



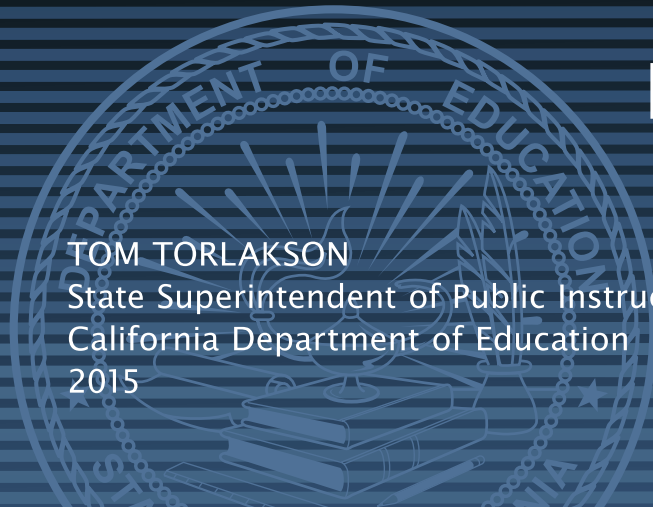
Use the relationship between multiplication and division to explain that  $\left(\frac{2}{3}\right) \div \left(\frac{3}{4}\right) = \frac{8}{9}$

# A BLUEPRINT FOR GREAT SCHOOLS

VERSION 2.0

TOM TORLAKSON  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education  
2015

Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team



# A BLUEPRINT FOR GREAT SCHOOLS

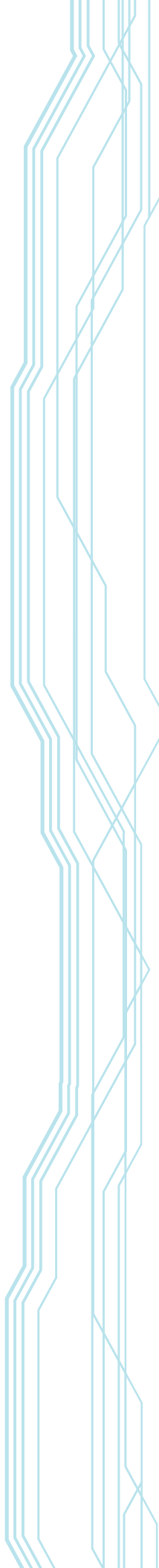
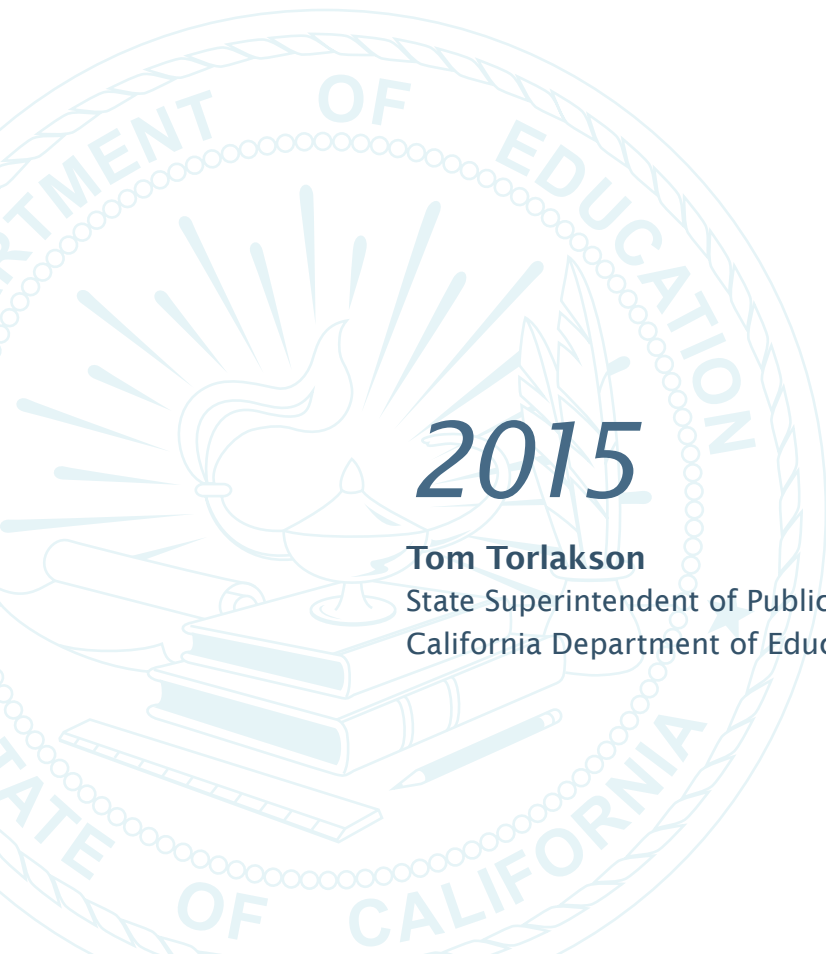
VERSION 2.0

Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team

2015

**Tom Torlakson**

State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education





## PUBLISHING INFORMATION

*A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0* was developed by the Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team. This publication was edited by Faye Ong and John McLean, working in cooperation with Bill Ainsworth, Director of the CDE Communications Division. It was designed and prepared for printing by the staff of CDE Press, with the cover designed by Karen Phillips and the inside designed by Tuyet Truong. It was published by the Department of Education, 1430 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. It was distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act and *Government Code* Section 11096.

