

A Commitment to
**CIVIC
ENGAGE-
MENT**



The Education Trust

www.edtrust.org

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

As many schools across the nation close out another academic year, and students from preschool through college head into summer, it's an appropriate time to reflect on our efforts as an organization to expand educational excellence, opportunity, and justice.

Certainly, this has not been an ordinary school year. Many of us who are educators or parents or who work with youth have had to engage in difficult conversations with young people about divisive political rhetoric. And it seems that there are near daily examples of people across the country being victimized by hate and intolerance. Surely, though, there also have been examples of hope — such as the hundreds of thousands of students who have become more civically engaged by raising their voices and taking action on the issue of gun violence.

Civic engagement, in fact, is an important lens through which we at The Education Trust view achieving our mission. Each day, we demonstrate civic engagement and civic action.



We do this work by supporting and collaborating with state equity coalitions to ensure all students — especially those who are most vulnerable and historically underserved — receive a quality education. We do this work by advocating for legislation, education funding, and other vital resources that advance positive outcomes for students. And we do this work by making our voices heard via a variety of platforms — from events with national partners, to editorials in national news outlets, to social media, to letters to Congress, to publications that highlight disparities in access to educational opportunity for the students for whom excellent teaching and learning make all the difference.

Indeed, we believe that educational equity is justice, and that as advocates, our civic engagement and civic actions should be about the pursuit of justice for students of color and low-income students in particular.

Over the last few months, I was honored to speak about the relationship between education and democracy at the [University of Maryland](#), at [Lehman College](#), where our own José Luis Cruz is president, and at the first-ever Reagan Institute Summit on Education, where I joined three other former U.S. Secretaries of Education.

In observation of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I was humbled to speak at the National Civil Rights Museum on the imperative to expand educational equity to all students. And in conjunction with the anniversary of the release of the landmark Kerner Commission report, I [emphasized](#) the need for increasing school diversity and integration.

In the following pages, you'll also learn more about the civic-minded work of The Education Trust's state offices, which are engaging communities through forums, conversations at state capitols, and the "democratization of data" by bringing evidence about what works in education to the public. And through new reports, state offices are expanding necessary civic discourse about what's required to ensure that all children have access to rich educational experiences and strong, diverse teachers that prepare them for bright futures.

We are at a moment when our divisions in this nation are becoming ever more present, but I deeply believe that we can make a difference in schools and colleges through the work that we do each day on behalf of students. This work is crucial. This work is far from complete. Our current times and our civic responsibility to advance educational excellence, opportunity, and justice compels us to act. Let's keep moving forward.

John B. King Jr.
President and CEO of The Education Trust

Pushing for a Renewed Commitment to Civic Engagement

We are continuing to respond to the civic division and unrest deeply affecting our communities and our young people. We are speaking out publicly around issues of student civil rights and engagement, school improvement, school safety, gun violence, and more. We are urging equity-minded advocates, policymakers, educators, and university leaders to act and to remain committed to tackling these issues in their schools and institutions, communities and states. Now is not the time to get weary.

- For nearly a week in mid-March, responses to Secretary DeVos' *60 Minutes* interview trended on social media. [John, during an interview with Wolf Blitzer on CNN](#), was asked for his opinion on the interest grabbing interview. His response? "It was certainly hard to watch, but more concerning are the policies of this administration and their unwillingness to protect student civil rights, their unwillingness to invest in public education, their unwillingness to do what's necessary to make our schools safer from gun violence."
- And at the University of Maryland, College Park's inaugural Dean's Lecture on Education and Society, John [called](#) on higher education institutions to reinvigorate their civic mission. He urged them to take greater responsibility for educating students to become informed and engaged citizens prepared to help solve the most pressing challenges facing our communities, our country, and the world.
- Ed Trust and the Center for American Progress co-hosted a standing-room-only event focused on unpacking Chicago's impressive educational gains. Janice Jackson, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, and others leading groundbreaking partnerships across city institutions shared their successes and challenges along the way, as well as the work ahead to advance the district's improvement efforts.
- Like thousands of others in communities across the country, we joined the #MarchForOurLives movement and heeded the call from students, standing up and speaking out for the safety of young people, both in and outside of school, and for sensible gun control. We also used our blog to add our voice to the chorus for action. In response to the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, assistant director of P-12 policy, Allison Socol — a south Floridian and parent herself — wrote a [compelling piece](#) about why school shootings are an education issue. "Our students," she wrote, "should be spending their days engaged in rigorous assignments,



not engaged in regular active-shooter drills because school shootings have become a diurnal inevitability."

