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2025

ANNUAL REPORT

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION TO UNLOCK LIFELONG
OPPORTUNITY AND SUCCESS FOR EACH AND EVERY CHILD

About ExcelinEd

CHANGING POLICY, CHANGING LIVES

WHAT WE DO: Advance Student-Centered Solutions

Improve the System

- Reading & Math Achievement
- Equitable Funding
- Assessments & Accountability
- Teacher Pipeline
- College & Career Pathways
- Digital & Technology

Create Alternatives

- Public School Choice
- Charter Schools
- Private School Choice
- Education Scholarship Accounts
- Home Education
- Hybrid Learning & Microschooling

Reimagine the System

- Part-time Enrollment
- Career Scholarship Accounts
- Learn Anywhere
- Chartered Teachers
- AI to Support Learning
- Course Access

HOW WE DO IT: Policy & Advocacy Expertise Customized for States

Develop Policy

We leverage our team of experts to deliver customized policy solutions for each state.

Advance Policy

We work with policymakers and partners to adopt student-centered legislation.

Implement Policy

We stay engaged to provide technical assistance, best practices and knowledge exchange across states.

Catalyze Policy

Our annual National Summit is the forum for igniting and incubating innovative ideas.

WHY WE GET RESULTS: Our Strengths Set Us Apart

We're Always Relevant

With broad policy engagement, we help states with their most pressing needs and develop foundations for long-term success.

We Pollinate Great Ideas

With extensive cross-state engagement, we gain trust and expertise to spread policy solutions quickly across states.

We Partner Strategically

Depending on what a state needs, we can play a lead role or work in coalitions, behind the scenes or to fill a gap.

We're In It for the Long Term

Our students deserve the best. We believe success is never final, and reform is never finished.



A MESSAGE FROM Our Chairman

Transforming education is a marathon, not a sprint. Rapid progress can be slowed by new and complex challenges. As we look at the national landscape, it's clear that student achievement is not yet where it needs to be. While significant hurdles exist, I remain a steadfast optimist who believes that student-centered policy can transform lives.

There are bright spots on the horizon in states that are refusing to accept the status quo. We've seen incredible momentum in comprehensive math policy, applying the same rigor and evidence-based strategies that revolutionized early literacy. Ensuring every student is prepared in math is a prerequisite for success in a modern economy.

We also have seen great courage in states that are protecting school accountability and assessments. Despite pressure to obscure results or lower standards, policymakers are holding firm. We simply cannot improve what we do not measure, and maintaining high expectations is the only way to give teachers and families the information they need to know how students are doing—and what interventions are available to help.

As we look toward a future where technology continues to evolve at breakneck speed, we are seeing states lead the way ensuring children are safe in online spaces. This includes getting distracting technology out of the classroom and establishing essential AI guardrails to protect student privacy and safety.

Innovation must serve our children's learning rather than compromising their safety.

These emerging trends are proof that policy can change the trajectory of a child's life. ExcelinEd is ready to assist states with a laser focus on student outcomes. We will continue to bring proven solutions to meet pressing needs while innovating to stay ahead of new challenges. There is serious work ahead, and America's students are counting on us. As always, I am grateful for your partnership.

Onward,

 Jeb Bush

ExcelinEd Board Of Directors

JEB BUSH, CHAIRMAN
 Chairman of the Board & 43rd Governor of Florida

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 Former New Jersey Commissioner of Education

ALLAN B. HUBBARD
 Co-founder and Chairman, E&A Industries & former Director, National Economic Council

JANET AYERS
 President, The Ayers Foundation

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 Chief Policy and Strategy Officer of Oscar Health & former Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education

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 Partner, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

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 31st Governor of New Mexico

ERIC CANTOR
 Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Moelis & Company, & former U.S. House Majority Leader

BRUCE RAUNER
 42nd Governor of Illinois



A MESSAGE FROM Our CEO

As I reflect on 2025's progress, one theme stands out: States are building—not retreating. Policymakers are working broadly across the education landscape to raise literacy achievement, improve career pathways, expand choice, strengthen teacher pipelines, create phone-free schools and elevate math with the urgency it deserves. Momentum is real, with states readily learning from each other to accelerate progress.

Literacy remains foundational. Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania aligned

professional development for teachers in K-5 with the science of reading. And in Mississippi and Alabama, leaders are building on strong K-3 reforms to support students in grades 4-8. The message is clear: Don't stop at third grade; keep going with adolescent literacy.

Math had a breakthrough year in 2025. Indiana, Oklahoma, Iowa, Texas and Florida enacted numeracy policies that provided for universal screenings, guaranteed access to advanced coursework, stronger teacher preparation and targeted intervention.

We also saw renewed attention on academic transparency. Oklahoma deserves credit for restoring rigorous standards that had been lowered last year. Honesty with families about student achievement must remain non-negotiable.

Governors again advanced bold education-to-workforce pathways. Indiana reimaged the high school diploma, while Georgia aligned career planning with return-on-investment data, and Arkansas streamlined college access.

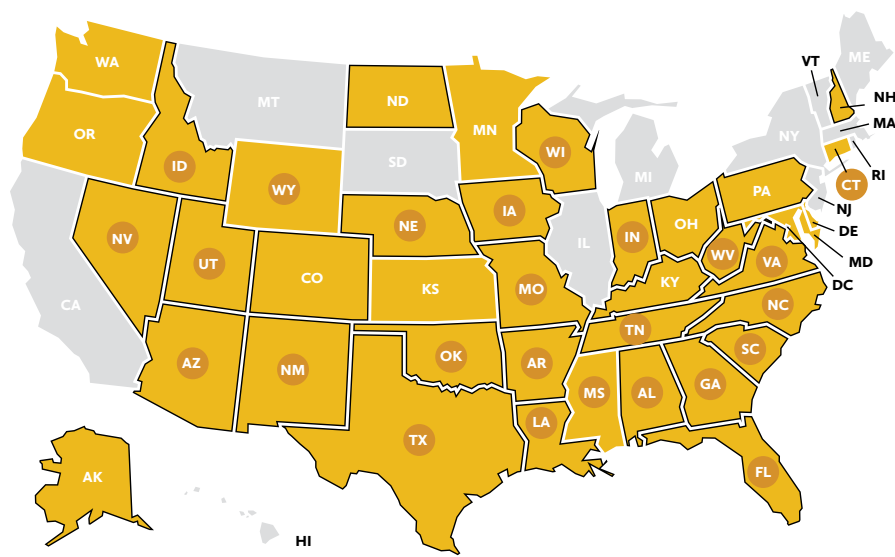
Public school choice in 13 states saw policy improvements in funding equity, facilities access, open enrollment and charter school expansion. Private choice expanded in Tennessee, Idaho, Texas, South Carolina and New Hampshire.

