

# #OurTimesNow



FEBRUARY 2019  
Quarterly Report



The Education Trust

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



As the nation celebrates Black History Month, we remember the struggle and the sacrifices of those who've come before us. We also take pride that so many leaders of color and committed allies are speaking up and standing up for justice — from a new, diverse Congress more representative of the nation's diversity to social justice activists to advocates on the ground pushing to make policies better for young people to students themselves. They truly understand that our time is now to confront the systems of injustice that have marginalized far too many for far too long.

At The Education Trust, we continue to fight for educational justice because we know that it is up to each of us to use our deep expertise in research, policy, advocacy, and educational practice to increase opportunity and bring about positive outcomes for the students we serve.

Young people — especially students of color and students from low-income families — have no time to wait. That is why we believe the time to act both for and with students in service of their success is now.

Certainly, this is a time of extraordinary division in America, and the work to build a collective movement on any issue can seem like a daunting task. But there are promising signs of hope.

I find inspiration in the many young people with whom I have had the chance to speak who are civically engaged as activists in their communities, and in the parents and families who are deeply engaged in their children's education and passionate about expanding opportunity for all students. I am heartened by teachers who are organizing to make this nation better, and inspired by people across America who have organized, rallied, and participated in campaigns to advance civil rights and move the nation closer to fulfilling the promise of democracy.

In December, I was honored to give the winter commencement address at the University of Maryland, where I am a visiting professor. In that address, I explored how the present — for the university, the state of Maryland, and the nation — has been shaped powerfully by the past, including both the awful legacy of slavery and systemic racial oppression and the inspiring legacy of generations of resistance and social change. I urged the graduates to seize this moment to ensure our nation becomes fairer and more just through their education, their civic engagement, and their service.

Here, at The Education Trust, over the last few months, we have continued to boldly speak out across the education spectrum.

We made our voices heard on the use of exclusionary discipline in our public schools, which disproportionately affects students of color and students with disabilities. And we encouraged educators and advocates at the state and local levels to be vigilant in ensuring the safety of all students, even in the absence of federal guidance that would protect young people from unfair school discipline practices.

We are helping to lead the national conversation on equitable access to quality dual enrollment programs, which provide high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses and earn transferable college credits.

We convened higher education experts to consider how they can advance policies that equitably support student success in college, and we pushed those who are considering or implementing “free college” programs to ensure that they work for students who are most underserved.

Education is critical to our students' freedom — to their ability to make of their lives whatever they dream. And every time we call out injustice and stand up to ensure that a quality education is truly available to the students who need the most, we not only give our children the chance to choose their future, we reclaim our history — bringing our country closer to its ideals as we create a better future for generations to come.

