

988 Districts, Millions of Students: California by the Numbers¹



January 2026

334

school districts serve fewer than 500 students.

1

school district serves over 400,000 students.

[LAUSD]

414

school districts operate three or fewer schools.

4

school districts operate over 100 schools.

[LAUSD, Fresno Unified, San Diego Unified, San Francisco Unified]



39% of districts in CA are rural.



46% of students are in city districts—a larger percentage than in any other locality.

515 Elementary School Districts

76 High School Districts

345 Unified School Districts⁴



Eight out of ten students are students of color.

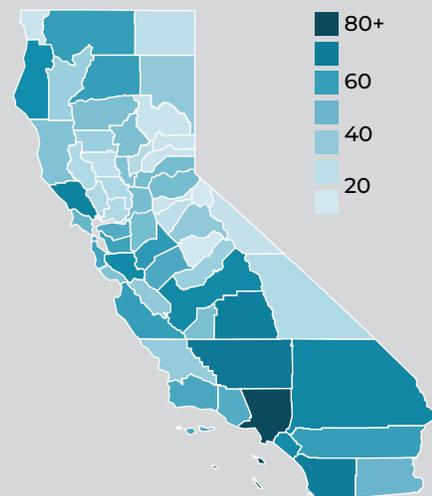


Six out of ten students are part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).²



Two out of ten students are multilingual learners (MLLs).³

Number of Districts by County



Turn insights into action.
Contact us: info@cemd.org

1. SOURCE—US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Local 2. Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey", 2022-23 v.1a, 2023-24 v.1a. (ELSI - Elementary and Secondary Information System)
2. The NSLP is a commonly-used proxy for economic need.
3. The term MLL is used interchangeably with the federally-defined English-language learner (ELL), in order to highlight the strengths of students learning multiple languages simultaneously.
4. SOURCE—California Department of Education, Public Schools and Districts Data Files (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sj/ds/pubschls.asp>)