



After a summer of reading and relaxation, students, teachers, and administrators are going back to school!

This week's newsletter highlights the ways states are preparing their districts and schools for a new year of learning and success for all students.

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## State Spotlights

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### Illinois State Board of Education

The **Illinois** State Board of Education launched new peer-to-peer learning tools to support administrators as they kick off the new school year. The first tool is the Superintendents-Only Support (SOS) Line that enables superintendents to receive immediate insights into questions or concerns and share feedback and best practices.

The Peer Finder allows users to locate similar schools and districts around the state based on a range of characteristics. In addition to these new tools, the Illinois Report Card facilitates comparisons between schools using data available on the Report Card through an Advanced Compare Schools feature.

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To help parents and educators ease the transition back to the classroom, the **Louisiana** Department of Education released a suite of free resources to support student learning.

The Educator Resource Guide highlights various instructional priorities and resources to support educators. The first resource is the School System Support Calendar that details in-person training sessions, virtual support, tools, and communication streams designed to support educators.

Next, a customizable back-to-school night presentation helps school leaders provide parents with information on academic goals, standards, and assessments that help to meet parent engagement requirements under ESSA.

Last but not least are the parent back-to-school guides provide families with information and resources to support learning at home.

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Massachusetts Department of  
**ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY  
EDUCATION**

Just in time for back-to-school, the **Massachusetts** Department of Elementary and Secondary Education launched several new resources and initiatives designed to help districts strengthen curriculum to align with state standards.

The resources include maps of districts' curricular choices, quick reference guides on topics like assessing curriculum and aligning to state standards, and a link to CURATE (CURriculum RATings by TEachers), which will convene panels of Massachusetts educators to review and rate evidence on curriculum materials.

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# NM PED

## Public Education Department

Starting this fall, **New Mexico** districts and schools are working with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to improve the state assessments for reading and math.

As part of their commitment to ensuring all students are college and career ready, teachers, students, and schools will have 15 more days of instruction by shortening the assessment window, parents and families will receive their Individual Student Report within 30 days of the district receiving it, and educators will be encouraged to help develop and vet assessment items to ensure rigor and relevance to all students.

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New York State  
**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

In **New York**, Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia kicks off each school year by meeting students, teachers, and administrators on their first day back to school in the fall. This year, Commissioner Elia looks forward to greeting students and educators when they return to school in early September.

Commissioner Elia will also send letters to parents, teachers, and administrators to welcome them back to school and wish them success in the upcoming school year, and outline ways in which the New York State Education Department (NYSED) will continue to work with educators statewide to make New York's schools even stronger.

Finally, Commissioner Elia will distribute a Back to School video message welcoming students, teachers, administrators, and parents back to school. In the video, Commissioner Elia will discuss NYSED's policy priorities and plans for the school year.

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## Must Read

Two resources from Education Commission of the States provide information on state instructional time requirements for kindergarten through 12th grade — including days or hours per year, hours per day, and start and end date parameters where they exist in state law. Check out a report and a database that shows how all 50 states approach instructional time.

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[50-State Comparison on Instructional Time Policies](#)

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## Tools & Resources

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The National Conference of State Legislatures established the America's Legislators Back-to-School program to give elected officials in all 50 states the opportunity to meet and answer questions from students, share ideas, listen to concerns, and impart a greater understanding of the legislative processes necessary for developing effective public policy and engaged citizens.

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"States Pave the Way for Smoother Transitions to Kindergarten," which appeared in NASBE's *State Education Standard* journal, highlights how state leadership in **West Virginia, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington** have helped districts and schools improve the transition process as young students move from private, state-funded, or Head Start pre-K programs to kindergarten.

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## We want to hear from you!

Send your state's stories or organization's resources to [communications@ccsso.org](mailto:communications@ccsso.org)

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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  
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