



## California School Boards Association 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

### Candidate Information

Candidate Name: Marshall Tuck  
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Candidate Occupation: Educator, Candidate  
Employer: Currently a full-time candidate; previously: New Teacher Center  
Proposed Ballot Designation: Schools Improvement Director  
Elected offices currently/ previously held:  
N/A

Other campaigns for elected office:  
2014: Candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction

Appointed offices currently/ previously held:  
CEO, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools; President, Green Dot Public Schools

Organization(s) you belong to:  
Board Member, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools; Board Member, Parent Revolution;  
Member. PTA: Member. local church: Member. Democratic Party

Experience / Relationships with schools:  
See attached.

**On the following pages, CSBA has composed a list of ten (10) questions regarding K-12 public education in California. These questions are arranged based on CSBA's four (4) Policy Pillars. More information about each Policy Pillar and about CSBA are provided for your reference.**

Please attach your biography, a list of current endorsements and any campaign literature you have printed to date. Email completed forms to Dennis Meyers: [dmeyers@csba.org](mailto:dmeyers@csba.org)



## California School Boards Association 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

### Experience/Relationships with schools:

As the son of a public school teacher, the product of public schools, and a public school parent, I believe strongly in the power of public schools. But *California's public schools need big changes* to give *all* students the education they deserve – and I have spent the last 16 years working to deliver those changes for kids and families.

Most recently, as Educator-in-Residence I directed various school improvement efforts with the New Teacher Center (NTC), a nonprofit organization working with school districts to help develop and retain effective teachers and principals. NTC has supported 166,000 teachers since 2012.

Prior to that, I was the founding CEO of the nonprofit Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, a groundbreaking collaboration between the Mayor's office and LA Unified School District which operates 18 struggling elementary, middle, and high schools serving 15,000 students. Under my leadership, these schools raised four-year graduation rates by more than 60%, and had the highest academic improvement among California's school systems with more than 10,000 students. The Partnership launched the innovative Parent College, creating a national model for getting parents more involved in their kids' education.

Before joining the Partnership, I was the president of the nonprofit Green Dot Public Schools, where he helped create 10 new public charter high schools in some of LA's poorest neighborhoods. All of them outperformed local schools – and 8 have been ranked among the top high schools in America by *U.S. News & World Report*.

**Q1: What is your view on the role that locally elected school boards play in public education in California?**

I believe that school boards are central to our public education system and need to be given the flexibility and support from Sacramento to be able to best serve children. But too often this doesn't happen. In fact, the state often makes the work of school boards more difficult.

A top priority of mine as State Superintendent will be to work with school board members around the state to get districts significant flexibility from the Education Code, to unlock real local control and decision making. This will take time, but as we are working to get that flexibility from the legislature over the long-term, I will seek immediately to get a number of waivers from the State Board of Education so that school boards have the freedom to act in a way that best meets the needs of the children they are serving.

**Q2: Please describe any interactions/experiences you have had either personally or professionally with local school boards?**

I have worked in public education for about 16 years now, with the bulk of that time spent leading public school systems. For almost seven years I led the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, an innovative partnership between the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District to turnaround some of the lowest performing schools in the district. I helped found this organization and in order to create such a unique arrangement, we had to work closely with the school board. Given the schools we oversaw were LAUSD public schools, I worked closely with school board members throughout my time as the leader of the Partnership.

And we had tremendous success. We increased graduation rates in those schools by 60%, significantly reduced suspension and truancy rates, and had the largest rate of academic improvement of any California public school system of more than 10,000 students.

Additionally, as the President of Green Dot Public Schools, we opened a number of new public charter schools in LAUSD. At Green Dot, we worked regularly with LAUSD school board members, particularly the members that represented the neighborhoods where our schools resided.

**Q3: Please explain any changes that you believe may be necessary in state law, including the LCFF or the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) processes, to ensure or enhance school board authority, community engagement, and accountability over the use of funds and implementation of effective educational programs?**

To start, we have to recognize that LCFF will never be entirely effective until we increase overall funding levels in our state. No matter how we distribute the funding, if we are at 41<sup>st</sup> nationally in per-pupil funding, we won't get the job done for all kids. Beyond the overall funding levels, I am a big supporter of the underlying intent of LCFF. I have led public schools serving children with significant needs, and there is no question that they are capable of

achieving great things, but they also require additional resources and supports. I also appreciate the additional flexibility that LCFF is meant to provide to local districts.

