



EdSource

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Helping You Understand CA Education

Dear Friends of EdSource,

I'm new to EdSource. I joined the team as CEO in January of 2025 (and it's been off to the races ever since.) Though new to the world of education, I'm not new to the world of making complicated subject matter accessible and engaging to a broad audience. For many years, I ran the public media enterprise Marketplace, whose work helping people understand the economic forces that shape their lives was indispensable for audiences from Main Street to Wall Street. I was drawn to EdSource for similar reasons – education is complicated and it's a foundational building block for economic mobility. To understand is to have power. To understand is to have agency.

EdSource decodes the important things happening in education in California. Never has that been more important as seismic shifts emanating from Washington reshape the education landscape. So I'm excited to lead EdSource at this interesting moment.

As CEO, I am focused on building a bigger, stronger EdSource, so we reach more people and become that indispensable source for parents, teachers, policymakers (and more) navigating the world of education.

I'm proud to join an organization that's already done such a great job, some highlights of which are covered in the following pages.

Thanks for your ongoing support,

Deborah Clark

Deborah Clark, CEO



WHAT DID YOU READ?

SOME OF YOU TOLD US ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE STORIES

Responding to *TK staffing ratios are often unmet, teachers say; why some districts escape fines*: “Thank you for diving in deep and finding the answers!” - transitional kindergarten teacher

Responding to *Is creativity a superpower in early education?*: “Now this is one of my favorite articles you have written. Nice job capturing Daniel Mendoza. Thank you!” - arts education leader

Responding to *Community colleges loosen STEM math placement rules, calming some critics*: “Outstanding reporting. You did an excellent job summarizing this complex law and all the pros and cons. Thank you for taking on this issue and allowing more people to learn about the changes.” - community college faculty

Responding to *Homeless youth advocates call for dedicated state funding, local flexibility*: “Thank you for your good work” - county education leader

Responding to *Financial aid fraud is growing at California’s community colleges*: “I want to thank you for this article.” - college trustee



WHAT ELSE YOU MIGHT HAVE READ

GETTING STUDENTS BACK TO SCHOOL

EdSource continued its data and co-publishing collaboration with the Associated Press (AP) and Stanford professor Thomas Dee around chronic absenteeism in the wake of pandemic.

This year’s coverage focused on what schools are doing to get students to return to class, with EdSource contributing reporting and data graphics to the [AP’s August 2024 report](#). EdSource published a related story on California districts’ efforts to [combat truancy through nonpunitive methods](#) and an August Roundtable panel focused on this same topic.

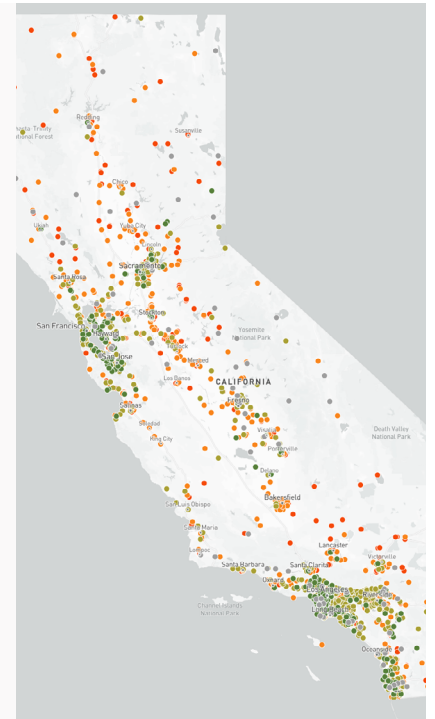
In December, both EdSource and the AP focused on particularly high chronic absenteeism among Native American youth, with EdSource [exploring data and stories from California’s indigenous communities](#). This was published alongside a same-day AP story on the [national trends](#) and a spotlight on an [Oklahoma program](#) that is showing success in getting Native students back to school.



FOLLOWING THE NUMBERS

Two special data projects illustrated how EdSource's data team and reporters work together to shed light on issues affecting students. In February, EdSource data journalists Daniel Willis and Yuxuan Xie gathered, analyzed and mapped data showing trends among which high school students are not completing prerequisites to remain eligible for four-year state university admission. Equity reporter Emma Gallegos followed up with an [article](#) sharing first-person stories, and audience members heard directly from educators and students in a [Roundtable panel discussion](#).

In June, data journalist Willis and investigative reporter Thomas Peele obtained extensive data on how and when police are called to California's K-12 public schools, creating [an accessible database](#) available to the public with accompanying explanatory graphics and [articles](#), allowing other journalists to localize this data for their own reporting.



LESSONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EdSource explored critical issues in California education by delving into model solutions in other states. A [multipart special series](#) highlighted this journalism, including stories on a [Virginia dual enrollment partnership](#), four-year [community college degree expansion](#) in Washington state, and an innovative [vocational campus](#) in Waco, Texas. As part of this series, EdSource partnered with Center for Public Integrity to report on [faculty free speech](#) in the midst of widespread campus protests.

