

# CALIFORNIA'S BLUEPRINT FOR K-12 EDUCATION

By Anna K. Miller and Dr. Scott Yenor





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**California's legislators, state department of education, colleges of education, teacher unions, and school boards have built a seemingly impenetrable bureaucratic machine to govern the public school system.** It resembles an unaccountable monopoly, with poor academic results and being governed by a self-regarding ideology that promotes the cutting edge of leading radical gender and anti-racism theories.

The principal aim of this report is to lay bare California's impenetrable, self-perpetuating ideological system of education. California has had a low-performing public school system since the 1990s, ranking in the middle to bottom third of states in reading, math, and other academic subjects.

California's system has governed for decades. Its laws require that teachers can be certified only if they graduate from schools of education with a five-year degree. Newly minted teachers are strongly encouraged to join the California Education Association and the state has made it illegal to inform teachers of their right not to join the union. Unions have an outsized influence on school board elections, where union members or their allies win about two out of three contested school board elections. The legislature will spend \$128 billion on the K-12 public education system this year, exceeding the entire budget of all states except New York and Texas and equal to the combined state budgets of Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Tennessee.<sup>1</sup> California teacher pay is the third highest in the nation. Sympathetic interest

groups, promoted by the union, receive grant money to bring training and curricula to the school. The machinery of the system seems unreformable without the system's consent.

This report shows that California's system has initiated an educational revolution in the past twelve years. The state has implemented no less than twenty laws, programs, and initiatives since 2011, many of which bring leading critical race theory and radical gender ideology to California schools. The FAIR Education Act of 2011, for example, mandated that LGBTQ+ heroes be incorporated into K-12 curricula. A 2013 act allowed for students to use the bathroom or locker room of their gender identity, instead of their biological sex. A 2019 restorative justice initiative prevented suspensions or expulsions for willful or extreme defiance. Students will soon be required to take an ethnic studies course about "power and oppression" to graduate from high school. Other initiatives sink racial equity and social justice activism into math and preschool initiatives or gay pride into history and nearly every other subject.

Most remarkable, however, is the way that California's laws are, if anything, even more radical in their implementation. The California education establishment is animated by the progressive notion that public education requires the displacement of parental authority in the rearing of children. California's strategic plan for education imagines the public school as the principal educator of children and the state as the main influence in shaping



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*– Alexander Solzhenitsyn*



students' minds. Expressions of parental concern for their own children, as articulated at local school boards, have little weight in the eyes of California's education establishment. When a single school district bucks the system, even in small ways, the state's political establishment comes down on it like a ton of bricks. Financial and political pressure is applied to bring the district into line. All school districts get the message. School districts that want to get rid of inappropriate books for young children are forced to put them on the shelves of their libraries anyway. Districts that would rather not celebrate homosexual and other LGBTQ+ activists and even pedophiles in

elementary school are required to adopt the state's curriculum regarding the celebration of these thoroughly non-, even anti-conventional, adult sexual tastes.

Reforming the California education system will not be easy. Everything should be tried—loosening certification requirements for teachers, school choice programs, and limits on grants and on funding for its many low-performing schools. Enterprising journalists should expose the closed, quasi-monopolistic system that benefits bureaucrats at the top, without delivering quality education for most Californians.



# SECTION

I

WOKE EDUCATIONAL VEHICLES





## WOKE EDUCATIONAL VEHICLES

### **California's K-12 schools have changed drastically over the past fifty years.**

Remarkably, the number of students in California public schools, for the first time in the state's history, is shrinking. Teachers and administrators are promoting ideologies hostile to the American experience and to traditional family values. These new ideologies come under a variety of names, but all of them are dedicated to promoting left-wing political activism and to rejecting the principles of American society. We call this new ideological bent Critical Social Justice (CSJ).

The term CSJ describes the academic work stemming from Critical Theory.<sup>2</sup> While Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the most famous example of CSJ, critical theorists also analyze subjects like homosexuality, through the lens of Queer Theory or Gender Theory, or obesity through Fat Studies. CSJ is a broader term than CRT. All CSJ approaches identify a problem and propose a solution. The supposed problem is that American society is made up of an intersection of oppressive structures. According to CSJ ideologues, America is racist, sexist, misogynist, intolerant, ableist, cisgendered, and homophobic. The privileged have built structures like the education system to keep the disadvantaged groups weak, unequal, and scattered.

CSJ adherents believe a transformed K-12 education can solve this problem.<sup>3</sup> Instead of imparting truth to children or emphasizing skills or literacy, K-12 schools will teach oppressors to dismantle the oppressive

structures and then to identify with the plight of the supposedly oppressed. Schools will cultivate feelings of shame among the supposed oppressors for their whiteness or their "toxic masculinity" so they become allies in dismantling the old structures. On the whole, the new education encourages conflict and change-oriented (or revolutionary) values at the expense of assimilation into the older American society.<sup>4</sup> Activists promise a future in which the formerly oppressed are liberated from these oppressive structures. Then all people will supposedly enjoy success, regardless of their race, sexual orientation, or gender.

There are eight main vehicles for integrating CSJ into K-12 systems. These vehicles first seek to be critical of or to disrupt American culture and the family and then to create a new culture dedicated to what they call social justice or liberation. Some vehicles try to shape the mindsets, beliefs, and behaviors of children. Some change disciplinary standards to celebrate what the supposedly oppressive of old culture had condemned. Some teach students to protest for leftist political causes. Others foster racial discrimination or the sexualization of children.

Advocates for CSJ sow confusion by using seemingly innocent terms like *culturally responsive teaching*, *anti-racism*, *implicit bias*, and *equity*. Old words no longer mean what they used to mean, so citizens are easily duped into thinking that the education system is the same as it has always been. These eight vehicles are policies and programs presented



as remedies to the supposed problem of oppressive social structures in K-12 schools.

**Culturally responsive teaching** caters to stereotypes associated with identity groups.<sup>5</sup> This teaching method denigrates those perpetuating the supposedly dominant culture and coerces students into modifying their behavior to suit supposedly marginalized cultures. Two key practices include rejecting color-blindness and replacing instruction about facts with so-called narrative stories.<sup>7</sup>

**Social-emotional learning** (SEL) cultivates certain attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and behaviors in children.<sup>6</sup> It is important to distinguish between Standard and Transformative SEL. The core objective in Standard SEL programs is to fill the void created by secularism in public schools. Standard SEL replaces the Judeo-Christian understanding about morality and objective truths with a celebration of the self and group norms, claiming to help students feel better about themselves. Transformative SEL programs seek to displace and stigmatize the old, supposedly oppressive, cultural, moral, and religious institutions central to a child's health and well-being, such as the nuclear family, meritocracy, and the church.<sup>7</sup> In their place, these programs encourage children to embrace ideas such as gender fluidity, anti-white racism, toxic masculinity, white privilege, and the notion that American society is fundamentally unjust. Education systems typically sell Standard SEL but deliver Transformative SEL.

**Action civics** displaces traditional, knowledge-based civics education with training students for activism and protest.<sup>8</sup> The old civics teaches students about the character of the American democracy or the history and traditions of the American people. The new

civics, by contrast, aims to raise up a new generation that believes good citizenship means fundamentally transforming America through radical activism. To achieve this, civics must be redefined as progressive political activism.

**Equity** is not equality of opportunity but equality of group outcomes. In order to achieve equity, students must be treated differently based on their race, culture, and socioeconomic background. Resources and access to opportunities must be redistributed in schools based on racial favoritism; equal outcomes must be achieved despite loss of genuine academic advancement or learning attainment for individuals.

**Restorative justice** makes school discipline into a race issue.<sup>9</sup> Disparities among races in school discipline—with blacks being disciplined more frequently than whites—are taken as evidence of systemic racism. Schools must then change disciplinary standards to ban out-of-school suspensions (OSS) for low-level conduct offenses (use of profanity, failure to follow classroom rules) or reduce OSS length for more serious infractions (violence, drug abuse). For example, in an effort to show that fewer black students are suspended, a district will not suspend black students for fighting, theft, drugs, or alcohol abuse.

**Whole child** or “student-centered” views of education see schools as a mechanism to socially engineer emotionally literate citizens by introducing activities that encourage children to reveal their emotional vulnerabilities to state employees.<sup>10</sup> The traditional view of education is “teacher centric,” where expert teachers impart knowledge to students and expect them to prove proficiency. Schools were expected to teach “the best that is thought and written” and to promote the concomitant



character formation and basic critical thinking necessary to preserve Western civilization.<sup>11</sup> School districts that adopt a “whole child” or “student-centered” approach in their guiding frameworks implement SEL (see above) and trauma-informed programs (see below) rather than teaching basic academic disciplines such as English, math, or history.