But with greater flexibility, we must have effective implementation of the policy and a strong system of accountability. This starts with making sure that the supplemental and concentration grant dollars generated by kids with additional needs, actually reaches those kids. Current guidance from the State Superintendent permit across-the-board raises for staff, including those that aren't serving high-needs student populations. I'll change that guidance, and work with school districts to ensure that additional resources are being spent as intended.

Additionally, the California Department of Education (CDE) needs to work with county offices of education to identify best practices that emerge as schools and districts innovate and utilize their flexibility to try new things. Then, the CDE can give stipends to educators who are having success so that they can support other schools and districts.

I also will work to keep the LCAP from simply becoming an alternative bureaucratic requirement that smothers local control. One way to accomplish this is by helping to build the capacity of the county offices of education, so that they are equipped to support districts in developing meaningful LCAPs, and also to identify if a district needs support meeting the targets and goals set out in their plans.

Lastly, as mentioned in Question #1, above, I want to work with school districts to get significant flexibility from the California Education Code so that we can give local school districts a lot more flexibility to innovate and improve outcomes for students.

**Q4: What is your view on these kinds of statistics and do you support increases in the state's financial investment in public education throughout California to that of the national average in per-pupil funding or the Top 10 of all states?**

California can't have the best schools in the nation if it continues to spend among the least in the nation on our kids. We used to be 7th in the nation in per-pupil funding and are now 41st. California needs to make an unequivocal commitment to be among the top 20% in the nation in per-pupil funding, and take the necessary actions to get there. This will be a critical focus for me as State Superintendent as we need to adequately fund our schools to carry out many of the strategies necessary for our schools to be the best. Below are five strategies I plan to pursue to help increase funding for public education in California:

1. **Launch a Marketing Campaign around our Public Schools:** To get the increases in funding for public schools that will be needed in California, we must raise the overall awareness about the situation in California's public schools and build positive energy around making California's public schools the best in the country. One way to do this is

to launch a large statewide marketing campaign around the importance of our public schools and the need to fully fund our schools. Most Californians don't know how poor California's per pupil funding is, especially relative to other states. Many Californians have forgotten how important public schools were to their lives and how important public schools are to a thriving State. We need to change this. As State Superintendent, I plan to partner with media and Internet companies to run a multi-year marketing campaign to build awareness of the funding issues facing our public schools and excitement to support our schools. Marketing a public policy issue is not a new idea. The federal government invests heavily in marketing the military and California is currently investing around tens of millions of dollars to market Covered California. We need to do the same for public schools.

2. **Greater Transparency:** Beyond raising awareness about the need of our public schools, we also have to build the public's confidence and trust if we want to get their support to dramatically increase school funding. A key part of building that trust will require more transparency in how schools and school districts spend their money. Everything from posting accessible financial information online, to reporting how new dollars are translating into results for all kids will help demonstrate that public education funds are being used wisely. As State Superintendent, I will work with policymakers and schools districts to support reporting financial information in a consistent, user-friendly format so educators and the public can see where money is being spent and how spending priorities are helping to deliver student achievement gains.
3. **Less Money for Bureaucracy and More Money to Schools/Classrooms:** In addition to increasing transparency, our state can provide greater flexibility from the California Education Code to school districts, which will often free up some funding, by reducing the need for spending on some layers of bureaucracy. The State Superintendent and CDE should also work with counties and districts to share best practices around staffing, resource allocation, and operational efficiencies. Along with more flexibility from the California Education Code, this should help push overall spending on bureaucracy down and leave money available for schools and classrooms.
4. **Re-Allocate State Budget to Education:** Our state budget must also reflect our true priorities for our children, and we need to reallocate dollars from certain areas in our budget to education, because education should be our top priority. Education makes up a larger portion of our budget, but other areas of the budget have increased at a faster rate.

This is perhaps most apparent when we consider the state's investment in Corrections, which has increased dramatically over the years; not only would some of that money be

better spent on education, but a greater investment in our schools would likely release pressure on our state's Corrections needs yielding even greater cost reductions in Corrections over time. I plan to work closely with the legislature, the Governor and others to find dollars in the current budget that can be moved to education.

Reallocating any dollars in the state budget is very difficult, given entrenched special interests. Irrespective of the difficulty, however, the state has a responsibility to our children and taxpayers to make the difficult decisions needed to make funding our public schools the state's top spending priority.

