

# **EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA**

## **PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE**

### **BACKGROUND**

- Pro-Student: Ensure a quality education for students from all neighborhoods.
- Pro-Teacher: Support the teaching profession by providing consistent support and feedback.
- Pro-Parent: Help parents be active participants in their child's education.
- Pro-Local District Control: Stop the state from managing district budgets.

### **THE ISSUES**

#### **ENSURE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS FROM ALL NEIGHBORHOODS**

- Covid-19 imposed upon our schools the monumental task of offering online education led by instructors who did not desire to teach online and who were not trained to do so, using curriculum that was not designed to be presented online and offered to students who did not choose to be educated online.
- It follows that students have suffered learning loss during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Policy Analysis for California Education, the loss was significant in math and English language arts, and it was especially hard on low-income students and English language learners.
- A return to classroom instruction is critical to end the learning loss that occurred in 2020 due to Covid-19 policies. Schools must be open full-time for in-class instruction and to facilitate this all schools should have access to free rapid testing, and funding to support cleanliness and proper ventilation.
- Because the single greatest factor to improve student learning is a high quality teacher, policies must support the development and retention of high quality teachers.
- The combination of the permanent employment statute ("tenure"), ineffective teacher evaluations, dismissal statutes, and the seniority-based "last-in, first-out" (LIFO) layoff statute – which fails to protect high quality teachers – has a negative affect and disproportionately impacts students in poverty and minority students.
- We must offer students the opportunity to succeed in college and career by promoting 21<sup>st</sup> Century education with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

#### **RETURNING TO FULL TIME IN SCHOOL INSTRUCTION AND MITIGATING LEARNING LOSS**

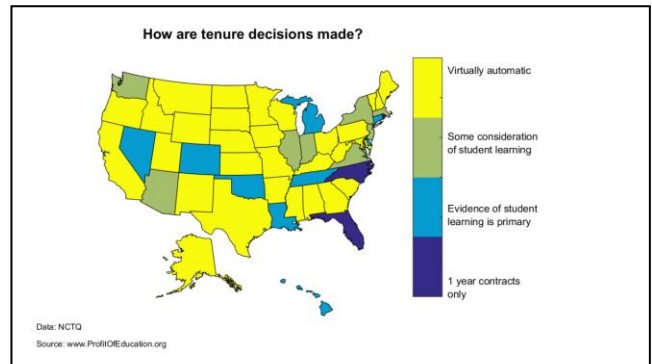
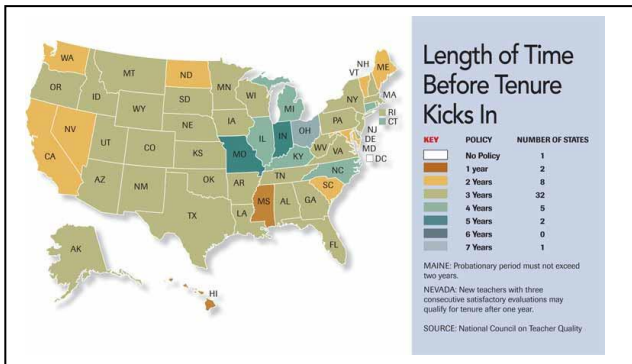
- In March of 2020 under a shelter-in-place order California's public and private schools were closed, and in April Governor Newsom announced that schools would remain closed for the remainder of the year.
- Public schools were thrust into the role of providing education online led by instructors who did not desire to teach online and who were not trained to do so, using curriculum that was not designed to be presented online and offered to students who did not choose to be educated online.
- In July of 2020 Governor Newsom issued an order that would keep most school districts online for the remainder of the school year; ensuring students would be isolated and forced to into distance learning.
- Inequities were quickly identified; demonstrating lack of adequate access to quality online services for many our states students – particularly low-income students and students in rural communities. Attendance across the state diminished and learning loss became a reality, particularly for elementary students.
- To address learning loss Republicans supported legislation to provide \$5.3 billion to local schools for learning loss mitigation; funds are to be used for expansion of learning supports that begin before the start of the school year and the continuation of intensive instruction and supports into the school year; extending the instructional school year to increase the amount of instructional time for pupils based on their learning

needs; providing additional academic services for pupils, such as diagnostic assessments of pupil learning needs, intensive instruction for addressing gaps in core academic skills, additional instructional materials or supports, or devices or connectivity for the provision of in-classroom and distance learning.

