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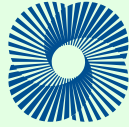


Breaking the Gridlock:

# An Action Plan to Strengthen Education-to-Workforce Pathways







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**Bellwether** is a national nonprofit that exists to transform education to ensure systemically marginalized young people achieve outcomes that lead to fulfilling lives and flourishing communities. Founded in 2010, we work hand in hand with education leaders and organizations to accelerate their impact, inform and influence policy and program design, and share what we learn along the way. To learn more, visit [bellwether.org](https://bellwether.org).



# Introduction

Two-thirds of American fourth-grade students cannot read proficiently<sup>1</sup> or perform math<sup>2</sup> on grade level, and on global math tests,<sup>3</sup> American students are not keeping up with economically advanced nations. The COVID-19 pandemic further stalled learning<sup>4</sup> for millions of students and widened<sup>5</sup> long-standing gaps in achievement and opportunity, particularly among Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander students, students from low-income families, and students with special needs.<sup>6</sup> In some states, achievement has fallen back to 1990s levels.<sup>7</sup> Without basic literacy and math skills, America's students are unprepared to fully contribute to our nation's workforce and democratic way of life.

**Policymakers and business leaders can work with education leaders to strengthen K-12 systems to address inequities and build a diverse, skilled, and competitive workforce. This level of collaboration will in turn strengthen our economy and make the American Dream accessible to all.**

Creating a highly skilled future workforce requires a renewed, bipartisan focus on the core issues of teaching and learning that can accelerate student achievement. With unique insights into labor market needs and the ability to influence policymakers and the national dialogue, business leaders are uniquely positioned to help drive this focus. However, many business leaders and other stakeholders are understandably leery of education's highly politicized environment. While families are clamoring for practical options to improve education, expand opportunity, and address the impact of the pandemic,<sup>8</sup> the political climate around education is acrimonious and often partisan. Many policymakers, entrenched in ideological camps, are enacting policies out of sync with the needs and priorities of the majority of students, families, and educators.





Any focus on school improvement necessitates a focus on low-income students, Black students, Hispanic students, and other student populations consistently underserved by schools. Business leaders should not flinch from a focus on students currently furthest from opportunity, even if discussions about equity discomfit some on the ideological right,<sup>9</sup> or if attempts at structural education reforms like school choice discomfit many on the ideological left.<sup>10</sup>

In the past, business and political leaders worked together in a bipartisan fashion to set our nation's education agenda, which resulted in major educational accomplishments. For example, in the late 1980s, Pacer Systems CEO Jack Rennie founded the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education after the publication of "A Nation at Risk." The organization aims to improve educational outcomes for all students, particularly those from low-income communities.<sup>11</sup> Its work led<sup>12</sup> to the influential Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 and underscored the business sector's focus on education as an important political lever for policymakers. In the 1980s, Xerox CEO David Kearns was an outspoken advocate for education reform and was selected by President George H.W. Bush to join the administration as a deputy secretary in the U.S. Department of Education in 1991.<sup>13</sup> And in 1996, IBM CEO Lou Gerstner<sup>14</sup> hosted an education summit at IBM headquarters, bringing together 43 state governors, each accompanied by a CEO from a business in their state, to tackle major education issues. At the summit, Gerstner and other attendees agreed to create the nonprofit organization Achieve to spearhead the work of raising high school expectations and state standards.<sup>15</sup> Through national and multi-state efforts like Achieve, and through other state-led efforts, business leaders contributed to a political climate where seriousness about education reform and school improvement was expected.

Today, inaction on education is the status quo in the political arena and among too many business sector leaders. It is time for a reset. Business leaders have a unique, valuable perspective on the needs of the labor market and the skills the country's future workforce will require. Policymakers and business leaders must reunite around an agenda that strengthens America's educational outcomes, economy, and global competitiveness.<sup>16</sup>

A blueprint exists to accomplish this. From the 1980s to the 2010s, the U.S. made steady educational improvement,<sup>17</sup> thanks in part to a bipartisan commitment to clear educational standards, accountability for addressing achievement gaps, efforts to strengthen the teaching profession, and investments in expanding early childhood education. While policymakers in those years often disagreed, they worked within common guardrails and against a similar theory of action. Those areas of agreement have been weakened, and today, partisan divisions are wide. Business leaders and policymakers have a chance to shape the public discourse for the better — to refocus on the fundamentals of education rather than the culture wars and infighting of the past decade.

This report explains why solutions to labor market challenges must be rooted in and responsive to a high-quality education system for all students. It describes the current education-to-workforce pipeline and the barriers students encounter along the way. It highlights effective policy solutions in both red and blue states, showcasing similarities in policy approaches across ideological lines, and it issues a call to action for policymakers and business leaders.

# Education Challenges Require Urgent Action

America's workforce has always depended upon a strong K–12 system. So why is this issue particularly urgent right now? Several factors, including a labor shortage, changing demographics, and a fiscal cliff, underscore the need to act to improve our education system and its connections to the workforce.