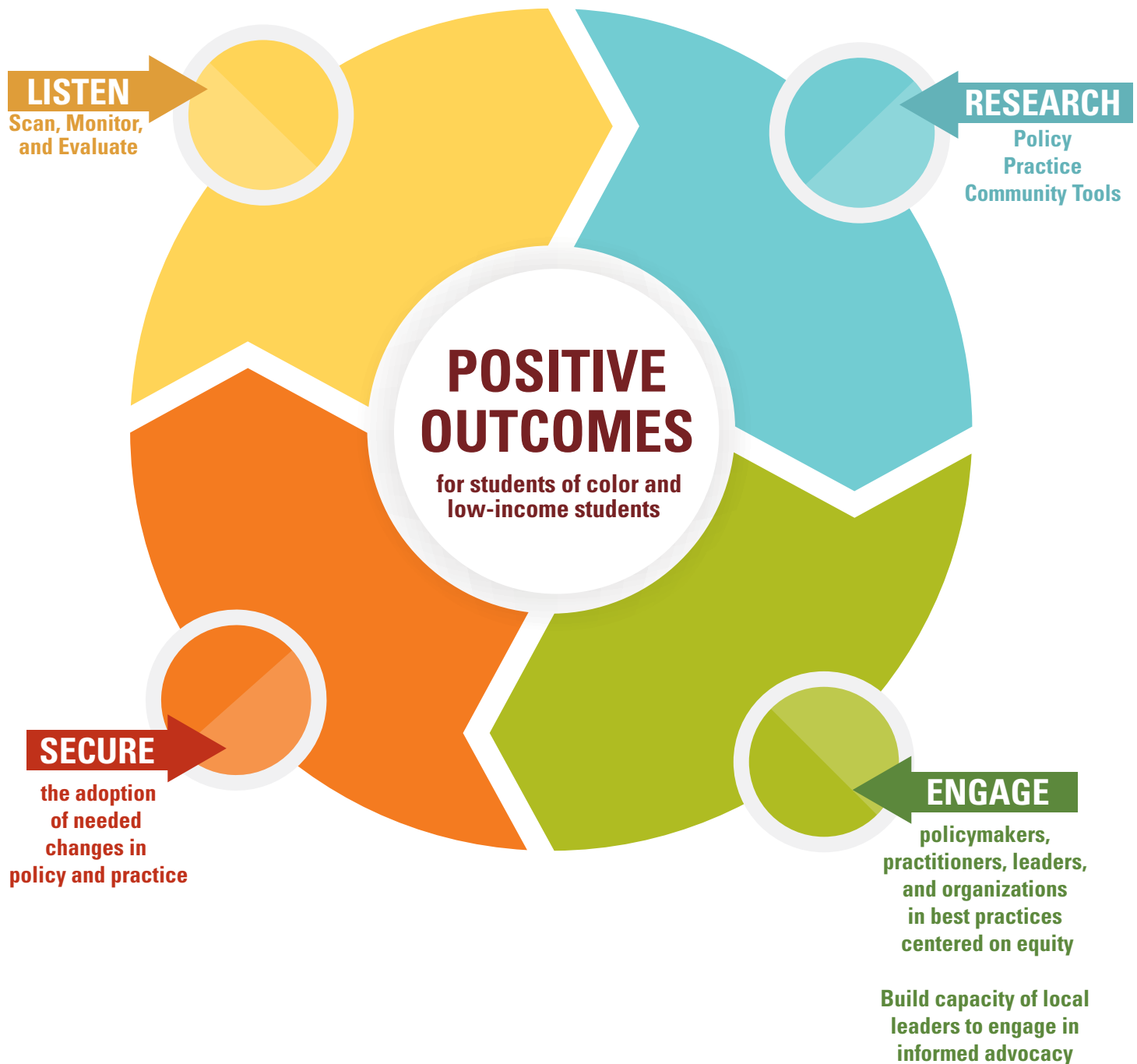
**John B. King Jr.**

President and CEO of The Education Trust

 [@JohnBKing](https://twitter.com/JohnBKing)

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

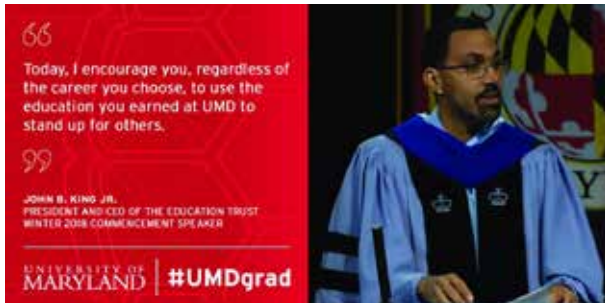
## THEORY OF CHANGE



# #OurTimelsNow

Ed Trust is inspired by those who have fought for justice and those who are continuing that fight today. As fierce education advocates, we are encouraged by activists who are boldly speaking out and working to make our educational systems more just. This past quarter, we advocated alongside those activists and pushed for protections for LGBTQ students, fair discipline practices for students of color, equitable access to high-quality early learning experiences as well as to high-quality school counselors, college affordability, and more. Tomorrow's historymakers are in today's classrooms, and we need to make sure they have the resources and supports they need to achieve their wildest dreams. By working together, calling out injustices, and pushing for equity-focused policies, we can effect positive change in our schools and in our nation. #OurTimelsNow.

Through our **"Profiles in Education Equity" blog series**, we continued to inspire activism, by highlighting education advocates, including Ed Trust Family Fellow [Nicole Jimerson](#), who is the founder of The Ari Advocacy Center, which helps North Carolina families with children who have disabilities or special needs, and [Rich Buery](#), the former deputy mayor to New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and now chief of policy and public affairs at KIPP. Rich, who grew up in a Brooklyn neighborhood that was largely Black and Brown, poor and working-class, shares: "I want to help expand the number of public schools in neighborhoods like the one I grew up in that provide an education that will set students up for a life of fulfillment and economic security."



In a winter commencement speech at the University of Maryland, College Park, John let the new graduates know that #OurTimelsNow. In his address, he urged them to think about what they can do to shape the course of history — to be historymakers. He encouraged them to be informed, engaged, open, and of service as they put their stamp on the world. Watch his full speech [here](#).

In this Afro-American op-ed, [Education: Critical to Our Children's Freedom](#), John called out the inequities that schools and communities that serve predominantly students of color and students from low-income families face, such as lack of access to strong teachers, a well-rounded curriculum, and even basic supplies, such as books and heating. He noted that these inequities are historical: "To be sure, our nation's cruel legacy of slavery and Jim Crow segregation established the foundation of what we still see far too frequently: separate and inferior schools for students of color."

During Native American Heritage Month, we called for action to increase the number of Native Americans earning a college degree. In a [Higher Ed Equity Lens](#) blog, Wil Del Pilar, vice president of higher education policy and practice, writes: "Compared to 47 percent of White adults, only 24 percent of Native American, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiian adults have earned a college degree at the associate degree level or higher." He continues, "For perspective, current degree attainment levels for Native people are about 6 percentage points lower than the attainment levels of White adults in 1990, which was over a quarter of a century ago."

## We made the case for a more affordable college education for underserved students:

- In this *Inside Higher Ed* opinion piece, [Free College Denied](#), senior policy analyst for higher education Katie Berger joins with National College Access Network's Carrie Warick to break down FAFSA verification, the barriers it creates for students and to free college programs, and what the new Congress and the Education Department can do to simplify the financial aid process.
- Similarly, in an [op-ed in The Hill](#), Katie describes how student loan refinancing isn't the common-sense cure-all it purports to be. She writes, "Students, families, and taxpayers would all be better served if federal funds were used to make college more affordable and reduce the need to borrow in the first place, and to provide targeted relief for those who struggle the most to pay their loans."
- In this *Higher Ed Equity Lens* post, [Can Undocumented Students Access Free College Programs?](#), Wil Del Pilar and Satra Taylor, higher education policy analyst, argue that as advocates support free college programs, they should also work to ensure that eligibility requirements are advancing equity and not limiting participation for historically underserved students, including undocumented students.



**We urged Congress to pass a clean DREAM Act** to protect undocumented young people. In this *Education Post* opinion piece, [I'm a DACA Recipient and a First-Generation College Graduate and I'm Nervous About What's Next](#), former Ed Trust intern Mayra Gonzalez Menjivar writes, "I am only in the United States because of the American dream. This is my home. But for how long?" She arrived in the U.S. in 2001 and recounts her journey of obtaining DACA status, which was an exercise in proving her "worthiness" to stay in the only country she knows. "In the wake of family separations at the border," she says, she's "nervous what will happen next."



