

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

A CALIFORNIA 100 ISSUE ROADMAP FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION



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The modern American Dream rests on the idea that education is the doorway to equal opportunity and social mobility. However, many have come to question this idea as researchers have found glaring inequities in academic achievement, college access and attainment, and life-long outcomes based on students' socioeconomic backgrounds, race and ethnicity, and geographic location. State and federal lawmakers have acknowledged these gaps and have attempted to 'level the playing field' by injecting new and targeted resources and designing intervention policies to help students reach broader economic and democratic goals.

While many recent policy efforts have attempted to address student equity, they have also attempted to meet the demands of a changing economy. Advanced technological changes are beginning to take root across a range of industries in the U.S. that will require students to acquire 21st century skills for a transforming labor market. As the birthplace and incubator of innovations in automation and artificial intelligence, California must meet the challenges of this pivotal and historic moment to create a skilled workforce capable of developing and implementing this new infrastructure.

FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION

What will these changes mean for current and future generations of Californians, and how can we make sure that California's future in education remains innovative, resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and equitable?

In May 2022, the California 100 Initiative released a policy and future scenarios report on education, developed by the UC Berkeley Institute for Young Americans and the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education. The teams conducted extensive primary and secondary research, and spoke with a wide array of experts in the public and private sectors to examine possible scenarios and policy options for future-focused action.

"It is no secret that California's public education system has been stress-tested by the pandemic, on top of broader changes in the economy that demand 21st Century learning and skills," said **Erin Heys with the Berkeley Institute for Young Americans** and one of the authors of the California 100 Future of Education Policy and Scenario Report. "As the state sits at the crossroads of change, we encourage Californians to think carefully about what reforms may be necessary to sustain the state's public education system in the years ahead. What might the future look like if traditional public education fades into the past—does this risk compromising student equity, education quality, and the democratic purposes of education—and is that a risk worth taking?"



FUTURE SCENARIOS

Other key takeaways from the California 100 report include a consideration of policy options that improve education under **four future scenarios** that center around two critical dimensions: whether education is considered to be a public good that largely benefits society or a private good that largely benefits individuals, and whether models of education are centralized, with rules made by state agencies and professional associations, or decentralized, with rules that empower corporations, individual students, or families.

In a context where California's education model is centralized, the scenarios range from a stronger public model of education with a focus on equity, technology, and cradle-to-career planning, to public-private partnerships that include charter schools, private universities, and other private education service providers. In a context where the state's education model is decentralized, the scenarios range from an unbundled publicly-financed model that focuses on skills and credentials rather than degrees, to a largely private model of certificates and skills that cater primarily to industry.

Whatever the scenario, the research commissioned by California 100 indicates that doing nothing should not be our default option. In order for California to do better under these various scenarios, the state will need to consider, research, and enact policies that advance **innovation** (such as responsible use of technology to customize educational experiences), **resilience** (such as the ability for students to recover from hardship and trauma), **inclusion** (giving students and parents greater understanding of, and input into, education decisions), **sustainability** (including addressing environmental, economic, and human sustainability goals), and **equity** (with well-resourced policies that eliminate disparities by race, income, gender, and other markers of social disadvantage).



Artist rendering of future scenarios in education
Source: California 100



THE CALIFORNIA 100 ROADMAP

The California 100 report on policies and future scenarios is the first step in a multi-stage process that is designed to inspire and engage Californians—from a variety of sectors and all walks of life—to build a stronger future for current and future generations. In the summer of 2022, our expert and intergenerational Commission will conduct a series of listening sessions throughout the state, to solicit feedback on the ideas generated by our research and to generate additional big and bold ideas for consideration by public and private agencies, as well as by everyday Californians. We will also be generating insights from our policy innovation projects throughout the state that cover a variety of topics, and our deep engagement on questions of science and technology as they relate to a variety of issues, including education.

In early 2023, we will take these various policy ideas and scenarios, and engage in a process of deliberative democracy featuring a representative cross-section of California residents. The goal of this deliberative exercise is to understand the conditions under which Californians from various walks of life can come to agreement on the long-term challenges facing the state and, importantly, the kind of bold and visionary solutions we need to put the state on a stronger trajectory for the next century.

California 100 will also be engaging intentionally with young Californians, who have the most to gain or lose in the coming century. Our team members will engage young people throughout the state, including in high school and college settings, and will organize a statewide youth summit that will produce a manifesto for the future of California.

Finally, in Winter and Spring 2023, our intergenerational Commission will draft a vision and strategy document for the future of California, based on briefing materials that build on insights from the various streams of work. California 100 will then launch a culminating event in early summer 2023 that serves as the formal launch of the vision and strategy document and, importantly, also brings together leaders and partners from our various streams of work and prior engagement.

Our culminating event in the summer of 2023 will:

1. Showcase the pressing need for California to prioritize long-term futures,
2. Build an ambitious yet achievable vision and strategy that are grounded in rigorous research and community engagement, and
3. Inspire others to do the same, providing tools that a variety of partners (including policymakers, government agency officials, business leaders, activists, researchers, and next-gen leaders from various sectors) can use to build their own aspirational visions and strategies for California's long-term success.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA 100

The California 100 Initiative envisions a future that is innovative, sustainable, and equitable for all. Our mission is to strengthen California's ability to collectively solve problems and shape our long-term future over the next 100 years. California 100 is organized around 15 policy domains and driven by interrelated stages of work: research, policy innovation and engagement with Californians. California 100's work is guided by an expert and intergenerational Commission. Through various projects and activities, California 100 seeks to move California towards an aspirational vision—changing policies and practices, attitudes and mind-sets, to inspire a more vibrant future.

California 100 staff members compiled this roadmap document, drawing on research in two publications—a Policies and Future Scenarios Report and a Facts-Origins-Trends Report—by authors from the UC Berkeley Institute for Young Americans and the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education. The two education-related publications are part of California 100's larger research stream of work, built in partnership with 20 research institutions across the state.

California 100 sponsored grants for data-driven and future-oriented research focused on understanding today and planning for tomorrow. This research, anchored in California 100's 15 core policy domains, forms the foundation for the initiative's subsequent work by considering how California has gotten to where it is and by exploring scenarios and policy alternatives for what California can become over the next 100 years.

The California 100 Initiative is incubated through the University of California and Stanford.

CALIFORNIA 100 RESEARCH TEAM

Henry E. Brady, PhD., Director of Research
Lindsay Maple, M.P.P., Deputy Director of Research
Ava Calanog, M.P.P., Assistant Director of Research

THE CALIFORNIA 100 EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Allison Berke, Ph.D., Director of Advanced Technology
Henry E. Brady, Ph.D., Director of Research
Amy Lerman, Ph.D., Director of Innovation
Jesse Melgar, M.P.P., Director of Engagement
Karthick Ramakrishnan, Ph.D., Executive Director

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To learn more about the future of education in California, visit the California 100 website at California100.org, where you will find our detailed reports on the topic, and more information about our research partners.