## U.S. employers face a critical gap in labor and talent

American employers face a labor shortage — in 2023, there were 2.4 million more jobs than there were workers to fill them.<sup>18</sup>

Job candidates often lack the required skills, particularly in areas like strategic thinking and analytics, digital communications, and project management,<sup>19</sup> with 69% of human resources (HR) professionals saying their organizations face a skills gap.<sup>20</sup>

Policymakers and business leaders cannot rely on immigration alone to address these high-skill labor shortages. A comprehensive, long-term solution demands that policymakers generate home grown talent through strong education systems. Job-related skills depend on a solid foundation in core academic subjects, but many students leave high school without the preparation needed to have a real shot at competitive postsecondary or career options.

## Changing demographics and economic conditions are an inflection point

The U.S. is experiencing significant demographic shifts that are changing the composition of the nation's classrooms. The fastest-growing populations tend to include student groups that are not well served by the K–12 system. In the past 20 years, the white elementary and secondary student population has steadily declined, while the Hispanic student population increased by 76% from 2000-2022 (Figure 1).

Policies that address our nation's talent pipeline must be grounded in explicit efforts to improve K–12 education systems for Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander students as well as students from low-income families.

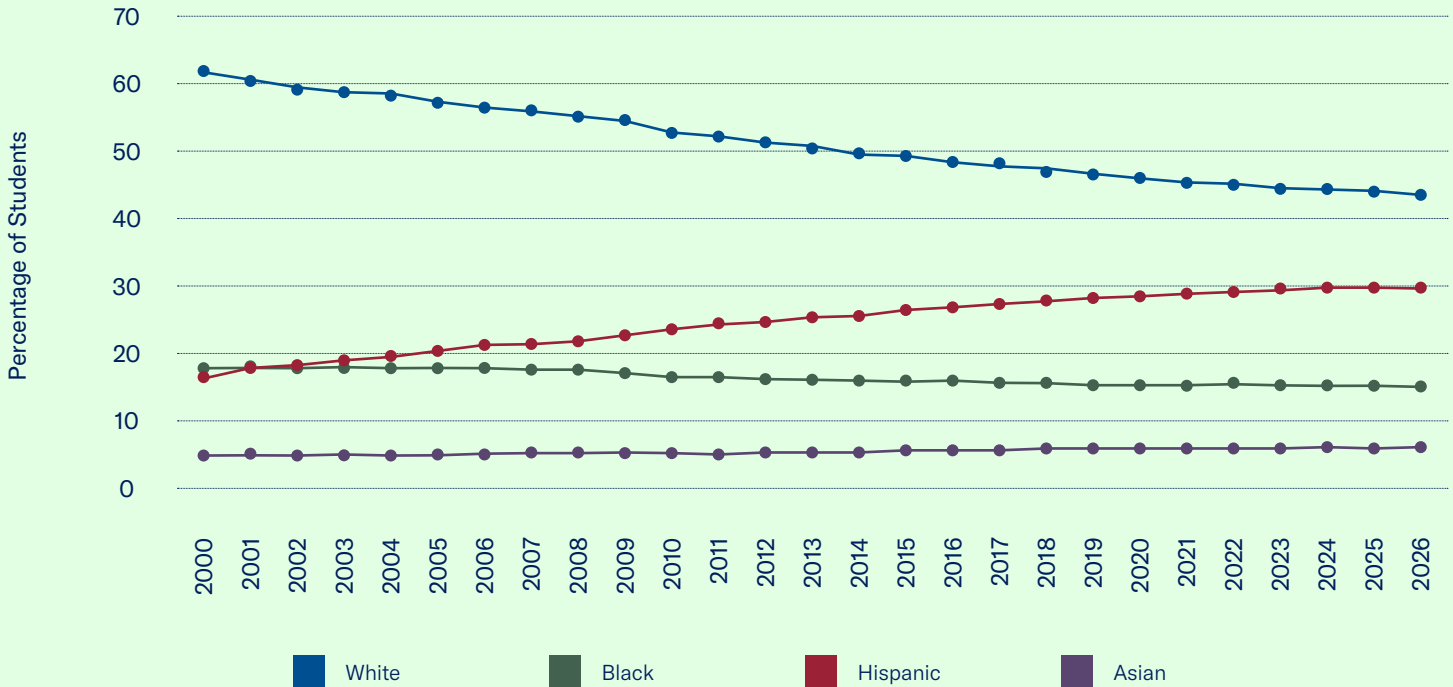
Ratcheting up the urgency: K–12 schools face steep enrollment declines (Figure 2),<sup>21</sup> as do community colleges.<sup>22</sup> Thus, if education systems prepare and graduate students at the same rates they do today, U.S. schools will produce even fewer college- and career-ready graduates in the years ahead, further widening the gap between labor market demands and a prepared workforce.

Education-to-workforce pathways challenges are especially relevant given current fiscal realities. Some states are anticipating slower revenue growth<sup>23</sup> and, in some cases, deficits as the economy cools, leading to reduced revenues for schools as inflation causes educational costs to continue rising. At the same time, federal pandemic relief funds, frequently used by schools to hire new staff, will expire in September 2024. This, in combination with enrollment declines, means many school districts face a funding cliff<sup>24</sup> and will have to make tough decisions about whether to reduce staff, cut programs, or close schools — decisions that historically have disproportionately affected students of color<sup>25</sup> and low-income students.<sup>26</sup>

HR professionals who say their organizations face a skills gap

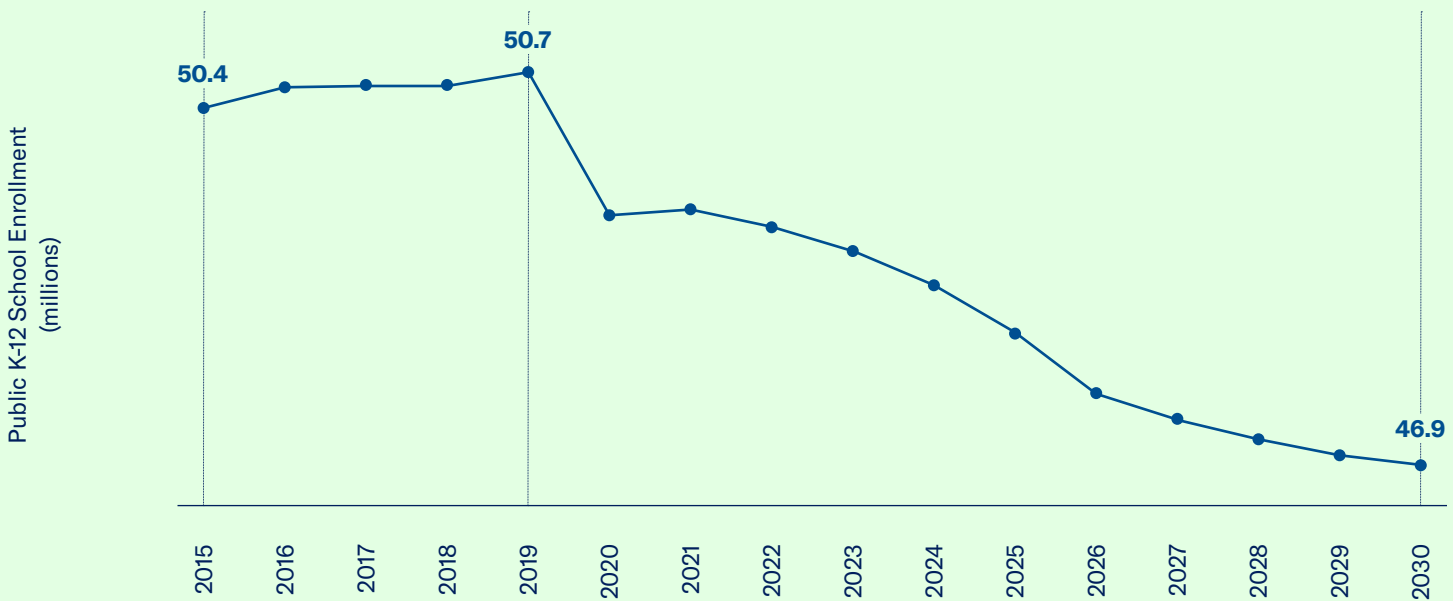
69%

**Figure 1.** The percentage of Hispanic students in U.S. schools is on track to nearly double by 2026, while the percentage of white students continues to decline. The years 2023-2030 denote projections based on current enrollment.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics. Enrollment, by race, in public elementary and secondary schools 2015 through 2022 and projected enrollment, by race, from 2023 through 2030.

**Figure 2.** Public K–12 school enrollment in the U.S. peaked in 2019 and has since been on the decline, with decreases projected in future years. The years 2023-2030 denote projections based on current enrollment.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics. Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools 2015 through 2022 and projected enrollment from 2023 through 2030.

# Cracks in the Education-to-Workforce Pipeline

The labor shortage, demographic, and fiscal challenges described above further strain an already fractured K–12-to-workforce pipeline. While the ecosystem of alternative pathways is exploding, with numerous routes to graduation and workforce readiness available to students, too few students graduate from high school well prepared for college and careers. Disproportionately, students from underserved and historically marginalized communities are the ones who fall through the cracks.

## Only 22%

of fourth-grade students from low-income backgrounds are proficient in math compared with 64% of their more economically advantaged peers.<sup>27</sup>

In the 2021–22 school year,

## 14.7 million

students were chronically absent, meaning they missed 10% or more of school days.<sup>29</sup>

## Only one in five

high school graduates is ready to succeed in college-level math, reading, English, and science coursework, based on 2023 ACT results.<sup>32</sup>

The average eighth-grade reading score in 2022 was the lowest recorded since 1975.<sup>25</sup>

The average eighth-grade math score was the lowest recorded since 1990.