**Trauma-informed** practices invite the state to assess the private psychological condition of children and to intrude further into a child's life.<sup>12</sup> This therapeutic education model is rooted in the concept of “safetyism,” which makes emotional safety a virtue and creates a feedback loop wherein “kids become more fragile and less resilient, which signals to adults that they need more protection, which then makes them even more fragile and less resilient.”<sup>13</sup>

**Queer theory** asserts that all sexualities must be actively promoted and all taboos overcome. It rejects traditional views about heterosexuality, sexual self-control, monogamy, marriage, and the natural family, and then endorses experimentation with homosexuality, bisexuality, transgenderism, transsexuality, polyamory, and, in some cases, even pedophilia.<sup>15</sup> Queer theory manifests in districts changing their policies regarding

gender identity, parental notification, transgender students' use of bathrooms or locker rooms, and transforming the school libraries. Comprehensive sex education is no longer about health outcomes or pregnancy prevention. Instead, it centers on gender identity and sexual orientation at even the earliest ages.<sup>16</sup>

Each of these practices is objectionable on its own terms. Scholars have indeed developed significant secondary problems related to their implementation and to their validity as enterprises. Restorative justice undermines school discipline, which in turn compromises teachers' ability to teach.<sup>17</sup> Combined with a focus on equity, trauma-informed practices lead to overdiagnosing trauma and stigmatizing entire groups of children.<sup>18</sup> We could go on, and many others have.

Nevertheless, the principal problem with these vehicles for CSJ is their connection with a false and pernicious vision of American society. CSJ in whatever form—even if it were not associated with these significant secondary problems—is bad for America in general and for California in particular. CSJ ideology cannot organize a just society or deliver a workable education.



# SECTION

II

THE EDUCRAT STRANGLEHOLD





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## THE EDUCRAT STRANGLEHOLD

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**California's education system yields fair to middling results.** California's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores—commonly known as the nation's report card—rank forty-third in the country. Its combined fourth grade and eighth grade math and reading averages have been dropping for years. On fourth grade mathematics assessments twenty-nine jurisdictions performed significantly higher than California. Only 30 percent of fourth grade students in California performed at or above NAEP proficiency in mathematics and only 31 percent did so in reading. By eighth grade, 77 percent of students performed below proficiency in mathematics and 70 percent remained below proficient in reading. The *U.S. News and World Report* ranks California twentieth among state K-12 systems, in part because they take teacher pay and other inputs into account.<sup>19</sup> California's education laws do not rank as highly. The Heritage Foundation, a mainstream conservative think tank, ranks California twenty-ninth overall in education, while seeing California's system as highly regulated (thirty-sixth in regulatory freedom), centralized, and very expensive (thirty-sixth in return on investment, which takes into account low test scores and high teacher pay). These traditional measures, however, do not capture the full extent of California's decline. Since 2010, California's education system has been transformed through a series of state laws and standards that elevate equity and diversity over educational competence and excellence. The state system is sinking as a result.

### EDUCATION FREEDOM: FROM EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

**School Choice.** California is one of just eighteen states that offer no private school choice programs such as vouchers, a tax credit, or education savings accounts (ESAs) for K-12 students. The state provides K-12 students limited choice within the public education system, including charter schools, magnet schools, and some public school choice via open enrollment. About 520,000 California students attend private schools, according to 2023 data, which is less than 10 percent of all students.<sup>20</sup>

**Homeschooling.** California places some burdensome reporting requirements on homeschooling, but it allows parents to decide how to homeschool. Families can choose to homeschool as a home-based private school, with a private school satellite program or via instruction by a private tutor. Families who choose to homeschool as a home-based private school face several regulatory burdens, including filing an affidavit and maintaining an attendance register, lists of instructors with their addresses and qualifications and a list of courses of study, among other things. Those who choose to homeschool with a private school satellite program must meet similar requirements. Families who choose to hire a private tutor to homeschool their child must hire a state-certified teacher and agree that their child will be taught for at least three hours a day, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. for 175 days each school year in several



branches of study required to be taught by the public schools and in the English language. There were, at most, 753,000 homeschooled students in grades K–12 in California during the spring of 2021.<sup>21</sup> Homeschool applications in California have nearly tripled since 2020.<sup>22</sup>

**Charter Schools.** California does much to limit the independence of charter schools. Under California law, there is a cap on charter schools of 2,450 statewide. This cap is raised by one hundred schools each year. There is a moratorium on the establishment of virtual charter schools until January 1, 2025. Only local school boards, county boards of education, and the state board of education are allowed to authorize charter schools. California does not provide complete autonomy for independent charter school boards. The law entitles a local school district board that has granted a charter to place a representative on the charter school's governing board. Charters are not exempt from state teacher certification requirements. Overall, charter schools receive less funding per student than district schools. About 690,000 or 11 percent of California students attended charter schools in 2022 and 2023.<sup>23</sup>

## **TRANSPARENCY AND PARENTAL RIGHTS**

For the California Department of Education (CDE), parents are partners with the state rather than primary authorities, when it comes to educating children.<sup>24</sup> California law affords parents basic rights, such as visiting a school for classroom observation, participating in parent-teacher conferences, volunteering, receiving student testing results, reviewing curricula before school board approvals, and accessing student's records. State code governing parental rights has not been altered

since 1999.<sup>25</sup> While California's transparency laws are not bad under some traditional measures, recent developments in areas of gender theory are concerning, as we catalog below. In 2015, for instance, California adopted an opt-out policy, which requires schools to notify parents before giving their child sexuality education and allows parents to opt their children out of the class by providing a written statement to the school district.<sup>26</sup> If the school does not receive a written statement from the parent, the child is automatically enrolled in the class. Recent changes to parental rights include a federal ruling in 2023 that California is not violating parents' rights by requiring public schools to accept students' gender identities and to hide this information from the students' parents.

*Since 2010, California's education system has been transformed through a series of state laws and standards that elevate equity and diversity over educational competence and excellence.*



## TEACHER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

California has some of the nation's tightest regulations on teacher certification requirements. Many states offer alternative tracks for teacher certification, but in California all teachers must complete at least five years of higher education in order to be certified. Most teachers earn a bachelor's degree through a four-year program and then complete a masters degree in education. As an alternative, aspiring teachers can enroll in a blended undergraduate teacher preparation program, which allows students to earn a degree and teaching credentials at the same time. Teachers must also pass a series of four standardized tests and complete a teacher certification program approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing's approved programs list.<sup>27</sup> Additional qualifications, such as a single-subject teaching credential or special education instruction credential, are needed for teaching high school students.

## TEACHERS UNIONS

California does all it can to support the unionization of California's teachers—from mandating collective bargaining to making it illegal to inform teachers of their right not to join the union. California law mandates teacher collective bargaining and stipulates that a school district must give the union the “name, job title, department, work location, work, home, and personal cellular telephone numbers, personal email addresses . . . and home address [sic] of any newly hired employee within 30 days of the date of hire.” It also requires that new teachers attend a mandatory union orientation meeting during which the audience is taught about union membership.<sup>28</sup> It is illegal to discourage teacher union membership in California. Outside groups

cannot contact teachers to inform them of their right to resign from the union under *Janus v. AFSCME*, which elevates paycheck protection to a constitutional right. The California Teachers Association (CTA) claims to have about 310,000 members, which would mean that a super majority of California school teachers and school personnel are members.<sup>29</sup> This makes the CTA the fourth largest teachers union in the country, smaller in size only to the National Education Association, the American Federation for Teachers, and New York State United Teachers. Unlike in other states, however, teacher union membership in California has not decreased much since the *Janus* decision.

## SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

School board elections are held on cycle in even numbered years to boost voter turnout.<sup>30</sup> The candidates endorsed by the CTA win close to 68 percent of competitive races.<sup>31</sup>

## STATE-MANDATED EQUITY PROGRAMS

Traditional measures of school system health, like return on investment, union membership, certification requirements, and test scores, do not capture the beating heart of the California K-12 system. California is leading the way in transforming education from the top down by adopting CSJ policies in the areas of gender and race. Curricula are infused with these policies. Administrators push them. Teachers adopt them. California adopts nearly every cutting-edge, “woke” policy through law or administrative fiat. Woke radicalism is not confined to individual, let alone, rogue teachers; the “woke” system itself is now designed to produce radical teachers and administrators.



# CALIFORNIA EQUITY PROGRAMMING SINCE 2011

## A timeline of state laws and regulations promoting CSJ education in California.

**2011**

**Seth's Law:** Required schools to adopt and publicize anti-bullying policies that include sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

**2011**

**FAIR Education Act:** Required that examples of LGBTQ+ people be incorporated into social science instruction for all K–12 students.

