

## America's Legislators Back to School Week

The official 2002 numbers are in for America's Legislators Back to School Week, the time when lawmakers marched off to schools in their districts to meet personally with young constituents.

At least some legislators in every state supported the program, but in the top 10 the turnout was remarkable, hitting 92 percent to 38 percent of the body. In 22 states, 30 or more legislators participated.

Some 1,600 legislators altogether went to classrooms and auditoriums to answer questions, share ideas, listen to concerns and impart a greater understanding of the legislative process. They reached 200,000 students.

"Our kids need this program," says Sandra Morales, a teacher at Fox Tech High School in Texas.

America's Legislators Back to School Week, part of NCSL's Trust for Representative Democracy, is held annually the third week of September and is implemented in each state by legislative coordinators.

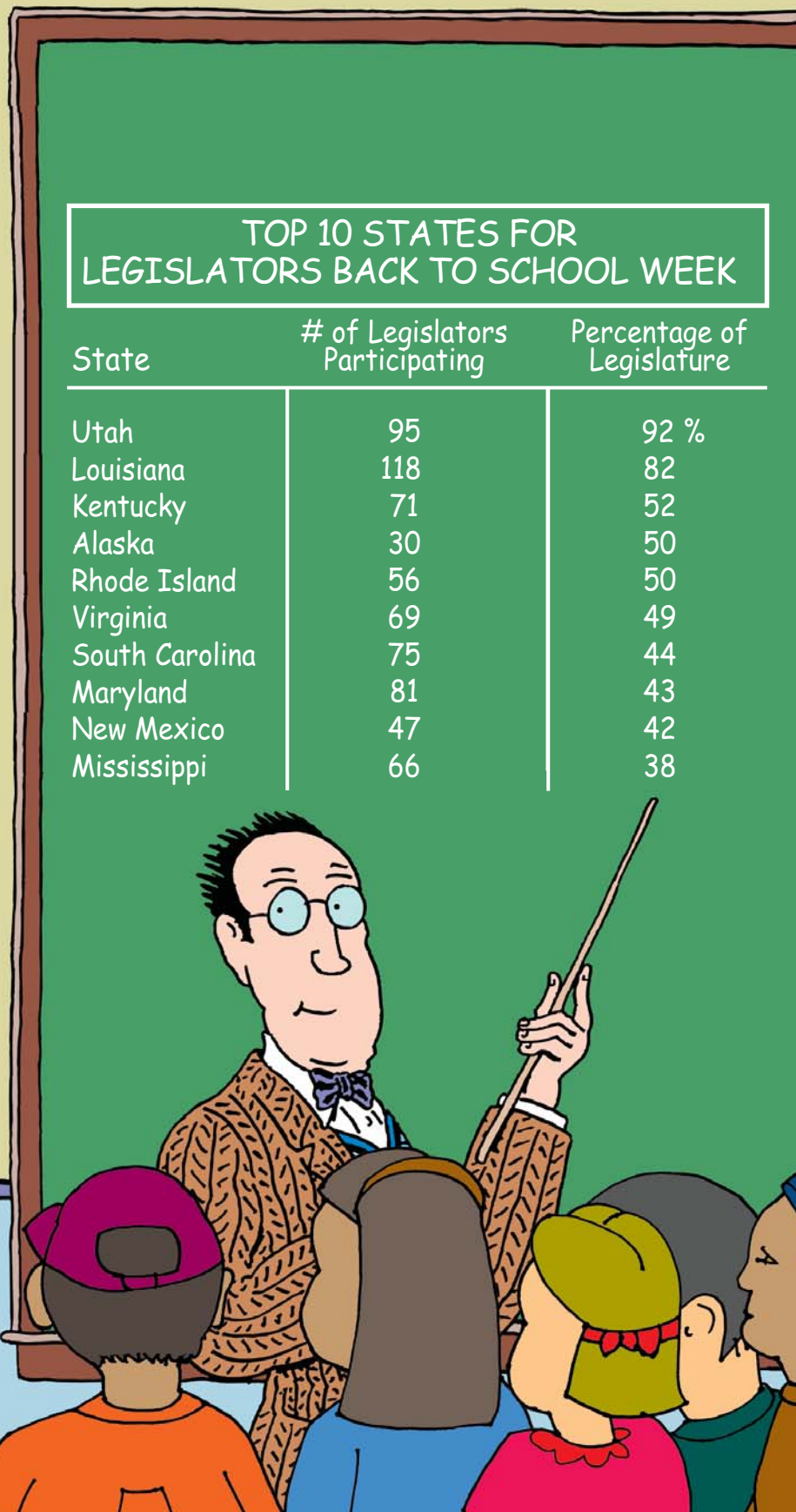
Nevada Senator Valerie Wiener has a passion for reaching out to students and has participated in Back to School Week since its inception in 1999. She alone visited 12 schools this year and met with 1,718 students.

Citing a survey that says less than 9 percent of students ever meet an elected official, Wiener says she's going to make sure that "students at every school in my district have the opportunity to meet me."

Wiener says lawmakers need to "share the message with students that government is within their reach and it's important to get involved. The earlier they participate, the stronger our nation becomes."

Plans are already under way for the 2003 America's Legislators Back to School Week, Sept. 15 to 19. Mark your calendars now to join your colleagues in the nation's largest civic education lesson.

To get involved this year contact your state legislative coordinator listed at [www.ncsl.org/public/trust/contacts\\_bsw.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/public/trust/contacts_bsw.htm) or Jan Goehring at NCSL, (303) 364-7700.



TOP 10 STATES FOR LEGISLATORS BACK TO SCHOOL WEEK		
State	# of Legislators Participating	Percentage of Legislature
Utah	95	92 %
Louisiana	118	82
Kentucky	71	52
Alaska	30	50
Rhode Island	56	50
Virginia	69	49
South Carolina	75	44
Maryland	81	43
New Mexico	47	42
Mississippi	66	38