© 2015 by the California Department of Education  
All rights reserved

### NOTICE

The guidance in *A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0* is not binding on local educational agencies or other entities. Except for the statutes, regulations, and court decisions that are referenced herein, the document is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)

# CONTENTS

- A Call to Action: Continuing Our Journey Toward a World-Class Education** ..... iv
- California Schools—A Snapshot** ..... 1
- A. Introduction: Our Journey Together on The California Way**..... 1
- B. California’s Education North Star** ..... 2
  - CDE Mission..... 3
  - Right Drivers..... 3
  - Guiding Principles ..... 3
- C. Strategic Priority Areas** ..... 5
  - 1. California Standards ..... 5
  - 2. Teaching and Leading Excellence ..... 6
  - 3. Student Success ..... 7
  - 4. Continuous Improvement and Accountability Systems ..... 9
  - 5. Systems Change and Supports for Strategic Priorities ..... 11
- D. Conclusion**..... 13
- E. Acknowledgments**..... 14

## A Call to Action:

### Continuing Our Journey Toward a World-Class Education

During my first term in office, the Great Recession caused revenues to drop so fast that our schools faced devastating cuts—30,000 teachers were laid off, class sizes swelled, and I was forced to declare a fiscal emergency for California schools. But the education community refused to become discouraged. In fact, teachers, parents, administrators, classified employees, and business, community, and civic leaders rallied.

Some education leaders lent their creativity, vision, and talents to my Transition Advisory Team, helping to issue a report in 2011 called *A Blueprint for Great Schools*, which outlined a new path forward for public education. Since then, we have worked together to transform education. We are implementing new, more rigorous California academic standards to better prepare students for twenty-first-century careers and college, we passed Proposition 30 to help temporarily make up for lost revenues, and we are developing an improved accountability system that uses multiple measures to more completely assess the progress schools are making. These changes and our gradual, sensible, and collaborative approach toward implementing them have begun to draw national attention to what we call The California Way.

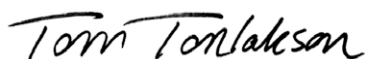
But we have many more miles to travel on The California Way before we get our schools where we want them to be. That's why I asked a special team of education leaders and experts—the Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team—to create an action plan that keeps our momentum going forward and guides our journey over the next four years.

I am fortunate and grateful that this outstanding team of educators assembled to develop *A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0* is co-chaired by three great leaders: Martha Infante, Teacher, Los Angeles Unified School District; Chris Steinhauer, Superintendent, Long Beach Unified School District; and David Rattray, Executive Vice President, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.

*A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0* outlines recommendations in five critical areas: California standards, teaching and leading excellence, student success, continuous improvement and accountability systems, and systems change and supports. Please read this plan, discuss it with your peers, and consider how to contribute to making it a reality.

I believe strongly in the African proverb that teaches, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” I want to go far because there is so much at stake. By educating and training the students of today to be the problem solvers, inventors, and pioneers of tomorrow, we are ensuring that our economy will remain robust and strong—and that California will remain the land of opportunity and abundance.

Sincerely,



**Tom Torlakson**

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

## California Schools—A Snapshot

California’s rich cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity has always been its strength, providing the talent, drive, and creativity to preserve and enhance our state’s leadership in high technology, entertainment, agriculture, and so many other fields.

California’s student population reflects our diversity, according to the latest statistics, which cover the 2014–15 school year. Fifty-three percent of California’s 6.2 million students are Latino, 25 percent are white, 8.7 percent are Asian, and 6.1 percent are African American. In addition, 58 percent, or about 3.6 million students, qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

About 23 percent of students are English learners, a total of 1.4 million students. More than 60 languages are spoken, with Spanish by far the most prevalent (84 percent), followed by Vietnamese (2.3 percent), Tagalog (1.5 percent), Cantonese (1.4 percent), and Hmong (1 percent).

California students attend 10,366 schools and 1,125 charter schools in about 1,000 school districts. In 2014, California’s high school graduation rate reached a record high of 80.8 percent, up from 74.7 in 2010.

Unfortunately, California’s school funding continues to lag. The latest annual state ranking by *Education Week* placed California 46th in the nation in school spending, but it was based on data from 2011–12. California’s expanding state budget for 2015–16 has certainly increased our ranking, though California is still likely to remain in the bottom half of the nation.

### A. Introduction: Our Journey Together on The California Way

Immediately following his election as California’s State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2011, Tom Torlakson convened a Transition Advisory Team to provide him with advice on the critical issues facing public education. The result was the groundbreaking *A Blueprint for Great Schools*.