**2011**

**California Early Childhood Educator Competencies:** Includes a focus on "culture, diversity and equity," which requires the use of culturally responsive teaching methods, "identity development," and SEL competencies.<sup>32</sup>

**2013**

**School Success and Opportunity Act:** Required public schools to allow all K–12 students to use bathrooms, locker rooms, and other school facilities not based on their biological gender.

**2015**

**Healthy Youth Act:** Mandated "LGBTQ+ inclusive" Comprehensive Sex Education for grades 7–12.

**2016**

**Suicide Prevention:** Required public schools to adopt suicide prevention policies for grades K–12 that specifically mention and incorporate LGBTQ+ students.

**2017**

CDE develops "California SEL Guiding Principles."

**2018**

**Online Anti-Bullying Training for Teachers and School Staff:** Required schools to provide teachers and staff with annual online training on bullying.

**2019**

**Safe and Supportive Schools Act:** Required California Department of Education (CDE) to provide LGBTQ+ resources for school districts.

**2018**

**Suspension and Expulsion:** Banned suspensions in elementary and middle schools for willful defiance, defined as disrupting school activities or defying school authorities.

**2019**

**Health Education Framework:** Includes training teachers to affirm and perhaps cultivate LGBTQ+ identities in students. According to the Framework, kindergarten students learn about challenging gender stereotypes, gender identity, transgenderism, and gender nonconformity.<sup>33</sup>

**2020**

CDE launches **Transforming Schools Initiative.**

**2020**

State Superintendent of Public Instruction creates "**Advance SEL in California Campaign**" to make Transformative Social Emotional Learning (T-SEL) the "cornerstone of California's education system."

**2021**

CDE published **School Discipline Guidelines:** These directed school districts to adopt restorative justice practices and more social emotional learning in the classroom.

**2021**

CDE developed **K–Adult Transformative SEL Competencies:** Guide all K–12 educators across California in integrating "systemic SEL and equity" in schools.

**2021**

**Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Mandate:** All students must complete a semester-long course in ethnic studies in order to graduate from high school.

**2021**

**Menstrual Equity for All Act:** Requires public schools service students in grades 6–12 to put feminine hygiene products in both men's and women's restrooms.<sup>34</sup>

**2021**

**Universal Pre-Kindergarten.**

**2022**

**Gender-Affirming Health Care Act:** Allows the state of California to take a child from their parents' custody if the parent does not affirm gender-reassignment surgery.

**2023**

**Social Justice Mathematics Framework.**

**2023**

**Task Force on Inclusive Education:** Superintendent's taskforce to pressure curriculum providers to diversify their materials and be LGBTQ+ inclusive.



## Gender Radicalism

No state does more to affirm transgender students than California through state mandates. In 2013, California enacted the innocuous-sounding School Success and Opportunity Act, which required all K–12 students to be given access to school facilities and programs, including locker rooms, bathrooms, and athletic activities, in accordance with their gender identity rather than their biological sex.<sup>35</sup> By 2023, California had passed the Gender Affirming Health Care Act, allowing the state of to take children from their parents' custody if the parents do not affirm gender-reassignment surgery.<sup>36</sup>

California uses the cover of anti-bullying laws and suicide prevention programs to insinuate gender ideology into K–12 school policy and teacher training. California adopted Seth's Law in 2011, which required schools to include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in anti-bullying policies.<sup>37</sup> The Bullying and School Safety Plans Act required the California Department of Justice and CDE to contract with providers to train school-site personnel in the prevention of bullying.<sup>38</sup> It also encouraged school safety plans to include restorative and transformative justice programs. In 2016, the state required that schools adopt suicide prevention policies for grades 7–12, policies that specifically mention and incorporate plans for LGBTQ+ youth.<sup>39</sup>

Regulations from the CDE also promote the bullying/social harm narrative. According to the CDE, teachers must use students' pronouns and chosen names corresponding to their gender identities, regardless of the teacher's religious belief or deeply held personal convictions or parental wishes. The CDE maintains that if a public school employee "intentionally uses a student's incorrect name and pronoun, or persistently refuses to respect

a student's chosen name and pronouns, that conduct should be treated as harassment" and posits that such an act violates the states anti-discrimination laws.<sup>40</sup> Teachers have reportedly been fired from their job for refusing to conceal children's gender identities from the children's parents because to do so is against their Christian beliefs.<sup>41</sup>

## Academic Standards

California adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, and Technical Subjects in 2010.<sup>42</sup> Since the adoption of CCSS, the state has written new standards for mathematics and sex education, curriculum for ethnic studies, and social-emotional learning guidelines that influence all learning and teaching across the system. In 2011, the FAIR Education Act required elementary and secondary schools to incorporate LGBTQ+ representation into social science instruction and American history classes throughout the K–12 curriculum.<sup>43</sup>

## Mathematics Standards

California has adopted a new Mathematics Framework for all K–12 schools and declared that "teaching toward social justice can play an important role in shifting students' perspectives."<sup>44</sup> These ideological math standards presuppose that teaching math plainly and objectively reinforces oppressive power structures, and therefore must be transformed through politicized pedagogical practices to make math about social justice and equity. Reviewers of the new math framework have found that it contains many misrepresentations of the literature it cites, selectively cites research to make points it wants to make, and will put California students years behind the students in other nations of the developed world.<sup>45</sup>



## Sex Education Standards

The California Healthy Youth Act (2015) mandated comprehensive sex education for grades 7–12 and required sex education to be LGBTQ+ inclusive.<sup>46</sup> California law mandates that school districts provide students with “inclusive comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education, at least once in high school and once in middle school.”<sup>47</sup> The law also permits such education in elementary schools. Instruction at each grade level must affirm different sexual orientations and be inclusive of same-sex relationships in discussions and examples, and it must involve lessons about gender identity and gender expression.<sup>48</sup> Sexuality instruction may not “teach or promote religious doctrine” and must teach about abortion and contraceptive methods to prevent pregnancy.<sup>49</sup> All instruction and materials in grades K–12 must teach and be inclusive of LGBTQ+ students and prohibit any bias against any gender identity or sexual orientation.<sup>50</sup> In 2019, the Safe and Supportive Schools Act established that the CDE must host LGBTQ+-focused resources on its website for school districts to use.<sup>51</sup> For example, the CDE recommends that teachers undergo training sessions from the Trevor Project<sup>52</sup> and use resources such as “the Gender Unicorn,” “Creating a Gender and LGBTQ Inclusive Elementary School,” Planned Parenthood’s “What Should I teach my elementary school-aged child about identity?” and GLSEN’s “Ready, Set Respect! Elementary Toolkit.”<sup>53</sup>

## Health Education Standards and Framework

The Health Education Standards, adopted in 2008, address what children must learn from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The standards include teaching the basics of health such as the importance of eating a healthy breakfast or coping strategies to deal with peer pressure

around drugs and alcohol.<sup>54</sup> Health teachers are also expected to follow the Health Education Framework. The framework is a foundational resource for all health education instruction and is used as a guide for teachers to follow the Health Education Standards.<sup>55</sup> The framework emphasizes Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and focuses on culturally responsive teaching, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed learning. The framework includes training teachers to affirm and perhaps cultivate LGBTQ+ identities in students. According to the framework, kindergarten students learn about challenging gender stereotypes, gender identity, transgenderism, and gender nonconformity.<sup>56</sup>

## Ethnic Studies Curriculum

The CDE adopted a model curriculum for ethnic studies, giving local school districts guidance.<sup>57</sup> The state has made ethnic studies a high school graduation requirement, starting with the class of 2030, and it mandated that all ethnic studies courses must follow the state’s model curriculum. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) is steeped in racist ideology.<sup>58</sup> The ESMC lists the perhaps unintentionally imperious dictate, “critique empire-building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism and other forms of power and oppression,” as one of its guiding values. The curriculum contains an activist orientation toward social justice, portrays America as systemically racist, and emphasizes the race-centric structure of oppressed versus oppressor. Many school districts in California already promote an even more radical version of this ethnic studies model, which they call “Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.”<sup>59</sup> This model instructs children in intersectionality, Howard Zinn’s academically bankrupt version of history, and it trains students to be activists for Black Lives Matter. The CDE has created a series of ethnic studies webinars to train



educators on how to use the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum and to teach public schools how to provide an ethnic studies graduation requirement by 2026.<sup>60</sup>

