



» **School Readiness for All**

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University have found a child's cognitive, emotional, physical and social development is critical to his or her success in school. Many factors impact school readiness, including the type and quality of a child's early life experiences, the home environment and challenges due to poverty. For children to be ready to learn, they should have mastered developmentally appropriate levels of language, literacy, motor skills, socialization, and scientific and mathematical thinking. As state leaders work to measure and adequately prepare students for school, they will be looking at policies and practices focused on effective child care, Head Start and pre-kindergarten programs that promote high quality and efficient early learning programs to ensure school readiness for all children.

» **Experiential and Work-Based Learning**

Students must graduate high school with the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for college, the workplace and life. In order to accomplish this goal, students need environments that encourage them to apply their knowledge, solve complex problems and learn much needed communication skills. Experiential and work-based learning will not only increase student engagement in the classroom, but also help connect learning to application on the job site. State policymakers will be looking at ways to help local school districts offer internships, job shadowing, enhanced field trips, community or service-learning, paid work opportunities and clinical experiences. With future careers as the focus, these learning experiences can offer an opportunity for students to engage with a variety of jobs, network with potential employers, determine future courses of study and create job skills necessary for employment.

» **Academic Success for At-Risk Populations**

Students can be at risk of failure in school due to a wide range of issues or circumstances, such as poverty, race, ethnicity, culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, disabilities, mental health disorders or chronic health problems. To overcome these challenges and enhance learning, students require supportive instruction, continuous appropriate assessment, ongoing professional development for educators and staff, and appropriate referral to effective community services. State policymakers will be looking at strategies to create conditions where administrators, educators, parents and the extended school community offer individualized, personalized learning with high expectations for success needed to ensure school connectedness in stimulating and challenging learning environments for all students.

» **Innovative State Accountability Systems**

More than 40 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have taken advantage of the federal waiver process to be more innovative as they implement the accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind. The relief given by the U.S. Department of Education, however, expires at the end of the 2014-15 school year. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was up for reauthorization in 2007, but with no congressional compromise in sight, states must determine the next steps for adopting and implementing college- and career-ready standards and assessments, developing effective state accountability systems and creating or sustaining teacher and principal evaluation systems. Waiver renewals must focus on continued emphasis for graduating all students ready for college and careers, closing the achievement gaps, increasing the graduation rates and targeting interventions in the state's lowest-performing schools. The majority of states can request renewals of up to three years and will apply by the end of March 2015. Certain states will be fast-tracked with requests due in late January and will offer longer renewals through the 2018-19 school year.

» **Advance Attainment of Degrees, Certificates and High-Quality Credentials**

State economies rely on the job market and business demands a well-educated workforce. Additionally, during an age of continued high unemployment, business and industry claim they cannot find skilled workers for vacant jobs. According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, by 2018, nearly two-thirds of all jobs will require a postsecondary credential or degree. The two-year degree, certificate or credential has become the new minimum standard for many professions. Policymakers, K-12 and postsecondary education officials, business, labor, economic development officials and other key stakeholders will focus on ensuring student outcomes are met by providing a world-class postsecondary education system that is student-centered and aligned with the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in a career thereby increasing the number of degrees, certificates and high quality credentials awarded.

For more information on these topics and for additional resources on education policy, see » [www.csg.org/top5in2015](http://www.csg.org/top5in2015).

# YOUR CSG EDUCATION RESOURCE »

## PAM GOINS



THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

**Pam Goins** is the director of education policy at CSG headquarters in Lexington, Ky. She manages the State Pathways to Prosperity initiative focused on the nexus between education and workforce development to ensure America has a strong workforce for economic development and prosperity. She initiates policy analysis and dissemination to executive, legislative and judicial government officials around the country. In addition, she is the lead staff liaison to the Education and Workforce Development Public Policy Committee, comprised of nearly 100 governmental leaders and private sector members who address emerging challenges and issues from dynamic educational conditions in the states. Members of the committee focus on rising trends, innovative and effective solutions and viable policy positions and response projects.

Prior to joining CSG in 2005, Goins served as a program consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education for 11 years, working in a regulatory and policy compliance capacity, as well as associate director for Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline, a statewide center working with 176 local school districts in Kentucky on positive behavior supports for students. She is a certified educational mediator and certified Kentucky administrative hearing officer. Goins completed her bachelor's degree in psychology at Eastern Kentucky University and her master's degree in education at the University of Kentucky.

### GET INVOLVED »

CSG provides state leaders a variety of regional and national opportunities to actively engage on issues of importance to their jurisdictions and constituents. CSG's regional and national committees and task forces are designed to encourage multi-state problem solving, the sharing of best practices and networking among state officials and between the public and private sectors.

CSG's Education and Workforce Development Public Policy Committee is co-chaired this year by Rep. John DeBerry, Tennessee, and Rep. Jacqueline Sly, South Dakota. Over the past two years, the committee has focused on several key issues, including preschool education, the role of technology in instruction, postsecondary degree attainment and the transition from school to sustainable employment.

The committee will hold its next meeting as part of the CSG 2015 National Conference, Dec. 10-13 in Nashville, Tenn.

### CSG RESOURCES»



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