Now in 2015, as Superintendent Torlakson starts his second term, many of the goals identified in the *Blueprint* report have become reality. With the passage of Proposition 30 in 2012, the fiscal crisis impacting public education in California eased temporarily. But Proposition 30 soon expires, making the search for stable and sufficient education funding a top priority. Financial stability is essential for our state’s districts and schools to continue the exciting implementation of the far-reaching changes now under way. These include the implementation of new California Standards,<sup>1</sup> the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and the transformation of California’s education accountability systems from the “test and judge” methods of the past to the “support and improve” approaches of the future that now have irreversible momentum.

---

1. Throughout this document, the term *California Standards* is used to refer to the full range of standards that describe our state’s learning goals for students, including the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, English Language Development Standards, Career Technical Education Standards, Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Learning Foundations, and future standards in other subject areas, including history and social science, social and emotional learning, and visual and performing arts.

The days of California’s reliance on a single standardized test for accountability purposes are over. While we had good intentions, we now recognize that we were using the wrong drivers for positive educational change. The implementation of the LCFF and the new California Standards drive an accountability system that differs from the previous one in almost every respect. Schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) throughout California now have a unique opportunity to reconfigure themselves as learning organizations committed to continuous improvement.



The result of all of this work is emerging as The California Way, which builds on a collaborative team approach to positive education change and is now attracting national attention as an alternative to test-driven reform. The California Way rests on the belief that educators want to excel, trusts them to improve when given the proper supports, and provides local schools and districts with the leeway and flexibility to deploy resources so they can improve. The California Way engages students, parents, and communities as part of a collaborative decision-making process around how to fund and implement these improvement efforts, and provides supplemental resources to ensure that California’s English learners (ELs), foster youths, and students in poverty have the learning supports they need.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the eyes of the nation have shifted appreciatively to our state as The California Way gains momentum. With Governor Jerry Brown, Superintendent Tom Torlakson, the State Board of Education (SBE), the State Legislature, and other key stakeholders fundamentally aligned on the major issues facing public education, we have an exciting and unprecedented opportunity to make meaningful advances together.

We recognize that much work remains to be done. To provide a framework for his next four years in office, Superintendent Torlakson again asked key external advisers and staff at the California Department of Education (CDE) to describe California’s Education North Star (see section B) and to develop strategic recommendations that will prioritize and organize the work ahead.<sup>3</sup> He asked that this work be undertaken rapidly so that it could provide the basis for detailed strategic planning by the CDE and its partners.

California stands at a crossroads of huge significance. The recommendations in *A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0*, when successfully implemented, will provide for great strides along The California Way for our students and the adults that serve them.

## **B. California’s Education North Star**

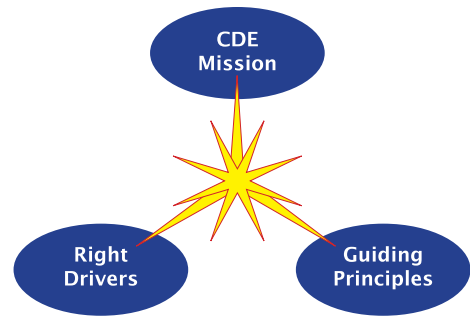
California’s emerging Education North Star orients the recommendations in *A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0*. In ancient days of celestial navigation, routes to uncharted territories were plotted by first locating the North Star, a constant in the midst of the ever-rotating star field. The Education North Star guides our path along The California Way.

---

2. Throughout the rest of this document, English learners (ELs), foster youths, and students in poverty will be referred to as “LCFF subgroups.”

3. The Blueprint 2.0 group was co-chaired by Martha Infante, Teacher, Los Angeles USD; David Rattray, Executive Vice President, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce; and Chris Steinhauser, Superintendent, Long Beach USD. See the acknowledgments section for the full list of Blueprint 2.0 team members.

As we advise Superintendent Torlakson and the CDE, we know that much will change over the next four years. We will be entering uncharted territory together. We are confident, however, that the basic coordinates of the Education North Star, composed of the **CDE’s mission, drivers, and guiding principles**, will assist with the critical choices and decisions that must be made along The California Way.



## CDE Mission

An organization exists to fulfill a mission. Four years ago, State Superintendent Torlakson, working with his Transition Advisory Team, articulated CDE’s mission:

*California will provide a world-class education for all students, from early childhood to adulthood. The Department of Education serves our state by innovating and collaborating with educators, schools, parents, and community partners. Together, as a team, we prepare students to live, work, and thrive in a **multicultural, multilingual, and highly connected world**.<sup>4</sup>*

## Right Drivers

We know that our work to successfully realize our mission must focus on building the capacity of California educators and the systems that support them. The framework must focus on what researcher Michael Fullan has described as the “right drivers:”<sup>5</sup>

- Investing in and building educator **professional capital**<sup>6</sup>
- Emphasizing **collaborative efforts** based on shared aspirations and expectations
- Supporting effective pedagogy
- Developing **systemic solutions** to create a coherent and positive education system

## Guiding Principles

As we translate these drivers to actions, a set of guiding principles has emerged that can be continually relied on as a filter or litmus test for future policies and programs. Extensive discussions involving the CDE, SBE, and academic, education, and private-sector leaders have resulted in a set of guiding principles, which we have adapted to form part of California’s Education North Star:<sup>7</sup>

- **Meaningful learning** should support acquisition of the knowledge, language, lifelong learning skills, and dispositions that students need to succeed in today’s world: the ability to apply complex knowledge to solve problems, collaborate, communicate, inquire, and learn independently, build relationships, and be resilient and resourceful.