While Black students compose only

## 15% of the total K–12 population,

they faced a suspension and expulsion rate of 33% in the 2017–18 school year.<sup>30</sup>

The overall high school graduation rate was 87% for the 2019–20 school year.<sup>33</sup>

For students with disabilities and English learners (ELs), the rate was 71%.

## Only 23%

of eighth grade students performed at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics exam.<sup>28</sup>

## Only 73%

of high school seniors in rural schools have access to an Advanced Placement course, compared with 95% of high school seniors in suburban schools.<sup>31</sup>

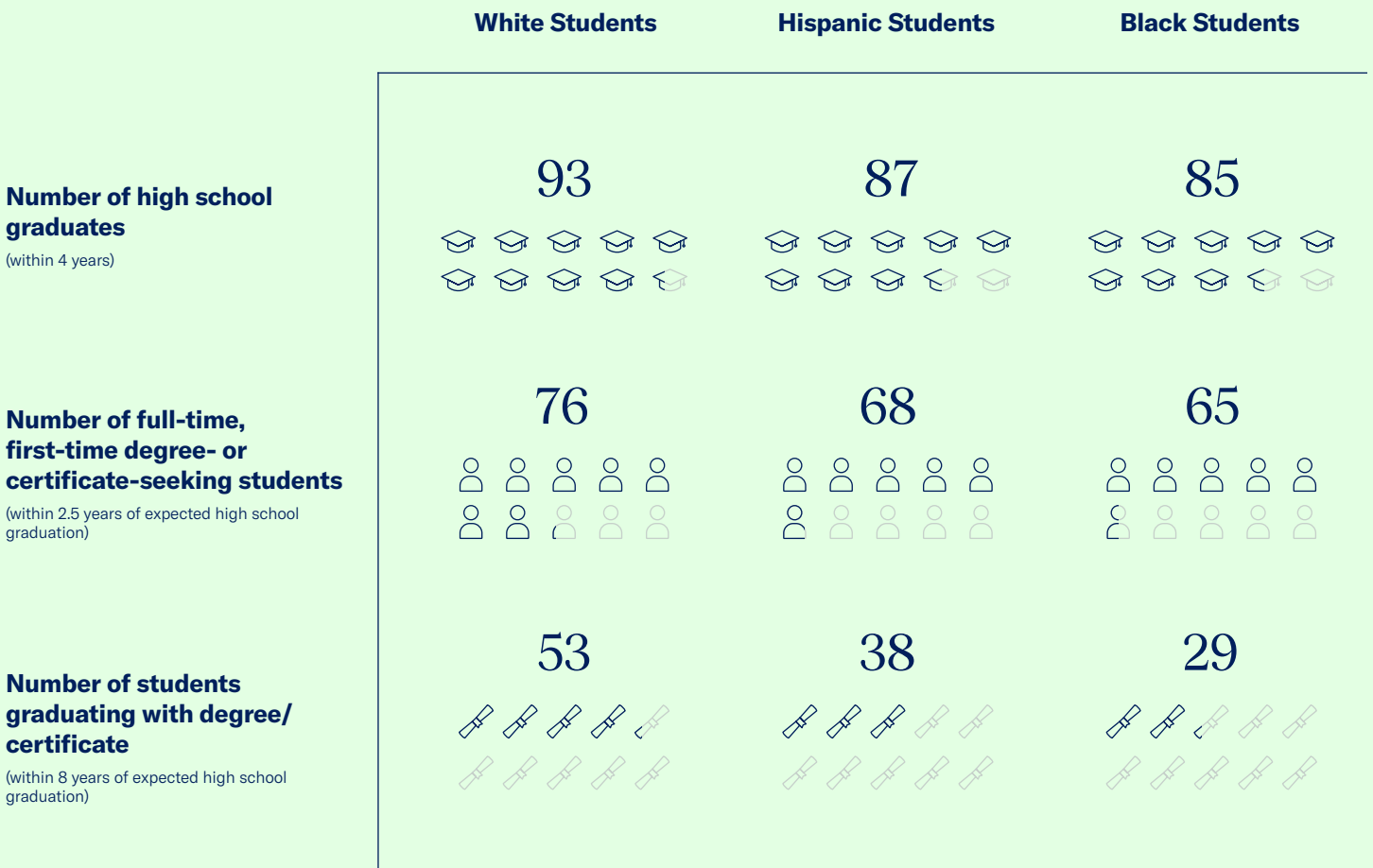
## Only 52%

of high school students feel school has prepared them for the workforce.<sup>34</sup>

Policies that address our nation’s talent pipeline must be grounded in explicit efforts to improve K–12 education systems for Black, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander students as well as students from low-income families.

Because of these problems in the K–12 pipeline, America’s young people — particularly Black, Hispanic, Native American, and youth from low-income backgrounds — face limited opportunities after high school to engage in postsecondary education and the workforce. The secondary and postsecondary system as a whole has an attrition problem that exacerbates cracks in the pipeline (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Attrition from a cohort of 100 ninth graders.



