



RESOURCE TITLE:

# 50-State Comparison: K-12 Governance

State education governance is the practice of coordinating institutions, processes and norms to guide collective decision-making and action.

Understanding how key governance roles are structured and relate to each other helps clarify complex systems for policymakers. Every state has the same or similar policymaking roles; however, each of the roles operate differently in the context of each state's governance model.

This resource provides a national overview of the key policymaking roles in K-12 education policy, a summary of each role's general powers and duties, and some information on how they relate to other policymaking roles. Education Commission of the States researched state level education governance roles to provide these three comprehensive resources.

Click on the questions below to access 50-State Comparisons for each of the data points.

**Click here** to view individual state profiles detailing all data elements for a single state.

**50-STATE COMPARISONS**

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## **State Constitutional Language**

- **Location of education provision in state constitution.**
- **Education provision language.**
- **Funding provision.**
- **Religious restriction.**
- **Students with disabilities.**
- **Student age.**
- **School year.**

## **State Legislature**

- **What constitutional or statutory powers does the legislature have as it relates to education policy?**
- **What is the appointment or confirmation authority of the legislature in education?**
- **Which committees in the legislature focus on education issues?**
- **Are the legislature's duties and powers found in the state constitution and/or state statute?**

## **Governor**

- **What constitutional or statutory duties does the governor have as it relates to education?**
- **What is the appointment authority provided to the governor in education?**
- **Are the governor's duties and powers found in the state constitution and/or state statute?**

## **Chief State School Officer**

- **What are the duties of the chief state school officer?**
- **What constitutional or statutory authority does the chief state school officer have as it relates to education policy?**
- **How is the chief state school officer selected, and are there term limits/lengths?**
- **Are the chief state school officer's duties and powers found in the state constitution and/or state statute?**

## **Executive-Level Secretary**

- **Does the state have an executive-level secretary?**
- **What other powers or duties does the executive-level secretary have?**
- **Are the executive-level secretary's duties and powers found in the state constitution and/or state statute?**

### **State Board of Education**

- **What constitutional or statutory powers and duties does the state board have as it relates to education policy?**
- **What is the composition of the state board of education?**
- **How are members of the state board of education selected?**
- **Are there term limits for state board members?**
- **Are the state board of education's duties and powers found in the state constitution and/or state statute?**

### **School Boards**

- **What constitutional or statutory authority do school boards have?**
- **What is the required composition and selection of school board members?**

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Twenty-five states have outlined a formal constitutional role specific to education for their governor.
- Every state has constitutional language detailing the authority and duties of state legislatures in education, and 40 states give the legislature some role in appointing or confirming the chief state school officer or state board of education members.
- Thirty chief state school officers have a formal constitutional role in state government. Additionally, how they are selected for office varies: 21 are appointed by state boards of education, 16 are appointed by the governor, 12 are elected, and one is appointed by the state executive-level secretary. In Oregon, the governor is the superintendent of education.
- State board of education authority and duties are also detailed in state constitutions and statute. Twenty-three states include state boards in the constitution, and 26 have only statutory powers

and duties. Only Minnesota and Wisconsin do not have a state board, and New Mexico's public education commission is advisory only.

- Thirty-four states have some variation of an executive-level secretary. Such positions may mean additional formal duties for chief state school officers, or they may be individually appointed positions designated to serve the state board of education or work in some other capacity.
- Every state except for the District of Columbia and Hawaii has statutory provisions related to outlining the authority of local school boards. (Hawaii is one single school district and so is the District of Columbia.)

## RELATED RESOURCES

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[50-State Comparison: Postsecondary Governance Structures](#)

[50-State Comparison: Early Care and Education Governance](#)

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