4. The Blueprint 2.0 team recommends inserting the words *multilingual* and *multicultural* to the mission statement.

5. Fullan, M. (2011). *Choosing the Wrong Drivers for Whole System Reform*. Centre for Strategic Education. Retrieved March 31, 2015, from <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/media/13501655630.pdf>.

6. See also: Fullan, M., Rincon-Gallardo, S., and Hargreaves, A. (2015). *Professional Capital as Accountability*. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23(15).

7. Darling-Hammond, L. and Plank, D. (2015). *Supporting Continuous Improvement in California’s Education System*. Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). Retrieved March 31, 2015, from <http://bit.ly/1CQDZrE>.



- **Whole child** approaches should address the needs of the “whole student”—the multidimensional aspects of each child’s growth and development, including cognitive, linguistic, nutritional, health, social, emotional, cultural, and community influences, and the impacts of school climate and safe, bully-free learning environments.
- **Community engagement** should be the result of a local agency that allows schools and districts, with community input, to make appropriate informed decisions on behalf of their linguistically, culturally, and academically diverse students.
- **Collaboration and coherence** at the state level, across districts and LEAs, within schools, and between early childhood, preK–12, and higher education, as well with the diverse state and private agencies and departments serving children and families, should enable California’s educational system to operate more effectively to meet the state’s educational needs.
- **Creativity and flexibility** should be encouraged in order to meet the demands of the future and the full range of student needs. Multiple pathways to success, featuring relevant and engaging learning, should be available for students to attain a productive future.
- **Transparency** should ensure that information about school decisions, programs, and outcomes is readily available to support continuous improvement and accountability.
- **Multiple measures** should capture the many aspects of education valued by families, educators, and community members and inform all decisions about students, teachers, and schools. The measures should be evaluated through systems of review, judgment, and intervention that support continuous improvement.
- **Trust and responsibility** should be achieved by strengthening professional accountability, family engagement, and available data, so that educators and parents have the best knowledge to make decisions that serve each child well.
- **Reciprocity and subsidiarity**<sup>8</sup> should guide state–local relationships. Each level of the system should be held responsible for the contributions it must make to support learning for every child. The state is constitutionally responsible for providing adequate and equitable resources, while local districts must allocate resources intelligently to meet students’ needs with County Offices of Education providing essential support.
- **Equity** should seek to engage, inform, and strengthen the development and implementation of policy and practice to meet the needs of California’s diverse population, including LCFF subgroups.

---

8. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, “subsidiarity” represents the idea that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks that cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.

## C. Strategic Priority Areas

Utilizing California’s Education North Star for orientation, we advise the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to focus actions on five critical and interrelated strategic priority areas:

1. California Standards
2. Teaching and Leading Excellence
3. Student Success
4. Continuous Improvement and Accountability Systems
5. Systems Change and Supports for Strategic Priorities

Key recommendations in each of these strategic priority areas are outlined below. These will become the basis for further strategic planning by CDE and its partners. Strategic Priority Area 5, Systems Change and Supports for Strategic Priorities, outlines necessary supports for the success of the other strategic priority areas, including critical financial and communications strategies.

### 1. California Standards

To prepare California’s young people for the world of tomorrow, we must equip them today with the knowledge and skills that they will need to succeed in college, careers, and life. California has a strong tradition of using standards throughout its education system and has updated the goals for student learning in the new rigorous California Standards. California has approached adoption and implementation of these new standards in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, resulting in strong agreement across stakeholder groups that these standards represent the right step for our state’s students and educators.<sup>9</sup> There is still much work to be done, however, to fully implement the California Standards, and it is critical that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the CDE continue to lead and collaborate effectively as this work moves forward over the next four years. We call upon Superintendent Torlakson and the CDE to work with statewide partners to:

- 1.1. Continue articulating and communicating our state’s vision for our children’s education and for the continuous improvement of California Standards, done deliberately and thoughtfully.
  - 1.1.1. Explain to communities statewide why the California Standards are important.
  - 1.1.2. Support the development of standards for social and emotional learning (SEL), pre-school through high school, building on existing California and national models.
- 1.2. Build CDE’s capacity to support high-quality standards implementation through the development and support of a CDE California Standards Support Office.<sup>10</sup>
  - 1.2.1. Seek state financial support for the core operations of the California Standards Support Office.

---

9. Throughout the recommendations that follow, the word *educator* is used to refer to both teachers and administrators.

10. In response to statewide demand from the field for support with the California Standards, CDE is developing a new Standards Support Office to integrate CDE and partner resources.