5. **Increase Overall Funding for Public Schools:** Ultimately, we will need to look closely at all revenue options and make the necessary changes to our tax structure to get to the top 20% in per-pupil funding, including allowing school districts to pass parcel taxes at the 55% voter approval threshold, like bond measures. The Governor, legislature, State Superintendent, labor, business leadership, and others need to look comprehensively at our state's revenue and tax structure to identify which taxes and policies need to be changed and over what time frame to get our schools to at least the top 20% of states in per-pupil funding in the country. Change in our public school system must accompany additional resources as money alone will not solve the deep challenges in our current public education system.

**Q5: What actions would you take to ensure faster sale of voter approved bonds at the state level to provide critically needed matching funds for local projects?**

In 2016, the voters approved \$9 billion in school bonds to help address this problem, and our priority now should be getting those dollars into the hands of districts of schools in a timely, efficient, and equitable manner. There are currently several state agencies that districts must interact with to receive the funding, as well as a host of rules. The state should consider ways to streamline this process, and ensure that it is flexible enough to maximize the use of these funds. We need to get the voter approved bonds to work as soon as possible to help create safer and more modernized learning environments for our children. Getting the bonds sold and the money into the hands of our school districts will be a top priority for me as State Superintendent.

**Q6: How do you plan to support the state and local partnership to build and modernize public schools and how do you plan to keep that partnership strong into the future?**

Our students deserve to learn in inspiring environments, and the needs of the 21st century classroom and school will often require rethinking the physical space in which learning takes

place. Too many of our students attend dilapidated schools, and ones that were built for a different era.

The current policies governing bond fund distribution to local districts can sometimes favor larger and wealthier districts by issuing funds on a first-come, first-served basis; smaller districts don't have the resources or expertise to apply for these funds as quickly, and miss out. The state should reexamine policies like these to ensure an equitable distribution of funds.

The state should also be sharing best practices about school design and construction that help districts update facilities in a way that aligns with student learning in the 21st century, and effectively utilizes taxpayer dollars.

Critically, as mentioned in Question #5 above, we need to get the current voter approved bonds sold and out the door so we can enable districts to modernize our public schools.

**Q7: What do you believe is needed to ensure safe learning environments for students and staff in all schools in the state; all sizes, all types and all locations?**

Keeping kids safe must always be the first priority of our schools. We must do whatever we can to keep our schools safe. There are many facets to this effort-- from investing in mental health service, to crisis-responses training, to having secure facilities, and much more. Additionally, schools cannot do this work in isolation. They must work in partnership with community groups and other agencies, and be supported by commonsense policies- such as those on gun control- at the state and federal levels.

Below are some steps our state and schools can take to help keep our kids safe:

- Improve mental health services available to students. This starts with improving the counselor-to-student ratio in our public schools; California currently ranks last in the nation when it comes to the number of counselors per student, and this needs to change.
- Better integrate our public schools with other health and human services available to students from nonprofits, government agencies, and other organizations.
- Ensure teachers and staff are trained in identifying possible concerns, and addressing them. Through teacher preparation programs and professional development, we need to prepare teachers and other school staff to identify issues, and then to address them before they escalate.
- Target school bond dollars to improve the security of school facilities. Voters have approved funds for school facilities, and the state should prioritize projects that enhance the safety of school campuses.
- Collaborate with local law enforcement and other agencies, to ensure productive communication that can help prevent threats to school safety, as well as effectively respond to a crisis.

Finally, the state can support schools in this area by studying effective practices across the state, to determine which strategies are having the most success, and sharing those practices.

**Q8: How will you champion the efforts of schools to access community resources and encourage family participation?**

Increasing parent engagement and developing robust partnerships with community resources were both key to much of the success we had improving outcomes and opportunities in the public schools I led in Los Angeles.

*Access to community resources:*

At the schools I led, we had to acknowledge and respond to the fact that many of our students struggled with lack of adequate access to healthcare and/or quality nutrition, and many faced emotional distress and other burdens. We worked both to establish new partnerships with the philanthropic, civic and business communities, as well as to integrate existing health and human services more directly onto our campuses.

I believe our public schools can and should be community hubs, serving as a central point for a variety of social services that improve outcomes for students. Our state and local communities often provide many layers of services, especially for those with greater need. This is crucial, as we must tend to the needs of the whole child, not merely academics. But it is also a critical component of academic success: a student with a vision problem and no glasses will suffer academically when she can't see the whiteboard; a student with untreated asthma will likely miss many days of school, and fall behind in his learning. And while there are many social programs that would help alleviate these and many other challenges- everything from free vision testing and glasses, to full-service health clinics- they can be most effective if they are woven into the fabric of the schools, where students and families spend so much of their time.

The state can play an important role in breaking down some of the barriers that exist between our public education system, and other public health and human services. The state can also help districts connect to these types of services more effectively by taking a number of actions, including: (1) providing more flexibility to schools to integrate outside service providers, (2) helping counties create online communities for service providers and districts to create partnerships, (3) sharing best practices and acting as a convener, bringing together the many private and public organizations to determine where there is alignment and opportunity for partnership.

Finally, the state needs to support efforts to extend learning time for students who need it most, by expanding after school programs, summer programs, and other opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. We must advocate for continued and expanded funding of these critical programs, including at the federal level, where recent budget proposals recommend cutting them entirely.



*Parent engagement:*

At the schools I led, many of our students came from families with multi-generational poverty, there was an 8th grade average education level among our parents, and parents often didn't speak English-- but they loved their kids. We worked hard to engage them, including launching a Parent College on Saturdays, where they could learn about how to get more involved in their kids' education.

Schools work better, and students learn more, when parents are involved. Actively engaged parents are more aware of what's happening in the classroom, are better able to support students' learning at home, and are more prepared to advocate for their children. Schools should provide parents with the information and opportunities they need to be strong advocates for their children and public education.

Beyond sharing best practices, there are a number of other actions the state superintendent can take in order to help schools better engage parents, including: 1) advocate for a school accountability system that is user-friendly for parents, 2) push for district-level academic and financial reports that are clear and readable, 3) help county offices of education build their capacity around parent engagement so that they can assist districts as they try to improve parent engagement, and 4) work closely with the PTA and other parent organizations to make sure parent voice is heard when it comes to statewide policy making on education.

**Q9: In your view, what are the most critical needs in California to close achievement gaps between various student groups?**

Most of my 16 years in public education has been spent leading public school systems serving predominantly children of color, English Learners, and children living in poverty. In one public school system I led, we significantly increased student achievement, which included raising graduation rates by 60% and having the fastest improvement of any large public school system in California. In the other public school system I led, eight of ten of our high schools have been ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as among the very best high schools in the country. So my career has been not just talking about the need to close the achievement gap, but actually making real progress on closing it. That's what informs my priorities to continue this work as State Superintendent:

- a. Increase funding for schools and ensure additional dollars meant for children with additional needs actually reaches those children.** We need to increase funding in our public schools. We are 41st in the country in per pupil spending and we need to increase our funding in order to ensure all of our low income students have the supports they need to be successful. At the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools one of the reasons we were able to double graduation rates in our schools was because we raised \$100 million over a decade, which

allowed us to provide a better education to our children. Beyond just the amount of funding, we need to ensure additional dollars are getting to our students of greatest need. The current State Superintendent has undermined the intent of the Local Control Funding Formula, by issuing guidance to school districts that tells them they can use additional dollars meant for high-needs students on across-the-board raises-- irrespective of whether the person receiving the raise actually serves those high-needs students. I will reverse that decision, and ensure that dollars intended to provide additional services and supports for children living in poverty, English Learners, and children in the foster care systems, are actually spent serving those students.

- b. Fight to finally make universal pre-k a reality.** In the public schools I led, we saw that the achievement existed on the first day of Kindergarten, and that was because our students lacked access to quality pre-k. I will fight to make this a priority in the state budget. Over the last six years our state has approved an increase of about \$800 million annually in our prisons, despite a reduction in the number of prisoners. My opponent voted for those increases, but they could have helped to pay for universal pre-k. It's time for education leadership in our state that is going to put our kids' interests ahead of that of special interest groups in Sacramento.
- c. Drive policy changes to help ensure our low income students have equal access to high quality instruction and school leadership.** In California, low income students overall have younger and less experienced teachers and principals that turn over more often than higher income schools. They also see substitutes in their classroom more often than higher income students. We must change this trend if we are going to have real equity in our public schools and make meaningful progress on closing the achievement gap. As State Superintendent, I will pursue strategies to help address this issue, including paying principals, teachers, and counselors more to work in low income, historically low performing schools. The state can pass direct policy to make this a reality and can also incentivize districts to make paying teachers and principals more to work in our most challenging schools a priority. By changing the current interpretation of the LCFF law, as described in (a) above, we will significantly increase the likelihood that districts will pay more for teacher and principals to work in low performing schools as more money will be allocated for those schools. And it isn't just about money. To both attract and retain educators in our highest need schools, we need to provide more support to our teachers and principals through high quality coaching and mentoring programs and we also need to increase counseling and related supports given the extent of the needs of

