

PUSHING FOR

JUSTICE

AMID MULTIPLE CRISES



The Education Trust

UPDATE
OCTOBER
2020

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



IT HAS BEEN EIGHT MONTHS SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, and the nation continues to grapple with multiple crises. More than 200,000 Americans have died from the coronavirus — a grim milestone and a number that once was inconceivable. Tens of millions of people are out of work, the right to vote is under siege as Election Day approaches, and protestors continue to call for an end to systemic racism and the senseless murders of Black people at the hands of the police.

With the fall semester in full swing, students are resigned to the sobering reality that these difficult times are far from over. Many are still struggling to learn remotely, due to a digital divide that leaves some without access to devices or high-quality internet. Teacher turnover and shortages have forced some schools and districts to rethink their reopening plans, while a number of colleges and universities have postponed reopening or closed shortly after reopening because of outbreaks, leaving some students stranded and forcing others to go home. And

sadly, many students and their families are making difficult choices about health and safety and whether to go back to school or campus — while those with limited means agonize over added cost considerations about how to pay for basic needs like keeping a roof over their head and putting food on the table.

While the COVID-19 crisis has undoubtedly exposed and exacerbated stark inequities in our society, it also seems to have shifted some Americans' attitudes on racial and economic injustice, and that could spark a renewed commitment to upholding our country's ideals and protecting those who are most underserved and face the most injustice. The question is do we have the will and the courage to reevaluate the social contract in this country and follow through on that commitment, so we can create a fairer and more just future for students and families.

We cannot say we support Black Lives Matter, but in the same breath balk at building affordable housing in our neighborhoods. We cannot purport to care about students and then [suspend or expel them from online learning](#) — or put them in [jail for not completing homework](#). We cannot claim to understand the plight of students who are homeless while ending the [Pandemic EBT program](#) that helps them eat. We must recognize that celebrating a spike in Black student enrollment is insufficient without action to [recruit and retain more teachers of color](#) that support students of color and others to get them to college. It is important that our rhetoric match our actions.

That's why I am particularly proud of the work we've done at EdTrust over the past few months that questions the policies and practices that most impact the students we serve and calls for meaningful actions in this moment of national reckoning. In our report, [“Segregation Forever?”](#), we examined access at 101 of the nation's most selective and best-funded public institutions. We found that 6 out of 10 enroll a lower percentage of Black students today than they did 20 years ago and while the number of Latino students they serve has grown, that growth has not kept pace with the growth in the Latino population in most states. How can we move our country forward and toward a more inclusive and intentionally diverse future if our college enrollment perpetuates systemic racism and bias?

We also released a report on [social-emotional and academic development](#), which underscores the need for socioemotional and academic supports for students of color and urges school leaders and educators to ensure that their policies and approaches are equitable, just, and reflective of the students they intend to serve.

Similarly, we partnered with the National Women's Law Center on a [guide that encourages schools and districts to eliminate unfair school discipline practices](#) that consistently target Black, Latina, and Native girls. And I was proud to see coverage of this report in the [New York Times](#) in a powerful, yet sobering piece that tackled this issue of why Black girls, in particular, are unfairly targeted and disciplined in school. As the father of two girls of color in Maryland public schools, I want them to feel seen, supported, and successful. What are we doing to affirm their identities and tell them that they matter?

The nerdy high school history teacher in me likes to look to the past to understand the present. Nearly a century ago, F.D.R. led America out of the Great Depression through the New Deal. Let this be our country's *new* “New Deal moment,” but let us go one step further and this time ensure that people of color are fully recognized and supported, so we can finally make good on this great nation's promise of freedom.

We face a stark choice in this moment of national peril. We can choose to ignore these crises and hope that they will go away, or we can act boldly and invest in, support, and make room at the table for all people, so everyone has an opportunity to succeed. I hope we will choose the latter. The lives of countless students and families depend on it.

John B. King Jr.

President and CEO of The Education Trust

[@JohnBKing](#)

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 low-income families.

Pushing for Justice Amid Multiple Crises

SUFFICE TO SAY, THESE ARE NOT EASY TIMES. OUR IDEALS AND DEMOCRACY ARE AT STAKE.

Yet, it is in this moment, that our fight to protect students who are facing the most injustices in school and in the larger world deepens. Over the past few months, Ed Trust, along with our valuable partners, have called for selective institutions of higher education to enroll their fair share of Black and Latino students; for educators to address social-emotional and academic development through a race-equity lens; for an end to exclusionary discipline policies for girls of color. By calling out these injustices and pushing for fair and just policies, we choose to be on the right side of history. Which side are you on?

To highlight the outsized impact that these crises are having on students of color and students from low-income households, John B. King Jr., president and CEO of Ed Trust, hit the airways to call for better policies and practices to protect underserved student populations.

- John was a guest on CBS News' chief White House correspondent Major Garrett's podcast "[The Takeout](#)," where he discussed how to safely reopen schools, as well as books and music.
- He also discussed school reopening and social justice [with MSNBC host Craig Melvin](#).
- He spoke with [CNN's Don Lemon](#) about how reopening schools will impact communities of color.
- And, most recently, he joined [Joe Madison's show on Sirius XM, "The Black Eagle](#)," to discuss ways to protect teachers — who are considered essential employees in some states — from COVID-19.



"Black Boys," a documentary that celebrates the full humanity of Black men and boys in America, premiered on NBC's Peacock streaming service in October. Malcolm Jenkins, activist and football safety for the New Orleans Saints, produced the film, which features John alongside NBA All-Star Carmelo Anthony, poet and activist Malcolm London, and many other inspirational contributors.

Ary Amerikaner, vice president for P-12 policy, practice, and research, and Emma Vadehra, executive director of Next100, co-wrote [this commentary](#) calling for a "[maintenance of equity](#)" provision to be included in education stabilization and relief efforts. We were thrilled that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi included much of the language in the updated HEROES Act. We will continue to urge federal leaders to provide critical resources for our nation's schools in coming months.

Joe Truss, principal of Visitacion Valley Middle School in San Francisco, is committed to dismantling the culture of White supremacy in public schools. So, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced his school to close, Truss' first concern was how he might leverage online learning to continue to advance anti-racist learning. Out of that reflection came #COVID19PBL, a project to develop interdisciplinary COVID-19 curricula that centers culturally sustaining pedagogy, he explains in a post on [The Equity Line](#).





This moment has many in the education community reflecting on the importance of language and how we frame crucial issues. In an article in [The 74](#), Lynn Jennings, senior director of national and state partnerships, explained that the shift away from the term, “achievement gap,” has been a long time coming: “What we had to do 20-something years ago, to make that case and show numbers and charts and graphs, it has been made. Any kind of narrative that something is wrong with Black students and Black children is problematic.”



The Education Trust and the New Teacher Center co-hosted a webinar, (R)evolutionize Professional Learning, about disrupting educational inequities by disrupting professional learning. Tanji Reed Marshall, director of P-12 practice, moderated the discussion.



John appeared in a New York Times Magazine cover story, “Will This Be a Lost Year for America’s Children?” that also featured Denver Superintendent Susana Cordova, Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, USC School of Education Dean Pedro Noguera, and Teacher/Activist Shana V. White. Together with moderator Emily Bazelon, a New York Times reporter, these education experts discussed the disparate ways in which K-12 schools are reopening this fall, touching on the digital divide, socioemotional and mental health supports, and how this could be a time for us to reimagine America’s social contract.

The New York Times Magazine

If an Inside Higher Ed piece on why wealthier colleges can offer more protection from COVID-19 than their cash-strapped peers is any indication, P-12 education isn’t the only sector in which there’s a growing divide between the haves and the have-nots. “Funding disparities in higher education have always been a problem,” Tiffany Jones, senior director of higher education policy, said, but “they put certain students and certain colleges at even higher risk this fall because of the added costs of COVID-19 prevention.”