- 1.2.2. Leverage existing CDE and partner resources, including institutions of higher education, to create an action team that articulates and supports California Standards statewide.
- 1.2.3. Utilize peer networks to develop a deep knowledge repository of exemplars and promising approaches in standards implementation support, including use of technology,<sup>11</sup> with a special focus on district and LEA development and improvement of Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs) and support for LCFF subgroups.
- 1.2.4. Leverage CDE and partner resources, including institutions of higher education and organizations leading biliteracy efforts, to develop a collection of promising approaches and resources for implementing standards that address the needs of English learners and support English language and biliteracy development.
- 1.3. Continue to develop and strengthen broad-based coalitions of support that build California's capacity to develop and implement high-quality standards.

## 2. Teaching and Leading Excellence

To fully implement the California Standards, many teachers will need to learn new pedagogical strategies and integrate formative assessments into their teaching to support continuous improvement of their own instructional practices. This is equally true of principals, many of whom will need intensive professional development to provide a new kind of leadership expected and required by the more ambitious goals for teaching and learning. To support these needs for educator capacity building, we call upon Superintendent Torlakson and the CDE to work with statewide partners to take the following steps:

- 2.1. Utilize *Greatness by Design* as the overarching framework guiding efforts to revitalize the education profession, including the use of a holistic framework for preparation, induction, professional learning, evaluation, and career pathways.<sup>12</sup>
- 2.2. Revitalize California's professional learning systems to build capacity for all educators at the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels.
  - 2.2.1. Take initiative to disseminate guidance and frameworks for educator evaluation, Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), and induction using *Greatness by Design* as the frame.
  - 2.2.2. Support dedicated time for professional learning and educator collaboration throughout the year.
  - 2.2.3. Support the availability of quality substitutes or creative alternatives to allow teachers to participate in professional learning during the school year.
  - 2.2.4. Strengthen partnerships with professional organizations to coordinate opportunities for professional learning about the California Standards.
  - 2.2.5. Improve pre-service professional learning and develop in-service professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators.

---

11. This should include the development of state and local capacity to utilize high-quality digital materials in support of the California Standards.

12. California Department of Education, Educator Excellence Task Force (2012). *Greatness by Design: Supporting Outstanding Teaching to Sustain a Golden State*. Retrieved April 28, 2015, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/greatnessfinal.pdf>.

- 2.2.6. Increase resource development and accessible information to the field on evidence-based practices and current research on academic and behavioral interventions and the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- 2.3. Take immediate steps, in collaboration with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), to address the impending teacher and school principal shortage.
  - 2.3.1. Review relevant research to identify the root causes of the teacher shortage, including issues of diversity and access to higher education and to certification and credentialing programs.
  - 2.3.2. Address the pipeline into the teaching profession, specifically the shortage of bilingual and special education teachers.
  - 2.3.3. Work with the CTC to convene regular meetings of the deans of education across institution of higher education segments (University of California [UC], California State University [CSU], and private colleges) and other relevant stakeholders to coordinate and improve recruitment and preparation programs.
  - 2.3.4. Encourage and support diverse undergraduate routes to a teaching credential, preschool through secondary.
- 2.4. Continue efforts to develop, promote, and disseminate effective forms of labor-management collaboration.<sup>13</sup>
- 2.5. Continue to recognize and support the essential role that counselors, nurses, librarians, food service workers, maintenance and facilities specialists, and other school employees play in providing a world-class education for all California students.
  - 2.5.1. Support the availability of professional learning opportunities for classified staff to ensure that all members of school communities are prepared to support students.
  - 2.5.2. Identify specific actionable steps to increase the number of school counselors and nurses so that all students have access to these critical health and well-being supports.

### 3. Student Success

We have long known that student background, language status, socioeconomic status, and disability can strongly influence academic achievement. Despite a long history of understanding the relationship between these factors and educational success, education leaders and stakeholders have often ignored the very real needs of children for secure housing, regular health care, supportive out-of-school environments, and educational assistance.

During the past four years, State Superintendent Torlakson, the CDE, and collaborative partners have made impressive strides toward developing or rebuilding plans and systems for early learning, expanded learning, and whole child community schools to ensure that California's students receive the support they need to become successful. Most recently, California's Statewide Task Force on Special Education presented an important vision and a bold plan for a unified system of education serving all children effectively.<sup>14</sup>

---

13. See <http://cdefoundation.org/lmi/>.

14. Statewide Task Force on Special Education (2015). *One System: Reforming Education to Serve All Students*. Retrieved on April 28, 2015, from <http://www.smcoe.org/about-smcoe/statewide-special-education-task-force/>.

Successful approaches to student learning must look at the whole child from cradle to career and must include an aligned system of supports and services for students both inside and outside the classroom as well as robust family and community engagement. We call upon Superintendent Torlakson and the CDE to:

- 3.1. Set the foundation for one coherent system of education in which students receive the supports they need to be successful in the most inclusive environment.
- 3.2. Ensure the incorporation and alignment across programs of effective student, family, and community engagement strategies in all relevant areas of CDE activity.
- 3.3. Support use of holistic and engaging curricula and pedagogy that include arts education, civics education, environmental literacy, Linked Learning, physical education, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.
- 3.4. Implement high-priority elements of the CDE Whole Child Integrated Action Team Strategic Plan.<sup>15</sup>
- 3.5. Promote the use of community schools as a strategy to address the needs of the whole child, including the use of community schools as a framework for addressing LCAP priorities.
- 3.6. Support the adoption of key policies promulgated by the California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan (CCELP),<sup>16</sup> including statewide use of a developmentally appropriate school readiness assessment tool. Implement the CDE Early Education and Support Division Strategic Plan.<sup>17</sup>
- 3.7. Develop innovative partnerships to communicate to families the importance of early brain development.<sup>18</sup>
- 3.8. Continue to build statewide capacity for expanded learning through the ongoing implementation of the CDE After School Division Strategic Plan.<sup>19</sup>
- 3.9. Support the implementation of the State Systemic Improvement Plan developed by the CDE Special Education Division consistent with the Statewide Task Force on Special Education's recommendations for one coherent system of education serving all students.<sup>20</sup>
- 3.10. Meet the needs of English learners by establishing an English learning master plan and enacting the English Language Development Standards Implementation Plan.<sup>21</sup>
- 3.11. Implement the key priorities recommendations from the Blueprint for California Education Technology report and, in particular, statewide efforts to reduce the impact of the digital divide on California's students and families.<sup>22</sup>

15. See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/bp/bp2res.asp>.

16. Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care (2013). *California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan*. Retrieved on April 28, 2015, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/compearlylearningplan2013.pdf>.

17. See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/bp/bp2res.asp>.

18. See, for example, the results from the First 5 California 2015 summit (<http://bit.ly/1DHeV3r>).

19. California Department of Education After School Division (2014). *A Vision for Expanded Learning in California, Strategic Plan: 2014–2016*. Retrieved on April 28, 2015, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/cp/documents/asdstrategicplan.pdf>.

20. Statewide Task Force on Special Education (2015).

21. California Department of Education (2013). *California English Language Development Standards Implementation Plan*. Retrieved on May 20, 2015, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/nov2013impplanfinal.pdf>

22. California Department of Education, Education Technology Initiative (2014). *Empowering Learning: A Blueprint for California Education Technology 2014–2017*. Retrieved on April 28, 2015, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/yr14bp0418.pdf>.

- 3.12. Develop and implement strategies to improve the coherence and effectiveness of the state’s career technical education programs and policies.
- 3.13. Develop infrastructure at the CDE to improve cross-agency collaboration in support of student health. Increase capacity and support for school-based health centers and programs, and year-round access to appealing and nutritious meals for students to enjoy in healthy learning environments.
- 3.14. In order to better serve and support districts and LEAs, work toward alignment of California’s system of learning supports across divisions within the CDE and reconfigure divisions for optimal collaboration and efficiencies. Continue work to build the CDE’s capacity for service and support.
- 3.15. Conduct regular meetings between Superintendent Torlakson and leaders of other relevant state departments and agencies to break down “silos” and encourage the development of integrated state and local systems serving the whole child from cradle to career.

#### **4. Continuous Improvement and Accountability Systems**

The key to improving the performance of California’s schools and districts is based on a simple premise: *improvement depends on capacity*. This encompasses improving both the *individual capacity* of teachers and school leaders—their knowledge, skills, and material supports—and the *institutional capacity* of schools, districts, and state agencies to support the delivery of improved education through strong staffing, instructional guidance, well-directed resources, helpful data and information, and productive incentives.

California must build individual and institutional capacity while creating a state accountability system that (1) is based on promoting continuous improvement of a broad array of student outcomes as well as continuous organizational learning; (2) places importance on improving the performance of students who are not meeting their full potential; (3) better identifies the needs and capacity of underperforming schools and districts and provides the appropriate resources and supports to facilitate improvement; and (4) properly balances accountability both vertically within the state and districts (students, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards), and horizontally within the community (parents, schools, businesses, community-based organizations, county services, and the like). To accomplish this, Superintendent Torlakson and the CDE should take the following steps:

- 4.1. Continue to accelerate California’s accountability shift to a system of continuous improvement that actively supports the forward progress of every student.
  - 4.1.1. Advocate thoughtful reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
  - 4.1.2. Determine the total financing and resources required to fully support a system of continuous improvement statewide.
  - 4.1.3. Communicate the shift in California’s student assessment system from “test and judge” to “assess to improve” and the fundamental movement from sole reliance on standardized testing to a multiple-measures approach.