Note: These numbers are from the NCES High School Longitudinal Study (HSLs), which follows fall 2009 ninth graders. Sources: [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsls09/tables/highschool\\_completion\\_k1.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsls09/tables/highschool_completion_k1.asp) Table K1, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018139.pdf> Table 2, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2024/2024022.pdf> Table A-4.

# Competitive Rhetoric Impedes Solutions



Current rhetoric often fails to match the complexity of the challenges the U.S. education system faces and the urgency needed to address them.

At times, state leaders exaggerate, minimize, or misrepresent alarming data on school performance. It is not uncommon for education leaders in both red and blue states to issue press releases celebrating “promising gains” in test results, when, in fact, those gains are minimal, overall performance levels are low, or wide gaps remain. For example, the California Department of Education issued a press release<sup>35</sup> celebrating positive 2022–23 statewide student assessment results. Yet, the reality of the scores did not justify the rosy rhetoric: Nearly two-thirds of California’s K–12 students failed to achieve at grade level, scores lagged pre-pandemic levels, and gaps among student groups had widened.<sup>36</sup> Some state leaders are also quick to celebrate one upward tick in an isolated student assessment metric when the broader picture suggests room for significant improvement. For example, the Tennessee Department of Education celebrated improvements in its state test results in June 2022,<sup>37</sup> however, a few months later, its NAEP scores showed declines in progress across reading and math.<sup>38</sup>

Governors and education leaders, understandably, want to share good news and take credit for educational progress. When business leaders engage in education, they can help hold these state leaders accountable for transparency and truth-telling and ensure good news is credible.

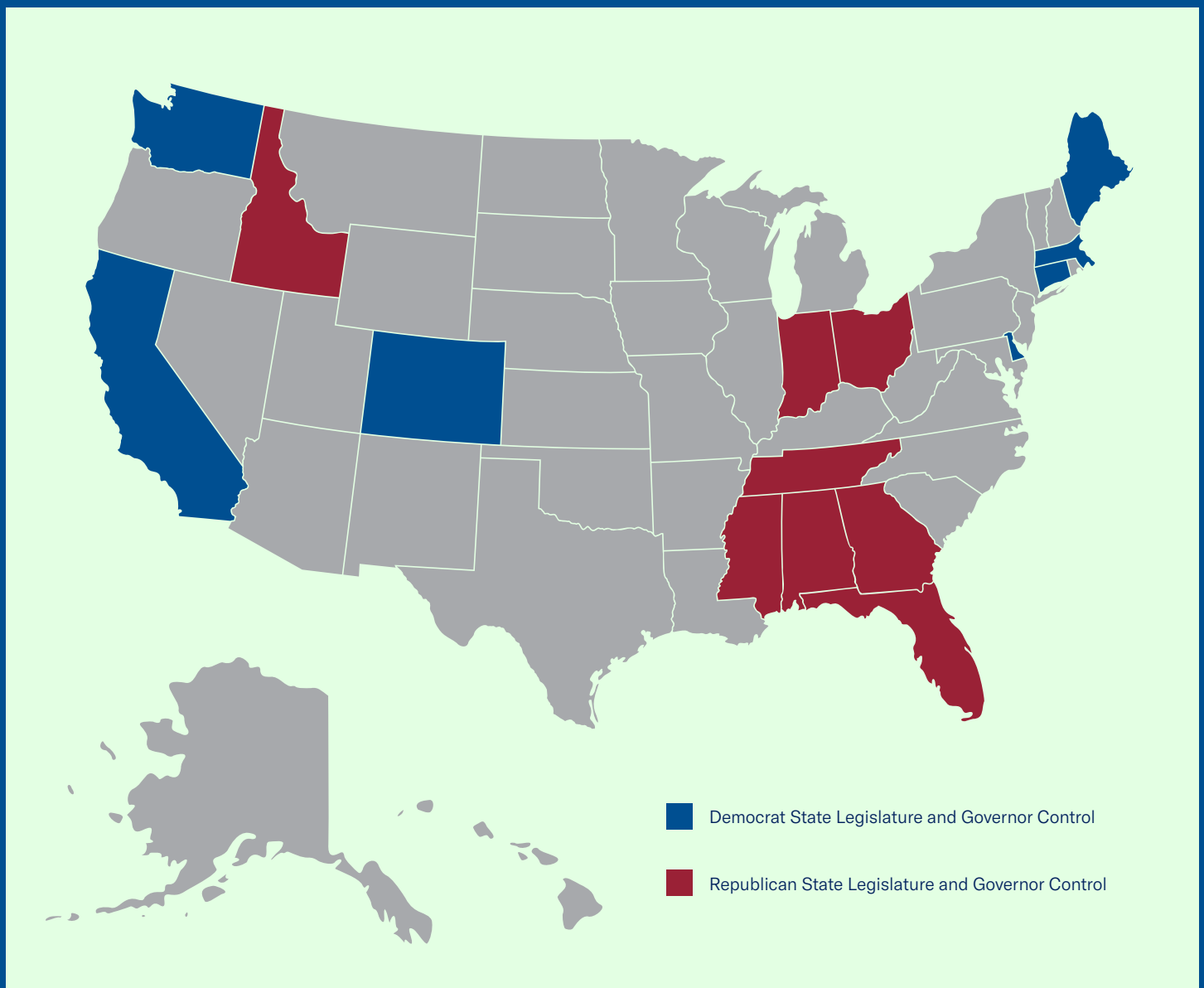
Other times, education rhetoric becomes more partisan than pragmatic — focused on chalking up political wins rather than improving educational outcomes. This is worsened when political leaders focus on a cacophony of opposition and argument from activists on the political right and left rather than common-sense and evidence-based solutions. Policymakers and business leaders can communicate a commitment to tackling education problems head-on, with attention paid to historical inequities and other structural problems, while also seeking to build common ground among different political factions.

