

Elections 2022: Gubernatorial Races

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Alaska

Rating: Lean R

Candidates: Incumbent Gov. Mike Dunleavy (R), Les Gara (D), Former Gov. Bill Walker (I)

- Incumbent **Gov. Mike Dunleavy** (R) has promised to ensure more students can read by grade 3. He advocates for parents to make decisions about their children's education and experience within the school system.
- **Les Gara**, the Democratic candidate, pledged to keep school funding consistent with inflation and to provide statewide voluntary pre-K using existing programs such as Parents As Teachers Pre-K.
 - Additionally, Gara's platform includes reducing class sizes, returning to a state pension system for educators, and supporting student success so all students enter school ready to read and learn.
- Former **Gov. Bill Walker**, who is running as an Independent candidate, has proposed investments in school budgets, including making salaries and benefits competitive for educators.
 - Walker's plan for higher education is to make sure the University of Alaska is properly funded and supported.
 - He also pledges to provide financial incentives for employers who help ensure their employees have access to affordable childcare, including kindergarten and pre-K.

Arizona

Rating: Toss-up

Candidates: Secretary of State Katie Hobbs (D), Kari Lake (R)

- The platform of Secretary of State **Katie Hobbs**, the Democratic candidate, includes early childhood policies such as providing universal voluntary preschool and voluntary full-day kindergarten, and expanding childcare assistance.
 - For educators, Hobbs proposes to increase salaries by an average of \$14,000 and provide more affordable health care coverage; fully fund the Arizona Teachers Academy; increase funding to hire more school counselors and social workers; promote educator mentorship programs; and provide new funding for grants and scholarships to train more STEM educators.
 - Her priorities for primary and secondary education include increasing career and apprenticeship opportunities; ensuring access to advanced courses; investing in dual enrollment and career and technical education programs (by issuing a refundable tax credit for career and technical education students); increasing audits on charter schools to boost financial transparency; rolling back universal vouchers; eliminating the aggregate expenditure limit for schools; investing more funding in special education; funding start-ups for healthcare certification; expanding dual and concurrent enrollment programs; funding the first year of community college for middle- and lower-income students; increasing funding for in-state university students; and allowing DREAMers to receive in-state tuition rates.
- Republican candidate **Kari Lake** is promising to institute “backpack funding” for K-12 education, where each student’s parents would be able to choose how to use the money for their child’s education, fractionalized by course.
 - She has pledged to create a statewide system of technical institutions to allow for dual track education after 10th grade; replace annual statewide testing with NAEP; align state standards to Hillsdale’s 1776 Curriculum; and strengthen the state’s existing ban on CRT, including Social-Emotional Learning and Diversity Equity and Inclusion programs, which she says are associated with CRT.
 - Lake has also promised to provide teacher bonus incentives; to update and expand Arizona’s Parents Bill of Rights to be modelled on similar Florida legislation; to ban sexual education for grades K-4; and to provide a seat for homeschool parents at the state Board of Education and Board of Regents.

Georgia

Rating: Lean R

Candidates: Incumbent Gov. Brian Kemp (R), former Democratic House Minority Leader Stacey Abrams (D)

- Incumbent Republican **Gov. Brian Kemp** has promised to focus on addressing learning loss, increase the educator and counselor workforce, and implement stronger safety measures. He pledges \$25 million for a Learning Loss Opportunity Scholarship Grant, \$25 million to recruit more school counselors, and \$15 million to help paraprofessionals offset the cost of obtaining their teacher certification.
 - Gov. Kemp's school safety proposals involve new safety training for teachers and staff, continuing education requirements for school resource officers, and a requirement for districts to submit school safety plans to the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency.
- Democratic candidate **Stacey Abrams** is proposing to raise pay for teachers; overturn legislation that "devalues teachers' professional judgement" (a reference to a "divisive concepts" bill Gov. Kemp signed into law); and strengthen the teacher talent pipelines.
 - When it comes to early childhood education, Abrams' platform includes a call for universal pre-k; increasing the funding and number of slots for the state's childcare assistance program; investing in childcare providers through funding, tax credits and grants; and increasing paid parental leave.
 - Notably, Abrams has pledged to address funding disparities and adopt a new funding formula for k-12 education; oppose private school voucher programs; invest in student transportation; pay for greater access to mental health in schools; oppose legislation that would limit transgender and nonbinary youth access to sports teams; repeal campus carry; increase training for campus police; make sexual assault protections reporting processes and services more robust; and support DREAMers' ed goals.
 - On the workforce front, Abrams has promised to expand access to apprenticeships and eliminate tuition for technical colleges; establish need-based aid for postsecondary education and expand college advising; support programs that expand higher education access for foster youth, students of color, disadvantaged youth, first generation students, disabled students, DREAMers, adult learners, veterans, and military families; and allow sports betting and casinos to pay for expanded pathways to careers.

