

The Majority Report:

2024 Fact Sheet



Fifty years after thousands of Latinx teenagers in Los Angeles walked out of classes in protest of the inadequate and blatantly unequal education they received compared to their white peers — known better as the East LA Walkouts — EdTrust–West released [The Majority Report: Supporting the Educational Success of Latino Students in California \(2017\)](#). Our analyses confirmed that far too many inequities still exist for Latinx students across the state from early education through college. As a follow-up to that report, this fact sheet provides a brief but meaningful glimpse at some of the opportunity gaps California’s Latinx students still face, as well as several “bright spot” examples of progress and promise.

In the seven years since we released our original report, California has afforded Latinx students greater educational opportunities by way of promising developments in access to transitional kindergarten³ as well as meaningful shifts away from detrimental college courses known as remedial education.

However, a great deal of work remains to be done. As the [fifth largest](#) economy in the world, California indisputably has the resources to provide a high-quality education for all students. Yet data continue to show that systemic barriers impede Latinx students’ educational journeys from preschool through college, and institutions still deny Latinx students the supports that make overcoming them more likely.

The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the barriers that Latinx students have always faced; as a result, Latinx students and other students of color were hit hardest. The scale and speed at which leaders restructured our systems, changed policy, and marshalled resources to address the pandemic showed what’s possible when we recognize an educational emergency for what it is.

[The Power of Now: EdTrust–West’s 2023-24 Policy Agenda](#) outlines the statewide policy changes necessary for improving educational outcomes for all students, including Latinx students. We urge local and state leaders and fellow advocates to use this fact sheet to raise awareness and foster the political will for leaders and institutions to do more to ensure California’s Latinx students can achieve their potential.

A note on terminology:

We use the word “Latinx” in this fact sheet as an alternative to “Latino” or “Latino/a” in an effort to be gender inclusive. However, we recognize that the term is unfamiliar to many and doesn’t conform to the grammar of the Spanish language.

Who Is the Majority in 2024?

Latinx people are the largest racial or ethnic group in California. This geographically, culturally, and linguistically diverse population¹ represents 51% of the state’s overall population under 25 years old.²

Early Learning and Care

Half of all Californians under the age of five — nearly 1.1 million children — are Latinx.⁴ The tremendous amount of learning that happens in early childhood sets the foundation for a child’s future success. Yet too few Latinx families have equitable access to high-quality early learning opportunities and child care. The best way to change that is to ensure that educators and caregivers—a large portion of whom are Latina—are better paid and respected. As California expands early learning and care opportunities, the state must provide adequate compensation for the early learning and care profession.

In 2019, just 3 out of every 10 Latinx three- and four-year-olds (31%) were in high-quality early learning programs in California.⁵



The state collects and publishes limited data on access, participation, and program quality by child demographics. For a deeper understanding of Latinx families’ experiences and needs, the state’s leaders should invest in a comprehensive statewide early learning data system.

Latinx early learning professionals — especially Latinas — make up large portions of California’s early learning and care profession. Early learning and care is a notoriously underpaid field, and substantial wage gaps keep Latinx early educators even more poorly compensated than their peers. What’s more, Latinx early educators are more likely than those in any other racial group to hold positions associated with the lowest wages, such as aides or assistant teachers in center-based programs.⁹ Around 37% of the state’s home-based family childcare providers and 39% of center-based teaching staff in California are Latinx, while only around 20% of center directors are Latinx.¹⁰

Latinx infant/toddler teachers making the average hourly wage of \$9.31 and working 40-hour weeks for a year would earn roughly \$19,400 annually, less than the federal poverty line for a family of two and \$10,000 below the federal poverty line for a family of four.¹¹

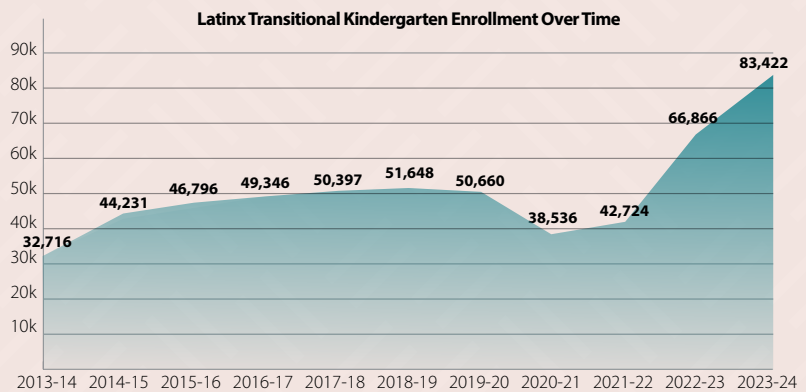
Bright Spot:

Universal transitional kindergarten (TK) presents an opportunity to expand access to early learning equitably in a mixed delivery system.⁶

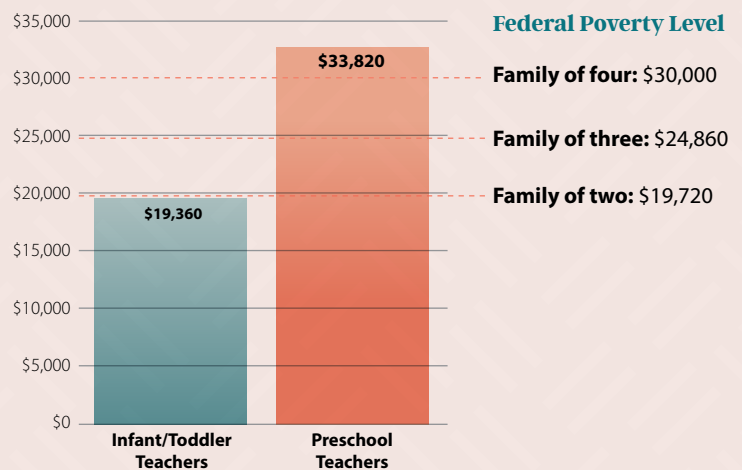
Latinx families enroll their children in TK at higher rates than all other groups and have steadily increased TK enrollments over time.⁷ This is an encouraging sign that state efforts to move toward universal TK access have been especially impactful for Latinx families.

TK enrollment for Latinx students has rebounded since the pandemic and now hovers around 70% of eligible Latinx 4-year olds enrolled.⁸

TK-12 districts should continue to proactively engage Latinx families by increasing awareness that TK programs are expanding eligibility to include all families of four-year-olds.



Estimated Annual Income of Latinx Early Learning Professionals



TK-12 Education

More than half (56%) of California's TK-12 students are Latinx, a total of 3,275,030 Latinx students, or roughly the population of the San Diego metro area.¹² Despite the fact that Latinx students are the clear majority of TK-12 students statewide, California schools fail to provide the high-quality, enriching educational experiences that evidence has shown are needed to close equity gaps. Latinx students thrive, meeting and exceeding high standards, when they know that educators and school staff care about them and have high expectations for their success and when they are provided with adequate and equitable resources and supports.¹³

Research clearly shows that Latinx students benefit from having Latinx teachers, from improved attendance, better test scores and graduation rates, and a lower likelihood of getting suspended or dropping out.^{14, 15}

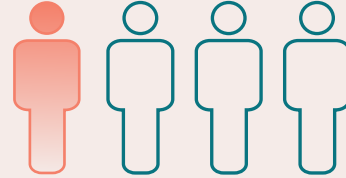
Yet while more than 5 out of 10 students in California are Latinx,



only 2.5 out of every 10 TK-12 teachers are Latinx.¹⁶



Just 1 in 4 Latinx students (24%) report feeling a high level of school supports.¹⁷

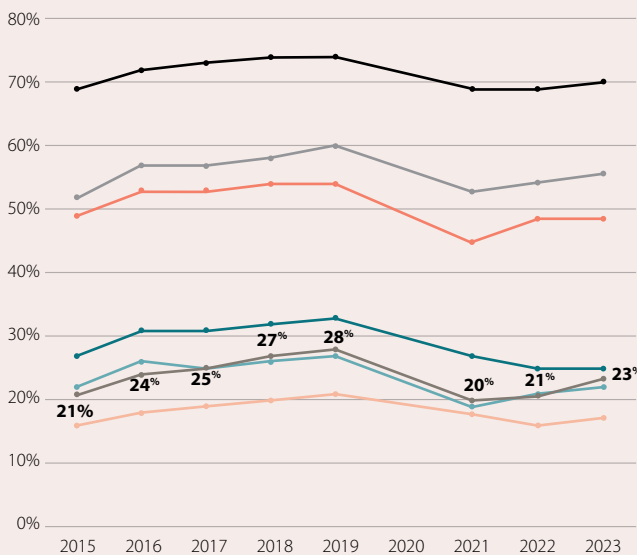


Latinx students are the least likely of any student group to say they experience a high level of support at school, which includes having relationships with adults who care about and have high expectations of them, as well as having opportunities for meaningful participation in school.

