

TIPPING POINT:

ENSURING EDUCATION EQUITY AND JUSTICE
IN A DEEPLY DIVIDED NATION



The Education Trust
EDTRUST.ORG

ED TRUST
UPDATE
OCTOBER
2021

LETTER FROM THE INTERIM CEO



Over these past 19 months, we have clearly seen the need for a movement for racial and education justice. I am proud of the work of The Education Trust in leading this movement with advocates across the country.

While local school board meetings have become battlegrounds in the culture wars, as some angry parents voice their opposition to mask mandates for students or the accurate teaching of American history in the classroom, equity advocates working alongside Ed Trust have pushed back with the support of science and facts. And now that federal funds have been allocated to most states through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), Ed Trust is working closely with equity advocates to ensure that those funds are spent on addressing unfinished learning or students' social-emotional needs, which have been heightened by the pandemic, instead of [sports facilities and gym equipment](#).

Indeed, our country is at a tipping point. Advocacy is critical at this juncture — and we, and all those who believe in equity and justice, can't let our collective guard down or let our souls get weary.

Ed Trust's voice is as strong as ever as we continue to advocate for our nation's most underserved students. In late September, I [testified](#) before the U.S. House Committee for Education and Labor Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education. There, I highlighted best practices for safely reopening schools and underscored the need for ARP funds to be used equitably to meet students' needs and make lasting change. I also [testified](#) before the U.S. House Committee on Rules about the role of schools in ending hunger and improving nutrition.

On our blog, [The Equity Line](#), we published a series of posts highlighting the challenges that schools and districts face as they reopen amid a pandemic and the issues — such as [school nutrition](#), [unfinished learning](#), [mental health](#) — affecting students right now. Thanks to unprecedented ARP funding, schools should have the resources to address these issues — but there is a need for transparency. Families and advocates can and should ask [where ARP funds are going](#).

As our update will show, families and advocates have strong allies in us as we speak out for justice for underserved students in many venues, including major news outlets (e.g., [CNN](#), [MSNBC](#), [NPR](#), [The New York Times](#), and more). And John B. King Jr., president, continued to represent us well, as he spoke out against injustices at many virtual conferences including those attended by [district- and school-leaders](#), [prospective teachers](#), [advocates](#), [business leaders](#), and [students](#) themselves.

The moment is upon us, as advocates, to dedicate ourselves to fierce advocacy and to use every resource we have to push, prod, and cajole policymakers into doing right by our students. Although there is so much pessimism about the future, I choose to be optimistic. Throughout our nation's history — and even, as we've seen, during this pandemic — there is power in communities who band together to improve one another's lives. There is power in forceful advocacy that forges better policies and a new path forward. There is power in student activism to mobilize folks to push for a better tomorrow. And there is power in believing that things can change for the better.

Ed Trust is dedicated to using our power to advocate for a brighter and fairer future. We know that, with your support, together, we can tip the scales toward equity and justice in education.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Forte". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "F".

Denise Forte

Interim CEO of The Education Trust | [@dm_forte](#)

DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD, WE CONTINUED TO EXECUTE OUR THEORY OF CHANGE BY ENGAGING IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

LISTEN:

Ed Trust serves as a vigilant watchdog. We monitor policy proposals and engage legislators, parent and family coalitions, educators, advocates, and students to better understand context and conditions to inform our advocacy.

RESEARCH:

Tapping the power of quantitative and qualitative data, Ed Trust publications and materials focus on policy, practice, and community tools that are either effective in — or detrimental to — advancing equity. From teacher diversity to college completion, Ed Trust is a thought leader on key issues due to our extensive research and subject matter expertise.

ENGAGE:

Ed Trust engages policymakers, practitioners, and advocates to build a diverse coalition of people from various sectors and backgrounds. This increases political and public will to bring meaningful change for the students we serve.

SECURE:

All of our efforts should result in the adoption of meaningful changes in policy and practice, opening up opportunities for students of color and students from families from low-income backgrounds.

THE NATION IS AT A TIPPING POINT

Should children wear masks in school? Should educators teach students about systemic racism and America's troubled history with race and inequality? How should COVID-19 recovery money be used to address unfinished learning? How should students' social-emotional needs be addressed?

Issues affecting students' lives are being hotly debated, and there has been a [concerning spike in harassment and threats against school board members](#). The nation is at a tipping point, and it is important that our leaders get the answers to these questions right. The health and academic well-being of our students depend on it.

We, at The Education Trust, continue to boldly speak out for what is right for students, particularly those who are continually and deeply underserved. Our mission is to ensure that every student has the resources they need to reach their full academic potential and to be equipped to live the life of their choosing. We are activating our networks and working alongside our partners on many fronts. If we act together, we can win together. And win, we must.

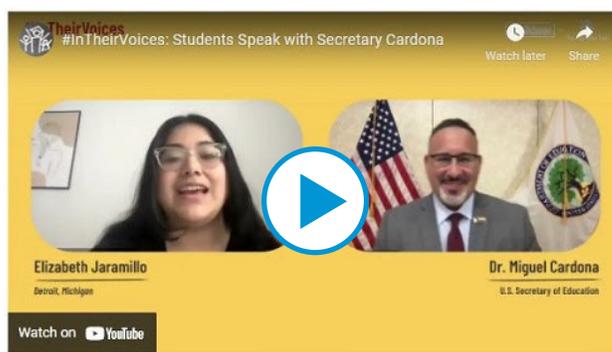
During this reporting period:

We spoke out for our earliest learners in a groundbreaking [New York Times](#) story about how the pandemic has dampened school enrollment, particularly among Black 5-year-olds from low-income neighborhoods. The piece explained that more than 1 million children did not enroll in local schools last school year. The shift to remote instruction and parental concerns about schools' ability to make it work successfully were factors in that decline.

- In *The New York Times* piece, Kayla Patrick, senior P-12 policy analyst at Ed Trust, noted that local schools that are back in session must work to restore relations with the families of color who left them: "They need to know in-person instruction is proven to be better. We want to make sure that schools are rebuilding that trust."
- Kayla also appeared on [MSNBC's Yasmin Vossoughian Reports](#), where she discussed unfinished learning, the use of ARP funds, and the mass exodus of kindergartners from public schools.



Speaking of our earliest learners, Carrie Gillispie, Ed.D., senior P-12 research associate, joined Dana Goldstein, a *New York Times* education reporter, for a robust live conversation on [NPR's 1A](#). The discussion focused on ways to ensure that our nation's 3- and 4-year-olds have a successful school year after a year-and-a-half of unfinished learning.



U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona met with student panelists from Michigan, New York, and Tennessee, who recounted their experiences of learning during a pandemic and talked about the policy changes they seek in their schools, districts, and communities. [Watch the panel discussion](#), which Ed Trust organized as a way to help amplify students' voices in conversations that may impact their future.

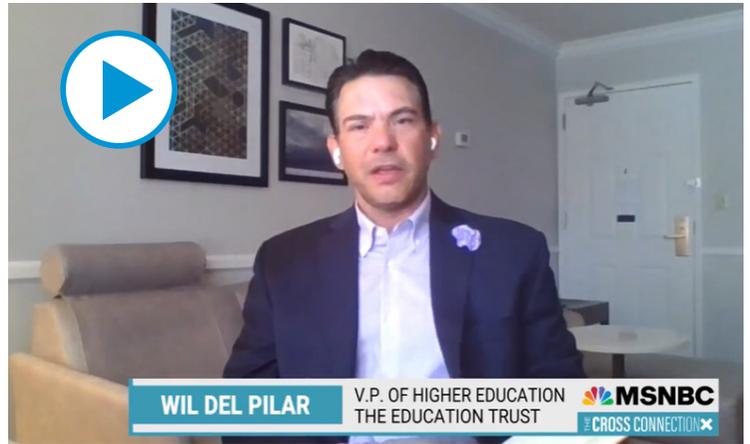


The pandemic and remote learning has wreaked havoc on education across the country. In some states, parents are being offered a chance to let their children take a mulligan and repeat the school year, as Ed Trust's Allison Socol, Ph.D., assistant director of P-12 policy, explained on [CNN's "Smerconish"](#). During her appearance, she discussed unfinished learning, the questions facing parents considering whether to have their children repeat a grade, and how school districts can use ARP funds to implement evidence-based strategies to catch students up.