### **Equity-Focused, Transformative Social-Emotional Learning**

The CDE first incorporated SEL into the Preschool Learning Foundations in 2008 for children between four and five years of age. In 2017, the CDE's Social Emotional Learning Team developed the "California SEL Guiding Principles," which affirmed SEL as "an essential part of a well-rounded, quality education in all youth-serving settings." The guiding principles included a commitment to equity, culturally responsive teaching, and whole child practices.<sup>61</sup> In 2020, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, and State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond created the "Advance SEL in California Campaign." The project culminated with a report declaring that Transformative Social-Emotional Learning (T-SEL) needed to be the "cornerstone of California's education system."<sup>62</sup> Another key finding of the initiative was that racial equity must be an integral part of T-SEL. To implement the recommendations made by the campaign, the CDE developed "equity-focused" T-SEL guidance tools for districts to use in "every learning and teaching context across the education system."<sup>63</sup> The tools directed districts to adopt culturally responsive policies that reinforce "equity, inclusion and anti-racism."<sup>64</sup> By 2021 the CDE developed K-Adult Transformative SEL Competencies to guide all K-12 educators across California in integrating "systemic SEL and equity" in schools. The CDE defined five core SEL competencies based on the Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning's (CASEL) research brief to use

T-SEL "as a way to integrate an explicit equity and social justice lens" into SEL.<sup>65</sup>

### **Early Childhood Educator Competencies**

The California Early Child Educator (ECE) competencies describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood educators need to educate young children from shortly after birth through the age of five. The ECE competencies include a focus on "culture, diversity and equity,"<sup>66</sup> which requires the use of culturally responsive teaching methods, "identity development" and SEL competencies. The CDE provides many early education resources on equity and inclusion to teachers.<sup>67</sup> For example, the CDE encourages early childhood educators to use its resource, "Creating Equitable Early Learning Environments for Young Boys of Color: Disrupting Disproportionate Outcomes," which include sessions on "Understanding Oppression," "Examining Whiteness," and "Implicit Bias."<sup>68</sup> The publication stresses the supposed effect of white privilege on preschool students and the need for white educators to practice "anti-racist" racial discrimination in the classroom.

### **Task Force on Inclusive Education**

The California Superintendent of Public Instruction created a Task Force on Inclusive Education to diversify instructional materials and textbooks in K-12 classrooms. The task force asked textbook publishers to "make a firm commitment to diversify their books."<sup>69</sup> Representatives from Benchmark Education, CPM Educational Programs, the College Board, and Studies Weekly demonstrated to the task force examples of how they are trying to be more "inclusive." The task force has worked with legislators to draft bills promoting its vision of "inclusive education." For example, Superintendent Thurmond is



supporting Assembly Bill 1078, which would require a supermajority vote from school boards to remove books, including ones that are pornographic or obscene, from schools.<sup>70</sup> Superintendent Thurmond and the task force are also supportive of Assembly Bill 1352, which would “expressly prohibit” school boards from “taking an action that contradicts any existing law requiring a school district to have inclusive policies, practices and curriculum.” If the bill becomes law, school board members who propose policies contrary to California’s equity mandates could be removed by their colleagues with a two-thirds majority vote.<sup>71</sup>

### **School Libraries**

California mandates sexual content for its school libraries. The CDE directs teachers and librarians to use the Marxist-led American Library Association’s resources, such as the “Rainbow Book List,” a list of recommended children’s books with graphic content about sexuality and transgenderism.<sup>72</sup> California public school libraries are exempted from state criminal law against exposing children to obscene material.<sup>73</sup> Some school districts have sought to remove pornographic books that are not age-appropriate from the children’s sections of their libraries. In response, Governor Newsom, Attorney General Bonta, and State Superintendent Thurmond sent a joint letter to all school district superintendents urging them to protect obscene material in libraries despite parents’ objections.<sup>74</sup> The letter threatened local education agencies that if they remove any books or instructional materials from classrooms or libraries, despite the pornographic content found in such items, they may be investigated by the Attorney General’s office. Additionally, the Los Angeles County Library system created a digital library card that grants eBook access to books on LGBTQ+ subjects and sexuality for students throughout California.

### **Academic Accountability and State Education Spending**

The California education budget totals \$108.3 billion for 2023–24, including about \$1.5 million for literacy initiatives that seek to improve literacy outcomes for students with a focus on equity.<sup>75</sup> California ranks third in the country for teacher pay. California’s government does not view public education as K–12 but as Pre-K–16. Per student spending in the last ten years has increased by 53 percent in K–12 schools, after adjusting for inflation. K–12 schools receive approximately 38 percent of the general fund every year. California’s per student spending is about \$17,020 per average daily attendance, according to the CDE.<sup>76</sup> However, this number does not include spending from all sources. When spending from all other sources is included, the per pupil expenditure rises to over \$20,000.<sup>77</sup> Despite the continual increase in state spending on public education, student test scores for math and reading are dismally low. Approximately 53 percent of California students did not meet English language standards and 67 percent did not meet math standards on statewide examinations for 2022.<sup>78</sup> Just 30 percent of eighth graders in the state achieved proficiency in reading and only 23 percent did so in math, according to the NAEP.

### **School Discipline**

In 2019, California banned suspensions in elementary and middle schools for willful defiance, defined as disrupting school activities or defying school authorities.<sup>79</sup> In 2021, the CDE published School Discipline Guidelines that directed school districts to adopt restorative justice practices and more social-emotional learning in the classroom.<sup>80</sup>



# SECTION

III

THE WOKE CONQUEST  
OF CALIFORNIA





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## THE WOKE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

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**CSJ is sown into in every aspect of California's education system.** We have documented the extraordinary actions taken by California to promote radical gender ideology and racialism in its K-12 schools. This is part of the story. An informal empire involving teacher unions, school boards, and superintendents exists within California's radical laws and regulations—all tending to prepare California's students for leftist activism. The CTA promotes all aspects of CSJ. CSJ elements are sown into teacher certification standards, which is one reason it takes five years to become a teacher in California instead of the usual four years required elsewhere. Most of those serving on California school boards are endorsed by the CTA. Therefore, most school board representatives promote a CSJ ideology. School boards then hire sympathetic superintendents, build DEI departments, adopt CSJ policies, and require CSJ training. School boards are generous with teacher salaries, since most of them are captured by teachers and teacher union allies.

The CDE ratchets school districts to adopt more CSJ policies and initiatives. School districts and school boards are only too happy to enforce California's slate of new equity and diversity laws and regulations and to expand their powers in relation to families. Few, it seems, dissent, and school boards that resist the state mandates are crushed, either with investigations or financial threats. The local control and the state apparatus (mostly) move in the same direction, sometimes with the state following radical local initiatives and sometimes with the school boards adopting state plans.

CSJ wokeness demands that all (some sooner, others later, but ultimately all of them) must burst the chains of pro-Americanism, white supremacy, racism, homophobia, and transphobia and rule the country and finally the world through activism and agitation. The CDE's strategic plans to transform the schools focus on anti-racism, equity, LGBTQ+ teacher training, and therapeutic education practices. Its plans hardly even mention academic excellence, except to discuss inclusive excellence. It is no wonder that test scores are always below the national average. It is no

*An informal empire involving teacher unions, school boards, and superintendents exists within California's radical laws and regulations—all tending to prepare California's students for leftist activism.*

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wonder that 100 percent of secondary schools in the San Diego Unified School District teach kids gender identity and sexual orientation in a required course. It is no wonder that only three school districts have a policy banning or discouraging the teaching of critical race theory, while 66 percent have a policy promoting DEI. There are a dizzying number of initiatives at the state level to promote CSJ in the schools, and there are more to come. There are constantly new reports of gender radicalism and white shaming in schools because there are constantly new policies and demands to push CSJ coming from education actors at the state level and at the local level, with both formal political power and informal social power. Consider just a few examples ripped from the headlines in the past year or so:

- ▶ **California Reparations Task Force, created by Gavin Newsom, urges the state to adopt a K-12 curriculum that teaches kids about “systemic racism” and “advances the ideology of Black liberation.”**<sup>81</sup>
- ▶ **Conservative California school board OKs curriculum on gay rights activist after Newsom threatened \$1.5M fine.**<sup>82</sup>
- ▶ **Federal judge in Sacramento rejects suit to force California schools to report students’ gender identity to parents.**<sup>83</sup>
- ▶ **The California Teachers Association adopts a policy stating students should be able to access hormone therapy without parental consent.**<sup>84</sup>
- ▶ **CDE adopts the Health Education Framework, claiming genders are ever expansive, ever evolving, and ever changing and that children can choose their own gender.**<sup>85</sup>
- ▶ **California bill could punish parents for refusing to affirm their child’s gender identity.**<sup>86</sup>
- ▶ **California superintendent of public instruction shows up to school board meeting to oppose a policy requiring parental notification for changing a student’s gender, name, or pronouns.**<sup>87</sup>
- ▶ **Third grade math teacher in Cupertino, California requires students to rank themselves according to their “power and privilege.”**<sup>88</sup>
- ▶ **Davis Joint Unified School District pushes White Privilege Conference for teachers and uses Office of School Climate to teach staff that “gender is a scam.”**<sup>89</sup>
- ▶ **California school broadcasts sexually explicit books, some covering “pedophiles,” kink, and pornographic images.**<sup>90</sup>

If, as we have argued, California has a powerful system promoting CSJ, we would expect this system to reveal itself at a granular level. School districts would have CSJ policies. Each individual school would manifest a variety of CSJ practices demanded by its district.