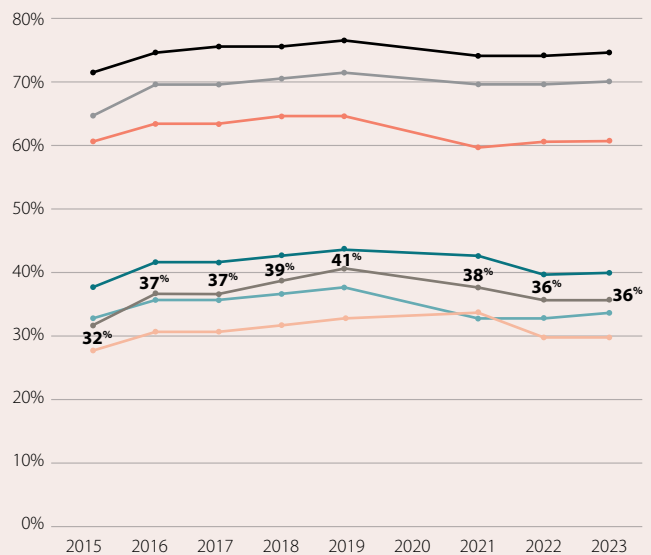
The impacts of COVID-19 and school closures have been greatest on students of color, including Latinx students.

After several years of incremental improvement on California's statewide assessments, the percentage of Latinx students meeting or exceeding grade-level standards in math decreased from 28% in 2019 to 23% in 2023. In English language arts, the percentage of Latinx students at or above grade level decreased from 41% in 2019 to 36% in 2023.¹⁸

% of Students Who Met/Exceeded Standards on CAASPP Mathematics



% of Students Who Met/Exceeded Standards on CAASPP English Language Arts



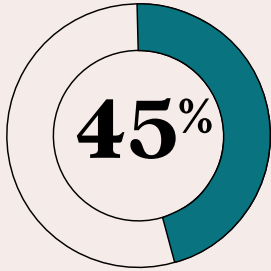
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state tests were not administered in the year 2020 and testing participation varied in 2021. As such, results are not available for the 2019-2020 school year and results for the 2020-21 school year should be interpreted with caution.

Asian
 Filipino
 White
 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 Latinx
 American Indian or Alaskan Native
 Black

College and Career Readiness

Too few California high schools ensure that when their students graduate, they are on a clear pathway to college or career opportunities. Many high schools fail to help Latinx students take and pass the courses required to apply to California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) campuses, leaving them locked out of dozens of higher education options upon graduation. Where high schools invest in rigorous course offerings like dual enrollment (community college courses offered to high schoolers), the opportunity to enroll isn't extended equitably. Educators must begin to see their Latinx students as destined to succeed in challenging high school coursework and any endeavor they aspire to afterward.

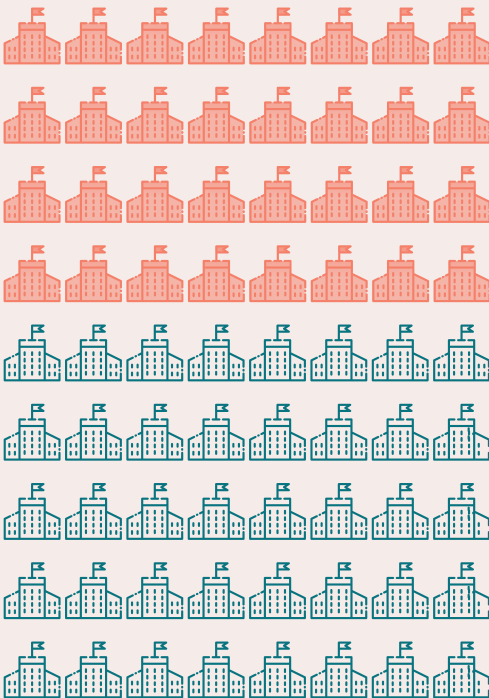
% of Latinx High School Graduates Completing A-G Courses



Nearly half of districts don't require students to complete A-G courses to graduate despite the fact that those courses are required for UC/CSU eligibility, and some schools do not even offer access to the full A-G course sequence.¹⁹

In the 2022-23 school year, just 45% of Latinx students graduated from high school having completed all A-G courses. California has made virtually no progress in improving that rate over the past five years.²⁰