I'm especially grateful that distraction-free learning emerged as a bipartisan priority. This year alone, 24 states moved decisively to protect instructional time and restore focus in classrooms.

This work demonstrates that no single policy, in one single year, can turn mediocre systems into outstanding ones. The states seeing the strongest outcomes are working consistently and courageously, committed to building year after year. My message to policymakers is simple: Be bold, don't blink, and keep building. We're with you every step of the way.

Patricia Levesque
Patricia Levesque

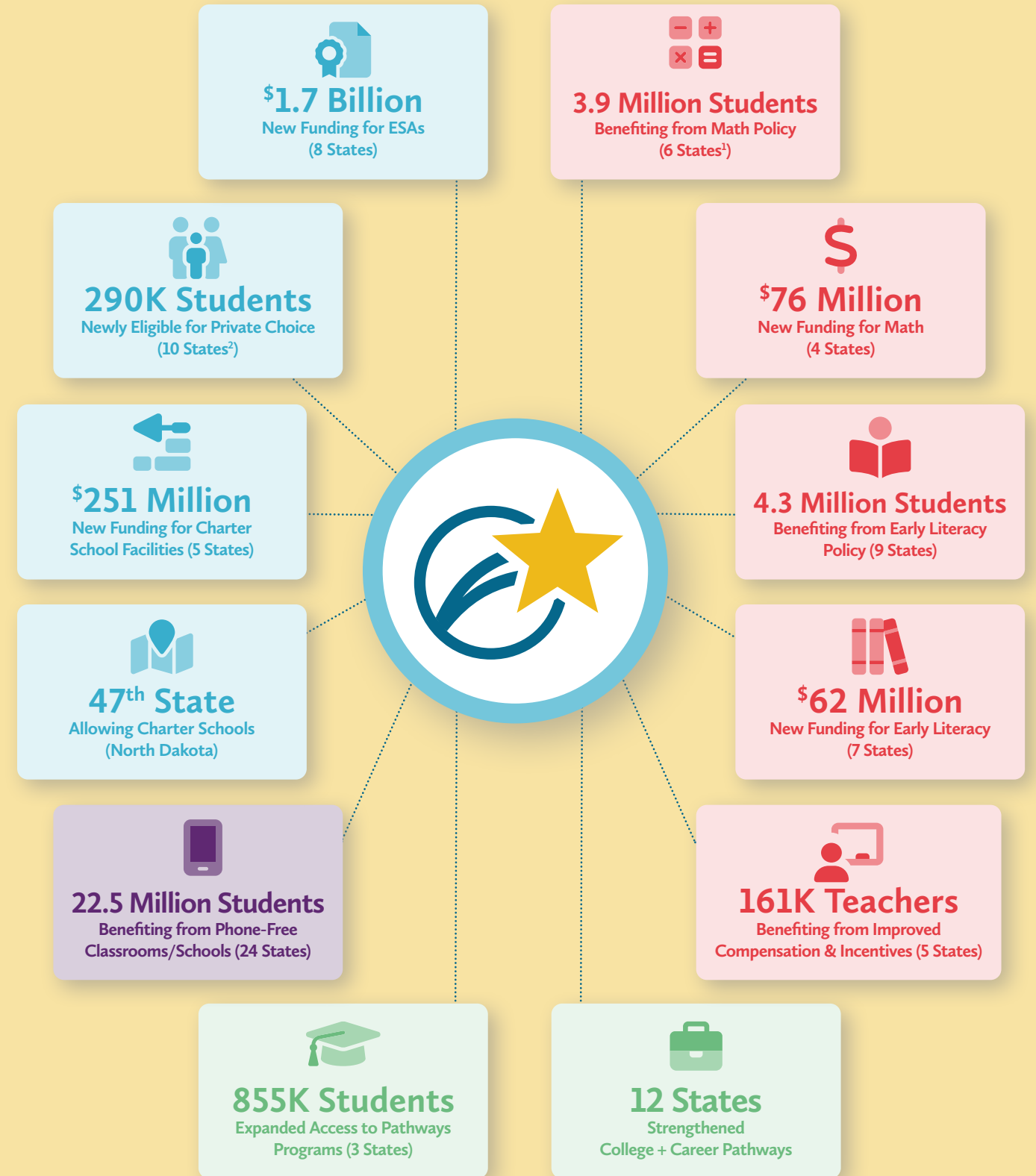
ExcelinEd in the States | 2025



- 38** States + DC Engaged
- 126** Policies Passed or Improved in 29 States
- 39** Policies Protected in 13 States
- 25** States + DC Implementation Support

OUR VALUES | COLLABORATION | INTEGRITY | SERVICE | EXPERTISE | MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By the Numbers | 2025

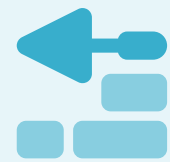


Closing Learning Gaps Strengthening Pathways to College + Career Building Digital Skills Empowering Families with Opportunity

¹Includes executive action in MD. ²Includes executive action in UT.

Five Years of Impact, 2021-2025

ExcelinEd's student-centered policies are achieving unprecedented impact nationwide, with state investments in education benefiting millions of students. Thank you to the policymakers, state leaders, advocates, educators and philanthropy partners who, year after year, are turning our shared vision for student success into reality.



