

EDUCACY

Executive Summary

I. Mission Statement

EDUCACY is a non-profit organization comprised of parents dedicated to the advocacy of K-12 education. **EDUCACY's** mission is to connect, educate, and mobilize parents towards education reform at the community, political, and policy level. Through the development of a powerful parent network, we aim to ensure every student has access to equitable and adequate opportunities and funding that will provide them with success both inside and outside of school.

II. The Problem: We Are Failing Our Students, Our State, and Our Nation

California, which boasts the 8th largest economy in the world, has seen its education budget crumble year-after year, specifically \$11B, or 18%, in the last four years alone. Diminishing state funds have forced massive teacher lay-offs, mounting class sizes, severe cuts in programs and services, and decreased school days. Overall, this creates an environment where students – who become less and less able to compete – suffer most.

California has the largest K-12 public education system in the nation, serving 6.3 million students across 1,000 school districts and almost 10,000 public schools. Yet the state ranks 47th in per pupil spending, \$2,856 less than the national average. Nearly half of its students are economically disadvantaged (vs. 43% nationally), 24% are English learners (vs. 9%), and 49% are Hispanic (vs. 20%). With its key economic role and populous, diverse student demographics, California should be focused on ensuring that its students are ready to fully embrace and contribute to its evolving economy.

III. The Solution: EDUCATION + ADVOCACY = A Path to Education Reform

1. High Level Goals

Through EDUCATION and ADVOCACY, **EDUCACY** will achieve the following high-level goals:

- Parents will become informed on the education crisis.
- Parents will drive and take actions that will result in education reform, both short and long-term.

2. Focus Areas

- **Community Education** – The first step in the key to mobilization is the education of parents on the funding crisis, the widening student achievement gap, and diminishing college preparedness.
- **Community Building** – The improvement of the local and broader communities will be achieved through the core community's capacity to accomplish effective tasks and goals.
- **Leadership Development** – The creation of opportunities for parent members to become involved and lead efforts in their communities will ensure that education remains a priority at all levels of government.
- **Advocacy** – The long-term goal is to empower parents to TAKE ACTION on systemic and large-scale changes that affect statewide and federal reform. This advocacy will include:
 - i. Legislative action, including support for voter ballot initiatives or legislator-sponsored bills
 - ii. Lobbying local and state candidates to support our education platform

IV. Education Reform Objectives: **EDUCACY** is focused on the following:

- **Equal Access to Education** – All children should receive fair and equitable access to an education that prepares them for academic and career success and fosters not only their growth as students, but also as valued citizens.
- **Locally Controlled, Efficient, Flexible Funding** – Funding should be appropriately allocated, spent, and sufficient to meet standards. Districts and schools should be given more fiscal accountability and flexibility to meet their needs.
- **A Complete and Innovative Education** - Students' academic, moral, and physical developments must be met. They must develop a strong foundation in both core and complementary subjects. Innovative teaching techniques should be implemented along with standard curriculum.
- **Strengthened Teaching and Administration Effectiveness** – Our education system needs to recruit, develop, and retain a strong and steady supply of highly trained and effective teachers and administrators who are adequately compensated.
- **Streamlined Governance and Accountability** – Clearly delineated roles and responsibilities should focus on continuous improvement against rigorous educational standards.

V. The Path Forward

A. Membership Outreach, Growth, and Empowerment – A Key Focus in the Next 6 Months

The following educational and civic-based activities are planned:

- Educational Workshops - Inform parents on the growing California education crisis.
- Voter Registration Drives - Increase voter registration and turnout and help school districts pass local parcel taxes and other measures that support education funding and reform.
- Candidates' Forums - Allow parents to better understand the candidates' positions on education and make informed decisions.
- Interactive Website - Inform and mobilize parents by providing toolkits, best practice guides, education news, community forums, blogs, regional pages, calendars, and more.

B. Local Wins and Silicon Valley Geographic Scope Will Be Initial Base of Momentum – Next 12 Months

Local Wins - A key goal for the organization is to build momentum for change by generating WINs within Silicon Valley, further empowering parents to move them onto regional and state-level reform. A WIN can be a successful voter registration driver, the passage of a local parcel tax, the election of “strong” school board trustees, etc.

Regional and State-Level Campaigns - A secondary goal is to support more specific regional and state-level campaigns/projects through shared best practices such as assisting in fundraising or voter registration campaigns.

C. Never Lose Sight of the Long-Term – Next 18 Months

Sustained and systemic change requires long-term focus and efforts. In order to meet the reform goals, members will need to advocate for change at the state-level through supporting legislative bills, ballot initiatives, and lawsuits.

VI. Who Are We?

EDUCACY is comprised of parent leaders who have been successful in driving awareness and change in local school districts across Silicon Valley. The list of participating districts and parents continues to grow daily. Our executive staff includes:

- **Hoi Yung Poon, Executive Director** - Hoi has over 20 years of leadership experience in consulting, marketing, fund-raising, campaign strategy and community organizing. She has founded a consulting company, co-founded a non-profit organization, and served on several non-profit boards. Hoi was one of the core volunteers that lead the Cupertino Union Fundraising campaign, which raised \$2.2 million in eight weeks and helped save 107 teachers jobs. Hoi is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the organization, creation of plans and programs, financial management, and fundraising.
- **Steffanee Taylor, Director, Communications and Programs** – Steffanee has over 20 years of experience in consumer marketing. Her specialties include campaign management, marketing communications, and project management. She co-founded EECIA, the first parent-led advocacy organization of its kind in the Evergreen area of San Jose. Steffanee is responsible for strategic marketing communications, research, and local and regional campaigns and programs.
- **Kay Louie, Director, Advocacy and Operations** – Kay Louie has over 20 years of leadership experience in operations, consulting and project management. She has founded several companies and has held VP and Director level positions in a number of high-tech companies. Kay has led local and regional advocacy efforts, including rallies with thousands of people in her district, lobbying in Sacramento, and testifying before the Senate on needed education reform. Kay is responsible for driving legislative initiatives, partnerships and operations.

VII. Collaboration

We recognize the importance of seeking common ground and partnering with other groups statewide that are all vested parties in high quality education. These groups include, but are not limited to parent groups, such as the California PTA; advocacy groups, such as Education Coalition; business groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce; and unions, such as the California Teacher's Association.

VIII. Summary

EDUCACY is committed to helping California restore its public education system to its former glory by engaging and mobilizing parents in education reform. Combining the force of parents with others from advocacy, community, business, employee/union/ administration and civic groups, we can ensure that education reform is at the top of the agenda. With complete and enriched public educations, students will be prepared for success and can contribute as informed and productive members of society. Our students, state and nation deserve no less.