

Tony Thurmond

for State Superintendent of
Public Instruction



Tony Thurmond's Plan to Make California's Public Schools the Best in the Nation

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Public schools saved my life.

I was born in Monterey at Fort Ord military base. My father was a soldier in the Vietnam War, who didn't return to our family after the war. I met him for the first time when I was 39 years old after finding him on the internet. He told me that the physical and mental scars of war made it too hard for him to return to his family. So, I grew up without him.

My mom was an immigrant from Panama who came to San Jose, California to be a teacher. She raised four children by herself until she lost her battle to cancer when I was six years old. After she passed, I moved to Philadelphia to live with a cousin who raised my brother and me as her sons. Growing up in a low-income household, we struggled at times, and public assistance like food stamps and the free lunch program helped us get by. Despite it all, this amazing woman who raised me provided the love we needed and made sure we got a great public education. That education led me to a public university, where I became student body president, to graduate with two master's degrees that set me on the path to have a 20-year career as a social worker, and to work for 12 years in education, running after-school programs and teaching life skills, civics, and career training. Ultimately, I was inspired to serve on the Richmond City Council, the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board, and now in the California State Assembly.

In my life, education has been the great equalizer that allowed me to overcome humble beginnings. I want the same opportunities for all of California's kids.

That's why I've made improving public education my top priority while serving in the State Assembly. I [introduced a bill](#) that would provide hundreds of millions of dollars to fund STEM education so our kids will be prepared for the jobs of the future. I [passed legislation](#) that provides millions of dollars to school districts to keep kids in school and out of the criminal justice system. I [successfully advocated](#) for money to make sure all California youth who were in foster care would have the money to go to college. I [reduced bureaucracy](#) to enroll nearly 400,000 additional low-income children in the free and reduced lunch program. And I'm [leading the charge](#) to provide mental health services to kids to help combat the pressures of bullying, the impact of trauma, and other barriers to success.

I'm running for Superintendent of Public Instruction because I believe that every California child should get the education they need to realize their potential. We can't be satisfied with the status quo. There was a time when education in California was among the best in our nation. Now, by most accounts, [California ranks 46th](#) in the nation in per-pupil spending. My plan offers innovative solutions, backed up by real strategies, to take California back to the top.

If we have a clear eye on the future, we must be able to provide an education that gives our children an opportunity to thrive in the global economy. California is the cradle of modern technology, yet we lag behind in educating our kids on tech, engineering, and other critical subjects. One of my highest priorities will be to make sure our education system is fully aligned with our innovation economy. My plan will create partnerships with our leading technology companies to create internship programs, place tech mentors in our schools, and modernize our curriculum to include computer and data science. I will put in place innovative strategies that bring our public schools into the 21st Century, bringing a commitment to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and career technical education (CTE) to schools across the state, including rural and low-income districts that are too often left behind. And 21st Century education is more than technology – it's arts, language, civics, and entrepreneurship, too. We need to return creativity and critical thinking to the classroom, not teaching to the test. Our schools should be equipped to prepare our students to be the global thinkers, creators, and leaders of tomorrow.

Our success should always be measured by the number of high school students that are prepared for college and career pathways, and by closing the achievement gap for African American and Latino students, English Learners, special education students, foster youth, and students from low-income backgrounds. We must employ new and innovative strategies to significantly improve outcomes for all students. The achievement gap begins before a student ever enters a kindergarten classroom – we must invest in high-quality early education and care programs and make universal preschool a reality. But for too many of our kids, the barriers to student success exist outside the classroom, like poverty, homelessness, and trauma, so we must recommit our investment in school-based health and mental health services, the free lunch program, and truancy prevention, to ensure all of our students are in school and ready to learn.

We have a crisis in our public schools from a lack of qualified teachers. In many districts class size is ballooning because of a perpetual [teacher shortage](#). In almost every district there is a lack of continuity because of the high turnover. The problem is clear – we aren't paying teachers enough to recruit new ones or even to retain the ones we have. My plan will reduce our statewide teacher shortage by paying teachers a competitive salary, investing in professional development and mentorship programs for our educators, and offering scholarships to aspiring teachers to make education a more accessible career path. I've authored legislation that would provide affordable [teacher housing](#) so teachers can live in the communities where they teach. Teachers are among the most important influences to a student's academic success. We need to invest in our teachers, not attack them.