- For National Gun Violence Awareness Day, [ELLE](#) magazine published an opinion piece by John where he argued, "In all of this, we must remember that activism is more than just a hashtag. It is a matter of life and death. It is understanding the systems and structures that have, for generations, under-served or abandoned people whose very history has been erased, controlled, and re-written."
- Long-time Ed Truster Ebony Daughtry reminded our [Equity Line](#) readers of the power and importance of parents as advocates, sharing an experience at her son's school where she had to step in and advocate for her child. "I refused to let someone label another little Black boy — my boy — as a problem child," [she writes](#).
- Ed Trust's new, ongoing [Profiles in Education Equity](#) blog series features individuals from our diverse network of national, state, and local advocates who represent business, civil rights, education reform, immigrant rights, and disability rights communities, as well as parent leaders and equity-minded educators from across the country. By sharing their stories and insights, we honor the hard work these people do to advance educational equity and social justice and help connect advocates on the ground to learn from one another.
- In March, to celebrate [Women's History Month](#), we launched [#ShePersisted: 31 Days of Women's History](#), a digital campaign featuring diverse women working across spheres of influence to create a more equitable America.
- We're excited to announce that Travis L. Robinson has joined our Ed Trust Influencers! Travis leads America's student outreach and global diversity recruiting at [@Spotify](#) and is founder of Belonging At Monday, a non profit focused on "creating a sense of belonging" for underrepresented young professionals.



For a full review of all our media efforts, both traditional and social, please visit <https://edtru.st/2GED8iQ>

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

THEORY OF CHANGE





ESSA Boot Camps

Our ESSA Boot Camps continue to be a powerful vehicle for civic engagement. State and local advocates from 80 business, civil rights, disability rights, immigrant rights, educator, parent, and ed-reform groups from 11 states attended our ESSA implementation meeting in New Orleans.

Participants:

- Learned about [evidence-based](#) policies and practices to drive school improvement, including high-quality early childhood education; resource allocation; school leadership; access to strong, well-supported teachers; supportive school culture; early warning and intervention systems; rigorous learning; and escalated interventions
- Engaged school, district, and state practitioners who have led improvement for low-income students and students of color, including Chicago Public Schools CEO Janice Jackson and Louisiana Superintendent John White; and [BARR](#)
- Identified priorities for action in their state/community

Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In a survey, **over 90 percent** of participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the following statements:

- I strengthened my knowledge of important policy opportunities in ESSA.
- I was able to strengthen relationships with advocacy partners.
- The programming helped me to identify future advocacy targets and strategies for ESSA implementation.
- I strengthened my knowledge of strategies for engaging wider audiences in ESSA conversations.
- The materials were applicable and relevant to the work I do in my state.

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS:

*“An insightful, powerful,
well-organized opportunity
for state advocates!
Please make more of these happen!”*

*“The meeting spoke
directly to steps that
family and community
advocates can take.”*

*“I carry forward all I learn
and take the responsibility
seriously to share
all I’ve learned.”*

Advancing Equity With National Partners



We joined 16 other civil rights and education groups in sending [a letter to the chair and ranking members of the House and Senate education committees](#), urging them to monitor the U.S. Department of Education's implementation of ESSA and correct the approval of noncompliant state plans. Drawing from [Ed Trust analyses](#), the letter calls out state plans that disregard the "critical provisions related to signaling how all schools are serving each group of students and the identification of schools for support and improvement when they are not effectively serving individual groups of students."

And we joined more than 150 organizations in [urging Secretary DeVos not to rescind discipline guidance](#) that offers help on how schools can reduce disparities in discipline practices.

Additionally, we participated in the inaugural meeting of the National Association for Student Financial Aid Administrator's [Forward50 Committee](#), which included a number of influential higher education leaders. Katie Berger, senior policy analyst for higher education, joined an expert panel to discuss college access and barriers facing historically underserved students. She also presented at the spring meeting of the [National](#)

[Council of State Directors of Community Colleges](#), where she discussed "free college" programs and their implications for the community college sector and previewed Ed Trust's forthcoming framework for equitable free college programs.