**What does it mean to be LGBTQ in school?** And how are students experiencing the intersection of being queer and a student of color? To answer these questions and more, we joined GLSEN and the National Black Justice Coalition to uplift student voices by hosting an event at D.C.'s Duke Ellington School of the Arts. There, high school and college students gathered to talk about what it means to be LGBTQ in school. "All we want is love and acceptance," says one Black student who identifies as gay. [Watch this video](#) or read our *Equity Line* blog post, [LGBTQ Students of Color Speak Up](#), to learn what the students had to say.

**Prior to the midterm elections, we hosted a roundtable discussion at Howard University**, where John and social justice activist [Brittany Packnett](#) spoke with students from the School of Education about the nexus of voting, activism, and education. "Policy is what affects you directly. Technically, you're voting for your own activism," said one student. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* covered the event in their story, [Educators and Activists Discuss Civic and Political Engagement](#), and Letisha Marrero, senior editor/writer, wrote this blog for *Equity Line*, [Voting vs. Activism: Black College Students Weigh In](#).



### **We called on the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress to act.**

Now that the new Congress has been sworn in, Ed Trust has a better sense of what things will look like in Washington for the next two years. With the Democrats taking the House, Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.) is now chairman of what will revert back to its original name of the Education and Labor Committee. With the Higher Education Act reauthorization on deck, we might see some actual progress in 2019. From Pell Grants to the DREAM Act, [here's what else should be on Congress' agenda](#).

- Likewise, when the Trump administration proposed a public charge rule that would threaten immigrant families by imposing cruel burdens on access to basic needs like Medicaid, food stamps, and housing assistance, we [staunchly urged that the Department of Homeland Security](#) withdraw this proposed rule in its entirety.
- Ed Trust, National Urban League, and UnidosUS sent a joint letter to the entire Congress urging congressional leaders to protect students' civil rights and to use our organizations' [joint principles](#) as a guide when "engaging in oversight of the ESSA implementation and in consideration of any other pieces of education legislation."



### **To end this quarter, we celebrated Black History Month by launching a digital campaign #OurTimesNow.**

We honored Black men and women who are changing the American landscape and fighting for justice.

**For a full review of all our media efforts this quarter, both traditional and social, [please click here](#).**

# Calling Out Injustices With School Discipline



When the current administration rolled back discipline guidance, we spoke out against this action, which will indisputably harm large numbers of students who are Black, Latino, or have disabilities. The guidance was originally put in place to address unjust, widespread school discipline practices that disproportionality affect students of color. [Recent data](#) show that students of color and those with disabilities are more likely to be suspended or expelled than White students, often for the same or similar offense.

In a [joint statement](#), John and Arne Duncan, both former U.S. Secretaries of Education, write, "Once again, the Trump administration turns its back on our most vulnerable and underserved students. Today's recommendation to roll back guidance that would protect students from unfair, systemic school discipline practices is beyond disheartening. It is also shameful that this administration has chosen to ignore students, educators, families, and advocates who have repeatedly asked to keep this guidance in place."

In a [Now This video](#), John discussed his fear that the school-to-prison pipeline will widen under the Trump administration due to the rollback of civil rights policies. There are dire consequences for a disproportionate number of Black children who are punished in school that result in them eventually being incarcerated. What can communities do to combat this? John says it involves giving children first chances through a high-quality P-12 education and then, being willing to give second chances to the students who are justice impacted.



**Kayla Patrick**, P-12 data and research analyst, wrote a passionate blog post on dangerous school discipline practices for *The Equity Line*, [For Black Children, Attending School Is an Act of Racial Justice](#). She explains, "What many (including this administration) fail to realize is that there is a difference between discipline and punishment. Suspensions and expulsions don't teach. They punish. And far too often, adults decide that Black children are not worthy of teaching and second chances. Excluding students from classrooms does not help them to correct the mistakes that children inevitably make." This blog also ran in the [Amsterdam News](#) and [BlackPressUSA](#), among other African American newspapers.

# Ensuring Fair Access to Quality Dual Enrollment Programs

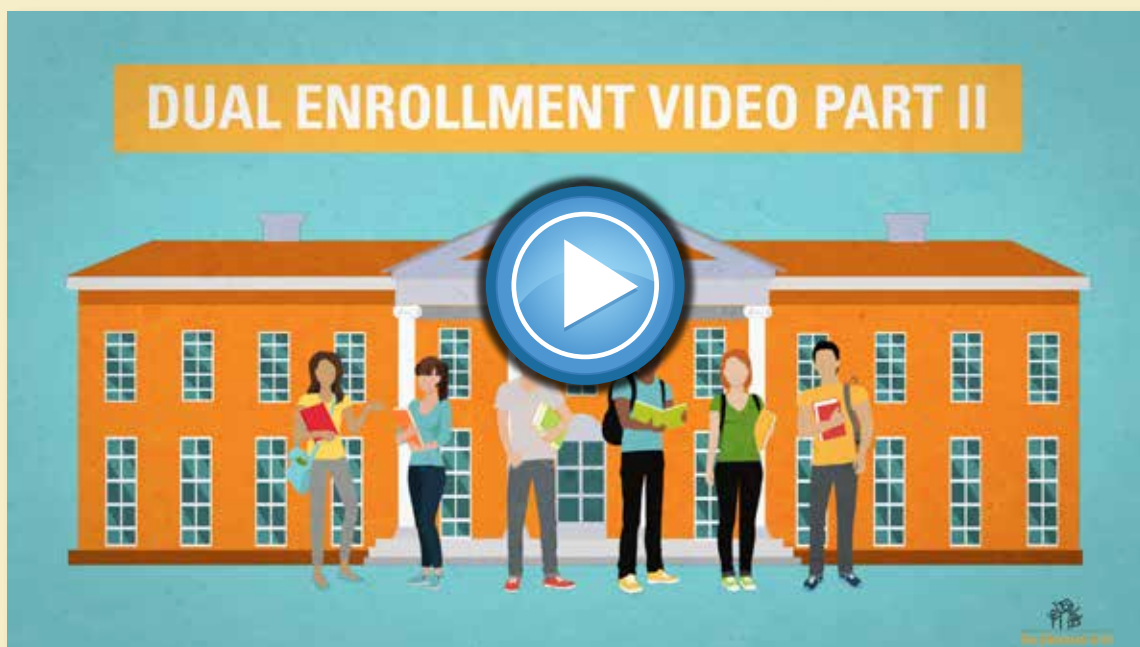
Too few students have access to [dual enrollment programs](#), which enable high school students to simultaneously take credit-bearing college courses while pursuing their high school diploma. The good news is that is changing. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, more states and districts are providing dual enrollment opportunities to prepare students for college and career. However, as is the case too often in education, students of color and students from low-income families are more likely to be shut out of dual enrollment programs.

