

## VIRGINIA AND ECS

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) was established in 1965 by the states to:

1. Provide a forum for the discussion, development, crystallization and recommendation of public policy alternatives in the field of education
2. Provide a clearinghouse of information on matters relating to education problems and how they are being met throughout the nation
3. Facilitate the improvement of state and local education systems.

As a nonpartisan organization involving key leaders from all levels of the education system, ECS creates opportunities to share information, build partnerships and promote the development of education policy based on proven strategies and sound research. The states, territories and the District of Columbia constitute ECS' membership, with each represented by commissioners including the governor, legislators, chief state school officers, superintendents, state and local school board members, higher education officials and business leaders. This combination of education leaders from across the spectrum — preschool through college and a variety of role groups — makes ECS unique among national education-related organizations.

### Current ECS Commissioners from Virginia

Name	Role	Commissioner Appointment	Appointing Authority
Mark R. Warner	Governor	01/12/02	Statute
John S. Reid	Delegate	07/01/00	House
H. Russell Potts, Jr.	Senate Education & Health Committee Chair	05/19/04	Senate
Lee Brazzell	Transformation Corporation President & CEO	07/26/04	Governor
Jo Lynne DeMary	Superintendent of Public Instruction	04/26/02	Governor
Alan A. Diamonstein	Patten, Wornom, Hatten & Diamonstein Partner	07/26/04	Governor
Claire Guthrie Gastanaga		04/26/02	Governor

John Reid represents Virginia on the ECS Steering Committee.

The **state fees** for Virginia for FY2005 are \$81,600, and are directly appropriated by the department of education of Virginia. The fees have been paid.

### Virginia statutory language pertaining to Commission appointments

Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-337 (1998). These commissioners shall consist of the Governor, one member selected from the body of the House of Delegates by the Speaker thereof, one member selected from the body of the Senate of Virginia by the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the Senate, and four members appointed by the Governor. The term of the member from the House shall be two years; the term of the member from the Senate shall terminate at the end of his current term as Senator. The terms of the members appointed by the Governor shall be for four years each except that appointments to fill vacancies other than by expiration of term shall be for the unexpired terms. The Governor, the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the Senate and the Speaker shall have the authority to fill all vacancies in the manner of the original appointment.

## ECS SERVICES TO STATES

### Clearinghouse

Through its Clearinghouse, ECS provides one of the nation's most extensive collections of materials on education issues, especially on policy actions and activities across the country. Leaders in every state have access to both print and electronic avenues through which to share their experiences and learn from one another. In addition, the wealth of resources provides a record of actions taken throughout the nation to make the nation's education systems the best in the world. During the past year, Clearinghouse staff provided customized, timely, accurate and credible information to more than 1,500 requests for information, half of those from media representatives who needed a neutral, factual understanding of the education issues confronting policymakers and the general public. To ensure policymakers, media and education leaders have the information they need to make timely, knowledgeable decisions, ECS staff responds to caller requests within 24 hours. For this past year, the top 10 issues of interest were:

1. Finance
2. No Child Left Behind
3. Assessment
4. Teaching quality
5. Leadership
6. Community colleges
7. Scheduling/school calendar
8. Accountability
9. Early learning
10. Governance

### Web Site

ECS also provides a comprehensive Web site ([www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)) on education policy. In 2003, the ECS Web site received 1,173,000 visits, up from 624,000 a year earlier. The heart of the site is the "Education Issues" section, divided into Early Learning, K-12 and Postsecondary Education. Staff regularly update nearly 100 "Issue Sites," providing visitors with access to state policies, quick facts, the best pieces to read on a given issue, and links to other groups or Web sites that can provide expertise or other valuable information. The development of some of these Issue Sites is supported through corporate donations. Through its Web site, ECS also provides anytime, anywhere access to a wide range of products, including:

- Approximately 40 State Notes (multi-state compilations) about the most popular education issues added in the past year
- Policy briefs that evaluate specific state approaches to education policy
- 50-state databases about high-interest issues such as reading, governance and kindergarten
- A dynamic database that captures important legislation and other education policies as they are enacted across the states
- The nation's only database that reflects where states are in meeting requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.

### Products for State Policymakers

Electronic newsletters sent out via e-mail and posted on the Web, appeal to readers who want general news about what's happening in education policy, as well as those who are interested in specific issues. Current e-newsletters include:

- ECS e-Clips (the day's most interesting education news stories from around the nation)

- ECS e-Connection (weekly look at noteworthy new reports and studies, state legislative and board activity, ECS news and products, other valuable Web sites and more)
- ECS Governance Notes (bimonthly news from ECS' National Center on Governing America's Schools, as well as key information about education governance)
- ECS TQ Update (bimonthly examination of ECS' work, as well as what's going on nationally and in the states, to improve the quality of teaching)
- Citizenship Matters (bimonthly report from the National Center for Learning and Citizenship on improving citizenship education in our nation's schools).

