



General Inquiries

If you need a general statement from CCSSO, or need a statement outside of these topics areas, please contact Olympia Meola (Communications@ccsso.org).

Executive Director, Chris Minnich

Chris Minnich was appointed Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in December 2012. As executive director, Chris leads CCSSO's work with states to raise the bar on standards, assessments and accountability, transform educator preparation programs, design new approaches to teaching and learning, and implement and sustain promising reforms across the country.

His leadership has centered CCSSO's work on making sure all students in our public education system – regardless of background – graduate prepared for college, careers and life.

Chris first joined CCSSO in 2008. In his time with the organization, he facilitated the state-led Common Core State Standards Initiative and worked as Senior Membership Director, serving as the lead contact for all 58 of CCSSO's members.

Chris has an extensive background in assessment and accountability systems, working to improve assessments for educators in both the public and private sectors since 2003.

Chris is available to provide commentary on all CCSSO initiatives, as well as state-level collaboration with chiefs.

If you would like a comment from or interview with Chris, please Contact Olympia Meola (Communications@ccsso.org).

Deputy Executive Director, Carissa Miller

Carissa Moffat Miller joined the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as the Deputy Executive Director in February 2013. In this role, she ensures all CCSSO activities are aligned with chiefs' priorities, including overseeing the organizations' advocacy at the federal level, communications strategy and all membership meetings.

Carissa previously served as the Deputy Superintendent of the 21st Century Classroom Division at the Idaho State Department of Education. Prior to that, she worked for the Idaho State Board of Education overseeing assessment and accountability, including the initial implementation and deployment of statewide online testing. Carissa has her doctorate in education with an emphasis in quantitative research.

Carissa is also available to provide commentary on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and federal legislation, membership, the American Indian Opportunity Gap and collaboration with chiefs.

If you would like a comment from or interview with Carissa, please Contact Olympia Meola (Communications@ccsso.org).

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CCSSO STAFF EXPERTISE

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Carrie Heath Phillips

Program Director, College- and Career-Ready Standards

At the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Carrie Heath Phillips is responsible for implementation of college- and career-ready standards. Carrie has been involved with the Common

Core State Standards initiative since its inception and, during the standards development process, was responsible for building support for the initiative among national education stakeholders. Prior to working at CCSSO, Carrie was a fellow on Capitol Hill for former Senator Chris Dodd. She began her career in education as a fourth and fifth grade classroom teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. Carrie holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Policy and a Master's degree in Education from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

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202-336-7071

ACCOUNTABILITY

Scott Norton

Strategic Initiative Director, Standards, Assessment and Accountability

Scott Norton joined the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as Strategic Initiative Director for Standards, Assessment and Accountability in July of 2012. In this role, he works with states to implement the Common Core State Standards and assessments and to create and implement new student-focused accountability systems. The team is also responsible for the State Collaboratives on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS), the National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA) and collaborative work with the assessment consortia.

Scott previously served as the Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Standards, Assessments and Accountability at the Louisiana Department of Education. His responsibilities included the implementation of content standards and development of the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum, as well as the state's transition to full implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Scott holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Supervision from Louisiana State University.

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Kristen Carr

Program Director for Accountability on the Standards, Assessment and Accountability

Kirsten Carr serves as a Program Director for Accountability on the Standards, Assessment and Accountability team at the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In this role, she leads CCSSO's accountability work with states, supporting states in developing and implementing next-generation accountability systems. She also supports states as they transition to new assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards.

Prior to joining CCSSO, Kirsten practiced corporate law in New York, New York, for five years. She specialized in private equity and advising emerging growth companies, as well as working on general corporate matters.

Prior to law school, Kirsten worked on education policy in Senator Edward Kennedy's office and spent several years working on key education reform initiatives at the Boston Plan for Excellence. Kirsten has a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Middlebury College and a J.D. from Duke University School of Law.

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AMERICAN INDIAN OPPORTUNITY GAP

Chris Minnich
Executive Director

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ASSESSMENTS

Scott Norton

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CAREER READINESS

Stephen Bowen

Strategic Initiative Director, Education Workforce

Stephen grew up on the coast of Maine and taught social studies in middle and high schools for ten years. After serving two terms in the Maine Legislature, he joined a Maine-based public policy think tank, where he served as an education policy researcher and analyst. Stephen served for a short time as Gov. Paul LePage's education policy advisor and was named Commissioner of Education in March of 2011. To advance the governor's vision of a student-centered educational system, Bowen focused his efforts on key policy areas such as educator effectiveness, state accountability, digital learning and competency-based instructional practices.