We illustrate the extent to which CSJ manifests itself in two ways. Table 1 presents a survey of California’s four largest school districts to determine how many schools have policies or practices that manifest common gender identity indicators of CSJ. Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of schools in California’s four largest school districts require teaching about gender identity and sexual orientation in a mandatory course, adopt comprehensive sex education curricula, and encourage transgender-approved pronoun use.

Table 2 zooms out, and presents relevant statistics on all of California school districts. It reveals the percentage of California districts that adopt certain practices for their schools. Nearly 85 percent of districts have policies



that allow bathroom use to follow gender identity, instead of biological sex, for instance. Almost 90 percent of districts mandate comprehensive sex education.

Few school districts resist the drift of California's laws even in optional policies. In a survey, captured in table 2, the Californians for Equal Rights Foundation found that only three school districts (2.7 percent) had a policy banning or discouraging the teaching of critical race theory, while seventy-three had a policy promoting DEI and 39 percent provide one or more ethnic studies courses. Seventy-eight school districts have committed local funding to advancing DEI or its equivalents, and about 40 percent of school districts have a dedicated DEI department. Eleven school

districts had just one of these policies or requirements, while only two school districts had none of them.

There is a little leakage from the districts that mandate certain practices to its schools. One hundred percent of San Diego schools require courses on gender identity and sexual education, following the mandate from San Diego's school district. That number is very rare among the four largest school districts though. Some schools, for whatever reason, do not report following particular school district policies. California officials at the state and local levels are probably busy discovering which schools are failing to implement these plans and coercing them into compliance.

**Table 1. How Far CSJ has Conquered California's Largest School Districts**

School District	Schools teaching students about gender identity and sexual orientation in a required course <sup>91</sup>	Schools training for top health education official in LGBT ideology <sup>92</sup>	Schools with gender and Sexuality alliances <sup>93</sup>	Encouraged use of gender-neutral pronouns during instruction to recognize "gender diversity" <sup>94</sup>	District enrollment <sup>95</sup>
Los Angeles	79.6%	76.2%	80.4%	88.8%	538,295
San Diego	100%	71.4%	85%	98.1%	112,790
San Francisco	82.4%	83.5%	94.2%	96.5%	55,537
Oakland	92.1%	61.3%	74.4 %	92.1%	45,741



**Table 2: How Widely CSJ Policies Are Adopted in California**

District Policies	Percentage of CA school districts <sup>96</sup>
Gender-sexuality alliance clubs in at least half of their middle schools	52%
Gender-sexuality alliance clubs in all their middle schools	32%
Gender-sexuality alliance clubs in at least half of their high schools	81%
Gender-sexuality alliance clubs in all their high schools	59%
Training on anti-bias, diversity, and inclusion to their school staff members	78%
Policies that allow students to use locker rooms and restrooms based on their gender identity rather than their biological sex	84%
Adopted LGBTQ+-inclusive social science textbooks at the high school level	52%
Mandate comprehensive sex education unless a parent opts their student out	87%
LGBTQ+-inclusive sex education	76%
CRT ban <sup>97</sup>	2.7%
DEI policy	66%
Paid DEI training	71%
DEI department	41%
CRT-based ethnic studies	39%



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## CASE STUDIES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS RESISTING THE SYSTEM

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### **Every force in California is pushing school districts and schools to adopt a CSJ vision.**

What happens when a school district either drags its feet in adopting this vision or defies it openly? Episodes in such feet-dragging or defiance show the power of the system, but at the same time might point to effective methods to resist the CSJ juggernaut.

School districts are governed by local school boards and superintendents who derive their authority from the consent of the governed and are meant to be responsive to parents' concerns. However, school boards in California are dominated by representatives endorsed by the state's largest teachers union, who win around 68 percent of competitive races.<sup>98</sup> Still, some school boards are not controlled by teacher unions or their allies. The few school boards that have tried to buck the status quo have been threatened with fines or investigations by the governor, the superintendent of public instruction, and the attorney general. In some cases a school board might be successful in passing education reforms but not without great resistance from the state's powerful leaders. We use three school districts to show what happens when school boards buck the system: Temecula, Poway, and Chino Valley.

**Temecula.** The Temecula Valley Unified School District voted to reject part of a state-endorsed social studies curriculum for elementary school children over content about gay rights activist Harvey Milk.<sup>99</sup> The

board expressed concern that parents had not been adequately consulted about the curriculum. It thus bucked the two pillars of California's education system—CSJ policies and ever less parental oversight. Soon after, Governor Newsom threatened the district with a \$1.5 million fine and an extra \$1.6 million associated with shipping curriculum materials to the districts. "If these extremist school board members won't do their job, we will—and fine them for their incompetence," Governor Newsom said. When the school board refused to reverse its decision, Newsom announced he would work with the state's legislature and the superintendent to "enact legislation to impose fines on any school district that fails to provide adequate instructional materials." The board ultimately reversed its decision and approved the curriculum to avoid an expensive lawsuit.

**Poway.** Many parent groups, including one in Poway Unified School District, have pressured schools to remove pornographic books that are not age-appropriate from the children's sections of their libraries.<sup>101</sup> In response, Governor Newsom, Attorney General Bonta, and State Superintendent Thurmond sent a joint letter to all school district superintendents urging them to protect obscene material in libraries despite parents' objections.<sup>102</sup> The letter threatened school districts that if they remove any books or instructional materials from classrooms or libraries, despite their pornographic content, the districts will be investigated by the attorney general's office. The school board did not risk



removing the pornographic books from the libraries in the face of state pressure.

**Chino Valley.** Chino Valley successfully resisted state pressures on certain issues. When the Chino Valley Unified School District considered a policy to inform parents about a student's gender identity, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond attended the school board meeting to oppose it.<sup>103</sup> The school board president, Sonja Shaw, had the superintendent escorted out of the meeting by security and told him, "We will not be bullied in Chino." The board ultimately adopted the policy that requires schools to notify parents if their child adopts a gender different from their biological sex, seeks a pronoun or name change, or desires to use a different bathroom or locker room than the ones dictated by the requirements of their biological sex.<sup>104</sup> In 2021, the Chino Valley school board attempted to ban students from using the restrooms or locker rooms corresponding with their gender identity rather than their biological sex. The superintendent sent a letter to the district claiming the policy would violate the state's law.<sup>105</sup> The California attorney general's office told the board that the office was prepared to

litigate if the policy were passed.<sup>106</sup> After much parental and student protest, the proposed policy was voted down 3-2.

Overall, school district resistance to the system is rare and state officials have shown, through a few examples, that they are willing to come down on recalcitrant districts with the full force of state law.

*School boards in California are dominated by representatives endorsed by the state's largest teachers union, who win around 68 percent of competitive races.*

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# SECTION IV

WHO PUSHES WOKE POLICIES?





## WHO PUSHES WOKE POLICIES?

### **Groups of people have to act to bring such policies and practices to school districts and individual schools.**

California has a formal system of laws and regulations promoting CSJ. It also has an informal set of actors promoting CSJ in schools. Sometimes these actors lobby for the adoption of policies or offer curricula to help California promote radical gender theory or racialism. Sometimes they lobby to include CSJ in professional standards. This is a system. The laws and regulations are a good part of the system, and we have discussed those in great detail in Section 2. The informal actors push for more laws and regulations and help to bring the laws and regulations alive at the ground level. Below we try to outline in basic terms the informal actors within the system. They come in many shapes and sizes, but they have the same general objectives.

### **1. CDE STRATEGIC PLANS**

The CDE is on the frontlines of efforts to transform California's education system. Its policies aim to implement anti-racism, radical gender theory, and diversity, equity, and inclusion in teacher training, school programs, and curricula. The CDE also sees itself as the primary element within the state to increase state power vis-a-vis parent rights. As a result, the CDE seeks to increase students' reliance on the public system through spending that expands universal preschool, transitional kindergarten, expanded learning, and universal meals programs so as to decrease the power of parents in overseeing the raising

of their children. These aspects work in tandem: parents are unlikely to push CSJ; so an increase in the power of the CDE and local school districts in the direction of CSJ requires a waning of parental rights. The CDE imagines a situation where families willingly give their children over to the state for proper raising.

