

Reaching for Equity and Excellence: California's Educational Progress and the Path Ahead

Thursday, February 21, 2019
9:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. PT

Tsakopoulos Library Galleria
828 I Street, Sacramento, CA

#CAWay

A forum to spur dialogue among stakeholders about progress, challenges, and next steps for California, featuring leading researchers, policymakers, advocates, organizers, and practitioners.



PRESENTED BY:



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Registration | 9:00–9:30 a.m.

Welcome

Patrick Shields | Executive Director, Learning Policy Institute | [@shields_lpi](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)

Louis Freedberg | Executive Director, EdSource | [@louisfr](#) [@EdSource](#)

Research Presentation

The California Way: The Golden State's Quest to Build an Equitable and Excellent Education System

Laura E. Hernández | Senior Researcher, Learning Policy Institute | [@lehernandez02](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)

Keynote

Tony Thurmond | Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education | [@TonyThurmond](#) [@CADeptEd](#)

Panel Discussion

Changing Culture and Practice to Advance Equity and Excellence

- Louis Freedberg (moderator) | Executive Director, EdSource | [@louisfr](#) [@EdSource](#)
 - Michael Kirst | Emeritus Professor of Education, Stanford University; Former President, California State Board of Education | [@Michael_Kirst](#) [@StanfordEd](#)
 - Francisco Escobedo | Superintendent, Chula Vista Elementary School District | [@JoseFra78449306](#) [@CVESDnews](#)
 - Danielle Letts | 5th Grade Teacher, Hubbard Media Arts Academy; 3–5 Director, Alum Rock Educators Association; Member, Instructional Leadership Corps | [@Danielle_Letts](#) [@AlumRockUnion](#)
 - Aurea Montes-Rodriguez | Executive Vice President, Community Coalition | [@CoCoSouthLA](#)
 - David Rattray | Executive Vice President, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce | [@david_drattray](#) [@LAAreaChamber](#)
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Break

Panel Discussion

Scaling and Sustaining Equity and Excellence

- Roberta Furger (moderator) | Senior Writer and Director of Storytelling, Learning Policy Institute | [@RobertaFurger](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)
 - Heather Hough | Executive Director, Policy Analysis for California Education | [@hjrough](#) [@edpolicyinca](#)
 - Rucker Johnson | Associate Professor of Public Policy, UC Berkeley | [@GoldmanSchool](#)
 - John Kim | Executive Director, Advancement Project California | [@flowing_chi](#) [@AP_California](#)
 - Tom Armelino | Executive Director, California Collaborative for Educational Excellence | [@CCEECA](#)
 - Patrick O'Donnell | Chair, Assembly Education Committee, California State Assembly (D-Long Beach) | [@AsmPatODonnell](#)
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Table Discussion

Lunches served

Next Steps for California

Linda Darling-Hammond | President and CEO, Learning Policy Institute | [@LDH_ed](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)

Closing Remarks

Louis Freedberg | Executive Director, EdSource | [@louisfr](#) [@EdSource](#)

Tom Armelino is the Executive Director of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE). He has also previously served as a leader at the national and state levels as the former Executive Director of the National Association of Schools, the Association of California School Administrators State President, and chair of the state-appointed Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team committee. In addition, Armelino served three 4-year terms as the Shasta County Superintendent of Schools and as superintendent in two school districts, during which time his schools received multiple California Distinguished School and Title 1 High Achieving School awards. [@CCEECA](#)

Linda Darling-Hammond is President and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute and the Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education Emeritus at Stanford University. She is the former President of the American Educational Research Association and a member of the National Academy of Education and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She has authored more than 500 publications and has conducted extensive research on issues of school reform, equity, and accountability. Among her most recent publications are *Be the Change: Reinventing School for Student Success and Empowered Educators: How Leading Nations Design Systems for Teaching Quality*. [@LDH_ed](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)

Francisco Escobedo is Superintendent of the Chula Vista Elementary School District, which serves more than 29,600 students in southern San Diego County. In prior roles, Escobedo has also served as Assistant Superintendent for Educational Leadership in the South Bay Union School District, Principal Research Analyst for the American Institutes for Research, President of the Board of Directors for the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce, and Classroom of the Future Board Member. He is also an adjunct professor of Educational Administration at San Diego State University. [@JoseFra78449306](#) [@CVESDnews](#)

Louis Freedberg is Executive Director of EdSource. For more than two decades, Freedberg has analyzed and reported on local, state, and national education policy. Before coming to EdSource, Freedberg was the founding director of California Watch at the Center for Investigative Reporting. He spent 15 years at the San Francisco Chronicle, where he was an award-winning education reporter, Washington correspondent, columnist, and member of the editorial board. [@louisfr](#) [@EdSource](#)

Roberta Furger is Senior Writer and Director of Storytelling at the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), and lead author of the report, *The California Way: The Golden State's Quest to Build an Equitable and Excellent Education System*. She manages LPI's blog and storytelling work to inform and advance policy, and leads LPI's state and national work with the Partnership for the Future of Learning. Prior to joining LPI, Roberta was director of research and writing at PICO California. Roberta has more than 20 years of experience researching and writing on K-12 issues. She has earned regional and national magazine awards, authored a book on gender and technology, and contributed to documentaries and collections on K-12 education. [@RobertaFurger](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)

