



An Education Equity Agenda for California

This set of briefing papers present an Education Agenda for the next five years for California's leaders and the public to consider on the following urgent issues:

**Implementing Early
Education Rate Reform**

**Ensuring Adequate and
Stable Funding for Public
Education**

**Diversifying California's
Educator Workforce**

**Improving Higher Education
Affordability**

**Modernizing Statewide Coordination on
Education**

Why an Education Agenda is necessary for California

Despite California's dedication to innovation and notable economic standing, significant shortcomings in the state's education systems are continuing to hold back students of color, low-income students, English learners, and other underserved populations. Our most underserved families continue to be under-enrolled in high-quality early learning opportunities. Roughly two-thirds of Latinx and Black students in the state are below grade level in reading, with even fewer at grade level in math.¹ English Language Arts and mathematics achievement for English learners is stagnant or declining.² Low-income students are significantly less supported in completing a degree.³ Fewer Black students in the state are being supported to go to college after high school than ten years ago.⁴ **Continuing on our current trajectory as a state threatens not only the future of individual students and their families, it would also negatively impact the state's economic, health, and workforce sectors, therefore limiting California's continued innovation and prosperity.**

How this agenda came together

Despite California's dedication to innovation and notable economic standing, significant shortcomings in the state's education systems are continuing to hold back students of color, low-income students, English learners, and other underserved populations. Our most underserved families continue to be under-enrolled in high-quality early learning opportunities. Roughly two-thirds of Latinx and Black students in the state are below grade level in reading, with even fewer at grade level in math.¹ English Language Arts and mathematics achievement for English learners is stagnant or declining.² Low-income students are significantly less supported in completing a degree.³ Fewer Black students in the state are being supported to go to college after high school than ten years ago.⁴ **Continuing on our current trajectory as a state threatens not only the future of individual students and their families, it would also negatively impact the state's economic, health, and workforce sectors, therefore limiting California's continued innovation and prosperity.**

The accompanying briefing papers outline a set of key problems and evidence-based solutions needed to improve California's education systems equitably and effectively.

References

1. California Department of Education. (2024). *English language arts/literacy and mathematics Smarter Balanced summative assessments: Test results at a glance*. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. <https://caaspp-elpac.ets.org/caaspp/DashViewReportSB?ps=true&lstTestYear=2024&lstTestType=B&lstGroup=1&lstSubGroup=1&lstSchoolType=A&lstGrade=13&lstCounty=00&lstDistrict=000000&lstSchool=0000000>
2. EdTrust-West. (2023). *More to be done: California's Local Control Funding Formula after a decade*. https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/EducationTrustWest_2023_LCFFBrief_Final.pdf
3. Perez, C. A., & Gomez, S. (2024, September). *College completion in California*. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/college-completion-in-california.pdf>
4. EdTrust-West. (2025). *Black minds matter: Building bright Black futures*. https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/FINAL-FOR-WEB_EdTrust-West_2025_BlackMindsMatterReport.pdf
5. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *ACS demographic and housing estimates*. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05. Retrieved August 11, 2025, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2023.DP05?q=california>;
Bohn, S., Danielson, C., Kimberlin, S., Malagon, P., Stevens, C., & Wimer, C. (2025, August). *Poverty in California*. Public Policy Institute of California. https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/JTF_PovertyJTF.pdf;
California Department of Education. (2025). *2024–25 enrollment by ethnicity and grade* [Data set]. DataQuest. <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dq census/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=00&agglevel=state&year=2024-25>;
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2024). *Annual/term student count report*. https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Student_Headcount_Term_Annual.aspx;
California State University. (2024). *Enrollment dashboard*. https://tableau.calstate.edu/views/SelfEnrollmentDashboard/EnrollmentSummary?iframeSizedToWindow=true&%3Aembed=y&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3Adisplay_count=no&%3AshowVizHome=no;
University of California. (2025, January 7). *Fall enrollment at a glance*. <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/fall-enrollment-glance>