Kansas

Rating: Toss-up

Candidates: Incumbent Gov. Laura Kelly (D), Attorney General Derek Schmidt (R)

- Democratic incumbent **Gov. Laura Kelly's platform** includes investing in early childhood programs; funding K-12 schools; expanding job training opportunities and incentives to attend technical or trade schools; restoring funding to higher education and addressing the rise in tuition; and adding additional psychologists and social workers to schools while recommending these positions be hired by community mental health centers, safety net clinics, or other local behavioral health partners so that they are available year-round.
- Attorney General **Derek Schmidt**, the Republican candidate for governor, has pledged never to close Kansas schools.
 - He promises to fully fund K-12 public schools; increase the ability for all families to choose the best education option for their child; support school safety; and support post-secondary education, including public and private colleges and universities and community colleges and technical schools.
 - Schmidt also lists providing a strong civics education as a priority and signed the "1776 Pledge" committing to opposing critical race theory and "woke" ideology in schools.

Michigan

Rating: Lean D

Candidates: Incumbent Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D), Tudor Dixon (R)

- Incumbent **Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's (D) platform** focuses on her accomplishments, which include increasing K-12 funding without raising taxes, closing the school funding gap, tripling the number of literacy coaches, and reducing class sizes.
 - Notably, Whitmer has instituted two tuition-free skills training and higher education programs, helped increase four-year-old enrollment in pre-K, and expanded affordable child care.
- Republican candidate **Tudor Dixon's** education priorities include funding 25 hours of one-on-one or small group tutoring in reading and math for every student in Michigan using federal Covid relief funding; requiring school districts to make all curriculum and teaching materials accessible online for parents; banning school personnel from talking to students grades K-3 about sex and gender theory; banning transgender students from participating in girls' sports; enacting civic and financial literacy requirements for grade school and developing a new civics curriculum; and creating education savings accounts.

Minnesota

Rating: Likely D

Candidates: Former State Senator Scott Jensen (R), Incumbent DFL Gov. Tim Walz (D)

- The platform of incumbent **Gov. Tim Walz**, the Democratic nominee, features his accomplishments in education. These include expanding access to pre-K, major investments in summer learning programs, and a large increase in per-pupil funding.
- **Scott Jensen**, a former state senator and the Republican candidate, has issued an [education plan](#) calling for a Parents' Bill of Rights to ensure greater transparency about curriculum and materials, give parents a mechanism to voice concerns, and provide greater transparency around academic performance; raise achievement by implementing new academic standards, training teachers in reading and math instruction, and providing financial incentives to diversify the teacher workforce; and offer low- and middle-income families and students scholarships or ESAs.
 - On the K-12 front, he's calling for a redesign of low-performing schools to have new governance structures, updates to existing choice programs, new school safety measures, increased mental health resources, and standardized protocols to identify and assist students in need.
 - Jensen would ban Critical Race Theory-based standards and return approval of standards to parents, teachers, the public, and elected officials; enforce truancy laws and standardize a minimum amount of student-teacher instructional contact time; and protect and promote homeschooling and allow homeschooling families to access Educational Savings Account funding.
 - When it comes to postsecondary education, Jensen would develop a grid for higher education transfer credits and transform the Minnesota State Higher Education Grant Program into a forgivable loan program that incentivizes students to live and work in Minnesota for at least five years after graduation for specific career tracks that match workforce needs.

