virginia, is a stand-out example of technology-driven teaching methods, said Virginia Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling. Liberty currently has 50,000 online students and the virtual instruction at the university accounts for 85 percent of the university’s income, Bolling said. “There are a lot of those technologies that I think frankly, we’ve not been as successful at implementing at the college and university level—not just in Virginia, but all across the country.” Trading in $400 and $500 textbooks for their cheaper electronic counterparts is also another strategy, Bolling said.

3. Lotteries for Scholarships
A new Arkansas Scholarship Lottery started last September specifically fund a new scholarship program. By June, the new lottery has raised an estimated $380 million for 28,000 college scholarships. Scholarships and grants of varying amounts go to Arkansas residents to use at public and private nonprofit two-year and four-year colleges and universities within the state. “With the passage of the Arkansas Scholarship Lottery and legislation allowing more students than ever before to receive this scholarship, we are seeing a heightened interest in higher education that could be historic for this state,” Jim Purcell, Arkansas Department of Higher Education director, said in a press release. So far, the state received more than 50,000 applications for the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship, 10 times more than previous years, according to the department.
For example, when it comes to construction at the university, state policies slow down the entire process, costing needless time and money, Bazzell said.

The school isn’t allowed to issue its own bonding; all projects are managed by the state not by campus or university officials, Bazzell said. Each construction project has a 4 percent tax added on to help cover the cost of others who provide oversight for the construction projects, he said.

“We’re not allowed to have prime vendors for our construction, which means we have to go out and separately bid with all the different entities that are part of the construction project,” Bazzell said.

That means the plumbing might be bid out to one entity and the electrical could be bid out to another entity.

“It’s just a very inefficient way to construct a building—ways that no one in the private sector would ever think of doing,” Bazzell said.

“The big picture that the chancellors really want to see is that the legislature gives the chancellors more flexibility in the way they move money around from one pot to another pot,” said Wisconsin Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, chair of the Agriculture and Higher Education Committee.

Bazzell would like to see a compact, or special agreement, between the public university system and the executive branch or legislature allowing the universities more latitude on certain processes in exchange for providing affordable education for in-state students, for example.

Virginia has that sort of agreement in place, while New York and Oregon have proposals on the table.

In Wisconsin, the compact could take the form of a bill in the legislature or simply an agreement between the governor and the public higher education system.

“It’s become kind of the approach in higher education to address this issue in a more fundamental manner,” Bazzell said.

As state funding to public colleges and universities shrinks and tuition costs rise to make up the difference, Kelli Stamper, UPS work force development manager, has an enticing proposition for students scraping by to pay the college bill.

“Our students obtain a four-year college degree and come up debt-free,” Stamper said.

That’s due to an innovative partnership UPS has with Kentucky, where its Worldport International air hub is located in Louisville. There, students can enroll in the company’s tuition assistance program called Metropolitan College and go to college while they work part-time at the UPS hub that packages a million packages a night. UPS chips in 50 percent of tuition costs while the state foots the other half of the bill.

Students can take classes at the University of Louisville or Jefferson Community College. Students are UPS employees and must work at the UPS hub; most work the night shift.

“Stamper thinks it’s a win-win. UPS gets a trained work force and is able to fill its night shift part-time positions, while the state gets a helping hand for college assistance to its residents. Students have college paid for and are earning money at the part-time job.”

After this year, Kentucky will support the program with a 50 percent tax credit to UPS for Metropolitan College tuition—a change from the way it funded the program in recent years, Stamper said. The change “allows us to expand the draw of the program over time (and) it secures that funding for a longer period of time.”

Before, the state funded Metropolitan College on a yearly basis, paying 50 percent of the tuition costs. Now, “we don’t have to go back every year,” Stamper said.

In a tight economy and as more and more students struggle to pay for college, these programs at businesses across the nation, it would seem, would be a magnet for students seeking ways to pay for school. But, according to Stamper, UPS hasn’t seen an increase in enrollment in Metropolitan College.

Enrollment actually depends on how many people the company needs to hire, Stamper said, because individuals must first be UPS employees to be eligible for the program.

There were 2,268 participants in 2009 and 2,236 in 2008.

