



CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR DIVERSITY ROAD MAP BRIEF SERIES:

How California State Leaders 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, the state of California has made addressing the current teacher shortage a priority.

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. California's elected representatives and state education officials, along with staff at state agencies and commissions, have a significant responsibility to address this urgent need that affects both the education and workforce arenas. Without serious shifts in how well the state cultivates and supports educators of color, California's continued economic prosperity is at risk.

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 13% more likely to graduate from high school and 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. With recent assessment data showing persistent gaps and alarmingly low numbers of students at grade level in English language arts and math, California state leaders must take tangible statewide actions to invest in the types of educators that research shows contribute to higher rates of student achievement.

Demographic data at the state level also paints a clear picture of why state leaders must tackle the teacher shortage in ways that significantly increase the number of educators of color in classrooms across California. Based on data from the 2021-22 school year, 78% percent

of students in California are students of color: 56% are Latinx,¹ 5% are African American/Black, 0.5% are American Indian and Alaska Native, and 12% are Asian and Pacific Islander.² The student population is roughly 49% female and 51% male.³ However, the diversity of the educator workforce, which is approximately 58% White and 73% female, does not mirror that of California's students.⁴ Only about 27% of educators identify as male,⁵ 24% identify as Latinx, 8% identify as Asian and Pacific Islander, and 3% identify as African American/Black. Students of color consistently request a teaching force that more accurately represents their racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.⁶ Therefore, diversifying 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, created through a partnership between Californians for Justice, The EdTrust-West, and Public Advocates. This partnership sought to develop a community-informed policy road map

to address the lack of educator diversity in California and to provide community-informed solutions. The full report contains results from focus groups with students, parents, educators, and administrators, identifying the highest policy priorities these important stakeholders expressed for recruiting and retaining a racially and linguistically diverse educator workforce in California.

These recommendations guide state leaders on the best ways to prioritize the recruitment and retention of a diverse educator workforce. We urge state leaders to embrace their responsibility for creating an educator workforce that reflects the rich diversity of our state — by adopting and acting on a comprehensive **Master Plan for Teacher Diversity**, which incorporates the following

priorities. The Master Plan for Teacher Diversity would include making and publicly acknowledging targets for recruiting and retaining educators of color, organizing stakeholders around shared priorities, and galvanizing state leaders to action. It would also incorporate a shared vision for California’s workforce, use and improve California’s Cradle-to-Career (C2C) data systems in ways that support recruitment and retention, and explicitly show how the state’s investment in recruiting diverse educators would help drive economic prosperity. To begin this effort and set the groundwork for this vision, the state should focus on these recommendations.

- Adopt and fund salary incentives to raise educator pay and address inequitable salaries among districts.

RECOMMENDATION 1

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

Subject to local collective bargaining, this initiative would establish a target minimum salary for beginning teachers that is competitive in the labor market, and it would offer salary subsidies, as needed, to all districts throughout California. The subsidies would be determined by an equity formula that allocates funding to districts according to their students’ needs, the resources available to them, and the cost of living in that region.

- Create incentives for districts to hire fully qualified teachers by allocating the foregoing state incentive funds to districts based on the numbers of fully certified teachers hired. Tying the teacher compensation subsidies to salaries for qualified teachers or those on track to be fully qualified within a few years creates incentives for candidates to get prepared and for districts to hire prepared candidates.
- Establish a Teacher Diversity Block Grant to enable local education agencies (LEAs) to offer innovative additional benefits to attract and retain diverse educators to schools with a high concentration of students experiencing poverty and a significant mismatch between student and staff demographics. The

California Department of Education (CDE) would create an index to determine which schools qualify. Some examples of innovative benefits could include subsidies for housing (for example, rental and/or down-payment assistance, low-cost housing) and transportation. Childcare and special tax credits also could be offered to diverse educators who commit to working in eligible schools.



RECOMMENDATION 2

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

- Provide funding for, convene, and facilitate partnerships between institutions of higher education (IHEs), local colleges, school districts and local schools, and community-based organizations that promote and support new educator preparation and training, including virtual options. Ensure funding can support staff time for all those involved in the partnership.
- Provide funding for the development of the new PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential pathways. Funding would support faculty from community colleges and university educator preparation programs, in partnership with LEAs and community partners, to design PK-3 ECE credential pathways that will meet the needs of early educators of color and multilingual educators, aligned with best practices. Funding could also be used to develop PK-3 ECE credential programs that are part of apprenticeship pathways.
- Support LEAs as part of the [Golden State Pathways Program](#) to partner with community colleges to build pathways into education and early education — with a focus on underrepresented students.⁷ The state, or funders, could support a learning community or provide technical assistance to help these partnerships launch.
- Improve the Teacher Residency Grant Program by increasing the stipend for teacher residents, which has been a barrier to residencies (because they require partnerships between IHEs and LEAs) that recruit and support residents of color.⁸



RECOMMENDATION 3

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

- Launch a coordinated outreach and recruitment campaign led by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) that helps connect prospective teachers with the information they need to become an educator; include the option to seek mentorship from educators who share with them critical identities. This effort is essential to address the recruitment challenges that Teacher Residency Grant recipients have faced,⁹ and it could build on the investment in the 2022-23 budget to hire eight career counselors at CTC to give career guidance to prospective educators.
- Commit state funding for student teachers to be compensated for student teaching.