But have no doubt, fighting for education starts with opposing President Donald Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos's agenda, which threatens to defund our public schools. In his first proposed budget, Donald Trump proposed to cut \$1.2 billion in funding for before- and after-school programs. He and Betsy DeVos are determined to undermine our public schools by creating vouchers and other ways

to divert money away from public education, including diverting taxpayer dollars to for-profit charter schools. California needs to be ready to face this attack head on, oppose school voucher laws, and ban for-profit charter schools. I am prepared to fight the Trump Agenda to gut our public schools at every step, and I am the only candidate in this race who has a demonstrated commitment to fighting that battle on behalf of our students and teachers.

My plan is rooted in the belief that every child deserves a high-quality public school. California is the 6th largest economy in the world, home to leading economic sectors in technology, entertainment, agriculture, and more. It's time to make our public education system the greatest in the nation. Our kids deserve it. Our economy demands it. I won't stop until we achieve it.

My plan for making California's public schools #1 in the country includes:

- Keeping our students safe from gun violence in schools
- Prioritizing funding to provide schools and educators with the resources they need
- Leading the fight against Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos's efforts to privatize our public education system
- Increasing transparency in public education funding
- Ensuring accountability for charter schools
- Creating a 21st Century curriculum focused on STEM education that will prepare our students for jobs of the future
- Supporting English Learners and bilingual education
- Renewing our commitment to special education for students of all abilities
- Creating inclusive schools that protect LGBTQ students from bullying
- Empowering teachers to instill critical thinking and creativity in students, not just teach to the test
- Addressing the teacher shortage by removing barriers to entry and improving affordability
- Prioritizing early education and after-school programs to close the achievement gap
- Providing school-based physical and mental health services for all students, regardless of income or immigration status
- Making college and career pathways accessible and affordable for every student
- Keeping kids in school and out of the criminal justice system
- Caring for kids before they even enter the public school system

Keeping our Students Safe

As Superintendent, I will ensure the safety of our students is our number one priority. For too long, we have lived with the tragedies of school shootings in states across the nation. My heart breaks for the families who have been affected by these horrific events. We must do more than offer our thoughts and prayers. We must act to keep our children safe.

We need violence prevention training in every school in California. The solution is not to arm teachers – in fact, we must vehemently resist efforts by the federal administration to place weapons in classrooms – but to invest in commonsense mental health services and gun violence prevention programs for our students and educators.

I introduced [legislation](#) in the State Assembly that will provide resources to schools so they can provide physical, social, and emotional services through on-site counseling. In addition to legislation, I am meeting with district superintendents throughout California to discuss best practices to ensure schools safety, and I am collaborating with nonprofit organizations who are working to educate schools, families, and community organizations on life-saving gun violence prevention programs. I have [convened roundtable discussions](#) with local educators and social justice advocates to discuss ways in which our schools can prevent acts of hate on campuses. I am leading the discussion on gun violence prevention in this campaign because our students demand their elected leaders take action to save their lives.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Provide schools with the resources to offer all students and teachers commonsense mental health services and gun violence prevention programs
- Resist efforts by the Trump Administration to bring guns into our schools
- Prioritize a curriculum that teaches tolerance and promotes diversity

Improving California's Public Schools Starts with Funding

California is the 6th largest economy in the world, yet we rank [46th in the nation](#) in per-student funding. With the rising cost of special education, pension contributions, and other critical school district needs, we must act now to get our students, teachers, and districts the money they need to [improve student outcomes](#). I have a plan to bring California to the top ten states in per-pupil funding by 2022, and to #1 in the nation by 2026.

In the Assembly, I am constantly fighting to find additional revenue sources for our public education system. During my first 3 years in office, I secured an additional \$500 million for early education

programs, and I introduced bills that would generate hundreds of millions of dollars for [after-school programs](#), [STEM education](#), and other essential programs. To give California's kids a fair shot in the global economy, we must provide the resources that will set them up for success.

A recent [survey](#) showed that nearly two-thirds of Californians believe funding for our state's public schools is inadequate, and 59% reported they would support a local parcel tax to fund their district's schools. To tap into this public support, we should change the voter threshold for passing these local parcel taxes from two-thirds majority to 55% in all districts.