Bowen stepped down from the commissionership in September 2013 to join the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as the Strategic Initiative Director for Innovation, where he oversees the Council's Innovation Lab Network and its other work supporting innovation.

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Rich McKeon

Director, Career Readiness Initiative

Rich joined the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in 2016 as director of the Career Readiness Initiative. Previously, Rich served as the program director of Education at the Helmsley Charitable Trust. While at Helmsley, Rich led a national team that annually manages \$30 million in grants supporting K-12 and postsecondary education, which have included grants to support the work of CCSSO, its partners and members.

Rich oversees CCSSO's work to advance the recommendations of the 2014 Career Readiness Task Force with partners to achieve the objectives of the JPMorgan Chase-funded New Skills for Youth initiative.

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COMMON EDUCATION DATA STANDARDS

Maureen Wentworth

Program Director, Education Data and Information Systems

Maureen Wentworth joined the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in 2006 and assumed her current role as Director for Education Data and Information Systems in February 2012.

Maureen has a demonstrated commitment to education and has spent her career working to improve systems so that all students have a chance to succeed. Maureen has worked at a number of national and international organizations including Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Greenhill Centre for Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland, Project Vote, the American Youth Policy Forum, Every Child Matters, and Mentoring International. At CCSSO, she works with state education agency officials, national partners, federal staff and the business community to architect coherent state and national education data policies and systems that support teaching and learning.

Maureen graduated from American University with a B.A. in Political Science and received her M.B.A. from the Carey School of Business at Johns Hopkins University. Maureen lives in Alexandria, Virginia, with her husband, daughter Maddie and two rescue dogs.

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COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Jennifer Poon

Director, Innovation Lab Network

Jennifer's mission is to impact social justice by helping education system leaders deliver high-quality educational experiences that are responsive to the needs of all students, especially the most disadvantaged. Currently, Jennifer directs the Innovation Lab Network (ILN) at the Council of Chief State

School Officers (CCSSO). She oversees the work of the ILN to support twelve states acting as incubators for state-level policy and practices that scale promising innovations in student-centered learning from the ground-up. At heart, Jennifer is a scientist and a teacher, having graduated from Harvard University with a B.A. in molecular and cellular biology and an M.Ed. in Teaching and Curriculum. She taught 9th grade biology at King/Drew High School in Compton, California, and served as CCSSO's Research Director prior to her work with the ILN.

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DATA (PRIVACY, SECURITY, USE, STANDARDS, VISUALIZATION & TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE)

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Rolf Grafwallner

Program Director, Early Childhood Education

Rolf brings 22 years of experience to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), having served as the assistant state superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood Development at the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE). In this role, he managed \$190M in funding for prekindergarten, child care, Head Start services, and other quality initiatives. Rolf also has led initiatives to expand and improve early childhood and kindergarten programs including a statewide kindergarten entry assessment system, integrating funding for full-day kindergarten in all public schools, and prekindergarten for all

economically disadvantaged four-year olds into the state education finance system. During his tenure at MSDE, the number of publicly funded prekindergarten students increased from 8,200 to 30,381 children. Rolf has a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in Education Policy, Planning and Administration.

Contact: Olympia Meola
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EDUCATOR PREPARATION

Mary-Dean Barringer
Strategic Initiative Director, Education Workforce

Mary-Dean Barringer has had a thirty-plus year career in education, distinguished as a nationally recognized special education teacher, expert on a variety of teacher quality and reform issues and a leader in the emerging field of neurodevelopment and learning variation.

Mary-Dean was named the Strategic Initiatives Director for Education Workforce at the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) in April 2015. Prior to that, she has served as program director on CCSSO's Education Workforce team, overseeing a portfolio of initiatives that support the transformation of educator preparation, including the Network for Transforming Educator Preparation (NTEP).

Before Mary-Dean joined CCSSO in December 2011, she was the Chief Executive Officer of All Kinds of Minds Institute in North Carolina. She is the author of *Schools for All Kinds of Minds* published in 2010 by Jossey-Bass. Throughout her path in education, Mary-Dean has been dedicated to keeping America focused on learning — making schools effective learning environments for each child. Prior to joining All Kinds of Minds, Mary-Dean served as a founding board member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, then served as Vice President of Outreach and Mobilization for NBPTS for a decade. She was the first teacher to serve as an officer of the organization and led the introduction of National Board Certification process in 1993.

