



SREB

Legislative Report

Governors' legislative and budget proposals

Arkansas (<http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/budget/>)

The governor released a \$5.3 billion 2016-17 executive budget in March (up 2.8 percent over the enacted 2015-16 budget) before he called the Legislature to a week-long special session on Medicaid. Legislators met the following week for the state fiscal legislative session, which convened mid-April and allows the Legislature to consider appropriations to state agencies and the budget.

General fund aid to public schools in 2016-17 would increase 1.1 percent to \$2.2 billion. This amount includes \$32 million for career education, the same level of funding as 2015-16. Higher education would receive general funding at the 2015-16 level of \$733.6 million. This amount includes \$588.1 million for four-year institutions and \$119.9 million for two-year colleges. Technical colleges would receive \$33.5 million.

The Legislature adjourned in early May following the approval of a 2016-17 state budget. Legislators returned in mid May to attend a special session on funding the highway system and other topics. A summary of final actions will appear in an upcoming *Legislative Report*.

Final legislative and budget actions

Florida (<http://www.leg.state.fl.us>)

The Legislature concluded its session in March and passed a budget for 2016-17 as well as several measures to reduce taxes. Included in the tax measures were a permanent extension of the sales tax exemption on manufacturing equipment, a three-day sales tax holiday in August for school supplies and a reduction in the required millage rate for local property taxes that support education. The Legislature approved \$30.3 billion in general fund appropriations for 2016-17, up 4.3 percent from the 2015-16 budget.

State general funds for K-12 school operations total nearly \$10.6 billion (up 2.3 percent), including \$7.7 billion for the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding formula (up 2.8 percent) and nearly \$2.9 billion (up 1.2 percent) for class size reduction. The Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program — established in 2015 to provide up to \$10,000 to each teacher who earns a rating of highly effective and whose SAT or ACT score is in the 80th percentile or higher — receives \$49 million, up 11.3 percent. Voluntary prekindergarten receives \$395.2 million in general funds, up 1.5 percent.

General funds for Florida College System (FCS) institutions are up 3.1 percent to \$966.2 million, which includes \$60 million (up 50 percent) for performance funding based on the model approved by the state Board of Education and \$10 million (double the 2015-16 amount) for performance-based incentives to colleges with students who earn industry certifications in certain fields. State universities receive nearly \$2.5 billion, up 4.9 percent, including \$500 million (up 25 percent) for performance-based incentives. General funds for student financial aid decline 11.3 percent to \$81.5 million, but for the National Merit Scholars Incentive Program are up 54.3 percent to \$12.9 million.

While lottery funds are projected to increase 7 percent to nearly \$1.8 billion, allocations to several programs in 2016-17 remain the same as provided in 2015-16, and Bright Futures merit-based scholarships receive \$217.3 million, a 9.4 percent decrease. Total lottery funding amounts for 2016-17 that are greater than the 2015-16 amount include: \$64.9 million for need-based Florida Student Assistance Grants to undergraduate students, up 23.1 percent; \$276.8 million for the FEFP school finance formula, up 26.2 percent; \$88.5 million for school district workforce education, up 11.8 percent; \$273.8 million for FCS, up 11.8 percent; and \$276.1 million for the state university system, up 12.6 percent.

The Legislature made changes to a wide range of education issues, including charter school approval and governance, school choice, alternative methods of awarding course credit to students and performance incentives for state colleges, through House Bill 7029. Under the bill, charter school applications must disclose information regarding all applicants, board members and service providers, including information regarding other charter schools that they operate or that have closed. The bill requires automatic termination of a charter school's contract after two consecutive grades of F under the statewide school accountability system, permits an approved charter school to defer opening for up to two years to allow facility planning, and requires school districts to provide funding to charter schools monthly or twice-monthly. The legislation also establishes a controlled open enrollment policy that permits parents to enroll their child in any school or charter school in any school district, subject to both school capacity and maximum class size restrictions. The bill also requires each district to create a process to transfer a student from one teacher to another at the request of the parent.