our students in historically low performing schools.

We will not close these pervasive gaps with more of the same. It is time for a leader who has made real progress on closing these gaps in the past, and has a record of challenging broken systems that aren't working for kids. You can read much more about my plans to finally and truly serve *all* kids on my website, [here](#).

**Q10: What kinds of supports can the state provide to ensure that governing boards have the resources, tools, staffing, expertise, etc. necessary to prepare all students for successful career pursuit and civic engagement throughout their adult lives?**

Our state has neglected our public schools for decades and thus there a number of challenges that face public education in California today. These challenges include, but are not limited to, a massive teacher shortage, antiquated work rules, a 2,500 page California Education Code that makes it very difficult for educators to do their jobs, a lack of investment in pre-K, and a number of systematic barriers that have resulted in a number of sub-groups of students not being effectively educated.

We have developed the starting point for a ten-year plan for California's public schools that includes a set of policies and practices that we believe need to be implemented to make California's public schools the best in the country. The foundation of this plan is a focus on five areas that will be my priority as State Superintendent of Public Instruction: a) investing in our teachers and principals, b) moving California's schools into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, c) serving all students in our public schools effectively, d) adequately funding our public schools, and e) shifting the Department of Education to being a support provider to school districts. Below is a summary some of the initiatives we will pursue in each area. [You can read much more about each area on my website.](#)

**1. Invest in our teachers and principals**

Nothing is more important to a school's success than our teachers and principals. When my wife, Mae, and I think about our son, Mason, and the public education we want for him, we think first about his teacher. We want him to have a teacher who believes deeply in him, is excited to be teaching, who is very well prepared, and is consistently supported by an awesome principal. That's what all parents want for their kids and that is what all kids deserve. We need to invest heavily in our teachers and principals, with specific focus on increasing compensation and incentives, and developing and supporting our educators. Below are a number strategies we will pursue related to our teacher and principals:

- a. **Increase Teacher Compensation:** Teaching is a wonderful, difficult and incredibly important profession and it needs to be compensated as such. Teachers should not have to be Lyft drivers on the side to own a home in or near the community in which they teach. We need to put in place a clear path over the next decade to increase overall compensation for our teachers. This will require more funding (see Question #2 for additional ideas on this topic) and real changes, but it is essential if we want to elevate the teaching profession.
- b. **Provide Free College to Teachers:** As State Superintendent, I will push immediately for California to offer no-interest loans to college students that commit to teach for five years. Once a teacher finishes his/her fifth year, the loans would be forgiven. The teacher shortage in our state makes this an urgent priority. If we are unable to fund the full program immediately, we should start with teachers that commit to teach in high poverty communities and in hard-to-staff areas, like special education. Additionally we need to invest further in programs that support career changer to come into the teaching profession.
- c. **Revamp University Training Programs:** I will work with policymakers and university leaders to improve our university teacher training programs to help teachers be as prepared as possible when they begin teaching. I believe much of the coursework that is currently offered in the credentialing year should be provided in undergraduate programs so that the credentialing year can serve as a residency, where the teacher-candidate is spending the vast majority of his/her time learning in the field from highly effective teachers.
- d. **Help all New Teachers get a Quality Mentor:** We need to revamp the current BTSA program and create incentives and supports to encourage school districts to provide all new teachers and principals with a quality mentor.
- e. **More Quality Collaboration and Professional Development:** Educators learn and grow so much when collaborating with one another, and yet our schools often do not provide enough time in the day for quality professional development and collaboration. We have to give schools the flexibility and provide them with support to build these opportunities into their regular schedules, as part of a culture of continuous learning. The state also needs to help educators and schools share best practices much more efficiently (see below for additional ideas on this topic).