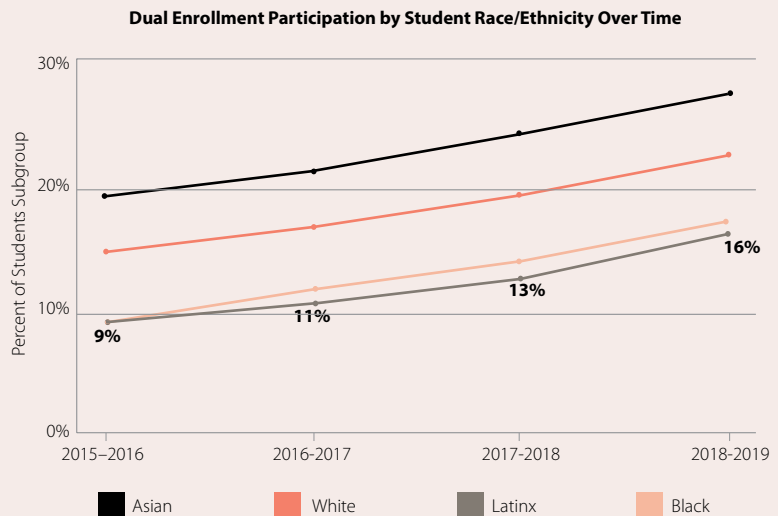
Dual enrollment programs offer community college courses to high schoolers. Because students receive both high school and college credit simultaneously, dual enrollment helps students earn college degrees faster and save on tuition costs.



Only 44% (or 32) of California's 72 community college districts have representation of Latinx students in dual enrollment programs that nears the proportion of Latinx high school students in their area.²¹

Despite research showing that dual enrollment leads to higher college graduation rates and less student debt, California has yet to expand such programs equitably.

Although more schools are offering and enrolling Latinx students in dual enrollment courses since our original report, California's high schools enrolled only 16% of the state's more than 1 million Latinx high school students in dual enrollment classes in 2018-19, whereas they enrolled white and Asian students at substantially higher rates.²²



Data for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native, and Filipino students were not disaggregated in the research referenced in this chart and are therefore not included here.

Higher Education

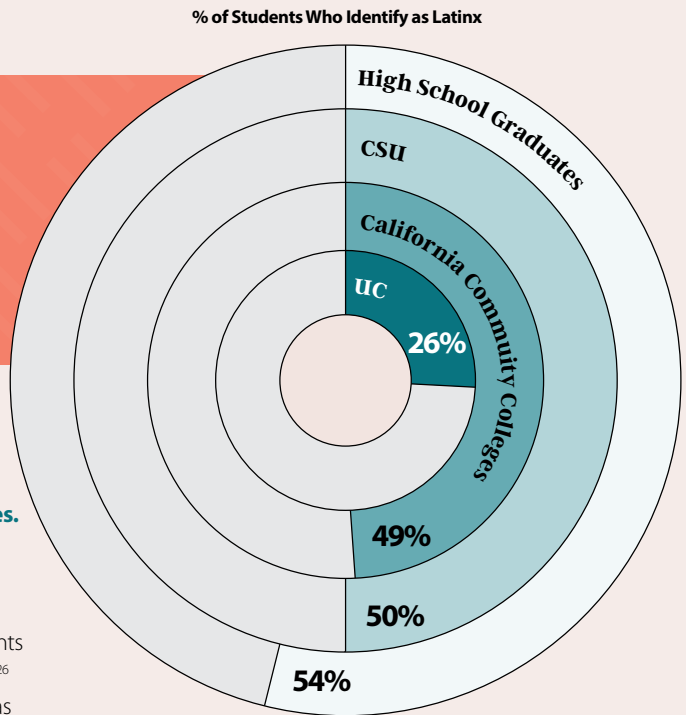
Latinx families believe deeply in the value of higher education, and when given the opportunity, Latinx students shine in college classes and on their campuses. And yet higher education is the only educational realm in which Latinx students are not the majority — although they should be. California’s nearly 1.3 million Latinx college students make up only 44% of the state’s higher education student population.²³ That underrepresentation and the systemic inequities that drive it reverberate across the population at large: among adults over the age of 25, Latinx Californians are least likely of all racial groups to hold a bachelor’s degree. Our colleges and universities must rise to meet those aspirations with equitable access to rigorous courses and academic support that works.²⁴

As of fall 2023, the share of Latinx undergraduates at the CSU and Community College systems are beginning to more closely reflect the share of California high school graduates who are Latinx (54%). However, in the UC system, Latinx students are still remarkably underrepresented: only roughly 1 in 4 undergraduate students are Latinx.²⁵

Bright Spot:

Far fewer Latinx students are getting trapped in remedial courses.

These courses don’t count for credit, don’t improve students’ odds of graduating or transferring, but do cost tuition and time. As a result of legislation focused on eliminating these courses and closing gaps in access to credit-bearing coursework, the share of Latinx first-time students taking transfer-level courses rocketed from 15% in 2015 to 76% in 2019.²⁶ Now, the state must keep up that momentum and reach 100% as well as ensure that any Latinx student who does need support gets evidence-based resources and ultimately passes their courses.



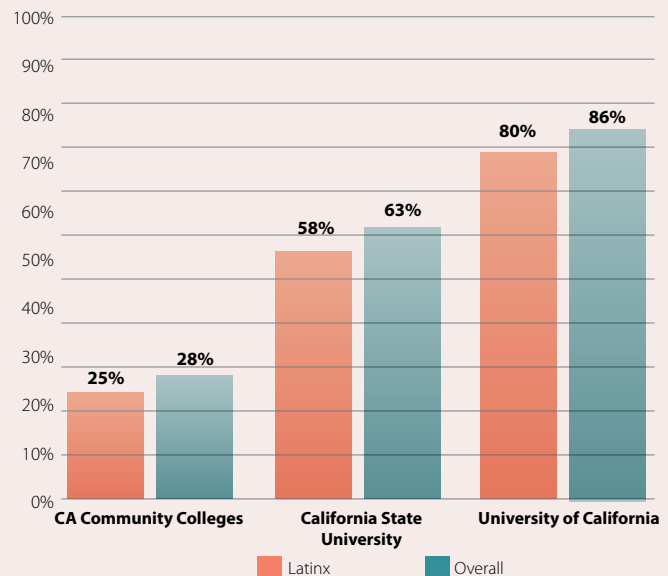
Nearly 60% of Latinx parents say that it is “extremely important” or “very important” that their children earn a college degree, higher than most other racial and ethnic groups.²⁷

It’s worth celebrating that the percentage of Latinx Californians ages 25 years or older with a bachelor’s degree or higher continues to rise at an exponential rate. Despite this progress, that rate remains unacceptably low, having reached only 16% in 2022 — the lowest of any racial/ethnic group in the state.²⁸

Although still far too low, Latinx graduation rates in the CSU are fast improving. The percentage of Latinx students who enroll as full-time freshmen and graduate in four years doubled between 2011 and 2016, jumping from 9% to 18% for Latinos and from 15% to 29% for Latinas.²⁹

California has a long way to go to approach degree attainment parity with the overall California population (which stands at almost 37%³⁰), and a much, much longer way to go to rise to the aspirations and commitment of Latinx students and families.

Graduation Rates for Latinx Students at California’s Public Colleges³¹



Endnotes

- 1 See "The Majority Report Infographic: Who is the Majority?" for more details on the makeup of Latinx students in California: https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ETW_MajorityReport_Infographic.pdf.
- 2 U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2022 Population Estimates.
- 3 [Universal Prekindergarten FAQs: Elementary \(CA Dept of Education\)](#).
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2022 Population Estimates, Ages 0-4 by Race/Ethnicity and Hispanic Origin.
- 5 The Education Trust. (2019). Young learners, missed opportunities: How well is your state serving its Black and Latino 3- and 4-year-olds? Data Tool. <https://edtrust.org/early-childhood-tool/>
- 6 California currently has a mixed delivery system of early learning and care options. For 3- and 4-year-old children, this includes California State Preschool Programs, funded by the California Department of Education, and childcare and development programs with educational components provided by the California Department of Social Services, operated by family childcare home networks, public or private agencies and local educational agencies, and federally funded Head Start. Starting in 2025, universal transitional kindergarten will be available to all 4-year-old children. Source: UPK and TK Facts Universal Prekindergarten FAQs - Elementary (CA Dept of Education).
- 7 Berkeley Children's Forum and District Innovation and Leadership in Early Education. (2022). *How pre-K may narrow early gaps in children's learning: California's roll-out of universal transitional kindergarten*. Center for District Innovation and Leadership in Early Education. https://bse.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/berkeley_childrens_forum_-_utk_equity_brief_r6_final.pdf
- 8 EdTrust-West analysis of TK enrollment data and Department of Finance population estimates.
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- 11 Center for American Progress analysis of workforce survey data from NORC, "National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE), [United States], 2019 (ICPSR 37941)," Child and Family Data Archive, available at <https://www.childandfamilydataarchive.org/cfda/archives/cfda/studies/37941> (last accessed June 2022). Federal Poverty Level data reflect 2023 thresholds, accessed from Department of Health and Human Services notice, accessed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-01-19/pdf/2023-00885.pdf>.
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