



A LIFETIME OF LEARNING: PRIORITIZING EDUCATION FROM PRE-K TO POST-GRAD

The quality of our children's education shouldn't depend on where they grow up, their family circumstances, their race, their wealth, or their ability. That's why Cal has dedicated his public service to improving education -- serving on K-12 and higher education committees in the State Senate, where he championed efforts to raise teacher pay, reduce class sizes, and fully fund professional development.

Cal believes that public education—and the investments we make in our children through schools—should be an engine of opportunity for all North Carolinians. Especially now, in the midst of a pandemic, our public schools deserve the resources they need to ensure our children are getting the instruction and support they need to thrive. Cal believes we can—and must—do better for North Carolina's children, starting in their youngest years.

That's why Cal has put together a **Taskforce on Lifelong Learning**, so he can hear from educators, students and families about the needs of North Carolinians and take those education priorities with him to the Senate. From keeping teachers and students safe in the middle of a pandemic, to recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, to investing in early childhood education and making higher education and workforce training more affordable and accessible, Cal will make education a priority and fight for North Carolina teachers, students and families in the United States Senate.

Here are Cal's priorities:

Keeping Students And Educators Safe During The COVID-19 Pandemic

As the state faces unprecedented challenges related to COVID-19, Cal is pushing for more support for teachers, school administrators, support personnel like janitorial, nurses and food services staff, to provide the resources needed to reopen safely or conduct online learning.

Cal believes we must prioritize keeping educators and students safe, from making sure schools that are reopening have the personal protective equipment and the testing they need to ensuring North Carolinians can stay connected through access to broadband internet.

Cal also understands the added pressures that have been placed on North Carolina families and students since the beginning of the pandemic. That's why Cal will continue pushing for increased investment in specialized instructional support personnel—the counselors, psychologists, and other professionals—who can address children's unique academic and developmental needs and make sure every child can thrive in school.

Giving Our Kids a Strong Start in Life By Supporting Pre-K

Cal believes that all North Carolina kids serve a strong start in life and that means accessible, affordable pre-K. Cal believes it's absolutely critical to have every child ready for their first day of kindergarten—and that starts with expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs. Cal is committed to investment in our children through Head Start, Early Head Start and early learning programs that address the needs of the whole child. Cal understands that high-quality pre-k programs can create long-term benefits for not only the children they serve, but for their communities, too.

Investing In A Strong K-12 Education

All students - regardless of their parents' income or their zip code - deserve a school that supports their development, and it's on us to meet the unique needs of all schools from rural North Carolina to schools in our urban centers. This includes making sure every school is welcoming, supportive and safe as our students learn.

Unfortunately, years of underinvestment in our public schools, in part thanks to Senator Thom Tillis gutting education funding, has left our state less equipped to meet "its constitutional obligation to provide every child with the opportunity for a sound basic education," according to the Leandro report.

Cal supports a national strategy to invest in opportunity through public schools including by doubling funding for Title I and finally fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to provide schools the resources they need to succeed and close significant funding gaps between districts. Cal knows it is far too often that students of color and students living in rural areas attend under-resourced schools. He thinks this is an injustice. As your United States Senator, Cal is committed to investing in resources necessary to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Cal will also fight to ensure that all North Carolina teachers are paid what they deserve with an education system that supports their professional growth and development. This means ensuring that schools are well-resourced so that teachers don't have to pay out of their own pockets for basic supplies. It also means doing more to make sure the profession is reflective of the diversity of the students and families it serves, with particular emphasis on recruiting African American and Latinx people into the profession.

Making Sure Kids Are Safe & Supported

Cal believes that kids learn best when they feel safe and supported at school. That's why he would work to boost access to mental health care programs and to increase the number of school counselors, social workers and psychologists. Cal supports the expansion of restorative justice and trauma-informed programs in schools—preventative measures to help end the school-to-prison pipeline. Cal is committed to standing with LGBTQ+ students, more than half of whom report feeling unsafe at school, against bullying and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Cal was also proud to serve on the Governor's Crime Commission, where he helped create recommendations to curb the risk of school shootings.

Increasing Access In Higher Education And Workforce Development

Cal believes all North Carolinians, whether coming directly out of high school or seeking higher education later in life, should have access to a four-year degree, vocational degree or certificate, or community college education that supports their educational and career goals. Cal understands our approach to higher education must encompass and drive resources to not just four-year colleges, but also community colleges and vocational certificate programs that help students looking for specific skills sets in emerging industries.

That's why he plans to lead the fight to lower the cost of college, expand access to community college and technical training, and reduce the burden of student loan debt for student borrowers. In the Senate, he will support efforts to expand Pell Grants, allow students to refinance their student loans to get a lower rate, and fix and expand the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

North Carolina also has a proud tradition of strong public universities and our Historically Black Colleges and Universities are a critical part of our higher education system. And Cal will work to ensure the federal government increases support for these important institutions, including investments that ensure North Carolina's institutions of higher learning can continue to lead on research and development, including the development of vaccines and innovative ways to respond to the current and future pandemics.