This dual movement—promoting CSJ while increasing the amount of time public schools get with children—already underway for a decade, accelerated in the aftermath of rioting ostensibly triggered by George Floyd's death. In 2020, CDE created the Transforming Schools Initiative (TSI) to direct massive increases in state spending on public education toward new strategies and programs.<sup>107</sup> The TSI aims to “break the cycle of educational inequity” and “address historic inequities, learning loss and the social-emotional needs of students.” The TSI requires school districts to assess and change policies, programs, and practices to advance the equitable and anti-racist future that the CDE envisions.

The TSI creates “community schools”—pre-kindergarten through grade twelve public schools—wherein parents are mere “partners” with the state. The partnership with the state begins when participating families receive mandatory “home visits, home school collaboration, [and] culturally responsive community partnerships” from state employees.<sup>108</sup> Such community schools are not seeking to improve traditional academic skills. Their aim is to influence the



mentality and beliefs of children to achieve the CDE's "equity goals." Community schools use whole-child, trauma-informed teaching, SEL, and restorative justice practices. These schools work with local interest groups to infuse these practices into curricula and programs. The CDE refers to community schools as an "equity enhancing strategy" and seeks large state investments in mental and behavioral health, universal preschool, expanded learning, and SEL. Expanded learning also includes before and after school care and summer programs to keep children out of the home for longer so as to better wrest their minds away from parents. Community schools must commit to providing "racially just and restorative school climates" in every classroom and office, as well as culturally relevant instruction that prioritizes the activist education practices of experiential or service learning.

The TSI also expands teacher and administrator "professional development" and increases diversity in the teacher workforce. It includes a spending increase of \$1.8 billion on the Educator Effectiveness Block Grant. With these funds, teachers and administrators will undergo more professional development offered by the CDE, such as "Empowering K-12 STEM Teachers to bring Equity in Education" or the Trevor Project's LGBTQ+ Ally training.<sup>109</sup> A portion of the grant also goes to diversifying the teacher workforce by recruiting and retaining more "teachers of color" across California.<sup>110</sup> Such spending is a windfall for leftist interest groups that bring such "professional development" to California schools at a hefty price.

The amount of money pouring into the CSJ-based educational establishment is seemingly endless. The TSI increases spending on

therapeutic education models in schools, universal pre-kindergarten, and "universal meals." A new spending increase of \$184 million is allocated for teacher and school counselor residency programs, and an existing \$350 million for residency programs goes to school counselors.<sup>111</sup> Two hundred and fifty million dollars of new spending expands the Inclusive Early Education Expansion program, which funds infrastructure, professional development, and other elements to create "inclusive classrooms."<sup>112</sup> Six hundred and fifteen million dollars are used to expand eligibility for all four-year-old children to attend transitional kindergarten. One hundred million dollars went to Californian preschools, transitional kindergartens, and full-day kindergartens in 2022 and 2023, with another \$550 million coming in the later part of 2023 and in 2024. California was the first state in the nation to adopt a statewide Universal Meals Program for all school age children. The 2022-23 state budget included a \$596 million increase in spending to subsidize school meals and an additional \$600 million for kitchen infrastructure, as well as \$100 million for school districts to improve food services.<sup>113</sup> The amount of \$1.74 billion is allocated for schools to increase in-person expanded learning opportunities to schools from transitional kindergarten to sixth grade. The legislature and the governor have agreed that the program will grow to a total of \$5 billion in annual funding. At full implementation the program will create 30 additional school days that are nine hours long increase students' time in public school by nine hours per day for thirty non-school days.<sup>114</sup>

The TSI includes the "Education to End Hate" plan to "empower" educators and students to confront "hate bigotry and racism." Under



this effort, the CDE led a series of strategies including educator training grants, virtual classroom sessions, and partnerships with community leaders. Most notably, the initiative created the Anti Bias Education Grant Program, which is designed to “prevent, address and eliminate racism and bias in all California public schools.” The program gives no less than \$75,000 to school districts to use for anti-bias activities, such as anti-racism teacher and administrator training, the development of a diversity plan, “inclusive” curricula for K–12 students that address bigotry or racism and promote “pride in one’s multiple identities,” and student-led efforts about racism or bigotry.<sup>115</sup>

## 2. INTEREST GROUPS

Interest groups are prominent support staff in promoting CSJ in schools. Laws and regulations do not immediately become reality. They have to be implemented, supported, furthered, and made into the culture of a school. Prominent interest groups help with translating CSJ laws and regulations into the practices within school districts and schools themselves.

The California Teachers Association (CTA). Most people might think of a teacher union as an entity for collective bargaining and setting working conditions. The CTA, for instance, was on the front lines, keeping California public education remote during the COVID-19 pandemic. But in most states unions also define conditions for entry into the profession and set the standard for professional development. California’s largest teacher’s union is, according to its own self-understanding, “committed to racial and social justice for all.” The Human Rights Department works with CTA members “to develop equity plans to organize around local racial and social justice issues and move closer

toward collective liberation.” The CTA trains thousands of educators every year in anti-racism, how to “fight white supremacy culture,” and how to achieve “equity/social justice.” The CTA organizes local chapter equity teams and social justice committees in school districts across the state to increase racial and social justice programming in schools. One of the most popular forms of training offered by CTA is the Cadre Training Program, which covers the five content areas of Transformative Social-Emotional Learning, racial justice advocacy, LGBTQ+ leadership advocacy, black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) advocacy, and women’s leadership advocacy.<sup>116</sup> Unlike the experience of unions in other states after the *Janus* verdict, the CTA continues to grow its membership each year and wins a majority of school board positions in the state.

The **California School Boards Association** (CSBA), the state’s largest membership organization of school board members and superintendents, would seem to be mostly concerned with professionalizing school board policies, budgeting, and accountability. But board professionalism in California has been inundated by CSJ. The CSBA charges \$3,000 for a year-long training program, “CSBA Equity Network Training,” with a course called “Governance with an Equity Lens: A Systemic Approach to Closing Equity Gaps in Public Education” being taught in the first year. The three-hour courses focus on “racial equity,” implicit bias, stereotypes, racism, and how to develop “equity statements” and equitable school policies.<sup>117</sup>

The **California Library Association (CLA)** claims to be dedicated to equity and justice. The CLA organizes interest groups across the state to train librarians, host conferences, network at events, and to share resources, publications, and projects. For example, the CLA hosts the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion interest group,



which provides training and events for library staff to engage in and discuss DEI topics.<sup>118</sup> Another interest group focuses on “climate justice” and seeks to frame the “environmental justice movement within the larger need to work for more equitable and just communities” in California libraries and communities.<sup>119</sup>

The **Equality California Institute** operates the Safe and Supportive Schools program, which is guided and informed by the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee, a group of representatives from districts, teachers’ unions, and community organizations. Equality California pressures school districts to implement both transgender student policies and policies for mandatory culturally responsive, anti-bias, diversity and inclusion teacher training.<sup>120</sup>

The **California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC)**. The CAEYC provides training and resources to early childhood educators and preschool collaboratives across California. The group encourages early childhood educators to view gender as a “societal construct,” to recognize that children can be “gender expansive,” and to introduce children to “gender expansive” books with “characters who transcend the binary.”<sup>121</sup> The CAEYC hosted a “Courageous Conversations” series about how “early children have long been present at the intersectionality of othering and isms,” the “critical need” to recognize “institutionalized racism,” and to “advance equity and social justice.”<sup>122</sup>

The **One Archives Foundation** provides California schools with LGBTQ+-affirming education programs, training, and classroom resources.<sup>123</sup> For example, the One Archives Foundation provides the LGBTQ+ lesson plans to teachers with titles in the forms of leading questions like “How did Harvey Milk and the Briggs Initiative unite marginalized

groups?”<sup>124</sup> and “How was gender challenged during urbanizations in the late 19th Century and what was the response?” the latter of which includes a discussion of “crossdressing theater” or drag performances.<sup>125</sup>

The **It Gets Better Project** provides grants to school districts to fund projects to promote gender ideology in schools.<sup>126</sup> For example, Baldwin Park High School is considered an “exemplary grantee” for establishing a “Pride Garden” and using it to host an “LGBTQ+ culture club” to teach students queer history and art. Impact Academy of Arts and Technology received a grant to host a “back-to-school shopping day for trans and non-binary students,” create a gender-affirming wardrobe, and host an LGBTQ+ day.