## 2. **Move California's Schools into the 21st Century**

Our public school systems need to make sense in the 21st century. Most of our public schools have operated for decades in a way that was better suited for a manufacturing economy than our current society and economy. The demands of the 21st century require that our public education system be more innovative. It needs to be designed to allow our educators to be more creative and entrepreneurial and enable our children to be more actively engaged in their learning, and prepare them for the jobs of the future. Below are a number of strategies we will pursue to help move California's schools into the 21st century:

- a. **More Flexibility and Local Control:** The California Education Code is overly prescriptive, dictating far too much to educators, and acting as a barrier to innovative, diverse schools that meet the needs of all children. We need to enable our superintendents, principals, and teachers to innovate, and to create the schools and classrooms that work best for their students. I plan to work with the legislature, superintendents, labor associations and others to get more flexibility from the Education Code for our schools. This effort will likely take significant time so we will work with the State Board of Education in the short-term to get waivers from the Education Code while we work on longer term policy change.
- b. **Promote a More Robust and Relevant Academic Program:** We need to make changes to the programs of study for our students so that they align with what students need to be successful in the world, and with the best research on brain development and learning. For instance, we should encourage schools to offer foreign languages at earlier ages, expand access to computer science courses, and ensure that civics, art, and music are infused into what students are learning from the start. Beyond the content, the expectations of how people interact in the workplace are changing, and our education system needs to reflect that. Rather than sitting at desks from bell to bell, our students should be working collaboratively on projects to solve problems with real-world applications. Our classrooms should leverage technology to make our curriculum come to life and make student learning much more personalized and interactive.
- c. **Facilitate Sharing Best Practices and Innovation:** The State Superintendent and the California Department of Education need to be great at learning from practitioners in the field and identifying what is working in schools and classrooms, and sharing those practices throughout the State. When a school is doing a phenomenal job offering students educational experiences beyond the four walls of a classroom, for example, our state should know about it, support it,

learn from it, and help share those practices so that students across California are benefitting from those practices. The State and the CDE need to leverage highly effective counties and districts to do the actual work sharing best practices and capacity building in the districts that are struggling.

We must also invest more resources to enable districts and schools to innovate. I plan to create a statewide fund- the California Innovation Fund- with both public and philanthropic dollars that could be used to support schools that want to test new practices or scale proven practices to tackle big challenges. When a school wants to expand computer science to all high school students, or develop a unique collaboration with their city, county health services, or local businesses, our state should be there to provide the resources and support, and to learn from their work. These pilot programs could then be replicated, as appropriate, throughout the state. We need to unlock the creativity of our educators to help bring out schools into the 21st century and make sure they work for all kids.

### 3. **Serve All Students in our Public Schools Effectively**

For too long, California's public schools have not effectively educated all students. Groups of students, such as English Language Learners, African American males, students with special needs, foster students, and others have been significantly underserved for decades. This is unacceptable. As State Superintendent, I plan to work with our school districts and guide our state to make the policy and implementation changes needed to differentiate the supports we provide to our students of greatest need, and to ensure equity in our schools. Below are our key priorities for addressing the needs of all students in our state:

- a. **Make Pre-K Available to All:** The achievement gap begins before the first day of Kindergarten. We know how important those early developmental years are, but today pre-school and early childhood education is largely only for families that can afford it. That has to change. Universal access to pre-K will help address these gaps, while also laying critical foundations for social-emotional, and academic growth in later years. This needs to be an immediate priority for our state. If we can't fund pre-K for all right away, we need to at least fund it for our high poverty children immediately.
- b. **Ensure Effective Implementation of Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF):** See Question #3 for additional detail.

- c. **Provide Additional Differentiated Supports to our Students of Greatest Need:** In addition to properly implementing LCFF, we need to ensure that differentiated resources are also made available for our special education students, our homeless students and students classified in the lowest performing subgroups. We will work to provide these students additional financial resources and will also differentiate supports provided by the CDE to counties and districts serving our highest need students. We will leverage data to identify which schools and districts have the greatest success serving our neediest students, learn what is working from those schools/districts and share their practices with others throughout the state.
  
- d. **Help Connect Health and Human Services More Effectively to our Schools:** See Question #8 for additional detail.
  