Tiffany Jones, senior director of higher education policy; Robert Kelchen, associate professor Seaton Hall University; David Tanberg, senior vice president of policy research and strategic initiatives SHEEO; and Justin Ortagus, assistant professor University of Florida, participated in a [panel discussion](#) on state funding for public higher education in the midst of the pandemic.



Ambitious. Uncertain. Hopeful. Anxious. Woke. Confused. That’s what [middle and high school students across Tennessee said they were feeling during a panel discussion](#) organized by our Ed Trust team in Tennessee. This discussion was hosted by Chalkbeat Tennessee, our media partner for uplifting student voice.

Pushing for Justice Amid Multiple Crises

Eric Duncan, a senior data and policy analyst, kept pushing policies and practices that school districts can leverage to address high turnover among teachers of color this quarter. [In this piece for NewsChannel 5 Tennessee](#), he said, “For so long, I think people have been uncomfortable having discussions about race and how that influences not only students but teachers in a school setting, where you are learning about what society is supposed to look like.”



Speaking of teachers of color, in this [Equity Line piece](#), [Irene Sanchez, who teaches Chicano/Latino Studies](#) at three high schools in Azusa, California, talks about what drew her to the classroom and why she is invested in ensuring that her students have every opportunity to succeed, as well as developing a deep knowledge of their history and culture.



In a New York Times article, “[A Battle for the Souls of Black Girls](#),” our work was highlighted to talk about the policies and actions taken by adults that are hurting Black students, especially young Black girls, and robbing them of valuable learning time.

As schools move to reopen this fall, it’s essential that education and health decision-makers work closely together to protect our nation’s students. To drive home this point, the [National PTA hosted a webinar](#) in July with infectious disease experts Dr. Tina Tan of the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and Dr. Wendy Armstrong of Emory University School of Medicine. John moderated the discussion.

During the pandemic, parents with means are hiring teachers or tutors and forming “learning pods,” or small instructional groups, so their kids can go to school together at home without losing the benefits of in-person instruction and socialization with other children. But where does that leave student populations with limited financial means? Ed Trust weighed in on this question in several news stories:

- Terra Wallin, associate director for P-12 accountability and special projects, told [Vox](#) that “In order to do a lot of the practices that are going to most help our vulnerable students, schools and states and districts are going to need more funding. She also expressed similar sentiments in [The Seattle Times](#) and [MarketWatch](#).
- In an article in the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), director of P-12 practice Tanji Reed Marshall noted that the mere fact that “parents are forming pods shows basic problems with poorly funded public education and social support systems. We wouldn’t even be having these conversations if funding was equitable.”



The Seattle Times

MarketWatch

The Philadelphia Inquirer

On June 18, the Supreme Court of the United States handed a victory to Dreamers, blocking the Trump administration's latest attempt to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. For the nearly 700,000 Dreamers, this decision provides a welcome but temporary reprieve from the fear of being deported from a country that is, for many of them, the only home they have ever known.

Sadly, the decision neither protects the DACA program, nor provides a pathway to citizenship for the more than 1 million undocumented students in K-12 schools and the over 450,000 undocumented students enrolled in higher education in the United States. In this [blog post on The Equity Lens, Wil Del Pilar, vice president of higher education, explains why Congress should pass the American Dream and Promise Act.](#)



In a series of interviews on the Black News Channel, Tiffany Jones, senior director of higher education policy, described the challenges facing Black students in higher education and the policies and practices that should be implemented to better serve them. Watch [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

We pushed for justice through a series of Twitter chats.



#BlackTeachersTalk

On June 17, [@EdTrust](#), along with [@BlkTeachCollab](#) and [@BlackEdRocks](#), held an open forum where Black teachers talked about the challenges they face in the classroom amid COVID-19 and what could be done to make schools better.

#SEADChat

On August 19, we teamed up with [@CASELorg](#) and [@AmericasPromise](#) to discuss what it means to approach social, emotional, and academic development through an equity lens.



#EndSegregationChat

On September 16, we along with [@ReachHigher](#), and [@EdTrustWest](#) hosted the [#EndSegregationChat](#) where we addressed the lack of Black and Latino student representation at our nation's most selective schools.



Ed Trust on the Hill

After Congress passed the CARES Act in March, it was clear that our nation's education system and the students and families who rely upon it would require more federal assistance to face the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as the fall months draw nearer — *and we stand at the doorstep of a presidential election* — Congress and the Trump administration have thus far failed to act in a bipartisan manner to provide additional, much-needed relief to a struggling nation. As a result, [millions of students and families are trying to survive](#) — [and struggling to learn](#) — on the brink of collapse.

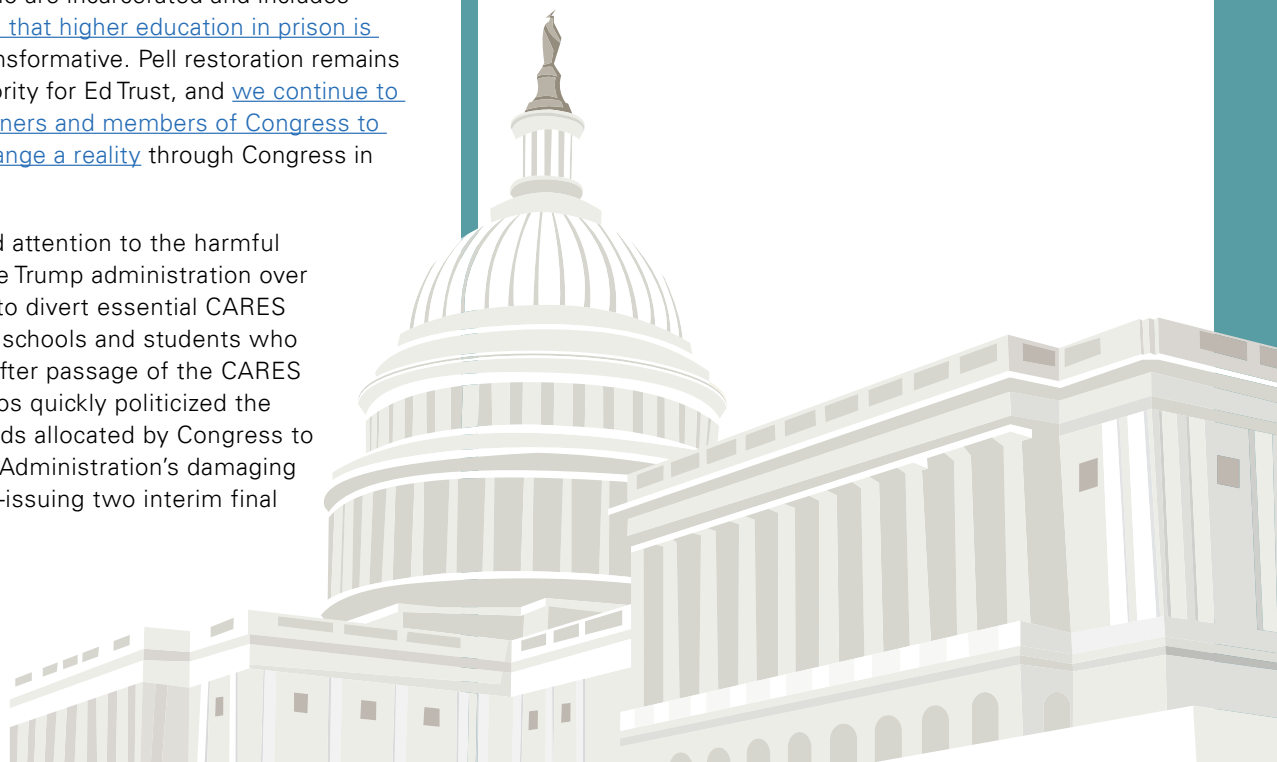
At Ed Trust, we continue to advocate for additional relief, while also advancing our policy priorities in a tense political climate. [A mountain of research and recent policy analysis](#) from Ed Trust on advanced coursework recently inspired [a new bill](#), the “[Advanced Coursework Equity Act](#),” introduced by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX) in August. Additionally, Ed Trust was pleased to see the House Appropriations Committee advance a fiscal year 2021 Labor, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Education, and Related Agencies funding bill earlier this summer that [lifts the 1994 Pell ban](#) for students who are incarcerated and includes [guardrails to ensure that higher education in prison is high quality](#) and transformative. Pell restoration remains a top legislative priority for Ed Trust, and [we continue to work alongside partners and members of Congress to make this policy change a reality](#) through Congress in 2020 and beyond.