I fought for passage of Proposition 30 in 2012 and Proposition 55 in 2016, which significantly increased funding for our public schools. No other candidate has a record of success in Sacramento fighting for and delivering billions of dollars for public education.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Bring California to the top ten states in per-pupil funding by 2022, and to #1 in the nation by 2026
- Appoint a group of business, education, and government leaders to identify strategies for developing new permanent funding streams to improve education funding
- Work with state lawmakers to change the voter threshold for passing local parcel taxes from two-thirds majority to 55% in all districts

Leading the Fight Against Betsy DeVos and Donald Trump's Agenda

In addition to state and local funding mechanisms, I will prioritize urging the federal government to invest in California's schools. States rely on federal funds to support essential resources like teacher training, special education, and after-school programs.

In his 2018 budget proposal, President Trump [proposed](#) to completely eliminate 20 of these essential public school programs, yet he included \$1.4 billion to fund public school alternatives like charter schools and private school vouchers. The budget is especially disastrous for California students, [cutting \\$400 million](#) from our state's federal funds alone. This will hurt all our country's children, and especially California's most vulnerable students. I will not stand for it.

I have not shied away from criticizing Donald Trump when he does not stand up for the values we hold most dear. In fact, I [authored](#) the resolution in the Assembly that made California the very first state to call upon Congress to censure the President following his reprehensible comments about the tragedies that took place in Charlottesville during a white supremacist rally.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Continue to relentlessly fight the Trump Administration, doing everything in my power to keep him and Betsy DeVos from gutting California's public schools
- Fight to keep public schools public by protecting California's ban on school vouchers

Transparency in Public Financing

With greater funding, there must also be greater transparency and accountability. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) was created through landmark education funding legislation in 2013 that returned spending decisions to communities and makes sure that school districts with the greatest number of high-need students get more resources to support those students. We must have oversight of the LCFF to ensure funding is going where it is supposed to go – directly to students and the programs that benefit them – while streamlining the bureaucracy faced by school districts.

LCFF funding data must be made available online so the public can see how their tax dollars are being spent. Publicly available, easily accessible data will help keep public officials accountable and allow school districts to learn best practices from high performing districts throughout the state. By providing necessary resources, we can empower County Offices of Education, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, and the California Department of Education to support districts in need of improvement. Data from the LCFF will also allow the public to hold school districts accountable for treating all students equally. And if a district is underserving a particular student group, this data will help inform the changes that need to be made to build equity in communities, as intended by the LCFF.

We should also continue to empower students to hold their schools accountable. Last year Governor Jerry Brown signed into law my legislation, [AB 261](#), which guarantees students in high school have a vote and a voice on their school district governing boards.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the LCFF to ensure that funding is spent as efficiently and effectively as possible
- Ensure all LCFF funding data is available online so the public can see how their tax dollars are being spent, and provide schools and districts with clear, easy to use systems to provide data
- Continue my efforts to empower young people to have a voice in policies related to their public education

Accountability for Charter Schools

We have a crisis of accountability in California's charter schools, with an estimated [\\$149 million](#) in charter school fraud reported in the state. As Superintendent, I will systematically eliminate bad actors who seek to profit off the education of California's kids. This year I will co-author legislation that would make for-profit charter schools illegal, and I have supported legislation to increase the transparency and accountability for taxpayer-funded charter schools, holding them to the same standards as our traditional public school districts. And like public schools, I also support efforts to mandate that charter schools disclose if any board members have a financial stake in school spending.

Additionally, I will require charter schools to be fully transparent about their enrollment policies. We must end the practice of charter schools keeping out English Learners and students with special needs.

I am the only candidate for State Superintendent who is fully committed to reforming charter schools and ensuring they are held accountable. It is essential that all California schools follow the same standards of transparency and accountability when it comes to disclosing how public money is being spent.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Make for-profit charter schools illegal
- Increase the transparency and accountability for taxpayer-funded charter schools, requiring public hearings and disclosures of conflicts of interest

A 21st Century Curriculum Focused on California's Future

California is widely recognized as the innovation capital of the world, yet [fewer than half](#) of K-12 schools in the state offer computer science courses. My top priority as Superintendent will be to modernize our curriculum so our schools are equipped to educate well-rounded students ready to compete in the global workforce.

As Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Education, I authored legislation to expand courses in computer science and STEM education, particularly in low-income and rural school districts. My bill, [AB 2186](#), proposes a \$200 million STEM education grant program that will allow school districts to apply for funds that would go toward professional development for STEM educators, computer science education, and the development of public-private partnerships aimed at increasing STEM opportunities for students. I am [proactively working](#) to bring together tech companies and school districts across the state to build partnerships that will infuse technology into curriculum and create pathways to the internships and jobs of tomorrow.

In addition to STEM, we must prioritize and invest in arts and civics education, enabling students to foster creativity and critical thinking skills. [Research](#) shows that including arts in our education curriculum improves student outcomes in many subjects. That's why I worked to secure an additional [\\$27 million](#) in last year's budget to fund the California Arts Council – a 130% increase since 2014. I am proud to be the only candidate for Superintendent who has committed to prioritizing increased funding for the arts and civics in our public schools.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Secure additional funding for STEM education to ensure students in every school district have access to a 21st Century curriculum
- Prioritize funding for arts and civics education to ensure our students have a well-rounded curriculum that fosters critical thinking and creativity

Supporting English Learners and Global Language Learning

In 2016, California voters passed Proposition 58, which made it easier for schools to provide bilingual education. I was proud to endorse Proposition 58, and I fully support this effort and plan to do all I can as Superintendent to ensure the policy is implemented effectively. More than [1 in 5 students](#) in California public schools are English Learners and over 40% speak a language other than English at home. Last year I helped to secure an additional \$5 million in the state's budget to fund bilingual education programs.

A 21st Century education must prepare students for a global future that requires global competency. To compete on this scale, we must provide opportunities for foreign language education, especially at an early age, when [research shows](#) most students are most capable of learning a new language. I have introduced [AB 2514](#) which will provide grant funds to districts in support of the creation and expansion of dual language immersion programs, developmental programs for English Learners, and early learning dual language programs. I will continue to work to equip each school district with the resources they need to recruit and train language teachers who can guide our students into a globalized future. I will also aim to incorporate foreign language classes in the curriculum for elementary and middle schools so our younger students can get a head start on building this skill.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Expand bilingual education for English Learners
- Invest in language immersion programs for students who want to learn new languages
- Recruit and retain high-quality language education teachers through hiring incentives and professional development opportunities

Renewing California's Commitment to Special Education

Our education system needs to renew its commitment to student populations that require a specialized education, including those with special needs. I once served as a classroom aide to students with special needs and saw firsthand the challenges some students face without the right support. Students of all abilities and learning needs deserve a first-rate education.

In this year's proposed budget, I'm working to preserve an additional [\\$100 million](#) in funding, as proposed by Governor Brown, to recruit and retain special education teachers. As a member of the state's [Advisory Commission on Special Education](#), I will continue to advocate for increased resources to support these chronically underfunded programs. I have introduced legislation, [AB 2168](#), which provides grant funds to school districts seeking to recruit high-quality special education instructors. I also co-authored [legislation](#) that would provide scholarships for aspiring teachers who commit to teaching special education as an extra incentive to recruit these badly needed educators.

As Superintendent, I will work to enact similar measures that increase special education funding throughout the state so school districts can fill vacancies for special educators, psychologists, and aides, and improve retention rates through training and professional development. I will also seek to sponsor legislation and respond to recommendations from the [Special Education Task Force](#) to create a coherent education system where teachers can immediately connect students to the support they need to be successful. I will fight back against Betsy DeVos and Donald Trump's efforts to dramatically cut special education funding, and ensure California provides quality support for these underserved students.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Ensure students of all abilities have access to education that meets their needs
- Seek solutions to address the special education teacher shortage, including scholarship programs, mentorship, teacher residency programs, and professional development

Creating Inclusive Schools

In an increasingly diverse California, it's essential that we're teaching civics, cultural competency courses, and ethnic studies that teach students to appreciate different viewpoints and come up with creative solutions to conflict. I have [convened a series of roundtables](#) with educators, students, and social justice advocates from across the state to discuss teaching strategies for dissipating racism in the classroom and supporting LGBTQ students.