### 3. EQUITY CONSULTANTS

**Equity consultants** help fill a gap between school districts and state departments of education. The state government of California mandates testing. Gaps between blacks and whites emerge from the testing. States and school districts are required by law to narrow and eliminate these gaps. Equity consultants can help make it appear like districts are doing something about this so-called problem. At a minimum, under such consultants, training is given to teachers and administrators on gender ideology, cultural responsiveness, and implicit bias. A more involved equity consultant will conduct small group debriefings to determine whether a group has a sufficiently anti-racist and “inclusive” mindset.

Equity consultants usually work with school district DEI officers and departments and help them develop DEI strategic plans to transform the school districts in question. About 30



percent of California school districts with more than fifteen thousand students have DEI officers, usually dedicated to a DEI department (appendix B).<sup>127</sup> Taxpayers have spent at least \$8,120,723 on twenty-eight different equity consultants in twenty-five of California's school districts. This is a modest sample but it offers an idea of how equity consultants affect a school district (appendix A).

Consultants make recommendations to districts for adopting equity practices or restorative justice policies. For example, in February 2021, the Partnership for Los Angeles Unified School District sent a letter to parents, introducing Gholneskar Muhammad of HILL Pedagogies LLC as its "Equity Champion in Residence," supporting instructional staff and "anti-racist" work. Muhammad promoted "Historically Responsive Learning," which included CRT as one of four significant elements to be included in planning lessons. Teachers were given up to five hours of training on units that teach intelligence, skills, identity, and "criticality," or "oppression, equity, and antiracism."<sup>128</sup>

Alameda County Office of Education paid Nicole Anderson & Associates Consulting \$30,000 during the 2020–21 school year for "L&A Division Capacity Building/Strategic Planning." Nicole Anderson & Associates Consulting is led by a self-described "Educational and Racial Equity Consultant," and delivers "a unique systemic approach to providing professional development services" to educators. The group provided "equity impact planning" to Alameda with five days of meetings, including one half-day session per month. The program trained educators in "cultural proficiency, equity leadership planning, [and] implicit bias/institutional racism." It also included "equity leadership coaching" for five days, with meetings taking place on two half days per month.<sup>129</sup>

Districts know what they are buying when they buy the services of equity consultants. And the districts always get what they want.

## 4. SCHOOLS CLUBS AND PROGRAMS

**Youth Organize California (YO!Cali)** is a coalition of eleven organizations collaborating to train students to protest school discipline and pressure schools to adopt restorative justice policies.

The **Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) Network of California** is an "LGBTQ racial and gender justice org empowering middle and high school students to advocate, organize and mobilize an intersectional movement for justice and liberation."<sup>130</sup> The GSA network of California organizes student GSA clubs and committees in schools across the state. One such example is the Long Beach Unified School District's "Trans and Queer School Climate Committee." The GSA encourages students to attend pride events such as Santa Cruz Pride, which included a drag show for children.<sup>131</sup> The group organizes an "Inclusive Sex Ed" campaign to increase the LGBTQ+-affirming sex education in schools.<sup>132</sup> The CDE directs school districts to use the GSA network as a resource for student clubs and organizations.<sup>133</sup>

**Los Angeles LGBT Center Community Action Network (CAN)** works with GSA and LGBTQ+ clubs on middle and high school campuses to build more GSA clubs and to train "peer leaders" who are taught to "create social change." CAN estimates they have worked in more than seventy-five schools where they conducted LGBTQ+ training and workshops for LGBTQ+ and allied youth.<sup>134</sup> The CDE also directs school districts to work with CAN.



# SECTION V

CONCLUSION





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## CONCLUSION

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**There are two kinds of systems, according to an Italian philosopher.**<sup>135</sup> One system, resembling medieval France, is governed by one prince and many barons, all of whom hold their rank independently of the king. In such places, it is easy to start a reformation because some baron is always discontented with the king and his ways, but it is difficult to conquer the whole set of institutions because, eventually, somewhere within the system, those with an interest in maintaining it rally to resist. The other kind of system resembles the kingdom of the Turks, where all subordinates owe their place to the one prince. In such systems, it is difficult to start a revolution, because it is difficult to find allies to start it, but the system might crumble if the leader at the top is taken out. The case of California presents a more difficult challenge.

Nearly every California institution—both central and subordinate—is unified in its dedication to radical CSJ policies. There is no real way to break into the system to subvert these policies. And there is no central authority to really take out. It is a top-down system, with laws and regulations emanating from state institutions and dollars supporting the CSJ mission. It is a bottom-up system, with teacher unions and professional groups hungering to promote CSJ. The system is flooded with crisscrossing dollars—from the CDE to local districts, from local districts to interest groups, from schools to interest groups, and from the CDE to interest groups. It is not an open system, where dissenters might construct a bulwark with a discontented subordinate in one kind of institution and build out from there. It is a closed system, hierarchical at its core

and united with a deep faith in the power and righteousness of CSJ ideology.

The only way to begin is to create places within the system open to reform, to create dissenting subordinates. This can probably be done only at the local level for now, where recalcitrant school districts resist some state mandates. A prerequisite for such rebuilding is an expose—detailed and damning—of how the state government funds the Left in California, and how the revolving door between government, interest groups, and unions appears to enrich the individuals within the system. Resisting more mandates would be a good place to turn the system around. Decreasing the power of the unions would also help, if one can find a place within the system to do that. Opening up certification requirements for teachers, in the face of teacher shortages, would be a good place to decrease the power of teacher unions. Perhaps there are ways that the federal courts could be used to sue California schools for failing to protect children from predatory practices. When it comes to resisting the California system, a thousand flowers should bloom.

No system lasts forever. None is self-perpetuating, no matter how impregnable it appears at one time or another. The exodus from California has been impressive, but it hasn't disciplined the government. Perhaps at some point it will. But it will not happen without breaking the alliance between government bureaucrats, tech oligarchs, and the “underserved” in California's bloated system.



## APPENDIX A: EQUITY CONSULTANTS

Many California school districts have hired equity consultants to guide school administrations. With the increased demand for such services, many consultants have arisen across the state and indeed across the country. They suggest that a pretty standard set of policy ideas are implemented at the local level. None of this is mandated. But the failure to adopt such an approach leads to dishonor, so districts across California—large and small—have hired equity consultants. Equity consultants lead the way in radicalizing schools,

at the behest of the education establishment in the state. In this appendix, we describe the equity consulting jobs done by seven different outfits. Some information was gathered through freedom of information act (FOIA) requests; other information was gathered from publicly available internet sources.

Taxpayers have spent at least \$8,120,723 on twenty-eight different equity consultants operating in twenty-five of California's school districts.

**Table 3. Equity consultants working in California schools<sup>136</sup>**

Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
Akobnen LLC	\$7,250	2020–21	Palm Springs Unified School District
	\$16,000	2019–20	Palm Springs Unified School District
	\$22,800	2018	Riverside County Office of Education
	\$29,200	2019	Riverside County Office of Education
			San Jacinto Unified School District
Dale Allener			Elk Grove Unified School District
			San Juan Unified School District
			San Francisco Unified School District



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Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
Chiarella Consulting Education for Good			Pleasanton Unified School District
			Santa Rosa City Schools
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)			Oakland Unified School District
			Sacramento City Unified School District
Council on American-Islamic Relations		2017	San Diego Unified School District
EdEquity Inc.	\$135,000	2019–20	Fairfield Suisun Unified School District
	\$162,000	2018–19	Fairfield Suisun Unified School District
	\$45,000	2018	Fairfield Suisun Unified School District
			Mount Pleasant School District
			Rosemead School District
			Washington Union School District
Education and Civil Rights Initiative University of Kentucky College of Education	\$15,000	2021	San Francisco Unified School District
Educational Equity Consultants LLC			Santa Barbara School District
			Santa Maria School District
Elliott Educational Services			Etiwanda School District
			Piper Preschool Santa Monica
Enid Lee Consultants			Kitayama & Pioneer Elementary School



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Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
			Antioch Unified School District
			Folsom Cordova United School District
			Kipp Bay Area Schools
			Los Gatos High School
			Murrieta Valley Unified School District
			Riverside Unified School District
			Ross Valley School District
			Sonoma Valley Unified School District
FourPoint Education partners LLC			Los Angeles County of Education
			Los Angeles Unified School District Charter School Special Needs Services Project
			Santa Clara County Office of Education
Generation Ready Inc.	\$42,000	2019	ABC School District
Heinemann	\$48,215		Torrance Unified School District
Islamic Networks Group			Berkeley Unified School District
			Brentwood Union School District
			Gilroy Unified School District
			Menlo Park City Elementary School District
			Milpitas Union School District



