Note: Throughout this questionnaire, data about the interests, beliefs, and concerns of the general electorate and public school parents are drawn from the Public Policy Institute of California’s April 2025 PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Education.

2026 Candidate Questionnaire for the Office of Governor

**All questions and answers will be published verbatim at the following website:** [**www.EngageForEdu.org.**](http://www.EngageForEdu.org/) **If you do not respond, the publication will state “Did Not Respond.”**

**DIRECTIONS: Please download the Word document to add your responses. and limit your responses to 400 words. Once complete, email your final responses in PDF form to** **allianceforcandidateengagement@gmail.com.**

1. Data from the state’s math and reading tests show that schools continue to struggle to support all students on their path to academic success, with low-income students, English learners, and students of color, including Black, Latino, and Native American students, attaining lower rates of proficiency in math and reading compared to higher-income students, non-English learners, or white students. If elected governor, how would you address these gaps across the state?

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1. Despite a majority of parents of school-age children believing that attending preschool is very important to a student’s success in school, high costs and limited space keep high-quality child care out of reach for many families in California. At the same time, California’s early care and education (ECE) rate reimbursement system has underfunded ECE programs, falling far short of the true cost of care and leaving care providers making less than a living wage, often without benefits. If elected governor, what approaches would you take to address concerns regarding family access to early learning opportunities and the early care and education workforce across the state’s mixed-delivery system?

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1. Research shows that teachers are the most important in-school factor influencing student achievement. However, California faces an ongoing teacher shortage—87% of residents view it as a problem. While most students are from communities of color, the majority of teachers are white and are not bilingual. Additionally, 88% of Californians believe teacher salaries do not keep pace with the cost of living. If elected governor, what specific policies would you pursue with respect to the teacher pipeline in early learning and care settings, as well as TK-12 public schools— from recruitment and preparation through licensure and retention?

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1. More than a decade after the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) was enacted, it has reshaped education funding and led to some gains in student outcomes. Still, research points to areas for improvement, and nearly half of Californians believe local schools remain underfunded. In 2018–2019, the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) was introduced to promote equity in community college funding, but its momentum has slowed due to implementation delays. Community colleges remain underfunded compared to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems; meanwhile, both real and threatened federal funding

cuts continue to strain TK–12 schools and community colleges. If elected governor, what specific steps would you take to ensure all TK-12 schools and community college districts have the funding they need to provide a high-quality education to all students?

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1. A majority of parents in California want their children to graduate from a four-year college,

yet most parents (72%) are concerned about affording college. Nearly two-thirds of college-bound high school seniors worry about being able to afford tuition and fees, and a similar share worry about being able to afford basic expenses like rent and food, with current California Community College (CCC), University of California (UC), and California State University (CSU) students reporting high rates of housing and food insecurity. If elected governor, what policies would

you pursue to address college affordability and related issues across California’s public higher education systems?

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1. About 41.5% of California’s students speak a language other than English at home. And, about 60% of children aged zero to five have home languages other than English. Research increasingly documents the benefits of dual language education, and evidence builds about the benefits

of biliteracy to individuals and to society. If elected governor, what strategies, programs, or actions would you promote to build upon the linguistic assets of our students and their families from early learning through 12th grade?

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1. A large percentage of California’s public school parents are concerned about increased federal immigration enforcement efforts and their impact on students. If elected governor, what specific approaches would you take to protect students and families from the disruption caused by such federal immigration enforcement?

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1. Many Californians believe the quality of public education has declined in recent years, citing concerns like lower test scores, pandemic learning loss, teacher shortages, and school safety. How do you interpret this perception, and if elected governor, what is your plan to restore public confidence? What specific measures will you use to demonstrate that California’s education system is changing under your leadership?

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1. Recent enrollment data from the California Department of Education indicates that there is a long-term trend of declining enrollment in California’s public TK-12 schools. Similarly, community college enrollment fell during the COVID-19 pandemic and remains below pre-pandemic levels. In both cases, projections suggest that declining enrollment is likely to impact school and community college funding distribution. If elected governor, how do you plan to address the impact this trend is having on funding, staffing, and the ability of school and community college districts, especially those serving high-need communities, to maintain quality programs and services for students?

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1. California does not currently have a single statewide entity that brings together the state’s higher education systems and workforce systems to strategize, plan, and coordinate actions toward helping California meet its larger education and workforce needs. The 2025 California Budget Act included $1.5 million towards this purpose. If elected governor, what specific items would you like to see a California higher education coordinating body accomplish in its first couple of years?