To combat this, we released a series of videos for advocates and parents on dual enrollment. In [part one](#) of the series, we explain what dual enrollment

programs are and how many students of color and students from low-income families don't have access to these programs.

In the [second installment](#), we explain what parents and advocates can do to make sure their state, district, and school leaders take action to eliminate barriers that keep students from high-quality dual enrollment programs. In addition to the videos, we released a [fact sheet](#) on how to advance equity in dual enrollment programs under ESSA, co-authored with the College in High School Alliance.

*Watch me!*

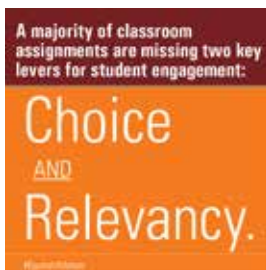
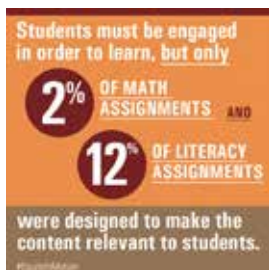


# Increasing Student Engagement Through Choice and Relevancy in Classroom Assignments

When students have the opportunity to attend classes that are engaging, creative, and relatable to their lives, they are more likely to succeed academically. Unfortunately, several new analyses have found that far too many students experience classroom assignments that fail to prepare them for life beyond school. In November, Ed Trust released a [report](#) that examined two powerful levers for engaging learners — choice and relevancy — and explored how educators can use these levers to increase student motivation and engagement.

The report received solid media coverage, including this piece in [Education Week](#), which outlined the findings and recommendations for educators. Tanji Reed Marshall, senior associate of P-12 practice and co-author of the report, explained why this work is important. “When everything in the classroom is told to [students], and they have no voice ... that’s demotivating because all they are doing is producing the wishes of someone else,” she said. The report also reached its primary audience of practitioners through features in [THE Journal](#), [SmartBrief](#), and [The Marshall Memo](#).

To continue the conversation, we published a blog on [The Equity Line](#), [How to Keep Students Motivated](#), and submitted articles for the January/February 2019 issue of NAESP’s *Principal* magazine and the Spring 2019 issue of ASCD’s *Education Leadership* magazine.



## Working With School Districts

In October, we conducted our first [Educational Opportunity and Outcome Equity Audit](#) in partnership with Richmond Public Schools, to support our fee-for-service portfolio. Using publicly available data, we provided district and school analyses in four areas: academic performance, course access, assignment to experienced teachers, and school culture and climate.

The superintendent and school board received a comprehensive report of our findings, which were made public and covered extensively by [local media](#). In general, we found that Richmond elementary and middle schools serving a larger percentage of White and higher income students provided greater access to learning opportunities and had better outcomes overall. But there was a lot of variation in outcomes and opportunity among similarly high-poverty elementary schools. And, the schools that appeared to be doing well on average often had large within-school opportunity and achievement gaps. This analysis was used to help inform the district’s strategic plan.



## Pushing for Fair Access to High-Quality Early Learning Opportunities

ENGAGE

"More than 10,000 babies will be born in the United States today, each with infinite potential," writes John, along with ZERO TO THREE's chief policy officer, Myra Jones-Taylor, in an op-ed for *The Hechinger Report*, [How current policy hurts our youngest citizens](#). And the majority of babies being born are children of color. In the opinion piece, they contend that our leaders and policymakers need to do a much better job of providing babies and toddlers with what they need to be healthy and happy. "These newborns, from diverse backgrounds, represent our country's next generation of thinkers, workers, and leaders," they write. "[A] key decision is to promote policies that can ensure babies thrive, including quality early learning, child care, home visiting programs, and comprehensive paid family leave."

Also, Ed Trust became an official partner of ZERO TO THREE's "Think Babies" campaign, which gives us the opportunity to bring issues of race and income to the forefront in a national advocacy campaign for infants and toddlers.



## Advocating for More Students to Have Access to High-Quality School Counselors

RESEARCH

School counselors are part of a school support team who provide essential social-emotional support in addition to academic support. Yet, nearly 8 million children don't have access to a school counselor. John spoke at an event co-sponsored by the American School Counselors Association and Reach Higher, [Impact and Influence of School Counselors](#), where he called out the need for more students to have access to high-quality school counselors as a pressing social justice issue.

Former second lady and lifelong educator, Jill Biden, also spoke at the event where [Brian Coleman, School Counselor of the Year](#), was honored.

In partnership with Reach Higher and the American School Counselor Association, we published a [fact sheet](#) with the latest statistics and

a color-coded map that shows which states are in most need of school counselors. Across all schools, the average student-to-school-counselor ratio is 464 to 1. And, shockingly, 38 states are shortchanging their students of color and/or students from low-income families.