\$1.3 Billion

Secured for **Charter Schools & Charter School Facilities**



\$1 Billion

New Funding for **Workforce Training**

29 States

Expanded **School Choice Options**



\$1.3 Billion

New Funding for **Early Literacy**

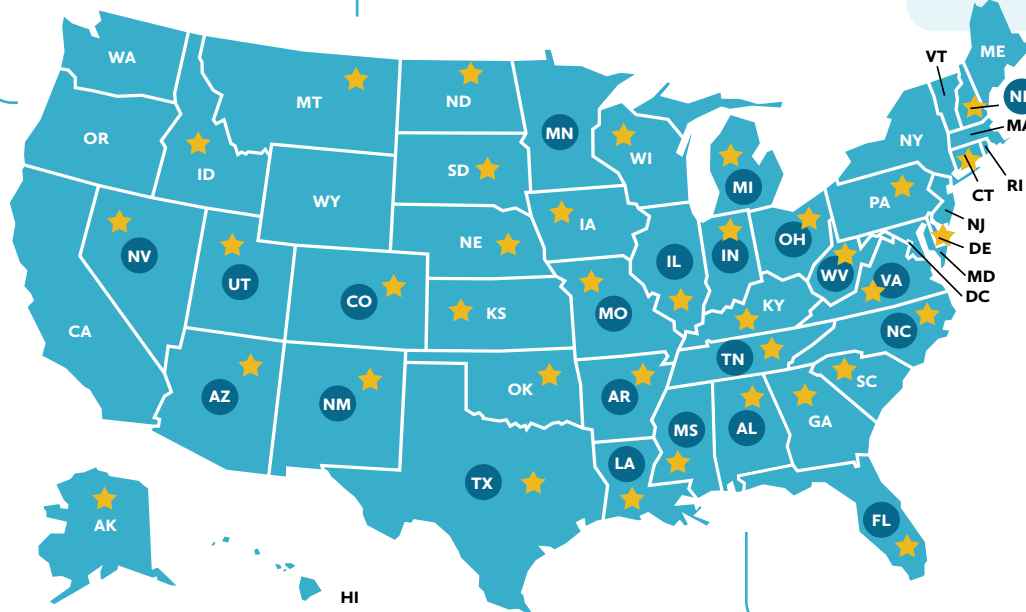


27 States

Adopted **Digital Policies**

50
States Engaged + DC

556
Policies Passed or Improved in **37 States**



111
Policies Protected in **22 States**

204
Expert Testimonies in **32 States**

1170
Bills Engaged in **45 States**



\$3.2 Billion

New Funding for Expanded **Private School Choice**

32 States
Strengthened **Early Literacy**



18 States

Launched or Expanded **ESAs**



15 States

Protected **School Accountability & Assessments**



24 States

Strengthened **Education to Workforce Pathways**

19 States

Strengthened **Teacher Recruitment & Retention Policies**



26 States

Improved **Charter School & Public Education Choice**



NATIONAL SUMMIT ON EDUCATION

2025 | NEW ORLEANS



ExcelinEd CEO Patricia Levesque welcomed more than 1,400 education leaders, policymakers and advocates to the National Summit, recognizing the many states that took action this year on transformative policies ranging from math and accountability to distraction-free learning and reimagining high school. The Summit featured inspirational keynote speakers, in-depth strategy sessions, multi-state policy networks and more.



ExcelinEd Chairman Gov. Jeb Bush and the Daniels Fund CEO **Hanna Skandera** discussed key priorities to transform education: close learning gaps, build career pathways and expand opportunity as well as the innovative solutions needed for emerging challenges, such as the role of AI in K-12 education.

"It's an emergency when so few kids are capable of getting a job or going to college or serving in the military."
– Gov. Jeb Bush



Angela Duckworth, psychologist and co-founder of Character Lab, presented her research on what teachers and the latest data reveal about phone-free classrooms. In discussion with **South Carolina Superintendent Ellen Weaver**, Duckworth described the importance of distraction-free environments where every child can engage fully in the task of learning.

"The farther the phone, the higher the GPA."
– Angela Duckworth



"If we have good data, we can make better decisions."
– Emily Oster



Emily Oster, founder and CEO of ParentData.org, shared her research-backed insights on healthy childhood development and the role state leaders hold in shaping it. Emphasizing the power of data to guide effective solutions, Oster and **ExcelinEd Board Member Eric Cantor** explored strategies that improve focus and enhance learning for all students.

"You know what right looks like. You know the right thing to do. Do it."
– Adm. William McRaven



Tim Urban explored the need for learning environments that cultivate critical thinking, humility and curiosity in students. His discussion with **ExcelinEd Board Member Gov. Susana Martinez** emphasized classrooms as idea labs instead of echo chambers, where students can learn the art of respectful dialogue and help restore civility to public discourse.

"In an idea lab culture, even a small group can be smarter than any of its individual parts."
– Tim Urban

Admiral William McRaven (U.S. Navy, Ret.) shared his expertise in military and university leadership, drawing from his latest book, *Conquering Crisis: Ten Lessons to Learn Before You Need Them*. In a compelling conversation with Gov. Bush, McRaven highlighted the high-impact strategies all leaders need to navigate complex challenges and drive meaningful change.



#EIE25 Highlights

- 1400+ attendees
- All 50 states and Washington, D.C., plus Canada, Ireland and the UK
- 22 State Education Chiefs
- 120 policy practitioners from 35 states for ExcelinEd's policy networks
- 90% rated Summit outstanding or above average for value and usefulness

2025 SUMMIT SPONSORS



2025 National Summit: Strategy Sessions & Networking



STRATEGY SESSION: *Keeping Up with AI: Smart Policies to Protect Students in a Fast-Paced Digital Age*



STRATEGY SESSION: *Funding for Universal Choice*



STRATEGY SESSION: *Great Teachers in the Making: Raising the Bar for Educator Prep Programs*

"I learned so many new strategies and tools to bring back to Alabama."
- Jonathan Brumlow, Policy Advisor to Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey



STRATEGY SESSION: *Making Pathways Actually Matter: Turning Ambition into Results for Every Graduate*



STRATEGY SESSION: *The Fundamentals of Math Policy*

STRATEGY SESSION: *A Candid Conversation About Accountability: Why Some States Nail it, Others Miss the Mark*



STRATEGY SESSION: *Turning Struggle Into Strength: Policy Solutions for Adolescent Readers*

"We're better legislators for having attended."
- Amy Sinclair, Iowa Senate President



"A powerful gathering of leaders, innovators and changemakers committed to shaping the future of learning."
- Kate Arrizza, Executive Director, Stiles-Nicholson Foundation



STRATEGY SESSION: *What's Up with Federal Education Policy?*

STRATEGY SESSION: *Celebrating 250 Years: Renewing Civic Education for a New Generation*



"An amazing event—legislators, educators and advocates coming together to learn how to make education better."
- Avi Schnall, New Jersey Assemblyman

"I left inspired...and look forward to future opportunities for collaboration and conversation."
- Molly Hart, Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction



STATE CHIEFS FORUM



SPONSORED ROUNDTABLES

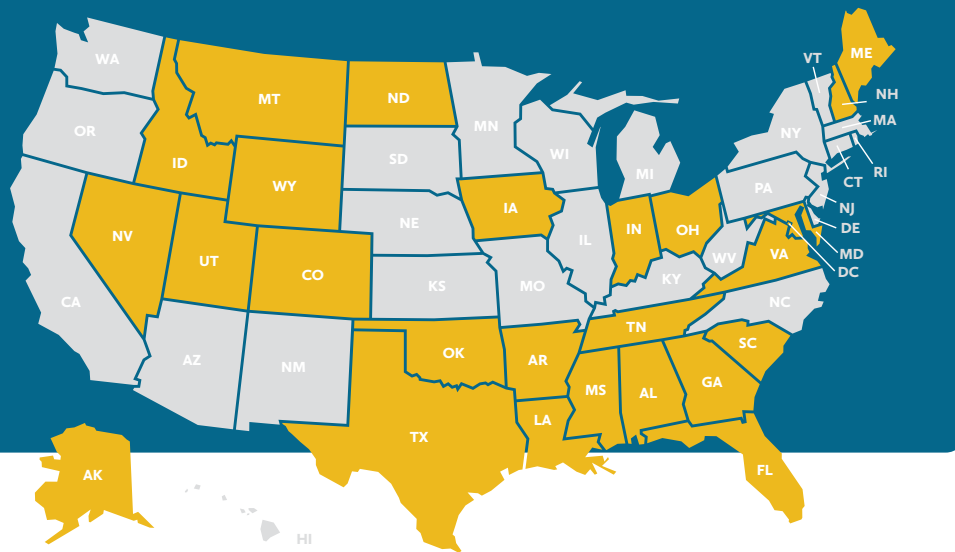
2025 SUMMIT SPONSORS



Multi-State Policy Networks

STATE CHIEFS FORUM

ExcelinEd’s forum for state education chiefs grew out of the State Chiefs annual convening at ExcelinEd’s National Summit and the chiefs’ strong interest in ongoing connection, sharing challenges and exploring student-centered policy solutions. Now in its second year, the **State Chiefs Forum** held multiple convenings in 2025 to discuss federal policy changes, current flexibility options and strategies that align flexibility requests with state-specific goals and support needs to improve educational outcomes for students, close achievement gaps and improve the quality of instruction. The state chiefs also previewed ExcelinEd’s comprehensive math policy and were updated on our newly launched Math Policy Network.



LITERACY NETWORK

ExcelinEd’s **Literacy Network** was formed in 2015 as a forum for state literacy leaders and reading program specialists to share best practices for effective policy and program implementation. Its membership has grown steadily during the decade and now includes 38 states and Washington, DC. Quarterly convenings feature panel discussions, collaborative work groups and state spotlights. At the 2025 National Summit, 14 network members shared their literacy expertise as presenters, facilitators or panelists.

Meetings in 2025 highlighted new resources in [EarlyLiteracyMatters](#) and updates from **Georgia, Indiana, New Mexico** and **North Carolina** on implementation of ExcelinEd’s Literacy Coaching “Train the Trainer” program. State updates featured **Mississippi’s** highest pass rate on third-grade assessments, **Indiana’s** Keys to Literacy science of reading training, **Colorado’s** dyslexia screening, **Tennessee’s** high-quality instructional materials and the positive outcomes of **South Carolina’s** multi-year Read to Succeed efforts.

ExcelinEd launched its new Collaborative Literacy Communities in March to connect literacy leaders facing challenges in specific policy areas with practitioners excelling in implementation of those policies. Participants in these small group forums reported on their work in four areas—literacy coaches, literacy for leaders, curriculum implementation and dyslexia screeners—and held group discussions on three cueing, multilingual learner guidance, statewide literacy plans and parent reading at home plans.



“Joining this incredible literacy community of learners, movers and shakers has been a game-changer. Grateful for the inspiration, collaboration and growth opportunities.”

“Participating in the Literacy Network has supported me in bringing evidence-based practices to my state.”

“The Literacy Network has given me insights from other states that I’ve integrated into my work supporting early literacy and dyslexia statewide.”

“One key takeaway for me was that other states are struggling in similar areas and that there is a plan to support one another.”

DIGITAL POLICY & INNOVATION PARTNERS NETWORKS

The **Digital Policy Network** and the **Network of State Innovation Partners** together focus on solutions to transform education and address the fast-moving challenges associated with digital technology.

Practitioners from 13 states attended the joint convening at the National Summit, where they discussed roles and responsibilities for AI literacy, cybersecurity in education and social media safety for students. **North Carolina** shared its AI micro-credentials for teachers and grade-appropriate use of AI tools.

Participants shared their state’s progress on phone-free policy implementation and delved into funding strategies to incentivize education innovations. Updates during the year included **Ohio’s** ongoing work to scale personalized

learning, **Tennessee’s** new taskforce on assessment reform and high school redesign, **Mississippi’s** work to identify pilot schools for AI integration and **Kentucky’s** new AI guidance document for districts.

Presentations in 2025 covered the success of **South Carolina’s** Free to Focus cell phone policy and **Kentucky’s** work to rethink high school math through a mastery-based badging system. **Indiana, Mississippi** and **Utah** shared their strategies for building AI literacy and integrating AI into K-12 education, including in

curriculum and teacher training on creative AI use. **Kentucky** shared its resource for educators on how to use AI and strategies to reimagine assessments and accountability.

“The phone-free discussion set me up with great resources to advise our state leaders.”

“I had my eyes opened so that I can go back to my department and make a difference by showing examples of what other states are doing.”



Multi-State Policy Networks

MATH POLICY NETWORK

ExcelinEd's newest policy network was sparked by 2024's NAEP math results and states' urgent interest in taking action to turn around declining student performance. Launched in 2025, the **Math Policy Network** brings together mathematics leaders from states to learn from one another in designing, implementing and improving math policies to drive better outcomes for students.

Twenty-three states and Washington, DC, have joined the network, convening quarterly in 2025 to learn more about ExcelinEd's fundamental math policy principles and the new MathMatters policy resource launched at the 2025 National Summit. Topical discussions have included the importance of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). **Maryland** and **Florida** made presentations on the success of their state's HQIM, and **Mississippi** shared its strategy for student improvement using math coaches. **New Mexico** and **Utah** presented on designing and implementing math plans.

At the high school level, a topic of strong interest was pathways-aligned math courses. **Florida** and **Utah** shared their secondary math pathways, which have split options such as STEM, quantitative literacy and statistics. At the end of the year, 94% of network participants said they had gained a better understanding of best practices for math policy implementation.

“ We just published a state math plan, and although it is broad, the information gained through this network will strengthen and tighten up implementation.”

“ I've gained ideas for improvements to our current math policy—math coaching for example.”

“ We've used the ExcelinEd model policy to help us structure our K-8 policy request!”

“ The discussion topics really helped focus my thinking on what makes quality math policy and implementation.”



“ This network is key to the success and growth of the ESA movement.”

“ We apply what we learn at these meetings to improve administration of our program.”

“ Being able to discuss current issues, pressing problems and emerging opportunities with other ESA administrators is very helpful and illuminating.”

POLICY LEADERS NETWORK

ExcelinEd hosts a network of state lawmakers who are proven reformers committed to addressing emerging and persistent educational challenges. By sharing ideas across state lines, network members aim to design policy solutions to newly identified challenges, grow policymaker capacity through peer engagement and increase the impact of existing education policies.

