

# Braiding Funds to Support an Effective and Diverse Educator Workforce

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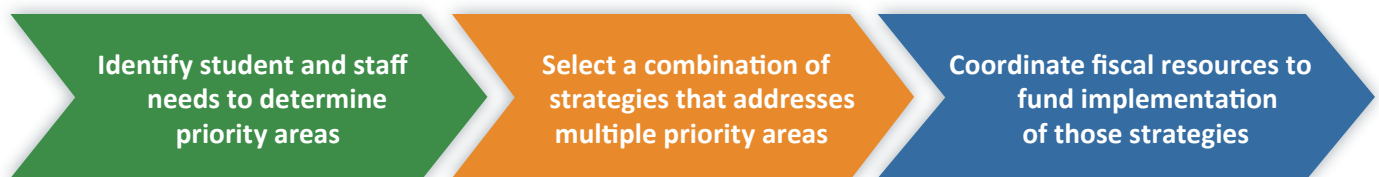
# Introduction

*One of the most valuable resources available to districts and schools is its educators. To be effective, educators should be qualified, experienced, student-centered, and reflective of the student population, including students' language and cultural backgrounds.*

To develop and support an effective, diverse educator workforce—which, in turn, fosters an equitable, high-quality learning environment—education leaders in California must be strategic in how they coordinate resources. To effectively maximize the use of resources, education leaders are encouraged to coordinate, or **braid**, state funds, federal funds, and specialized grants. By braiding funds, education leaders can adapt to the ebb and flow of annual budgets to better meet local needs that drive improved outcomes.

Braiding funds can offer tremendous benefits, as it enables districts to invest in strategies that address multiple priority areas. The process of braiding funds starts with a *needs-based approach to planning* (as outlined in Figure 1). When adopting this planning approach, leaders can begin by identifying local needs as the drivers to determine the priority areas on which to focus. From there, they select a combination of strategies that can address multiple priority areas and, finally, coordinate fiscal resources to fund the implementation of those strategies.

**Figure 1. Needs-Based Planning Approach**

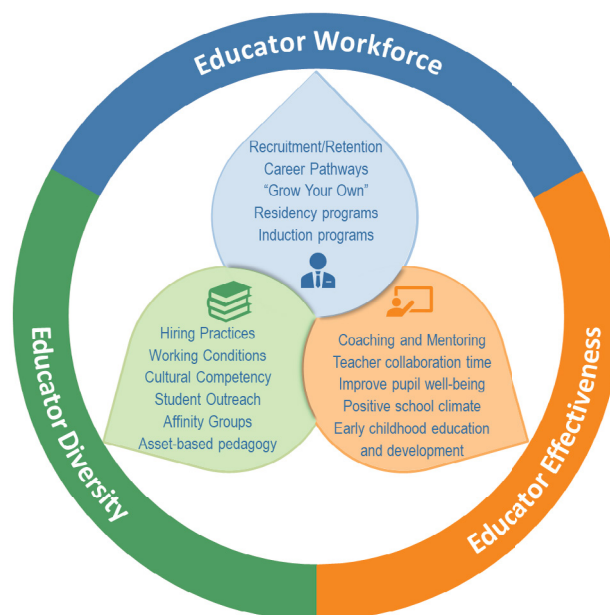


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## Braiding Funding Streams to Address Educator Workforce Priority Areas

This brief is intended to support education leaders in California with braiding funds to address various educator workforce priority areas (examples of priority areas are shown in Figure 2). When planning for the use of educator workforce funds, consider how your local education agency (LEA) priority areas may overlap with one another and align with the intent of each available funding source. While this brief provides examples of how each funding source can be used, it is important to also consider what your local data indicates as areas of need for your students and staff and how those areas align with priority areas such as teacher preparation and hiring practices.

**Figure 2. Key Educator Workforce Priority Areas**



Source: Region 15 Comprehensive Center Network Webinar (April 21, 2022), Coordinating “Braiding” Educator Workforce Funds. Hosted by the California Department of Education and presented in collaboration with Fresno State.