Wil Del Pilar joined partners including UnidosUS, Young Invincibles, and UNCF for a number of panels and meetings to discuss the sacrifices and experiences of students of color as they transition through college and to amplify the need to improve graduation rates. He also joined the Education Commission of the States Higher Education Policy Forum and participated in an accountability discussion with representatives from the American Council on Education.



Deeper State Engagement

We've continued and intensified our engagement with and support of state equity coalitions. For example:

- The Education Equity **Delaware** coalition hosted a summit on increasing equity and transparency in Delaware's school funding system. John was the keynote speaker, and Ary Amerikaner, director of P-12 resource equity, led a workshop on exposing hidden funding inequities. In addition, we hosted a webinar focused on school improvement in Delaware's ESSA plan to prepare coalition members for our ESSA implementation meeting in May.
- In **Kentucky**, Syritha Robinson, national and state partnerships associate, participated in the Prichard Committee's first-ever Kentucky Parent Leadership Summit along with more than 50 parent leaders from nine counties. Participants engaged in an Ed Trust–West-inspired [Data Equity Walk](#) and discussed topics ranging from what questions parent leaders should ask about the state's accountability system to what high-quality curricula look like.
- The **Louisiana** coalition has prioritized building awareness, understanding, and support for the state's ESSA plan to defend against attempts to water it down. To support this strategy, we presented at a Louisiana Association of Business and Industry-hosted convening of key legislators and State Board members and on a Stand for Children-hosted Tele-Town Hall reaching 2,000 Louisiana families.
- In **Maryland**, we've convened monthly meetings with CASA De Maryland, Right to Read Maryland, the ACLU of Maryland, the Greater Baltimore Urban League, Teach Plus Maryland, Faith Leaders for Excellent Schools, Strong Schools Maryland, and the Baltimore Teachers Network. These groups took formal steps toward forming a coalition by drafting principles to guide their advocacy agenda and have identified the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education as a priority opportunity to address educational inequities, especially racial inequities, in Maryland's school system.
- In **Massachusetts**, we convened over a dozen social justice and civil rights advocates to preview and solicit feedback on an analysis and narrative for a report we're drafting for advocates to endorse. With the working title "Number One for Some," the goal of this report is to use data on inequitable opportunities and outcomes in the state to provide a counter-narrative to the prevailing "we're number one, we're just fine" narrative that dominates the current conversation.
- In **Tennessee**, we shared forthcoming higher education analyses with advocates and policymakers. Because of this engagement, policymakers immediately updated their publicly available materials to reflect a greater focus on racial equity in their degree attainment goals. We're also working closely with the Tennessee Ed Equity Coalition on its response to the recent failure of the state testing vendor.

SECURE

Federal Appropriations

In late March, Congress released the [FY18 omnibus appropriations bill](#), delivering much-needed good news to equity advocates. The bill reflects our top priorities: supporting college access and affordability for students from low-income families through an increase in the maximum Pell Grant award and maintaining funding for teacher and principal support and development. In a [statement](#), Lillian Lowery and Wil Del Pilar applauded this bipartisan commitment. We [look forward to continuing working with appropriators in FY19](#).



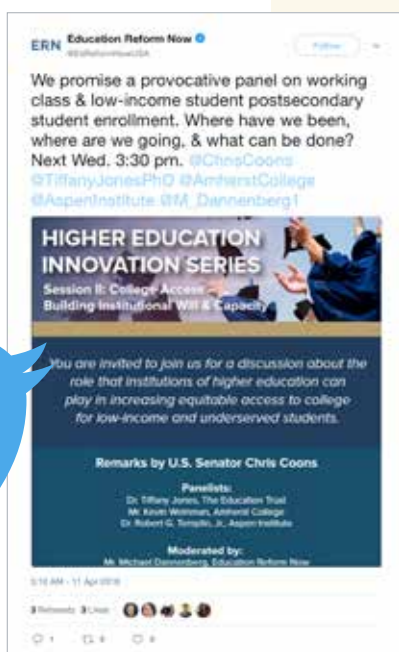
HEA

SECURE

There's been no movement on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in either chamber since the House's partisan PROSPER Act advanced out of the Education and the Workforce Committee in December 2017. Despite multiple hearings before the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee in early 2018, the Senate has yet to introduce its own proposal.