Two times a year, State Education Leader looks at legislative action and the hottest education trends. Supplementing those reports, The Progress of Education Reform examines what the research shows about the most critical issues. ECS also publishes a variety of print publications, ranging from policy briefs to major reports on numerous education policy issues.

### **Forums, Networks and Partnerships**

In addition to publications, state, regional and national meetings enable policymakers to learn from and share with one another. The National Forum on Education Policy, held annually, brings together governors, legislators, chief state school officers, higher education leaders, federal officials, business representatives and others to share experiences and learn from the experts. Various project-related meetings, such as the State Leader Forum on Educational Accountability, draw education leaders together to address issues in their states, such as improving the design of their education accountability systems. Through several grant programs and long-standing collaboration with other organizations, ECS also works closely with other groups and individuals representing its broad constituency, and with some of the finest scholars and practitioners in the country.

- Education Chairs Network — Sponsored by the Legislative Chairs Network, a partnership of ECS and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the network provides a two-way information exchange and network opportunities for legislators chairing education committees.
- Legislative Education Staff Network (LESN) — Also sponsored by ECS and NCSL, LESN provides education staff with professional development and training opportunities, a clearinghouse for information and interaction with experts in the field.
- Governors' Education Policy Advisors — In conjunction with the National Governors Association (NGA), this network offers opportunities for governors' aides to learn from one another and share what is happening in their states.
- National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) — Along with the University of Texas at Austin and Just for the Kids, ECS established the National Center for Educational Accountability to expand state leaders' knowledge of how to use data to monitor, analyze and improve student and school performance.
- National Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy — With the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, ECS launched the National Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy. The collaborative is working with selected states to answer questions around preparation, affordability, completion, enrollment, learning and benefits of postsecondary education.
- State Action for Education Leadership Project — Led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and funded by the Wallace Foundation (formerly Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds), the collaboration includes ECS, NCSL, NGA and the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). The partner organizations have worked intensely with 15 states for the past two years to help implement policies designed to attract, support and sustain effective superintendents and principals.

### **Policy Projects**

ECS carries out much of its issue-focused work with the support of grants. Following are highlights of those efforts.

- **Accountability.** ECS has undertaken a variety of activities to help states improve the systems by which they measure the accountability of their schools, districts and education systems. These activities include: Gathering and disseminating information to policymakers, educators and the public that demonstrates the effectiveness of results-based accountability systems; Creating models of accountability that will result in substantial improvements in teaching and learning; Providing information through NCEA, which works to expand states' knowledge of how to use data to monitor, analyze and improve student and school performance; Developing an interactive Web-based tool that will allow states to compare their accountability systems with other states' systems and with accountability models. Through the State Leaders Forum, teams of policymakers from the states of Indiana, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Washington have been supported to develop stronger accountability systems for their states.
- **Citizenship and Service-Learning.** With the goal of educating every student to be an active citizen, the ECS National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) assists state and district policymakers and education leaders in developing policies that support citizenship education. During the past year, the center's activities included: Sponsored the Education Leadership Colloquium (ELC), which brought together policymakers, education leaders, faculty, teachers, administrators, students and community partners to discuss how education can serve the purposes of democracy in the 21st Century; Began developing model policy options to help state policymakers integrate citizenship education into education policy; Supported service-learning as an effective strategy to help students meet academic and civic outcomes; Supported and expanded the principles outlined in the ECS report, *Every Student A Citizen*. Specific technical assistance or legislative testimony has been provided to California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin.
- **Postsecondary Education.** ECS' Center for Community College Policy promotes the development of public policy that encourages the growth of effective and innovative community colleges. Its *New Colleges for New Times* project is designed to help state leaders in their efforts to develop policies and practices that support community colleges' role as the key player in responding to new demands for universal access to postsecondary education. The major work includes describing and analyzing the potential scope and magnitude of state-level demographic change in the decade ahead in terms of its impact on postsecondary access and opportunity. As part of this project, customized state reports were prepared for each of the 50 states.

ECS also has joined with nine national, regional, state and local entities in an effort to change and improve public policies affecting teacher preparation. The PT3 Consortium (Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers To Use Technology) is exploring how community colleges can help ease the looming teacher shortage in K-12 schools, and how the training of teachers in the effective use of technology can be strengthened.

In a major effort to improve postsecondary education, ECS, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems formed the National Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy. The Collaborative is working through the Governors of the states of Missouri, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia to help them develop comprehensive higher education policy agendas.