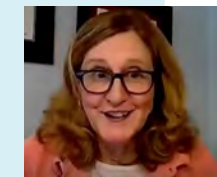


The **Policy Leaders Network** held its third annual retreat in June, with 12 policymakers representing 8 states. CEO Patricia Levesque moderated a fireside chat with Governor Jeb Bush on high school redesign and outcomes-based models of education. Network members also participated in a “Rethinking High School” policy workshop, building on last year's work on credentials of value and exploring the interconnected policies of ExcelinEd's *Pathways Matter* framework, which includes using return-on-investment analyses to drive decision-making.



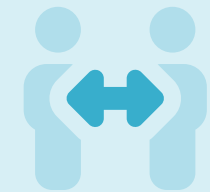
ESA ADMINISTRATOR NETWORK

The **ESA Administrator Network** was formed in 2020 as a collaborative forum and technical resource to ESA administrators looking to create and successfully launch new ESA programs that directly serve students and parents. Eighteen states have participated in this year's convenings to share ESA program updates and vendor information. To optimize program management, they explored program efficiency, accounting-related challenges, AI tools to enhance ESA administration and the use of commodity codes to streamline and expedite funding disbursements. Discussions also included the use of ESAs in microschoools, **West Virginia's** successful vendor transition, best practices for verifying residency and enrollment and strategies to enhance public outreach.



ESA ADMINISTRATOR LEADERS NETWORK

The **ESA Administrator Leaders Network** grew out of ExcelinEd's original ESA network in 2024 to provide focused space for experienced administrators working through common challenges in mature programs. Ten states participated in this year's convenings to discuss standard RFP items, purchasing codes, navigating school system barriers, course access and open enrollment, fee structures and funding concerns. The potential role of artificial intelligence in document review (including purchases) and as support to parents in answering questions and providing guidance on reimbursement was also explored.



Closing Learning Gaps

MATH MATTERS: NEW POLICY RESOURCE

ExcelinEd developed Math Matters, a digital playbook to help states strengthen K-8 math policy and improve student outcomes. Using the latest research and data, Math Matters provides evidence-based policy solutions and state-level insights to help policymakers and education leaders ensure every student gains the math foundation they need for lifelong success.

Senior policy director Lindsey Henderson and policy director Tim Flatley hosted an introductory video and wrote a blog, Introducing Math Matters: New Digital Tool and Resources to Help Policymakers Transform Math Education in Their States, to launch the new set of resources.



NEW MODEL POLICY: EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

With students nationwide lagging in literacy and math skills, high-quality educator preparation programs (EPPs) have become critical to improving student outcomes. ExcelinEd released a new model policy, State Educator Preparation Provider Accountability, to help states increase transparency of these programs, ensure greater accountability and raise the bar for teacher preparation. Senior Policy Director Justine Morina penned a blog, Improving the Teacher Pipeline: How EPP Report Cards Can Support Stronger Educators and Schools, to launch the new policy.



TEACHER POLICY WITH STATE LEADERS

ExcelinEd's video series with four state leaders explored actionable solutions to develop and retain high-quality teachers. Featured are Arkansas



Education Secretary Jacob Oliva, Indiana Secretary of Education Katie Jenner, South Carolina Superintendent Ellen Weaver and North Carolina Teaching Roles Advanced Lead Leah Sutton.

NEW MODEL POLICY: ADOLESCENT LITERACY



Building on comprehensive literacy policy for K-3 students, ExcelinEd identified a need for improved literacy support beyond the early grades. A new model policy, Advancing Adolescent Literacy, offers states practical guidance to enhance instruction, expand teacher training and sustain early literacy progress so that middle and high school students have the skills to analyze complex texts and engage with content across every subject.

A FOCUS ON MATH

ExcelinEd released its new Comprehensive K-8 Math Policy covering multiple components of effective state policy. Policy Director Lindsey Henderson presented in a webinar for the PIE Network: Math Multipliers Series where she shared state policy recommendations and discussed NAEP scores and trends.



Henderson also spoke at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2025 legislative conference on improving student outcomes in math.

THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

Gov. Bush penned an op-ed on student achievement in the Boston Globe, For better education, it's time to heed Nation's Report Card. "The assessment results provide valuable data to determine whether students are doing well or falling behind," he wrote, emphasizing the importance of the report card for seeing trends in performance, which are essential to informing education policy.



NAEP AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ExcelinEd's Senior Policy Fellow Christy Hovanetz showcased states that achieved reading and math growth in their National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) outcomes. The blog, Policy Lessons from States that Improved Students' Reading and Math Proficiency, highlighted successes in Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.



TRAINING FOR LITERACY COACHES

ExcelinEd held a "Train the Trainer" convening to provide for effective delivery of the Fundamentals of Literacy Coaching resource for educators. The training modules, informed by the latest reading research, are helping states increase the number of trained literacy coaches who provide direct support in classrooms to improve literacy achievement for all students.



SCIENCE OF READING



Policy Director Casey Taylor was a keynote speaker at the AIM Institute's 2025 Symposium invitation-only roundtable

session where she spoke about early literacy policy implementation and trends. Taylor also was featured in an All for Literacy podcast where she discussed science of reading, literacy policy impact and successes in Mississippi and North Carolina with policy adoption and implementation.



ADVANCING EARLY LITERACY

Senior Policy Fellow Kymyona Burk was a keynote speaker and panelist at the Pennsylvania Literacy Coalition's summit in Harrisburg, and VP of Advocacy Ashley Mullins moderated one of the summit's panels, The Power of Policy: Lessons from Other States.



FUNDING STUDENT SUCCESS

Senior Policy Advisor Matthew Joseph and Senior Policy Director Ben DeGrow co-authored ExcelinEd's Student-Centered Approach to K-12 Funding to explain the value of universal weighted student funding formulas. They outlined strategies to modernize funding models and ensure that all students receive the support they need. Joseph and Policy Director Suela Cela wrote Rethinking School Funding: Rewarding



Student Success Over Seat Time to emphasize a focus on student success through performance funding models.



PATHWAYS MATTER EXPANSION

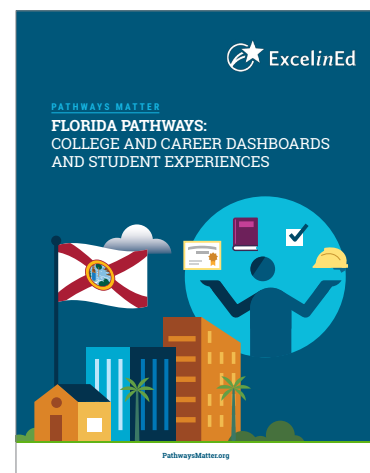
ExcelinEd's Pathways Matter is a comprehensive tool helping states build high-quality learning pathways that lead students into mid- and high-wage careers. Managing Director of Policy Adriana Harrington and Senior Policy Director Nathan Oakley wrote Improving College and Career Pathways, to describe the tool's expanded resources, now with 45 policy components and additional state reports.



