

No Time to Lose



How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State



PRESENTATION TO THE IDAHO SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
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About NCSL

- Instrumentality of all 50 state and territorial legislatures
- Bipartisan
- Provides research, technical assistance and opportunities to exchange ideas
- Advocates on behalf of legislatures before the federal government

NCSL is committed to the success of state legislators and staff. Founded in 1975, we are a respected bipartisan organization providing states support, ideas, connections and a strong voice on Capitol Hill.



NCSL International Education Study Group -- 28 legislators and staff

- 22 legislators and 6 legislative staff
- Bipartisan, experienced state education leaders
- Eighteen months of work
 - Consulted experts
 - Studied 10 top performing countries/provinces (Alberta, Ontario, Estonia, Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Poland, Shanghai, Singapore, Taiwan)
- Preparing for Phase II



Why Study Other Countries?

- Other countries are moving all students upward – US student achievement is stagnant.
- Top performing countries have strategically linked education reform to economic development and global competitiveness.
- Comparing other countries to the United States is imperfect but shouldn't be a reason to dismiss the PISA results or the relevance of lessons from other countries.
- States are responsible for ensuring high quality education and this is a state (not national or federal) problem.
- States compare relatively favorably with other countries than does the United States as a whole.



NCSL Legislative Study Group Findings: Good News and Bad News

- **Bad news:** Most state education systems are falling dangerously behind the world in a number of international comparisons and on our own National Assessment of Educational Progress, leaving the United States overwhelmingly underprepared to succeed in the 21st century economy.
- **Good news:** The good news is, by studying these other high-performing systems, we are discovering what seems to work. If we get to work right away, we can quickly turn this around as high-performing countries have.



Elements of High-Performing Systems:

Common Element #1

Children come to school ready to learn, and extra support is given to struggling students so that all have the opportunity to achieve high standards.



Elements of High-Performing Systems:

Common Element #2

A world-class teaching profession supports a world-class instructional system, where every student has access to highly-effective teachers and is expected to succeed.



Elements of High-Performing Systems:

Common Element #3

A highly-effective, intellectually rigorous system of career and technical education is available to those preferring an applied education.



Elements of High-Performing Systems:

Common Element #4

Individual reforms are connected and aligned as parts of a clearly planned and carefully designed comprehensive system.



Action Steps for States

- ✓ Build an Inclusive Team and Set Priorities.
- ✓ Study and Learn from Top Performers.
- ✓ Create a Shared Statewide Vision.
- ✓ Benchmark Policies.
- ✓ Get Started on One Piece.
- ✓ Work Through “Messiness.”
- ✓ Invest the Time.



How States are Moving the Conversation

- Bringing conversation about top performing countries to a broad group of citizens
- Bringing policymakers, educators and citizens together to identify a vision, priorities and opportunities for action
- Linking these conversations to major reform occurring in the state (ESSA, school finance reform)
- Conducting gap analyses
- Considering benchmarking
- Finding an entity for hosting/sponsoring this ongoing work



Study Group Phase 2

- Learn more about specific implementation strategies in the top performing countries (both technical policy approaches and navigating major policy change)
- Support state-based activity and study and learn about what works



Urgent Call to Action: Begin Now, No Time to Lose!

“As state policymakers, it is our responsibility to provide our citizens with a world-class education. We cannot let another generation settle for anything less. Our future workforce, national defense, economic vitality and democratic foundation depend on our ability and willingness to get this done.

If we assemble the best minds in policy and practice, implement what we know works, and commit ourselves to the time, effort and resources needed to make monumental changes, we can once again be among the best education systems in the world. If they can do it, so can we. But there’s no time to lose.”



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