State Policy Update for 2010

June 29, 2010
States are experiencing their worst budget crises in recent memory

These budget problems are necessitating major funding cuts in public education

Prime opportunity for opponents to push to cuts funds to charters and halt their growth through new caps and moratoria
• Bulwarks against these efforts:

  – Our champions in governor’s offices and legislatures
  – President Obama and Secretary Duncan, especially via their use of the $4.35 billion Race to the Top competitive grant program
Caps and Moratoria

• State Highlights:
  • AK: Removed the state’s cap on charters.
  • CT: Lifted the state’s caps on high-performing charter schools.
  • HI: Partially lifted its cap on start-up charters.
  • IA: Removed the state’s cap of 20 conversion charters and the pilot nature of the charter law.
Caps and Moratoria

- **MA:** Made a partial but significant lift in the most restrictive of the state’s caps.
- **MI:** Partially lifted the state’s cap on university-authorized charters.
- **NH:** Removed the state’s moratorium on state-authorized charters.
- **NY:** Lifted the state’s cap from 200 charters to 460 charters.
Caps and Moratoria

• OK: Lifted the state’s numerical caps on charters and expanded the number of districts in which charters can open.
• RI: Partially lifted its cap from 20 charters to 35 charters and removed the statewide enrollment limits for charter schools.
• UT: Removed the state’s cap on charter school enrollment.
• State Highlights
  • AZ: Expanded eligible authorizers to include a state university, a community college district with an enrollment of at least 15,000 students or a consortium of community college districts with a combined enrollment of at least 15,000 students.
  • CO: Created charter school and authorizer standards review committee.
• HI: Clarified oversight responsibilities for authorizers and created a renewal process for charter schools.
• OK: Expanded eligible authorizing entities to include more school districts, more technology center school districts, more postsecondary institutions, and federally recognized Native American tribes for certain types of schools.
Authorizers

• UT: Allowed colleges and universities to authorize charter schools, subject to approve of the state board for education.

• VA: Elevated the role of the state board of education in the approval and renewal processes.
• State Highlights
  • AK: Created a charter school construction, lease, and major maintenance grant program
  • AZ: Allowed a tax exemption for consumption of food and drink at charter schools (similar to districts)
  • CO: Allowed charter schools to form multi-school collaboratives
  • HI: Make existing public school buildings more available to public charter schools
• State Highlights:
  – MS: Enacted a law to allow the conversion of failing schools to charter schools.
  – AL: Tabled charter bills in House and Senate Education Committees
  – KY: Passed a bill out of the Senate, but not the House
  – ME: Failed to amend “innovation school” bill to allow charters
– SD: Passed a law that would allow one charter school for Native American students if the state won a Race to the Top grant.
– WV: A special session is reconvening on July 19, at which time we expect the legislature to again take up a charter schools bill.
• 15 states have lifted caps and one state has passed a new law

• Significant vs. Symbolic

• Examples of Significant: Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York
Impact of Race to the Top

• Examples of Symbolic: Alaska, Iowa, and Mississippi

• While there has been significant progress on lifting caps on charters, much work remains ahead to create strong policy environments across the country (funding equity, facilities support, and authorizing environments)