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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leveraging Transition:

Ten Ways for
New Governors to
Advance Education Policies
and Priorities from Day One



NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

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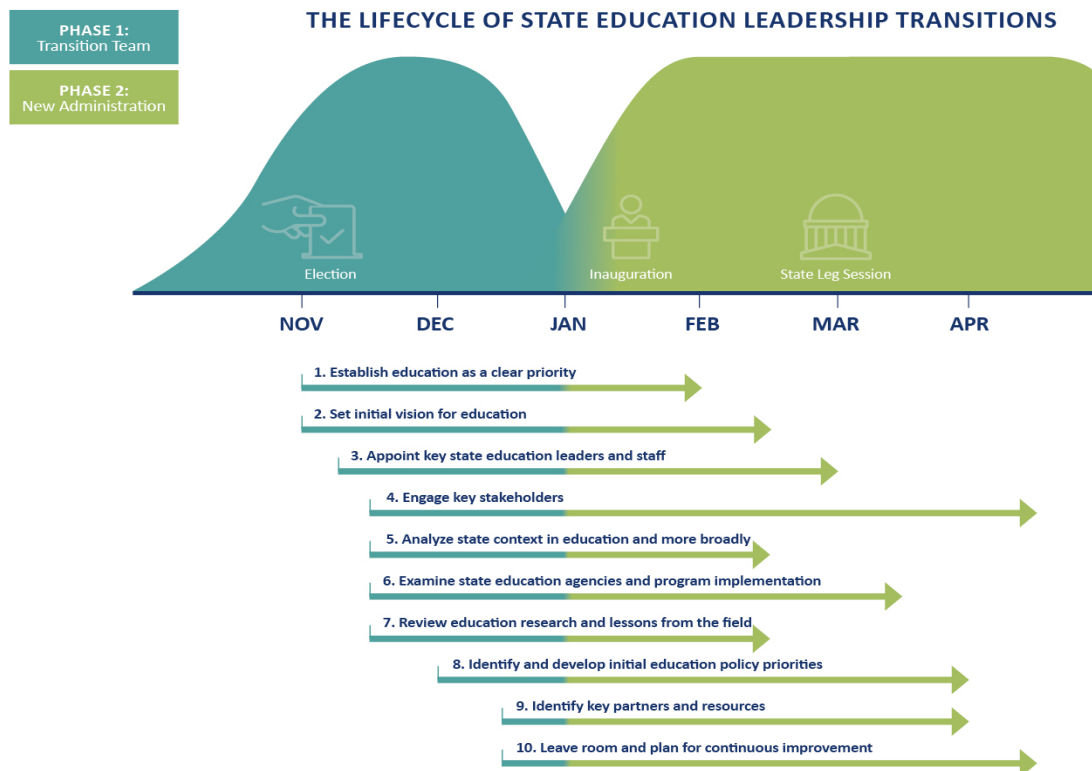


Introduction and Background

The 2018 election cycle resulted in new governors in 20 states and two territories. The large class of new governors will have further ripple effects as new governors in many states appoint new chief state school officers, state board of education members and other state education leaders. Each new governor now embarks on a rapid transition process – from election to inauguration to the first 100 days in office and beyond. Each new governor’s transition period provides a critical window of opportunity to advance education policies and priorities in their states.

Providing access to a high-quality education is a critical state responsibility. While each state’s context and governance structures are different, every governor has a unique, leading role to play in improving education in his/her state. This is particularly important considering the passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), which transferred more education authority from the federal government back to state and local governments.

This executive summary is intended to provide initial guidance to new governors and state education teams on ways to approach this critical transition period in their states, how to best advance their education priorities and how the National Governors Association’s (NGA) Center for Best Practices’ Education Division and its partners can best support their efforts. Based on lessons learned from prior gubernatorial, state and national education transitions, we have identified ten opportunities for action that governors and their teams can consider to maximize the potential of the transition period and further their education priorities. These opportunities, while listed in a somewhat linear order, are inherently overlapping in nature and should ideally be pursued simultaneously to inform and build on each other.





Key Questions to Ask in Leading State Education Transitions

State transitions can be challenging. Given the limitations imposed by time and personnel, it's critical for new governors and other state leaders to carefully consider the state context, what priorities should be continued from prior administrations and what should be added or changed and why. Our hope is that the ten opportunities summarized above and below (and fleshed out more fully in the longer memo) can provide a "checklist" for new governors and their staff to best leverage the two phases of transition shown in the graphic above to advance education policies and priorities. In addition, we recommend that each new governor and his/her team attend to three "Cs" in their work – clear *communication* on the role of education; dedicated *capacity* for education leadership; and intentional *continuity* between the transition team and new administration.

Ten Opportunities for Action in Education	Sample Questions to Consider
1. Establish as a clear priority for state action	<i>Is there a dedicated team focused on education during the transition period? Since being elected, has the governor publicly discussed the importance of education? Is education included in the governor’s critical addresses? What areas of education has the governor highlighted as a priority?</i>
2. Set the education vision	<i>Has the governor articulated a vision for education in the state? Has this vision evolved from campaign commitments, and is it informed by state context? Has this vision been messaged internally and/or to the public?</i>
3. Education leadership appointments	<i>Has a “short list” been developed for each of the key state education staff positions the governor appoints depending on your state’s education governance structure? Is it clear how these leaders would engage with the new governor and his/her broader leadership team in transition and in the new administration? Do education leadership appointments reflect the governors values and priorities?</i>
4. Engage key education stakeholders	<i>How does the governor plan to engage key stakeholders from all critical constituencies across the state (including the state legislature and outgoing administration, teachers and leaders, parents and families, business and civil rights, etc.)?</i>
5. Analyze state context	<i>Has the transition team begun to analyze relevant education and youth data and information to deeply understand the state context and status of education efforts? How is this knowledge informing the governor’s overall approach to education policy and priorities in the state?</i>
6. Review state education agencies and programs	<i>Has the transition team begun a review of the state education agency and ongoing program implementation to get a sense of status, issues, and opportunities? Have those with specific expertise, such as career staff, been engaged in this process?</i>
7. Review research and lessons from the field	<i>How are both education research and lessons from the field informing the education vision, priorities and policies being developed? What other states have pursued similar policies?</i>
8. Identify and develop initial education policy priorities	<i>Has the governor set initial education priorities? Are these informed by the information gathered throughout the transition period? How are these priorities advanced in key state addresses, legislative and regulatory proposals, budget decisions, etc.?</i>
9. Identify key partners and resources	<i>Have you identified key partners and resources that can help advance the governor’s education agenda both in the short- and long-term, both in the state and regionally or nationally?</i>
10. Leave room and plan for continuous improvement	<i>Have you set the expectation and established processes to ensure review and continuous improvement in education policies, including learning from implementation in the field?</i>