



**Teachers
We Need**

How can California provide every student with the teachers they need?

**GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO
FULLY PREPARED EDUCATORS**



California has made several recent investments intended to address the state’s well-documented teacher shortage, with a particular focus on encouraging more educators of color to enter the profession and remain in the classroom. Some of these investments include the following:

- Golden State Teacher Grant Program: **\$500 million**
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification Incentive Program: **\$250 million**
- CA Teacher Residency Capacity Grant Program: **\$350 million**
- CA Teacher Residency Implementation/Expansion Grant Program: **\$479 million**
- Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program (BTPDP): **\$20 million**

Despite these important one-time investments, the state continues to face a shortage of teachers who reflect the rich diversity of our communities.

EdTrust-West launched the [Teachers We Need](#) campaign in December 2024 to build a movement of parents, families, and community leaders that pushes policymakers across the state to support educators of color and multilingual educators.

So, who are the teachers we need? A robust and growing body of research suggests students experience the greatest learning gains and educational attainment when their teachers reflect the rich racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of their communities. Additionally, we know students see large gains when they are taught by fully credentialed educators who are qualified to teach the subject matter that they are assigned. Taken together, these insights underscore that ***our students—especially students of color and multilingual learners—need and deserve diverse, fully prepared teachers.***

This fact sheet focuses on guaranteeing access to fully prepared educators. For research and recommendations on the other dimensions of Teachers We Need, see our fact sheets [Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color and Strengthening Pathways for Bilingual Educators](#).



THE RESEARCH

Students thrive when their teachers are fully prepared

Students experience the largest learning gains when taught by fully credentialed educators who are qualified to teach the subject matter and students they are assigned.¹ When teachers' classes align with their training and expertise, students are more likely to receive instruction that is both rigorous and relevant.² A teacher certified to teach English, for example, would be misassigned if they were scheduled to teach geometry — and their students' math outcomes would likely show it. Aligning teachers' qualifications with their teaching workload is essential for fostering a learning environment conducive to student success, particularly in challenging subjects.

The positive impact of well-prepared teachers on student outcomes is especially marked for students of color.^{3,4} Teacher preparedness was found to be a major driver of outcomes for school districts in California that are creating conditions where Black and Latinx students are supported to achieve exceptional levels of academic success.⁵

THE PROBLEMS

EdTrust-West and Public Advocates have partnered to analyze state data on teacher placements, published annually by the California Department of Education in accordance with state law, and broaden awareness of the serious equity gaps it reveals.^{6,7} The data reveals that students of color and those from low-income households have less access to fully prepared teachers.⁸ Furthermore, these students are more likely than their peers to be taught by interns, teachers on emergency permits, and teachers who are "misassigned" to subjects or students for which they lack the proper credentials.



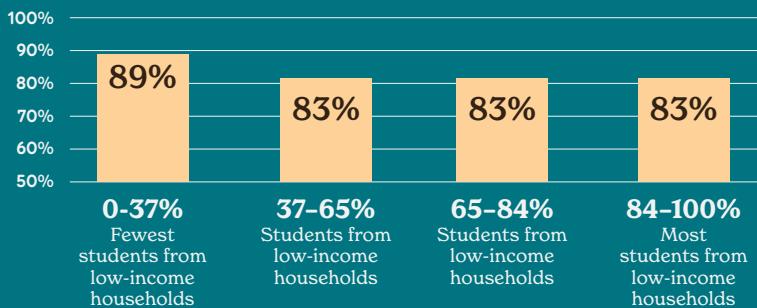
Students from low-income households are least likely to have fully prepared teachers

Students from low-income households are the least likely to have access to fully prepared teachers. Schools serving the most students experiencing poverty have, on average, 83% of classes taught by fully prepared teachers, which is six percentage points fewer than schools with the lowest concentrations of low-income students, where 89% of classes are taught by fully prepared teachers (Figure 1).⁹ Additionally, students experiencing poverty are three times more likely than their non-low-income peers to

be taught by interns who are still earning their teaching credentials, and they are nearly twice as likely to have a teacher with a temporary teaching permit.

As Figure 2 shows, schools with the highest concentration of students experiencing poverty have substantially lower rates of fully prepared teachers in the four core subject areas of English, History, Math, and Science compared to schools with the fewest students experiencing poverty.

