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**To:** Jaryn Emhof (Jaryn@excelined.org) <jaryn@excelined.org>  
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Several states we have been working with to advance and protect current reforms have just wrapped up their legislative sessions. Below is a brief summary of the reforms adopted by lawmakers or policies that were protected from attempts to turn back the clock.

#### Florida:

As Florida closed out session on Friday, several reforms were approved by the House and Senate and are headed to Governor Scott's desk. The House and Senate passed legislation that encourages accelerated learning and begins to transition Florida to a performance based system. The Legislature also approved an expansion of Florida's popular Tax Credit Scholarship program and policies that expand access to digital learning. While the Parent Empowerment Act was one vote shy of passing, we know that it has sparked discussion that will fuel future reforms.

#### Indiana:

Indiana's session ended last Thursday and with it an attempt to strike A-F school grading from the law. While no bill was passed, language was placed in the budget to create a taskforce to study the school grades policy. We will remain vigilant throughout the year working with Superintendent Bennett and legislative leaders to ensure this important accountability policy remains in law. A bill to water down the hard-line reading policy also did not pass. Several lawmakers and Superintendent Bennett worked to advance an online course requirement for graduation. While this reform fell short of final passage, it will likely be pursued again next year.

#### Utah:

Last year, the Utah Legislature passed a bill that would implement A-F grading. This year, the Foundation has been working with Senator Niederhauser and Utah's Parents for Choice in Education to advance reforms that further refine their school grading laws to ensure that schools are accountable for all students. We are excited to share that this bill has passed both chambers and is on its way to Governor Herbert's desk for his signature. Additionally, a bill that would have dismantled parts of the Statewide Online Education Act, which passed last year and has become a national model for online learning, did not make it to final passage.

#### Virginia:

Virginia's session ended Saturday with many education reforms still being considered up to the final hours. Governor McDonnell championed many reforms this session and while his number one priority, reforming teacher evaluation and tenure, did not pass, many others did. He will have the opportunity to approve reforms that expand digital learning, including the establishment of an online course requirement and a new process to streamline accreditation for virtual public schools, place a command focus on reading, and create tax credit scholarships. We are also pleased to report that a bill which would have restricted student access to approved online courses did not pass.

Other state sessions continue and some have just begun. Below is a summary of the reforms that continue to advance in these states.

#### Arizona:

Senator Crandall continues to guide his bill to expand digital learning and transition to a performance based system through the Arizona House and Senate. The Senate passed its version last week and the House held a hearing to consider several changes proposed by Senator Crandall to strengthen the bill and ensure student access to quality online courses statewide is protected.

#### Idaho:

Superintendent Luna and Governor Otter continue to champion reforms in their state, this year by advancing legislation to remove the cap that limited the expansion of public charter schools. This has been approved by the legislature and is headed for Governor Otter's desk for final approval.

#### Louisiana:

The 2012 Legislative session began this week in Baton Rouge as Governor Bobby Jindal addressed both the house and the senate about the upcoming year. He focused on the many education reforms he hopes to see pass and is ready to do the work required to make the education system in Louisiana one that is effective and beneficial for all students.

#### Minnesota:

Thanks to the leadership of Representative Pam Myhra, a digital learning bill that would require high school students to take an online course as part of their

graduation requirements was successfully passed out of both the House Education Reform and House Education Finance Committees for the second time. The bill will now move to the House floor for debate.

### Mississippi:

Mississippi lawmakers have voted their A-F school grading policy from the senate over to the house. As it moves through the committee process, we are working with local advocates and House and Senate leaders to improve the legislation to ensure it can be implemented effectively and efficiently. Their third-grade reading policy, championed by Representative Rita Martinson, died on the House floor.



### Rhode Island:

This week the digital learning team spoke with staff from the House of Representatives regarding legislation that has been introduced to expand access to virtual and online courses in Rhode Island public education.

### Wisconsin:

Over the past year, the Foundation has participated in a reading and teacher evaluation task force launched by Governor Walker to develop policies to ensure every child learns to read and an excellent teacher is in front of every classroom. The resulting legislation to require kindergarten screening exams and teacher evaluations to be partly based on student achievement reached final passage this week. The legislation's next stop is Governor Walker's desk.

The **Foundation for Excellence in Education** is igniting a movement of reform, state by state, to transform education for the 21st century economy.

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