As a mother of an eighth-grader, Letisha Marrero, Ed Trust senior editor/writer, has experienced the importance of a school counselor firsthand. In an *Equity Line* post, [Why School Counselors Matter](#), she writes, "From day one, eighth grade has been a pivotal year, and these whiplash changes can be overwhelming. From selecting a high school and registering for courses, to dealing with physical injury and emotional issues, my daughter has relied on her school counselor all year long." But she acknowledges that she and her daughter are lucky. Usually, schools that serve the most students of color or the most students from low-income families are shortchanged when it comes to school counselors. This must change.





ENGAGE

## #OurTimelsNow to Call for Change in Our Higher Education Systems

Ed Trust hosted its second state workshop in Chicago, bringing together nearly 30 racial and social justice organizations, think tanks, and education reform groups from Illinois, Ohio, and Tennessee for a two-day intensive training session. The team heard from experts on the state of higher education nationally as well as in their state. They attended sessions on:

- How representative public colleges are in terms of enrolling and graduating Black and Latino students
- How well states are investing in ensuring more students graduate from college
- How advocates in California influenced a redesign of the funding formula for community colleges
- What an equity-focused “[free college](#)” policy could look like
- How state leaders incorporate race/ethnicity in their goals to boost the share of college graduates in the states

Participants in each state identified actionable next steps, including holding regular stakeholder meetings to grow statewide coalitions to advocate on these issues and outline clear guidelines on how to demand better data.

*“I plan on collaborating with other participants. I plan on creating a white paper/report on Blacks in college in [my state] with participants’ help; I plan to stay in contact with folks to become more active in policy.”*

*“I came as a student with little knowledge but with a passion to learn and advocate. I left with so much knowledge and inspiration to continue and aid allies in the push for better funding and opportunities for low-income students.”*

*“The workshop further reiterated how necessary it is that more students/people we talk about are also in the space to advocate for themselves.”*

## Providing Advocates With Tools to Fight for Educational Justice

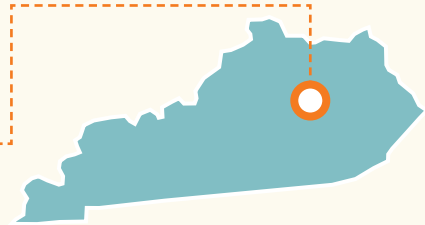
Leaders in most states understand the importance of increasing the number of adults with college degrees; all but seven states have a goal to do just that. But, especially when we know Black and Latino adults face greater challenges on the path to a college degree, how do these statewide college degree attainment goals address race? To explore this question and to give advocates hard-hitting data and concrete action steps, we published [Aiming for Equity: A Guide to Statewide Attainment Goals for Racial Equity Advocates](#) authored by Tiffany Jones, director of higher education policy, and Katie Berger, senior policy analyst. The guide offers advocates:

- A national analysis of the extent to which statewide attainment goals have addressed racial equity
- A list of models and resources that stakeholders can look to for examples of best practices
- Action steps based on their states' progress on setting attainment goals that center on racial equity
- An appendix with links to additional materials and information on each of the 43 existing statewide degree attainment goals

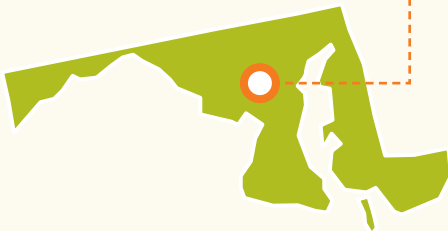


# Ed Trust Working in the States

**Kentucky:** We conducted a one-day training session on the state's policymaking process to help prepare Ed Trust Family Fellows to push state policymakers to carefully review and monitor the state's new graduation requirements, which may set the bar too low and exacerbate inequities. We also conducted a webinar on Kentucky's ESSA plan for Ed Trust Family Fellows and the Prichard Committee's Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership that focused on accountability. This quarter, John delivered a keynote at the Prichard Committee's "Delivering Educational Excellence with Equity: The Role of Communities" in Louisville.

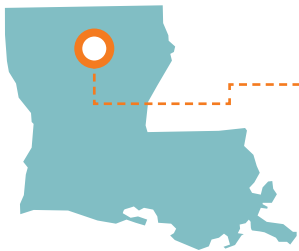


**Illinois:** We supported the Northern Illinois University Ed Systems Center with data to assist them in developing equity targets for Illinois's attainment goal, including presenting on various webinars. We worked with partners on identifying state officials with responsibility for equity, diversity, and/or inclusion. We also partnered with Women Employed to pen a powerful [Higher Ed Equity Lens blog on how to better support student parents in Illinois](#).



**Maryland:** The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education released a public statement about our [analyses of the opportunity gaps in Maryland's schools](#), which highlighted how the lack of resources and supports results in dramatic racial gaps in student outcomes regardless of family income. The ACLU of Maryland released a [blog post](#) on our data along with a [petition](#) calling for action to close stubborn opportunity gaps. Also, a number of the coalition members shared our analyses on social media.

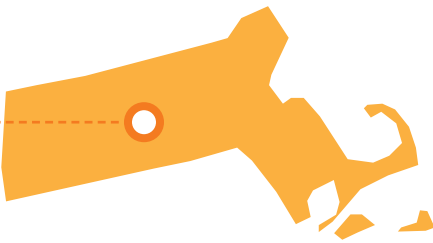
The coalition also sent the materials and [a letter to the Kirwan Commission](#) requesting a meeting to brief the Commission members. The Commission responded to the coalition's meeting request by inviting them [to testify at an open meeting on November 29<sup>th</sup>](#). The analyses were formally submitted as testimony. Robert Ruffins, senior associate of national and state partnerships, discussed the analyses on Baltimore Community Foundation's ["20 minute Update Live Stream,"](#) which has been viewed nearly 700 times.




**Louisiana:** The Louisiana Equity Coalition was able to successfully stop a proposal that would have watered down accountability for alternative schools by raising the "n-size" (or number of students that have to be in a group before that group "counts" for accountability purposes) from 10 to 30. For more information, including the letter the coalition sent and explicit acknowledgement of that advocacy by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, [click here](#).