Mary-Dean started her career as teacher of exceptional needs students in Michigan. As a special education teacher for thirteen years, Mary Dean received numerous awards and recognition for her innovation in teaching and advocacy, including the 1985 Council for Exceptional Children's National Teacher of the Year award and induction into the Eastern Michigan University College of Education Hall of Fame in 2008.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Fen Chou
Program Director, Assessment

Fen Chou joined the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as the program director for Assessment in 2013. In this role, she supports all states in their work to implement high-quality assessments that measure college-and career-ready (CCR) standards and leads the Council's efforts on supporting implementation of CCR-aligned assessments equitably for all students. Fen also leads the team responsible for the National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA), the development of English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21), policy and technical issues related to establishment of a common definition of English learners, and collaborative work with the assessment consortia.

Fen previously served as the Director for Next Generation Assessments of the Office of Standards, Assessments, and Accountability at the Louisiana Department of Education. Prior to working at the Louisiana Department of Education, she was an instructor at the Louisiana State University. Fen holds her M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychological and Quantitative Foundations from the University of Iowa.

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E-RATE

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GENERAL STATEMENT FROM CCSSO

Melissa McGrath *Director of Communications*

Melissa joined the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in May 2014 as the Director of Communications. In this role, she is responsible for developing and implementing the Council's strategic communications plan. She manages internal and external communications efforts for the Council. She also works closely with the communications directors in each state education agency to provide

resources and support to them as they communicate throughout their states about education reform efforts.

Prior to joining CCSSO, Melissa spent more than seven years as the Communications Director for the Idaho State Department of Education, where she managed all strategic communications and public relations for Idaho's elected State Superintendent and the agency that oversees K-12 public schools in the state. Before joining the Department, Melissa worked as a newspaper reporter. Melissa holds bachelor's degrees in Journalism and Government and Politics from the University of Maryland.

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INNOVATION LAB NETWORK

Jennifer Poon
Director, Innovation Lab Network

Jennifer's mission is to impact social justice by helping education system leaders deliver high-quality educational experiences that are responsive to the needs of all students, especially the most disadvantaged. Currently, Jennifer directs the Innovation Lab Network (ILN) at the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). She oversees the work of the ILN to support twelve states acting as incubators for state-level policy and practices that scale promising innovations in student-centered learning from the ground-up. At heart, Jennifer is a scientist and a teacher, having graduated from Harvard University with a B.A. in molecular and cellular biology and an M.Ed. in Teaching and Curriculum. She taught 9th grade biology at King/Drew High School in Compton, California, and served as CCSSO's Research Director prior to her work with the ILN.

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INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT SYSTEMS

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NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

Paul Ferrari

Director, Educator Engagement and Outreach

Paul directs the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) strategy to engage educators in the Council's strategic plan and to provide support to state education agencies in their efforts to engage with educators. Included in this work, Paul oversees the nation's oldest and most prestigious educator recognition program: The National Teacher of the Year Program. Prior to this role, Paul directed CCSSO's national and state efforts in communicating about the value of college- and career-ready standards and next generation assessments. Paul has worked at CCSSO since 2007, and in that time has been responsible for developing an online and social media strategy for the organization, leading the redesign of the CCSSO webpage, managing the Council's brand, and developing and implementing the Council's strategic communications plan. Paul has worked at a number of professional theatres as an actor, company manager, marketer and afterschool project administrator. Paul holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Criticism from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

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OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Maureen Wentworth

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STATE CHIEF PERSPECTIVES

STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Carey Wright

State Superintendent of Education (Mississippi)

Dr. Carey M. Wright has been the State Superintendent of Education for Mississippi since November 1, 2013. Within her role, she has supported increased accountability and the implementation of higher standards to challenge students academically. She has served as the chief academic officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools, as well as the deputy chief for the Office of Teaching and Learning, providing leadership for PK-12 education by managing offices including college and career readiness. From 2003 to 2009, Wright served as the associate superintendent for the Office of Special Education and Student Services for the Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland. Wright spent the majority of her career in Howard County Public Schools, also located in Maryland. In Howard County, Wright was a teacher, a principal for fifteen years, and the director of Special Education and Student Services. She began her career in Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland, serving as a teacher. Wright obtained her bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Contact: Olympia Meola