We must work with our teachers to ensure they are trained in how best to support students who may be experiencing bullying or feeling unsure of their identity. This year I introduced [legislation](#) in the State Assembly that would provide training for teachers and administrators on how best to support LGBTQ students and prevent bullying and harassment of all students. I support teaching tolerance in our classrooms, and I will continue advocating for teacher training programs and school-based mental health providers in every school to encourage those values. Communities must be proactive in promoting student safety, from anti-bullying programs to gun violence prevention training to LGBTQ-specific support.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Pursue policies that make schools safe and inclusive for all students, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity
- Provide professional development so educators know how to support LGBTQ students and prevent bullying and harassment of all students
- Ensure all students have access to school-based mental health services

Pay Teachers to Teach, Not Just Test

We entrust teachers to educate the next generation of problem solvers and innovators. But for nearly two decades, our educators have been under siege by high-stakes testing regimens at the expense of student learning. We must end the top-down culture that encourages teaching to the test and return learning to the classroom.

To compete in a 21st Century global economy, we need to prepare our kids to think critically and creatively about global-sized problems. We won't accomplish that by keeping our teachers tied to the restraints of standardized testing – we need to find the balance between helping students achieve benchmarks, while still allowing teachers the flexibility to fuel creativity and critical thinking in students.

The Common Core Standards are rooted in good policy and have been effective for many teachers and school districts, but we also need to give teachers the professional development they need to teach to new standards with competence and creativity that engages their students. We need to give teachers the high-quality curricular resources they need to ensure that their students remain competitive on state and national evaluations.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Ensure teachers have access to high-quality curriculum and resources
- Advocate for a curriculum that prioritizes teaching civics, critical thinking, and creativity
- Convene groups of teachers, students, and policy experts to evaluate our current practices and ensure we provide flexibility in our curriculum

Leading the Charge to Address the Teacher Shortage

Preparing students for a bright future begins with having a well-trained teacher leading every class. But unfortunately states throughout the country are experiencing a [teacher shortage](#), with 75% of California schools [reporting](#) a shortage of teachers. Some aspiring teachers can't afford to get the degrees necessary to teach, while others are being forced out of the classroom because they can't afford to live nearby. We must work harder to remove the barriers to entry for aspiring teachers and pay our educators a competitive salary. I will work collaboratively with stakeholders to address the critical need to recruit and retain teachers.

In the Assembly, I co-authored [legislation](#) that would provide \$20,000 grants to aspiring teachers who commit to working in high-needs subjects, and I will work to make college free and offer loan forgiveness for aspiring educators. I am committed to ensuring our teacher credentialing processes help and not hinder California's ability to fill the most extreme gaps in science, math, special education, and bilingual education.

As Superintendent, I will invest in our teachers' success by expanding peer support programs that allow newer teachers to be mentored by more experienced ones. I will direct funding toward professional development and training programs to help teachers support at-risk students, similar to the [bill I introduced](#) this year, which would provide resources to help teachers learn how best to support LGBTQ students. I'll also work towards the improvement and modernization of teaching programs at our state universities and other teacher preparation institutions. As a member of the California State University Board of Trustees, I will be the strongest advocate for CSU teacher education programs.

I firmly believe that no teacher should go without affordable access to housing. Educators should be able to afford to live in the communities where they teach so they can spend that critical time after school working with students and preparing lessons. To help solve this problem, I recently introduced [AB 2788](#), a teacher housing bill in the Assembly that would help school districts provide affordable housing to teachers and school staff, both in urban areas where housing is too expensive and rural areas where housing is in too short supply. I am the only candidate for State Superintendent who has committed to putting policies in place that will attract and retain teachers and make their housing more affordable and accessible.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Support efforts to make college cheaper and more accessible for aspiring teachers
- Streamline the teacher credentialing process to get teachers in the classroom faster
- Provide mentorship and professional development so new teachers are supported
- Work with legislators to provide access to affordable housing to educators so they can live in the communities where they teach

Early Intervention to Close the Achievement Gap

California ranks [47th in the nation](#) in average fourth grade reading levels. [Studies show](#) that students who are not on track with reading proficiency in the 3rd grade have a significantly higher risk of dropping out of high school. Disparities in achievement threaten the future for many of California's students, particularly African-American and Latino students. As a member of the State Assembly, I am leading the charge to use early intervention techniques to close the achievement gap and get students back on track.

In my first year in the Assembly, I championed this issue by authoring [legislation](#) to create the Early Intervention Attendance Grant program. Signed into law in 2016, [AB 1014](#) made available \$35 million in grants for schools to implement programs that tackle chronic absenteeism. Funding for this program came directly from Proposition 47, which required resulting savings in the criminal justice system to be routed to restorative justice and education.

To fight the achievement gap, we must also engage school administrators, teachers, families, and other stakeholders. And sometimes evaluating how best to approach the achievement gap requires specialized help. That's why in last year's budget I worked to secure funding that provides school districts with technical assistance aimed at closing the achievement gap, including hiring professional coaches who can evaluate a district's root causes of the gap and offer solutions. This year, I am hosting a roundtable series to convene educational leaders from across the state who can develop strategies and interpret data that will help reduce the achievement gap.

Research [shows](#) the achievement gap for some students starts even before kindergarten. Low-income students in particular tend to be at a disadvantage when they start school, as many of their families cannot afford to send them to increasingly expensive preschools. For that reason, I am working tirelessly to remove the barriers to pre-K education programs. In my first three years in the Assembly, I have fought to secure an additional \$500 million in funding toward early childhood education. Another of my bills, [AB 2303](#), will generate millions of dollars to fund high-quality preschool education, as well as critical after-school programs, by placing a tax on private prisons. We must educate our students, not incarcerate them. By funneling money from prisons back to schools, we can address the achievement gap at its earliest stages.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Champion efforts to close the achievement gap by addressing chronic absenteeism to keep kids in school and out of jail
- Seek innovative solutions to closing the achievement gap, calling upon professional technical assistance to evaluate school district practices and make recommendations for improvements
- Provide millions in funding to make preschool accessible to all California families
- Prioritize after-school programs that prevent at-risk students from falling into the criminal justice system
- Provide professional development to educators to help address the achievement gap

Providing School-Based Services for All Students

During my 20-year career as a social worker, I learned that even the best educators cannot solve poverty, fix issues of public health, or fully make up for other negative experiences in a student's life. The facts are that [one in five](#) children in California live in poverty and many suffer from homelessness, food insecurity, or poor access to health care – all extreme challenges to academic achievement.

Every student, regardless of income level or immigration status, should be able to get the healthcare they need. I am the only candidate for Superintendent who has advocated for more comprehensive school-based health services, including mental health services, because all students should have access to the treatment needed to address behavioral issues, learning disabilities, and trauma. In the State Assembly, I co-authored [legislation](#) that guaranteed Medi-Cal to pay for health and mental health services for undocumented children. As State Superintendent, I will fight every day for the over 200,000 Dreamers in our public schools, including students, teachers, and parents.

Just as poor health impedes learning, so does hunger. Last year, my legislation, [AB 1502](#), was signed into law, allowing 400,000 more eligible students to receive a free or reduced price school lunch by changing the way that the California Department of Education (CDE) identifies students who need help getting lunch. Instead of requiring parents to fill out extra paperwork, the CDE will now begin to match students to other social services data systems, like CalFresh, the state's food assistance program, and automatically enroll matched students in the program. This is just one example of the ways in which I plan to improve how CDE uses available data to address equity issues in public schools. Smart reforms like these can help school districts better serve the needs of their students, as well as efficiently track students who move from district to district and often get lost in the system.

In 2016, I authored [AB 2054](#), legislation to more efficiently provide nutrition assistance to students who qualify for free and reduced lunch into the summer months. No child should go hungry just because school is out for the summer. I am proud to be the only candidate in this race who has advocated for and will continue to enhance the free and reduced lunch program for California's kids.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Ensure every district provides school-based physical and mental health services, regardless of income or immigration status
- Support the 200,000 Dreamers in California's public schools
- Pursue policies to support low-income and food insecure students, including during the summer months

College and Career Pathways for Every Student

When we invest in strategies to close the achievement gap, the door opens to the possibility of every student leaving high school prepared for college or other postsecondary education. But we must address the fact that higher education, including tuition, housing, and other necessities, have become increasingly expensive and out of reach for California families. As a member of the UC Board of Regents and the CSU Board of Trustees, I will stand with students and advocate for increased funding for higher education to end tuition hikes and provide assistance with the associated costs of going to college.

It's essential that we support kids from all backgrounds who aspire to go to college. In 2016, I helped create a [new law](#) that expanded the Chafee Grant, which gives every foster youth scholarship money for college. And when I learned that many foster kids aren't able to access the program, I acted. This year I introduced [a bill](#) that gives more foster youth eligibility to access scholarship money for college. As Superintendent, I will continue thinking creatively about how we can remove barriers that keep kids from pursuing postsecondary education.

