



Gubernatorial Leadership

Governors Out Front in Modern National Education Reform Movement

“In the early 1980s, several groups also called for national education goals... Yet none of these various recommended sets of national education goals had much of an impact until their cause was taken up by the nation’s governors in the second half of the 1980s.”

–National Education Goals Panel, 1989

1989 The President’s Education Summit with Governors

Charlottesville, Virginia
September 27–28

Meeting at the University of Virginia, President George H.W. Bush and the nation’s governors, for the first time in U.S. history, agreed to establish a process for setting national education goals and to undertake a major state-by-state effort to restructure the American education system by:

- ◆ examining federal regulations under current law and to move in the direction of greater flexibility;
- ◆ taking parallel steps in each state with respect to state laws and administrative rules;
- ◆ submitting legislation to Congress early next year that would provide state and local recipients greater flexibility in the use of federal funds, in return for firm commitments to improved levels of education and skill training; and
- ◆ establishing a working group of governors and the designees of the President to begin working immediately to accomplish these tasks.

1990 State of the Union Address

Washington, D.C.
January 31

The governors’ work in Charlottesville helped draw attention to specific issues and galvanized the will to enact reforms that are now taking hold today. As a direct result of the Charlottesville summit, President George H.W. Bush announced six national education goals for the coming decade:

- ◆ All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- ◆ The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- ◆ American students will leave grades four, eight and 12 demonstrating competency in English, mathematics, science, history and geography and every school in America will ensure all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
- ◆ U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
- ◆ Every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- ◆ Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

1996 National Education Summit

Palisades, New York
March 26–27

Sponsored by the National Governors Association and IBM, the 1996 summit brought together 40 governors and 45 business leaders. Participants agreed to support efforts setting clear academic standards in core subject areas at the state and local levels, assisting schools in accurately measuring student progress, helping overcome barriers to new technology and holding schools accountable for demonstrating real improvement. Governors agreed to within two years develop and implement internationally competitive academic standards, assessments to measure academic achievement, and accountability systems in states. Business leaders pledged to consider the existence of state standards when locating facilities. It was here that Achieve, Inc. was created to assist states by evaluating these standards and assessments. Together, governors and business leaders agreed to take the following specific actions:

- ◆ commit to be held accountable for progress made in our respective states toward improving student achievement in core subject areas;
- ◆ provide the necessary resources and technical assistance to develop and implement standards and assessments and, when appropriate, to work together to pool information resources and expertise to move forward on this agenda; and
- ◆ work on the immediate next steps and actions specific to states.

“...the nation’s governors became among the most active and effective leaders of the school reform efforts in the early 1980s. One of the governors’ most influential organizations, the NGA, played a key role in developing interest and support for education goals and standards in the mid-1980s.”

–National Education Goals Panel, 1989

1999 National Education Summit

Palisades, New York
September 30–October 1

The 1999 summit, sponsored by Achieve, Inc., brought together governors, business leaders and educators to reaffirm their commitment to rigorous academic standards and to focus on the large challenges confronting states and communities. In the final action statement, participants agreed on concrete actions aimed at raising academic standards and performance in every American classroom, pledging to improve educator quality, help all students achieve high standards, and strengthen accountability measures.

2001 National Education Summit

Palisades, New York
October 9–10

The 2001 summit, sponsored by Achieve, Inc., once again brought governors, business leaders and educators together to focus on helping states address two key challenges: increasing the capacity of teachers and schools to meet higher standards and expanding testing and accountability systems to provide better data and stronger incentives for high student achievement. Participants adopted a Statement of Principles addressing three sets of critical issues:

- ◆ *Measuring results.* States will collect better data on student performance to be measured against clear and rigorous standards. Jargon-free test reports will also be broken down by race and income.
- ◆ *Strengthening accountability.* Schools will be given time to put into place curricula that reflect state standards and to train teachers. Low-performing schools will get extra help.
- ◆ *Improving teaching.* States will use "multiple pathways for talented people to enter the profession." Efforts will be made to align standards with curricula and teaching materials.

“The nation’s governors recognized the growing importance of formal schooling for personal and national economic success in their 1989 educational summit.” –The Business Roundtable, 2003