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John White

State Superintendent of Education (Louisiana)

John White was named Louisiana State Superintendent of Education in January of 2012. That year he launched *LouisianaBelieves*, the state's plan to ensure every child is on track to college or a professional career. He has also transitioned Louisiana towards higher standards, with new assessments, school and district accountability, educator accountability and curriculum tools and guidebooks. Prior to being named state superintendent, White served as superintendent of the Louisiana Recovery School District. Prior to moving to Louisiana, White worked as a deputy chancellor for New York City, launching the Innovation Zone. White previously served as executive director of Teach For America – Chicago and Teach For America – New Jersey. He began his career as an English teacher at William L. Dickinson High School in Jersey City, New Jersey. White received a B.A. from the University of Virginia and a Master's in Public Administration from New York University.

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AMERICAN INDIAN OPPORTUNITY GAP

Joy Hofmeister

State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Oklahoma)

On January 12, 2015, Joy Hofmeister of Tulsa was sworn in as Oklahoma's 14th State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Joy is an advocate for strengthening state accountability for student academic performance, which is the basis of the new legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In her two legislative sessions as state superintendent, Hofmeister has led a number of successful efforts to improve public education in Oklahoma with a keen eye on closing opportunity and equity gaps individually. Hofmeister is a former public school teacher and small business owner. As an appointee of Gov. Mary Fallin, she served on the Oklahoma State Board of Education from January 2012 through April 2013. In the private sector, Hofmeister spent 15 years as the owner of Kumon Math & Reading Centers. She holds a bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University and teaching certificates in English and elementary education.

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Denise Juneau
Superintendent of Public Instruction (Montana)

Denise Juneau has served as Montana's Superintendent of Public Instruction since 2009. During this time, Juneau has worked to prepare Montana students for life after graduation through her statewide initiative, Graduation Matters Montana. She also customized a federal school improvement grant program to better fit the needs of rural Montana schools. She began her education career teaching in Montana and North Dakota and worked at the Montana Office of Public Instruction soon after. She served as an instructional specialist and director of Indian Education, where she oversaw the implementation of Montana's constitutionally-mandated Indian Education For All program. Juneau is an enrolled member of the Mandan Hidatsa Tribes and a descendant of the Blackfeet tribe. Juneau received her bachelor's degree in English from Montana State University, a masters from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and juris doctorate from the University Of Montana School Of Law.

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CAREER READINESS

Stephen Pruitt
Commissioner of Education (Kentucky)

In September 2015, the Kentucky Board of Education unanimously appointed Stephen L. Pruitt as Kentucky's Commissioner of Education. As Commissioner, Pruitt has made investments in career readiness education, and has worked to strengthen both college and career preparation. He began his education career as a high school chemistry teacher in Georgia. He later served as the science and mathematics program manager, director of academic standards, associate state superintendent for assessment and accountability and chief of staff for the Georgia Department of Education. Most recently, Pruitt served as senior vice president for Achieve, Inc., where he coordinated the development

of the Next Generation Science Standards. Pruitt has also served as president of the Council of State Science Supervisors, a member of the writing team for the College Board Standards for College Success (Science), and member of the National Academies of Science Committee on Conceptual Framework for New Science Education Standards. Pruitt holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from North Georgia College and State University, a master's degree in science education from the University of West Georgia and a Doctorate of Philosophy in chemistry education from Auburn University.

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Carey Wright
State Superintendent of Education (Mississippi)

Dr. Carey M. Wright has been the State Superintendent of Education for Mississippi since November 1, 2013. Within her role, she has supported increased accountability and the implementation of higher standards to challenge students academically. She has served as the chief academic officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools, as well as the deputy chief for the Office of Teaching and Learning, providing leadership for PK-12 education by managing offices including college and career readiness. From 2003 to 2009, Wright served as the associate superintendent for the Office of Special Education and Student Services for the Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland. Wright spent the majority of her career in Howard County Public Schools, also located in Maryland. In Howard County, Wright was a teacher, a principal for fifteen years, and the director of Special Education and Student Services. She began her career in Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland, serving as a teacher. Wright obtained her bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Maryland, College Park.

