

State STEM Policy Trends



Board on Science Education, June 8, 2026

Claus von Zastrow



EDUCATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATES

| ecs.org

WHO WE ARE.

The essential, indispensable member of any team addressing education policy.





The Federal Landscape

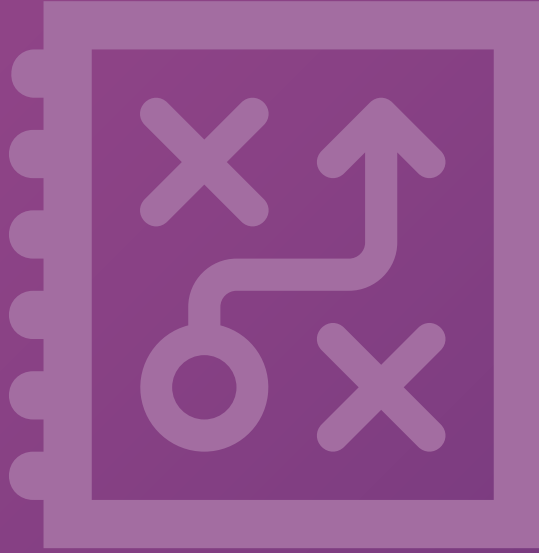
Implications for State STEM Efforts

- Funding cuts & uncertainty
- Shifts from categorical funding to block grants
- Restrictions on diversity initiatives
- Returning Education to the States



Limited State Policy Levers

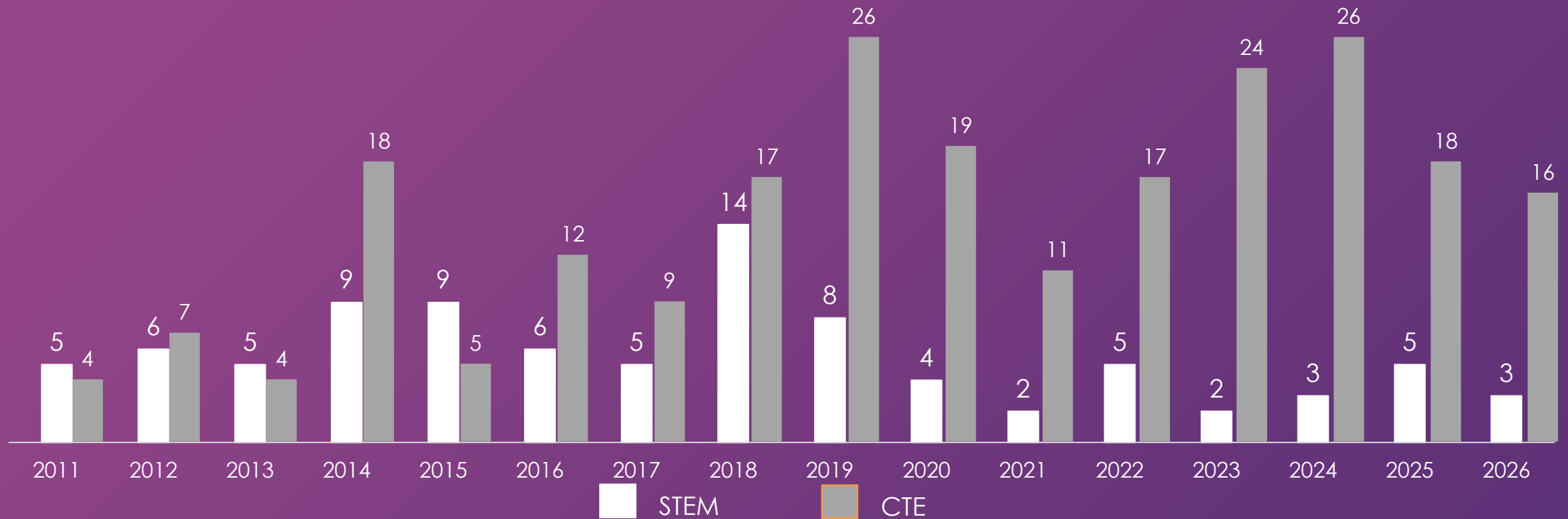
- Operational challenges
- Legal responses
- Fewer state policy responses
- Limited policy levers



State STEM Policymaking

Changes in STEM Interest

Governors Mentioning Education Policy Topics in State of the State Addresses



Source: Education Commission of the States



EDUCATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATES

ecs.org

State Policy : Mathematics

- Numeracy
- High-Quality Instructional Materials
- Automatic Enrollment
- Screening/Diagnostic Tools

State Policy : STEM Councils & Ecosystems

- Codified STEM Council in Alabama
- Funding for STEM ecosystems in Minnesota
- CTE/STEM grants in Pennsylvania
- Quantum technology ecosystems