By encouraging political leaders to focus on core issues like quality math instruction, foundational literacy, and civics, business leaders can help create the conditions needed to repair cracks in the education-to-workforce pipeline.

# Bright Spots in State Policy Strengthen the K-12-to-Workforce Pipeline

Many state education leaders and policymakers are advancing practical solutions at the K-12 level intended to strengthen the education-to-workforce pipeline and ensure it serves all students, in red and blue states alike. These places offer good ideas that other states can build on, and they demonstrate that a nonpartisan approach to education policy is possible.

**Figure 4.** Both red and blue states, including those highlighted here, have advanced practical policy solutions.



## Science of reading

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States can improve reading and writing for all students from the early years by adopting instructional approaches rooted in the Science of Reading, which emphasizes systematic phonics instruction and strategies designed to build all students' content knowledge.<sup>39</sup> In the past decade, 47 states and Washington, D.C. passed laws aligned with the Science of Reading.<sup>40</sup>

**Mississippi** passed a literacy law in 2013 rooted in the Science of Reading and has since seen big gains in its reading NAEP scores. The state's comprehensive reading reform includes teacher training, early student screenings for dyslexia and other reading challenges, a requirement that students achieve reading proficiency to move on from the third grade, and interventions for struggling readers.<sup>41</sup>

**Delaware** has drawn on promising practices from Mississippi and other states to implement laws aligned with the Science of Reading. Laws passed in 2021 and 2022 focused on universal reading screenings, professional development for elementary school teachers around evidence-based literacy strategies, required interventions for students struggling with reading, and strengthened literacy curricula in teacher preparation programs.<sup>42</sup>

## High-quality math curricula, instruction, and pathways

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High-quality instructional materials are critical to boosting math achievement for all students. Some states have recognized the importance of improving math curriculum, implementing timely interventions, and training and supporting aspiring and current teachers on effective math teaching strategies.

In 2023, **Colorado** lawmakers voted to invest more than \$27 million in math tutoring, training for current and future math teachers, and other instructional math supports in response to pandemic-era declines in math achievement statewide.<sup>43</sup> The legislation took a comprehensive approach to math instruction by addressing how teacher training programs use timely research to educate aspiring teachers, how preschool teachers build foundational math skills in students, and how interventions can be used to help struggling schools.

In 2022, **Alabama** passed the Numeracy Act, which aims to improve math proficiency for students in grades K-5.<sup>44</sup> The law created a number of new programs and offices, including the Office of Mathematics Improvement, the Elementary Mathematics Task Force, and the Alabama Mathematics Summer Achievement Program. It also introduced a system of accountability that provides support and interventions to ensure student progress in math.

## Fair and flexible K-12 funding

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Schools cannot succeed without adequate and equitable funding. Many states have revised their funding formulas to direct more money to districts, schools, and students with greater needs and to empower local school districts to decide how to use those funds to best serve their students.<sup>45</sup>

In 2013, **California** enacted the Local Control Funding Formula, directing more money to districts with larger numbers and concentrations of low-income students, ELs, and youth in the foster care.<sup>46</sup> Lawmakers gave district leaders control over those funds while also requiring transparency, stakeholder engagement, and accountability for the effective use of resources. Researchers have found that the funding reform has improved academic achievement, graduation rates, and other outcomes.<sup>47</sup>

In 2022, **Tennessee** overhauled its education funding formula. The Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act was designed to simplify the state's complex education funding system and more equitably allocate resources to school districts and charter schools.<sup>48</sup> The new funding formula aims to improve academic outcomes for the state's 1 million students, especially low-income students, ELs, and students with unique learning needs.

## Equitable school choice policies

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States can improve educational equity by ensuring that where students attend school is not determined by their ZIP code. Policy approaches include expanding high-performing charter schools that serve high-need students; enacting open enrollment policies that allow families to enroll in schools outside of their district boundaries or attendance zones; and incentivizing the creation of magnet schools and other specialized programs available to all students, especially those with the greatest needs. Other school choice policies, like education savings accounts, are rapidly spreading. However, given a lack of evidence on their effectiveness and equity impacts, must be approached with caution, transparency, and accountability.