House Bill 7029 requires — even if a student has not completed or enrolled in the particular course — a school district to award course credit to a student who obtains a passing score on the corresponding end-of-course assessment, Advanced Placement examination or College Level Examination Program examination; it also permits districts and charter schools to award course credit for passage of an online content assessment. The bill establishes: the Florida Seal of Biliteracy Program for high school graduates who attain a high level of competency in one or more foreign languages; the Distinguished Florida College System Program to recognize and provide additional funding to the highest-performing FCS institution; and the Florida College System Performance-Based Incentive, which will provide funding to FCS institutions that meet performance metrics adopted by the state Board of Education.

Legislators approved Senate Bill 672 to modify several programs that provide educational options to students. The bill codifies the Students Attired for Education (SAFE) Act, established through the 2015 appropriations act and which provides \$10 per kindergarten through grade eight student to each school district that

implements a districtwide standard student attire policy. General funding for the SAFE Act in 2016-17 is up 40 percent to \$14 million. The bill renames the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts Program (provided for students with disabilities to pay for instructional materials, curriculum, specialized services or assessments) as the Gardiner Scholarship Program and makes numerous changes, including permitting the use of scholarship funds for online instruction or for instruction at independent colleges and universities. The bill allocates general funds totaling \$71.2 million (up 29.5 percent) for the program in 2016-17.

Senate Bill 672 establishes the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Act, which permits public and private colleges and universities in the state to offer transition programs for college students with intellectual disabilities age 18 to 26 and establishes a scholarship for students attending those programs; the bill provides \$3 million for program start-up grants in 2016-17 and \$3.5 million for scholarships. The bill also establishes the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities at the University of Central Florida, which will coordinate the provision of information on programs and services for students with disabilities to those students and their parents; \$1.5 million is provided for the center's operations in 2016-17.

Also relating to educational choice and students with disabilities, House Bill 837 will now permit private schools to offer transition-to-work programs for recipients of the McKay scholarship (which allows students with disabilities to use state-provided K-12 education funding to attend private schools) who are 17 to 22 years of age and have not received a high school diploma. Private schools may enter dual enrollment agreements with colleges and universities, and school districts may provide exceptional student services to home school students who enroll in public schools solely for the purpose of receiving those services.

Two bills address school leadership. The Legislature established, by passing House Bill 287, the Principal Autonomy Pilot Program Initiative within the state Department of Education, which will provide principals at participating schools with increased autonomy to operate their schools in ways that significantly improve student achievement and school management. Districts seeking to participate in the initiative must identify three low-rated schools and three principals who have earned performance evaluation ratings of highly effective in the prior academic year who the district will assign to those schools. Participating principals will receive salary supplements of \$10,000 per year. House Bill 719 requires the state Department of Education to establish a process for the approval of competency-based school leader preparation programs offered by school districts and postsecondary institutions that are aligned with state standards for school principal leadership and that allow a school leader to obtain a certificate in educational leadership.

Other legislation

HB 189 permits a teacher who holds a temporary educator certificate to obtain a professional educator certificate without completing a teacher preparation program. The teacher must hold a master's or higher degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) field, teach a high school course on the subject of that degree, receive a highly effective teacher performance evaluation and achieve a passing score on the Florida Teacher Certificate Examination.

HB 229 requires each school district to review its policies prohibiting bullying and harassment at least every three years and to integrate those policies with a bullying prevention and intervention program.

HB 585 requires each school district to submit to the state Department of Education, at least once every three years, proposed procedures for the provision of special instruction and services for exceptional students. The state Board of Education will establish rules for the provision of instruction to homebound or hospitalized students, including eligibility criteria and procedures for determining a student's eligibility.

HB 793 establishes the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award for students who are seeking an applied technology postsecondary diploma, a postsecondary technical degree or a career certificate; a recipient who completes a technical degree program may also receive an award to obtain a related bachelor of science or a bachelor of applied science degree.

HB 1365 establishes the five-year Competency-Based Education Pilot Program within the state Department of Education, under which participating schools will allow students to progress to higher grade levels based on demonstrated mastery of course content. The program will begin in 2016-17.

HB 7019 requires the Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida and the state Board of Education to annually identify strategies to promote college affordability for all Floridians; the bill also allows the Board of Governors and each state college to use innovative pricing techniques and payment options for textbooks and instructional materials.