**Texas:** John met with Texas advocates and visited Huston-Tillotson University to participate in the formal kickoff event of My Brother's Keeper Scholars. The program stems from the Greater Austin area's My Brother's Keeper initiatives of the Obama administration and Foundation. MBK Scholars, led by Huston-Tillotson, brings together school district, higher education, and community partners dedicated to closing the college attainment gap for young men of color. Wil Del Pilar was the keynote speaker at the Yes We Must Coalition in Austin. And Wil and Katie Berger were keynote presenters at Jobs for the Future's conference in Austin.



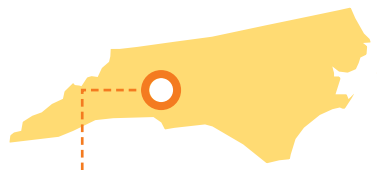
**Massachusetts:** The [Number One for Some](#) coalition framed questioning on the state of education for the [gubernatorial debate](#). In collaboration with the Urban League of Springfield and The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, we hosted the [Massachusetts Education Equity and Excellence Summit](#). The summit was designed to explore research and share information and best practices to improve teaching and learning, particularly in schools that are underperforming and that need to serve students better.



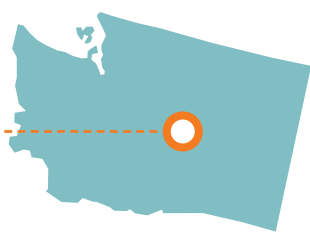
**Ohio:** For the Mayor Alliance Summit in September, we curated a handout on Ohio's attainment data with equity-focused questions to ask mayors. Alongside one of our partners, we were able to reframe the summit to include sessions and discussion questions focused on race and income. Also, Tiffany Jones and Katie Berger were acknowledged in the OH Policy Matters report on free college for advising. John also offered the keynote address at the 34th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Breakfast in Columbus, which is the largest community event of its kind in the nation honoring the civil rights icon's legacy on Martin Luther King Day. John spoke to the theme of this year's gathering, which was "[The Purpose of Education: Intelligence Plus Character](#)."



**Tennessee:** After many opportunities to share degree attainment analysis with TN officials and due to the advocacy efforts of TN Educational Equity Coalition, and TN SCORE, Tennessee officials changed their attainment goal to include a more explicit focus on race. Also, Nashville's mayor started a new financial aid program, Nashville GRAD, to help low-income community college students cover living expenses, as recommended in [A Promise Fulfilled](#).



**North Carolina:** John joined former U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and president of the University of North Carolina at the UNC-Chapel Hill Institute of Politics for a wide-ranging conversation on education policy and politics. He kicked off the university's Civic Ideas Summit and encouraged the audience to push for equitable state and federal education policies. He also met with students and higher education advocates.



**Washington:** Syritha Robinson, senior associate of national and state partnerships, led a training on how to conduct a data walk at the Black Education Strategy Roundtable's annual conference in Seattle.

The Data Equity Walk exposed the systemic conditions that create barriers for Black students in Washington state. Check out this [article](#) for a summary of the event. Additionally, John provided keynote remarks at the Washington Educational Research Association's annual meeting, where he made the case for educational justice to more than 500 educators, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from across the state.

# The Education Trust—Midwest



**“The problem in Detroit’s school district is not the children. The problem is Detroit’s schools.”**

We, along with Ed Trust’s national office, proudly stood with Detroit students, asserting that all students can learn, that Detroit students have been particularly underserved, and that ultimately, Michigan education leaders are responsible for providing a quality education to Michigan students.

The joint *amicus* brief supported the “right to literacy” lawsuit, *Gary B. v. Snyder*. Central arguments about the longstanding grave disparities in opportunity and achievement between students in Detroit and Michigan were reiterated in a well-received [quest column in the Detroit Free Press](#).

## Convening Advocates to Advance a Call for Educational Equity

Despite icy roads and slow traffic, more than 225 Michiganders joined The Education Trust—Midwest (ETM) at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History for our first [Opportunity for All: State of Michigan Education Conference](#) in January.

Advocates from more than 170 zip codes registered for [the event](#), which featured a panel of influential advocates, the leaders of Michigan’s largest school districts, prominent local, journalists, and a keynote by John B. King Jr.

The event concluded with a powerful [call-to-action by Amber Arellano and Detroit civil rights leader and activist, Alice G. Thompson](#).



## Deploying Our Expertise in State Policy

As the 99<sup>th</sup> Legislature drew to a close, it became clear that legislators would leave their mark on their way out the door.

The persistence and engagement of ETM contributed to the passage of an accountability law that prioritizes academic factors, maintains regulatory authority with our Department of Education, and minimizes the role of partisan politics in state accountability. Meanwhile, bills to [reduce the use of data](#) and [deregulate public schools](#) were defeated.

With the combined efforts of ETM and other advocates for public education, a plan to pay a half-billion dollars in income tax refunds from school funds was derailed and the [diversion of school funds](#) to other priorities was minimized.

ETM kicked off the 100<sup>th</sup> Legislature by meeting with leaders from both sides of the aisle, as well as the many new, energized, and engaged state lawmakers.

## Leading the Conversation on Educational Equity, Quality

ETM remains the leading voice in Michigan for promoting a high-quality education for every student, regardless of race, family income, or disability status. [Strong media coverage](#) reached an estimated 91,800 potential unique visitors, and content was shared on social media nearly 8,240 times.

Following the filing of a joint *amicus* brief in Gary B. v Snyder, [Ed Trust and ETM were highlighted](#) for insisting that when provided with the tools and supports to do so, [every student can learn](#). Standing up for the students of Detroit and their right to learn is central to ETM's mission and critical for ensuring that the educational needs of underserved students are not forgotten, and in fact, are prioritized.