We have also called attention to the harmful actions taken by the Trump administration over the past 8 months to divert essential CARES Act funds from the schools and students who need it the most. After passage of the CARES Act, Secretary DeVos quickly politicized the pandemic relief funds allocated by Congress to advance the Trump Administration's damaging education agenda—issuing two interim final

rules that Ed Trust fervently opposes. The first interim final rule that Secretary DeVos issued would [prevent college students who are illegible for Title IV aid under the Higher Education Act \(including undocumented students\) from receiving federal emergency support](#). The second interim final rule that Secretary DeVos issued was regarding “[equitable services](#),” [which would steer more COVID-19 relief towards wealthier private schools](#). While the first interim final rule is currently tied up in litigation, the latter rule was [struck down](#) by multiple federal judges—causing Secretary DeVos to abandon her privatization agenda.

Secretary DeVos has also recently reaffirmed her intent to cut questions from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), [a move we oppose](#). While ED has taken many actions that we consider counterproductive to helping students from low-income backgrounds and students of color during this time, [we were heartened](#) to see that ED does not plan to grant waivers for statewide assessments in the upcoming year — an important tool for measuring how gaps in opportunity cause gaps in achievement for historically underserved students. We continue to closely follow ED's actions and hold the agency accountable during a time when federal leadership is sorely needed but in short supply.

In terms of COVID-19 related advocacy, [we supported our partners in calling on Congress to allocate more funds to stabilize P-12 and higher education](#). Specifically, we urge lawmakers to provide the following in any future COVID-19 relief legislation:



- **At least \$175 billion in funding aimed at stabilizing state budgets, to be directed toward K-12, and \$50 billion toward higher education, including [maintenance of effort and maintenance of equity provisions](#) that would ensure our highest-need schools and districts are not subject to state budget cuts**

- **At least \$4 billion for an Emergency Connectivity Fund administered through the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) E-rate program to support distance and remote learning for millions of K-12 students without home internet access and an additional amount for higher education students**

EdTrust grew its presence in the fight for enabling remote learning for millions of students who lack high-speed, quality internet access at home, and/or the devices needed to continue their education. In addition to working within different coalitions to educate policymakers and state-level officials about the scope of the problem, EdTrust's John B. King Jr. partnered with two FCC commissioners to bring this issue and proposed solutions to the forefront. EdTrust co-hosted [a joint webinar](#) with FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks about the importance of connectivity in Latino communities, featuring remarks by Rep. Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM) and a panel discussion with several other community activists. Additionally, John and FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel co-authored [an Education Week op-ed](#) on increasing national internet access and how Congress should increase funding for the E-rate program.

- **Expansion of nutrition assistance programs for students and families**
- **Funding for [extended learning opportunities](#) to help students make up for lost learning time**
- **Future funding that considers that students may need additional academic, social-emotional, and physical supports as they return to school**

Though some of these priorities were included when the House passed the HEROES Act in May (and the bill's subsequent reintroduction in October), the Senate has failed to bring an adequate proposal to the negotiating table. Instead, in July, the Senate opted to introduce the HEALS Act — a proposal that falls short of addressing the needs of students and families, and conditions federal funding on the physical reopening of school buildings despite local health guidance. Though we were pleased to see our request calling for a "[Maintenance of Equity](#)" provision included

[in House Speaker Pelosi's October-released version of the HEROES Act](#), failure to reach a larger deal on COVID-19 relief will continue to leave students and families vulnerable in a new school year, and will prevent schools, districts, and higher education institutions from doing what is necessary to keep their students safe. This inaction on the part of the federal government is unacceptable, and EdTrust will continue to push for additional supports prior to, and after, the election in November.

A Victory for Children, Students, and their Families in the Fight to Eradicate Hunger and Food Insecurity During COVID-19

EdTrust mobilized to ensure that children who needed access to school meals received them. Prior to COVID-19, nearly 30 million school-aged children relied on their schools for free-and reduced-priced meals. As school buildings closed, it became clear that federal and state action was needed and that became our [leading priority](#).

We worked to advance policies regarding federal nutrition assistance. After Congress created the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program in March, [Ed Trust led extensive outreach efforts with our partners to ensure that states opted-in to the program](#).

As COVID-19 persisted into summer and fall, the need to expand and extend P-EBT, [boost SNAP benefits](#), and [extend child nutrition waivers](#) became even clearer. We leveraged key advocacy opportunities, including: testifying before the [House](#) and [Senate](#) education committees; pushing out an [animated video](#); hosting a virtual Capitol Hill briefing with Feeding America and Share Our Strength; Co-branding a [two-pager with New America and the Food Research and Action Center \(FRAC\)](#) to coincide with the release of [a new report on the success of P-EBT in Michigan](#); engaging in state advocacy in California, Michigan, New York, [Tennessee](#), Louisiana, and [Texas](#) to pressure lawmakers at the federal level; [landing an op-ed in the Topeka Capital-Journal](#) with [Kansas Appleseed](#); and coordinating a "[leader letter](#)" to Congress and the White House.

As government funding was set to expire at the beginning of October and additional relief legislation stalled, we participated in a last-ditch effort on Capitol Hill to include nutrition assistance in any moving legislative vehicle. This advocacy resulted in the inclusion of \$8 billion in federal nutrition assistance, in addition to P-EBT and child nutrition waivers in [a bipartisan continuing resolution \(CR\) that was signed into law](#) in the final week of September.

Segregation in Higher Education Forever?



Top public colleges say that “Black Lives Matter,” but do they enroll Black — or Latino — students?

The title of EdTrust’s latest higher education report — [“‘Segregation Forever?’ The Continued Underrepresentation of Black and Latino Undergraduates at the Nation’s 101 Most Selective Public Colleges and Universities](#) — makes direct reference to America’s fraught history with racism.

It was 1963 when Alabama Gov. George Wallace, a Democrat and segregationist, said the words, [“Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!”](#) in his inaugural address. It was the same year that he stood at the door of University of Alabama’s Foster Auditorium in an attempt to block Black students, Vivian Malone and James Hood, from registering for classes. He was eventually forced to stand down by federal authorities, and Vivian Malone and James Hood completed their registration, successfully integrating Alabama’s top public college. But while this story is part of our nation’s history, structural racism is still, unfortunately, very much part of our nation’s present.

[“‘Segregation Forever?’”](#) analyzes racial segregation at the 101 most selective public colleges across the country to see how access for Black and Latino students at these institutions has changed since 2000, and whether these institutions are serving an undergraduate student body that represents the racial and ethnic diversity of the state population. What the report — by Andrew H. Nichols, senior director of higher education research and data analytics — reveals, is truly sobering.

Overall, the most selective public colleges in the country enroll a smaller share of Black students today than two decades ago. They’ve become less equitable. And it’s the states with the largest populations of Black residents where top public colleges and universities are least accessible for Black students.

While all of the colleges in the study enroll greater percentages of Latino students than in 2000, only 14% of them enroll representative numbers of Latino students.

[“‘Segregation Forever?’”](#) concludes with 10 actions that campus leaders and policymakers should take to increase access to these institutions for students of color and builds on the race-conscious policy recommendations in Ed Trust’s [“Hard Truths”](#) report.

One of those recommendations is for colleges to use race as one factor in college admissions. While the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld this practice on several occasions, groups against affirmative action continue to sue colleges for taking race into account. In [an op-ed for CommonWealth Magazine](#), John B. King Jr., president and CEO of EdTrust; Margaret Chin, a sociology professor at City University of New York, and Jennifer Davis Carey, executive director of the Worcester Education Collaborative — all three graduates of Harvard or Radcliffe — take a behind-the-scenes look at holistic admissions at Harvard and at Students for Fair Admissions, the group that’s suing Harvard in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

“The most selective public colleges in the country enroll a smaller share of Black students today than two decades ago. They’ve become less equitable.”



To spread the word about the findings and recommendations in the [“Segregation Forever?”](#) report, the Ed Trust team held several webinars for national and state education advocates. Our national office and Ed Trust – West teamed up on a California-focused presentation for more than 100 stakeholders that ended with a call to [vote Yes on Prop 16](#), which would overturn the state’s ban on affirmative action in public education, hiring, and contracting. The team also held briefings for Texas, Tennessee, and national advocates, with over 200 participants from dozens of partner organizations in total. Outreach will continue into the fall with a focus on the Midwest region and college student organizations.

The report garnered widespread coverage by the national and local press, including: [The Hechinger Report](#), [Inside Higher Ed](#), [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), [Diverse: Issues in Higher Education](#), [The College Post](#), [Times Union](#), [U of L News](#), and [Minnesota Reformer](#).

Learn more at edtrust.org/EndCollegeSegregation

In addition to publishing [“Segregation Forever?”](#) this quarter, our national higher education team authored several pieces and delivered dozens of digital presentations:

Sample of articles, op-eds, etc.

- [“Care about the Lives of Black Students? Then It’s Time to Fix the Black Student Debt Crisis!”](#) – Liberal Education, AAC&U
- [“5 Reasons to Support Student Debt Cancellation”](#) – Inside Higher Ed
- [“Crushed Dreams and Broken Promises. Supreme Court Edition”](#) – Ed Trust Higher Ed Equity Lens
- [“How to Support College Students Aging Out of Foster Care During COVID-19”](#) – Ed Trust Higher Ed Equity Lens (guest contributor)

Sample of presentations

- [SHEEO Virtual Higher Education Policy Conference Webinar Series](#) – “Hard Truths: Why Only Race-Conscious Policy Can Fix Racism in Higher Education”
- [Southern Regional Education Board](#) – “Borrowing While Black: Understanding What Makes Student Debt a Crisis for Black Students”
- Webinar on [“Black Women in Higher Education in Prison”](#)
- [The Hill’s Future of Education Summit](#)
- [Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children](#)



Students of Color Aren't Broken; Systems, Practices, & Policies Are

After months of distance learning, unfinished instruction, social isolation, and missed activities during the summer months, many of the nation's students will need extra support during the 2020-2021 school year. But will they get it?

As school leaders are working through this new reality, we called on educators to address social-emotional and academic development, or SEAD, through a race-equity lens in our latest [report](#). For this work, we conducted focus groups with students of color (ages 12-18) and parents/families of color across the nation and learned firsthand why schools should change the way SEAD is practiced.

[Research shows](#) that while most (91%) of our nation's public schools and districts in the U.S. report they are working to support the social-emotional learning of students, many of their practices focus solely on changing student behavior rather than on building relationships and creating learning environments that support positive social and emotional growth.

"Unfortunately for students of color, their competence in social-emotional skills and academic mastery are often overlooked, devalued, and hindered by the very systems that are meant to support their growth," said Nancy Duchesneau, lead author of the [report](#) and a P-12 research associate. "To ensure that students' humanity is seen and cherished, school and district leaders must examine their own learning environments to see if they are equitable, listen to and learn from the experiences of families and students of color, and make communities and students of color full partners in decision-making."

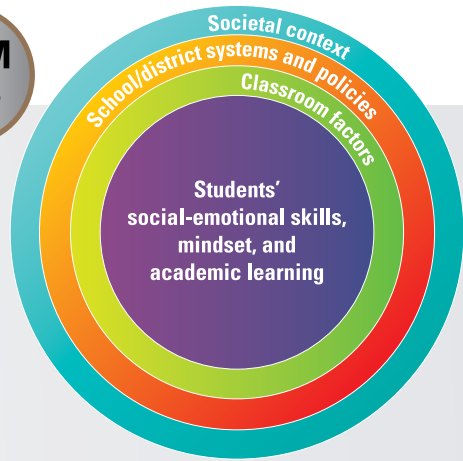
Without equity-focused policies, the right mindset, and appropriate responses, educator biases (whether implicit or explicit) often unfairly and unjustly marginalize some students. Many students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are seen as "broken" or in need of "fixing." Students need equitable learning environments that recognize their strengths and provide the supports they need to thrive.

Ed Trust maintains that for students to thrive in schools, school leaders and educators must focus on changing adult beliefs and mindsets and make certain that systems and policies are equitable, just, reflective, and inclusive of the students they intend to serve by:

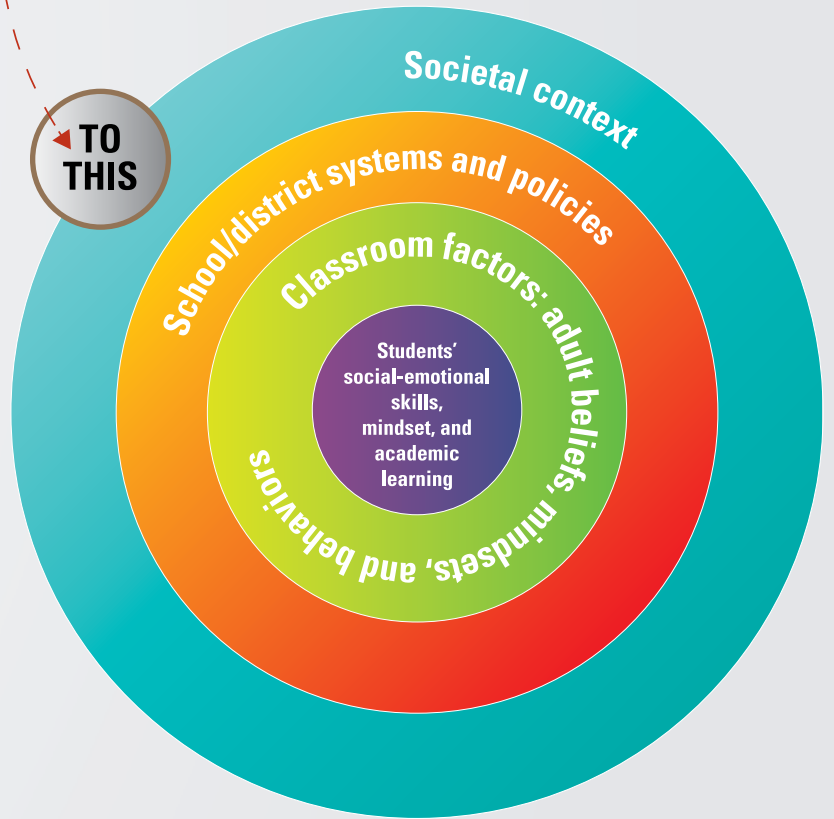
1. Shifting educators' focus from "fixing kids" by teaching them specific competencies to a broader asset-based approach that includes environments that support holistic student success. To do this, educators must recognize the assets students bring to the classroom, focus on what students can achieve and become, and have high expectations for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.
2. Addressing bias in adult perceptions. Educators who interact with students must address their explicit and implicit biases. Additionally, educators must shift their mindsets to an active orientation toward dismantling systemic oppression by race, language, gender, immigration status, etc.
3. Moving from a one-size-fits-all approach to one that recognizes cultural and contextual influences. Educators must recognize and value student differences and accept that what works for one student may not work for all students.

"The way schools are structured now, and the way education is structured, it's not set up for students to succeed," a student who identifies as Black and Latino said in our report.

**FROM
THIS**



**TO
THIS**



We believe that social, emotional, and academic development should be addressed with a student-first approach. To that end, schools and districts should reexamine policies, and consider whether they equitably foster belonging, give challenging opportunities for students to thrive, and provide the supports, rather than tacking new policies onto existing ones.

We offer six policy recommendations as a starting place for how school and district leaders can equitably support students' social-emotional and academic development:

1. Provide meaningful professional development.
2. Diversify the leadership and teaching workforce.
3. Ensure equitable access to and supports for success in rigorous and culturally sustaining coursework.
4. Ensure inclusive discipline and dress code policies.
5. Ensure access to integrated wraparound services and supports.
6. Engage students, parents, families and communities as full partners.

In this piece for The Equity Line, "[All Children are Born to Thrive](#)": Why Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) Matters, Nancy sat down for an interview with Letisha Marrero, an Ed Trust senior editor and writer, about why this work is personal to her.

This report continues to garner attention among those steeped in SEAD. It received coverage in [Education Week](#) and [District Administration](#). And Nancy participated in a virtual panel on August 25 on the SEL Roadmap, an online hub designed by [CASEL](#) and partners to help school leaders plan for the back-to-school transition, in whatever form that takes.

Learn more at EdTrust.org/SEAD



THE ED TRUST

FaMiLy

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

After working together in a community of practice all year, the fellows wanted to elevate their work to the national stage by connecting parent/family advocacy groups from across the country and sharing best practices. The fellows hosted a national call with 120+ participants across 20 states. John B. King Jr., president and CEO of The Education Trust, was a guest speaker. On the call, the parent fellows from New York, Kentucky, and North Carolina exhibited their final projects, shared lessons learned, and led a robust discussion about parents' concerns for the upcoming school year. New York State Sen. Shelley Mayer and Maryland State Sen. Mary Washington attended. Sen. Mayer expressed her appreciation for hearing directly from parents about their concerns and ideas about school reopening plans.





Too loud.

Too assertive.

Too sexually provocative.

Too defiant.

Too adult-like.

“And they cared”: How to Create Better, Safer Learning Environments for Girls of Color



All across the country, girls of color are being excluded from school for subjective offenses and missing out on critical class time and opportunities to learn as a result. Girls of color face some of the greatest barriers to educational opportunities and social-emotional growth inside schools with poor school climates.

Black girls are five times more likely than White girls to be suspended at least once from school. Native girls are twice as likely as White girls to be suspended at least once from school.

This has to change — and we can work together to make it happen.

To help decision-makers implement changes, Ed Trust and the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) partnered on [a new guide for school, district, and state leaders](#) that reimagines school safety in ways that dismantle exclusionary discipline policies and practices that create hostile learning environments and derail learning.

In three case studies, this guide explores the steps that the Oakland Unified School District in California, Chicago

Public Schools, and the state of Massachusetts are taking to decrease suspension rates for girls and enact restorative discipline practices. The steps include:

- Utilizing discipline data and making it publicly available;
- Eliminating racist and sexist dress codes;
- Implementing student- and community-centered approaches to restorative discipline;
- Committing to investing in support services for families, restorative justice programs and coordinators, school counselors, and psychologists; and divesting in school police or similar structures that criminalize students.

Racial disparities in school discipline aren’t inevitable. Policymakers, advocates, and school leaders can work together to address these disparities, and our new guide can show them ways to move forward.

“They say that they want us to get the best education, but when you take us out of class and take us out the school and suspend us, we don’t get the education because we don’t get to be in classroom and get the information they want us to get.”

– Student, McClymonds High School, Oakland, Calif.



To coincide with this guide, we also released a jarring yet powerful video on how to [Stop Criminalizing & Excluding Black, Latina, & Native Girls in Schools](#), which shows exactly why exclusionary school discipline policies must stop.



Kayla Patrick, EdTrust’s main researcher for the report and senior P-12 policy analyst, talked to [Yahoo News](#), which noted that:

this simple guide is also important to help provide “a common language” to both students and the adults who are supposed to help them navigate the most formative years of their lives.

[Kayla] recalls that as early as the first grade, she would go home with complaints about things that were “not fair” at school. “Now, as a Black woman who does this work, I realized what I was trying to communicate was that I was actually experiencing racism and sexism in

my classroom,” she says. “It’s really important that we engage students in this work, so that they know and have the language to communicate what’s happening to them,” rather than allow unfair school policies to “silence their identity within their culture.”

The report received media coverage in outlets such as: The Black News Channel, [MassLive](#), [The Boston Globe](#), [Diverse Issues in Higher Education](#), [The New York Times](#), and the [Washington Informer](#).

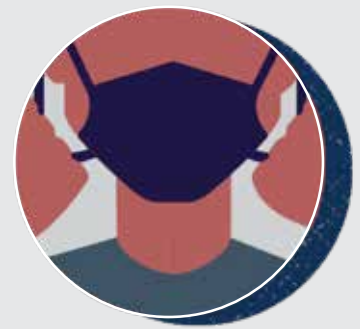
Read more at EdTrust.org/Discipline

The Alliance for Resource Equity Provides Guidance to Navigate the Challenging Decisions Ahead

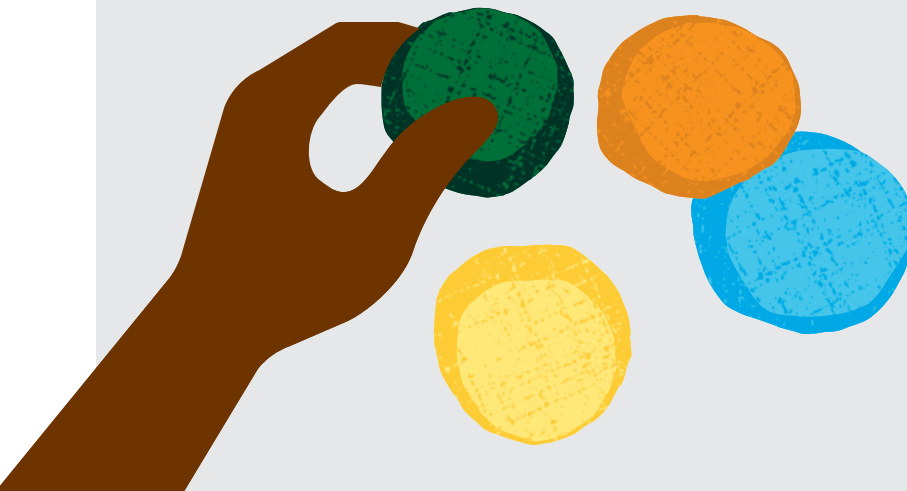


COVID-19 has exacerbated the barriers that students who are underserved face to access excellent learning opportunities. Therefore, schools must provide those students who have been impacted with different levels of support, while mobilizing the right combination of resources to create high-quality learning experiences and meet the distinct needs of every student. That idea — education resource equity — is what we need to ensure that school unlocks every child’s power to live a life of their choosing.

Through the Alliance for Resource Equity — Ed Trust’s partnership with Education Resource Strategies (ERS) — we developed and [released guidance for both advocates and practitioners](#), including district and school leaders, to help them navigate challenging resource decisions for the 2020 – 2021 school year and beyond. The result of that work is a series of equity guides for school leadership teams, district leadership teams, and community advocates. Each document includes equity actions, resources, and examples that will help local leaders prioritize the needs of students who have been most impacted by COVID-19 and those who are continually marginalized.



Learn more at EducationResourceEquity.org/



Education Resource Equity Framework



SCHOOL FUNDING



TEACHING QUALITY & DIVERSITY



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP QUALITY & DIVERSITY



EMPOWERING, RIGOROUS CONTENT



INSTRUCTIONAL TIME & ATTENTION



POSITIVE & INVITING SCHOOL CLIMATE



STUDENT SUPPORTS & INTERVENTION



HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING



LEARNING-READY FACILITIES



DIVERSE CLASSROOMS & SCHOOLS



COVID-19: IMPACT ON EDUCATION EQUITY Resources & Responses



SECURE

Nearly a Dozen National Organizations Unite to Garner Policy Wins for Underserved Children

To respond to these multiple crises, we gathered 11 leading national education and civil rights advocates to form a “Rapid Response Desk” with the purpose of engaging policymakers on whole child equity and centering their decisions on the educational needs and experiences of underserved students: including students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, English learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness.

Together, we are proactively offering an equity agenda that meets the urgency of the moment. Since its formation, we have issued [a call to Congressional leaders](#) for a new round of relief for students and schools. We’ve also presented state advocates tools to advocate for underserved students at the state and district levels on issues including: teacher equity and diversity; digital access; equitable funding; supportive school climates that foster students’ social-emotional and academic development; graduation and college and career readiness; expanding learning time; and equity-driven approaches to ensure transparency and measure student learning.

ENGAGE

State Webinar — State-Level Advocacy in the Era of COVID-19

To bolster the efforts of activists and advocates at the state level, in June, we hosted a webinar on “State-Level Advocacy in the Era of COVID-19,” which featured Ed Trusters from California, Louisiana, Tennessee, Massachusetts, and New York. In this webinar, we shared an overview of the challenges and successes in these states, as well as [resources geared toward state advocates](#).

This webinar also highlighted opportunities for positive change during this unprecedented time. For example, Christopher Nellum, deputy director of research and policy at The Education Trust–West (ETW), touched on encouraging educators to reengage students in creative ways in K-12 and higher education. Natasha Ushomirsky, state director for Massachusetts, discussed how her team has made efforts to be even more inclusive of community and family advocates, by ensuring that they have seat at the table and a voice when discussing school reopening plans and partnering with them when writing a response to the state’s guidance. Dia Bryant, deputy director and chief of partnerships for The Education Trust–New York (Ed Trust–NY) led a presentation on how to center equity in district-level conversations about pandemic response plans and planning for the future.



Ed Trust Working in the States

The Education Trust in Tennessee: It was a busy summer for team Tennessee, starting with the hiring of two additional full-time staff members, [Alexza Barajas Clark](#), assistant director, and [Vilmaris González](#), senior manager of engagement and operations. We've continued to engage with policymakers and hosted our watch parties of recent meetings of the State Education Committee and the State Board of Education, which helped us to engage advocates across the state in a virtual setting, and build their understanding of education policy and rulemaking in Tennessee.

Our advocacy efforts have also focused on our Tennessee congressional delegation. Ed Trust in Tennessee penned a [letter to the delegation](#), signed by 25 partners, requesting more stimulus funds for education. In mid-August, we also sent [this sign-on letter](#) asking the delegation to extend Pandemic EBT benefits to families into this school year.

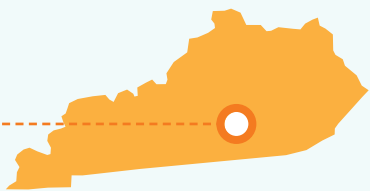
Tennessee State Director Gini Pupo-Walker penned [this op-ed](#) in *The Tennessean*, in which she said, "If Congress does not allocate additional federal relief funds, states like Tennessee will have to make budget cuts that could devastate [the state's] educational systems."

Ed Trust in Tennessee announced a partnership with the [Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance](#) and will form a statewide Educator Diversity Advocacy Council, which will identify and analyze challenges and opportunities to crafting a policy and advocacy agenda that supports recruitment and retention of educators of color. Last, but certainly not least, we continue to work with students across the state as part of our youth voice initiative. We launched the [EmpowerEd](#) website featuring students and their stories. We are working with them on how to influence decision-makers in their schools and communities.



Kentucky: This summer, the Kentucky Equity Coalition, which Ed Trust supports financially and is one of our leading partners, opened its membership to individual advocates. By late August, the number of active coalition members had doubled from 20 to 40 participants, and with this larger, more diverse group — which includes school board members, PTA leaders, parent advocates — the coalition hopes to engage in more public education advocacy work across the state.

With our support, the Prichard Committee released a statement [calling for racial equity and justice](#) in the wake of the killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and others. This statement was followed by a week-long series of discussions on racial equity in Kentucky's public schools. The series, [Black Minds Matter](#), focused on formulating solutions to boost achievement and postsecondary attainment at the state and local levels. Ed Trust participated in the following Facebook Live discussions: John B. King Jr participated in a discussion on [The COVID-19 Impact on Student Equity](#); Lynn Jennings, senior director of national and state partnerships, joined a discussion on [Innovations in Education: Racial Equity in Schools](#); and Denise Forte, senior vice president for partnerships and engagement, discussed [Re-Imagining Education](#).



Maryland: This summer the Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education worked to ensure that school districts plan to address the educational inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The coalition [released a reopening guide for school districts with 10 recommendations for how districts could meet the needs of students when they return in the fall](#). Several coalition members, including the Caucus of African American Leaders, the NAACP Maryland State Conference (MSC), and the Black and Brown Coalition for Educational Equity and Excellence held events with their members and with local elected officials to publicize the report and hold decision-makers accountable.



The Education Trust in Massachusetts: As the 2020-2021 school year approached, the Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership (MEEP) pushed policymakers and education leaders to center the needs of historically underserved students and families in resource allocation and school reopening decisions. The Boston Globe published MEEP's op-ed, "[State must fulfill its promise to underserved students.](#)" Co-signed by [27 partner](#) organizations, the op-ed urged lawmakers to follow through on the Student Opportunity Act's promise to historically underserved students — even if that means wealthier communities get less. Recognizing that the challenges of this school year will be magnified in districts where the COVID-19 pandemic landed atop years of economic and educational disinvestment, the op-ed stressed the need to ensure that all state and federal resources be distributed based on student need.

MEEP released its latest brief, [Keeping Equity at the Forefront: Returning to School](#), which was born out of concern that the significant logistical challenges of reopening school buildings have overshadowed everything else that constitutes "school," including teaching and learning and social-emotional supports for students. In the brief, advocates urged district and school leaders to shift focus from reopening buildings for all students to making sure all students continue to learn and that family needs are met — regardless of where kids are learning from. The brief lays out a set of 10 recommendations aimed at supporting district leaders in meeting student and family needs, especially as more are choosing a remote start to the school year.



The Education Trust in Texas:

Since being named state director for Texas in June, Jonathan Feinstein has been expanding and deepening relationships with hundreds of state and local advocates and policymakers.

In July, we authored a [joint letter](#) endorsed by more than 60 groups from across the state, representing school districts, higher education institutions, parents, teachers, business leaders and advocates calling on Texas Congressional representatives to support additional federal relief. This letter was followed by 1000+ [constituent emails](#) and media outreach to elevate stories of how the lives of educators, students, and families are being impacted during this time of federal inaction. With Texas' next legislative session approaching, we have also worked within and across multiple coalitions, including the Texas Legislative Educational Equity Coalition (TLEEC) and Texas Postsecondary Advocates Coalition, to engage in the state policy conversation. We co-authored and submitted a public comment in response to multiple interim changes from the House Higher Education Committee, focusing attention on the need to address disparities in students' access to technology and strong, diverse educators.

The Education Trust in Louisiana: EdTrust continues to collaborate with the Urban League of Louisiana to highlight parent experiences with distance learning during COVID-19 related school closures. We hosted a virtual town hall meeting to discuss parents' perspectives on [returning to schools in the summer and fall](#); and another one on [early childhood education and caretakers](#). The virtual town halls had 325 registrants and 100 attendees, respectively, and they were covered by [KADN](#), [Nola.com](#), [Biz New Orleans](#), and [My New Orleans](#). Keisha Smith, state director for Louisiana, served as a panelist on a webinar about [Education, Children, Families, & COVID-19](#) to discuss what state and local districts can do when planning for the 2020-2021 school year in the wake of the pandemic. With our allies in Louisiana, EdTrust continues to push for the inclusion of Pandemic EBT program in any federal relief efforts — by sending a joint letter to the Louisiana congressional delegation urging them to support extending Pandemic EBT benefit to families this school year.



The Education Trust—West

Restoring Affirmative Action in California

Pushing for justice amid multiple crises was front and center during the effort to get [Prop 16](#) on California's November ballot. Prop 16, if passed by voters, will restore affirmative action as a tool to fight discrimination and expand opportunity for all. When The Education Trust-West (ETW) joined the [Opportunity for All](#) coalition earlier this year, we faced an uphill battle. It took a major narrative change of how COVID-19 is deeply impacting communities of color, along with the urgent call for racial justice across the globe, to get legislators to vote to put the constitutional amendment on the November ballot.

In June, we celebrated a major victory when the California Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5 (ACA 5) passed the California State Assembly and was approved by the California State Senate allowing voters an opportunity to restore affirmative action through a ballot measure now called Proposition 16. ETW led a behind-the-scenes advocacy effort and secured critical votes to pass ACA 5. State legislators, ETW staff, and hundreds of supporters gave impassioned testimony about their personal experiences with affirmative action, with many calling the recent murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor the catalyst in this latest fight to dismantle systemic racism.

We published a [CalMatters](#) op-ed that included support for ACA 5 and were featured in the [Guardian](#), [KTVU](#), and other press outlets. We also developed an [extensive FAQ](#) on the impact of ACA 5 on

K-12 and higher education, and one-pagers ([K-12](#), [HE](#)) to support the campaign's broader legislative advocacy efforts. Our data and materials were cited by legislators and the following news outlets: [Airtalk](#), [The Sacramento Bee](#), and [The San Diego Union-Tribune](#).

Now, with just a month until the November election, ETW continues to play a leading role in promoting Prop 16 as a member of the [Yes on 16: Opportunity for All Coalition](#) steering committee. We are thankful for Director of External Relations Andy Wong's management of the campaign. We launched our [#EdEquityontheBallot](#) campaign to rally equity advocates and educate voters about Prop 16. ETW is providing critical data and research challenging the myths that Prop 16 opponents are putting out in the field. Over 400 participants attended our recently held [#EdEquityontheBallot panel](#), which featured ETW Executive Director Elisha Smith Arrillaga, Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis, Democratic Assemblymember Shirley Weber, Democratic State Sen. Connie M. Leyva and Democratic Assemblymember Monique Limon. The speakers discussed why Prop 16 matters for the education and empowerment of women. What started off as a shoestring campaign with few supporters has evolved into one of the most exciting and promising ballot initiatives in California, with key endorsements from Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, Sen. Kamala Harris, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, the California Teachers Association, California PTA, and hundreds of organizations.

Ed Trust is a 501c3 nonprofit, nonpartisan organization.





A Pathway to Equitable Math Instruction

As students resume learning in the midst of uncertain times, one thing remains clear: The global pandemic and national call for racial justice have brought to the forefront our responsibility to do better for students of color. On September 9, The Education Trust–West and over 30 education and policy partners released [A Pathway to Equitable Math Instruction](#), a toolkit for supporting equitable access to math standards for Black, Latino, and multilingual students in grades 6–8. School leaders and teachers can move from crisis to opportunity by using these resources to address and close inequities in math education, and as they navigate the individual and collective journey from equity to anti-racism. ETW launched the toolkit with a keynote by Executive Director Elisha Smith Arrillaga at the [Wellness Together](#) conference, which had over 1200 registrants, and in a new blog series called [DisruptED](#).

From Crisis to Opportunity

Summer looked very different this year, as California adjusted and responded to both the global health pandemic and the longstanding scourge of racism. Over the summer, we worked diligently to listen to the voices and concerns of parents and educators. We released [From Crisis to Opportunity: Recovering California's Commitment to Equity](#). We compiled a list of key equity considerations as schools planned for this school year, on topics such as: social emotional wellness, digital equity, family and educator engagement, family support for distance learning, and assessment of student learning.

We continued to advocate for our legislative and budget proposals and even scored some wins along the way — on the rollout of the Pandemic EBT program for children who receive free or reduced-price meals and an allocation of federal funds

to address learning loss. We also are co-sponsors of a bill that would require unspent supplemental and concentration funds to be used according to spending rules for these funds. The bill passed the Assembly and State Senate and is now on Governor Newsom's desk.

To help local school districts center equity in their learning continuity and attendance plans, we issued an [Equity Alert](#) for districts, charter schools, and county offices of education. The Equity Alert includes a checklist with considerations for local education agency leaders to better serve the needs of historically marginalized students who have been most affected by the pandemic. Our back-to-school advocacy work was covered in [KPBS](#), [KOED](#), [CNN](#), [two](#) articles in the [Los Angeles Times](#) and the [San Francisco Chronicle](#).

To learn more about efforts in California, please visit [EdTrustWest.org](#).

The Education Trust—Midwest

Protecting Students Who Are Underserved During Troubling Times

The Education Trust-Midwest (ETM) continued to be a strong voice for students who are underserved across the state, providing critical information and research to the public and key stakeholders and working to advance educational equity at the state level over the past several months, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Prioritizing Equity Amid the COVID-19 Crisis

ETM released its [2020 State of Michigan Education Report](#) in June. In addition to reporting on key indicators of Michigan's progress toward becoming a top education state, the report serves as a Marshall Plan for reimagining Michigan's public education and making it more equitable.

The report made recommendations on six ways to jump-start Michigan's education transformation — fair investment, honest information, transparency and reporting, extended learning time, quality virtual instruction and access, inclusivity and socioemotional supports, and transitions to postsecondary opportunities.

In July, ETM also issued a budget brief, [The Time is Now: COVID-19 and Fair Funding](#), which laid out key strategies to create a more equitable funding system in Michigan. In partnership with The Education Trust, ETM conducted extensive modeling to identify more equitable formulas that could replace Michigan's standard, inequitable approach to budget cuts.



The brief garnered significant media attention and follow-up coverage, including in the [Detroit Free Press](#), [The Detroit News](#), [Crain's Detroit Business](#), [Chalkbeat Detroit](#), [U.S. News & World Report](#) and other syndicated outlets through the Associated Press, [Michigan Radio](#), [Detroit Public Television](#) and more.

Concurrent with the publication of the policy brief, Executive Director Amber Arellano joined business and civil rights advocates in a virtual press conference to launch the [Opportunity for All campaign](#), the first and immediate goal of which is to ensure that Michigan public education is protected from harsh cuts — and that students who are most underserved are shielded in budget decisions.



Spotlighting Best Practices and Working With Educators to Advance Equity in High-Poverty Schools

The Education Trust-Midwest's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning led a session for educators about how to support literacy instruction, regardless of where the learning takes place, be it in person or via distance learning. The team is partnering with Leading Educators and West Michigan Leadership Academy on a series of sessions aimed at helping teachers further their learning and identify promising strategies for accelerating student learning after months of missed learning opportunities.

Building a Grassroots Equity-Centered Coalition and Securing Policy Wins

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ETM strengthened efforts to build a durable and impactful network of equity-minded advocates in Michigan around the need for an educational plan that meets the needs of underserved student groups. Collective advocacy has included food security for students, the distribution of CARES Act funding and an equitable approach to any needed education budget cuts.

Additionally, ETM provided research to leaders around benchmark assessments, which led benchmark assessments to be included in the state's school restart deal and ensured that all districts have access to high-quality assessments at the state's expense.