Georgia (<http://www.legis.ga.gov/>)

The Georgia Legislature adjourned its legislative session after passing a \$23.7 billion 2016-17 statewide budget, up 2.9 percent over the amended 2015-16 budget, including \$20.4 billion in general funds, up 3.9 percent. Amendments to the 2015-16 budget provided \$1.2 billion in additional state funds. Elementary and secondary education received an additional \$109.9 million for the Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula. K-12 schools also received a supplemental \$1.7 million to support information technology services. Funding to the state Move on When Ready dual-enrollment program increased by \$20.2 million, while the merit-based HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarships (for top-performing students) received an additional \$30.3 million in lottery funds.

In 2016-17, elementary and secondary education receives \$8.9 billion in general funds, up 6 percent over the amended 2015-16 budget. General funding for the QBE formula increases 6.5 percent to \$8.1 billion. The increase includes \$300 million to offset part of the austerity reductions made during the economic downturn and allow local education authorities the flexibility to end teacher furlough days, increase the number of instructional days and increase teacher salaries. Technology and career education programs receive \$17.5 million, up 2.4 percent.

The budget devotes \$413.4 million in state funds to the Department of Early Care and Learning, up 9.7 percent. The state's pre-k program, funded by the state lottery with \$357.8 million (an 11.4 percent increase), receives \$26.2 million to implement a new compensation model, retain lead teachers and increase assistant teacher salaries.

General funds to the University System of Georgia increase 5.9 percent for 2016-17 to \$2.1 billion, while funds to the Technical College System of Georgia increase 3 percent to \$350 million. The Georgia Student Finance Commission, the state agency that administers student financial aid, operates with \$807 million in state funds, up 5 percent. The lottery-funded, merit-based HOPE Scholarship for students who attend public postsecondary institutions receives \$522.5 million, a 5.8 percent increase. The budget funds the HOPE Scholarship for students who attend independent colleges and universities, the HOPE Grant for students who seek a postsecondary diploma or certificate, and the HOPE GED at the 2015-16 levels. General funding to Move on When Ready, the state dual enrollment program, increases 18.7 percent to \$58.3 million. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia announced in February that it will not increase tuition in 2016-17.

Senate Bill 364 alters provisions relating to the statewide school personnel evaluation system. The bill reduces the portion of evaluations based on student growth from 50 percent to 30 percent for educators and from 70 percent to 40 percent for principals and assistant principals. Only the scores from students who attended at least 90 percent of course instructional days will count in evaluations. Professional growth will count for 20 percent for educator evaluations, and observations will count for 50 percent.

In principal and assistant principal evaluations, school climate (the quality and character of school life) must count for 10 percent; a combination of other performance data will count for 20 percent; and the results of evaluations, observations and standards of practice will count for the remaining 30 percent.

Changes to student assessment include decreasing the number of tests elementary and secondary students will take and adding a school readiness assessment for first- and second-grade students that will not factor into teacher evaluations. The bill requires that testing occur as close to the end of the school year or semester as possible by 2017-18.

Other legislation

HB 100 prohibits local schools where enrollment includes at least 5 percent out-of-district students from providing virtual instruction to such students should its College and Career Ready Performance Index fall below the state average. Ninety percent of funds received for out-of-district students must be spent on their virtual instruction.

HB 402 encourages employers to provide work-based learning opportunities to students aged 16 and up by offering a reduction in workers' compensation premiums up to 5 percent to employers certified by the state Board of Education as a work-based learning employer.

HB 739 makes optional the state process for reviewing and approving instructional materials. It requires school districts to set up a review and recommendation process for locally approved instructional materials.

HB 801 adds courses in computer science to the list of eligible advanced science courses a high school student may take to gain eligibly for a HOPE Scholarship. For postsecondary students, the Board of Regents will identify a list of STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) college courses leading to employment in high demand fields for which weighted grades will be used to determine HOPE continuing eligibility.

HB 879 establishes a Georgia Seal of Biliteracy, which recognizes high school graduates who attain a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to achieving high proficiency in English language arts courses.

HB 895 establishes financial training requirements for charter school leaders and personnel and prohibits a charter school principal from serving simultaneously as the school's chief financial officer.