“When we are not growing and not adding new people, it levels off,” Stamper said.
1800s
- 1821 First public high school opened in Boston.
- 1827 Massachusetts passed law requiring towns of more than 500 families to have a public high school open to all students.
- 1829 First school for the blind opened in Massachusetts.
- 1839 First state-funded teachers’ college opened in Lexington, Mass.
- 1852 Massachusetts enacted the first mandatory attendance law. All states had them by 1918.
- 1856 The first kindergarten in the U.S. opened in Watertown, Wis.
- 1857 43 educators founded the National Teachers Association, now the National Education Association, in Philadelphia.
- 1867 The U.S. Department of Education is created to help states establish effective public schools.
- 1874 The Michigan State Supreme Court set a precedent in ruling that Kalamazoo may levy taxes to support a public high school.
- 1890 The Second Morrill Act provided for higher endowment and support of colleges through the sale of public lands. Part of this funding leads to the creation of 16 historically black land-grant colleges.

1800s–1900s
- 1901 The last legal barrier to public high schools is removed.
- 1908 The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a rigid system of segregation in a Virginia school district is unconstitutional.
- 1909 The U.S. Department of Education is created to help states establish effective public schools.
- 1910 The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that certain school voucher programs are constitutional and do not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

1910s
- 1911 The first Montessori school in the U.S. opened in Tarrytown, N.Y.
- 1914 The American Federation of Teachers is founded as the American Educational Research Association.
- 1919 All states had laws providing funds for transporting children to school.
- 1926 The SAT is first administered.

1920s
- 1927 After Russia launched Sputnik, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, which authorized increased funding for scientific research and science education.

1930s
- 1938 The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Brown v. Board of Education that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

1940s–1950s
- 1946 The U.S. District Court in Los Angeles ruled that educating children of Mexican descent in separate facilities is unconstitutional, thus prohibiting segregation in California schools and setting an important precedent for Brown v. Board of Education.
- 1957 Federal troops enforced integration in Little Rock, Ark., as the Little Rock Nine enrolled at Central High School.

1960s–1970s
- 1965 Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act providing federal funds to help low-income students, which resulted in the initiation of educational programs such as Title I and bilingual education.
- 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Higher Education Act at Southwest Texas State College, increasing federal aid to higher education and providing for scholarships and student loans, and establishing a National Teachers Corps.
- 1965 Project Head Start, a preschool education program for children from low-income families, began as an eight-week summer program.
- 1968 McCarver Elementary School in Tacoma, Wash., became the nation’s first magnet school.
- 1971 A federal court ruled that students with mental retardation are entitled to a free public education.
- 1972 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibited discrimination based on sex in all aspects of education.
- 1975 The Education of All Handicapped Children Act required a free, appropriate public education, suited to the student’s individual needs, and offered in the least restrictive setting, be provided for all “handicapped” children.

1980s–1990s
- 1990 Teach for America is formed, re-establishing the idea of a National Teachers Corps.

1990s
- 1991 Minnesota passed the first “charter school” law, and the next year, City Academy High School, the nation’s first charter school, opened in St. Paul.

2000s
- 2001 President Bush signed the controversial No Child Left Behind Act into law.
- 2002 The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that certain school voucher programs are constitutional and do not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.
- 2003 Congress again amended and reauthorized the Higher Education Act, expanding access to higher education for low- and middle-income students, providing additional funds for graduate studies and increasing accountability.
- 2007 Both the House and Senate passed reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, but President Bush vetoed the bill because it exceeded his budget request.
- 2009 Congress passed the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 providing more than $90 billion for education, nearly half of which goes to local school districts to prevent layoffs and for school modernization and repair.
- 2010 The U.S. Department of Education awarded the first of two rounds of funding for Race to the Top, a $4.35 billion program designed to induce reform in K–12 education.

Source: Edmund Sass, professor of education at the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University
**HIGH SCHOOL WORLD HISTORY**

**Roger Breed**  
Commissioner of Education  
Nebraska

“'I was fortunate to have many great teachers and many fond memories from the public schools I attended. One of my favorite teachers was Mrs. Williams, high school world history. Mrs. Williams made world history come alive with unbridled enthusiasm and unbounded humor. Her special talent was telling the stories of significant Greco-Roman historical figures in a way that connected them to present day issues. She was barely 5 feet tall but when she was in full storytelling mode, she held the attention of every student.'