In late 2018, media coverage of the lame-duck Legislature's efforts to [change education policy, funding, and governance](#) continue to cite ETM as experts on improved education policy.

January's event was not only a critical opportunity for engaging with advocates in attendance, but it also was well-received for the sense of optimism and focus express around the potential for a [grand bargain](#). Coverage featuring quotes from Amber Arellano, John, and key Michigan educational leaders [focused on](#) the need for large investments in early education, equitable funding, and greater support for classroom educators.



# The Education Trust—West

## Leveraging the #WhatsNextCA Campaign

Following the launch of the [#WhatsNextCA](#) campaign earlier in 2018, The Education Trust—West (ETW) continued to work to shape the narrative and focus of the California education policy landscape during the election and post-election transition period in targeted ways. In October, we released the responses to our [candidate questionnaire](#), giving voters in the state an opportunity to hear directly from candidates for California governor, lieutenant governor, and state superintendent of public instruction on a range of educational equity issues. We then launched a targeted digital ad campaign to educate voters on the roles each of these offices play in education decisions, and to amplify our parent poll, [What's Next Policy Agenda](#), and candidate questionnaires. Using this amplification strategy, we saw a reach of over 1.1 million impressions on Twitter and a reach of over half a million impressions on Facebook, gaining over 500 new Twitter followers and 100 Facebook likes in that time period.

Shortly after the November election, we shifted our focus to the transition period leading up to and directly after the inauguration of California's newly elected leaders in early January. To both establish ETW as a go-to resource for the newly elected policymakers, and to influence the first steps they would take in office, we sent transition packets including our policy agenda, recommendations for state budget investments, and suggestions for administration appointees to California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis, and State Superintendent Tony Thurmond. In early January, Gov. Newsom released his administration's first proposed state budget, which incorporated a number of education-related proposals aligned with our recommendations in transition packet, including expanding high-quality early learning programs for low-income families, and directing revenue to mitigate the pension burden on local school districts.

In January, we hosted a reception in Sacramento to welcome new legislators and connect policymakers more directly with community partners. The event featured a discussion with John B. King Jr., along with ETW Interim Co-Executive Directors Carrie Hahnel and Elisha Smith Arrillaga, California Community College Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley, and California State Board of Education Member Feliza Ortiz Licon. The [#WhatsNextCA](#) reception was well-attended, with over 100 attendees, including members of California's Legislative Black Caucus, Latino Caucus, and Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, alongside leaders from the California Department of Education, the Community College Chancellor's Office, the California Collaborative of Educational Excellence (CCEE), and the Community College Board of Governors.

## Resources and Reach

ETW's resources and expertise are reaching educators, policymakers, and advocates throughout California. Our report on best practices for teaching math with English learners, [Unlocking Learning II](#), continues to be a hot commodity, with the ETW team presenting on the report's findings at a variety of conferences and events.

Our in-house expertise is reaching different pockets of the state with a specific focus on building the capacity of local educators and advocates to engage in school, campus, and education system improvement efforts. In December, ETW's External Relations Manager Anthony Chavez presented to 250 registrants on a webinar with CCEE, highlighting ways to make stakeholder engagement meaningful in the local control and accountability plan process. We partnered with the CCEE again in January, with our Senior Policy Analyst Natalie Wheatfall-Lum presenting on a webinar focused on resource equity and California's local control funding formula, and with Carrie Hahnel representing ETW on the CCEE Community Engagement Initiatives' advisory council. With California's legislators and governor exploring the development of a longitudinal education data system, we've worked with fellow members of our higher education equity coalition to help policymakers understand how crucial equity considerations are in determining the components, audience, and accessibility plans for such a system.

In January, Elisha kicked off ETW's external facing work for 2019 with an inspiring, short, motivational chat on the power of teachers at the Extra Yard for Teachers Summit. Additionally, we continue to engage with key



partners and the California Department of Education around the launch of our Education Equity Navigator website and the department's work to identify and scale bright spot practices throughout California. ETW's practice team is also continuing to lead important work in local communities around access to college and career readiness and student success in K-12 schools, working with multiple schools districts in Marin, and another in Daly City.

To help shape the narrative around California's education accountability landscape, we employed a media engagement strategy that linked our parent poll results to the release of updated state assessment results and the updated California School Dashboard. Elisha and Carrie pushed for more urgency around closing gaps in school improvement efforts in a variety of mediums, including [CALmatters](#), the [Los Angeles Times](#), [EdSource's podcast](#), and public speaking engagements.

## Deepening Our Higher Education Work

In December, we released a set of resources exploring how to expand financial aid access and availability in the state. Our policy brief, [Paving the Path](#), shared implementation lessons from our 2014 sponsored legislation to streamline the financial aid application process in California. The accompanying equity alert took a big picture look at California's recent legislative proposals on financial aid, urging policymakers to keep in mind key equity considerations for "free college" and other policy proposals. Our higher education team is flexing our advocacy muscle around college affordability and other key issues throughout the state, attending all governing board meetings of the California Community Colleges, the California State University System, and the University of California. We've commented on policy issues at governing board meetings, and Tyler Wu, higher education policy analyst, and Manny Rodriguez, legislative associate, shared our take on the college affordability landscape and needed fixes on a webinar with The Institute for College Access and Success. Chris Nellum, senior director of higher education policy and research, spoke around the state on a number of pressing postsecondary issues, including on a panel co-hosted by Google on data and college access, and in closing remarks during the election season at townhalls with candidates for California lieutenant governor. We are thrilled that just before his term ended, [Gov. Jerry Brown appointed Chris to the Student Success Funding Formula Oversight Committee](#), where he will play a key role in ensuring the new equitable funding formula's implementation helps close gaps.