The following sections outline strategies for addressing a variety of educator workforce priority areas, including related strategies for prioritizing diversity. Each section also lists the state-specialized grants and other funding sources that can be braided to implement those strategies. The content throughout these sections is based on recommendations from the California Coalition for Educator Diversity, as detailed in [A Funding Guide for More Diverse Schools in California](#). The examples in this brief are not an exhaustive list but are offered as a guide to help education leaders explore the types of funds that may be braided to achieve short-term and long-term priority areas that support educators’ needs.

## Braiding Funds to Promote Educator Effectiveness

California’s [Educator Effectiveness Block Grant](#) can be used to address areas of need related to professional learning, school climate, social–emotional learning, mental health, restorative justice, implicit bias, and discrimination and harassment prevention. The table below outlines various strategies to support educator effectiveness and related strategies to prioritize diversity. The table is followed by a list of the available funding sources that can be braided with the Educator Effectiveness Block Grant to implement those strategies.

**Table 1. Strategies to Support Educator Effectiveness and Related Strategies to Prioritize Diversity**

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to support educator effectiveness</b>	<p>Provide professional learning, coaching, and mentoring opportunities for administrators and teachers, as well as paraprofessionals and classified staff who work with pupils.</p> <p>Topic areas could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching and mentoring staff</li> <li>• Programs improving instruction across all subject areas</li> <li>• Practices and strategies that reengage students and lead to accelerated learning</li> <li>• Strategies to implement social–emotional learning, trauma-informed practices, access to mental health services, and other approaches that improve student well-being</li> <li>• Practices to foster a positive school climate, including, but not limited to, restorative justice, implicit bias, and discrimination and harassment prevention</li> <li>• Instruction to support effective language acquisition programs for English Learners</li> <li>• Strategies to improve inclusive practices</li> <li>• New professional learning networks for educators</li> <li>• Instruction, education, and strategies in early childhood education</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies to prioritize diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract with professional development (PD) providers that specialize in anti-racist practices and culturally sustaining pedagogies.</li> <li>• Support veteran teachers of color to serve as coaches and mentors. Consider providing PD, release time, compensation, etc.</li> <li>• Consider partnering with providers of color and local providers who can speak to the unique local context.</li> <li>• Prioritize PD that focuses on actively dismantling the preschool-to-prison pipeline.</li> <li>• Prioritize PD that focuses on empathic instructional approaches, healing-centered engagement, and humanizing pedagogies.</li> </ul>

The following funds can be braided together with the **Educator Effectiveness Block Grant** to carry out the strategies detailed in Table 1:

- **Teacher Residency Grant Program** funds can be used to supplement proportional costs that cover residency program staff, teacher preparation, stipends for mentor teachers, stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring activities to implement educator effectiveness strategies.
- **Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** funds can be used to supplement proportional costs that allow for district classified staff to participate in professional learning opportunities as they earn their teaching credentials while serving as teachers in their district.
- **Special Education Learning Recovery Support** funds can supplement proportional costs that align with activities that enable all educators to provide learning recovery support for pupils with disabilities and to provide adequate support to neurodiverse students and students with exceptional needs.
- **Ethnic Studies Curricula Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs that align with activities that focus on teaching and learning strategies related to successfully implementing new curricula for ethnic studies.
- **Anti-Bias Education Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that are related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators, particularly to recruit and retain diverse staff.
- **Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Planning and Implementation Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that support the expansion and/or implementation of UPK.

## Using Funds to Recruit and Retain Teachers

The [Teacher Residency Grant Program](#) addresses areas of need related to teacher preparation, residency, and shortages. The table below outlines strategies to support teacher recruitment and retention and related strategies to prioritize diversity. The table is followed by a list of the available funding sources that can be braided with the Teacher Residency Grant Program funds to implement those strategies.

**Table 2. Strategies to Support Teacher Recruitment and Retention, and Related Strategies to Prioritize Diversity**

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to support teacher recruitment and retention</b>	Cover (or reimburse or provide) residency program staff costs, teacher preparation costs, stipends for mentor teachers (which can include housing stipends), stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring and beginning teacher induction costs following initial preparation. (Funding priorities should include a commitment from applicants to increasing teacher diversity and having a higher share than other applicants of unduplicated pupils.)