**FIFTH GRADE**

**Sen. Joe Balyeat**  
Montana

“My favorite childhood school memory was our one-week conservation class, when our fifth grade teacher took the entire class on a weeklong educational excursion into the mountains of Montana. We stayed in a youth camp and spent every day out in the woods learning everything about woodland plants and animals. I had already spent many days tagging along with Dad on hunting and fishing excursions; but this week was the beginning of my lifelong addiction to the outdoors ... not just experiencing the wild, but understanding mankind’s responsibility to conserve and manage this incredibly complex creation which has been entrusted to us.”
**STORYTIME**

**Kevin Fangman**  
Department of Education Acting Director  
Iowa

“My favorite childhood memory of a teacher is of Ann Silker. Mrs. Silker gathered us after lunch and at the end of the day on the ‘reading rug.’ During these times, she captivated us with stories such as ‘Where the Red Fern Grows’ and ‘Where the Lilies Bloom’ to name a few. I remember the whole class sobbing at times as we felt the pain of the characters in the books she brought to life for us. The bell would ring to go home at the end of the day and we would all remain sitting there mesmerized by the power of a book and a prolific reader.”

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**HIGH SCHOOL CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**Tony Wilson**  
Microsoft Midwest Director of Government Affairs

“My fondest memory of a teacher would be Mrs. Craddock, my high school current affairs teacher. While I did not understand it at the time, Mrs. Craddock was one of the first teachers to challenge me. I could have cruised through and got a decent grade in her class. She pulled me aside and told me that she expected more from me and that I needed to step it up. She not only challenged me to exceed expectations but showed me how my education would affect every aspect of my future. I believe that teachers like Mrs. Craddock are the most precious resource this country has to offer.”

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**HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH**

**Jim Rex**  
Superintendent of Education, South Carolina

“The teacher who made the biggest impression on me was my high school English teacher and football coach. Mr. Morgan was very calm and very self-confident. Over time, he instilled a lot of self-confidence in me. Even though he encouraged me to go to college, I didn’t go to college right away. I worked construction instead; then I worked in a factory. After a while, my factory job started to get to me, and that was when I started to think about college—because of the seed planted by Mr. Morgan. By the way, I ended up being an English teacher and a football coach.”
Sokolow Honored

Alan Sokolow, former executive director of The Council of State Governments’ Eastern Regional Conference, was honored by Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a Friend of Foreign Service Medal July 12. Kao Jen-chuan, director of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York, conferred the medal on behalf of Timothy Yang, Taiwan’s minister of foreign affairs. Kao thanked Sokolow for his efforts over the past 23 years in promoting cooperation between the U.S. and Taiwan on many fronts, including politics, trade, education and culture. Sokolow, who led delegations of state senators to Taiwan in 1990 and 1996, was given the medal mainly because of his efforts in promoting friendships between politicians from the two countries.

Western Legislators

From July 12-15, lawmakers participated in the 8th Annual Western Legislative Academy, the West’s most prestigious training experience for newer state legislators selected from the 13 states in the CSG-West region.

Learn more about these stories at capitolideas.csg.org. Click on Stated Briefly under Departments.

RECORD NUMBER OF DISASTERS

The number of disasters and emergencies are on the increase—this decade has had the most presidential emergency declarations since the Federal Emergency Management Agency started keeping records more than 30 years ago, averaging 65 per year. Despite the struggle to balance budgets, states are maintaining funding for local emergency management programs and providing disaster assistance. That’s according to the National Emergency Management Association 2010 Biennial Report. Based on in-depth survey’s of state emergency management directors, the NEMA 2010 Biennial Report represents the most comprehensive compilation of state emergency management data and information available. The report is available for purchase on the NEMA website www.nemawebsite.org.
Midwestern Governors & New Energy

The Midwestern Governors Association will hold an investment summit in Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 21-22, to explore increasing investments in the Midwest in areas related to the new energy economy. As current chair of the MGA, Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland has focused on increasing investment capital opportunities for the Midwest’s small and mid-sized businesses. “As a governor, I see firsthand how important investment capital is in attracting new businesses to Ohio. If we want to continue the Midwest’s progress in becoming a global leader in the new energy economy, we must find ways to increase investment opportunities into our region,” said Strickland. For more, go to www.midwesterngovernors.org/investsummit.htm.