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EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

Katy Anthes

Interim Commissioner (Colorado)

Upon being appointed interim Commissioner of Education on May 20, 2016, Dr. Katy Anthes became Colorado's first female commissioner in 65 years. Anthes has been with the Colorado Department of Education since 2011, during which she served as chief of staff, interim commissioner for achievement and strategy and executive director of educator effectiveness. As executive director, she led the Department's efforts to evaluate, support and retain highly effective educators in Colorado. In addition, Anthes was responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the state's educator evaluation and development system. In her past position as a partner with the Third Mile Group, Anthes led and researched major education initiatives for state, district and national organizations on a variety of education issues and projects. Previously, she had seven years of research, policy work and leadership experience at the Education Commission of the States. Anthes completed her undergraduate work from the University of Oregon and holds a Ph.D. and a master's degree from the University of Colorado, Denver.

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Sydnee Dickson

Superintendent of Public Instruction (Utah)

Dr. Sydnee Dickson was unanimously selected as State Superintendent of Public Instruction by the Utah State Board of Education in June 2016, having served three months as interim superintendent. Dickson has worked for the state education office in various capacities including as director of teaching and learning. Before that, she worked on Granite School District's administrative team and previously worked in Davis and Murray school districts in school leadership roles. She started her career as an elementary school teacher. She holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy and an M.Ed. in Education Administration and School Counseling.

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Candice McQueen

Commissioner of Education (Tennessee)

Dr. Candice McQueen was sworn in as Tennessee's commissioner of education on January 17, 2015. She has connected with more than 10,000 teachers on the first leg of her Classroom Chronicles Tour, spending time in more than 75 school districts and 125 schools in 16 months. In addition, she continued to oversee and participate in the department's Teacher Advisory Council and the Governor's Teacher

Cabinet. Prior to her appointment as Commissioner of Education, McQueen served as senior vice president and dean of the college of education at Lipscomb University. Under her leadership, Lipscomb's college of education and teacher preparation program were consistently highlighted as one of the top teacher training programs for quality and effectiveness. Prior to joining Lipscomb University, McQueen was awarded multiple awards for both her teaching and the curriculum design of a new magnet school. She began her career as a classroom teacher. McQueen has a bachelor's degree from Lipscomb, a master's degree from Vanderbilt, and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas.

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Melody Schopp

Secretary of Education (South Dakota)

Secretary of Education Melody Schopp is a lifelong educator with 23 years of classroom teaching prior to coming to the Department of Education in 2000. She worked in several roles in the Department, including deputy secretary and cabinet secretary for education. She served as a school board member for nine years in Lemmon, South Dakota, following her departure from teaching. Schopp is passionate about assuring that students are well prepared for careers and post-secondary education after leaving the K-12 education system. Schopp received a bachelor's and master's degree in elementary education from the University of Mary and a Ph.D. in Educational Studies and Higher Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Schopp will serve as the 2016-2017 President for CCSO.

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EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Tony Evers

State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Wisconsin)

Dr. Tony Evers was elected Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction in April 2009 and re-elected in 2013. With over three decades of public education experience, Evers has dedicated his life to advancing public education in Wisconsin and has made lasting investments and reforms that will shape Wisconsin's educational landscape for years to come. Evers began his career in 1976 as an educator in Tomah and has served Wisconsin students, parents and citizens as an education leader at every level — principal, school district administrator, CESA administrator, and deputy state superintendent. Evers earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in educational administration from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Evers has testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). He served as the 2015-2016 president for CCSO.

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Stephen Pruitt

Commissioner of Education (Kentucky)

In September 2015, the Kentucky Board of Education unanimously appointed Stephen L. Pruitt as Kentucky's commissioner of education. As Commissioner, Pruitt has made investments in career readiness education, and has worked to strengthen both college and career preparation. He began his education career as a high school chemistry teacher in Georgia. He later served as the science and mathematics program manager, director of academic standards, associate state superintendent for assessment and accountability and chief of staff for the Georgia Department of Education. Most recently, Pruitt served as senior vice president for Achieve, Inc., where he coordinated the development of the Next Generation Science Standards. Pruitt has also served as president of the Council of State Science Supervisors, a member of the writing team for the College Board Standards for College Success (Science), and member of the National Academies of Science Committee on Conceptual Framework for New Science Education Standards. Pruitt holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from North Georgia College and State University, a master's degree in science education from the University of West Georgia and a Doctorate of Philosophy in chemistry education from Auburn University.

Pruitt has testified before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

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