

**DAN LEAHY**  
**FOR STATE ASSEMBLY**  
*"A new voice, a better choice."*

# Education

## OVERVIEW

### ***Commitment to Early Education Opportunities***

Children are better prepared for elementary school if they have the opportunity to attend pre-school programs. We must provide access to quality programs that ensure our children will be prepared to succeed in Kindergarten.

### ***Improvements Needed to K-12 System***

Modernize the way Education is delivered in California by ensuring we are funding programs that improve student outcomes.

## THE PROBLEM

### ***Poor Student Performance***

For every 10 students who start high school in California, fewer than two will complete a higher education degree. In many middle and high schools, students have reading, writing and math skills that are significantly below their grade levels.

### ***High School Dropout Rate***

Fewer than 70% of ninth-graders in California will graduate from high school and in some districts the percentage drops to less than 50%. Many of these students do not go on to obtain a GED or any type of college education. Lack of personalized support contributes to the failure of these students. In California, about 150,000 students are dropping out every year.

### ***Demand for Teachers Outpaces Recruitment***

In many underserved areas recruiting teachers is the most difficult challenge school districts face. Nearly 30% of new teachers will leave the profession within the first five years. For example, many Science teachers leave to take higher paying private sector jobs.

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#### MY PLAN

##### ***Early Education Initiative***

Children perform better in Kindergarten and Elementary School when they have been in a pre-school program. I would expand early education and pre-school access to all children. I would also work to establish a voluntary universal pre-school program in California.

##### ***Reform to the K-12 Education System***

The current funding mechanism and administration system for K-12 school districts doesn't work. We need to work with local districts and collaborate with them to address the needs of students. We need to focus more on student outcomes and ensure students get the resources they need to be successful.

##### ***Curtail High School Dropout Rates***

We need to make schools more accountable to student outcomes rather than test scores. We need to provide schools with resources to combat this problem with early intervention to get failing students back on track. We can also increase opportunities for students to participate in alternate learning programs, including taking classes at colleges and taking proficiency tests.

##### ***Expanding Learning Opportunities***

As a State we need to increase the amount of mathematics and science classes and programs being offered in schools. Increased support for summer programs for struggling students and programs for English language learners needs to be a priority. We can ensure student success by giving opportunities to spend more time in the classroom.

##### ***Expanding Career Technical Education***

Funding for Career Technical Education (CTE) has lagged behind in the past 20 years. To give students more opportunities in the job market we need to increase the amount of programs offered in High School and Community Colleges. Students who participate in CTE programs graduate with better job prospects than student with just a high school diploma. We should increase funding to schools so they can offer more programs to students.

##### ***Recruiting Quality Teachers for Our Students***

Recruiting and retaining quality teachers is a must if we want to remain competitive. I would increase the number of students that can qualify for Cal Grant T, which provides financial aid to future teachers. I would also expand the Assumption Program for Loans for Education (APLE) which would allow more teachers to pay off their student loans while teach in an underserved school. I would also create a program that would award grants to students in teaching programs to help pay for living expenses while in school and serving as a student teacher. It is often impossible to do both and work at the same time, this would allow more students to finish the program.

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