We weighed in on college access and success amid COVID-19

As the pandemic's public health and economic effects continue to plague Americans, EdTrust has continued to underscore the disparate impact of COVID-19 on students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. Here are some examples of recent media engagement:

Wil Del Pilar, Ph.D., vice president of higher education policy and practice, appeared on [MSNBC's "The Cross Connection" with Tiffany Cross](#) to discuss the steep drop in college enrollment by students from low-income backgrounds amid the pandemic and what should be done to reverse this trend. He blamed the plunge on the high cost of college. He noted that many students from families with low incomes had to forgo their higher education dreams to help their families, who were more likely to be negatively impacted (financially and otherwise) by the pandemic: "College isn't affordable in this country, and part of the reason for that is the racial wealth gap. We leave students of color with no margin for error. That's why students end up working full time to be able to afford college."



In this *Politico* piece, "[The rush back to college campuses is leaving behind the most vulnerable](#)," Wil warned that this trend could exacerbate existing earnings gaps and inequality: "If we don't go get these students, there are students who just aren't going to show up at our institutions. Low-income students and students of color don't take a gap year — they leave school, and then we've lost them in higher ed." He was also quoted in a similarly themed *Inside Higher Ed* piece, called "[Reopening, With Equity](#)."



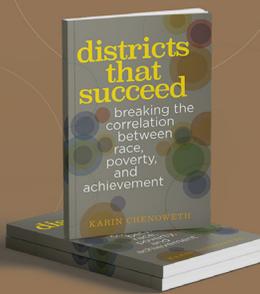
Jinann Bitar, Ph.D., our new director of higher education research and data analytics, noted in an [Inside Higher Ed article](#) that enrollment declines could have "long-term ripple effects" on social and economic mobility and, ultimately, on state economies, since "a bachelor's degree or a credential is still the most reliable way to the middle class with a secure job and benefits."



TIPPING POINT: Ensuring Education Equity and Justice in a Deeply Divided Nation

This summer, we hosted a [virtual book talk](#) about “[Districts That Succeed](#),” a new book by Karin Chenoweth, Ed Trust’s writer-in-residence. The event was moderated by Alia Wong, an education reporter at *USA TODAY*. It featured, Karin, Janice Jackson, Ph.D., former CEO of Chicago Public Schools and senior fellow at Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and Ed Trust’s Tanji Reed Marshall, Ph.D., director of P-12 practice. The discussion centered on the extraordinary progress that the Chicago Public Schools District has made over the last two decades — and why that news still comes as a surprise. Check out this [Washington Post article](#) to learn more about Karin’s new book. [And hear more about this promising school district in this episode of the “ExtraOrdinary Districts” podcast.](#)

The book is being used for professional development by districts in Richmond, Virginia; Carroll County, Maryland; Orange County, North Carolina; Evanston, Illinois; and by the Field Institute in California (founded by Cesar Chavez). This picture appeared on the Twitter feed of one of the regional districts in Ohio.



The Education Trust invites you to a virtual book talk about ***Districts that Succeed***.

FEATURING:

- Moderated by **ALIA WONG**, USA TODAY reporter
- KARIN CHENOWETH**, Author and Ed Trust writer-in-residence
- DR. JANICE JACKSON**, former CEO of Chicago Public Schools and Senior Fellow at Carnegie

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12
6:00 PM ET/3:00PM PT

[REGISTER NOW](https://edtrust.org/districtsthatucceed)
[HTTPS://EDTRU.ORG/DISTRICTSTHATSUCCEED](https://edtrust.org/districtsthatucceed)



In an [op-ed for Chalkbeat](#), Salwa Daouk, a first-year college student from Nashville who serves as an advisory member of our EmpowerED student voice network for Ed Trust in Tennessee, condemned the recent laws and rhetoric targeting critical race theory as thinly veiled efforts to hide the truth about racism in America. She also reflected on her own experience as a student, noting the harm that *not* being taught the truth about racism and *not* encountering enough diverse histories and texts can do. Salwa said she would like to see “a future with honest and wide-ranging history lessons and diverse reading lists — a future that will bring us closer to racial justice, educational equity, and real visibility for all.”

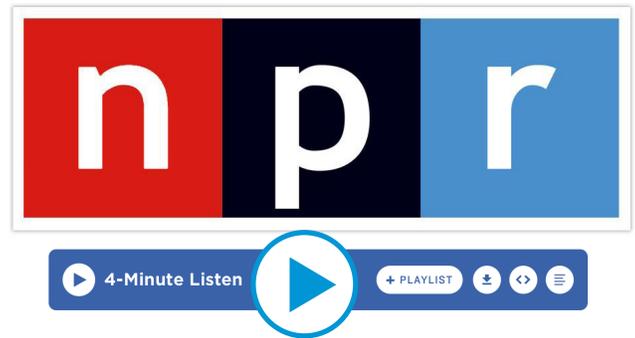
We commemorated **Hispanic Heritage Month** by celebrating some little-known but powerful Hispanic advocates who inspire us to continue our fight for justice. This year we highlighted the work of [Catalina Cifuentes](#), [Alberto Retana](#), [Jacinto Ramos Jr.](#), [Allie Garcia](#), and [Miriam E. Jiménez Román](#).



Gray Sterling, a Black and Mexican, first-generation, former low-income student, is our new assistant director who is working to advance equity and justice for underserved youth in Washington State. Gray has dedicated nearly 10 years to promoting educational justice, and economic opportunity for communities of color through strategic policy interventions and systems change. Read more about him in this [profile on The Equity Line](#).



Every Pride month, corporations, organizations, schools, and even the White House issue bold, rainbow-filled statements about LGBTQ+ people or make supportive but superficial gestures of support toward the LGBTQ+ community. But too often, these words and gestures ring hollow — unmatched by action and genuine support. Young people are watching — and taking notes. July 14 was International Nonbinary People’s Day, which celebrates individuals who do not conform to the gender binary and aims to broaden our understanding of gender fluidity. [In an Equity Line piece](#) published on that date, we urged readers to face up to their own inherent biases, learn from the LGBTQ+ community, and become better allies.



The Biden administration and House Democrats have introduced a bill that would give states billions of dollars of federal funding to eliminate tuition and fees at their community colleges. Speaking on [NPR](#), Wil Del Pilar, Ph.D., vice president of higher education policy and practice at Ed Trust, noted that this “would be one of the largest investments we’ve seen in higher ed in generations,” and “could change the landscape of higher education nationally” and extend what is considered “free education in this country beyond just high school.”

We advanced racial justice and equity in education in a series of Twitter chats.

#BlackStudentDebtChat

On October 20, @EdTrust, @CBCFInc, and @DebtCrisisOrg co-hosted a Twitter chat on the experiences of [#BlackBorrowers](#) and potential solutions to the [#BlackStudentDebt](#) crisis.



#FirstGenChat

On September 15, we hosted a [#FirstGenChat](#) with advocates, partners, and students about how policymakers and campus leaders can support [#FirstGen](#) students all year long.



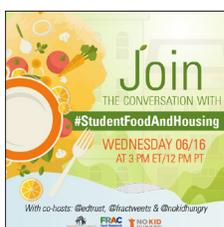
#BackToSchoolChat

On August 18, Ed Trust offices across the country talked about how states, districts, and schools can address the [#UnfinishedLearning](#) challenges facing students on account of [#COVID19](#).



#DiversifyTeacherPipeline

On July 21, @EdTrust, @afterschool4all, and @expand_school co-hosted a Twitter chat about ways to diversify our teacher workforce by encouraging after-school staff of color to become educators.



#StudentFoodandHousing

On June 16, we co-hosted a [#StudentFoodandHousing](#) Twitter chat with @NoKidHungry about the food and housing challenges facing students in the summer months and how [#PandemicEBT](#) changed things for the better this year.

To read more from The Equity Line and sign up to have posts sent directly to your email, please visit Edtrust.org/The-Equity-Line/





We continued to promote our educational equity agenda during this reporting period as Congress shifted from a singular focus on immediate COVID-19 relief toward legislative vehicles to implement systemic change. We also continued to work with the U.S. Department of Education on its education policy agenda and implementation of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act.

