



## CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR DIVERSITY ROAD MAP BRIEF SERIES:

# How California TK-12 Districts and Schools Can Prioritize Recruiting and Retaining the #TeachersWeNeed

California school districts are facing a worrisome teacher shortage. In fact, compared with the previous academic year, 16% fewer teachers were credentialed in California in 2021-22, and elementary schools were hardest hit — with nearly 25% fewer new multiple-subject credentials issued. Data also shows that fewer teachers are entering the profession and that more California educators are leaving due to increases in cost of living, excessive working hours, and lack of support. At the same time, districts and schools are also grappling with how to boost student achievement in the wake of stagnant academic outcomes, particularly for students of color.

Fortunately, research points to a strong strategy that boosts the achievement of students while meeting their socioemotional needs: ensure that students are taught by racially and ethnically diverse educators. As TK-12 school districts, schools, and other local education agencies (LEAs) work to address a shortage in the educator workforce, they must focus not only on hiring more teachers but also on recruiting and sustaining a teacher workforce that is racially diverse and fully prepared to teach in their subject area and that embraces culturally affirming instructional practices.

## WHY EDUCATOR DIVERSITY MATTERS

When all students, but particularly students of color, are taught by teachers of color, they are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. Research shows that Black students randomly assigned to at least one Black teacher in grades K-3 are nine percentage points (13%) more likely to graduate from high school and six percentage points (19%) more likely to enroll in college than their same-school, same-race peers. Being taught by teachers of color also contributes to lower rates of chronic absenteeism and reduces implicit biases, better preparing students for life in a diverse society. Put simply, ensuring a racially and ethnically diverse staff of educators in schools is one of the most effective strategies a school district can pursue to improve school climate, enhance family engagement, and boost student achievement.

However, California LEAs have work to do to ensure those leading classrooms reflect the diversity of the

state. Based on data from the 2021-22 school year, 78% of students in California are students of color: 56% are Latinx,<sup>1</sup> 5% are African American/Black, 0.5% are American Indian and Alaska Native, and 12% are Asian and Pacific Islander.<sup>2</sup> The student population is roughly 49% female and 51% male.<sup>3</sup> However, the educator workforce in California is approximately 58% White and 73% female, differing drastically from the racial makeup of the state's students.<sup>4</sup> Only about 27% of educators identify as male,<sup>5</sup> 24% identify as Latinx, 8% identify as Asian and Pacific Islander, and 3% identify as African American/Black. Students of color consistently report favorable perceptions of a diverse teaching force that more accurately represents their racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, increasing the diversity of California's educator workforce remains an imperative that demands bolder efforts from the state, districts, and schools.

The following recommendations come from the [California Educator Diversity Road Map](#), a community-informed guide developed by Californians for Justice, The EdTrust-West, and Public Advocates to address the lack of educator diversity in California. The full road map shares insights from focus groups with students, parents,

educators, and administrators and identifies the highest-priority policies for recruiting and retaining a racially and linguistically diverse educator workforce in California. The following recommendations are tailored specifically for LEAs and schools.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

### Increase investments in teacher compensation, basic needs, and employee benefits.

- Raise educator compensation to competitive levels in the local labor market to attract and retain more fully prepared, diverse educators.
- Use the multiyear discretionary dollars received since the start of the pandemic to fund innovative educator benefits, such as housing, childcare, and transportation subsidies.
- Explore other nonsalary, working condition benefits to attract and retain educators of color to schools with

high concentrations of students experiencing poverty and significant discrepancies between student and staff demographics. Examples could include bargaining for smaller class sizes in those schools and assigning strong school leaders of color.

- Consider innovative ways to address housing needs for teachers, such as transforming underused school sites into [low-cost educator housing](#).

## RECOMMENDATION 2

### Establish new institutional pathways that broaden opportunities for interested students and educator support staff to become teachers.

- Strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations to build a pipeline of classified staff and expanded learning staff who might ultimately transition into teaching roles.<sup>6</sup>
- Apply for the Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program to support classified staff members with associate's degrees in earning bachelor's degrees and teaching credentials.
- Leverage state programs.
  - Use the state Teacher Residency Grant Program to build residency programs in collaboration with higher education partners to address staffing needs, including anticipated transitional kindergarten educator needs and ethnic studies.
  - Establish education- and teaching-centered Regional Occupational Program classes in high schools.