EQUITY, ACCESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

EdSource continued to provide news and information to help teachers, principals, researchers, advocates and state and local leaders make decisions around improving access and success, particularly for students on the margins. Highlights of this coverage during 2024 included:

- Diana Lambert's series on [California's efforts to recruit and retain more Black teachers](#), which research has shown to be a factor in Black student success. EdSource produced a [podcast episode](#) with Lambert and Oakland teacher Alicia Simba.
- Karen D'Souza reported on arts education in preK-12 schools as funding approved by voters under Proposition 28 continues to roll out, with examples from around the state of how [visual arts](#), [music](#), [dance](#), [theater](#) and [media arts](#) are having positive impacts. She also followed challenges around the [use of Proposition 28 funds](#) and [teacher shortages](#). EdSource also produced a [Roundtable](#) on the proposition's implementation.
- EdSource reported on California's math reforms, including the impact of encouraging students to take data science and statistics in lieu of advanced algebra on U.C. admissions and new policies to [place more STEM majors in California Community Colleges directly](#) into calculus classes.
- EdSource's ongoing series on early elementary literacy, "California's Reading Dilemma," updated in spring 2024 with a [Roundtable](#) on how schools are implementing the "Science of Reading" in classrooms. English language learner reporter Zaidee Stavely covered [opposition](#) to this approach from English learner advocates.

PODCASTS + ROUNDTABLES



PODCASTS

Every week, EdSource's Education Beat took you deeper into one important education story. You can check out our [favorite podcast episodes of 2024 here](#).

We talked to student journalists on the front lines of on-campus protest coverage, innovative arts educators who use imaginative play and music to engage students, a parent worried about the level of lead in school drinking water and 16- and 17-year-olds who made history by voting in their first school board election.

In 2024, the number of podcast subscribers grew by 22%.

ROUNDTABLES

EdSource hosted nine Roundtables throughout 2024, focusing on topics like A-G requirements, dual admission, election options and adult education. The conversations brought together teachers and professors, students, researchers, education administrators, policymakers, advocates and parents.

Nearly 7,000 of you joined us live, and we had 470 attendees share their feedback in follow-up surveys, telling us what we did well or could improve in future Roundtables. Most of you told us that you were inspired after these events to take action on something you learned – from adapting aspects of your in-class curriculum to bringing CSU transfer opportunities back to your team working with students.

AWARDS

EdSource won a record number of awards in 2024, in part due to the success of our documentary on college in prisons at film festivals. A few notable awards include:

CALIFORNIA NEWS PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

- 1st place - In-depth Reporting
- 1st place - Best Podcast
- 1st place - Breaking News
- 1st place - Immigration Reporting
- 1st place - Homelessness Reporting

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY INSTITUTE

- 2nd place - Price Child Welfare Journalism Award for "Calling the Cops Database"

BEST OF THE WEST JOURNALISM CONTEST

- 3rd place - Immigration and Border Reporting for "Family reunited after four years separated by Trump-era immigration policy"

FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS

- SoCal Film Awards
- Helsinki Education Film Festival International
- Paris Women Cinefest
- London Women Film Festival
- Tokyo Shortfest
- Rotterdam Independent Film Festival
- LA Independent Women Film Awards
- Berlin Short Film Awards
- Sydney Indie Short Festival

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS NORCAL

- 1st place - Education Reporting (audio)
- 1st place - Longform Storytelling (audio)



OUR IMPACT

IMPROVING K-12 STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

EdSource reporting on how few low-income families were accessing CalKIDS free college funds was included in an Assembly bill analysis (AB 2508) that was signed into law in September 2024. EdSource's reporting on school finance was also referenced at a state budget oversight hearing. Both of these instances highlight the importance of EdSource's role in providing accurate information about California education policy so leaders can make informed decisions. EdSource also has heard from community leaders about how our consistent uplifting of K-12 issues can lead to improved access for students. EdSource heard from an education leader that their commentary being published led to a critical grant that funded their child care program.

72%

increase in college
journalists mentored

76

published community
commentaries

26%

increase in reader
donations

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS STEPPING UP

EdSource covers the largest higher education systems in the country, with particular attention to public universities. In 2024, we found that bringing attention to particular issues led to campuswide changes. Reporting on homelessness funding for college students in 2024 was included in a letter sent to the federal government and signed by state leaders to request continued funding in 2025. The authors of a guest commentary advocating for increased support for University of California students with disabilities reported that the piece had played a key role in UC's Office of the President allocating \$8 million in matching funds to campuses. At the end of 2024, reporting on a new law being implemented at community colleges around STEM math placement requirements shed light on the concerns of professors and students. Following a Roundtable hosted by EdSource, the chancellor's office adjusted its guidance to reflect concerns about how the implementation might hold students back.

Our Supporters

Thank you to all of our supporters. We can't do this work without you! Donors who gave \$1,000 or more include:

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