- Fund a housing stipend for prospective educators while they are completing their mandatory, full-time student teaching practicum.
- Dedicate funding to support the design and implementation of educator apprenticeship programs — as part of California’s commitment to expand apprenticeships — that enable educators to earn a living while training for the profession.
- Commit ongoing funding for the cost of the California Educator Exam and Performance Assessment and credential fees. Currently, prospective teachers must wait to see if waivers of fees are renewed each year during the budget process.
- Offer free online test prep courses for the California Subject Examinations for Teachers, Teaching Performance Assessment, and other assessments.
- Expand the Golden State Teacher Grant Program to provide more robust tuition assistance grants and scholarships for students enrolled in programs to become teachers in state colleges and universities. Such tuition assistance/funding/scholarships would cover the full cost of coursework (including undergraduate degrees), materials, and other expenses associated with the credentialing process.
- Amend the Teacher Residency Grant Program to allow for administrator residency programs and for larger resident stipends. This effort would address recent data from the WestEd residency grant program evaluation that showed many residents of color were experiencing financial challenges, including food and housing insecurity.
- Offer loan forgiveness for state and federally funded student loans; offer stipends to assist with private loans.

RECOMMENDATION 4

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

- CDE should recommit to annually tracking and reporting educator race and ethnicity data at district and school levels.¹⁰ If necessary, legislation should require that the data be reported annually.
- The legislature should commit funding for additional staff and technical support at CDE to (1) ensure CDE has the capacity to analyze and report the data in a timely manner every year, (2) build a more user-friendly DataQuest interface, and (3) engage in a broad communications effort to ensure a variety of educational partners have access to and can use teacher data.
- The California State Board of Education should consider including educator diversity as a measure under Priority 6 (School Climate) as a local indicator within the state accountability system.
- CDE should explore adding “languages spoken” as a data point for educator demographic files.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Foster safer and more inclusive school and district communities.

- Conduct a thoughtful review and discussion of California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) data — including focused conversations with district administrators. Circulate other student-focused surveys, as needed, to better understand students’ school experiences and develop programming or interventions, as needed, to address systemic issues or problems revealed by the data.
- Continue to offer webinars. Designate state-level staff whom LEAs may contact to review and discuss their CHKS data and to strategize responsive action.
- Publicize availability of CHKS Regional Survey Centers and the opportunity for LEAs to receive technical assistance regarding survey administration.

- Promote the use of the [California School Staff Survey](#) to gauge educator satisfaction. Support LEAs in developing action plans to address challenges that surface in the survey results.
- Allocate sustained funding for professional development as part of a comprehensive approach to creating equitable and antiracist school climates.
- Partner with content experts and IHEs to create curricula for no-cost micro-certifications for educators to train their peers on these topics.
- Mandate that educator preparation programs offer classes that focus solely on culturally responsive and restorative practices so graduates can teach the increasingly diverse student populations.

CONCLUSION

Although California has made significant 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. It is far past time for the state's leaders to create and implement a comprehensive plan to recruit and retain educators of color. This plan should include a clear commitment from the state on measurable goals for increasing the number of teachers of color and should include a tangible strategy to reach those goals. These goals should further be solidified by a commitment from the state to incorporate over the next several decades a **Master Plan for Teacher Diversity** that drastically

improves outcomes for students of color. At the very least, the state should report teacher demographic data and release frequent updates on any progress in addressing the current teacher shortage. Furthermore, state representatives should understand the implicit benefit of supporting such an initiative for their constituents and for all of California. The stakeholder-informed actions in this guide and the [longer road map](#) provide clear direction for the state to take action now and to make progress on a Master Plan for Teacher Diversity. We implore state leaders to act with the sense of urgency students deserve.

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
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 The Education Trust–West and California County Superintendents Association. (n.d.). *Recruiting & retaining educators of color: Hiring practices to diversify your candidate pool & strategies to support and retain educators*. https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EducationTrustWest_2020_Recruiting-and-Retaining-Educators-of-Color.pdf
- 7 The 2022-23 state budget allocated \$500 million in competitive grants to establish a new program to ensure students advance seamlessly from high school to college and career. The pathways include A-G course requirements for admission to state universities and the opportunity to earn 12 college credits through dual enrollment or through advanced placement or international baccalaureate classes. Work-based learning must be part of the pathway, and schools must offer support to students along the way.
- 8 Lambert, D. (2023, February 24). *California sinks millions into teacher residency programs, but many can't afford to enroll*. EdSource. <https://edsources.org/2023/california-sunk-millions-into-teacher-residency-program-but-many-cant-afford-to-enroll/685984>
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 As of March 2023, the last available dataset is from 2018-19.