This summer, congressional Democrats embarked on a complex reconciliation process to enact a bill that, if passed, would make significant investments in child care, education, health care, and a variety of other areas and transform key policy goals into law. The Education Trust has been advocating for a series of equitable policy interventions to be included in the bill, both on its own and [with our partners](#). These interventions include:

- An increase in the maximum Pell Grant award and extending federal aid access to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients
- The creation of a federal-state partnership to enable tuition-free community college
- A college completion fund to create and scale new evidence-based student success programs
- [Investments](#) to strengthen and diversify the teacher pipeline
- Investments in historically Black colleges or universities (HBCUs), minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and, or tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) and their students
- New federal-state partnerships to increase equitable access to early childhood education and universal pre-K
- Nutrition provisions that will extend and expand the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer EBT) program and increase access to school meals
- Additional funding for home broadband connectivity for students

Those interventions are included in the bill's current version, but more must be done to ensure they are included in the final package, and Congress must pass this fall.

The Education Trust lifted this work in [a statement](#) issued in response to the release of the Build Back Better Act. Our experts helped make a case for various interventions via [blogs](#) and an article in [The Washington Post](#); meetings with policymakers; participation in social media days of action; by signing on to specific marker bills to [increase investment in student success programs](#) and [home broadband](#) and coalition letters in support of those and other provisions; and [providing testimony before Congress](#), specifically on the role of schools in ending hunger and improving nutrition.

[Interim CEO, Denise Forte, testified before the House Education and Labor Subcommittee for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education](#) at a hearing on "Back to School: Highlighting Best Practices for Safely Reopening Schools." While this hearing focused on COVID-19 relief and equitable reopening, she also advocated for several Build Back Better Act provisions in her written testimony.

Our testimony on COVID-19 relief and reopening school buildings culminated in our efforts over the summer to monitor ARP implementation. We were in constant contact with the U.S. Department of Education as it reviewed and approved state-level plans, and we tracked actions at the state level to inform our federal advocacy. [We wrote a joint letter with partners](#)

to U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona stressing the need for quality statewide assessments in the coming year to help inform policymakers implementing relief plans and parents concerned about the status of their children's education. This outreach was [covered in Education Week](#), and Terra Wallin, associate director for P-12 accountability, participated in a [Q&A blog for the Equity Line](#), making a case for statewide assessments.

During this time, we continued to urge the administration to take up our educational equity agenda. We [submitted a comment](#) to inform the U.S. Department of Education's upcoming release of new guidance on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline, an important goal of ours. We anticipate positive developments on this front in the coming months.

Following the announcement that the U.S. Department of Education will be initiating the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) for the 2021-2022 school year, we [issued a statement](#) lifting our previous comments and reiterating the importance of the CRDC. We also submitted a comment on the U.S. Department of Education's request for more information about the Proposed Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs. In it, we urged the U.S. Department of Education to consider the effects of COVID and prioritize equity when formulating grant priorities in the future. Ed Trust looks forward to helping to get the Build Back Better Act across the finish line to mark a successful end to 2021.

Tipping the Scale in Favor of Students Who Are Underserved by Our P-12 Education System

Addressing Unfinished Learning

As the U.S. Department of Education approves state plans for spending American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to aid in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, our "[Strategies to Solve Unfinished Learning](#)" briefs have been valuable resources for advocates and practitioners seeking to ensure that this once-in-a-generation investment in education is used to boost student learning.

In July, we launched a [map](#) showing how much K-12 education relief funding each state would receive from the federal government and how much of that funding each state must use — and allocate to districts — to address unfinished learning.

Kayla Patrick, senior P-12 policy analyst, penned two blog posts about how district leaders should use those dollars: "[Students Are Back in School Buildings, but Things are Not Back to Normal](#)" and "[7 Questions to Ask Your District Leader About Where ARP Funds Are Going](#)."

We also published an [advocacy letter template](#) that community members can use to urge local leaders to ensure that districts implement evidence-based, equity-focused strategies for accelerating student learning. Allison Rose Socol, Ph.D., assistant director of P-12 policy, was featured in an article in *The Hechinger Report* on "[How one district went all-in on a tutoring program to catch kids up](#)."



ENGAGE

SECURE

Pressing for Resource Equity



Through the [Alliance for Resource Equity](#) — Ed Trust's partnership with Education Resource Strategies (ERS) — we launched a monthly newsletter highlighting resources for practitioners and advocates tied to the [10 Dimensions of Resource Equity](#). We also began releasing a series of [guidebooks](#) designed to help district leaders — in collaboration with school leaders, teachers, community members, advocates, students and families — identify the root causes of their districts' existing inequities and to choose promising actions to address those inequities based on the distinct needs of students in their community. Seven more guidebooks will be released in the coming months.

In addition to developing these new resources, the Alliance for Resource Equity hosted two events in July.

First, we held a webinar highlighting how the [Teacher Quality & Diversity Guidebook](#) can be used to diversify the workforce.

Then, as part of a semi-annual series by the Alliance for Resource Equity, we hosted a half-day workshop for state-level advocates and policy professionals called "[Now What? Using Federal Aid for an Equitable Education Comeback](#)." This



workshop provided resources and information to attendees, so they can ensure that state and school district leaders are using federal aid to address the impacts of COVID-19 in fair, effective, and responsible ways. We also highlighted ways advocates can help ensure that state and district leaders focus on equity as students return to school buildings. Allison Rose Socol, Ph.D., assistant director of P-12 policy, and Kayla Patrick, senior P-12 policy analyst, led a session called "Pedal to the Metal: How States Are – And Should Be – Using Their Federal Funds to Accelerate Learning." Seventy to 100 attendees participated in each of the three sessions, and more than 300 registrants in total received slides and a video of the presentations for asynchronous viewing.

LISTEN

ENGAGE

Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline

A strong and diverse teacher workforce is more crucial for students than ever, particularly as school and district leaders develop plans to address unfinished learning and help students catch up after the disruptions caused by COVID-19. A growing body of research shows that having access to teachers of color benefits all students — and can be particularly transformative for students of color. Yet, only 20% of teachers in the United States are teachers of color.

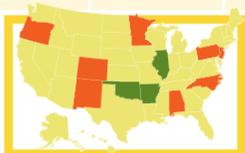
One underutilized strategy for increasing the racial diversity of the teacher workforce is to recruit and prepare those who have experience working in after-school or out-of-school time programs to enter the teaching profession. So says a groundbreaking new report released by Ed Trust, [A Natural Fit: Supporting After-School Staff of Color in Teacher Pipelines](#), which examines the experiences of current and former teacher candidates of color with after-school or out-of-school time experience to gain insights on how teacher preparation programs and state policymakers can entice more of them into the teaching profession and better support them for success.

Not surprisingly, many of the report's findings align with those of previous [reports](#) by The Education Trust on the experiences of teachers of color. Using Ed Trust's 50-state [Educator Diversity Data and Policy Scans](#) as a foundation, *A Natural Fit* offers a list of recommendations to help recruit, prepare, hire and retain after-school/out-of-school time staff as teachers.



RECRUIT AND PREPARE PEOPLE WHO WORK IN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS TO BECOME TEACHERS

who work in after-school programs to become teachers.



Going Beyond ESSA Compliance – A 50-State Scan of School Spending Reports

ENGAGE

For almost two years, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of [money](#) in affording schools the resources to conduct virtual instruction, provide meals, and ensure staff can respond to students' needs. Yet, for too long, data on school spending has been obscured or relegated to confusing reporting approaches that fail to provide the type of information that is helpful for district and school leaders or advocates who want to ensure equity in resource allocations.

Thanks to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states are required to include per-student school spending information on school report cards — putting that information in the hands of advocates and community members. While compliance with ESSA is a starting point, it doesn't go far enough. **You can't fix what you can't see.**

That's why Ed Trust analyzed all 50 states and the District of Columbia's reports to see how well the data can help generate insight about spending equity and promote action, and what is clear is that many states are falling short:

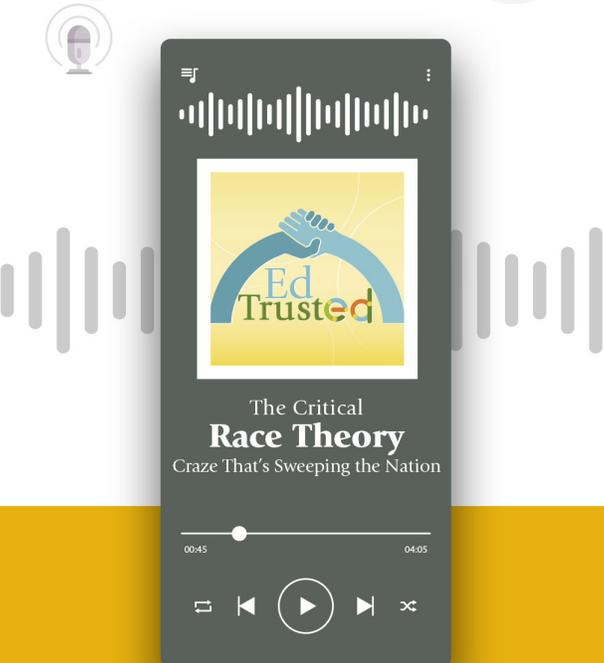
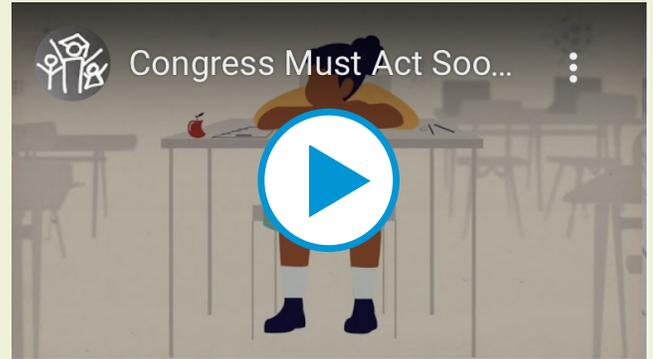
- 10 states failed to even include all the elements that are required by ESSA (that we examined).
- Just 17 states included spending comparisons across all schools in a district or in the state.
- Only five states (Arkansas, Illinois, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Tennessee) include visualizations of spending for all schools in the states or districts based on student need.

Check out [the full digital report](#) and [blog post](#) to see how states' reports stack up against our equity-oriented principles and what can be done to improve them.

Highlighting the Connection Between Nutrition and Learning

As many as [1 in 6 kids](#) may still face food insecurity as they re-enter the classroom. Over the last quarter, our team continued to center nutrition as a core educational equity issue and work to break down silos between education and hunger groups.

In August, Denise Forte and Pamela Taylor, the chief communications and marketing officer at Share Our Strength, chatted on Instagram Live about the critical role that school nutrition programs play in COVID-19 recovery. In September, we ramped up our federal advocacy efforts and issued a [statement](#) applauding the student nutrition supports, among other provisions, included in the Build Back Better Act. In September, Denise [testified](#) before the House Rules Committee about the importance of child nutrition programs in one of a series of events sponsored by Chairman James P. McGovern (D-Mass.) on “Ending Hunger in America.” In addition, we published blog posts on how hunger impacts students, [especially in the summer months](#), and [actions](#) state and district leaders can take to increase student access to school meals this year.



SUBSCRIBE
wherever you listen to podcasts!

Pushing to Teach Students the Truth About American History

[Legislators in at least 21 states have introduced bills restricting how teachers can talk about race and systemic racism with their students.](#)

This push is organized, strategic, and well-funded. It's also a concerted attempt to spread propaganda that schools have been taken over by a group of educators intent on humiliating and shaming White children as part of a project to foster division throughout the country. Some states — Texas and Tennessee among them — have passed legislation dictating what can and can't be taught in schools, in some cases explicitly banning critical race theory.

In response, Ed Trust is participating in a strategic partnership of aligned organizations focusing on communications and state-based tactical planning to support advocates fighting this battle on the local level — at school board meetings and in their communities — as well as in statehouses. We are also an inaugural member of the [Learn From History](#) coalition, which has released a press and media toolkit and actionable toolkits that advocates can use to ensure that [educators continue teaching thorough, accurate, and fact-based history](#). This group is a united band of [educators, school systems leaders, and education groups](#) who are countering efforts to restrict teaching the “hard parts” of history.

This summer, we also launched a new podcast, called “[EdTrusted](#)” by writer-in-residence Karin Chenoweth and P-12 director of practice Tanji Reed Marshall, Ph.D. The first season features historians, social studies teachers, psychologists, attorneys, and scholars like Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings. It focuses on recent efforts to ban so-called “critical race theory,” what's really behind them, and the troubling implications of these efforts to deny students a quality education.

Tipping the Scale in Favor of Students Who Are Underserved by Our Higher Education System


 ENGAGE


 SECURE

Expanding college education opportunities for justice-impacted students

Clearing the path to higher education for students who are, or were, incarcerated remains a top priority for Ed Trust.

In June, Satra Taylor, former manager of higher education justice initiatives, delivered written and oral testimony to the U.S. Department of Education. She spoke on the importance of implementing Pell Grant eligibility for students who are incarcerated now that Congress has finally lifted the decades-long ban on using Pell Grants for higher education programs in prison. In her [testimony](#), Satra implored the U.S. Department of Education to act with “deliberate haste” to implement Pell Grants for students in these programs and establish safeguards to ensure that higher education in prison pays off for students and taxpayers. In a *Politico* article, [“Advocates push to bring back Pell Grants for prison programs faster,”](#) she was also quoted urging the U.S. Department of Education to restore Pell Grants before the July 1, 2023, statutory deadline.

Soon afterward, the U.S. Department of Education announced that Pell Grant eligibility for prison education programs would be included in its first round of [negotiated rulemaking](#) this fall. We will remain engaged in the federal regulatory process alongside our equity-focused partners.

In July, Ed Trust, [Operation Restoration](#), [From Prison Cells to Ph.D.](#), and [Vera Institute of Justice](#) co-hosted the first in a series of Racial Equity Professional Institutes for higher-ed-in-prison practitioners: [Equity Beyond Pell](#). This institute explored racial equity issues faced by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students. William Freeman III, one of the Ed Trust Justice Policy Fellows, and Reverend Vivian Nixon, executive director of College & Community Fellowship, kicked things off by sharing their insights about the challenges of navigating the higher education system from inside and outside prison walls. Throughout, prominent and emerging leaders in the field discussed ways to improve learning for systems-impacted populations on campus and in prison. The institute addressed equity considerations in Pell restoration implementation, and participants had opportunities to engage with and learn from expert scholars, practitioners, and systems-impacted individuals. Justice Policy Fellow Patrick Rodriguez penned a [recap](#) of the event. Recorded sessions are available [here](#).

In late September, we co-hosted the second institute in partnership with the [Alliance for Higher Education in Prison](#). This event focused on building the knowledge and skills needed to increase advocacy, access, and accountability. Institute participants were empowered to co-create actionable strategies for their work in peer workshops facilitated by equity advocates.

The third institute will take place in early 2022. In the meantime, Fellows and Ed Trust staff are preparing to publish an advocacy toolkit for identifying and changing state policies that prevent justice-impacted students from accessing, completing, and benefiting from higher education.

The National Study on Black Student Loan Debt: Jim Crow Debt

RESEARCH

ENGAGE

About a year ago, Ed Trust launched the [National Study on Black Student Loan Debt](#). In October of this year, we released [our first report](#) detailing key findings from the study, which was co-written by Jalil Mustafa, Ph.D., an assistant professor of higher education at Villanova University, and Jonathan C.W. Davis, Ph.D., senior research associate at The Education Trust.

Their research team surveyed nearly 1,300 Black borrowers and conducted in-depth interviews with 100 of them. The study participants recounted their experiences with student loans, the emotional weight they carry, and their ideas about what should be done to address the Black student debt crisis in this country.

Jim Crow Debt outlines several key themes researchers heard from borrowers who participated in the study:

LISTEN

FINDING **1**

Student loans are not “good debt”

FINDING **2**

Income-driven repayment (IDR) plans feel like a lifetime debt sentence

FINDING **3**

Limiting student debt cancellation would harm Black borrowers the most

FINDING **4**

The federal government should cancel all student debt

The Chronicle of Higher Education published a story prominently covering the report, “[Black Borrowers Have Been Excluded From the Student-Debt Conversation, Report Says](#),” as did [CNN](#). Ed Trust will continue to advocate for an equity-focused approach to debt cancellation while pressing Congress to at least double the Pell Grant and make substantial progress toward debt-free college. Over the next year, we will continue to publish insights and recommendations coming out of the National Study on Black Student Loan Debt to bolster our arguments for our college affordability priorities.

EQUITY MATTERS BOOTCAMP

Reimagine.

Rethink.

Rebuild.



ENGAGE

On October 13-14, we hosted our biennial bootcamp — [Equity Matters: Reimagine. Rethink. Rebuild](#) — which featured more than 24 breakout sessions on higher education, K-12, early childhood education, communication skills, and other policy areas. This two-day virtual event provided tools and resources to advocates, community leaders, families, policymakers, and practitioners and a space to connect with others who are part of the movement to advance educational justice.

