



The Education Trust–West

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Office: Lieutenant Governor

Candidate: Eleni Kounalakis

- 1) **This year, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a new equitable funding formula focused on student success for the California Community Colleges. This approach has the potential to dramatically increase student success and institutional performance. As the Lt. Governor is a member of the governing boards for both the University of California and California State University systems, if elected, what actions would you take to encourage and support the implementation of the Student Centered Funding Formula in ways that truly maximize the equitable student success incentive provisions?**

California’s community colleges provide an affordable way for students to receive a higher education. I support the new Student Centered Funding Formula as a way to provide greater access to underrepresented students, support low-income students, and incentivize community colleges to focus on student success rather than simply enrollment.

The University of California and Cal State University are complex systems. But if this new funding formula proves successful at community colleges, I would support implementing it at the UC and/or CSU level.

I also support a Higher Education Coordinating Body so that our state government can better set goals across the higher education system. Right now, our colleges are governed by a mix of government and independent entities, making it difficult to have a shared vision for our state’s future. The state should also look at funding incentives to improve transfer pathways from community colleges to four-year universities.

- 2) **While California collects a substantial amount of education data, gaps in both collection and reporting hinder our ability to know how well students are learning and progressing through school, from kindergarten to college. Currently, we have no way to see where students from California high schools attend college and how successful they are, and it’s difficult to have a full picture of how well our educational systems are serving low-income students and students of color. As a technology powerhouse state, it is unacceptable that we do not know how many of our high school graduates progress to and through higher education — something 45 other states can already do. If elected Lt. Governor, would you support a longitudinal data system, and if so, what specific steps would you take in your first year in office to put such a system in place?**

I support a longitudinal data system to track students as they move from school to the workforce - because California can do more to support our students and measure successful outcomes from preschool through higher education. Forty-five states have a system linking K-12 and higher education data, and while California leads the nation in so many ways, when it comes to education, we have fallen behind.

While privacy is a real concern, especially for minors, it should be a priority to ensure this data system is secure and safe.



The Education Trust–West

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Office: Lieutenant Governor

Candidate: Eleni Kounalakis

SB-1224 was introduced this year, but stalled in committee. As Lt. Governor, I would work with the legislature and sponsor a bill that moves this issue forward, and I would be a vocal advocate in the halls of the Capitol and in the public arena.

- 3) **As students go back to college campuses this fall, many are facing food and housing insecurity. While tuition increases were not a part of the state budget this year, non-tuition expenses continue to be a huge barrier to access and success in our higher education systems. If you become the state's next Lt. Governor, what would you do to improve our financial aid systems and address the problem of non-tuition expenses in our state?**

I am the only candidate in this race who has pledged to oppose all tuition increases for California's students at our UCs and CSUs. But tuition hikes are only partly responsible for the soaring cost of higher education.

I have travelled to all 58 counties in California on this campaign, and visited several UC and CSU campuses along the way. I was shocked to hear that students pay between \$800 and \$1,800 per month to live in dormitories, and that a major portion of student debt is incurred due to housing expenses. I spent 18 years delivering affordable homes to working families in the Sacramento region, and as a housing expert, I know I can find better solutions to provide affordable housing to our students.

Nearly half of UC students and 42% of CSU students qualify as food insecure - too many students are faced with the choice between a bed or books or even a meal. Our students' academic experiences are enriskened under the pressure of rising costs.

While 80% of students at the CSU receive financial aid, the truth is the state is turning away tens of thousands of students because it cannot keep up with the demand.

We have to address the issue of capacity. The average student is now graduating in five or more years. If the process was more transparent and easier to navigate, and if more of the required courses were available, then students could graduate on-time, further lowering their cost, reducing the amount needed to borrow, and opening up more spots to incoming students.

- 4) **In 2017-18 more than 340,000 students qualified for a Competitive Cal Grant award, but only 25,750 grants were available. In the past decade the number of students who are eligible for Competitive Cal Grants has more than doubled, while the number of awards available has increased by less than 15%. In other words, the state runs out of money for qualified students and isn't able to provide them with a Competitive Cal Grant. If elected Lt. Governor, what would you do to expand access to the Cal Grant in order to serve more nontraditional students?**

As a UC Regent and CSU Trustee, I will fight hard to expand access to Cal Grants. I am the daughter of an immigrant who started out as a farmworker, and I was the first in my family to graduate from a four-



The Education Trust–West

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Office: Lieutenant Governor

Candidate: Eleni Kounalakis

year university. My grandmother couldn't read or write, and she could have never dreamed of the opportunities that I have had in my life - to run a successful business and serve as President Obama's Ambassador to Hungary.

During my campaign for Lt. Governor, I have visited a dozen of California's universities all over the state and in the Central Valley. Two of the schools I visited were CSU Stanislaus and UC Merced - at both schools over 70% of students were first generation students. California's colleges and universities serve as drivers for social mobility and expand opportunities for more Californians to succeed.

For every \$1 invested in colleges and universities, the state sees a return of \$4.50. Investing in higher education is critical to California's future. As Lt. Governor, I will fight for a greater allocation from the General Fund for higher education, and will advocate for other sources of revenue, including an oil extraction fee on Big Oil to fund education. Along with Texas, California is the only major state that doesn't tax oil companies with an extraction fee. We also need to take hard look at closing loopholes within Proposition 13. Consensus is building for tax reform in our state. Closing loopholes and making sure businesses are contributing their fair share is essential to the health of our society, and ultimately to our economy.

We need to meet demand of eligible students for Cal Grant and ensure the next generation can access affordable higher education and contribute to California's economy.

The Education Trust–West is recognized as a public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. As such, Ed Trust–West does not endorse or oppose any candidate for elected public office and this questionnaire is intended for educational purposes.