I proudly supported [legislation](#) in the State Assembly to make the first year of community college free. As your State Superintendent, I will work to provide students access to two free years of community college. I also pledge to enhance dual enrollment programs, which allow students to earn college credit while still in high school.

To serve all students, we need to invest in career technical education, vocational programs, and apprenticeships, especially those that emphasize high-tech skills that will lead to well-paying jobs. I oppose predatory for-profit career tech programs that take advantage of aspiring students. I will work with industry to support affordable, effective programs that actually prepare students for jobs in STEM, computer science, the trades, the arts, and elsewhere.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Support increased funding for our state universities and vote to end tuition hikes at UC and CSU
- Make it easier and more affordable for foster youth to attend college
- Work to provide two years of free community college and enhance dual degree programs that let students earn college credit in high school
- Expand access to vocational training and apprenticeships

Keeping Kids In Schools and Out of Prisons

California has [among the highest](#) rates of juvenile incarceration in the country. We must act aggressively to ensure that youth in our criminal justice system have the ability to return their education or get jobs upon their release, rather than reentering the system. I am acting now. With input from incarcerated youth themselves, I authored [AB 1488](#), which establishes wraparound service centers that help youth leaving the criminal justice system get access to transitional housing, health services, job training, and other reentry services that aim to end the school-to-prison pipeline.

California's prisons determine the number of jail beds required by analyzing reading scores for third graders in the state. I was deeply troubled by this fact, and I was inspired to introduce [AB 1014](#), the Learning Communities for Student Success Act. This law provided [\\$35 million in grants](#) to schools across the state to invest in restorative justice and programs to reduce chronic absenteeism. More than [10% of public school students](#) in California are chronically out of school, leading to poor performance and higher dropout rates. I will invest in programs that have successfully improved attendance rates, such as home visits, counseling, improved attendance data collection, and the enhancement of attendance review board processes by districts.

I have also worked to reform school disciplinary practices – as a school board member, I led an initiative that reduced school suspensions by 27%. By increasing attendance rates in schools, we will not only keep kids in school and out of the criminal justice system, but we can also recover \$1.1 billion in juvenile crime costs alone, according to the [California Dropout Research Project](#) at UC Santa Barbara. I am the only candidate for Superintendent who has committed to ending the school-to-prison pipeline that has tainted our public school system for too long.

To fully close the achievement gap and reduce incarceration rates, we need to intervene even before kindergarten. In the Assembly, I proposed [legislation](#) that would impose a tax on private prisons to create a revenue stream that funds after-school programs and universal preschool. Currently over 70% of four year olds are not enrolled in publicly funded preschool programs. I will increase the number of slots in preschool with the ultimate goal of providing universal preschool by 2026.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Work tirelessly to end the school-to-prison pipeline
- Divert funds from our criminal justice system to support programs to address chronic absenteeism (truancy), reform school disciplinary practices to reduce suspensions, and provide universal preschool and after-school programs

Caring for Kids from Day One

[Research](#) shows that reading or singing to a newborn child can have a profound impact on their literacy and learning capabilities later in life. Between ages 0 to 3, 85% of a child's brain development occurs. The CDE is uniquely equipped to influence early education and care as it is the only government agency which touches this policy area. As Superintendent, I will make sure that CDE works with prenatal health care providers to support the child-caring education of new parents, especially low-income parents. I have voted for and will continue to advocate for generous paid parental leave for all parents, to ensure newborns have substantial time to spend with parents during the critical early months of their lives.

When parents do go back to work, they need to be able to rely on quality, affordable early education and care. Last year Governor Brown signed into law [AB 435](#), my legislation to expand access to subsidies for early education and care in parts of the state, and as Superintendent, I will work to make early education and care more affordable for parents in every part of California. And because child care providers and preschool teachers should be highly qualified, we should treat the people in this critical workforce as professionals. As Superintendent, I will work to secure funding that will prioritize higher compensation, benefits, career education, and professional development for early education and care professionals.

In my three years in the Assembly, I have secured an additional \$500 million in early education funding – money that helps support kids and their families access the support they need at this critical stage. I also worked to secure \$31 million dollars in annual subsidies to support child care payments for foster parents of young children.