Recognizing that the 2020-2021 school year was challenging, this month's bootcamp showcased and inspired resilience. Our plenary sessions were robust and chock full of information that advocates could use immediately. One focused on "Policy Advocacy for the School Principals our Students Deserve"; another focused on "Critical Race Theory — The Attacks, Advocacy, and Opportunities in the New Public Fight."

Attendees also heard from Donna Harris-Aikens, acting assistant secretary of the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development at the U.S. Department of Education. Ms. Harris-Aikens talked about the Department's main priorities to address gaps in opportunity and achievement.

Our bootcamp raised awareness about crucial issues that need more attention and action, such as addressing food insecurity among college students, reimagining how school spending decisions are made, examining gaps in access to non-novice teachers, navigational based leadership — how to build resilience in advocacy, state plans to address unfinished learning, Black student debt, and more.

Videos of the sessions can be viewed [here](#).

Pictures From Our Equity Matters Photo Booth



Ed Trust WORKING IN THE STATES



The Education Trust in Texas

We marked the end of our first legislative cycle on the ground — which consisted of a bruising 140-day regular session followed by three special sessions — with an upbeat [recap video](#), a [two-pager](#), and a successful [funder briefing](#). Texas has been a focal point in the nationwide backlash against “critical race theory.” While multiple laws dictating how race and history are talked about were signed into law, this controversial legislation was met at every turn by persistent and coordinated advocacy, which included public opposition by nearly 100 organizations, 240 individuals mobilizing to testify at the Capitol, 700 media mentions, and more than 2,500 constituents contacting legislative offices.

We continue to defend [equity in education](#) while helping state and local advocates understand and respond to these new laws. We are helping partners to understand and engage with the [state’s education recovery plan](#), including how best to use the federal relief funds allotted to the state and districts for P-12 and [higher education](#). We are looking ahead to strengthening relationships and bringing urgent attention to equity issues in the interim legislative period.

Maryland: With our partners in the Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), we are working to ensure that the [Blueprint for Maryland’s Future](#) is implemented with fidelity. An initial step for implementing this law was establishing an Accountability and Implementation Board, which will oversee implementation and compliance and hold entities accountable for correctly putting the law into effect. In August, [MAREE wrote an op-ed](#) asking the nominating committee to prioritize candidates with expertise in racial equity. When the board candidates were announced in September, and there were no Latino nominees, the coalition released a follow-up statement decrying this omission, [which Gov. Larry Hogan and the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus echoed](#). We and MAREE will continue to push for structures and processes that will better support the delivery of the blueprint’s promise for Black and Latino students.



The Education Trust in Louisiana

Our Louisiana team celebrated as the state took a significant step toward greater equity in dual enrollment. Our last update reported that Louisiana’s Board of Regents extended its interim dual-enrollment eligibility policy, which makes having a minimum ACT score optional through 2023. We launched a social media awareness campaign ([Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)) for parents, students, and counselors throughout Louisiana in the wake of that extension. The campaign — which seeks to raise awareness about dual enrollment and its benefits and to encourage students to take advantage of the opportunities provided — has reached over 40,000 targeted groups in Louisiana. A primary goal of the campaign is to make this temporary policy permanent.



The Education Trust in Massachusetts:

Since spring 2021, we’ve been working with our [Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership](#) (MEEP) colleagues to develop resources for education leaders and advocates to help drive an equity-focused pandemic recovery in our districts and schools. In August, MEEP released the [Keeping Equity at the Forefront: Pandemic Recovery](#) toolkit, a web-based resource packed with ideas for how education leaders can use significant new federal and state resources to not only meet the needs of students and families in this critical moment but to tackle vast education inequities in our state that long predate the pandemic.

The goals of our new resource are twofold: (1) to inform district decisions around pandemic recovery, including how to leverage federal and Student Opportunity Act dollars, and (2) to support advocates — including students, families, educators, and community-based organizations — in helping to shape these recovery plans in their communities. To that end, each of the toolkit’s pages contains recommendations for education leaders, as well as questions for advocates to ask school and district administrators and school committee members.

Since its release, the toolkit has been viewed more than 1,200 times and has garnered attention from media and education leaders. Stories about the release ran in State House News, [NBC Boston](#), and several other outlets; more recently, a [Boston Globe editorial](#) referenced our recommendations as well. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education distributed the toolkit via its Commissioner’s Update newsletter, and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents also shared it with their network.



Ed Trust WORKING IN THE STATES

The Education Trust in Tennessee

Over the summer, we hosted a (virtual) listening tour across the state as part of an upcoming report, "[TN25: Mapping Our Future Together](#)." This initiative allows parents and families, students, teachers, and advocates to consider ways to use the nearly \$4 billion in state and federal pandemic aid and imagine a road to more meaningful and lasting change to schools and districts in Tennessee by the year 2025.

We have also been monitoring the implementation of bills passed in the 2021 legislative session, including a new law that prohibits specific discussions of race and racism in the classroom. We [hosted an engaging panel](#) of experts to help our [alliance members](#) learn about the implications of this new law and kept the conversation going in our #CriticalConversations Twitter Chat. One of our students published [an essay about it in Chalkbeat](#), and another had an [op-ed in the Knoxville News-Sentinel](#). Late in the summer, we issued a [statement on the release of the 2021 TCAP assessment data](#). And Kiah Albritton, our policy associate, made a case for why [Tennessee should use college funding levers to enroll and graduate more Black and Latino students](#).

The House Education Joint Summer Study provided another opportunity for The Education Trust in Tennessee to host a virtual watch party for advocates. Our watch party events, in which we live stream legislative meetings, are great opportunities for Tennessee advocates to learn about the legislative process and how education issues are framed and discussed. We gave members of the alliance a chance to sign on to an [advocacy letter to the TN Commissioner of Education](#) in response to the urgent need to help ensure that students can learn in person or access high-quality remote learning when necessary. We also launched our [EmpowerED](#) student voice network and featured many of our students on our new Instagram account [@empowered_tn](#). Last, and certainly not least, our team is growing! We are excited to welcome [Meili Powell](#), a Leadership for Educational Equity fellow, and [Breanna Sommers](#), a P-12 policy analyst, to team Tennessee.





Delaware

Along with our local partners, The Education Trust made significant steps to push for an equitable school funding system in Delaware. The Delaware General Assembly also made significant strides in education in the 2021 legislative session. [Delaware Senate Bill 56](#) invests more money in the Opportunity Funding portion of the education budget, which provides education supports for students from low-income communities and students who are learning English. This bill is a good temporary fix to increasing funding in education. Still, the entire funding system needs to be modernized to ensure that students who are most underserved receive greater resources. Signaling the need for this massive change, the General Assembly passed [Delaware House Concurrent Resolution 24](#), a resolution that celebrates the passage of SB 56 and the use of Opportunity Funding for student needs *and* mandates additional reporting by Delaware's department of education about key funding data and future analysis to highlight potential inequities in Delaware's funding system. Both chambers unanimously passed this resolution. We will now work to leverage these session wins and help advocates build their advocacy campaigns by providing policy analysis and strategic organizing support as we push for a full funding re-haul by 2023.

Washington

We are in the beginning stages of establishing our presence and scope of work in Washington State. This summer, we worked with several partners to develop an equity coalition focused on transforming Washington's education system to better serve Black and Latino students and other students of color. The coalition aims to elevate community voice to drive and inform its developing advocacy priorities, strategies, and legislative agenda for the upcoming session. The Seattle-area partners involved in this effort are Washington STEM, Black Education Strategy Roundtable, Community Center for Education Results, College Success Foundation, Stand for Children, League of Education Voters, Washington Roundtable, and One America, in addition to local and national funders. We are also working to advance ad hoc research projects that include assessments, school funding, and social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD) in early learning.



The Education Trust—West

BIG LEGISLATIVE WINS IN CALIFORNIA

SECURE

As a result of years of advocacy, targeted campaigns, and strong coalitions of students, families, educators and other advocates, the final California 2021-22 state budget includes many significant education equity policy wins, including two The Education Trust-West is particularly proud of, which focus on increasing college access and ensuring that equity-focused and actionable data is publicly available.

Data for the People

SECURE

The final state budget includes a \$15 million investment in a longitudinal data system spanning early learning through higher education. We not only advocated for the much-needed data system, but we played a key role in shaping the broader conversation and the state's work on developing the system proposal. Gov. Gavin Newsom's office even cited [five key principles](#) the state should follow in creating the new system, which The Education Trust-West initially outlined. In this year's legislative cycle, we made sure that the perspectives of local advocates were shared with decision-makers throughout the budget process. And we took particular care to increase engagement with early learning advocates to ensure equity in the early years component of the data system. The creation of this new data system is a massive win for equity in the state of California. We will continue to engage with the state leaders on the design and implementation of the system.



