

About California's Public Education System

The Association of California School Administrators believes that any meaningful reform in our public education system must include adequate, efficient, stable and ongoing funding to help students achieve the high academic standards we set for them.

- California has some of the most rigorous academic standards in the country, yet our K-12 funding is below the national average. California ranks 43rd in the nation in K-12 funding – most of the country allocates 30 percent more on K-12 per-pupil funding than does California. California has the largest class sizes in the country.
- Every student and every school is different and it does not cost the same to help all students in all schools reach the same achievement level.
- California's diverse population and geography ensures that different regions have different costs, including the cost of living, the number of available jobs, qualified applicants and college graduates.
- California also has the largest number of limited-English-speaking students. More funds need to be spent to help all students meet the high academic standards we set for them.
- California ranks 50th in the nation in the number of principals per pupil and 48th in the number of district administrators. This makes the job of developing high-performing schools even more challenging, as research points to strong school leaders as the key to improving student learning.
- The emphasis on the principal as the instructional leader has changed expectations. Evidence shows that in states where investments in leadership development are made, principals are able to bring about dramatic improvements in student achievement.
- California principals are more likely than those in other states to say that the principalship has too many responsibilities, and more likely to say they plan to leave the job. Still, California lags behind other states in efforts to recruit school leaders, support their development, and adequately staff school sites to meet the expectations.
- According to a recent Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) survey, most Californians agree on the need for adequacy and efficiency of funding for K-12 schools: "Most residents agree that more funds (65%) and better use of existing funds (84%) would improve school quality... If a system were in place to make sure funds were spent efficiently, at least seven in 10 adults (75%) and likely voters (70%) say they would favor increasing state funding for K-12 public education" (PPIC, "Californians and Education," April 2007).