

# EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Education & Workforce Development Council of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce advocates for improving alignment of the cradle-to-career educational pipeline - from early childhood to K-12, to post-secondary education and into the workforce. The Council is committed to ensuring the development of a 21st century workforce capable of competing in a global economy with an emphasis on expanding opportunities for at-risk and underserved populations. Ensuring California's students have a strong foundation will result in a compounding impact on their educational success and will maximize the impact of downstream investments in later stages of the cradle-to-career continuum.

## Invest in high quality early child care and education

Studies show investments in early education set the foundation for learning, ensure school readiness and narrow the persistent achievement gap for the region's most vulnerable children. All children should have high quality preschool and child care experiences, and all parents should be able to access affordable programs while confident



that their children are experiencing developmentally appropriate learning experiences from caring teachers and caregivers. The Chamber supports increased investments in reimbursement rates that will allow greater access to affordable, high quality early education and efforts to provide financial assistance to increase Early Care and Education (ECE) teacher knowledge, competencies and qualifications with a goal of both improving the quality of the workforce and maintaining and further promoting the diversity of ECE professionals.

## Improve student outcomes and investments for K-12 students

The Chamber supports "The California Way" policies including 21st Century assessments and accountability system based on decentralization, self-accountability and transparency. We support investments that will strengthen funding for our schools, such as the Local Control Funding Formula to provide local districts with flexibility and resources for programs addressing out-of-school time for our most vulnerable students. We advocate for a new vision of accountability that is inclusive of continuous professional development

and support for educators. These efforts will address our teacher shortage and ensure equity, transparency and flexibility to build local engagement and capacity.

## Safeguard students and mixed status families

In L.A. County, there are an estimated 520,146 children who live in mixed status families. Highly publicized restrictions toward undocumented individuals are having the unanticipated consequence of families not sending their children to child care centers and school, or accessing financial aid programs available for college students. The L.A. business community is a strong supporter of state efforts that maintain safeguards to provide families with a higher level of protections in or near educational institutions and government buildings where public services are provided.

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## Increase postsecondary access and attainment

In today's economy, a postsecondary credential is the key to both expanding individuals' employability and earnings potential and to improving socioeconomic mobility within our community. The Chamber supports efforts to expand college access and affordability, from increasing need-based financial aid, to providing more support for non-tuition costs for students with financial need. The Chamber also supports creating multiple on-ramps back to college for adults with "some college, no degree" and for workers in need of "upskilling." We champion innovations within our higher education systems that increase student completion, shorten time to graduation and improve system efficiencies and alignment. This includes supporting performance-based funding to reward degree completion and serving under-represented and low-income students, student success initiatives, creating an online community college, promoting regional alignment of transfer pathways and revamping developmental education.

## Implement Smart Justice reforms

The Chamber supports policies that mitigate barriers for the reentry population and enhance access to high-quality education and workforce opportunities for justice-involved youth and adults. We advocate for policies that uphold evidence-based diversion and intervention models that aim to disrupt the systemic causes of mass incarceration and dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.

## Close Los Angeles' skills gap

It is vital that we continue to invest in workforce development efforts that are tied to labor market and employer demand, including paid work experiences and internships for young adults. This includes adequate implementation and investments in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Strong Workforce Program efforts and improved regional coordination of workforce development systems and services to address the needs of vulnerable populations. The Chamber is a strong supporter of reviving the teaching profession through investments to recruit new teachers and retain existing educators through tuition assistance, loan forgiveness, and other incentives like housing programs and tax credits.

## Lead innovative work-life harmony

The Chamber encourages employers to foster a robust work life harmony environment. Well-designed work life policies increase job satisfaction, create loyal employees and allow employers to compete in today's workforce. The Chamber supports employer policies that encompass flexible work schedules, child care support and allow for community engagement.