

Summary: Education in California

Education for All

California's Constitution discussed public schools. Most citizens wanted schools for everyone. But many communities didn't have enough money to pay for schools. In 1863, John Swett became head of the state's public school. He believed that taxes could pay the costs of building and running public schools.

Today, with more than 6 million students attending public school, California has the largest number of public school students of any state. To make it easier to run the schools, the state's schools are divided into districts. The Los Angeles Unified school district is the largest in California, with 750,000 students. Times have changed since schools were just a single room and students of all grades sat together with one teacher. The only subjects taught in those days were reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic.

The University System

California's public schools include colleges and universities. The state has the largest system of state colleges and universities in the United States. The University of California, started in 1868, was the state's first public university. Today the public university system includes many other colleges and universities.

Colleges and universities prepare people for many different types of jobs, such as in state government, businesses, factories, and research labs. Well-educated workers help keep the economy strong by providing the state and businesses with well-qualified individuals. Colleges and universities also do important research that improves the health, safety, and well-being of all citizens.

California residents who cannot afford college can get grant money to help them pay tuition and fees. Students who want to be teachers can also get grants. Students with high grades in high school may be able to get scholarships.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

public *adjective*, for the people

tax *noun*, money people pay to the government

school district *noun*, an organization that builds and runs public schools for students living in a certain area

university *noun*, made up of different colleges that offer programs in many subjects

After You Read

REVIEW How does California pay for its public schools? Highlight the sentence that answers this question.

REVIEW In what ways do California's colleges and universities make the economy strong? Box the paragraph that explains how schools of higher education help the economy.