Nevada

Rating: Toss-up

Candidates: Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo (R), Incumbent Gov. Steve Sisolak (D)

- **Joe Lombardo**, the Republican candidate, has said that he wants “to be considered the education governor.”
 - His education priorities include supporting school choice by expanding charter school access, opportunity scholarships, and ESAs, and reinstating programs cut by Gov. Sisolak such as Read by Grade Three, a class size reduction program, and the Knowledge Fund.
 - At the postsecondary level, Lombardo would invest in workforce development by expanding vo-tech training and workforce development training programs and bolstering school safety by repealing restorative justice measures, implementing school safety training and support programs, and providing adequate resources for school safety initiatives and personnel.

- Incumbent **Gov. Steve Sisolak** (D) campaigned on "delivering on his promise to be the Education Governor."
 - Sisolak’s education platform highlights achievements from his first term. These include updating the education funding formula, increasing the public education budget, providing more transparency on per-pupil funding, helping educators purchase classroom supplies, hiring over 2,000 new teachers, allocating \$200 million to address learning loss and strengthen mental health resources for students, investing millions to improve school safety and violence reduction initiatives, and appointing a former educator and principal as lieutenant governor.
 - Like a growing number of democratic governors, Sisolak has campaigned on his support for teacher pay raises and opposition for school choice efforts.

New Mexico

Rating: Lean D

Candidates: Incumbent Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D), Mark Ronchetti (R)

- Democratic incumbent **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham** has named “investing in education” as a top priority.
 - Grisham’s platform focuses on her education achievements as governor: investing over \$1 billion into the education system; doubling affordable pre-K enrollment, establishing universal pre-K for 4-year-olds and expanding pre-K for 3-year-olds; delivering educator pay raises and thousands of hours of instructional and professional development; expanding tuition-free college and certificate programs by guaranteeing tuition-free higher education for all New Mexico student.
 - Grisham also highlights how she incorporated parent and community feedback; changed how schools with concentrated poverty receive investments; doubled the number of community schools; and partnered with sovereign nations, tribes, and pueblos to make investments in education in tribal communities.
- **Mark Ronchetti** (R) promises to provide every low-income family with a child in grades 1-3 \$1500 a year for the next 3 years to purchase out-of-classroom academic support; requiring schools to spend Covid relief funds on classroom learning interventions; launching school-based summer academies; and increasing instructional time on a school-by-school commitment basis.
 - Ronchetti also pledges to put more education money into classrooms by changing state law to limit the growth of administrative spending in education, then directing new education dollars into classrooms for expenses such as additional staffing and to help retain and recruit new teachers.
 - Additionally, Ronchetti has proposed to protect parents’ rights to engage in their child's education by providing them access to course curriculum, materials, and books and ensuring their concerns are addressed; helping them understand where their child stands academically; making education spending more transparent to parents; and enabling them to send their children to the public school that best meets their needs.
 - His workforce policies include helping students earn work certifications while still in high school; giving students who complete high school course requirements by the end of 11th grade a scholarship to spend their senior year in an apprenticeship, internship, or career-focused postsecondary education; expanding trade and vocational schools and better aligning high school and community college course offerings with workforce need; and making it easier for non-educator experts to teach relevant subjects in middle and high school while increasing opportunities for students to learn on job sites.
 - Ronchetti also suggests a number of policies to improve school systems, such as developing strong leaders, implementing early interventions to improve literacy, improving kindergarten readiness by coordinating early childhood programs and ensuring students are enrolling in them, addressing truancy issues, and supporting student mental and emotional health and safety on campus.

Oklahoma

Rating: Likely R

Candidates: Incumbent Gov. Kevin Stitt (R), Public Instruction Superintendent
Joy Hofmeister (D)

