



The Education Trust—West

UNIDOSUS

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NEW POLL SHOWS CALIFORNIA PARENTS OF COLOR OVERWHELMINGLY SAY IMPROVING K-12 EDUCATION IS TOP PRIORITY FOR NEXT GOVERNOR

Parents offer perspectives on school engagement, multilingualism in California schools, in new poll of Black, Latino, and Asian Pacific Islander parents

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California’s next Governor will need to take swift action to show parents of color how he will improve the state’s K-12 education system and access to college, [according to a new poll of racially and economically diverse parents](#) whose children attend public schools throughout California. The poll, conducted by Goodwin Simon for [The Education Trust—West](#) (ETW) and [UnidosUS](#) found that improving public schools ranked higher than expanding access to health care and addressing the lack of affordable housing on a list of priorities for the state’s next governor.

Poll results include:

- About 9 out of 10 Latino, Black, and Asian Pacific Islander parents say improving K-12 education should be a high priority for the next governor to address, with more than half saying it should be an extremely high priority
- Just over half of Black and Latino parents, and just 1 out of 3 Asian Pacific Islander parents think it’s very possible for parents to make a difference in improving school performance
- 8 out of 10 Black, Latino, and Asian Pacific Islander parents agree every teacher should be trained to meet the needs of English Learners

“This poll highlights an urgent and resounding call from California’s Black, Latino, and Asian Pacific Islander parents – the state must improve schools now,” said Elisha Smith Arrillaga, ETW’s interim co-executive director. “California’s recent reforms in education are a step in the right direction, but our next governor will need to take bigger, bolder steps to truly embrace equity in our state.”

The poll also surveyed parents on how likely they are to offer feedback to their child's school, finding that while most parents report adequate interaction with their children's schools, parents also face barriers to offering feedback that will be heard and are at times doubtful that they can prompt meaningful change. "The schools only let parents participate so much," said one mother. Reflecting on the barriers that exist even when districts offer opportunities for engagement, another parent stated, "I'm not sure who I could even offer feedback to. I know that there are school board meetings, but those occur during school nights around dinner time, so it's extremely inconvenient for me to go."

"Clearly parents are offering feedback to their children's schools, but unfortunately they don't always feel their input is making a difference," said Carrie Hahnel, ETW's interim co-executive director. "Schools and districts must authentically engage parents as partners in improvement, and this is especially the case for schools serving primarily Black, Latino, and Asian Pacific Islander students whose parents are far too often ignored."

The quantitative and qualitative poll also revealed that nearly all Black, Latino, and Asian Pacific Islander parents surveyed believe it is valuable for students to graduate high school being able to speak more than one language, although they were less confident that their schools share that value. "Across race and income groups, parents in California strongly support multilingualism and equity for English Learners," said Eric Rodriguez, UnidosUS vice president. "The next cohort of California leaders has an obligation to seize on this momentum and implement the English Learner Roadmap broadly and intentionally."

The poll's results come toward the end of Governor Jerry Brown's term, which included a shift to more equitable funding in K-12 and community college districts, but also saw stagnation in closing gaps in opportunity and achievement for millions of students and left a number of key equity problems unsolved. One such problem is the challenge of how schools can meaningfully engage parents in making decisions and improving performance – which should be a top priority for the next Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction, especially as the state finalizes its plans around supporting schools and districts identified as struggling to serve their students of color, English learners, and other historically underserved student groups.

About The Education Trust–West

The Education Trust–West works for educational justice and the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-K through college, in the state of California. We expose opportunity and achievement gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other youth, and we identify and advocate for the strategies that will forever close those gaps.

About UnidosUS

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels