



EdTrust 2024 Policy Priorities

EDTRUST IS A NATIONAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT IS COMMITTED TO ADVANCING POLICIES AND PRACTICES to dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the American education system. Through our research and advocacy, EdTrust improves equity in education from preschool through college, engages diverse communities dedicated to education equity and justice, and increases political and public support to build an education system where students will thrive.

Our 2024 policy priorities reflect our principles and ideas to improve our educational system for students, educators, and families.

Ensuring equitable, meaningful access to higher education

The federal government has a responsibility to protect students from unscrupulous practices and ensure policies that provide greater access are being implemented effectively and equitably. Furthermore, federal policymakers have an essential role in protecting and securing the civil rights of students, especially in light of attacks on policies that are designed to rectify historical discrimination and make campuses more welcoming to everyone. We support:

- Effectively implementing the expansion of the Pell Grant to more students through the Student Aid index and lifting of the Pell ban for students who are incarcerated
- [Strengthening data transparency and defending consumer protections](#) on behalf of students and borrowers
- Adopting recommendations from EdTrust's [campus racial climate report](#) and [our work](#) concerning [race-conscious admissions](#) to ensure students of color can access higher ed

Reducing college costs and providing wraparound supports

The federal government also plays a crucial role in making college more affordable and preventing the accrual of student debt in the face of increasing costs and burdensome debt. [As the purchasing power of the Pell Grant has declined over the years](#), student debt, especially for Black borrowers, has increased exponentially. We support:

- Doubling Pell, [creating a federal/state partnership](#) for debt-free college, and increasing resources to the institutions serving the most students of color
- Regulatory action to implement broad-based student debt relief
- Increasing evidence-based wraparound supports for current students via [increasing funding](#) for the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program
- Policies that address students' basic needs, including childcare and food insecurity

Ensuring college and career readiness for students of color

Research has shown that when students are enrolled in advanced courses, they're more engaged in school, boast higher grades, more likely to graduate, and have greater access to higher paying job opportunities. However, more needs to be done to provide advanced coursework opportunities to as many students as possible, especially students of color, who are disproportionately denied access nationwide. We support:

- The [Advanced Coursework Equity Act](#) (HR 6328/S. 3279), which creates grant programs to increase the enrollment and achievement of under-represented students in advanced coursework. Local educational agencies would be provided resources to expand access, provide tutoring, and engage with their communities
- Ensuring the Civil Rights Data Collection maintains data elements pertaining to AP course-taking and exam success rates and credit recovery participation, and adds data elements to collect dual enrollment, CTE enrollment, and credential earning by race, ethnicity, income, English learners, disability status, and gender

Expanding policies to increase educator and faculty diversity

All students benefit from a diverse teacher workforce, and it is especially important for students of color, who [are less likely to be chronically absent or suspended from school](#) and [more likely to be recommended for gifted and talented programs, graduate high school, and consider college](#) when they have had a teacher of the same race or ethnicity. There are currently massive disparities between the percentage of students of color versus relatively few teachers of color. Additionally, there is nationwide shortage of skilled educators, especially in districts that serve students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. We support:

- Protecting and expanding [vital HEA funding streams](#) that support educator diversity, including Teacher Quality Partnerships and the Augustus Hawkins Centers of Excellence Grant program
- Improving HEA Title II data reporting requirements to include program completion data, licensure pass rates, placement rates, and alternative certification programs data, all of which should be disaggregated by race and ethnicity
- Increasing funding for HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs, and other MSIs, to support state, local, and institutional efforts to recruit, retain, and support teachers and school leaders of color, including establishing pathways for teachers from community colleges into four-year programs and creating teacher training programs to respond to multilingual teacher shortages

Ensuring access to safe, equitable and positive learning environments and equitable school funding

All students deserve access to a physically safe, emotionally supportive, inclusive, diverse, and linguistically accessible school environment to boost their learning and mental health. They also deserve schools that are equitably funded to set them up for success. Both are needed to truly support and invest in all students' social, emotional, and academic development with an equity lens. We support:

- the [Protecting our Students in Schools Act](#) (S. 1762/H.R. 3596), which prohibits corporal punishment in any school that receives federal funding, establishes a series of enforcement protections for students and families, and invests in states and school districts to improve school climate and culture
- the [Ending PUSHOUT Act](#) (H.R. 2690), which prevents the criminalization and pushout of students from school, particularly girls of color, by providing federal grants to states and schools that commit to reducing the use of unfair and discriminatory school discipline practices
- the [Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act](#) (S. 3214/H.R. 6202), which prohibits the use of federal funds to support the hiring, recruitment, and placement of police officers in K-12 schools, and establishes a grant program to increase access to adequately trained personnel and trauma-informed services
- Tripling Title I to increase support to high-need districts, especially given [the ESSER fiscal cliff](#), including a \$100 million reservation to support states and districts making their education funding formulas more equitable