State Policy: Teachers

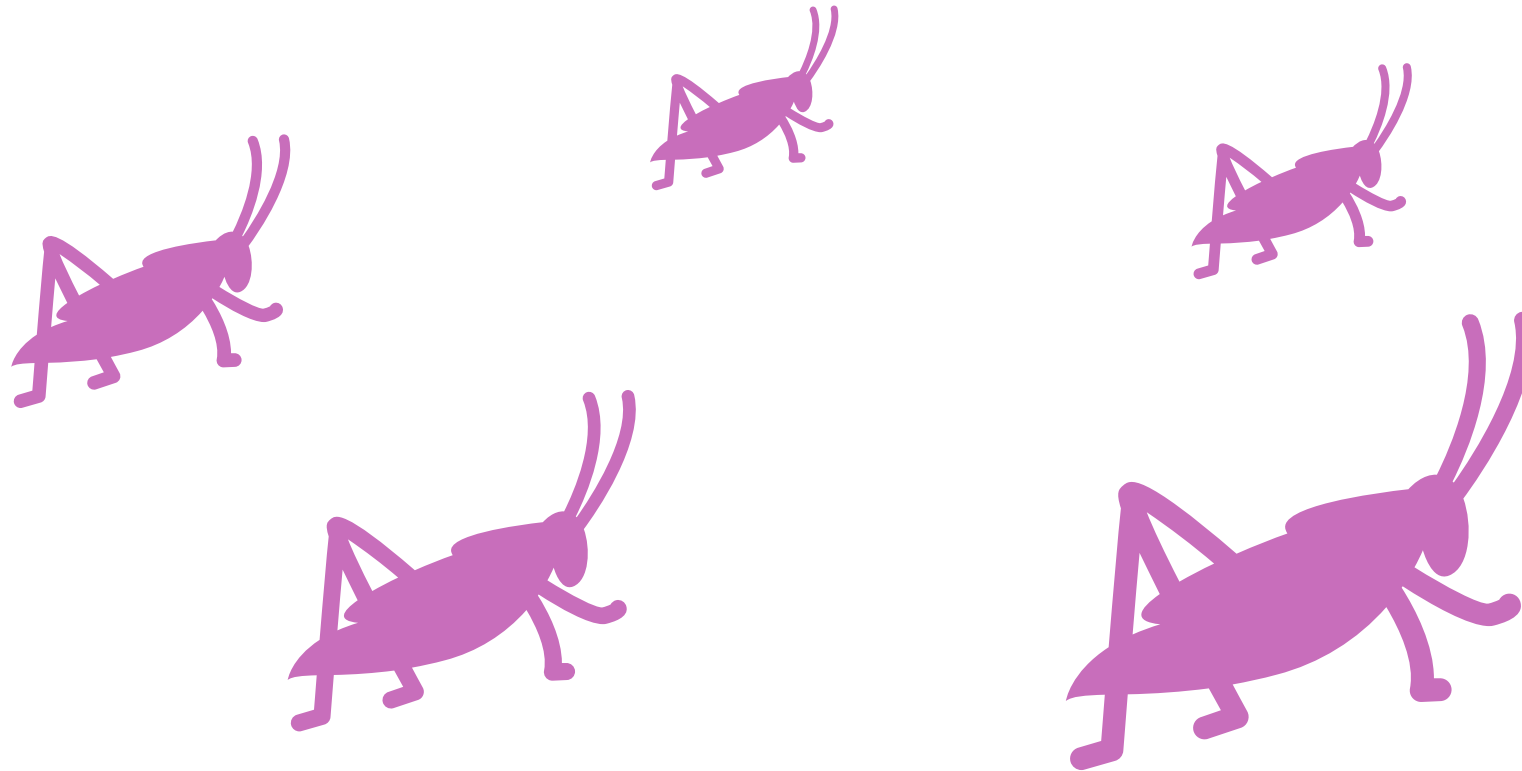
- STEM disciplines often identified as high-need
- Financial Incentives to attract teachers
- Teacher professional development in math
- Teacher professional development in A.I.

State Policy: AI

- Embedding AI into state academic standards
- Standalone AI literacy course requirements
- Requiring AI for graduation
- Teacher professional development



State Policy Areas: Science





Brewing Challenges

Brewing Challenges

- AI & cognitive surrender
- Understanding the changing skills landscape
- Advocating for The Next Big Thing
- The growing tech backlash



Questions?

Claus von Zastrow
cvonzastrow@ecs.org



EDUCATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATES

| ecs.org



**EDUCATION
COMMISSION**
OF THE STATES

Your education policy team.

THANK YOU



EDUCATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATES

| ecs.org