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to prioritize diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a strong collaborative partnership between the institute of higher education (IHE) and the local education agency (LEA) to guide the work of the residency program that includes representatives of color. In partnership, develop a clear vision for the residency that prioritizes developing a diverse teacher workforce and developing teachers who are well-prepared to serve students of color.</li> <li>• Leverage funding sources to ensure programs are affordable for pre-service teachers of color. Consider providing increased resident stipends by braiding funding sources, including the Golden State teacher funds.</li> <li>• Incentivize expert teachers of color to serve as mentor teachers (consider supporting these mentors through compensation, release time, affinity spaces, and help to access the \$25,000 funds through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Incentive Program).</li> <li>• Develop robust resident recruitment pipelines focused within local communities, including pipelines for paraprofessionals and after-school program staff.</li> </ul>

The following funds can be braided together with the **Teacher Residency Grant Program** funds to carry out the strategies detailed in Table 2:

- **Educator Effectiveness Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities for teachers to participate in professional learning, coaching, and mentoring opportunities.
- **Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that allow for district classified staff to participate in the residency grant program while earning their teaching credentials.
- **Special Education Learning Recovery Support** funds can supplement proportional costs that align with activities that focus on teaching and learning strategies for pupils with disabilities.
- **Ethnic Studies Curricula Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs that focus on teaching and learning strategies related to successfully implementing new curricula for ethnic studies.
- **Anti-Bias Education Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that are related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators, particularly to recruit and retain diverse staff.
- **Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Planning and Implementation Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that support educators that want to teach UPK.



## Using Funds to Recruit Classified School Employees

The [Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program](#) addresses teacher shortages by supporting teacher credentialing of classified staff, including support staff and paraprofessionals. The table below outlines strategies to recruit classified school employees to earn their teaching credentials, and related strategies to prioritize diversity. The table is followed by a list of the available funding sources that can be braided with the Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program funds to implement those strategies.

**Table 3. Strategies to Recruit Classified School Employees for Teacher Credentialing, and Related Strategies to Prioritize Diversity**

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to recruit classified school employees for teacher credentialing</b>	Allow interested district classified staff, such as paraprofessionals, bus drivers, tutors, and custodial staff, to use the funds to earn their teaching credentials and continue serving in their district as teachers.
<b>Strategies to prioritize diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to providing grant funding, provide participants with individualized non-financial support (e.g., test preparation, mentoring, cohort models).</li> <li>• Share information on individuals' financial and nonfinancial supports with local program managers and IHE liaisons to better understand program implementation and enable stronger strategic planning moving forward.</li> <li>• Connect with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing's (CTC) ongoing efforts to address inequitable barriers to passing the professional teacher licensure exams.</li> </ul>

The following funds can be braided together with funds from the **Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** to carry out the strategies detailed in Table 3:

- **Educator Effectiveness Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in professional learning, coaching, and mentoring opportunities for classified school employees earning their credentials.
- **Teacher Residency Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that cover residency program staff, teacher preparation, stipends for mentor teachers, stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring activities for classified school employees earning their credentials.
- **Special Education Learning Recovery Support** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that focus on teaching and learning strategies for pupils with disabilities.
- **Ethnic Studies Curricula Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that focus on teaching and learning strategies related to successfully implementing new curricula for ethnic studies.

- **Anti-Bias Education Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that are related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators, particularly to recruit and retain diverse staff.
- **Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Planning and Implementation Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that support educators that want to teach UPK.

## Using Funds to Support the Successful Implementation of Special Education

The [Special Education Learning Recovery Support](#) program addresses areas of need related to special education, learning recovery, and SELPA. The table below outlines strategies to support special education implementation and related strategies to prioritize diversity. The table is followed by a list of the available funding sources that can be braided with the Special Education Learning Recovery Support funds to implement those strategies.