ENGAGE

All in for Financial Aid

SECURE

Another major policy that was signed into law in this year's California budget season is a requirement that all public high schools in the state ensure that every senior completes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA). The Education Trust-West advocated for this policy proposal and worked closely with community advocates and legislative champions through the "[All in for Financial Aid](#)" campaign, which highlighted the importance of financial aid application support for students who are underserved. We supported students and local advocates in urging the state to adopt this policy. Its inclusion in the final state budget is a major win and a key step toward increasing college access in the state and came as a clear result of our organizing efforts via the "All In" campaign. We also sponsored a bill in the legislature that will further clarify and strengthen the FAFSA completion policy. That bill awaits Gov. Gavin Newsom's signature.

Also awaiting the governor's signature are additional bills sponsored or supported by us, which would reinforce creating an equitable financial aid access ecosystem in California.

20 Years of Fierce Advocacy

ENGAGE

In September, we officially launched a campaign celebrating the organization's 20th anniversary with [a look at the history of The Education Trust-West's work](#), a social media campaign kickoff, and the release of our "[Vision for Racial Justice in Education](#)," which examines the current state of education equity in California, identifies clear goals for our race-conscious policy work, and will guide our next chapter of educational justice efforts.



Continuing the Push to Rebuild and Reimagine Education Equitably

Since the release last April of our K-12 guide to equitable recovery from the pandemic, "[Reimagine & Rebuild: Restarting School With Equity at the Center](#)," The Education Trust-West has been sharing recommendations from the guide, including in a presentation in July by Natalie Wheatfall-Lum, director of P-16 education policy, to the Chronic Absence and Attendance Partnership.

In August, The Education Trust-West released "[Voices From California Higher Education: Recommendations for Centering Equity Amidst Campus Re-Openings](#)," a policy brief outlining a clear path forward for higher education leaders navigating the pandemic and recovery from it. The brief outlines eight recommendations that higher education leaders should implement to make their campuses more equitable and student-centered this academic year. The recommendations developed by The Education Trust-West from a series of virtual listening sessions attended by over 450 higher education administrators, faculty, staff, and student service providers from across the state, are actionable and targeted to the state, district, and college-campus levels.

To continue ensuring that educator perspectives are involved in policy development as California recovers from the pandemic, we welcomed the second cohort of our Educator Advisory Council. The council, which is comprised of education practitioners, offers valuable insights, feedback, and thought-partnership to The Education Trust-West.



Stopping AAPI Hate With Actionable Research

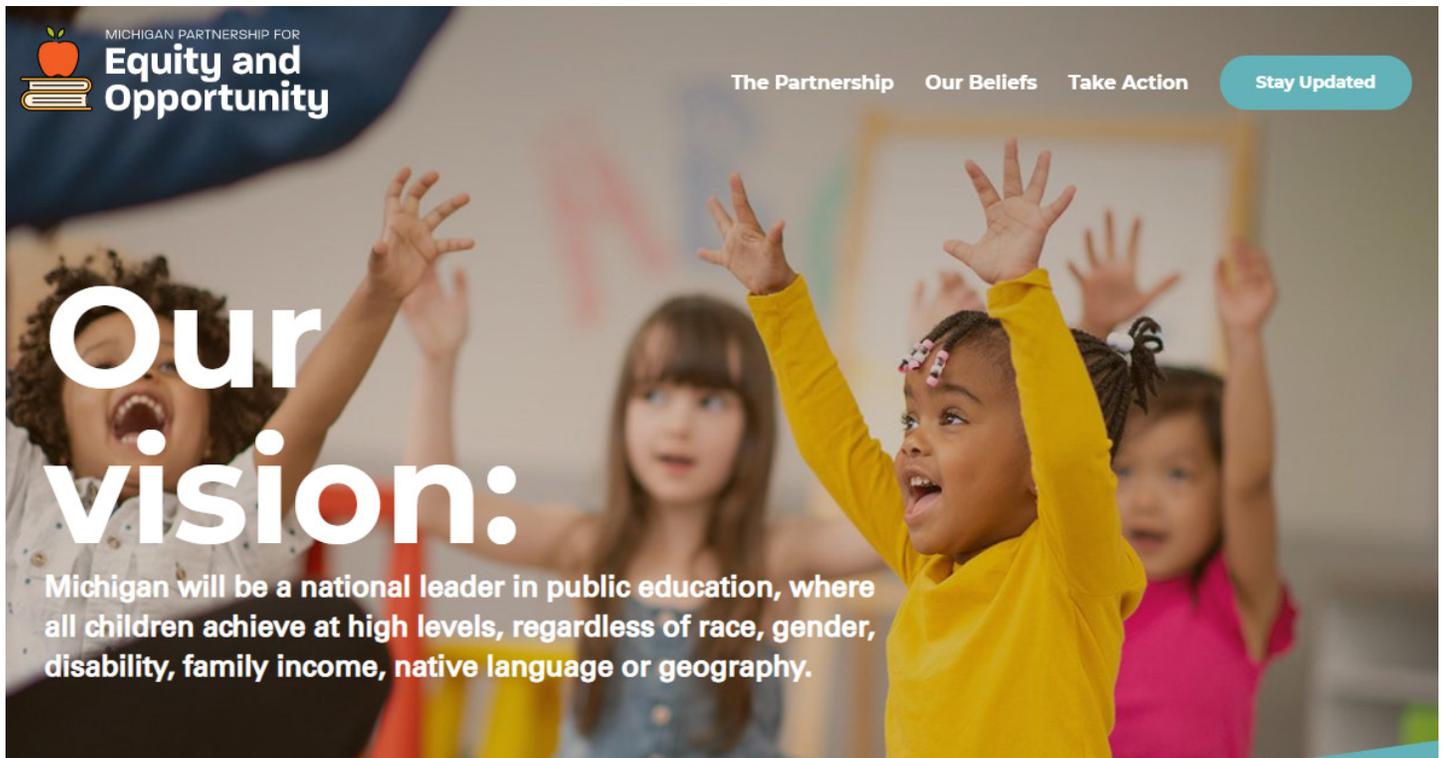
Recognizing the crucial role that policy research and advocacy work can have in rebuilding after the pandemic, The Education Trust-West released two research briefs on Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students in August. "[Anti-Asian Bullying and Harassment: Symptoms of Racism in K-12 Schools During Covid-19](#)" and "[A Racial Reckoning: Anti-Asian Racism and Exclusion in Higher Education](#)" focus on bridging the academic and the policy advocacy spheres in evidence-backed, action-oriented ways. Both briefs explain why the work currently being done to reckon with racism and white supremacy in our K-12 and higher education systems must include a focus on anti-Asian racism. The briefs are part of our "[Research in Brief](#)" series, in which we partner with scholars to produce actionable research in an accessible manner. The series harnesses the power of The Education Trust-West's outreach and advocacy approaches to help make sure the latest insights on educational equity from the academic world can reach a wider audience and have a significant impact on students' lives and educational journeys.



For more information, please visit EdTrustWest.org



The Education Trust—Midwest



Building a Movement for Equity and Opportunity, Education Trust-Midwest Launches a New Coalition



In September, The Education Trust-Midwest, alongside many partners, officially launched the [Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity](#) (MPEO), a diverse statewide, bipartisan coalition of civil rights, social justice, civic and business leaders working to promote educational equity for all Michigan students, especially those who are most underserved.

Reflecting the great diversity of Michigan — including Black, White, Latino, Arab Americans, and people from across the political spectrum and all around the state — the new coalition and its leaders came together to promote educational equity and to push the state to transform its education system — by dramatically overhauling school funding — into an engine of opportunity for all students.

The partnership includes leaders from the NAACP-Detroit branch, DTE Energy, Autism Alliance of Michigan, ACCESS, Detroit Parent Network, the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, and more. *See the full list of participating organizations, which we are working to expand, [here](#).*

More about the launch, our mission, and our members from all across the political spectrum, various professions, and different parts of Michigan can be found on [the partnership's website](#).