- 4.2. Provide support to districts and LEAs for the development and implementation of their LCAPs.
  - 4.2.1. Explore with district and LEA leaders how the CDE can more efficiently and effectively communicate and disseminate important LCFF and LCAP resources to the field to support the development of their LCAPs.
  - 4.2.2. Further clarify the role of the CDE and county superintendents in providing consistent LCAP support for districts and LEAs.
  - 4.2.3. Support the development and State Board of Education adoption of high-quality LCFF evaluation rubrics, which help districts and LEAs advance in the eight state priority areas and demonstrate high-quality improved and increased services for LCFF subgroups.<sup>23</sup>
  - 4.2.4. Develop a user- and viewer-friendly electronic LCAP form based on the SBE template.
- 4.3. Continue to develop robust data systems to guide diagnosis of local strengths and weaknesses and to identify strategies and practices to support improved performance.
  - 4.3.1. Continue development of the CDE's capacity to convene statewide partners and facilitate the exchange of resources and knowledge.
  - 4.3.2. Continue enhancements of interim and summative assessment systems that support continuous learning.
  - 4.3.3. Build state capacity for the development of a multiple-measures data system, including a "dashboard" that is aligned with the LCFF evaluation rubrics and state priorities. Explore appropriate individualized means for documenting student learning and progress in prekindergarten settings.
  - 4.3.4. Evaluate the success of accessibility supports and implementation of designated accommodations for specific student populations within the state's formal assessment system.
  - 4.3.5. Redesign the California School Recognition Program to align with changes to the new accountability framework and systems.
  - 4.3.6. Identify residual existing regulations and legislation that may impede the progress of new systems of continuous improvement.
  - 4.3.7. Recommend system elements to support the implementation of a new accountability system grounded in system coherence and continuous improvement.
- 4.4. Develop strong coalitions of support for accountability systems changes, using models developed for the California Labor Management Initiative,<sup>24</sup> California Common Core Communications Campaign,<sup>25</sup> and the recently launched K-12 Water Cooler Network.<sup>26</sup>

---

23. For more information on California's LCAP priority areas, please visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/statepriorityresources.asp>.

24. See <http://cdefoundation.org/lmi/>.

25. See <http://cdefoundation.org/what-we-do/common-core/>.

26. See <http://www.advancementprojectca.org/?q=node/622>.

## 5. Systems Change and Supports for Strategic Priorities

While there are many systems supporting California’s students and schools, we believe that three areas demand priority attention in the next four years:

- (1) Building long-term solutions to the state’s ability to provide sufficient financial resources to districts and LEAs
- (2) Establishing and supporting the California Collaborative on Educational Excellence, the agency that will create supports for learning, knowledge sharing, and evaluation as well for direct intervention and improvement in the work of schools and districts that are struggling to provide an adequate education
- (3) Creating a robust communications and information exchange system to serve educators and staff at all levels of our state

As the CDE continues its internal evolution from a primary emphasis on compliance to one of service and support for districts, LEAs, and educators, State Superintendent Torlakson and his CDE team will need to continue work on its own internal institutional strengthening, alignment, and capacity building to effectively support the transformative systemic changes represented by The California Way.

### Comprehensive Funding and Resources

Over the past four years, two major initiatives, Proposition 30 and the LCFF, hugely impacted funding and budgetary decision making. Proposition 30 served to relieve the significant financial pressures facing districts, and the LCFF transformed the focus of financial decision making from Sacramento to local school districts.<sup>27</sup> While great progress has been made, especially in the direction of a funding system that is simpler, more transparent, more rational, and more directly responsive to the needs of students, significant attention must now be given to the **revenue** side of state education funding to ensure that the current momentum can be maintained and that California’s schools do not again fall prey to the vicissitudes of economic cycles. To achieve this goal, Superintendent Torlakson should work with the legislature, stakeholders, and the people of California to take the following steps:

- 5.1. Continue building the base for the adequate long-term resourcing of school districts and LEAs.
  - 5.1.1. Convene and lead a coalition that obtains a comprehensive state education finance measure and conduct this work in combination with efforts to create innovative mechanisms for state and local education financing, including lowering the threshold for passage of local finance measures.
  - 5.1.2. Support continued state assistance to school districts for school facilities.
  - 5.1.3. Create and implement innovative public-private partnership strategies to build support for public education.
  - 5.1.4. Participate in and support efforts to restructure special education funding and advocate full federal funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act at 40 percent.

---

27. See <http://trackprop30.ca.gov/>.



- 5.2. Identify and organize potential funding streams for whole child learning and provide guidance on how LEAs might pursue existing funding streams for learning supports.
  - 5.2.1. Clearly articulate how federal education funding can be blended and leveraged to support LCAP priorities.
- 5.3. Partner with the Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation to develop opportunities for public-private partnerships and investments to strengthen California Standards research and development, support, and communications.
- 5.4. Work with the State Legislature to create and secure an educator-funding package that will strengthen induction, mentorship, and evaluation and build capacity for professional learning at the local level.
- 5.5. Support the adequacy of financial and other resources, especially educator and staff time for professional learning and for ongoing district and LEA standards implementation.

### **California Collaborative for Educational Excellence**

The CDE has a unique opportunity to support and collaborate with the newly established California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) during the formative years to help build capacity and provide support for school districts.<sup>28</sup> We recommend that Superintendent Torlakson and the CDE take the following actions:

- 5.6. Support and grow the CCEE by:
  - 5.6.1. Working with stakeholders to clarify the CCEE's support function. What does constructive intervention look like, and who needs to be involved? What should effective instruction and learning supports for targeted subgroups look like?
  - 5.6.2. Developing and implementing pilot projects to launch the work and development of the CCEE with an initial focus on promising approaches in LCAP development, implementation, and strategies to improve or increase services for LCFF subgroups.
  - 5.6.3. Developing the CDE's capacity to support the CCEE as a knowledge repository, improvement support provider, and convener.