Laura E. Hernández is a Senior Researcher at the Learning Policy Institute and is a co-author of the report, *The California Way: The Golden State's Quest to Build an Equitable and Excellent Education System*. A former teacher in both traditional public and charter schools, her work now focuses on local, state, and federal education policies and their equitable and democratic impact on districts, schools, and communities. Hernández's research has examined the politics of urban district reform, the implementation and impact of teacher evaluation models, and the stakeholder engagement efforts of leaders as they seek to build coalitions in support of their policy initiatives. [@lehernandez02](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)

Heather Hough is the Executive Director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). Prior to serving in this role, she led the partnership between PACE and the CORE Districts. Her recent work has focused on using research to strengthen state structures supporting continuous improvement and advance policies that support the whole child. Hough has worked in a variety of capacities to support policy and practice in education, including as an Improvement Advisor at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and a researcher at the Public Policy Institute of California, the Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University, and the Center for Education Policy at SRI International. [@hjrough](#) [@edpolicyinca](#)

Rucker Johnson is an economist and Associate Professor in the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, and faculty research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. He specializes in the economics of education, with a focus on the impacts of poverty and inequality on life chances. In 2017, Johnson received the prestigious Andrew Carnegie Fellowship. He has published his research in leading academic journals and been invited to speak at policy briefings at the White House and on Capitol Hill. In 2019, he published his most recent book, *Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works*. [@GoldmanSchool](#)

John Kim is the Executive Director of Advancement Project California. Since joining the Advancement Project in 2002, Kim has prioritized the needs of marginalized communities through advocacy and research initiatives on issues such as community health, redistricting, community engagement, voting rights, early care and education, and public finance. His community-building work garnered him a Local Hero of the Year Award (KQED Channel 9) and the California Community Foundation's Unsung Heroes Award, given for "outstanding excellence in community engagement." He has previously served as a member of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners for the City of Los Angeles and as a Commissioner for Los Angeles County's Commission of Children and Families. [@flowing_chi](#) [@AP_California](#)

Michael Kirst is Professor Emeritus of Education and Business Administration at Stanford University and former President of the California State Board of Education (1977–81, 2011–19). Before joining the Stanford University faculty, Kirst held several positions with the federal government, including Director of Program Planning and Evaluation for the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education in the U.S. Office of Education (now the U.S. Department of Education). He was a program analyst for the Title I ESEA Program at its inception in 1965. He was Vice-President of the American Educational Research Association and a commissioner of the Education Commission of the States, and he co-founded Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). Kirst has authored ten books and has published articles on school finance politics, curriculum politics, intergovernmental relations, and education reform policies. [@Michael_Kirst](#) [@StanfordEd](#)

Danielle Letts is a fifth grade teacher at the Hubbard Media Arts Academy. She has 20 years of teaching experience—all of it in the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District—and has spent the past 6 years at Hubbard, which focuses on using media arts to support student learning. There, she has also taught fourth grade and supported the school's participation in the Latino Film Youth Cinema Project. Letts is also a member of the Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC), a teacher-led professional development network in California, through which she leads trainings for teachers in her school and district. [@Danielle_Letts](#) [@AlumRockUnion](#)

Aurea Montes-Rodriguez is the Executive Vice President of Community Coalition, where she oversees education reform campaigns, community organizing efforts, and youth programs that are focused on building educational equity and dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline. Montes-Rodriguez also established Community Coalition's Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools, which have worked with more than 800 African American and Latino students to promote their love of reading and leadership skills. She is an ex-officio Board Member with InnerCity Struggle, and a member of the Building Movement Project, which works to build capacity within the nonprofit sector to promote social justice at the national level. [@CoCoSouthLA](#)

Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell was elected to the California State Assembly in 2014 and represents District 70, which includes Long Beach, Signal Hill, San Pedro, and Catalina Island. He is a teacher with over 20 years' experience in the classroom and a former member of the Long Beach City Council. As the current Chair of the Assembly Education Committee and a member of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance, O'Donnell has worked to secure funding for schools and community colleges and advocated for expanded career technical and vocational education opportunities. He has also passed legislation to protect vulnerable student populations, including English learners and LGBTQ students. [@AsmPatODonnell](#)

David Rattray is the Executive Vice President of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and oversees the Center for Education Excellence & Talent Development at the Chamber and UNITE-LA, the School-to-Career Partnership of Los Angeles. Rattray officially joined the Chamber in 2003 after being a strategic partner for several years. Since 1998, he has led UNITE-LA in building business and educational partnerships toward a goal of improving academic achievement and enthusiasm for learning for all Los Angeles students. Previously, Rattray spent more than 20 years in the foodservice distribution industry. Rattray served on the L.A. City Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council and was vice chair of the State Workforce Investment Board's Lifelong Learning Committee. [@david_drattray](#) [@LAAreaChamber](#)

Patrick Shields is the Executive Director of the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), where he most recently co-authored *The Tapestry of American Public Education: How Can We Create a System of Schools Worth Choosing for All?* Prior to joining LPI, Shields was the Executive Director of SRI Education, where he also served as Research Director for Teaching and California's Future. [@shields_lpi](#) [@LPI_Learning](#)

Tony Thurmond was elected the 28th California State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2018. Prior to this election, he served in the California State Assembly, where his legislative track record showed a commitment to creating better, more equitable education in California, including authoring legislation to move funding from the criminal justice system to school districts. Thurmond has devoted his career to public service, in particular in service to youth. Previously, he served on the Richmond City Council, was a Board Member of the West Contra Costa Unified School District, and spent 20 years working directly with families and youth as a social worker. [@TonyThurmond](#) [@CADeptEd](#)