ADVANCING PATHWAYS IN FLORIDA

ExcelinEd published Florida Pathways: College and Career Dashboards and Student Experiences, a new report featuring a comprehensive landscape analysis of Florida's data dashboards with findings on the student learner experience and recommendations for the state.

In Florida's capitol, ExcelinEd's policy experts presented the report's findings and recommendations to key lawmakers and legislative staff as well as in roundtable discussions with the Florida Department of Education, Florida Chamber of Commerce and Florida College Access Network. Highlights from the report were published in a blog, Florida College and Career Dashboards: Promoting Student Success Using Data-Driven Insights.



CREDENTIALS OF VALUE IN TENNESSEE

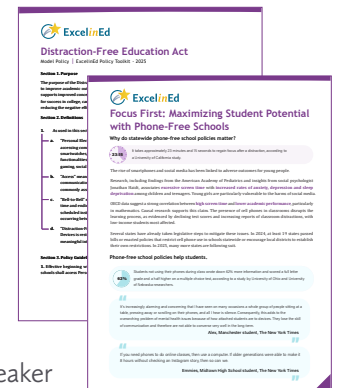
ExcelinEd conducted research on Tennessee's progress in strengthening student pathways into careers. High-Value Credentials in Tennessee: Aligning Education with Workforce Needs includes policy recommendations for further accelerating progress. The report was highlighted in an overview of credential-earning opportunities for students, Leveling Up the High School Experience: Credentials of Value in College and Career Pathways Policy, which featured successful strategies used in other states.



DISTRACTION-FREE LEARNING

ExcelinEd published a Distraction-Free Education model policy to help states create focused learning environments in K-12 schools and improve academic outcomes and boost student engagement.

An accompanying fact sheet, Focus First: Maximizing Student Potential with Phone-Free Schools, explores why statewide phone-free school policies matter. It cites National Summit speaker Jonathan Haidt's research on screen time and explains how phone-free school policies help students. This year alone, more than 20 states considered policies to create phone-free classrooms or schools.



BROADBAND STRATEGIES FOR STATES

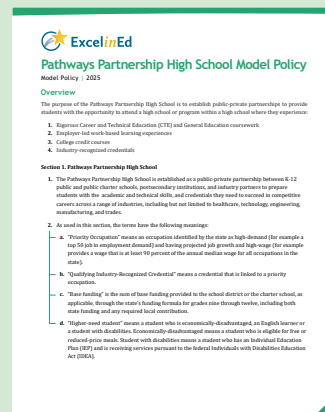
ExcelinEd hosted Drew Garner from the Benton Institute and Erin Mote from InnovateEDU for a deep dive into the evolving landscape of broadband access. They unpacked the latest federal updates, discussed opportunities and challenges for states and explored how broadband access and digital literacy work together to close the digital divide.

In technology's rapidly evolving landscape, ExcelinEd seeks to enhance instruction and learning without compromising safety or well-being. Our latest resources, on topics that include artificial intelligence and digital literacy, are available on our Digital Policies web page.



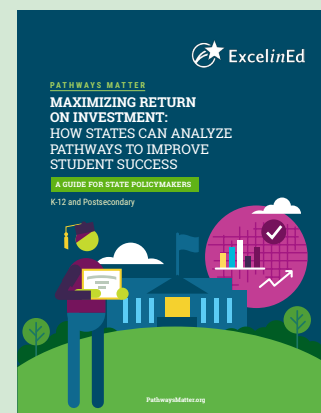
PATHWAYS HIGH SCHOOLS

ExcelinEd released a new model policy, Pathways Partnership High Schools, to advance career-connected high schools where employers are at the table from the beginning. The resource outlines how employers, postsecondary and a high school can develop a unique student experience in a specific industry using work-based learning, college credit and career and technical education.



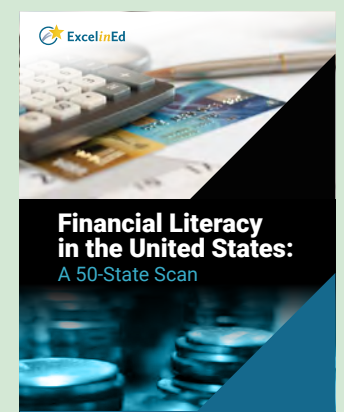
ROI GUIDANCE

ExcelinEd's new guide for state policymakers, Maximizing Return on Investment: How States Can Analyze Pathways to Improve Student Success, outlines the steps for conducting a return on investment (ROI) analysis of student pathway programs. The guide includes case studies in Colorado, Florida, Indiana and Mississippi, with highlights featured in a blog, Measuring Return on Investment: New ExcelinEd Resource Designed to Help States Assess College and Career Pathways.



FINANCIAL LITERACY

To assess current policies in K-12 financial literacy, ExcelinEd conducted a 50-state scan and released its findings, recommendations and state overviews in a comprehensive report. Launched with Financial Literacy Education in the United States: Landscape Analysis and Next Steps, the report includes data on financial insecurity across the nation and addresses key findings on graduation requirements, K-8 financial literacy education and teacher preparation as well as policy recommendations.



Empowering Families with Opportunity



HIGHLIGHTING PROGRESS IN CHOICE

ExcelinEd Chairman Gov. Jeb Bush penned several op-eds on state policy solutions that can advance parental choice:

[Texas' Education Savings Account Victory Can Set Nationwide Standard](#) highlighted the new program's scale and potential to drive innovation.

[Tennessee can learn from Florida's school choice success benefiting families](#) featured Florida's success with tax-credit scholarships and praised Gov. Bill Lee's vision for expanding choice.

[Expand access to education to help South Carolina children learn](#) encouraged the creation of South Carolina's Education Scholarship Trust Fund.

[Education choice has something for everyone](#) reminded readers that options in education serve all students.

[Here's How the Trump Administration Should Handle Ed. Policy](#) encouraged the federal government to allow states to drive innovation and empower families.

CHARTER FACILITIES IN IDAHO AND GEORGIA

ExcelinEd co-authored a report, [Reducing Facility Costs: How Idaho is Helping Charter Schools Focus Resources on Instruction](#), showcasing Idaho's progress in supporting charter schools' need for facilities and featuring several case studies of schools in the state. Senior Policy Advisor Matthew Joseph presented the report's finding to Idaho policymakers and provided highlights in a blog, [Idaho's Groundbreaking Approach to Charter School Facilities Funding: A Model for States](#).



ExcelinEd also conducted a facilities funding assessment in Georgia, [Building for Success in Georgia: Measuring How Well Georgia is Meeting Public Charter School Facility Needs](#). The report identified fiscal strategies to help Georgia's charter schools direct more resources to students by more efficiently addressing facilities costs.

Both states subsequently advanced policies to support charter school growth.

SCHOOL CHOICE MATTERS: TRACKING THE MOMENTUM

ExcelinEd's [School Choice Matters](#) policy tool documented 48 new or improved ratings across 12 states, capturing the continued momentum for school choice policy nationwide. Policy improvements ranged from ESAs and open enrollment to charter schools, homeschooling and transportation support. ExcelinEd staff created a series of [video shorts](#) to provide guidance on using the info-rich policy resource.



ESA IMPLEMENTATION

CEO Patricia Levesque and Senior Policy Director Ben DeGrow joined Michael B. Horn's Future of Education series for a [webcast conversation](#) about ESA implementation. DeGrow also spoke on a panel at the Children's Scholarship Fund Partner Summit in New York City.



More Policy Highlights

PODCAST WITH POLICY EXPERTS

ExcelinEd's [Policy Changes Lives](#) podcast embarked on a second season to continue exploring timely issues in education and transformative policies that change students' lives. Guests included ExcelinEd board member Chris Cerf; Dr. Thomas Dee, Professor of Education at Stanford University;



Terry Ryan, Board Chair of the Idaho Charter School Network; and South Carolina Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver. Topics covered included cell phone policy, math policy, adolescent literacy, charter school funding, school accountability, teacher pipelines and ESA innovations.



IMPROVING RURAL EDUCATION

To address challenges for more than 9.5 million students attending rural schools, ExcelinEd published a policy playbook, [Revitalizing America's Rural Education System](#), featuring strategies to support rural students and their communities. The comprehensive guide and [blog](#) focus on rural teacher pipelines, expanding educational opportunity, strengthening career pathways and improving digital infrastructure.

Policy Playbook: Revitalizing America's Rural Education System



NATIONAL POLL ON EDUCATION

ExcelinEd conducted a national poll on today's most important education issues and reported them in [What Americans Want: New Polling Reveals Support for Student-Centered Education Policies](#), a blog from CEO Patricia Levesque.

Based on feedback from 1,000 registered voters, the poll provides a clear blueprint for policymakers: Americans want strong state education policies that boost achievement, support teachers, provide transparency, equitably fund students and prepare them for tomorrow's economy.

State-specific feedback was also collected and analyzed for [Arkansas](#), [Florida](#), [Indiana](#), [Ohio](#) and [South Carolina](#).



ExcelinEd in the News

STRENGTHENING PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE + CAREER

CAREER PREP

ExcelinEd's Managing Director for Policy Adriana Harrington wrote an op-ed for The Tennessean on a new pathways program in Tennessee that removes obstacles for students hoping to attend an in-state college: [This new program will get TN students into college — without application or fees](#). She also was included in an article about the College Board's new approach to breaking down barriers between college-bound students and those in career & technical education: [The College Board Adds Two New AP Courses. Here's What Makes Them Different](#). An article in The 74, [Shut Out: High School Students Learn About Careers — But Can't Try One That Pays](#), included ExcelinEd's approach to work-based learning and apprenticeships.

RESPONDING TO NAEP RESULTS

ExcelinEd's subject matter experts took part in media interviews immediately following the release of the 2024 NAEP results to discuss the state and national data and trends.

National: ExcelinEd's Senior Policy Fellow Dr. Kymyona Burk was interviewed by the Wall Street Journal about declining NAEP reading scores. "Students who are struggling readers become adults who are struggling readers if we don't do something about it," she said in the story, [American Kids Are Getting Even Worse at Reading](#).



In Pennsylvania: ExcelinEd's Vice President of Advocacy Ashley Mullins shared her perspective on Pennsylvania's NAEP scores in a television interview, [Report shows little growth in PA test scores, still down from pre-pandemic levels](#). She emphasized the need for proven policies in Pennsylvania that can make a difference for students. "The faster that we get to it, the faster we will start to have positive impacts on kids," she said.

In Louisiana: ExcelinEd's Senior Policy Fellow Christy Hovanetz discussed NAEP results in Louisiana, in [Louisiana climbs in rankings as students make major gains on national test](#).



Commentary: As a follow-up to Gov. Bush's op-ed on student achievement in the Boston Globe, [For better education, it's time to heed Nation's Report Card](#), Dr. Hovanetz penned an op-ed on the policies states can embrace to turn around student outcomes, [NAEP scores are down. Here's what states can do to bring them up](#). She highlighted positive results in Tennessee in another op-ed, [As student performance in most other states fell, here's how Tennessee improved](#). When the 12th grade NAEP proficiency scores were released in September, she authored an op-ed for Governing Magazine, [The Urgent Case for Rebuilding Student Achievement](#).

EMPOWERING FAMILIES WITH OPPORTUNITY

PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DECLINE



Senior Policy Advisor Matthew Joseph provided expertise on emerging concerns around public school enrollment loss in an interview with The Hill in [Public schools in a bind amid enrollment declines](#). He also authored an op-ed on policy solutions in Mississippi to address those declines, [Fewer backpacks, fewer dollars: Mississippi's financial crunch from enrollment loss](#). His Ohio-focused research and comments were also featured in the web article for a TV news piece, [Ohio seeing decline in public school enrollment](#).

ESAs IN TEXAS

ExcelinEd's Senior Policy Director Ben DeGrow explained the concept of education scholarship accounts in a Texas television interview, [Education policies on the floor of Texas's 89th Legislative session](#). "The track record of research shows that access to options encourages the public schools to improve their offerings for students as well," said DeGrow.

BUILDING DIGITAL SKILLS

PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS



Foundation for Florida's Future Senior Legislative Director Nathan Hoffman discussed the need for distraction-free learning environments for a Miami Times story, [Total ban on in-school cellphone use coasts through first House committee](#). Hoffman cited research showing it takes students more than 23 minutes to get back on task after a phone disruption. "This is certainly a distraction that they don't need during class time," he said.

CLOSING LEARNING GAPS

MATH ACHIEVEMENT



ExcelinEd's Policy Director Lindsey Henderson spoke on the live morning news program "The Arc" on Salt Lake City's KUTV about math policy changes in Utah. She also discussed new math policy in Ohio and shared ExcelinEd's math policy recommendations in a story by the [Ohio Capital Journal](#), [Ohio Senate bill aims to help students with math interventions, including high-dosage tutoring](#). "It's never too late to get policy in place to move the needle on math improvement," she said.