In 2023, **Idaho** enacted statewide open enrollment — a policy to allow students to choose schools based on their preferences, rather than their ZIP code — through Senate Bill 1125, with overwhelming bipartisan support.<sup>49</sup> The law also aims to “increas[e] transparency and streamlin[e] the process for families to access a variety of public school options.”<sup>50</sup>

In 2023, the **Connecticut** legislature expanded its investment in inter-district magnet schools.<sup>51</sup> This move was in part due to the settlement in the *Sheff v. O'Neill* case, which centered around the racial and economic isolation of Hartford schools in Connecticut.<sup>52</sup> The settlement stipulated that the state increase funding for magnet schools as part of a strategy to increase racial integration.

## High-dosage tutoring

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High-dosage tutoring involves sustained one-on-one relationships between a student and trained tutor, who meet on a frequent basis in person or online during the regular school day.<sup>53</sup> Research suggests that high-dosage tutoring can increase student achievement, especially for those students who have fallen behind academically.<sup>54</sup>

In 2023, **Georgia** announced several investments and partnerships to provide high-dosage tutoring amid learning loss since the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>55</sup> The state is investing \$6 million for tutoring for nearly 5,000 students in grades K-8 through partnerships with AmeriCorps<sup>56</sup>, and it launched GaTutor, an initiative that became available online in the 2023-24 school year.<sup>57</sup>

**Maine** invested resources into tutoring programs statewide. In 2022, the Maine Senate passed a law to fund the Innovative Instruction and Tutoring Grant program.<sup>58</sup> Grants in the program are targeted at high-poverty and rural school districts, and participating districts must use evidence-based strategies for tutoring practices.<sup>53</sup>

## Accountability and data systems

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Thoughtfully designed systems of assessment and accountability, especially those that measure and address achievement and opportunity gaps, can lead to improved student achievement.<sup>59</sup>

**Florida** has maintained a long-standing commitment to measuring performance, publicly and transparently sharing school results, and holding districts and schools accountable for progress.<sup>60</sup> Those accountability efforts have been paired with investments that strengthen reading and math instruction. For example, a new law that was unanimously passed in the Florida legislature focuses on providing support to students struggling in math as well as improving professional development for teachers in math instruction.<sup>61</sup> Since 2017, Florida has performed above the national average on NAEP math assessments.<sup>62</sup>

**Massachusetts** has continued to refine and improve its accountability system in the decades since the passage of its landmark Education Reform Act of 1993.<sup>63</sup> For example, the state now sets improvement targets for a wider range of indicators, including chronic absenteeism, achievement gains of the bottom 25% of students, and the percentage of high school students taking advanced coursework.

## Career and technical education (CTE) programs and work-based learning

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Rigorous and relevant CTE programs and work-based learning opportunities,<sup>64</sup> including youth apprenticeships<sup>65</sup> and internships, can improve alignment among K-12, higher education, and the workforce to ensure graduates have the skills needed for well-paying, high-demand jobs, especially when designed with particular attention to equity in access and participation. These programs often involve collaboration between educators and business partners to ensure strong alignment between program curricula and business needs.

**Tennessee** has long been recognized as a leader and was cited by the national, bipartisan coalition of state and education leaders, Chiefs for Change, as an exemplar of good CTE policy.<sup>66</sup> Changes to CTE policy and programs in Tennessee, including indicators of student success, new CTE standards, financial support for students enrolled in CTE programs, and accountability measures, were championed by both the former Democratic Gov. Phil Bredesen and the former Republican Gov. Bill Haslam.

In **Ohio**, a bipartisan group of lawmakers has sought to expand access to and modernize the state's CTE programs.<sup>67</sup> The 2023 legislative changes call for investments in modernizing existing CTE programs and partnerships between high schools and Ohio Technical Centers, which provide postsecondary education and training.

## Rigorous college-level coursework

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By expanding access to rigorous college-level programs and coursework during high school years, including early college high schools and dual enrollment programs, policymakers can strengthen secondary and postsecondary pathways. And by earning college credits in high school, students can save money on their college tuition bill, opening doors of opportunity for students and families from low-income backgrounds.

The **Washington** State Legislature passed a bipartisan bill in 2022 to increase access to dual enrollment.<sup>68</sup> The legislation also aimed to improve data collection around student participation in dual enrollment programs and total credits earned.

In 2007, **Indiana** created a rigorous high school curriculum called Core 40, which aligned to entry requirements at its statewide colleges.<sup>69</sup> To boost low-income students' engagement and completion of the rigorous curriculum, Indiana created an incentives program: Students who complete the Core 40 diploma (and meet other grade and financial requirements) can receive up to 90% of tuition and fees at approved colleges."