Maryland (<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>)

The General Assembly completed its work on the state budget two weeks prior to the end of the session, permitting work on other legislative priorities, including criminal justice reform, police accountability, a system to prioritize funding for certain transportation projects, additional provisions to prohibit wage discrimination and assistance to impoverished areas. Legislators approved a \$17.2 billion statewide general fund budget for 2016-17, up 4.9 percent over the originally approved budget for 2015-16.

State-supported colleges and universities receive nearly \$1.4 billion in general funds, up 7 percent. State aid to community colleges is up 4.9 percent to \$251 million, while state funding for community college employee benefits totals \$63.3 million, up 7.6 percent. State aid to nonpublic colleges is up 18.7 percent to \$50.8 million. General funds for the need-based Educational Excellence Awards program are up 2.4 percent to \$80 million. Tuition for in-state undergraduates at University System of Maryland institutions is up 2 percent for 2016-17.

General funded state aid for primary and secondary education is up 0.6 percent to just less than \$6 billion, which includes \$2.7 billion in Foundation Program formula funds, a 1.1 percent increase. Also included in aid to education is \$434.9 million (up 2.2 percent) to educate students with disabilities, \$227.2 million (up 4.6 percent) for Limited English Proficient students and \$270.9 million (up 1.7 percent) for student transportation.

The 1.3 percent increase in state education aid for innovative programs, to \$8.1 million, provides \$104,000 in grants for operation of the two Education Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) schools that are set to operate in 2016-17. P-TECH schools will offer a six-year program that integrates high school and two-year postsecondary education with workplace skills in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) fields. Senate Bill 376 establishes P-TECH schools in the state; legislators included \$600,000 in the amended 2015-16 budget to provide planning grants for six P-TECH schools.

A tax increment financing (TIF) district encourages development in a defined geographic area by reinvesting the increased property tax revenues that result from development toward further development in that area. In 2015-16, state education aid provided to certain low-wealth areas of the state declined due to TIF development districts located in those areas. In response, the General Assembly approved House Bill 285, which in 2017-18 and 2018-19, provides grants of additional state education aid to low-income school districts that approve TIF development districts after May 1, 2016, in order to offset the reduced aid amount. Grants are provided to counties that receive disparity grant funding from the state, which is provided to counties with per-capita income tax revenues that are less than 75 percent of the state average.

To help high school students from low-income families pre-qualify for Guaranteed Access Grants and receive mentoring and guidance services, the General Assembly previously established the College Readiness Outreach Program. However, the program has neither received any funding nor provided any services. House Bill 1403 renames the program as the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program and requires the governor, beginning in 2017-18, to include \$5 million in the state budget annually for Next Generation Scholars of Maryland grants to nonprofit organizations. Services provided to each student under the program by nonprofit organizations must include plans for graduating from high school and college, internship opportunities, financial aid assistance, mentorship and counseling, and a summer bridge program for students entering postsecondary education directly from high school.

House Bill 1402 requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a comprehensive plan for extended day or summer enhancement programs by December 1, 2016, in consultation with the state Department of Natural Resources. School systems and nonprofit organizations may apply for grants from MSDE to create or expand extended day and summer enhancement programs or for schools to establish new educational or recreational partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Beginning in 2017-18, the governor must include \$7.5 million in the state budget annually for the program.

Reflecting broad concerns over the increasing cost of attaining a college education, the General Assembly passed House Bill 1014 and Senate Bill 676, establishing the College Affordability Act of 2016. Under the act, a taxpayer may accept a \$250 state contribution to a student's qualified tuition plan account in lieu of an income tax deduction and may apply for a tax credit of up to \$5,000 if he or she incurred at least \$20,000 in undergradu-

ate student loan debt and has at least \$5,000 in debt outstanding. To encourage students receiving state aid to complete their studies on-time, the act requires state institutions of higher education to prorate, in students' third and fourth academic years, the award amounts of Educational Excellence Awards and Guaranteed Access Grants provided to students who completed 24 or more academic credits in the prior year but did not complete 30 credits.

Other legislation

HB 72 requires the state Board of Education to develop and all county boards of education and nonpublic schools to implement an age-appropriate sexual assault and abuse awareness and prevention program.