Midwestern Legislative Leaders

In July, 37 lawmakers from 11 Midwestern states and three Canadian provinces attended the 16th annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD) in Madison, Wis. The five-day program, produced by the Midwestern Legislative Conference in partnership with the University of Wisconsin’s Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs, provides professional development and leadership training for newer legislators from around the region. During the institute, a panel of four current and former legislative leaders from the region (Iowa Speaker Pat Murphy, Kansas Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, North Dakota Senate Minority Leader David O’Connell and former Ohio Speaker Jo Ann Davidson) shared insights and advice on being more effective legislators and policymakers. For more information, visit www.csgmidwest.org/About/BILLD.htm.

Lieutenant Governors in China

The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) will conduct an economic mission Sept. 19-26, 2010, through Beijing and Shanghai. Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki will lead the mission, which includes meeting and outreach opportunities at the World Fair. Most lieutenant governors play economic development roles in their states and territories, according to Executive Director Julia Hurst. For more, visit www.nlgaus.org.

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS’
2010 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Dec. 3-6, 2010 | Rhode Island Convention Center

For more information visit www.csg.org/events
MEET THE 2010 CLASS OF

Henry Toll Fellows

The Henry Toll Fellowship Program, named in honor of CSG’s founder, has emerged as the nation’s premier leadership development program for state leaders. Designed to connect outstanding state leaders from all three branches of government, each year’s class includes 10 leaders from each of CSG’s four regions selected in a competitive process. These inspiring leaders engage in a robust set of activities focused on empowering them to make a significant difference as public servants. The 2010 Class of Toll Fellows gathered in Lexington, Ky., home of CSG’s national headquarters, Aug. 20–25. Since 1986 more than 1,000 outstanding state leaders have joined the ranks of Toll Fellow alumni. The 2011 Henry Toll Fellowship Program will be held in Lexington, Ky., Sept. 9–14. Those interested in joining next year’s class can find more information and an application online at www.csg.org.

Favorite Leadership Quotes

Adam Jeamel:
“The ultimate measure of a person is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rebecca Smock:
“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
—Maya Angelou

Tre Hargett:
“Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance.”
—C.S. Lewis

Eddie Lucio III:
“Leadership is not the ability to tell people what to do. It is the ability to get others to do what is right through example.”
—State Sen. Eddie Lucio (my father)
Keys to Effective Leadership

“One of the keys to effective leadership is the ability to listen to ideas and concerns of others and to then reflect back common sense solutions to those ideas and concerns.”

—Jo Oldson

“A leader must have a clear vision for the future and possess the ability to communicate that vision in such a manner that it sparks the imagination and motivates the person.”

—Dolores Gresham

“There is nothing more important to leadership than knowing who you are trying to lead and to where. You must listen, you must understand, you must cultivate consensus and you must champion the compromise.”

—Laura Kelly

“A leader must listen well, keep his word and treat people with the respect that they deserve.”

—Daniel Narum

“The best way to lead is by example—be the kind of person others will follow and emulate.”

—Tracy Guerrero

“Effective leaders focus less on their personal agendas and more on the greater common good. Effective leaders worry less about who gets credit and more about moving policy forward. Effective leaders listen.”

—Jim Hammond
Best Advice

“I guess a very important one is when under pressure, try not to do something that is irreversible.”

—William Hatch

“No person knows everything. There is always one more thing to learn.”

—Rafael Martinez

“The key to effective leadership is to carefully develop convictions about where to go and then to have the courage and consistency to persuade and inspire others to go there.”

—Steven Pierce

“Listen to whomever & from whatever source you prefer but also listen carefully and understand the points of view and messages of those with whom you disagree.”

—Kathleen Chandler

“If you do not want to read about it in the paper, you probably should not do it.”

—Carolyn McGinn

“Equilibrium is the next step to death. Do not be afraid of change.”

—Jeff Herring

“My son told me that voters didn’t elect me for the easy work. They need me for the tough times that we’re currently experiencing. It keeps me centered.”

—Debbie Smith

KANSAS CONNECTION
Kansas Sens. Laura Kelly, left, and Carolyn McGinn, right, visited with former Kansas Sen. David Adkins, the CEO of The Council of State Governments, during the Toll Fellows program. Photography by Suzanne Feliciano
A very special thank you to our sponsors for your support of the 2010 Class of Henry Toll Fellows

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**Making the Most of LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIPS**

Kentucky Rep. Derrick Graham, a high school government and history teacher, sees how his students who work as pages for the state legislature build on textbook knowledge. Here are his tips for legislators on helping students get the most from their internship.