NEW REPORT COMPARES MICHIGAN'S INEQUITABLE SCHOOL FUNDING TO LEADING STATES



At the same time, The Education Trust-Midwest released a new analysis showing that Michigan is drastically underfunding its most vulnerable students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds and others hit hardest by the pandemic, compared to states with comparable funding approaches.

The new report, "[Engine of Inequality: Michigan's Education System](#)," leverages national research and compares Michigan's school funding formula with the formulas of states leading the way on equitable funding, as well as with the student-based funding formulas used by a broader group of states around the country.

Michigan, which has long had one of the most regressive school funding formulas in the United States, invests much less than other states in students who are English language learners, students from low-income backgrounds, and students with disabilities. Michigan has provided only about 9% more funding to school districts that educate the most students from low-income backgrounds in recent budget years compared to Massachusetts, a leading state that plans to provide up to about 105% more funding for students from low-income backgrounds in the highest poverty districts after new policies are fully phased in.

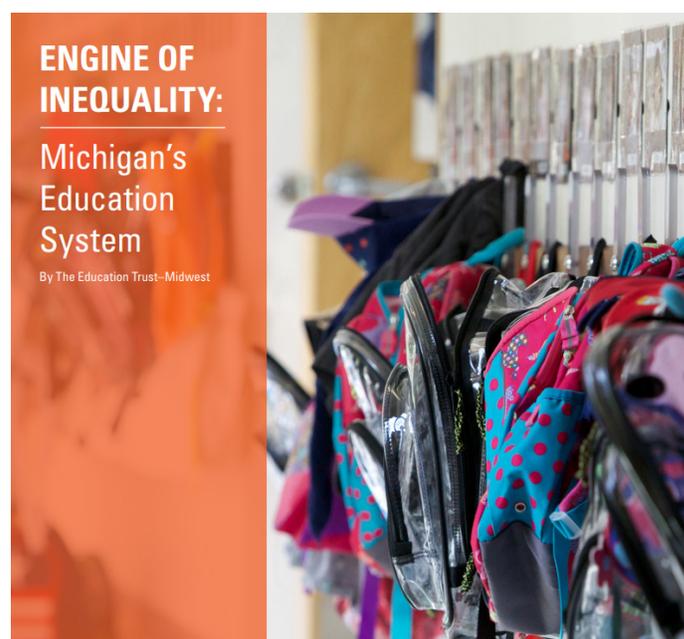
The report suggests strategies that state leaders should implement to prioritize Michigan students who are underserved — especially students from low-income backgrounds, students learning English, and students with disabilities. Those dovetail with the partnership's call for more transparency and accountability for new investments.

The report and voices of the diverse coalition members generated significant media coverage, including in [The Detroit News](#), [Crain's Detroit](#), [Chalkbeat Detroit](#), and the [Detroit Free Press](#). Reporters and advocates referred to the report in media interviews at the state's annual Mackinac Policy Conference.



Key findings from the report by The Education Trust-Midwest include:

- Michigan's supplemental funding weight for students from low-income backgrounds is only about one-tenth the size of weights used by leading states, and research and best practices indicate that more funding is needed to provide fair and meaningful access to opportunity.
- The size of the funding increase that Michigan is providing for students who are learning English is among the lowest in the country, according to a comparison across the 29 states that apply a weight or multiplier to the base amount for these students.
- On average, Michigan's highest-poverty districts have long received less state and local funding than Michigan's lowest-poverty districts, despite serving student populations with significantly greater needs.
- Leading states such as Massachusetts and Maryland have recently passed new policies to provide significantly more funding for students from low-income backgrounds and students who are learning English than Michigan offers.



For more information, please visit EdTrustMidwest.org



The Education Trust—New York



New York Equity Coalition

The New York Equity Coalition Outlines Policy Priorities for Next New York City Mayoral Administration

As New York City prepares to elect its next mayor, the New York Equity Coalition of civil rights, education, parent and family, and business groups released a blueprint for the next mayoral administration to ensure more educational equity from early childhood through college and in the workplace.

An equity-focused agenda will be particularly crucial as New York City rebuilds after the pandemic, which has exacerbated educational inequities deeply entrenched in the system.

The New York Equity Coalition is calling for the following educational equity priorities to be included in the next mayoral administration's agenda:

- Invest city resources to help address pre-existing inequities exacerbated by the pandemic, including expanding community schools; providing a comprehensive, equity-driven approach to early childhood education; addressing mental health and social-emotional learning in schools; providing academic support; and addressing the digital divide.
- Improve college and career readiness by improving equitable access to advanced coursework, supporting postsecondary transitions for high school seniors, and improving postsecondary attainment.
- Address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, including by expanding integration/desegregation programming, expanding initiatives that promote educator diversity and retention, and prioritizing inclusive instructional leadership and curricula.

Read more about the recommendations [here](#).



The Education Trust—New York Announces 12 High Schools as Winners of The New York FAFSA Completion Challenge

Despite the challenges of supporting students with college financial aid applications while many schools were operating remotely, the 12 winners of EdTrust—NY's 2021 FAFSA Completion Challenge found innovative ways to help students successfully fill out FAFSA applications.

The schools used creative ways — from hosting virtual workshops to scheduling one-on-one virtual sessions with students and parents and families — to help students navigate the process and complete their applications for financial aid, which can be a crucial factor in determining whether students from low-income backgrounds have an opportunity to attend college.

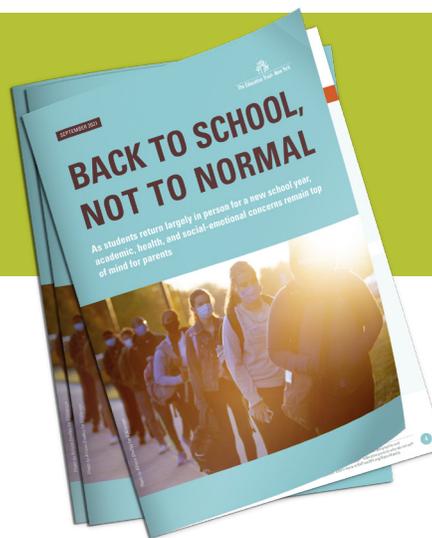
This year's winners serve as models for other high schools across New York State, where the overall FAFSA completion rate dropped from 59.3% last year to 56.9% this year, as of May 21, underscoring the critical need for high schools to help students and families with the application process.

Each of the winners of The New York FAFSA Completion Challenge — in which at least half of students must be from low-income backgrounds — received \$750 to award a scholarship to a graduating high school senior planning to attend college in the fall.

Learn more about the project and read about challenge winners [here](#).



NY FAFSA Challenge



Poll: Majority of New York State Parents Indicate Strong Support for a Remote Learning Option as Well as Safety Precautions and Resources for In-Person Instruction



As students across New York State returned to school in person for the first time in 18 months, a majority of parents indicated that they would choose a remote learning option if one were available, according to a poll we commissioned.

That was true across racial groups, although Black parents were far more likely to say they would choose a remote option (72% compared to 55% of White parents and 69% of Latino parents). The demand for remote learning was even higher in New York City, where 79% of all parents said they would choose a remote learning option if one were available.

Parents also identified many academic and social-emotional concerns heading into the new school year, including whether their child is on track academically and whether they will receive the social-emotional and behavioral supports they need to acclimate to full-time, in-person learning.

The results of this latest poll — the sixth since the start of the pandemic — underscore the critical need for state and local education leaders to listen to the voices of parents and

act with the greatest urgency to provide their children with the resources and support they need to safely thrive this school year — including a remote learning option and clear contingency plans in case school buildings need to close or students need to quarantine.

“In this unprecedented moment, we can and must do better for New York families, and that starts with listening to the people who know their children best — parents,” said Dia Bryant, executive director of The Education Trust–New York. “Our district leaders must respect the wishes of parents and offer families the specific supports they need to ensure that their children can learn, grow, and thrive — now and in the future. Parents agree that in-person instruction is ideal, and they are aware of the many challenges that we are all facing. We must do everything possible to keep our children safe and healthy so that they can focus on learning.”

Read more poll findings [here](#).

Poll: New York City Residents Overwhelmingly Support Government Investment in Early Childhood Programs



As New York City continues to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, a new poll suggests that New Yorkers overwhelmingly want the next mayor to address child care needs. Action on this critical issue would provide economic relief to working parents and help our youngest New Yorkers stay on track developmentally.

Nine out of 10 residents indicated that child care is a burden for New York City families, and 86% ranked improving access to free or low-cost child care as a priority for the next mayor. These results are driven by Black and Latino residents, nearly half of whom indicated that finding child care is a significant challenge in New York City, compared to 38% of White residents.