- e. **Promote Public School Options to Underserved Families:** No child should be forced to attend a failing school because of where he or she lives. Over the past three decades, California has adopted policies to give parents more power to decide which public schools their children will attend, and more options when their neighborhood schools are failing to provide a quality education. I believe it is important to preserve and strategically expand high-quality public school options for parents, particularly in communities where the need is greatest. I believe all students benefit when the system offers diverse public school options to meet the needs of diverse students. These public options can take many forms: some are magnet programs that focus on a particular academic discipline, some are charter schools that have flexibility to innovate with new practices, and some are specialty programs, like those that focus on the arts or sciences. This kind of variety is healthy in a system serving a population as large as ours, and provides opportunities for families to find the best fit for their kids, and for schools to learn from one another.
  
- f. **Support Parent Engagement in Our Schools:** See Question #8 for additional detail.
  
- g. **Champion Protections for our Most Vulnerable Students:** It is growing increasingly important for California and the State Superintendent to champion and safeguard the rights of all kids to receive a high quality public education in a safe and nurturing environment. No one should be fearful on our school campuses, and no one should slip through the cracks. Whether you're a student with special needs, part of California's large and growing English Learner

population; no matter your immigration status or, gender identity our public schools need to be safe and welcoming environments for all students.

4. **Adequately Fund Our Schools**

See Question #4 for detail.

5. **Lead the CDE to support our schools**

The focus of the California Department of Education (CDE) should be serving and supporting county offices of education and school districts, and helping the Governor, legislature and State Board of Education pass high impact policies for our schools. Unfortunately, the CDE historically has spent too much time on compliance and regulation and not enough time on those core focus areas. I will work with the staff at the CDE and superintendents and other administrators to shift the culture and practices of the CDE to be more about serving our educators in the field. Below are a number strategies we will pursue related to leading the CDE:

- a. **Sharing Best Practices:** The CDE is uniquely situated to spot innovative practices in districts, schools and classrooms, and should be the expert in the state at identifying best practices and sharing them with educators throughout the state. Utilizing the robust data it collects (and expanding the data the CDE collects, as necessary), CDE staff can find experts in the field who are yielding unusually strong results in the face of big challenges, and help make those expert practitioners available to districts and schools that may be struggling when confronted with similar challenges.
- b. **Launch Pilot Programs and Scale-Up What Works:** Though the California Innovation Fund that we plan to create (described above), we hope to provide districts with some of the funding and support needed to launch innovative pilot programs and scale-up proven best practices.
- c. **Bring More Practitioners into the CDE:** As State Superintendent, I plan to create rotating leadership positions for 1 to 3 years to be filled by education leaders in the field. To move the CDE to really being a service and support agency, it needs to consistently be guided by what is happening in classrooms, schools and districts. Having practitioners from the field in key leadership roles will help make sure the CDE is doing the work that can be most helpful to our school district's' efforts to improve student achievement.



- d. **Conduct Annual Surveys from County Office of Education and Districts:** To help shift the culture in the CDE, I plan to launch an annual survey where Superintendents and other key educators will be asked to give feedback on how effectively the CDE is supporting their districts. This feedback will be aggregated and shared with the staff at the CDE as well as with superintendents. Surveys can be build more of a service culture in the CDE, and also allow the State Superintendent and CDE to pinpoint areas of strength and areas in need of improvement.
- e. **Helping Struggling Counties and Districts:** The CDE needs to be more deliberate at identifying counties and districts that are struggling to effectively serve their students (or a subgroup of students) and provide targeted support to those counties/districts. The CDE should not necessarily use its own personnel to provide support, but rather it should fund successful counties, districts and nonprofit organizations to build the capacity of struggling districts to better serve their students. The CDE should work closely with the CCEE on this endeavor.
- f. **Better Support Governor, State Board, and Legislature in Policymaking:** The State Superintendent, the CDE should also better support the Governor, State Board, and legislature, as they make statewide education policy. The State Superintendent needs to leverage the expertise and voices of educators at all level to support policymaking in Sacramento. Education policy is often driven by non-educators, so there can be unintended consequences that could have been foreseen and prevented if the policymaking process had included the voices of educators and experts. As State Superintendent, I will focus on elevating the voices of Superintendents and other administrators in the policy making process so that education policy crafted in Sacramento is aligned with the most important issues impacting educators in the field (and thus our students). I will also work with education leaders to develop buy-in around education priorities, so that the various decision-makers (i.e., Governor, State Board, legislature) have a shared sense of purpose and vision for California's public schools.