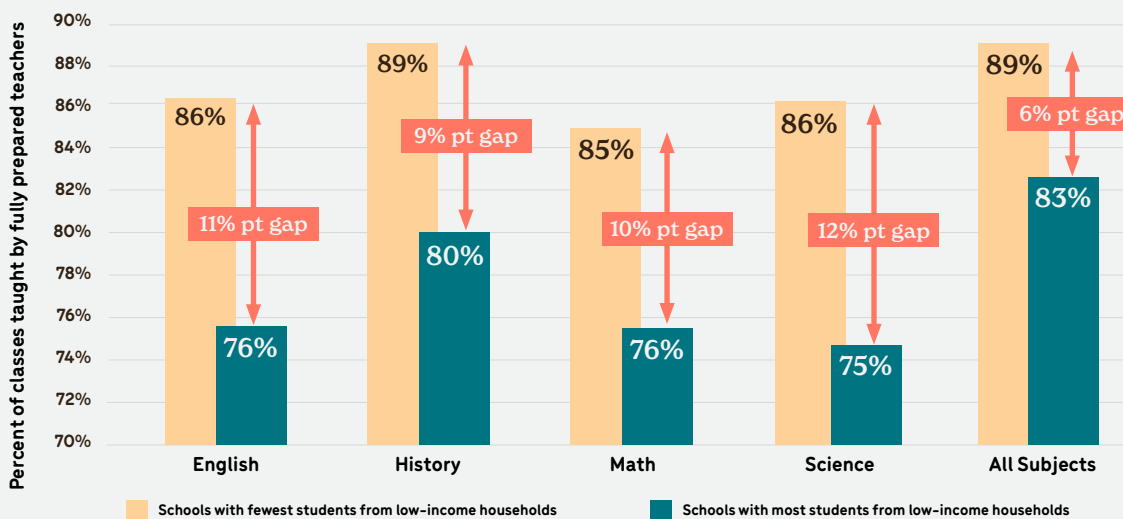
Figure 1. Access to Fully Prepared Teachers by School Concentration of Students from Low-income Households



Source: EdTrust-West analysis of 2021-22 Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcomes and Student Enrollment data from the California Department of Education.



Figure 2. Access to Fully Prepared Teachers by School Concentration of Students from Low-income Households



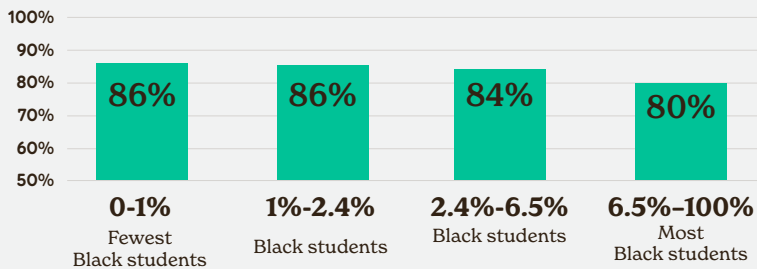
Source: EdTrust-West analysis of 2021-22 Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcomes and Student Enrollment data from the California Department of Education. Numbers may not sum precisely due to rounding.

Black students have limited access to fully prepared teachers

California’s Black students are among the most impacted by disparities in access to fully prepared teachers compared to their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. Schools with a high concentration of Black students have 6 percentage points fewer classes taught by fully prepared and properly placed teachers compared to schools with a low concentration of Black students (Figure 3).¹⁰

Analyzing the gaps in access to fully prepared teachers by subject area reveals an even larger disparity in English Language Arts. Schools with the highest concentration of Black students have 8 percentage points fewer English classes taught by fully prepared and properly placed English teachers than schools with the lowest concentration of Black students (Figure 4).