In March, John and UnidosUs' president and CEO, Janet Murguía, wrote [an op-ed published in The Hill](#), calling on Congress to invest in students of color through HEA reauthorization by maintaining and strengthening current accountability provisions and rewarding institutions who enroll and graduate historically underserved students. We also finalized and disseminated our [priorities](#) for an equity-focused HEA reauthorization: [strengthening Pell](#), [accountability for access and completion](#), and [investing in evidence-based innovations to increase completion](#).

As part of a Capitol Hill [briefing series](#) on higher education innovation sponsored by Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE), Tiffany Jones, director of higher education policy, joined a panel of policy analysts and practitioners in a robust conversation around building institutional will and capacity in college access. Her remarks centered on how access to and opportunities in higher education are not equitable for many low-income students, who traditionally do not have unlimited college choices.



You can follow this conversation on Twitter at #HIGHEREDINNOVATION

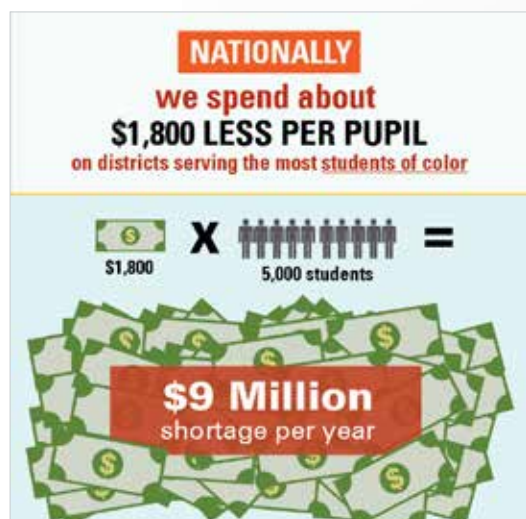
DACA

SECURE

Despite overwhelming bipartisan and public support, Congress has yet to strike agreement with the Trump administration on a legislative solution for Dreamers. Even with this standstill, our HEA reauthorization priorities include continued support for Dreamers by [encouraging](#) Congress to overturn the current restrictions limiting their access to federal student aid for postsecondary attainment.



#DACA



Funding Gaps

RESEARCH

Districts serving large populations of students of color and students from low-income families receive far less funding than those serving White and more affluent students. And despite widespread attention to inequitable funding formulas — and courts that have declared them unlawful for shortchanging school districts serving large percentages of low-income students — too many states continue this unfair practice, according to our [state-by-state report and online data tool](#) released this quarter.

The report received significant coverage (please visit <https://edtru.st/2IEHFYr> to view press coverage), and we presented our findings to the PIE Network, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the Delaware Education Equity Summit, and in numerous presentations on how opportunities in ESSA can identify and remedy inequities in spending between schools within districts.

Teacher Diversity

LISTEN

We continued our push for a more diverse educator workforce. Ashley Griffin, interim director of P-12 research, served as moderator at the Leadership Conference Education Fund's "Present in the Classroom: Educators of Color and Native Educators on Creating Racial Justice in Education" event for civil rights advocates. She also engaged congressional legislators and their staffs in a conversation about teachers of color at a briefing jointly sponsored by Ed Trust, The National Black Child Development Institute, the National Education Association, UnidosUS, The Learning Policy Institute, and Sen. Corey Booker (D-NJ).



Wil Del Pilar participated in Univision's Nuestros Maestros event in Miami, where he presented to a group of educators from around the country on the need for more Latino teachers in the classroom.

At The Harvard Graduate School of Education's "Beyond Desegregation: Promising Practices for Creating Diverse and Equitable Schools" conference, John highlighted our work examining the perspectives and experiences of Black and Latino educators. Ashley Griffin and Davis Dixon, P-12 research associate, also led a workshop on unpacking the "invisible tax" on teachers of color.

Additionally, John joined with Linda Darling-Hammond, president and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute, to write an op-ed for *The Hechinger Report*, titled, "[We Aren't Doing Enough to Support Teachers of Color.](#)" They state, "Teachers of color can — and should — be offered seats at the table when decisions are made that affect the daily work they do with students in the classroom."