HB 85 requires a school to provide the parents of a child with a disability with written information for contacting early intervention and special education family support services staff members within the local school system; the bill also requires the information to be provided in the parent's native language.

HB 365 includes social media communications in the definition of bullying and requires the state Board of Education to update the model policy prohibiting bullying, harassment or intimidation in schools by September 1, 2016.

HB 657 and SB 794 require MSDE and school boards to limit the administration of the kindergarten readiness assessment to a representative sample of students within each school system.

HB 668 and SB 584 require the governor to appropriate matching funds to which the state committed when applying for an expansion grant through the federal Preschool Development Grant Program in any fiscal year the state receives grant funds.

HB 999 and SB 905 establish the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, which will provide recommendations, based on the statutorily required study of the adequacy of state education funding, on how to prepare students for postsecondary education and for meeting the needs of the state workforce and the global economy.

SB 493 establishes the Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Pilot Program for first-year teachers.

SB 823 extends the date (to December 30, 2016) by which the Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program must submit its findings and recommendations and adds a requirement that the task force determine the services provided by successful dyslexia education programs in other states and the cost of those programs.

SB 910 establishes the Maryland Education Development Collaborative to study, recommend and promote policies that support learning, socioeconomic and demographic diversity in public schools and reducing achievement gaps in schools.

Virginia (<http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/>)

The General Assembly concluded its legislative session after adopting a general fund budget of \$40.6 billion for the 2016-18 biennium, which includes a 2 percent pay raise for teachers. The Legislature authorized a \$20.3 billion general fund operating budget for 2016-17, up 9.2 percent over 2015-16. Direct aid to public education will increase 5 percent to \$5.9 billion.

The general fund operating budget will decline slightly in 2017-18, down 0.3 percent. Elementary and secondary education will receive another 5 percent increase in the second year of the biennium, with general funds for direct aid to public education totaling \$6.1 billion. Legislators reconvened in late April to consider the governor's actions on legislation and the budget and to make further changes.

The governor requested that state postsecondary institutions keep tuition increases under 3 percent. Complete information on higher education funding in the 2016-18 biennium was not available at the time of this report; this information will be included in a forthcoming edition of *Legislative Report*.

The Legislature passed House Bill 895 and Senate Bill 336 to remove references to standard and advanced high school diplomas and verified units of credit. The bills direct the state Board of Education to collaborate with stakeholders in elementary and secondary education, higher education, and business and industry to create a profile of a Virginia graduate. The profile will identify the core skills and competencies students need to achieve in high school, with emphasis in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication and citizenship. The bills require the state Board of Education to emphasize the completion of core skills in the first two years of high school; the last two years will be characterized by increased flexibility to achieve college and career readiness through multiple pathways, each including opportunities for internships, externships and credentialing.

Other legislation

HB 66 and SB 576 establish the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Fund and Program to provide grants for students to complete noncredit workforce training programs in high demand fields.

HB 279 and SB 573 allow the state Board of Education to issue three-year teaching licenses for individuals who meet education and employment requirements and achieve a qualifying score on the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment. Individuals will be eligible to teach high school career and technical education courses for 50 percent of the instructional day. The Board of Education may also set other conditions for licensure.

HB 682 allows a district superintendent to apply to the state Department of Education to waive teacher licensure requirements for an individual to teach trade or industrial education if the individual possesses recent employment in a relevant field and is working toward or has an industry credential.

HB 831 requires the state Standards of Learning to include computer science and computational thinking, including computer coding.

HB 961 allows any public postsecondary institution to offer alternative tuition or fee structures that lower attendance costs to first-time, in-state undergraduate freshmen pursuing a degree leading to employment in a high-demand field.

HB 1303 prohibits members of a board of visitors of a four-year public postsecondary institution or the State Board for Community Colleges who fail to complete mandatory training during a first term from serving a subsequent term.

SB 245 directs each community college to enter into agreements with local school districts to facilitate the participation of eligible students in a career pathways program to prepare students for high school equivalency exams and postsecondary credentials, certifications or license programs.