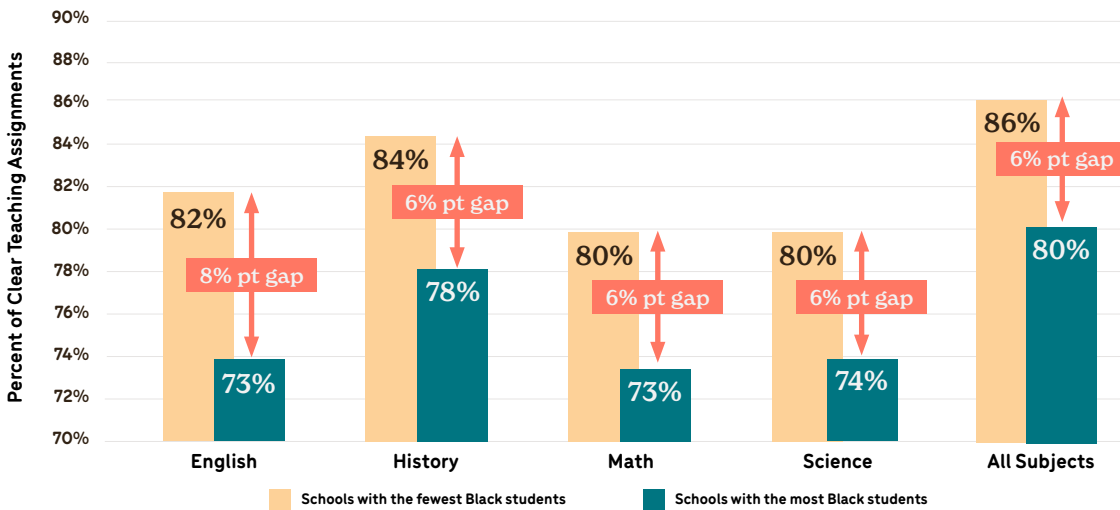
Figure 3: Access to Fully Prepared Teachers by School Concentration of Black Students



Source: EdTrust-West analysis of 2021-22 Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcomes and Student Enrollment data from the California Department of Education.



Figure 4: Access to Fully Prepared Teachers by School Concentration of Black Students



Source: EdTrust-West analysis of 2021-22 Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcomes and Student Enrollment data from the California Department of Education. Numbers may not sum precisely due to rounding.

Access to fully prepared teachers is not just a matter of educational quality—it’s a fundamental right.¹¹ The disparate access to such teachers revealed by this data reflect a clear violation of Black students’ civil rights that schools, districts, and the state have both a moral and legal responsibility to urgently remedy.¹²

THE SOLUTIONS

Ensuring every student learns from fully prepared teachers

Locally, parents, families and community advocates have championed the right of all students to be taught by fully prepared teachers through legal action in the form of the Williams Complaint, leveraging data like that included in this fact sheet to demonstrate equity gaps in access to fully prepared teachers. But each community should not have to fight individually to defend this right. There are many actions that parents, families, and community members can call on state leaders to take to address these issues. To identify what those actions should be, Californians for Justice, EdTrust–West, and Public Advocates partnered to develop a community-informed [Educator Diversity Roadmap](#). Drawing on the Roadmap, here are three big-picture solutions we think would move the needle on making sure all students have qualified teachers.

1. Increase Compensation and Investment in the Educator Workforce | The legislature and governor should increase teacher compensation and target teacher diversity workforce investments. Attracting and retaining diverse, high-quality teachers will require the state to increase and sustain funding for existing programs across the educator pipeline, such as the investments listed at the top of this fact sheet, and will require adequate teacher compensation to ensure the profession is competitive with other career choices. To invest more aggressively and strategically in our teachers — and, in turn, our students — the state should do the following:

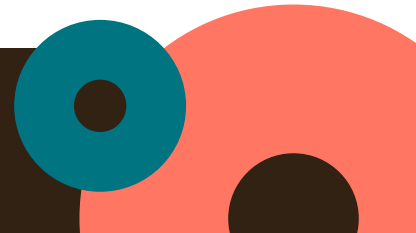
- Develop new tax revenue sources and enhance existing revenue streams to generate adequate funding for public TK-12 education, with a focus on increasing educator compensation.
- Use these funds to provide incentives aimed at retaining educators, particularly in high-need and hard-to-staff schools and subjects.

2. Data Transparency and Linkage | Require the California Department of Education to annually publish data on educator demographics at the school and district levels. The absence of this data since 2018-19 severely limits the ability of families, advocates, and education decision-makers to understand and address existing gaps. Furthermore, the lack of evaluation of investments keeps legislators in the dark as to whether teacher workforce investments have actually made a difference in getting qualified educators to the students that need them the most. Policymakers,

education leaders, and community members need to see misassignment data linked to other data — such as racial and linguistic demographics and Golden State Teacher Grantees — to understand the impact of current investments and the ongoing resources needed to ensure students of color and multilingual leaders experiencing poverty have access to fully prepared and properly assigned teachers. Finally, the state should create a state-level indicator in the California School Dashboard to hold districts accountable for closing gaps in access to fully prepared teachers.