The poll findings highlight the tremendous stress and economic instability New York City families experienced during the pandemic. Some of this stress could be relieved if all families, especially those disproportionately impacted by financial hardship during the pandemic, had access to high-quality, affordable child care.

Read more poll findings [here](#).

To learn more about all of our efforts in New York, please visit, EdTrustNY.org

Why Are We Hopeful?

During turbulent times such as these, it's important to remain optimistic and to be hopeful. To wrap up this EdTrust update, our staff wanted to share with you what gives us HOPE!

What Gives You Hope?

“

“Students who have the opportunity to spend time with their teachers and their peers again as vaccination becomes available.”

Wing Yi (Winnie) Chan, Ph.D.
Director of P-12 Research
The Education Trust,
National Office

”

“

“When big policy wins feel far away, I remind myself that every generation eats the fruit of trees planted by ancestors we never met. ‘Getting our hands dirty’ means doing soil work and soul work. Even though we may be sowing seeds of crops, we will never harvest or taste, and I am grateful that someone thought enough of me to do the same, and I am inspired to continue that legacy.”

Kayla C. Elliott, Ph.D.
Director of Higher Education Policy
The Education Trust, National Office

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“Last week, we visited a high school in California where students were joyfully describing how they felt seen, heard, and reflected in their ethnic literature class. Rigor came through their Latino teacher, who challenged them to explore and learn about rich and engaging topics that they hadn't experienced in their schooling.”

Jana Luft
Senior Educator Engagement Associate
The Education Trust-West

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“In a society that is more deeply divided than ever, more and more people are joining activists in pushing for equity and justice.”

Joe Weedon
Assistant Director of P-12
Communications The Education
Trust, National Office

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“

“I am hopeful that good will prevail, we will overcome this pandemic, and change dramatically and profoundly.”

Maria Darie
Director of Finance
The Education Trust, National Office

”

“What gives me hope is how many more people are aware of and willing to talk about the injustices that have been brought to light in recent years but have existed in our country for far too long.”

Allison Socol, Ph.D
Assistant Director of P-12 Policy
The Education Trust,
National Office

“Students like Salwa Daouk in Tennessee, who are advocating for, in her words, ‘a future when Black and brown students’ histories and stories will never be misrepresented or excluded in the classroom. A future with honest and wide-ranging history lessons, diverse reading lists — a future that will bring us closer to racial justice, educational equity, and real visibility for all.”

Sarah King
Doctoral Resident, National and State Partnerships
The Education Trust, National Office

“I am hopeful that individuals across the political spectrum — friends, family, even people making small talk in line — recognize the importance and urgency of Ed Trust’s work when I tell them about my job.”

Emily Herd
Development Associate
The Education Trust, National Office

“What gives me hope is seeing dozens of new equity advocates and champions — from both sides of the political spectrum — standing up and demanding educational justice in my home state of Michigan in ways that I’ve never seen in my lifetime. It gives me hope that we, as a country, can make real traction on some of our greatest challenges for children of color and children from low-income backgrounds.”

Amber Arellano
Executive Director
The Education Trust-Midwest

“What gives me hope is the creativity and resiliency of our nation’s students — their ability to create new and unexpected ways of learning and advocacy via social media and the internet.”

Lange Luntao, MA
Director of External Relations
The Education Trust-West

“Children give me hope. I have two teenagers, so I’ve seen firsthand how Generation Z navigates this messed-up world they inherited. They care about their education; they care about the environment; they care about their civil rights and safety, and want solutions. So, we — as adults — have to help them. We would all benefit from taking a page from their book. Maybe we can make the road not as rocky for them to traverse.”

Letisha Marrero
Senior Editor/Writer
The Education Trust, National Office

What Gives You Hope?

"What gives me joy is seeing more people from impacted communities at decision-making tables. And I am hopeful that this will continue. As many have said, folks are tired of 'policy changes being done to them and not with them.'"

Nicolle H. Grayson
Communications Director
The Education Trust,
National Office

"The smile of recent college graduates. They are entering a world that is full of opportunities to make policies and practices more just for communities who are underserved."

María Elena Tapia
Accounting Associate
The Education Trust, National Office

"I have hope that after a hard year and a half, students, parents, and families are fired up and empowered to make positive change in education and beyond."

Rachel D. Stalcup
Chief Development Officer
The Education Trust, National Office

"Students at selective private universities calling for the end of legacy admits."

Wil Del Pilar, Ph.D.
Vice President for Higher Education
The Education Trust, National Office

"Our Tennessee EmpowerED Network and League Leaders give me hope that high school and college students are gaining access to the policymaking process to reimagine our collective future through their leadership."

Breanna Sommers
P-12 Policy Analyst
The Education Trust in Tennessee

"Students and families give me hope. Even in the face of ongoing and evolving challenges, they continue to demonstrate resilience, innovation, and persistence to advocate for high-quality education."

Terra Wallin
Associate Director for P-12 Accountability and Special Projects
The Education Trust, National Office

"I'm hopeful because of the diverse and dedicated professionals in positions of power, who are working hard every day on behalf of students who are underserved."

Reid Setzer
Director of Government Affairs
The Education Trust, National Office

"When the dominant voices of White and/or wealthy parents began to push back against conversations about racism and transphobia students experienced in their schools, students of color and queer students clearly and compellingly demanded that these school leaders listen to them. These young activists give me hope."

Jana Luft
Senior Educator Engagement Associate
The Education Trust-West

Every morning when I walk my children to the bus stop, I see caregivers of all types adjusting masks, giving hugs and well wishes. The children's eyes smile! And that lets me know that our future is in good hands."

Dia N. Bryant, Ed.L.D.
Executive Director
The Education Trust–New York

"A quality education is life-changing. I wake up every morning knowing that the work we do at The Education Trust to make school systems work better will open up the doors of opportunity for more Black and Latino students."

Tramelle D. Howard, J.D.
Louisiana Policy and External
Relations Manager
The Education Trust in Louisiana

"What gives me hope is that so many students are demanding that they learn accurate, complete history. And more teachers seem determined to help provide it."

Karin Chenoweth
Writer in Residence
The Education Trust, National Office

WITH GRATITUDE

The Education Trust would like to express our deepest gratitude for the support of our mission to expand excellence and equity in education for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds from pre-kindergarten through college. As the nation continues to go through this health pandemic, generous gifts from donors such as these provide the financial and moral support needed to continue to build a movement toward educational justice. We are forever thankful for your support.

Thank you!

The Education Trust

National Office

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Annie E. Casey Foundation
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Baptist Community Ministries
Barr Foundation
The Baton Rouge Area Foundation
Bezos Family Foundation
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Blue Meridian Partners (part of COVID-19 Emergency Relief)
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Seattle Foundation
Share Our Strength
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
The Spencer Foundation
TIAA Institute
Trellis Foundation
The Urban Child Institute
W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation
The Wallace Foundation
Walmart Foundation
The Walton Family Foundation
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
William T. Grant Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

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West

Anonymous
Ballmer Group
BelleJar Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
The Buck Family Fund of Marin Community Foundation
California Community Foundation
The California Endowment
The California Wellness Foundation
Chinese for Affirmative Action
College Futures Foundation
Community Partners
David & Lucille Packard Foundation
Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund
The Heising-Simons Foundation
Hellman Foundation
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Silver Giving Foundation
Sobrato Philanthropies
Stupski Foundation
Tides Center
Tipping Point Community
Verizon Foundation
Walter & Elise Haas Fund
The Walton Family Foundation
The Weingart Foundation
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Yellow Chair Foundation

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New York

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Carnegie Corporation of New York
The Carson Family Charitable Trust
The Heckscher Foundation for Children
The John R. Oishei Foundation
Lumina Foundation
The New York Community Trust
Overdeck Family Foundation
Pritzker Children's Initiative
Robin Hood
The Walton Family Foundation

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Midwest

Ballmer Group
Bosch Community Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
DTE Energy Foundation
Grand Rapids Community Foundation
The Kresge Foundation
PNC Bank
Steelcase Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation



The Education Trust

Our Mission

The Education Trust is a national nonprofit that works to close opportunity gaps that disproportionately affect students of color and students from low-income families. Through our research and advocacy, Ed Trust supports efforts that expand excellence and equity in education from preschool through college; increase college access and completion, particularly for historically underserved students; engage diverse communities dedicated to education equity; and increase political and public will to act on equity issues.

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