**Table 4. Strategies to Support Special Education Implementation, and Related Strategies to Prioritize Diversity**

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to support special education implementation</b>	Ensure that Special Education Learning Recovery funds are utilized to enable all educators to provide learning recovery support for pupils with disabilities and to provide adequate support to neurodiverse students and students with exceptional needs.
<b>Strategies to prioritize diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use evidence-based practices for students of color with disabilities to ensure equitable access.</li> <li>• Provide unconscious bias training for general education and special education teachers to make them aware of the processes that may impact decision-making in the classroom and contribute to adverse outcomes for students (e.g., disproportionate suspensions for students of color with disabilities).</li> <li>• Develop a cohort model for evaluating best practices for students of color with disabilities, regarding academics and behavioral supports.</li> <li>• Provide an overview for staff of Section 504 and IDEA (including referral, eligibility, placement, and the provision of a free appropriate public education), as well as of districts’ responsibilities to protect students with disabilities from discrimination or harassment and ensure that they have an equal opportunity to participate in school programs and activities.</li> <li>• Create a diverse committee of education partners to evaluate the special education curriculum.</li> </ul>

The following funds can be braided together with the **Special Education Learning Recovery Support** funds to carry out the strategies detailed in Table 4:

- **Educator Effectiveness Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in professional learning, coaching, and mentoring opportunities that align with special education recovery supports.
- **Teacher Residency Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that cover residency program staff, teacher preparation, stipends for mentor teachers, stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring activities for classified school employees earning their credentials to implement special education recovery supports strategies.
- **Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that allow for district classified staff to participate in activities to implement special education recovery supports while earning their teaching credentials.
- **Ethnic Studies Curricula Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that focus on teaching and learning strategies related to successfully implementing new curricula for ethnic studies to implement special education recovery supports strategies.
- **Anti-Bias Education Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that are related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators, particularly to recruit and retain diverse staff to implement special education recovery supports strategies.
- **Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Planning and Implementation Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that support educators that want to teach UPK to implement special education recovery supports strategies.

## Using Funds to Implement Ethnic Studies Curricula

The [Ethnic Studies Local Support Grant](#) funding addresses areas of need related to designing and implementing ethnic studies curriculum and graduation requirements. The table below outlines strategies to support ethnic studies curricula implementation and related strategies to prioritize diversity. The table is followed by a list of the available funding sources that can be braided with the Ethnic Studies Curricula Block Grant funds to implement those strategies.

**Table 5. Strategies to Support Ethnic Studies Curricula Implementation, and Related Strategies to Prioritize Diversity**

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to support ethnic studies curricula implementation</b>	Distribute funding directly to schools serving high school students to develop new curricula for ethnic studies, as required to meet the state’s high school graduation requirements.

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to prioritize diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize a diverse group of people, with an ethnic studies background, to develop a curriculum from a local context.</li> <li>• Obtain feedback and engagement from focus groups of education partners who will be directly impacted by the curriculum.</li> <li>• Ensure those engaged in this work are properly compensated for the development, training, and ongoing implementation of the program.</li> <li>• Create a sustainability plan with ongoing financial commitment, with a diverse group of education partners who are/will be impacted by the curriculum.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing support through professional development for continuous improvement and schoolwide engagement with ethnic studies frameworks.</li> </ul>

The following funds can be braided together with **Ethnic Studies Local Support Grant** funds to carry out the strategies detailed in Table 5:

- **Educator Effectiveness Block Grant** can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in professional learning, coaching, and mentoring opportunities that align with new curricula for ethnic studies.
- **Teacher Residency Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that cover residency program staff, teacher preparation, stipends for mentor teachers, stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring activities for classified school employees earning their credentials to successfully implement teaching and learning strategies related to new curricula for ethnic studies.
- **Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that allow district classified staff to participate in activities to successfully implement teaching and learning strategies related to new curricula for ethnic studies.
- **Special Education Learning Recovery Support** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities to successfully implement teaching and learning strategies related to new curricula for ethnic studies for pupils with disabilities.
- **Anti-Bias Education Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that are related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators, particularly to recruit and retain diverse staff to successfully implement teaching and learning strategies related to new curricula for ethnic studies.

## Using Funds to Implement Anti-Bias Education Programs

[Anti-Bias Education Grant Program](#) funds address areas of need related to anti-bias education for educators and staff, including education about discrimination, bias, racism, bigotry, prejudice, and hate-motivated actions. The table below outlines strategies to support anti-bias education and related strategies to prioritize diversity. The table is followed by a list of the available funding sources that can be braided with the Anti-Bias Education Grant Program funds to implement those strategies.

