

EdTrust Federal Policy Priorities 2025

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

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 and students from low-income backgrounds
- Strengthening evidence-based wraparound supports for current students via [increasing funding](#) for the Postsecondary Student Success Grant program
- Addressing students' basic needs by increasing access to childcare and lowering barriers to combat food insecurity
- Implementing broad-based student debt relief via regulatory or Congressional action

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:

- Ensuring the effective expansion of the Pell Grant to more students via the new Student Aid Index and expanding access 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

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 in the 118th), which creates grant programs to increase the enrollment and achievement of under-represented students in advanced coursework via 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 completer 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](#) (HR 3596/S. 1762), 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](#) (HR 2690 in the 118th), 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](#) (H.R. 6202/S. 3214), 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
- Doubling 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

EdTrust Legislative Priorities for the 119th Congress (Bill Numbers are 118th Congress)

P-12 Education Bills

- [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 via resources to expand access, provide tutoring, and engage with their communities.
- [Protecting our Students in Schools Act](#) (HR 3596 /S. 1762), 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.
- [Ending PUSHOUT Act](#) (HR 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.
- [Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act](#) (HR 6202 /S. 3214), 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.
- [Read to Rise Resolution](#) (S. Res 814), which calls attention to the ongoing literacy challenges facing students nationwide, and advocates for evidence-based reading strategies to increase access to literacy for all students.

Higher Education Bills

- [Postsecondary Student Success Act](#) (HR 7811/S. 3995), which supports the creation and expansion of evidence-based student success programs that include wraparound services to increase retention and completion.
- [Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act](#) (HR 8807/S. 4595), which would strengthen the Pell Grant by doubling the max award, reindexing the award to inflation, make funding for the program fully mandatory, and expand it to undocumented students, among other provisions to support students from low-income backgrounds.
- [Debt-Free College Act](#) (HR 3923/S. 1848), which would create a federal-state partnership to create a path to debt-free college for millions of public college students.
- [Creating A More Positive University Space \(CAMPUS\) Act](#) (HR 10534), which would seek to improve the racial climate on college campuses via conducting an annual national survey of students, disaggregating the responses, and sharing that information publicly, among other changes designed to ensure transparency and accountability.