But the event that may have reached the largest audience was a Twitter chat co-hosted by EdLoC, Ed Trust, UnidosUS, and Latinos for Education. During this online event, we talked to Latino teachers, principals, advocates, and other education leaders about this important topic.

May 2nd, 8pm ET/5pm PT

Math Equity Chat

Join the conversation with
#MathEquityChat

With hosts:

@edtrust, @edtrustwest, @CABEBEBILINGUAL, & @NCTM



RESEARCH

Checking In: Are Math Assignments Measuring Up?

In "[Checking In: Are Math Assignments Measuring Up?](#)" we, along with a team of math content experts, examined more than 1,800 math assignments given to middle school students from six districts — urban, suburban, and rural — across the country. Our analysis revealed that the math assignments students receive fall far short on measures of assignment quality, engagement, and rigor.

This report was the centerpiece of an *Education Week* article, "[Low-Level Assignments Are an Indictment of the System.](#)" Additionally, we engaged National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, along with our colleagues at Ed Trust–West and the California Association for Bilingual Education to host a math equity Twitter chat.

"I want to be a math teacher for one specific reason: To teach my students completely impossible problems!"

—5th grader

#EquityInMotion

CHECKING IN: Are Math Assignments Measuring Up?



- Alignment to the Common Core
- Cognitive Challenge
- Aspects of Rigor
- Communicating Mathematical Understanding
- Motivation and Engagement

#EquityInMotion

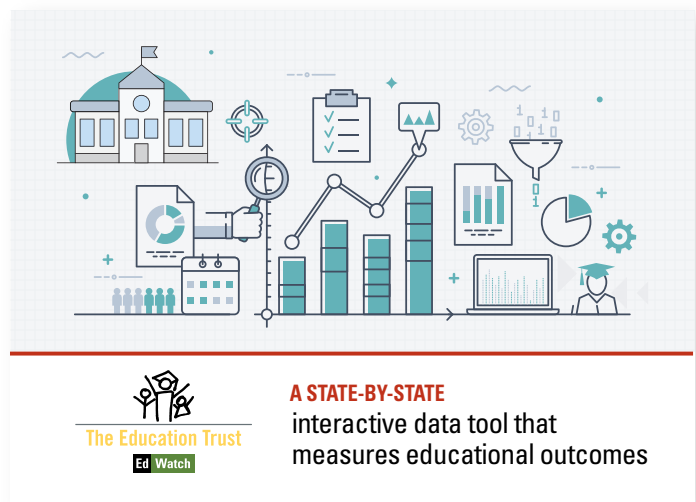
Education Watch

RESEARCH

We released our most recent update of [Education Watch](#), which includes a new interactive data tool with state-by-state data on critical measures of educational opportunity and achievement, pre-K through college. We unveiled this new tool to equity-minded advocates, who overwhelmingly said that this resource is just what is needed to enhance their advocacy efforts. Looking for your state's data? Visit www.EdTrust.org/EdWatch.



The Education Trust



A STATE-BY-STATE
interactive data tool that
measures educational outcomes

Education Watch THE STATE OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY



National Assessment of Educational Progress

LISTEN

We called the results of the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, “disappointing overall.” We found that across the country, results are flat or declining — even more so for low-income students and students of color. Every state and district in America needs to remedy the opportunity gaps that are undeniably leading to these achievement gaps. [Read Ed Trust's analysis](#). In keeping with our call for increased civic engagement, John said in a [statement](#), “If we fail to educate students of color and students from low-income families, we have no future as a nation.”



The Education Trust—West



Flexing Our Equity Expertise in the State Capitol and With the ESSA State Plan

We are excited to share that in April, **Ed Trust—West** held our first Advocacy Day at the state Capitol, bringing over 60 advocates to Sacramento for a day of capacity-building and legislative meetings with elected officials and their staffers. A group of students, parents, and other advocates spoke directly to the need for school district budget transparency and a more equitable restructuring of how the state funds the California Community Colleges — the latter of which [we also highlighted via an equity alert](#). When NAEP results released on the heels of Advocacy Day reinforced the need for more urgency in California, [Executive Director Ryan J. Smith](#) for more urgency from the state's current and soon-to-be-elected leaders.