**Table 6. Strategies to Support Anti-Bias Education, and Related Strategies to Prioritize Diversity**

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to support anti-bias education</b>	Use the Anti-Bias Education Grant to prevent, address, and eliminate racism and bias in all California public schools and make public schools inclusive and supportive places through the development of a comprehensive diversity plan that is tied to specific outcomes that support educator diversity and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators.
<b>Strategies to prioritize diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize curriculum development that explores a diverse range of behaviors/actions motivated by hate, bigotry, bias, or prejudice toward different communities (e.g., LGBTQ+, Latinx, AAPI, Sikh/Muslim/Middle Eastern, Indigenous, African American) to support students in understanding the context and impact of discriminatory actions in different communities.</li> <li>• Integrate student-initiated and student-centered efforts to combat hate, bigotry, racism, or any form of bias or prejudice in their school communities (including, but not limited to, climate surveys, focus groups, speaker series, student-led presentations and discussions, literature, music, and visual and cinematic arts).</li> <li>• Engage in further professional learning to better understand the effects of microaggressions and hate-motivated and biased behaviors on educators of color.</li> <li>• Develop reporting mechanisms to remedy and redress the effects of microaggressions and hate-motivated and biased behaviors on educators of color to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging on campus for all school staff.</li> </ul>

The following funds can be braided together with **Anti-Bias Education Grant Program** funds to carry out the strategies detailed in Table 6:

- **Educator Effectiveness Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in professional learning, coaching, and mentoring opportunities that are related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators.
- **Teacher Residency Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that cover residency program staff, teacher preparation, stipends for mentor teachers, stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring activities for classified school employees earning their credentials to implement practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators.
- **Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that allow district classified staff, while earning their credentials, to participate in activities that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators.
- **Special Education Learning Recovery Support** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities to successfully implement teaching and learning strategies related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators.
- **Ethnic Studies Curricula Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that focus on teaching and learning strategies related to successful practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators, particularly to recruit and retain diverse staff.
- **Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Planning and Implementation Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that support educators that want to teach UPK that support inclusion and belonging practices and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators.

## Using Funds to Implement Transitional Kindergarten and Preschool (Universal Prekindergarten)

[Universal Prekindergarten \(UPK\) Planning and Implementation](#) funds address areas of need related to implementing transitional kindergarten (TK) and preschool. The table below outlines strategies to support the implementation of TK and preschool, and related strategies to prioritize diversity. The table is followed by a list of the available funding sources that can be braided with the UPK Planning and Implementation funds to implement those strategies.

**Table 7. Strategies for Implementation of Transitional Kindergarten, and Related Strategies to Prioritize Diversity**

Type of strategy	Examples
<b>Strategies to support the implementation of transitional kindergarten</b>	Establish an early learning initiative to expand access to class-room-based TK and the California State Preschool Program in LEAs.
<b>Strategies to prioritize diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize the hiring and support of diverse teachers and teacher candidates for the TK program.</li> <li>• Co-create a culturally responsive curriculum with a diverse group of teachers.</li> <li>• Partner with local community colleges to identify potential teachers for the TK program.</li> </ul>

The following funds can be braided together with **UPK Planning and Implementation** funds to carry out the strategies detailed in Table 7:

- **Educator Effectiveness Block Grant** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in professional learning, coaching, and mentoring opportunities that are related to practices that support the successful implementation of UPK.
- **Teacher Residency Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that cover residency program staff, teacher preparation, stipends for mentor teachers, stipends for teacher candidates, and mentoring activities for classified school employees earning their credentials to support the successful implementation of UPK.
- **Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** funds can supplement proportional costs that allow for district classified staff, while earning their teaching credential, to participate in activities to support the successful implementation of UPK.
- **Special Education Learning Recovery Support** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities to support the successful implementation of UPK for pupils with disabilities.
- **Anti-Bias Education Grant Program** funds can supplement proportional costs to provide opportunities to participate in activities that are related to practices that support inclusion and belonging and create more positive school climates for students and greater retention of educators, particularly to recruit and retain diverse staff to support the successful implementation of UPK.