### **Communications, Data Systems, Online Resource Exchange, and Knowledge Dissemination**

Communicating the work outlined by *A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0* is critical to its success. Building public support to maintain adequate resources for schools requires the CDE and Superintendent Torlakson to continue and intensify efforts to communicate success stories from our schools to the public, the media, and stakeholders through a variety of channels, including traditional, online, and social media. Maintaining and building public support for the new funding system, the new standards, and the new accountability system will require significant effort by the CDE and its partners.

The CDE must play a leading role in developing communications and information sharing systems that are critical for our educators, school and district staff, and constituencies state-

---

28. The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence was established in 2013 to provide advice and assistance to LEAs in achieving the goals set forth in the Local Control and Accountability Plans. See <http://ccee-ca.org/>.

wide. Fortunately, the CDE and its partners have successfully created models for utilizing coalition-based/trusted messenger communications strategies.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, many platforms and tools for sharing digital resources focused on education already exist, including the CDE’s My Digital Chalkboard; similar Web sites operated by other state departments of education; and others operated by nonprofit organizations, foundations, and the private sector.<sup>30</sup> The CDE now has the opportunity to leverage these tools and build on its partnerships with statewide education organizations to provide California educators, staff, administrators, parents, and community members with a range of resources that are distributed and approved by a team of trusted messengers. The growth in CDE communications capacity over the past four years must continue through traditional, online, and social media communications mechanisms. In order to support all strategic priorities outlined by *Blueprint 2.0*, Superintendent Torlakson and the CDE should take the following steps:

- 5.7. Support the full range of California Standards work and ensure that these efforts reach California’s diverse communities.
  - 5.7.1. Communicate statewide the timeline for the ongoing development and improvement of California Standards.<sup>31</sup>
- 5.8. Elevate public opinion about the education profession (including the early childhood education and bilingual workforce) as a respected and desirable career pathway.
- 5.9. Provide districts, LEAs, and key stakeholders the tools to communicate effectively regarding new accountability systems.
- 5.10. Provide high-quality information and communications support around LCFF and LCAP issues and promising approaches directly and through the development and support of distributed and peer networks.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The California Way, as described by *A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0*, will not always be an easy one. But we are inspired by the progress that we have made over the last four years: with the California Standards, a groundbreaking new funding system for schools (the Local Control Funding Formula), the foundation for a new accountability system that focuses on support for continuous improvement, and much more.

We have shown that Californians working together can make great strides for students!

We also know that we have a long way to go. *A Blueprint for Great Schools: Version 2.0* lays out the next steps that must be taken.

We are inspired by the commitment of educators, parents, and students in schools throughout the state, and we are encouraged by the outpouring of energy, good will, and excellent ideas from stakeholders within and outside the education system. In his “Call to Action,” Superintendent Torlakson cited the wonderful African proverb: “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” Let’s go far and as rapidly as possible as we travel together on The California Way. The rewards for our children and their future will certainly be great.

29. See, for example, Common Core State Standards Communications Campaign (<http://cdefoundation.org/what-we-do/common-core/>) and California Labor Management Initiative (<http://cdefoundation.org/lmi/>).

30. See <https://www.mydigitalchalkboard.org/>.

31. These should build on the model of the current “CCSS Communications Campaign” (see <http://cdefoundation.org/what-we-do/common-core/>).

## **E. Acknowledgments**

We are deeply indebted to the following Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team members and supporters who generously gave of their time, talent, and resources to make this work possible.

### **Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team Co-Chairs**

Martha Infante, Los Angeles Academy Middle School, California Council for the Social Studies  
David Rattray, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, UNITE-LA  
Chris Steinhauser, Long Beach Unified School District

### **Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team Special Advisers**

Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford University, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
Michael Fullan, University of Toronto

### **Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team Members**

Peter Birdsall, California County Superintendent Educational Services Association  
Karen Cadiero-Kaplan, San Diego State University  
George Halvorson, First 5 California  
Brice Harris, California Community Colleges  
Eric Heins, California Teachers Association  
Jesús Holguín, California School Boards Association  
Carol Liu, California Senate District 25  
Shelly Masur, Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation  
Rebecca Mieliwocki, Luther Burbank Middle School, 2012 California Teacher of the Year  
Molly Munger, Advancement Project  
Barbara Nemko, Napa County Office of Education  
Hon. Patrick O'Donnell, California Assembly District 70  
Joshua Pechthalt, California Federation of Teachers  
Jennifer Peck, Partnership for Children and Youth  
Christy Pichel, Consultant, former president of the Stuart Foundation  
Paul Richman, California State Parent Teachers Association  
Mary Sandy, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
Wes Smith, Association of California School Administrators  
Jai Sookprasert, California School Employees Association  
Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, Californians Together  
Hon. Tony Thurmond, California Assembly District 15  
Dean Vogel, California Teachers Association  
Beverly Young, California State University  
Michelle Zumot, California Department of Education

**Special thanks to:** The David and Lucile Packard Foundation for financial support; the Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation for logistical support; the California Department of Education and State Board of Education staff for advice and input; CDE Press for graphic design and printing; and the Glen Price Group for facilitation, writing, research, and production support.



California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814