This quarter, we also took action around California's ESSA state plan, making sure the call for more equity and urgency is a part of every step of the plan's development and implementation process. At State Board of Education meetings, we provided public comment and submitted letters critiquing the Board's delays in finalizing the plan and system of supports. We also supported our community grantees in their own advocacy — both at the local level to build awareness and engagement around accountability, and at the state level during the board meetings, and continued to work with UnidosUS to push the board to make necessary equity adjustments to the plan and to determine the system of supports for struggling schools and districts.

We've also significantly stepped up our legislative advocacy game in Sacramento. In April, we announced [“The Equity 8”](#) — providing information on eight key legislative proposals important to education equity in California. We continue to monitor these proposals and are leveraging social media and other digital tools to update our supporters and partners as the proposals move through the legislative process.

California State Superintendent and Gubernatorial Forums

This spring, we will host two community dialogues with the major candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction. [The first event brought candidate Marshall Tuck to San Bernardino](#) for a Q&A in front of parents, students, and other community members, and was live-streamed to hundreds of others throughout the state. In May, we hosted a second event, with candidate Assembly member Tony Thurmond.

We also co-hosted a series of gubernatorial forums focused on higher education with our partners at the Campaign for College Opportunity, with Ryan serving as the closing speaker for each event. These forums all included a question we designed around the need for a robust, longitudinal data system connecting K-12 and postsecondary access and outcome data. Additionally, we partnered with the Campaign for College Opportunity to host and present at a special briefing in the state Capitol building on the state of California's current education data systems. We briefed all major gubernatorial candidates during coalition briefings that Ed Trust—West hosted this past fall.

Leveraging Math for English Learner Equity

In March, Ed Trust—West released [Unlocking Learning II: Math as a Lever for English Learner Equity](#). Second in our series of *Unlocking Learning* reports, this resource couples evidence-backed best practices with real world examples of how these practices are being utilized in classrooms, districts, and programs around the state. Since the release, we've used the report to amplify issues of English learner equity across California, presenting on both *Unlocking Learning* reports at the annual conference of the California Association for Bilingual Educators. The report was featured in media outlets, including [EdSource](#), [EdWeek](#), and the [LA School Report](#).

Diversifying and Amplifying the Pipeline of Education Policy and Research Experts

This spring, Ed Trust–West continued working with our eight senior equity fellows, creating platforms to amplify the work of these phenomenal researchers, policy experts, educators, and community activists. We hosted a lunchtime forum with seven of the senior fellows in the state Capitol and dozens of legislative staffers and advocates. In April, we created another opportunity to showcase the crucial perspectives and expertise of these equity champions through our [Understanding Educational Equity and Achieving It](#) webinar in partnership with EdSource.

During this reporting period, we received over 200 applications for the inaugural cohort of our Russlynn Ali Summer Fellowship,



designed to create a pipeline for women, Black, Latino, and Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander educators to work in California's education policy and research spaces.

Data for the People

California is at an inflection point. This year Californians will elect a new governor and state Superintendent of Public Instruction. Both leaders will take office at a time when the implementation of many education reforms is being significantly hindered by outdated, disconnected, and/or non-existent education data systems in the state. Our Data for the People Campaign is currently focused on leveraging this policy window to push for the development of coordinated, longitudinal education data systems in California that help us see better how students are doing in K-12 and higher education institutions, the distribution of effective educators, and how well we are preparing students for colleges and careers.

The Education Trust—Midwest

The Education Trust—Midwest continues to amplify the message of making [Michigan a Top Ten Education State](#), beginning with early literacy and seeing greater traction than ever. In March, ETM released a third Michigan Achieves report, [Top Ten for Education: Not By Chance](#). Focusing on declining student achievement, despite a policy focus and budget investment, the report was [very well received by the media](#), with more than 50 pieces of coverage, reaching an estimated 5.35 billion unique monthly readers. This was followed by more than a dozen speaking engagements and requests, including in partnership with the [Center for Michigan](#), [Business Leaders for Michigan](#), the [Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce](#), and [Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc.](#), [Michigan Day at the Capitol](#). This work also extended to the launch of ETM's early literacy work group. This cross-section of diverse leaders is regularly meeting to build knowledge and develop recommendations for improving equity and excellence in the systems responsible for educating young students.

John delivered a keynote address at the Mackinac Policy Conference attended by nearly 2,000 business, government, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders. He talked about key



policies and strategies to drive postsecondary attainment at the national and state level.

