



Educators, policymakers, and community leaders across the country are advancing equity through their hard work and commitment to success for all students.

This week's newsletter highlights innovative policies and programs that will enable all students to obtain equitable, excellent education.

Visit StatesLeading.org and follow #StatesLeading on social media to learn more and join the conversation.

State Spotlights



The **Utah** State Board of Education created the Student Advocacy Service Department as part of the state's commitment to educational equity. The new department focuses on providing resources to English Learners, refugees, and immigrant students.

To highlight the value of being multilingual, the department awards a seal of biliteracy to Utah students who are proficient in English and one or more world languages or the indigenous languages of Navajo or Ute. The seal is placed electronically on the student's high school transcript. In 2017, over 200 students from four districts in Utah were awarded the biliteracy seal.

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New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
[Knowledge](#) > [Skill](#) > [Opportunity](#)

To foster equity for all students, **New York** became the first state to launch the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative. This movement was created to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color and now includes 21 communities across New York State.

With MBK, New York works to ensure equal educational opportunities by providing grants to help school districts, colleges and universities, and community groups join forces to improve outcomes for all students in New York. The state has distributed almost \$33 million in grants to schools and in April 2018 hosted more than 600 students, parents, educational leaders, and citizens for the state's second MBK Symposium in Albany.

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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The **Arkansas** State Department of Education created a Commission on Closing the Achievement Gap to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and succeed.

The commission will focus on initiatives to produce highly qualified teachers, improve schools, and empower parents to get involved in their children's education as ways to close achievement gaps.

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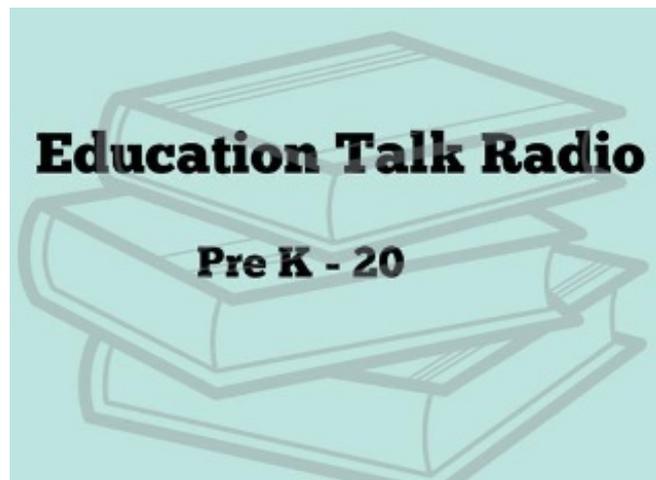


The **Vermont** State Board of Education published a list of seven approaches to education reform that the state supports.

Guided by a commitment to equity, excellence, and efficiency, the approaches include broadening course offerings, strategically reducing student-staff ratios, and improving special education delivering and funding.

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North Dakota's State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler sat down with Larry Jacobs of Education Talk Radio to discuss what it takes to create an equitable education system for all students in her state.

Baesler highlighted some of the elements North Dakota focuses on to ensure equitable education including teacher retention, community partnerships, engaging parents, and helping students choose postsecondary pathways.

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Must Read

In *Closing the Achievement Gap: Four states' efforts*, Education Commission of the States highlight **Connecticut**, **Massachusetts**, **Washington**, and **Wisconsin** for their efforts to reduce achievement gaps through state-level task forces and other legislative actions.

While recommendations and goals from state task forces vary, common approaches include: creating programs to recruit and retain teachers of color; expanding early childhood education programs; and supporting English learners and teachers.

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Tools & Resources

How many students complete a bachelor's degree in 6 years?



6 out of 10 **White students**



5 out of 10 **Latino students**



4 out of 10 **Black students**

HOW IS YOUR STATE DOING ON COLLEGE DEGREE EQUITY BY RACE/ETHNICITY?

