



The Education Trust—West

Moving Forward Together:

A Policy Agenda for Racial Equity in California Education Systems in 2023



The past few years are often described with a few poignant terms - unprecedented, challenging, momentous. In the education equity space, advocates have long felt a sense of urgency. The pandemic pointed out what so many of us already knew - the old normal wasn't good enough before, and it's certainly not good enough today.

Yet in recent years we have also seen the power of communities coming together to support each other and witnessed uncommon instances of decision-makers making choices previously considered impossible or implausible. As early learning and care programs, schools, districts, and colleges move forward from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are responsible for reimagining how we think about what is possible. Now is not the time for kicking the can down the road or accepting a view of equity that tinkers at the edges or focuses more on symbolic gestures than tangible policy change. Instead, we must embrace that we have the necessary ingredients to move forward together in ways that enact change in this school year, and in this generation. As the historic state revenue surplus in 2022 indicated, California has both the financial resources and a timely economic responsibility to invest in education equity which significantly addresses long-standing fiscal adequacy issues in early learning and care, K-12 education, and higher education sectors.

In addition to the cross-cutting need to improve adequacy and equity in education investments, this policy agenda presents the current statewide priorities of The Education Trust—West. We continue to advocate for investments, policies, and practices through research, reports, events, and legislative efforts while engaging with educators, communities, and decision-makers. Leaders must improve fiscal adequacy and equity and enact these 11 actions if California is serious about recovering from the pandemic while also leading the nation in progressive policymaking to advance racial equity in education.



Early Learning and Care



Prioritize access and center needs for children of color and multilingual children and their families during the ongoing implementation of transitional kindergarten.



Pursue rate and reimbursement reforms that reflect the true cost of delivering high-quality early learning and care, including livable wages and access to education and professional development for the workforce.



Secure funding to integrate early learning and care data and prepare for linkage to the Cradle-to-Career (C2C) data system.

K-12 Education



Ensure access to rigorous, culturally affirming coursework and educational experiences in which students thrive and are prepared for future college and workforce success.



Develop a coordinated plan to implement the English Learner Roadmap and provide resources to schools and districts to support English Learner education.



Approve and roll out a revised Mathematics Framework and ensure that school and district leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers have access to high-quality professional learning and ongoing support to implement the new Framework equitably.



Understand the root causes of teachers of color attrition and develop policy solutions that can address these causes, with a focus on teacher compensation.



College Access and Success



Create awareness for every student of color in a public high school of the availability of dual enrollment opportunities, allowing them to enroll and successfully complete high-quality dual enrollment coursework should they desire early exposure to college.



Urgently implement the state's new financial aid application completion requirement and guarantee that state aid is available to all students from low-income backgrounds who apply.



Ensure colleges enroll students of color in transfer-level coursework with adequate support instead of remedial courses so that more students complete credit-bearing courses and racial and geographic inequities are closed.



Enhance access to childcare, including campus-based care, for parenting and pregnant students. Additionally, establish better data collection and reporting on parenting and pregnant student demographics, institutional barriers, and available supports.