Additionally, Top Ten for Education highlighted the [success of some high-poverty schools in Michigan](#), with the assistance and support of ETM's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. With the center's support, these schools and districts have built the capacity of principals and teachers to bolster student achievement and lead building-wide improvement. While more progress is needed, [two of the original cohort of schools rank in the top 20 percent](#) for statewide math improvement, and a third has propelled to be a top-quartile school for low-income students in elementary school math. The impact continues to grow, as two additional schools join this improvement network.

The Education Trust—New York

Forum on Educator Diversity in Buffalo and Erie County

For Buffalo Public Schools student Malik Patterson, seeing teachers who look like him gives him a sense of opportunity. Principal Derek Baker and teacher Felice Brandy feel they can relate to their students because they, too, grew up in Buffalo, living in the same neighborhoods and attending the same district schools as their students.

Those sentiments were among those shared by educators and students of color at a town hall forum hosted in April by **EdTrust—NY** in association with the Center for Urban Education at Canisius College and WNED/WBFO.

The Honorable Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, New York State Assembly, Assembly District 141; the Honorable Dr. Catherine Collins, New York State Board of Regents, 8th Judicial District; and Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kriner Cash all delivered remarks at the forum, which emphasized solutions for cultivating a more diverse education workforce.

About 125 students, educators, parents, and community leaders attended the event, which has been viewed more than 800 times on Facebook. The event was covered by [The Buffalo News](#) and [WBFO radio](#). [Watch the recording](#) of the forum to learn more.

Graduation Standards, Student Loan Debt

In March, EdTrust—NY released [Graduating to a Bright Future](#), offering a first look at how school districts in New York are implementing the “4+1” high school diploma options — which provide students with a menu of options in a variety of subjects instead of having to pass a mandatory fifth Regents exam — and raising questions about whether historically underserved groups of students have equitable access to college- and career-prep pathways. The report also examined the status of efforts to close the graduation rate gap for historically underserved students across the state.

We also issued [Drowning in Debt](#), drawing on new data calculations from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York showing that New York communities with average income under \$50,000 owe a cumulative \$29.5 billion in student loan debt. The report identified several opportunities in the state budget to help make college more affordable, protect borrowers from abusive lending practices, and improve student outcomes.

State Budget Provisions Aimed at Education Equity

EdTrust—NY’s [See Our Truth](#) report raised awareness about the critical role that strong and diverse teachers and school leaders play in student success and in closing achievement and opportunity gaps. During this year’s state budget season, the team turned its attention to advocacy. Those efforts helped influence a final budget that includes funding for a teacher diversity pilot program to expand the pipeline to teaching, a report that will identify comprehensive strategies to improve diversity in the classroom, and a teacher loan forgiveness program that prioritizes students who are economically disadvantaged.

Supporting Local Education Advocacy Efforts

EdTrust—NY remains committed to supporting a network of regional organizations in their advocacy efforts through its Equity Partnership Program, and from Buffalo to the Bronx those partners are taking on issues such as educator diversity, ESSA, and school discipline.

In March, the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families and the Hispanic Federation both facilitated workshops at the statewide SOMOS conference, which brought together educators, elected officials, service providers, and advocates to discuss education issues affecting New York’s Latino student population, including college- and career-readiness.

We presented at an April workshop hosted by Rochester’s Ibero-American Action League to help Spanish-speaking parents better understand ESSA — and how it can be leveraged to work for more equity for their children. The team conducted a similar workshop for Masa, a community-based organization that works with Mexican families in New York City.

And in Buffalo, young men of color involved with the Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council are examining suspension and disciplinary policies, with the goal of using data and their own personal experiences to push for changes that will ensure Black and Latino male students are not disproportionately and unnecessarily punished.

We continue to work with The Equity Partnership Program to provide technical assistance and small grants to support advocacy capacity to 14 community-based organizations across the state.

This has been a productive quarter for The Education Trust. We look forward to continuing to show our commitment to civic engagement by pushing for educational and social justice for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds.



The Education Trust

Our Mission

The Education Trust is a nonprofit organization that promotes closing opportunity gaps by expanding excellence and equity in education for students of color and those from low-income families from pre-kindergarten through college. Through research and advocacy, the organization builds and engages diverse communities that care about education equity, increases political and public will to act on equity issues, and increases college access and completion for historically underserved students.