



Penner for Governor: Committed to Returning the American Dream of Social Mobility

The Penner Education Plan: Inspiring and Rewarding Academic Success

Plan Highlights

- **Direct Family Incentive:** For students who receive a passing score of 70% or higher, their families will receive \$5,000.
- **Targeted for social mobility:** This program will be solely for families with income levels at or below the poverty line will be eligible to register their children beginning with kindergarten and through 12th grade¹
- **Annual Academic Assessment:** Students will take the Governor's Exam at the end of each school year.
- **Future Performance-Based Opportunities:** As a later phase of the plan's rollout, we anticipate providing students who have displayed distinguished excellence with additional opportunities, including business mentorship programs and paid internships during high school, and priority access to state-sponsored educational initiatives.
- **Community and Business Partnerships:** In the spirit of the Penner Administration's commitment to igniting public-private partnerships, this plan will partner with state businesses and nonprofits for educational, mentorship, internship, scholarship, and career exposure programs.

California in Crisis

California ranks near the bottom: **38th in math, 33rd in reading**². Shockingly half of our students cannot read at grade level and fewer can do math at grade level. Too many of our young people are leaving school unprepared and without the tools necessary to succeed in life. **Our kids deserve better — and this crisis can't be ignored.** California's future depends on preparing every child to reach their full potential. Together, we can demand accountability, restore excellence in our schools, and ensure that every child has an opportunity to thrive.

Our leaders have either ignored this forming crisis or have taken the intellectually lazy path of blaming the teachers. The Penner Administration is not going to play the blame



game but instead will design win-win solutions based on careful and thoughtful observations. We see that today's gaping wealth and income gaps have disheartened too many in our society, especially those from lower income families who have given up on the notion of the American Dream. This is the only explanation possible for the dreadful school performance statistics of too many of our youth who come from those same lower-income families.

This Penner Education Plan is designed to re-ignite their belief in social mobility. It will communicate to them that society has not forgotten about them and has not given up on them and especially not their children, who we need to be full partners in California's economic future. By rewarding academic performance, we will inspire these families to once again believe that social mobility is available to them. The Penner Education Plan is designed to foster a deep bond between parents and students, in full partnership with teachers, to prepare their children for a lifetime of success and fulfillment.

Plan Benefits: Inspires Excellence, Combats Poverty, Opens Doors to Success

- Motivates students by tying academic achievement to real, immediate benefits for their families.³
- Encourage parental involvement in education, which is proven to boost academic outcomes.
- Make more accessible mentorship, internships and career opportunities for students striving for excellence.
- Democratize access to mentorships, internships, and career opportunities for high-achieving students.
- Attack poverty by getting more disposable income into the hands of lower-income families
- Rekindle faith in the American Dream of social mobility by inspiring academic achievement and equipping students with the tools, habits, and mindset needed for success.

Endnotes

1. [Public Policy Institute of California, Student Achievement on California's K–12 Assessments, December 2022. Proficiency rates declined by 4 percentage points in English Language Arts and 6.4 percentage points in math compared to pre-pandemic levels.](#)
2. [National Assessment of Educational Progress, State Profiles, 2022. California ranks 38th in math and 33rd in reading among all states and Washington, D.C.](#)



3. Incentive-based learning programs have been shown to improve attendance, test scores, and student motivation.