EARLY LITERACY



ExcelinEd's Senior Policy Fellow Kymyona Burk wrote an op-ed in Indiana about the Early Literacy Matters dashboard and progress the state has made adopting all 18 fundamental early literacy policies. "This year's NAEP results continue to highlight literacy struggles nationwide, and states must continue to act with urgency," Dr. Burk wrote in her op-ed, [Raising Better Readers: How Indiana just became a national leader in Early Literacy Policy](#).

ExcelinEd's Senior Policy Director Casey Taylor was interviewed by The 74 Million for [Young Readers Leap](#), [Middle Schoolers Sink as Indiana Fights Back From Pandemic](#), highlighting Indiana's recent early literacy gains.

ExcelinEd in Action's Legislative Director Jordan Zakery wrote an op-ed in the Kansas City Star, [Missouri is still teaching an outdated, ineffective reading method. Time to ditch it](#). He emphasized the need for Missouri to end the harmful practice of teaching reading using three-cueing instruction.

BOARD MEMBERS ON THE RECORD

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS



Gov. Jeb Bush penned an op-ed in the Chicago Tribune: [How postsecondary opportunities for students are changing for the better](#), highlighting pathways programs that align educational opportunities with economic mobility.



CHOICE IN FLORIDA

For the Miami Herald, Foundation For Florida's Future Trustee Jeb Bush Jr. wrote an op-ed in support of school choice initiatives in Florida, [School choice didn't cause Florida public school enrollment crisis, it's the solution](#).

ACCOUNTABILITY IN FLORIDA



ExcelinEd Board Member Bruce Rauner penned an op-ed in the Tallahassee Democrat, [Florida must resist the trend of lowering the bar for students](#), calling for policymakers to uphold Florida's long-time priority on school accountability.

REVERSING TRENDS IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



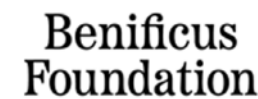
Foundation for Florida's Future Trustee John Padget wrote an op-ed in the Orlando Sentinel emphasizing the need to put Florida's students back on track with academic achievement, [Urgent new policies can turn around math, reading performance](#).

AS WITH OUR FORMULA FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, EXCELINED BELIEVES IN ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN OUR OPERATIONS.

As trusted stewards, we are committed to sound fiscal management and maximizing the use of every dollar toward policy solutions that are increasing student learning, eliminating inequities and readying graduates for college and career. In 2025, 84 percent of ExcelinEd's expenses were invested directly into our policy and advocacy work to support states in transforming education.



WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO OUR DONORS WHO BELIEVE IN THE GIFT OF A QUALITY EDUCATION. WITH THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT, WE ARE TRANSFORMING POLICY AND TRANSFORMING LIVES.



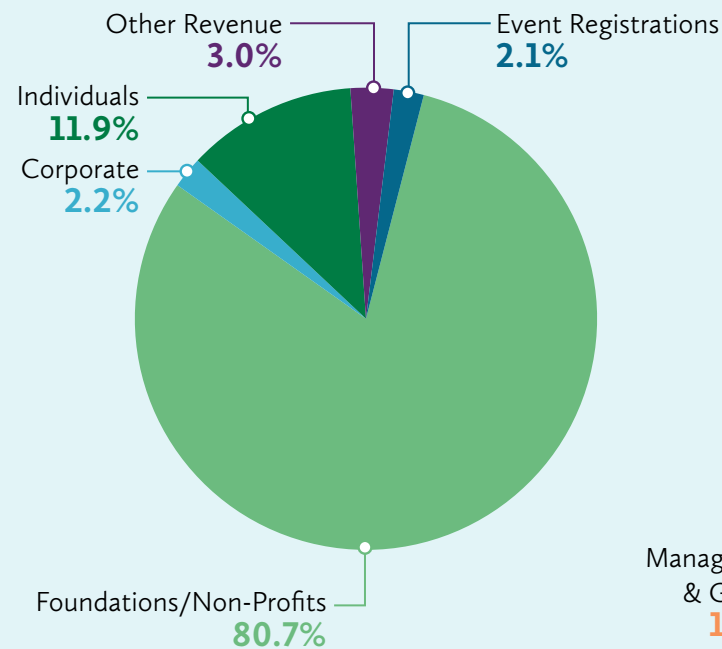
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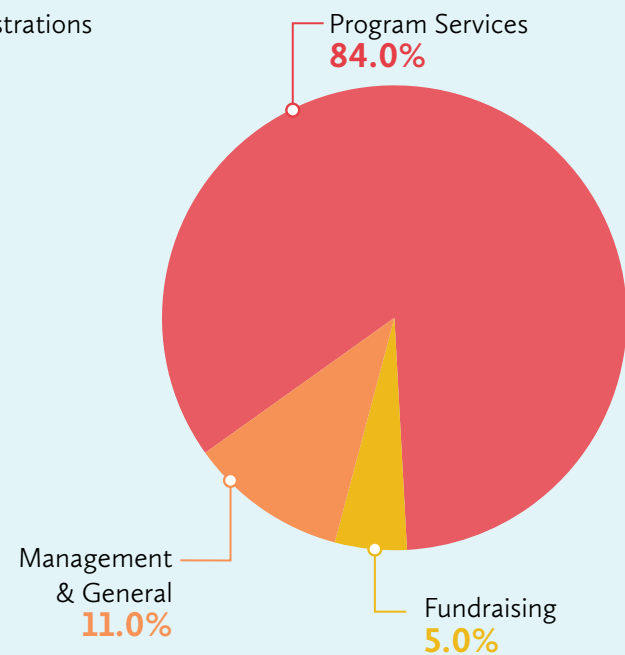
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2025 REVENUE



2025 EXPENSES



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NATIONAL SUMMIT ON EDUCATION



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ExcelinEd in Action is the 501(c)(4) sister organization to ExcelinEd. ExcelinEd in Action works with state lawmakers and advocacy partners to adopt legislation that empowers families with educational choice, prepares students for college and career, prioritizes early literacy, expands innovation and strengthens school performance.

ExcelinEd in Action Board members include Jeb Bush, Eric Cantor, Gary Chartrand, Dee Bagwell Haslam, Bruce Rauner, Chris Spowls and Zachariah P. Zachariah.

ExcelinEd in Action's work nationwide in 2025 is highlighted in our [Legislative Impact In Brief](#) and the in-depth [2025 Legislative Impact Report](#).