# A Call to Action for Business Leaders

Business leaders have an important role to play in strengthening education-to-workforce pathways, particularly for underserved students. They can use their voice, position, and influence in the following ways to create tomorrow's skilled workforce.

## Create or participate in state-based, business-led education coalitions

- Expand inclusive networks and spaces in which business and education partners engage in discussions about education improvements at the state level.

**For example, Colorado Succeeds brings together education, business, and government leaders to improve K-12 and postsecondary outcomes, strengthen the state's workforce, and empower a generation of learners to shape their futures.<sup>70</sup>**

- Collaborate with business, education, and community partners to establish priorities and shared policy agendas that include commitments to strengthening the fundamentals of K-12 education, expanding work-based learning, and investing in postsecondary education and training.

## Create and participate in public-private partnerships that expand opportunities and spur innovation

- Invest in and partner with private, nonprofit, and public programs that build career and technical skills through hands-on, paid work-based learning experiences for students.

**For example, the Stockton, California-based San Joaquin A+,<sup>71</sup> in collaboration with the Lodi Unified School District, Delta College, and the Lodi Winegrape Commission, created an innovative new program that builds skills and exposes students to opportunities in the winemaking and hospitality industries.<sup>72</sup>**

- Collaborate with schools and nonprofit organizations

to expand tutoring programs, mentorship, career guidance, and/or summer learning initiatives for underserved students.

- Support efforts to build robust state and local data systems that enable real-time analytics and strong research partnerships. These systems can help education leaders and policymakers identify effective practices and make informed decisions about how to allocate resources.

**For example, the Nevada Workforce Blueprint<sup>73</sup> was created by a coalition of nonprofits and the local chamber of commerce, with input from school districts and institutions of higher education, to highlight in-demand industries and map degree pathways for students that could feed into those jobs.<sup>74</sup>**

## Advocate for policies to strengthen teaching, learning, and whole-child supports

- Encourage state leaders to sustain long-standing commitments to rigorous K-12 academic standards in literacy, math, and science; assessment and reporting of student progress; and accountability for results and improvement.
- Support efforts to expand equitable public funding for early childhood education, K-12 education, and workforce readiness programs.
- Support state and district efforts to create graduate profiles, which outline the skills high schoolers should have upon graduation.

**For example, San Francisco Unified School District and the state of Kentucky have both adopted graduate profiles.<sup>75,76</sup>**

- Push for strong governmental support for education-to-workforce programs, including CTE programs, internships, and apprenticeships.



# A Call to Action for Policymakers

The education-to-workforce pipeline will remain fragmented without the engagement of federal, state, and local policymakers. Elected officials should look for opportunities in the following ways to build consensus around evidence-based solutions.

**Demonstrate a public commitment to investing in teaching and learning**

in their states, with a focus on supporting evidence-based practices rather than politically motivated reforms. In particular, political leaders should focus on backing the types of bipartisan policy solutions outlined in this report.

**Convene leaders in business and education**

to explore opportunities to strengthen talent pathways, with employers guiding a data-informed discussion grounded in information and trends about in-demand jobs and the training and skills workers need to fill those roles.

**Establish programs that expand access to work-based learning and postsecondary education and training programs,**

particularly for Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander students as well as those from low-income families.

**Host or participate in bipartisan working groups**

of governors, state legislators, and other elected officials and state leaders to identify consensus goals and priorities.



# Conclusion

America's workforce starts with a strong K-12 education system that prepares young people for success in a career of their choosing.

That work begins with equipping students with the fundamental skills needed in reading, math, science, and civics. Policymakers and business leaders must cut through ideological rhetoric and work together to repair education-to-workforce pathways for all students. Business leaders do not need to take a position on every controversial education question. Instead, they can play a vital role in keeping the focus on a K-12 system that prepares students for high-quality jobs based on up-to-date employer demands and timely labor market data. The blueprint for creating stronger talent pipelines starts with bipartisan ideas that allow students to access high-quality educational opportunities that prepare them for the demands of an ever-evolving 21st century economy.





## Where To Go For More Resources

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More from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation on:

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<https://www.uschamber.com/co/chambers>

More from Bellwether on:

- [State Education Finance](#)
- [Postsecondary Pathways](#)
- [CTE and Workforce Development](#)
- [Science of Reading](#)

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## Disclosure

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Bellwether works with organizations and leaders who share our viewpoint-diverse commitment to improving education and advancing equity for all young people — regardless of identity, circumstance, or background. As part of our commitment to transparency, a list of Bellwether clients and funders since our founding in 2010 is publicly available on our website. An organization's name appearing on our list of clients and funders does not imply any endorsement of or by Bellwether.

Some organizations referenced in this report have been past clients of Bellwether, including San Joaquin A+, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, the San Francisco Unified School District, and the Tennessee Department of Education. The views represented here are those of the authors, and the past clients listed were not consulted regarding this report.

# Endnotes

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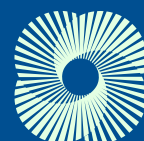
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