- Other postsecondary education work included: Serving as the external evaluator for Ohio's University Partnership/Urban Initiative, designed to open university resources to urban school district leaders; Completing an effort that explored how political and higher education officials can work together to reshape postsecondary education systems and how ECS could shape its own postsecondary education agenda; Participated along with The College Board, the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education and the State Higher Education Executive Officers in the Pathways to College Network designed to focus research-based knowledge and resources on improving college preparation, access and success for underserved populations Examined the need to redesign the K-12 and postsecondary education systems into an integrated system that serves students more effectively and efficiently, from preschool through the senior year of college (P-16); Took part, along with nine national, regional, state and local entities, in an effort to change and improve public policies affecting teacher preparation, in particular, exploring how community colleges can help ease the looming teacher shortage in K-12 schools, and strengthening the training of teachers in the effective use of technology.
- **Early Learning.** Launched under the leadership of 2000-01 ECS Chairman Jeanne Shaheen, former New Hampshire governor, the Early Learning Initiative works with state policymakers to: Expand and enrich the national dialogue about the importance of early care and education; Develop, track and disseminate the best information available on early care and education policy and programs; Provide technical assistance to states in defining and acting on an early childhood agenda that expands access, improves quality and promotes positive outcomes for children; Define how federal K-12 policy initiatives, such as No Child Left Behind, affect early learning policy; Explore the implications and possibilities of "P-3 education," linking early childhood education with early elementary education. With grant support, ECS also: Undertook a comprehensive study of full-day kindergarten policies to develop a clearer picture of where such programs are available, how states and districts are developing and funding them, and how state policy encourages access to full-day programs for different populations of children; Is a national technical assistance partner with the 17-state School Readiness Indicators Initiative, led by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. Participating states are developing state-based indicators of school readiness across multiple domains.
  - **Governance.** ECS' National Center on Governing America's Schools continues to serve as the leading source of information on education governance issues and reforms. Activities include: Conducting research and analysis on governance issues to give constituents a clear picture of state policies across the country and offer ideas for policy change; Disseminating news, information and research findings to policymakers, practitioners and citizens through a bimonthly electronic newsletter, Web Issue Sites and print publications; Promoting discussion and debate on promising governance policies and practices at The National Forum on Education Policy, as well as national and state conferences; Providing policy assistance on governance issues to state policymakers, including working with leaders in individual states. Other work this past year included an examination of charter districts — school districts composed entirely or primarily of charter schools or contract schools, and an exploration of the appropriate federal, state and local roles in a number of areas (including standards, assessment and accountability, and school choice) in light of the states-rights provisions of the 10th Amendment to the Constitution. The collection of 10th-Amendment papers is slated to be published by the Brookings Institution early next year.
- Technical assistance on governance issues was provided to Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, and Iowa.
- **Leadership.** ECS is a participant in the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP), an \$8.9 million national initiative aimed at strengthening the ability of superintendents and principals to improve student learning. The initiative is led by

CCSSO in partnership with ECS, NCSL, NGA and NASBE. The partner organizations have worked intensely with 15 states for the past two years to help implement policies designed to attract, support and sustain effective superintendents and principals. The states involved in this important project are Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. These states are implementing policies that address: education and professional learning; licensure, certification and program accreditation; professional practice conditions, including contracting and bargaining, salary and compensation, and performance reviews; governance structures; business priorities and practices; and diversification of the superintendent and principal candidate pool.

- ***No Child Left Behind.*** Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, ECS has tracked and reported on state efforts to implement the No Child Left Behind Act. Through a comprehensive Web-based database, ECS is following 40 NCLB indicators across six major fronts of the legislation: standards and assessment, accountability (AYP), school improvement (choice, technical assistance, safe schools), supplemental services, report cards and teacher quality. The information gathered by this project is designed to meet several objectives: Establish a baseline to track policy developments, changes or enactments among the 50 states, the District of Columbia and three territories; Develop a “real-time” nationwide gap analysis of NCLB implementation efforts; Provide a means for states and policy organizations to identify technical assistance needs; Identify model policies, programs or practices across the states and four territories; Roadmap possible scenarios for meeting requirements.
- ***School Finance.*** The goal of ECS’ School Finance Project is to help policymakers adjust their education funding systems to enhance their students’ education achievement. Working with national experts, ECS is helping state officials think of new ways to use limited funds. Over the past year, the School Finance Project has undertaken a variety of activities in this area, including providing seminars and other assistance to states, expanding ECS’ resources on finance and conducting a study of full-day kindergarten policies.
- ***Teaching Quality.*** The ECS Teaching Quality Policy Center was established to provide information, guidance and technical assistance to state policymakers and education leaders interested in improving the quality of teaching. Work over the past year has focused on the following issues: Addressing the gap between education research and policymakers’ needs for targeted and reliable data that can inform their decisions. A major report, released July 2003, focuses on what the research shows about teacher preparation, with implications for policy. Companion to that report is a 50-state, interactive Web database on teacher preparation policy, also slated to go live this summer; Examining, in partnership with the State Higher Education Executive Officers, how teachers are affected by policies limiting mobility; Encouraging the development of a strong core of leadership for policies to improve teaching quality and help close the gap in teacher quality between well-staffed and hard-to-staff schools.

Technical assistance on improving teaching quality was provided to Florida, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Texas.