USCEdPolicy HUB

Education in Southern California faces a daunting array of challenges. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, students' academic achievement has dropped, while mental health challenges have risen. High absentee rates and declining enrollments indicate increasing numbers of students are detached from school. Meanwhile, many schools face staffing shortages, increased political conflict, and funding cliffs brought on by long-term declines in enrollment as well as the impending end of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funding. Exacerbating these challenges are long-standing structural inequities related to race and economics, with causes often crossing geographic and education system boundaries.

Yet as one of the most dynamic areas of the nation, Southern California always has exemplified opportunity. The economy in this 10-county region is larger than Brazil's, with a population greater than every individual state except Texas. Approximately 300 Southern California school districts educate nearly 4 million school-aged children in one of the most diverse regions of the U.S., as evidenced by no ethnic majority and sizable populations of almost every major racial/ethnic group. Southern California's size and diversity means that there is a tremendous pool of current and future talent, with great potential for creative, innovative solutions. Drawing from these strengths, Southern California can provide models for addressing challenges, creating more successful systems, and preparing all children for a better future.

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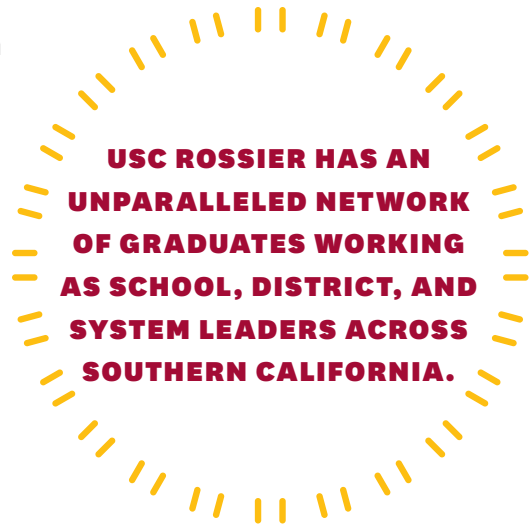
The USC EdPolicy Hub collaborates with Southern California schools, education systems, and community colleges to co-design and conduct relevant research that will help partners navigate challenges and improve outcomes and equity for students across the region. Research is built upon input from schools, families, education systems, community-based organizations, and civic leaders, with the intent of delivering practical, actionable solutions to these same stakeholders. While we hope the results of our work will be widely relevant outside of Southern California, our local partners determine our focus.

To deliver on this promise, we will create a network of Southern California districts, charter schools, and county offices of education – the "Hub Research Network" – focused on:

- **Understanding the most pressing challenges facing the region's educators, then matching those challenges to researchers with relevant expertise, wherever that expertise is located.**

- **Designing and carrying out research in Southern California education systems and schools to understand what works, for whom, and under which circumstances.**

- **Tracking the implementation and effects of new policies and practices throughout the network and sharing research-based lessons learned among network leaders.**

The Hub is based at the USC Rossier School of Education as part of Dean Pedro Noguera's Educational Equity Initiative. USC Rossier has an unparalleled network of graduates across Southern California working as leaders in schools, districts, and other types of education systems. From our USC Rossier base, we will bring in expertise from both inside the university (e.g., the USC Price School of Public Policy, the Center for Applied Research in Education) and outside, ensuring we can match the appropriate knowledge and methods to problems at hand.

USC ROSSIER HAS AN UNPARALLELED NETWORK OF GRADUATES WORKING AS SCHOOL, DISTRICT, AND SYSTEM LEADERS ACROSS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

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