**BUILD A RELATIONSHIP.**
The relationships students build while working as a page or legislative intern are important, not only in carrying out their daily duties but also in understanding the political process. “A lot of things are in the textbook about government and how government runs,” Graham said. “The key to success in being an effective legislator is having good personal skills, human relation skills.” Pages learn that quickly, he said, because they must interact with every legislator at one time or another. Legislators can help by being open to the students.

**EXPLAIN THE PROCESS.**
Students learn the basics of how government works in the classroom, but the process is much different in real life, Graham said. He said legislators can help students understand policymaking processes better if they take time to explain what occurred on the floor. “For example if we’re in recess and they didn’t understand how something developed, they will ask, ‘what went on here? What did you just do and why did you do it?’” Graham said. He said most legislators take the time to answer their questions.

**REMEMBER THEY’RE STUDENTS.**
While legislative pages and interns are working a job, they’re also students. Graham said many times they still have responsibilities to keep up with classes and turn in classwork even on the longest of legislative days. He said it’s important for the legislative internship or page program to have a good relationship with the schools students attend. “In Franklin County, we have said for years we want to provide hands-on education,” Graham said. “This is a true way of providing hands-on education in history and government.”

**ASK THEIR OPINION.**
Most students are adults or are nearing adulthood when they serve as a legislative page or intern. Graham said they can offer a fresh perspective to legislators. “We want kids to listen to us but a lot of times kids have a lot of things on their minds that can give us some ideas as to what they think would be the best way whether in terms of education or social issues,” he said. “Sometimes that youthful thought can make you think before you take action.”

**SET AN EXAMPLE.**
Teachers set an example in the classroom, but also in life. So do legislators, Graham said. He has seen that over the past eight years he’s served in the legislature while teaching—and before that as a city councilman in Kentucky’s capital city. Three of his former students have a good shot at winning seats on the city council. “I think me serving may have heightened their awareness of serving in public office,” he said.

“We want to provide hands-on education. (Offering legislative internships) is a true way of providing hands-on education in history and government.”

—Rep. Derrick Graham, a history and government teacher
National and Regional Meetings

Registration and application deadlines may apply.
Visit www.csg.org/events for complete details.

CSG 2010 Annual Conference
Gergen, Ifill to Headline
Dec. 3–6, 2010 • Providence, R.I.

David Gergen, former director of communications for President Reagan, will speak at the CSG Annual Conference Dec. 5 about the 2010 election. Gergen has also worked for Presidents Nixon, Ford and Clinton. In 1993, he served as counselor to President Clinton on both foreign policy and domestic affairs. Gwen Ifill, moderator and managing editor of “Washington Week” and senior correspondent for “The PBS NewsHour,” will also speak Dec. 5. Ifill was the moderator for the vice presidential debate during the 2008 election.

Visit www.csg.org for more information.

NEMA Annual Conference
NEMA Reviews Oil Spill Response, Recovery

Gulf states directly affected by the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history will examine how the Deepwater Horizon oil spill unfolded, the response strategy and the long-term impacts at the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) Annual Conference, Oct. 19. Other discussions will focus on lessons learned from Nashville’s spring flood, managing generational differences in the workplace, and the role of the military in support of large-scale disasters and emergencies. Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate will also address the full conference Oct. 20.

Visit www.nemaweb.org for more information.
The phrase “teaching to the test” is not on Massachusetts Rep. Antonio Cabral’s vocabulary list—at least it’s not something he would ever grade as passing. As a former public school teacher of social studies and foreign languages, and now full-time legislator, Cabral knows well how state policies translate to the classroom. “Sometimes when we talk about standards, we get sort of bogged down on tools that we think the average person can almost touch and feel—and teaching is not that kind of profession. You’ve got to allow some freedom in the classroom . . . because teaching is a creative thing,” Cabral said. “You should not be teaching to a particular test.”
“If I can make America stronger giving it clean, efficient, low-priced energy, then I’m doing my part. I’m making America better.”

Shane’s brother is on active duty in Afghanistan. And Shane will be the first to tell you that what he is doing doesn’t begin to compare to the sacrifice his brother is making.

Still, he feels that he and his fellow miners at the Powder River Basin’s Black Thunder Mine are doing their part to make America stronger by providing all of us the affordable and reliable electricity that coal makes possible.

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To learn more about Shane and coal’s vital role in a secure energy future, visit americaspower.org.

Shane Evans
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