# The Education Trust—New York

## Stolen Time: New York State's Suspension Crisis

New York State's education system suspended Black students at more than four times the rate of White students outside of New York City and more than five times the rate of White students in New York City during the 2016-17 school year.

And statewide districts suspended a student at least once every minute during that school year.

Those were among the findings highlighted in [Stolen Time: New York State's Suspension Crisis](#), a report The Education Trust—New York (EdTrust—NY) released in partnership with The New York Equity Coalition of civil rights, education, family, and business organizations.

The coalition released the report in December as the New York State Board of Regents moved forward with important regulations that address how schools will be held accountable for reducing out-of-school suspensions for all groups of students as part of the state's new accountability system under the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, and, as New Yorkers prepared for a state budget and legislative session that can make 2019 a turning point in stopping punitive discipline.

Using previously unpublished state data on the number of students on whom school districts imposed at least one out-of-school suspension in the 2016-17 school year, The New York Equity Coalition found a statewide crisis in the use of suspensions to exclude Black students from classroom instruction.

At the most basic level, suspensions deprive a student of classroom instruction — even though students who are suspended may be most in need of academic engagement. And beneath the surface, suspensions can represent a step in the school-to-prison pipeline and reflect a school climate characterized by punishment and fear — rather than a caring and supportive environment created by skilled educators with high academic expectations.

Based on the findings, the coalition is calling on state leaders to address three policy priorities: hold schools accountable for reducing suspensions and other exclusionary discipline, including through New York's ESSA regulations; strengthen laws and regulations to stop suspension abuse; and invest in supportive learning environments for all students.

Read the full report and learn more about this issue at [EquityInEdNY.org](http://EquityInEdNY.org).

## EdTrust—NY Gears Up for State Legislative Session

Improving access to critical courses, reducing suspensions, and fostering more teacher diversity are among the big education issues that EdTrust—NY will be focused on during the upcoming state legislative session.



Gov. Andrew Cuomo's State of the State agenda and executive budget advance several important policies that will improve educational justice in New York's education system.

### Among the promising proposals:

- **Improving Access to Advanced Courses:** The governor's goal that every student will be able to earn college credit or workforce experience by the time this year's sixth-graders graduate from high school is a powerful statement of New York's vision for our education system. The executive budget also takes important steps toward making that goal a reality by continuing to expand access to Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, closing the fee waiver gap so more high school students can afford to earn college credit, continuing to invest in the highly promising Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program, increasing opportunities for students to pursue computer science, and recruiting master teachers to focus on expanding access to advanced courses for underserved students.
- **Reducing Suspensions and Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline:** Schools must take steps to support all students in the classroom, not push them out of it. Implementing restorative practices requires training and support, and we are grateful that the executive budget invests \$3 million for this purpose. New York leaders must also strengthen laws and regulations to better protect students. The governor's call to expand the state's Human Rights Law to protect public school students is one essential reform, especially since President Trump's administration has abandoned key civil rights enforcement in this area. We are also hopeful for additional systemic reforms to stop suspension abuse this legislative session, including but not limited to enactment of the Safe and Supportive Schools Act.

- Investing in Student Success:** Schools that serve students with greater needs require significantly greater funding than other schools. There are three parts to this puzzle: whether a school district's overall level of funding from state and local sources is adequate to provide a quality education; whether the school district is directing the most resources to the schools with the greatest needs; and whether schools are spending the money effectively. All three parts are important to understand whether schools are receiving the resources they need to help students succeed.
- Improving Teacher Diversity:** All students deserve access to strong, well-supported, and diverse teachers. Programs that begin in K-12 and build partnerships between school districts and higher education to recruit and support diverse teaching candidates are a proven strategy that benefits students and schools. We are encouraged by the governor's investment in this important area in the executive budget through the 'We Teach NY' program. We also commend the governor for focusing on educator diversity in higher education.
- Teacher Evaluation:** The truth is that New York's teacher evaluation system has essentially been on hold since 2015. Meanwhile, we know that teachers are still the most important in-school determinant of student success. We hope that the governor and Legislature will now focus on solutions for how to ensure that all students — and especially those who have been historically underserved by our education system — have access to strong teachers and school leaders. The State Education Department has also spent months convening educators and other stakeholders to develop recommendations for a new teacher evaluation system, and we believe their work should be respected and could generate useful ideas for the future.
- College Access, Affordability, and Completion:** We are thrilled the New York State Legislature acted swiftly and passed the DREAM Act early in the legislative session, a law that will help more New Yorkers afford college. We also applaud the governor for including key measures in the executive budget to protect student loan borrowers, improve for-profit college accountability, and end abuses in the industry that harm students and communities.

## Racial and Gender Gaps Persist in Access to Computer Science Courses

Just 1 in 3 New York high schools offers computer science, and male students are twice as likely to be enrolled as their female peers.

Racial gaps in access persist as well, with White students being twice as likely to be enrolled in a computer science course as Latino and Black students.

Continuing its focus on access to rigorous coursework, EdTrust–NY launched a social media campaign in conjunction with Computer Science Education Week to highlight the need for state leaders to seek opportunities to make critical courses available to all students.

Computer science was one of the courses included in [a report](#) by The New York Equity Coalition that identified significant disparities in access to a range of important middle and high school courses that prepare students for college, careers, and civic life.

Along with the report, the coalition introduced its 5x25 Agenda, calling on state leaders to take steps to ensure that all students have access to the critical courses that will prepare them for future success. Hundreds of parents, students, educators, legislators, and business leaders have now signed on to the 5x25 Commitment, which lays out five commitments to every student in the graduating class of 2025 — an agenda for success starting with the cohort of students who are entering sixth grade in fall 2018.

Read the full report and learn more about this issue at [EquityInEdNY.org](http://EquityInEdNY.org).





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# The Education Trust

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## Our Mission

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

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