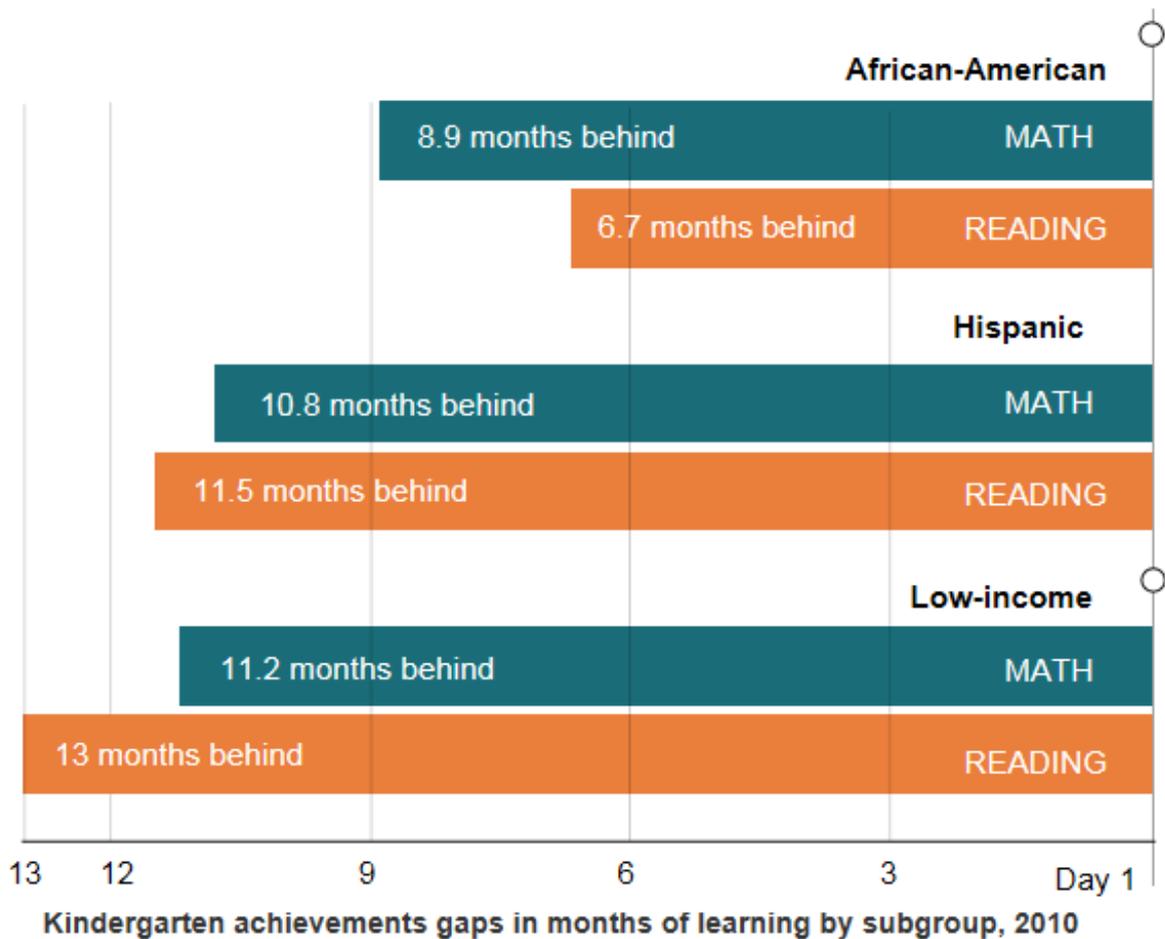


The Education Trust released Education Watch: The State of Educational Equity, a tool that offers a clear look at states' equity policies.

Each state's page uses the best available data on critical measures of educational opportunity and achievement to help the reader understand how states are improving opportunities and outcomes for all students, especially underserved student groups.

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In their research paper, *Closing Early Learning Opportunity Gaps Under ESSA*, NCSL shows that African-American and Hispanic/Latino children enter kindergarten at an average of 7 to 12 months behind their white and more affluent peers in reading skills and 9 to 10 months behind in math skills.

To help states close opportunity gaps and boost economies with early learning, NCSL is using this research to support state legislators committed to addressing these gaps in early learning for low-income students.

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In this issue of *The Standard*, titled *Unfinished Business: Addressing Unequal Opportunities in Education*, NASBE focuses on state policymakers' role in addressing unequal opportunities in education.

Authors discuss how policymakers can address teacher distribution, funding, access to early education, and other challenges to help close the opportunity and achievement gaps that still persist in the United States.

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We want to hear from you!

Send your state's stories or organization's resources to communications@ccsso.org



The States Leading campaign celebrates the progress states are making toward providing equitable education for all students through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and innovative policies in other key areas of education, such as early childhood education, teacher preparation, and career readiness, among others.

Thank you to our proud partners:

The Council of Chief State School Officers

Education Commission of the States

National Governors Association

The National Association of State Boards of Education

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