

2024

Call to Action: Educating for a Green Economy

Report Summary



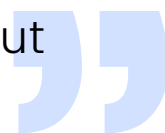
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A Call to Action



Teaching about climate change gets at the heart of what school is ultimately for: Helping kids make sense of the world around them, while preparing them for the future.

This is the topic of the century, and not just because of the potential disasters ahead, but because this is the future of the economy.



— Ms. Bertha Vazquez,
Seventh-grade science teacher

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Introduction

This report is a Call to Action to provide universal access to quality green career education. California needs a statewide strategic plan—a “California Roadmap to Educating for a Green Economy”—and coordinated statewide implementation of this Roadmap to meet the demand for a skilled green workforce and realize our state’s potential for enhanced economic mobility and equity through green jobs.

According to the State of California’s Governor’s Office, implementing the current California Scoping Plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 will require an estimated four million new green jobs. Already, “more than 2.7 million Californians work in green-designated occupations, both in and outside of traditional green industries.” However, the information and training to prepare for, secure, and thrive in these careers remain inequitably accessible, and in the words of Governor Newsom, “In California, we recognize that our incredible diversity is the foundation for our state’s strength, growth, and success – and that confronting inequality is not just a moral imperative, but an economic one.”

The realization of California’s ambitious climate, economic, and equity policies hinges on the contributions of skilled workers, invested employers, and entrepreneurs. However, California’s education and workforce development systems lack the information, direction, resources, coordination, and incentives to meet this pressing need. This white paper serves as a Call to Action to facilitate research-based, coordinated green career education and workforce development, aligned to industry needs and equitably accessible to all students statewide by focusing on those who have historically been left out.



Executive Summary

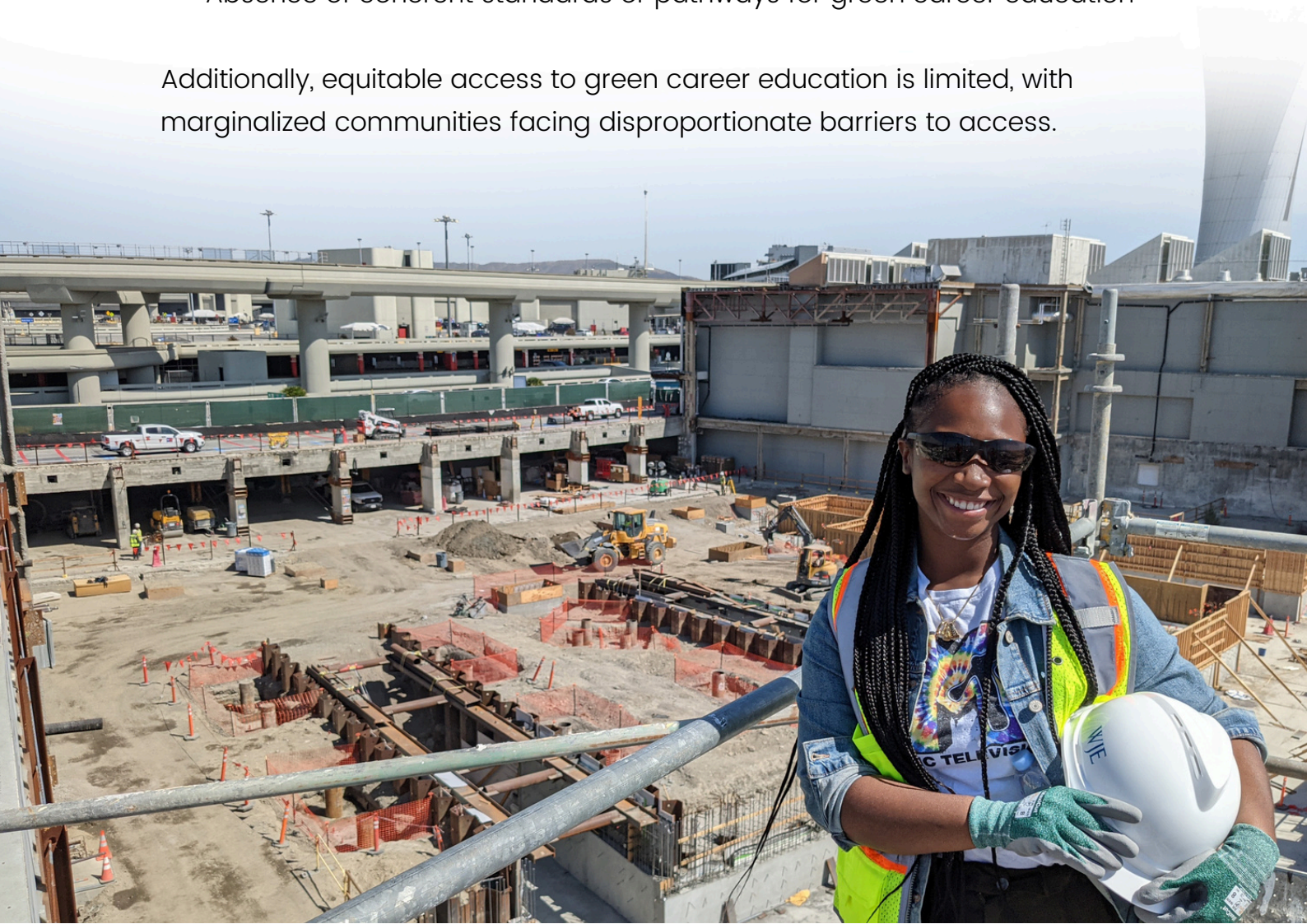
The "Call to Action: Educating for a Green Economy" white paper outlines the necessity and vision for integrating green career education into California's educational system. Our analysis and recommendations emphasize the urgency of preparing students for green jobs to address environmental challenges while fostering economic equity.