3. Create a State Commission on Educator Diversity | Create and empower a state advisory board to tackle teacher workforce issues, including preparation and placement. Centralizing this responsibility would catalyze progress in diversifying the teacher workforce. In addition to this critical focus, this governing body should also bring together the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, California Department of Education, public and private higher education institutions, schools and districts to ensure that our education systems' most marginalized students are prioritized in having access to properly assigned and prepared educators. Leveraging the community-informed policy strategies included in the [California Educator Diversity Road Map](#) as a starting point, an advisory board should be tasked with:

- Identifying where there is an undersupply of fully prepared, properly placed teachers
- Setting goals for rates of fully prepared, properly placed teachers for every district



ENDNOTES

- 1 Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8(1), 1-44. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v8n1.2000>
- 2 Harris, D. N., & Sass, T. R. (2011). Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 95(7), 798-812. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509656.pdf>; White, B. R., Presley, J. B., & DeAngelis, K. J. (2008). Leveling up: Narrowing the teacher academic capital gap in Illinois. Illinois Education Research Council. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502243.pdf>; Goldhaber, D. D., & Brewer, D. J. (1997). Why don't schools and teachers seem to matter? Assessing the impact of unobservables on educational productivity. *Journal of Human Resources*, 505-523.
- 3 Pflieger, R., Orfield, G. (May 2024). A Policy Brief: Segregated by Teacher Experience in California. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, UCLA. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/segregated-by-teacher-experience-in-california/Teacher-Experience-and-Racial-Segregation-in.pdf>
- 4 Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Clifton, C. R. (2023). Racial differences in student access to high quality teachers. *Education Finance and Policy*, 1-29. <https://direct.mit.edu/edfp/article/18/4/738/115596/Racial-Differences-in-Student-Access-to-High>
- 5 Podolsky, A., Darling-Hammond, L., Doss, C., & Reardon, S. (2019). California's positive outliers: Districts beating the odds. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/positive-outliers-districts-beating-odds-report>
- 6 Public Advocates, Are Your Classes Taught by the Right Teachers? Understanding Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcomes (TAMO) Data. <https://publicadvocates.org/our-work-2/education/access-quality-education-2-2/teacher-quality/are-your-classes-taught-by-the-right-teachers/>
- 7 Teaching Assignment Monitoring Outcomes (TAMO) Data Dashboard. EdTrust-West. <https://west.edtrust.org/tamo-data-tool/>
- 8 In this fact sheet, we use the term "fully prepared" to refer to classes taught by "Clear" teachers in the Teaching Assignment and Monitoring Outcomes dataset published annually by the California Department of Education. These reflect full time equivalents (FTEs) for which the teacher of record holds the appropriate credential for the courses in their teaching workload, meaning they are both properly credentialed and appropriately assigned.
- 9 EdTrust-West analysis of 2021-22 Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcomes dataset and 2021-22 Student Enrollment dataset from the California Department of Education.
- 10 EdTrust-West analysis of 2021-22 Teacher Assignment Monitoring Outcomes dataset and 2021-22 Student Enrollment dataset from the California Department of Education.
- 11 Jeannie Oakes and Martin Lipton. (2004). "Schools that Shock the Conscience": Williams v. California and the Struggle for Education on Equal Terms Fifty Years After Brown. *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice*. <https://lawcat.berkeley.edu/record/1119196?ln=en&v=pdf>
- 12 Public Advocates, Williams Resources Page, *Your Schools, Your Rights, Your Power: A Grassroots Guide to Effective Williams Campaigns*, April 2009. https://publicadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/your_schools_your_rights_your_power_reduced.pdf



We are grateful for the support and contributions of Public Advocates, whose partnership helped make this fact sheet possible. For more resources on advocating for equitable access to fully prepared teachers, you can access the learning series "Are Your Classes Taught by the Right Teachers?" online [here](#).

Photos by Allison Shelley for EDUimages.