Engaging Key Leaders and Building Knowledge Around Equity Issues

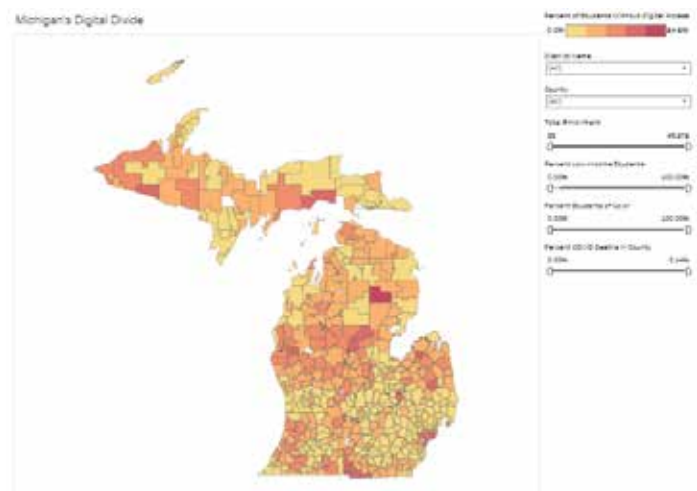
In July 2020, ETM convened grassroots leaders for a webinar with John B. King Jr. to build knowledge and engagement around Michigan's most pressing education equity issues.

Then, in September, ETM held a forum for key stakeholders to engage in immediate ways they can support Michigan's students. The forum, *Moving from Symbolism to Action: What We Can Do Right Now for Michigan's Children*, leveraged business and civil rights leaders to convey advocacy opportunities for students.

Leveraging Data to Shine a Spotlight on Inequities

In June, ETM published an interactive data tool on [Michigan's Digital Divide](#), which spotlights troubling gaps in digital access across the state, and has drawn great interest. Making a clear impact on the conversation, the tool was referenced by Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) during a call with most of Michigan's congressional delegation.

In September, ETM's policy team published an analysis of [inequities in postsecondary transitions](#), leveraging data to showcase opportunity gaps among students of color and students who are from low-income backgrounds.



For more information about our efforts in Michigan, please visit EdTrustMidwest.org

The Education Trust—New York

Ed Trust—NY Focuses on Equitable Reopening From Early Childhood Through College Completion

New York, like the rest of the nation, is facing the dual and related crises of the coronavirus pandemic and systemic racism in our society. Both have exacerbated persistent educational inequities and serve as a sobering reminder of the critical importance of the work we do advocating for students who have been historically underserved by our education system.

Our work this summer largely centered on how, faced with these dual pandemics, New York can take deliberate action, while reopening schools, to address pre-existing inequities and rebuild an education system — *from early childhood through college completion* — that is stronger than before the pandemics.

Reopening Higher Education

Drawing on the data from a June survey of college students, the REACH NY postsecondary equity advocacy network released, [Reopening With Equity: 10 Questions for Campus and System Leaders](#), a policy brief that recognizes the unprecedented challenges facing students and higher education institutions and offers a series of equity priorities that colleges and universities should address this fall alongside health and safety needs.

College students across New York State are experiencing intense academic, emotional, and financial instability during the coronavirus pandemic, with 4 in 5 (81%) indicating in a recent poll that they are concerned about staying on track to graduate. The poll findings highlight the urgent need to support college and university students, both during and in the aftermath of the pandemic, and set a path to a stronger, more equitable education system in the future.

Supporting Families With Young Children: Reopening Child Care Programs

At a moment when access to child care is essential to the state's economic reopening and recovery, the [Raising NY coalition](#) of parent, early childhood, education, civil rights, business, and health organizations released new data revealing that child care provider closures and massive under-enrollment in those programs that remain open may threaten the viability of the child care system for infants, toddlers, and other young children without additional financial support.

Raising NY urged state leaders to incorporate the following considerations on the needs of families with infants and toddlers into New York's reopening plan.

- Support employers by enabling New Yorkers with infants and toddlers to get back to work;
- Increase child care capacity by supporting child care providers who experienced significant challenges up to and during the pandemic;
- Support the child care workforce that has helped keep New York going throughout this crisis.

Learn more at RaisingNY.org.

REACHNY

REOPENING WITH EQUITY:

10 Questions for Campus and System Leaders

Uncertain Times, Unanswered Questions: Reopening the K-12 System

Our [August poll of public-school parents](#) — the third since school buildings closed in March — found that far fewer Black and Latino parents who are low-income planned to send their children to school in person this fall, underscoring the disproportionate toll the pandemic has taken on their communities and a lack of confidence in a school system that has historically underserved students of color and those from low-income backgrounds.

Among the key additional findings of the August reopening poll:

- Majorities of Black parents and parents from low-income backgrounds were hesitant to send their children back to school in person this fall. Sixty-six percent of White parents and 68% of parents with incomes of at least \$50,000 supported reopening school buildings fully or partially, compared to 43% of Black parents, 57% of Latino parents, and 48% of lower-income parents.
- The gaps were most pronounced in New York City, where just 34% of Black parents said their children would return to school in person, versus 84% of White parents, and 46% of parents in low-income households said so versus 74% of parents in non-low-income households.
- Satisfaction with remote learning remains low and parents have clear priorities for what districts and schools can do to improve remote learning — including more live instruction, teacher support, technology access, and social-emotional learning. From March to June 2020, satisfaction with distance learning among parents dropped to 43%, down from a high of 57%. In August, just 40% of parents say remote learning has been successful.
- Academic concerns are very important to parents and, coupled with the importance of social-emotional support and regular access to teachers, top the list of factors that lead parents to decide to send their child back to school in person. Those parents who opted not to send their child to school in person this fall said these concerns were secondary to the risks associated with the coronavirus, leading them to prioritize safety over their child's education.
- Parents of high school students are focused on ensuring that their child is on track to graduate from high school and go to college or get a job that pays well after they graduate. This is increasingly concerning to parents — 63% of high school

parents say they are very concerned about ensuring their child is on track to graduate (compared to 48% in June) and 61% are very concerned about ensuring that their child is on track for college or a career (up from 43% in June).

- Food insecurity remains a significant issue for parents, too. A staggering 39% of parents say they have skipped meals or reduced the number of meals they consume personally or reduced/skipped their child's meals as a result of the pandemic, up from 33% in June. Nearly half (48%) of low-income parents in the state say they are concerned about their child's access to meals and food this fall (43% overall), as are 51% of elementary school parents and 62% of parents in New York City.

The poll results, coupled with our analysis of school district reopening plans, raised questions about district readiness to support all students equitably in a remote learning environment, even as many districts across the state plan to start the school year entirely online.

Our analysis looked at school district reopening plans submitted to the New York State Education Department by the 50 school districts serving the greatest number of students from low-income backgrounds. The review was based on equity criteria drawn from the requirements and recommendations in state guidelines.

The criteria on which districts most frequently failed to show any evidence of readiness in their plans included adopting anti-racist policies and practices, providing equitable instruction and engaging all students, and supporting students with unique learning needs.

The analysis also identified some bright spots, noting that a number of districts are taking steps to address students' technology needs and recognizing the importance of addressing students' social-emotional needs. Districts are also prioritizing family engagement and working to address the needs of students with disabilities.

Together with The New York Equity Coalition, we called on state leaders to take specific steps to ensure that all students have the opportunity to experience rigorous, high-quality instruction, whether school is in an in-person, remote, or blended format.

Read more about the poll results, analysis and recommendations at [EdTrustNY.org/ReopeningStronger](#).

To learn more about all of our efforts in New York, please visit, [EdTrustNY.org](#).

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 families from prekindergarten through college. As the nation goes 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.

Thank you!

The Education Trust *National Office*

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The Education Trust *West*

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Overdeck Family Foundation
The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation
Pritzker Children's Initiative
The Walton Family 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, EdTrust 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.

To view this copy online, please visit [EdTrust.org/ed-trust-updates](https://www.EdTrust.org/ed-trust-updates).



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