- As the 2021-22 school year opened the Newsom Administration imposed a vaccine mandate for students, making California the only state in the Union with such a requirement. Numerous school districts have balked at opening full time and closures have occurred due to the Omicron variant.
- Republicans support our public schools being open full-time to offer instruction and additional support to mitigate learning loss. The role of the state is to ensure that schools have the necessary tools to remain open and safe for students; schools should have access to free rapid testing, and funding to support cleanliness and proper ventilation.

## ENSURING THAT OUR STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT BY THE BEST TEACHERS

- A two-year permanent employment statute (“tenure”) harms developing teachers by not providing time to grow before administrators must commit to a “lifetime” relationship.



- According to EdVoice, teacher evaluation laws are routinely ignored. As a result, these evaluation tools do not improve effectiveness. EdVoice found that 86.5% of the state’s school districts are out of compliance with the Stull Act (teacher evaluation requirements) and that their performance evaluation processes do not include pupil progress.
- The state does not include whether school district employers provide professional development for their teachers among its statutory state priorities under the local control funding formula (LCFF). Minimizing the need for professional development discourages a focus on this critical component of effective teaching and harms teachers.

## STRENGTHEN PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Current law (the LCFF) pushes school finance decisions down to the district-level, but there is no way to track how the money is allocated between schools or by identified priorities.
- While parents often know who the best teachers are in a school, they have no role or impact on teacher performance evaluations.

## ALLOW LOCAL CONTROL

- In a last-minute budget deal, the Governor and Democrats imposed a cap on school district budget reserves (to be implemented if funds are transferred into the State’s “rainy day” fund).
- The reserve cap is an affront to local control and prevents school district leaders from making local funding decisions in the best interests of their students.
- District bond ratings are dependent on ending balance reserves, and reduced reserves could increase district borrowing costs.

## REPUBLICAN SOLUTIONS

REPUBLICANS SUPPORT A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS AND GREAT SCHOOLS FOR TEACHERS TO WORK IN.

- Require schools to offer classroom education five days per week: Ensure that schools have the necessary tools to remain open and safe for students.
- Promote options to prepare for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century job market by allowing concurrent enrollment for STEM classes: Grant high school STEM students access to local educational expertise by allowing them to enroll in Community College courses.
- Promote STEM in the K-12 curriculum by allowing more opportunity for sequenced courses in computer science and programming.
- Repeal LIFO: Allow schools to manage their professional staff so that only effective teachers are paired with students in the classroom.
- Teacher “tenure”: Provide teachers with the opportunity to master their craft before evaluating them for professional tenure. This will better ensure that students are taught by effective teachers.
- Teacher evaluation: Support teachers by providing them with regular and meaningful feedback to help them fine-tune their professional skills, thereby improving both job satisfaction and student academic performance.
- Professional development: Evaluate school districts based upon how well they provide professional development so the needs of teachers are prioritized.
- School accountability and transparency: Empower parents to more actively engage with schools and teachers by disclosing anonymous and high-level teacher quality metrics, and school funding priorities.
- Empower parents to weigh-in on teacher evaluations, encourage the use of pupil and parent surveys in teacher evaluation.
- Repeal the district reserve cap: Allow districts to manage their own finances and save for local education priorities.

## **REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

- **Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE):** <https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/covid-19-and-educational-equity-crisis/> / <https://edpolicyinca.org/>
  - **Edvoice:** <https://www.edvoice.org/>
  - **Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC):** <https://www.ppic.org/topics/k-12-education/>
  - **Students Matter:** <https://www.studentsmatter.org/>
  - **Kids First:** <https://kidsfirstca.com/>
  - **Newsom Order Would Keep Most California Schools Online**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/us/california-schools-reopening-newsom.html>
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