- Aside from announcing he would support school choice bills, Republican incumbent **Gov. Kevin Stitt's education policy platform** focuses on his first term achievements.
 - As governor, Stitt called for a financial audit of the State Department of Education and signed a law requiring districts to post audits on the front pages of their websites. He issued historically high levels of pre-K through grade 12 public school funding for three years, raised teacher pay, introduced a funding mechanism for teachers to make six figure salaries, designated surplus state revenue to rural and smaller schools and charter schools, and changed the funding formula to use districts' current year enrollment or the most recent school year.
 - Additionally, he signed an open-transfer law to allow students to enroll in any public school and expanded the Equal Opportunity Scholarship from \$5 million to \$50 million.
- Democratic nominee **Joy Hofmeister**, the state superintendent and Democratic nominee, lists opposing school vouchers as one of her top priorities.
 - Her education platform includes solving the teacher shortage by offering nationally competitive salaries and benefits; increasing support staff, classroom resources and respect for the profession; and working with regional universities to diversify and expand the pipeline.
 - Hofmeister calls for partnering with parents through early engagement with parents as a child's first teacher; providing equitable access to excellent public education and broadband or internet connectivity at home for students; offering live-streaming of school board meetings with opportunities for regular public comment; and creating a Governor's parent advisory council.
 - When it comes to student mental health and wellness, Hofmeister proposes to offer mental health and substance abuse resources for students and families; expand access to extracurricular resources to deepen student engagement and belonging; grow the state's School Counselor Corps to serve all grade levels; train teachers and school community with trauma-informed instruction; and continue the Oklahoma Office of School Safety and Security.
 - Hofmeister's plan for childcare and learning opportunities includes securing more safe, healthy childcare and education opportunities before or after school and during summer break; partnering with Early Head Start programs, private daycares, SoonerStart, public preschools, and healthcare providers; and leveraging grants and private partnerships to support child nutrition, tutoring, and social services.
 - Her workforce policies involve providing high-dosage math tutoring for students in grades 7-9; expanding Alternative Education opportunities and credit recovery; aligning the CareerTech system with the hiring needs of local communities; and increasing student access to high-skill, high-demand credentials and licensing programs, work-based learning, accelerated curriculum, concurrent enrollment, AP coursework and testing, and Oklahoma's Promise and early-college programs.

Oregon

Rating: Toss-up

Candidates: Christine Drazan (R), Tina Kotek (D)

- **Christine Drazan**, the Republican nominee, promises to focus on academic accountability and individual student success; keep politics out of the classroom and “teach our students how to think, not what to think”; and expand access to school choice, including restoring open enrollment and supporting charter schools and magnet schools.
 - Drazan also pledges to restore basic graduation requirements that Governor Brown and the legislature eliminated; increase classroom time and enrichment opportunities to strengthen learning and improve graduation rates; and require curriculum transparency.
- Democratic candidate **Tina Kotek’s** priorities are to improve Oregon’s graduation rates to 90% for all student groups by 2027; make sure all children are reading by third grade; reduce the time dedicated to standardized testing and focus on real-time assessments to monitor student learning; ensure all high school students complete a financial literacy and life skills course; accelerate career and technical education program growth; and increase educational achievement for rural youth and youth of color by expanding investments in community-led initiatives.
 - Kotek also pledges to increase family and community engagement in schools as part of the local planning process of utilizing Student Success Act resources; oppose providing tax dollars to private schools; and fight for additional common sense gun violence prevention policies.
 - On early childhood and childcare, Kotek is campaigning to restore the childcare capacity that was lost during the pandemic, maximize federal dollars to expand access to pre-K for Oregon families, and improve access to infant and toddler care by reducing regulations on where home-based child care providers can operate.

Wisconsin

Rating: Toss-up

Candidates: Incumbent Gov. Tony Evers (D), Tim Michels (R)

- **Incumbent Gov. Tony Evers (D)** proposes increasing state aid to schools; expanding job training and apprenticeship programs; improving financial literacy by making financial literacy curricula available for every high school student before graduation; investing in mental health programming; and increasing investments in special education by directing a portion of the state's surplus into additional special education staff and programming.
 - Evers has pledged to create new opportunities for districts of all sizes, using an Urban Excellence Initiative to expand summer school, enhance early childhood education, and support community engagement to improve academic achievement; and supporting rural districts through sparsity aid and transportation funding.

- **Tim Michels (R)** has named his education policy platform the "I Trust Parents" Education Blueprint.
 - Michels plans to improve reading by setting higher standards for reading proficiency, implementing science of reading instruction methods, and giving parents transparency; empower and trust parents to choose properly by providing school choice for all families; and sign a Parental Bill of Rights.
 - His priorities for Career and Technical Education include expanding CTE Technical Incentive Grants; expanding apprenticeships by adding courses in those occupations to schools and requiring the University of Wisconsin system and Technical College system to accept dual credits for high school coursework that meets requirements.
 - Additionally, Michels has pledged to secure schools, hold a Governor's Conference on Safety every June, and support the renewal of Wisconsin School Safety Grants; and to increase turnout in school board elections by moving them to the fall.