



The Education Trust–West

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Office: Governor

Candidate: Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom

- 1) *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 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?*

As Governor, I will reassert California as an education data leader and fully support a longitudinal data system. The public deserves to know whether all students, regardless of background, have access to good schools and equitable funding. I know this transparency will enable educators to better tailor supports and remove barriers to opportunity.

We must link early childhood, K-12, higher education, and workforce data systems to more productively identify what practices are working and where our resources should be deployed. We'll be able to determine if the interventions we currently have in place are preparing our children for the 21st century workforce or leaving them behind. Streamlining this information will help usher in a new era of accountability and better serve California's students as they progress through the education system.

- 2) *Applying for financial aid is a critical step for students who want to attend a postsecondary institution. California currently ranks 30th in the country for FAFSA completion among high school seniors, and many of those who did not complete a financial aid application were either low-income students or students of color. Louisiana has taken steps in recent years to improve completion numbers and now leads the nation in financial aid application completion. If elected, what actions would you undertake to make sure more students get information about and complete the FAFSA or California Dream Act Application?*

As Governor, I will ensure high schools across California do all they can to make students aware of their financial aid options. It is important to me that students receive all of the aid they are eligible for, and that we don't leave critical financial aid dollars on the table that could benefit students and their families. This will include providing necessary training to high school and community college administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers who students may rely upon for information. I will also ground all conversations about tuition and financial aid in the full cost of attendance to reflect the actual cost of postsecondary education, and will work to bolster our Cal Grant program. That commitment includes my continued support to defend the financial aid programs undocumented students are legally entitled to under AB 540 and The California Dream Act, and to provide the resources necessary to ensure undocumented students are aware of the opportunities available to them.

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2018 Education Equity Candidate Questionnaire California Gubernatorial Candidates

3) *California is struggling to attract and retain teachers, especially teachers in STEM fields and those who reflect the demographics of our students. While the vast majority of California’s students are from communities of color, 63% of teachers are white. Teacher diversity matters for a multitude of reasons. If elected, what concrete steps would you take to diversity the teacher pipeline and incentivize teacher retention, especially among teachers in STEM fields and teachers of color?*

Unlike U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, we will attract teachers, not attack teachers. Our state faces an acute teacher shortage, particularly in early education, special education, bilingual education and STEM. A full 80 percent of California’s school districts reported experiencing a teacher shortage last year. While this is a widespread problem, I understand that California communities with greater proportions of students of color and students living in poverty have been especially impacted by both shortages and high rates of teacher turnover. For California students to succeed, I understand we must keep quality teachers in the classroom.

Educators deserve support for their own learning. I will invest in high-quality preparation for both teachers and principals, service scholarships to underwrite preparation for those who will become teachers in high-need fields, mentoring for all beginning teachers, and useful professional development — not the drive-by workshops or “spray and pray” approaches that most teachers have learned to dread. My plans provide incentives for schools to set aside time during the day for teachers to collaborate. I will also focus on engaging teachers of color and administrators to understand their needs and build holistic development programs. For example, providing training for principals and other school administrators on the importance of staff diversity and the mechanisms for retaining teachers of color is critical; studies have shown that teachers of color in schools that are predominantly white are less likely to leave the profession if they feel strongly supported by their administration.

My investments in teacher professional development and recognition — through vehicles like National Board Certification and the Instructional Leadership Corps, for example — will help the state develop a cadre of expert mentor teachers. Ensuring that teachers are involved in developing local school plans for improvement, building on their expertise and knowledge of what works, will move California schools and student learning forward.

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- 4) *Five years into the Local Control Funding Formula, school districts are benefiting from more equitable and flexible funding. However, many local stakeholders struggle to understand how the money is being spent to benefit schools and students. If elected Governor, what steps would you take to make K-12 education spending more transparent?*

In the same spirit as my aforementioned support for a longitudinal data system, I believe transparency in education spending is crucial to ensuring we're investing effectively in our students. That applies to the spending decisions made through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The LCFF made high-needs students a priority in policy, but the hard work of implementation to truly serve students' diverse needs is still a struggle with limited resources, and there have been challenges in making the system approachable. As Governor, I am committed to effective parent and local engagement in these budgeting decisions. Full funding for Prop 98 and successful implementation of LCFF are key next steps for our public education system. Governor Brown's Local Control Accountability Plans must be continued, so we can ensure that funding is focused on schools that need it most.

- 5) *Although California has invested more money in its K-12 schools, California still ranks 41st nationally when it comes to per-pupil spending. In addition, many districts are seeing their expenses rise faster than revenues. If elected Governor, what steps would you take to improve education funding and ease the burden on cash-strapped school districts?*

California is the most prosperous state in the nation and yet ranks woefully low overall education funding. If California wants to keep our mantle as the fifth-largest economy in the world, we need to reinvest in our economic engine — our cradle to career public education system. I pushed for increased K-12 education investment as Mayor and will make it a top priority as Governor.

I will protect the integrity of Proposition 98 while ensuring that it is a floor, not a ceiling and will push for class-size reduction at all grade levels. As outlined earlier, I also believe Governor Brown's Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control Accountability Plans must be continued, so we can ensure that funding is focused on students who need it most. Moreover, we need to empower local communities to control their own destiny and seek additional sources of revenue for public education. At the same time, I will seek to ensure that communities without the ability to pass these increases will not be shortchanged.

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