

# TK-12 STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

What will it take to close opportunity and outcome gaps for Black students in TK-12 schools?



## Create a State Commission on Black Education Transformation

To reject the status quo and create a brighter future for California's Black students in both TK-12 and higher education, the state should create The Commission on Black Education Transformation, a standing commission responsible for supervising the immediate implementation of policies and practices for Black student success. Decades of research and advocacy, including from EdTrust-West and other advocates, activists, and community members, have yielded several recommendations, some of which are listed below.

In addition, the state has taken an important initial step toward acknowledging its obligation to make transformative changes to benefit Black students by establishing the Reparations Taskforce to assess the harm

the state of California has caused to the Black community and recommend policy changes to address and reverse those harms. The Taskforce's 2023 report included 16 specific recommendations for addressing harms California's educational systems have inflicted upon Black students, in line with the policy changes Ed Trust-West has consistently identified and advocated for over two decades. The Commission on Black Education Transformation should be charged with moving the state's intention to address harms to Black students into action by creating implementation plans for Black student-centered policy changes and delineating clear responsibility to state agencies and other stakeholders for executing those plans. The commission should include Black students, parents, educators, policy

experts, community leaders, and advocates to ground its work in the collective knowledge of those directly impacted, ensure accountability, and foster transparency. Additionally, the commission must have the authority to allocate resources, set timelines, and ensure that state and local agencies follow through on commitments and take steps to scale promising practices.

While there have been past state efforts to improve the way our schools serve Black students in California, the commission would signal a commitment to holding state and

local leaders accountable for executing policy and practice changes focusing on transforming our education systems in ways that center Black students' success. An example of a similar approach can be found at the federal level, in the Biden administration's creation of a Presidential Advisory Commission on Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans.

In TK-12, we recommend the commission oversee prompt enactment of these state-level solutions:

## 1 Modify the state's funding formula to address racial disparities and provide abundant resources for Black students' education.

### Opportunity gap this recommendation addresses: Inadequate and ineffectively targeted resources

The state should take the following actions to revolutionize school funding and begin repaying educational debts owed to Black students:

- ▶ **Modify the state's funding formula to target racial disparities** | Although LCFF provides a strong foundation for equitable school funding, data from the past decade reveals the need to strengthen the formula for Black students. To do so, the state should create a mechanism within LCFF that allocates funding directly to schools to close racial disparities. These funds should be distributed based on a Systemic Disparity Index that targets funds according to the prevalence of systemic factors in school communities. The index should include metrics that reflect the disproportionate impact of systemic racism on California students, including inputs like the prevalence of asthma, levels of adult educational attainment, and homeownership rates. Los Angeles' Student Equity Needs Index (SENI), spotlighted here as a change agent, provides a successful example of this approach.
- ▶ **Strengthen accountability mechanisms** | The state should support continuous improvement and meaningfully hold schools and districts accountable for spending on approaches proven to close outcome gaps for Black students. They can do so by requiring districts to report in their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) the evidence-based strategies they plan to implement at the school level to meet the needs of Black students and requiring them to report back on the impact of those interventions.
- ▶ **Increase education spending overall** | The state should increase the amount of revenue it dedicates to school funding, given that at present, funding levels are woefully inadequate to cover basic costs, and California dedicates a smaller share of its GDP to education than most other states.

### Why Reparations For Education?

Reparations for slavery and racial discrimination against Black people in the U.S. are commonly misunderstood as being limited to cash payments to individuals who qualify. In fact, reparations are a much broader concept. Reparations are actions taken by a government to repair harm caused by its wrongful acts or negligence against a specific group of people. Given this broad definition of reparations, California has an obligation to repair the educational harms caused to Black students and the Black community through transformative education policy change that directly addresses and reverses past and continued harm.

## 2 Fully scale comprehensive community school models that create welcoming and affirming environments for Black students.

**Opportunity gaps this recommendation addresses:** Low levels of inclusion and engagement for Black students and families and the need for loving and affirming learning environments

Community schools embrace a holistic view of education, providing comprehensive supports and sharing decision-making power with students, families, community partners, and educators. In 2021, in response to advocacy from students and families of color and more than 50 organizations, California invested \$4.1 billion to create, expand, and strengthen community schools across the state, enough to allow every high-poverty school to become a community school within the next five to seven years.

So far, implementation and planning grants have been awarded to schools that serve higher shares of underserved students than the state average; 8% of students in schools receiving implementation grants are Black compared with 5% of students statewide. This landmark investment is an example of how bold state action can facilitate transformative change. Now, the state must do the following:

► **Ensure every school in the state becomes a community school** | The state must stay the course by maintaining investments in community schools so that every school can replace outdated models of education with more inclusive, empathetic, and collaborative approaches to teaching and learning.

- **Require schools to demonstrate how they are following Black families' leads** | As community schools scale up, the state should use existing reporting mechanisms like LCAPs and community school grantees' annual progress reports to actively hold schools accountable for increasing and sustaining trusting relationships with Black parents and students. Soliciting input proactively from Black families and students, and then acting on that guidance, will be critical for community schools to stay true to their original mission of redesigning education for racial justice.
- **Mandate that all schools end disproportionate discipline and pushout of Black students** | This will require strategic staffing in line with the community school model that prioritizes support and care over punitive and exclusionary discipline (such as investing in counselors, school psychologists, and social workers rather than school police) as well as making it mandatory that all staff receive training and support to fundamentally shift mindsets and practices.



### 3 Invest in and require schools to use proven strategies to recruit, support, and value Black teachers.

#### Opportunity gap this recommendation addresses: Shortage of Black teachers and lack of access to fully prepared and experienced teachers

California's leaders must create clear goals and a concrete plan for supporting more Black teachers to enter and stay in the profession. Anything less would mean accepting the futility of a colorblind approach to increasing teacher diversity, which the data in this report reveals has clearly failed over the past decade. Instead, this work should be grounded in community-informed strategies laid out in the [Educator Diversity Roadmap](#) and follow recommendations that come [directly from Black educators](#) and leaders.

In 2025, EdTrust-West created the Teachers We Need campaign to build a movement of parents, families, and community leaders that pushes policymakers across the state to support educators of color and multilingual educators. We call on the state to do the following:

- ▶ **Create a State Commission on Educator Diversity** | This advisory body would coordinate the development and execution of comprehensive solutions to the state's teacher pipeline issues, including the shortage of Black teachers and Black students' lack of access to fully prepared and experienced teachers. It should be empowered to set ambitious diversity goals for every stage of the teacher

pipeline, coordinate the implementation of large-scale policy and practice changes to meet those goals, ensure data transparency, and track progress on key performance indicators.

- ▶ **Increase teacher compensation for Black teachers** | The legislature and governor should increase and target teacher diversity workforce investments. Attracting and retaining diverse, high-quality teachers will require the state to increase and sustain funding for programs across the pipeline that reduce the cost of becoming a teacher, like residencies and Grow Your Own programs. It will also require increasing teacher compensation to ensure the profession is a financially stable option and is competitive with other career choices.
- ▶ **Mandate annual releases of teacher demographic data at the school and district levels** | The state should pass legislation that unequivocally requires that the California Department of Education annually publish data on teachers' demographics and ensure that this and any other relevant teacher employment data are provided to the state's Cradle-to-Career data system.



To read the full Black Minds Matter 2025 report, access data sources, and for more advocacy resources to support Black students in California, scan the QR code.