West Virginia (<http://www.legis.state.wv.us>)

In March, prior to the end of the legislative session, the governor announced that revenue estimates for 2016-17 had been lowered by over \$90 million. This was in addition to previously projected revenue shortfalls in both the current and upcoming fiscal years for which the Legislature had not yet reached an agreement on further budget reductions or measures to raise additional revenue. As a result, legislators halted all budgetary work and convened a special budget session in May; information on final budget actions in West Virginia will appear in an upcoming edition of *Legislative Report*.

Previously, state law required county boards of education that offer early childhood education programs for students age four to offer instruction five days per week. With the passage of Senate Bill 146, programs instead are required to offer a full-day program with a minimum of 1,500 minutes of instruction per week and at least 48,000 minutes of instruction per academic year.

To improve overall student outcomes, legislators passed House Bill 4295, the Innovation in Education Act, which permits the state Board of Education (BOE) to approve Innovation in Education schools. Each school approved under the act will focus on: science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); community school partnership; entrepreneurship; career pathways or the arts. Schools will use redesigned school curricula, instructional delivery and instructional strategies, will increase student engagement and will operate with greater flexibility than standard public schools. The bill terminates funding for School Innovation Zones and Local Solution Dropout Prevention and Recovery Innovation Zones as of July 2016.

In response to the 2012 Education Efficiency Audit of the state's K-12 education system, House Bill 4301 establishes a framework to initiate transformation of school leadership in a way that affects both the public education system and educator preparation programs. The framework will allow teachers, principals and administrative leaders to accomplish systemic change in school leadership. The bill requires the state BOE to report its recommendations for implementing the framework by the 2018 regular legislative session.

The Legislature made several changes to regulations governing home schooled students with the passage of House Bill 4175. Under the legislation, a parent is required to give notice to the county superintendent that he or she will be providing home school instruction to their child when they commence home schooling, rather than the previous annual notice requirement. The bill eliminates the requirement that a home school instructor outline a plan of instruction for each school year and eliminates the requirement to provide academic assessment results annually in favor of assessment results provided at grade levels three, five, eight and 11.

Other legislation

HB 4261 permits the use of confidential information by ACT or the College Board if the state Board of Education adopts the ACT or the SAT as state summative assessments.

HB 4566 moves to later in the year several deadlines by which county school boards must notify and take actions on personnel transfers, releases and reductions.

HB 4730 requires the state Board of Education to submit a plan to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability prior to the 2017 legislative session for the implementation of computer science instruction and learning standards, including core learning standards for a complete K-12 computer science curriculum.

SB 369 eliminates several education reporting requirements previously imposed by the Legislature on the state Board of Education, state superintendent of education, Higher Education Policy Commission and the Community and Technical College Council, among others.

Notes from other SREB states

Louisiana and **North Carolina** began their legislative sessions in April. The governor in North Carolina also released his recommended revisions to the 2015-17 biennial budget; information on this proposal will appear in the next edition of *Legislative Report*.

In April, the **Kentucky** General Assembly adjourned its regular session on the last possible legislative day, allowing legislators to reach an agreement on the 2016-18 biennial budget. The approved budget includes funding for the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship, which will provide last-dollar financial aid to permit students to attend Kentucky Community and Technical College System institutions at no cost, and provisions to establish performance-based funding for state colleges and universities; both begin in 2017-18. The budget provides increased funding for state pension systems but reduces state college and university funding; general funds for elementary and secondary education increase slightly in the first year of the biennium and decrease slightly in the second.

The **Mississippi** Legislature adjourned in late April shortly after adopting appropriations measures for 2016-17. Legislators also approved legislation that will require local boards to appoint district superintendents after January 2019 (some district superintendents currently are elected) and will create a statewide Mississippi Achievement School District that will allow the state to intervene in chronically underperforming schools. Also in April, the governor announced reductions to the 2015-16 budget and allocated stabilization funds to cover a revenue shortfall, the second such action in 2016.

Tennessee adjourned its legislative session late April after adopting a budget that significantly increases education funding and passing bills that require letter grades for schools and restructured higher education governance.

The **Alabama** Legislature approved the 2016-17 State General Fund budget in March and the 2016-17 Education Trust Fund budget in April. Legislators adjourned the regular session in early May.

Information on final actions in these and other states will appear in upcoming editions of *Legislative Report*.

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