The Call to Action envisions a near future in which every job is a "green" environmental or climate job. A future in which TK-12 students throughout the state have access to environmental education and well-coordinated green career education that aligns with California's environmental policy and industry needs.

Several challenges impede progress:

- A lack of consensus on criteria and data for Priority Green Careers
- Insufficient coordination among state agencies
- Absence of coherent standards or pathways for green career education

Additionally, equitable access to green career education is limited, with marginalized communities facing disproportionate barriers to access.





The Call to Action white paper recommends developing and implementing a statewide Roadmap to Educating for a Green Economy that is grounded in an equity-informed lens. High level details for each component of these recommendations include:

Recommendation 1

Develop a Statewide Roadmap to Educating for a Green Economy.

Developing this Roadmap will require establishing a convening backbone organization and leader, gathering labor market data that identifies Priority Green Careers in each region, and fostering statewide collaboration during the development of the Roadmap.

Recommendation 2

Coordinate Implementation of the Roadmap

Implementing the Roadmap requires empowering a green career education leader and a backbone agency or organization with the authority, insight, and funding needed to coordinate and align investments and programming across state agencies and education systems. This leadership structure is needed to guide collaboration at the state and regional level, coordinate and attract new funding streams, facilitate ongoing labor market research, influence and support the redesign of the Career Technical Education Standards, support teacher recruitment and ongoing training, coordinate dual enrollment and work-based learning, and effectively recruit and engage students.

Promising Practice Profile

Included in the white paper are seven Promising Practice Profiles. Each offers a case study of programs that elevate high-quality green career education for students within a school, district, county, or region.

Featured Profiles Include:

1. San Mateo County Office of Education's Green Career Awareness Program
2. Porterville Unified School District, Supported by Climate Action Pathways for Schools (CAPS)
3. High Tech High International: The Fight for Clean Air, and Becoming Environmental Scientists Along the Way
4. Environmental Innovation Academy at Oceanside High School
5. Roots of Success: Preparing Youth for Environmental Literacy and Careers in Schools, Job Training, and Carceral Settings
6. Rising Sun Center for Opportunity
7. Water and Energy Education Alliance (WEEA)



SNAPSHOT

Promising Practice Profile #2

Porterville Unified School District, Supported by Climate Action Pathways for Schools (CAPS)

Climate Action Pathways for Schools (CAPS) partners with under-resourced districts to lower costs, reduce emissions, and enhance climate literacy.

Starting with Porterville Unified School District, CAPS now operates in seven districts, providing students with knowledge, leadership skills, and paid internships. Porterville's program began in 2019, focusing on energy conservation, solar system optimization, and reducing transportation emissions. Student interns have been instrumental in managing energy projects and promoting sustainable practices. This program saved the district \$850,000 in energy costs and cut emissions by 28% within two years. Ninety-eight interns have participated, with 99% pursuing green careers post-graduation.

Porterville Unified School District Demographics

County:	Tulare
Number of Students:	14,752
Student Race/Ethnicity:	83% Hispanic 10% white 2% Native Indian or Alaskan Native 1.2% Asian Less than 1% all others
Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch:	83%

**Demographics here are only a snapshot of what is included in the full report*

What to Expect



Lead Organization:

Ten Strands on behalf of the Green Career Innovation Hub of the California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI)

Lead Author:

Emily Courtney, Good Green Work

Included in the full report:

- Part 1: The Need for Green Career Education
- Part 2: Vision for Educating for a Green Economy
- Part 3: Challenges of Educating for a Green Economy
- Part 4: Recommendations for Educating for a Green Economy
- Conclusion

Appendices:

- Promising Practices Profiles
- Key Funding Sources
- Labor Market Data and Current Gaps
- Policies and Programs that are Driving Demand for Green Jobs
- Curricular Resources Available on California Educators Together
- Age and Stage Green Career Pathway Recommendations
- K12 Strong Workforce Program Grant Funding for Green Career Programs
- CTE System Map
- Key Definitions

Download the full report

Visit the CAELI website to download the full report for free.

[Bit.ly/ca_green_careers](https://bit.ly/ca_green_careers)



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY INITIATIVE
GREEN CAREERS REPORT 2024

Call to Action

In summary, "Call to Action: Educating for a Green Economy" calls for concerted efforts to integrate and support green career education in California's educational and workforce development systems, aligned with California environmental policies and industry needs to empower students for a sustainable and equitable future.

Through statewide coordination and substantial, targeted investment in developing green skills for in-demand careers, we can collaboratively establish high-impact green career pathway programs. These efforts will empower California to cultivate a thriving green economy that is prosperous, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.

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Prepared by



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