As Superintendent, I will:

- Encourage CDE to work with prenatal health care providers to educate low-income new parents on how best to care for newborn children
- Support paid parental leave for all parents and make childcare more affordable for families
- Prioritize early education by increasing compensation for preschool teachers and creating universal preschool by 2026

Tony's Record on Education Policy

AB 261 – School Board Voting-Student Members: Guarantees that all Student School Board Members have the ability to vote on all matters before the board through what is known as a preferential vote.

AB 435 – Contra Costa, Sonoma, Marin, and Alameda Child Care Subsidy Pilots: Authorizes these counties to develop and implement an individualized pilot county child care subsidy plan. This pilot program will result in the maximization of existing child care dollars and the expansion of child care services.

AB 670 – Part-Time Playground Workers: Extends equity in compensation and benefits for part-time playground employees in schools.

AB 1014 – Our Children's Success – Early Intervention Attendance Grant: Creates a grant program that schools and school districts can apply to for assistance with implementing plans to resolve chronic attendance problems for students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade.

AB 1488 – County Juvenile Transition Centers: Requires counties to establish a Juvenile Transition Center with wraparound reentry services and optional transitional housing for youth who were previously associated with a juvenile correctional facility.

AB 1502 – Free or Reduced Lunch Direct Certification: Provides the California Department of Education with the necessary flexibility to increase the number of eligible students automatically certified for free or reduced price lunches.

AB 2054 – Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children: Proposes the continuation of free and reduced lunch into the summer months via an electronic benefits transfer to the families of students served by the free and reduced lunch program.

AB 2153 – LGBTQ Student Support: Provides for the training of educators in support of LGBTQ students regarding (1) the availability of both school site and community-based support systems available to LGBTQ youth and (2) best practices for schools including anti-bullying and harassment policies, complaint procedures, and counseling services.

AB 2168 – Special Education Grants: Directs carryover federal funds to be made available as grants to local education agencies for the recruitment of special education teachers through teacher residency programs, teacher scholarships, or other innovative local programs addressing the special education teacher shortage.

AB 2186 – STEM Education Grants: Increases access to high-quality STEM programming throughout the state on K-12 campuses by providing grants to fund professional development for STEM educators, teacher recruitment and retention programs, and computer science education. The bill also includes

funds targeting STEM education in rural school districts, and aids in the development of public-private partnerships.

AB 2250 – Children of Incarcerated Parents: Proposes a multi-departmental workgroup that would focus on coordinating support for children with incarcerated parents.

AB 2303 – Private Prisons Tax: Provides a revenue stream for preschool and after-school programs by taxing private prisons that profit from the prison industrial complex and using that money to fund early education opportunities.

AB 2471 – Student Support Services: Increases supportive services such as physical health, mental health, and other counseling services in schools in order to break down barriers to academic success using Prop. 64 funds.

AB 2506 – Chafee Grant Awards: Increases the rate of college completion among youth in foster care by expanding access to their only source of dedicated financial aid: the Chafee Education and Training Voucher (Chafee ETV). Specifically, AB 2506 modifies Chafee ETV eligibility such that all students who apply by September 2nd would be entitled to a grant. It also restricts the use of Chafee ETV funds at schools that meet certain graduation and loan default criteria.

AB 2514 – Bilingual Education Grants: Establishes a grant program to support the creation and expansion of dual language immersion programs for English Learner students and early learning dual language programs.

AB 2788 – Teachers Retention and Recruitment – Teacher Housing: Provides a tool for school districts to increase teacher recruitment and retention by creating a program to provide financial assistance to school districts for the predevelopment and development of housing for school employees, including teachers.

AB 2960 – Early Education Online Portal: Requires CA Department of Education to develop a comprehensive online portal for early education to assist families in gaining access to information about early education programs, including location of services, availability of slots, and quality indicators for individual programs. The portal will also help families to learn about their eligibility for subsidies and targeted programs and apply for subsidies through a single, uniform application.

AB 3089 – Chafee Grant Eligibility Extension: Extends eligibility for the existing Chafee Grant Program to former foster youth under the age of 28 as opposed to the current limitation of 22 which misses much of the need experienced by this student population.

AB 3188 – College and Career Readiness LCAP Fix: Amends the Education Code LCAP reporting requirements to emphasize student access to both college and career preparedness courses.

ACR 139 – Child Abuse Prevention: Acknowledges the month of April 2016 as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and encourages the people of the State of California to work together to support youth-serving child abuse prevention activities in their communities and schools.