

# Annual California Educational Opportunity Report



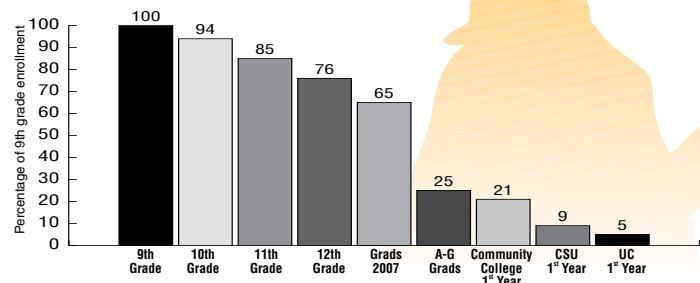
## Listening to Public School Parents

The latest edition of the *California Educational Opportunity Report* draws on the most recent state data along with public perceptions gathered from a series of focus groups of diverse California parents. The report examines the relationship among educational goals, achievement, and conditions in California’s public schools. It compares California’s public schools to schools across the nation, and considers differences among schools in the state. The report also explores the gap between achievement in California schools and the aspirations of California’s students and parents as well as the future demands of California’s economy

### General Findings:

- \* Almost half of the focus group participants noted that California’s high schools lack critical resources and programs, and many also pointed out that these problems are unevenly distributed across the state.
- \* Several parents worried that the weakening economy would lead to further cuts to educational programs
- \* **California’s high school graduation and college-going rates do not match the high aspirations of California’s students and parents**

**California**  
**Class of 2007: Pathway to College**



The number of students in the Class of 2007 shrank by more than one third between 9<sup>th</sup> grade and high school graduation. Fewer students yet graduated having successfully completed the A-G course sequence required for admission to California’s four-year public universities. California ranks 48<sup>th</sup> of all states in the percentage of its senior class that enrolls in a four-year college the following year. Yet, almost 9 in 10 California 10<sup>th</sup> students from every racial/ethnic group expect to graduate from high school, and a strong majority plan to attain a bachelor’s degree or higher. Almost all California parents want their children to attain a bachelor’s degree or higher. The problem is not one of low expectations of what students can accomplish but of the inability of our educational system to meet widely held high expectations of what it should deliver.

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✱ **Inadequate and Unequal Learning Conditions and Opportunities**

California students experience fewer educational opportunities than students across the nation. Their schools are often more often overcrowded, and they receive less personal attention from teachers and counselors than their peers in most other states. Secondary schools enrolling the highest proportion of underrepresented African American, Latino, and American Indian students are the most likely to face these opportunity problems.

*Limited and Unequal Access to Qualified Secondary Teachers*

Roughly 18% of intensely segregated middle schools serving 90-100% underrepresented students experience severe shortages of qualified teachers compared to less than 2% of majority white and Asian middle schools. Similarly, intensely segregated high schools are almost 3 times (71.4% to 25.4%) as likely as majority white and Asian high schools to experience severe shortages of math teachers qualified to teach mathematics.

*Limited and Unequal Access to Rigorous Math and Science Curriculum*

The proportion of students enrolling in higher level math and science classes remains quite low in most California schools. In 81% of California high schools, less than half of 11th and 12th graders enroll in advanced math classes. Students in schools serving majority African American, Latino, and American Indian students are more likely than those in majority white and Asian schools to experience this problem.

✱ **One-Third of California Middle Schools Face Severe Federal Sanctions**

Schools that fail to reach their annual proficiency goals in math and English are placed in Program Improvement (PI) status by Federal law. Schools that remain in PI status for five years (PI “5”) face dire consequences including reopening the school as a charter, replacing all or most of the school staff, and more. In 2008-2009, a staggering 27% of California middle schools are designated as PI “5” status. 70% of intensely segregated middle schools are designated PI “5.”

✱ **California’s Education System was Under-resourced Even Before Budget Cuts**

Even before the recent budget cuts, California spent \$2,000 less per student than the national average. The current economic crisis may create an environment in which Californians are open to pursuing fundamental changes in systems for school funding. As the state grapples with its immediate crises, it cannot neglect planning for an education system that does not just stumble from one crisis to the next. Instead, the state must begin a trajectory that both mitigates short-term harm and looks ahead to long-term solutions.



For more information and to obtain copies of the full state report, and additional reports searchable by individual high schools, Congressional District, Senate District, and Assembly District, please visit:

**[www.EdOpp.org](http://www.EdOpp.org)**

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