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Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
			Mt. Diablo Unified School District
			Oakland Unified School District
			San Diego County Office of Education
			San Francisco Unified School District
			San Ramon Valley Unified School District
			Santa Clara County Office of Education
			West Contra Costa Unified School District
Leadership Academy			Los Angeles Unified School District
Love Educational Services LLC	\$11,000	2020	San Diego Unified School District
			Castro Valley Unified School District
The Minor Collective LLC			Los Angeles Unified School District
Gholnecsar Muhammad, HILL Pedagogies LLC			Castro Valley Unified School District
			Los Angeles Unified School District
National Equity Project	\$61,250	2020	Alameda Unified School District
	\$25,000	2020	Alameda Unified School District
	\$25,000	2020	Alameda Unified School District
	\$50,000	2020	Alameda Unified School District



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Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
	\$19,000	2019	Alameda Unified School District
	\$29,800	2020	Cupertino Union School District
	\$35,500	2019–20	Jefferson Elementary School District
	\$5,600	2019	Menlo Park City School District
	\$798	2015	Menlo Park City School District
	\$139,000	2016–17	Novato Unified School District
	\$50,000	2012	Oakland Public Schools
	\$3,600	2019	Palo Alto Unified School District
	\$16,000	2020–21	San Francisco Unified School District
	\$20,000	2019–20	San Francisco Unified School District
	\$4,800	2019	San Francisco Unified School District
	\$130,000	2019–20	San Francisco Unified School District
	\$20,000	2018–19	San Francisco Unified School District
			Aspire Public Schools
			Berkeley Unified School District
			Campbell Union High School District
			Camino Nuevo Charter Academy
			Educate 78



Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
			Emery Unified School District
			Emery Unified School District
			Hayward Unified School District
			Healdsburg Unified School District
			Jefferson Elementary School District
			Lighthouse Community Public Schools
			Los Angeles Unified School District
			Milpitas Unified School District
			Monterey County Office of Education
			Oakland Unified School District
			Partners in School Innovation, San Francisco
			Partnership for Los Angeles Schools
			Sacramento City Unified School District
			San Diego County Office of Education
			San Diego Unified School District
			San Jose Unified School District
			San Mateo County Office of Education
			San Rafael City Schools



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Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
			Santa Clara County Office of Education
			Santa Rosa Public Schools
			Tamalpais Union High School District
			Tulare County Office of Education
			Vallejo City Unified School District
			West Contra Costa Unified District
Nicole Anderson and Associates Consulting LLC	\$30,000	2020-21	Alameda County Office of Education
	\$52,500	2019-20	Alameda County Office of Education
	\$28,750	2018-19	Alameda County Office of Education
	\$4,000	2021	San Francisco Unified School District
	Fairfield Suisun Unified School District	2019	San Francisco Unified School District
	\$2,500	2019	Fairfield Suisun Unified School District
	\$1,500	2020	Hemet Unified School District
			ABC Unified School District
			Adelanto Elementary School District
			Albany Unified School District



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Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
			Albany Unified School District
			Bakersfield City Unified School District
			California Department of Education
			Central Union School District
			Del Norte County School District
			Elk Grove Unified School District
			EQ Schools
			Evergreen Unified School District
			Fall River Unified School District
			Fresno Unified School District
			Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
			Highlands Community Charter Schools
			Humboldt County Office of Education
	\$24,000	2021	Vacaville Unified School District
	\$12,000	2020	Vacaville Unified School District
	\$4,500	2019	Vacaville Unified School District
			Vallejo Unified School District
			Victor Valley Union High School District



Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
			Victor Valley Union High School District
			Vista Unified School District
			Washington Unified School District
			Yolo County Office of Education
			Lewisville Independent School District
<b>Othering and Belonging Institute</b>			Sacramento City Unified School District
<b>Our Transformation of Education</b>			Salinas Union High School District
<b>Pacific Educational Group Inc.</b>	\$30,000		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$50,000		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$69,450		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$54,750		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$2,375		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$9,500		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$2,500		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$5,000		Acalenes Union High School District
	\$56,600		Monterey Peninsula Unified School District
			California Department of Education
			Lodi Unified School District



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Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
			Oakland
			San Leandro Unified School District
Panorama Education Inc.	\$5,200,685		
	\$95,000	2021	Moreno Valley Unified School District
	\$204,000	2020	Moreno Valley Unified School District
	\$89,000	2020	Moreno Valley Unified School District
	\$54,000	2020	Moreno Valley Unified School District
	\$12,000	2020	Moreno Valley Unified School District
	\$12,000	2019	Moreno Valley Unified School District
	\$89,000	2019	Moreno Valley Unified School District
	\$85,000	2021	Fresno Unified School District
	\$85,000	2020	Fresno Unified School District
	\$5,000	2019	Fresno Unified School District
	\$80,000	2019	Fresno Unified School District
	\$80,000	2018	Fresno Unified School District
	\$80,684	2017	Fresno Unified School District
	\$80,000	2017	Fresno Unified School District
	\$27,000	2016	Fresno Unified School District



Equity consultant	Dollar amount	Date	School district
Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales	\$26,000		
	\$8,000	2018-19	San Francisco Unified School District
	\$8,000	2018-19	San Francisco Unified School District
Truss Leadership	\$10,000	2019	San Francisco Unified School District
	\$43,793	2020	Alameda Unified School District
	\$11,000	2021	Bayshore Elementary School District
Williams, Damon	\$32,473.13	2019	Palo Alto Unified School District
			Manteca Unified School District
<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>\$8,120,723</b>		



## APPENDIX B: DEI OFFICERS

**Table 4. DEI Officers<sup>137</sup>**

	<b>School district</b>	<b>Officer title</b>
1	ABC Unified	Equity Officer
2	Antelope Valley Union High	Director of Equity
3	Chaffrey Joint Union High	Executive Director of Equity and Inclusion
4	Chino Valley Unified	Director, Access and Equity
5	Elk Grove Unified	Program Specialist, Educational Equity
6	Folsom-Cordova Unified	Director, Social Emotional Learning & Educational Equity
7	Fresno Unified	Chief of Equity & Access
8	Long Beach Unified	Director Equity, Engagement and Partnerships
9	Los Angeles Unified	Interim Administrator, Access, Equity & Acceleration
10	Mount Diablo Unified	Equity Administrator
11	Murrieta Valley Unified	Coordinator, Equity Diversity, Inclusion
12	Oakland Unified	Executive Director: Office of equity
13	Oceanside Unified	Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
14	Orange Unified	Executive Director—Accountability, Equity & School Support



	<b>School district</b>	<b>Officer title</b>
15	Oxnard	Manager, Equity Family and Community Engagement
16	Oxnard Union High	Director of Wellness and Inclusion
17	Palm Springs Unified	Coordinator—Diversity and Racial Equity
18	Palmdale Elementary	Director of Access & Equity for African American Student Achievement
19	Pasadena Unified	Program Coordinator of Equity and Access
20	Pomona Unified	Director of Equity & Professional Learning
21	Redlands Unified	Coordinator, Diversity and Equity
22	Riverside Unified	Assistant Superintendent, Equity, Access & Community Engagement
23	San Bernardino City Unified	Director, Equity & Targeted Student Achievement
24	San Diego Unified	Diversity and Inclusion Officer
25	San Francisco Unified	Director of Equity
26	San Jose Unified	Director of Educational Equity & Leadership
27	San Juan Unified	Director, Equity and Student Achievement
28	San Ramon Valley Unified	Director of Educational Equity
29	Santa Barbara Unified	Executive Director of Diversity, equity, and Family engagement
30	Sweetwater Union High	Chief of Educational Equity and Support Services
31	Visalia Unified	Administrator, Equity & Student Services



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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### **Anna K. Miller**

Anna is the Education Policy Director at Idaho Freedom Foundation's Center for American Education. She is an alumni of the MA Fellowship at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. She lives in Boise, Idaho with her husband, Brock. Anna earned her M.A. in Economics from George Mason University (2020) and a B.A. in Philosophy, Religion, and Ancient Greek and Roman Studies as a Division 1 student athlete from Furman University (2017). Anna's work has been published in the Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, The Hill, RealClearPolicy, The Detroit News, The Washington Examiner, and The Daily Caller among others.



### **Dr. Scott Yenor**

Scott Yenor is a Washington Fellow at the Claremont Institute's Center for the American Way of Life, and a member of the National Association of Scholars. He writes extensively on marriage and family life in the contemporary world, including his most recent book *The Recovery of Family Life: Exposing the Limits of Modern Ideologies* (Baylor University Press, 2020). He also writes on higher education, American Reconstruction, David Hume, and other topics for numerous websites including Law Liberty, City Journal, First Things, and The American Mind.





**IDAHO FREEDOM  
FOUNDATION**

802 W. Bannock Street, Suite 405  
Boise, Idaho 83702

IdahoFreedom.org  
208.258.2280



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