- Establish pathways and partnerships with community colleges and other partners to support students of color and multilingual students in entering the teaching profession after completing the requirements for the associate's degree.
- Cultivate strong student-to-teacher pipeline opportunities.
  - Offer paid internship opportunities for students who seek to become teachers.
  - Formalize teaching assistant positions that high school or community college students hold to support their development and provide compensation. Extend teaching assistant positions, compensation, and learning opportunities to classified staff.

- Recruit and provide training for classified staff who are pursuing teaching careers.



### RECOMMENDATION 3

#### Expand investment in traditional and alternative teacher preparation pathways for racially and linguistically diverse candidates.

- Cover fees associated with becoming an administrator, thereby reducing barriers for administrators of color who would best create school cultures that affirm educators of color.
- Offer stipends, tuition support, and loan forgiveness for promising high school and college students who commit to work in the district.
- Offer stipends and funding to support student teachers.
- Increase funding for educational resources (workshops, panel discussions, and so on) and communications on the process and steps to becoming an educator.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

#### Collect, report, and use educator race, ethnicity, and language data to improve recruitment and retention across the state.

- Commit to collecting and sharing staff demographic data, broken down by site and grade level, and use the data as part of a Local Control and Accountability Plan goal-setting process under Priority 1 (hiring, supporting, and retaining fully credentialed educators) and Priority 6 (building positive school climates for staff and students with an educator workforce whose diversity more closely mirrors that of its students).
- Conduct exit interviews to understand why educators are leaving as well as how their departures might be influenced by race, ethnicity, disability, national origin, and other protected categories.
- Encourage departing teachers to complete the survey that will be developed by the Commission on Teaching Credentials (CTC) and the California Department of Education to understand the reasons educators are leaving. Share the survey data with the CTC.
- Share the data with partners from institutions of higher education to identify opportunities to strengthen pipelines for diverse teacher candidates into the district (for example, through targeted recruitment into residencies or other educator preparation programs).
- Collect and monitor educator demographic data and use it to inform hiring processes and retention strategies. Schools and districts should also prioritize discussions of educator demographic data at school-site council meetings and determine how to increase educator diversity at their respective school sites.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

### Foster safer and more inclusive school and district communities.

- Solicit the input of students of color and their families.
  - LEAs should solicit student feedback in hiring processes and for continual improvements. Student voice also has been shown to be an effective factor in hiring decisions, especially for teachers of color and those who reflect the demographics of the student population.
  - Students with a range of academic and social experiences should be involved throughout the interview process, including in scenario questions and teaching demonstrations.
  - Invite students and families to participate in onboarding training for new teachers in their school sites.
- Hold convenings to discuss the following:
  - The results of California Healthy Kids Survey data and to solicit recommendations from the school community on next steps.
  - The content and impact of the school climate-focused trainings, including opportunities for follow-up instruction and conversations.
- Use affinity groups to focus on climate and culture work and as a strategy to increase retention of staff of color.
- Integrate both staff- and student-centered efforts to combat bigotry, discrimination, hate, racism, or any form of bias or prejudice in school communities (including, but not limited to, climate surveys; focus groups; speaker series; student-led presentations and discussions; literature; and music, visual, and/or cinematic arts).
- Designate school and district administrators as points of contact for staff regarding any questions, concerns, or requests for a follow-up discussion before or after the training.

## CONCLUSION

Although California has made some important strides in recent years to address the teacher shortage, ensuring that the state's educator workforce is sustainably supported as well as racially and ethnically diverse remains an urgent need. LEAs have a clear role to play in meeting that need through innovative, bold approaches to pipeline development, hiring processes, and supportive environments that retain skilled and racially diverse

teachers. These approaches should be evident in district planning processes as well as explicitly detailed in Local Control and Accountability Plans. As LEAs and others use the stakeholder-informed recommendations here and in the more comprehensive [road map](#), advocacy organizations, parents, and students must hold them accountable for improving educator diversity.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2023). *Teacher supply in California 2021-22: A report to the legislature*. [https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/commission/agendas/2023-04/2023-04-5c.pdf?sfvrsn=79721b1\\_3](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/commission/agendas/2023-04/2023-04-5c.pdf?sfvrsn=79721b1_3)
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Han-Harris, S. H., & Parchia, P. (2022, September 12). *One solution to the teacher shortage: Tapping into the after-school pipeline*. *The Education Trust–West*. <https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/one-solution-to-the-teacher-shortage-tapping-into-the-after-school-pipeline/#:~:text=Ed%20Trust%E2%80%99s%20recent%20report%2C%20A%20Natural%20Fit%3A%20Supporting,into%20the%20teaching%20profession%20and%20have%20them%20succeed>

