

PARTICIPANTS

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is a leading expert on public opinion and survey methodology, and has directed the PPIC Statewide Survey since 1998. He is an authority on elections, voter behavior, and political and fiscal reform, authoring ten books and numerous reports on these topics. He often provides testimony before legislative committees and state commissions, and regularly hosts PPIC's Speaker Series, a public forum featuring in-depth interviews with state and national leaders. Previously, he served as PPIC's director of research. Before joining PPIC, he was a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of California, Irvine, where he held the Johnson Chair in Civic Governance. He has conducted surveys for the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the California Business Roundtable. He holds a PhD in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Tony Thurmond is the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, overseeing the largest public school system in the nation with more than 6.3 million students and over 10,000 schools. His top priority is improving equity, access, and opportunity for California's public school students. He has created initiatives focused on closing the achievement gap for the state's most vulnerable students, and he is dedicated to supporting educators in delivering an equitable education to all students. Previously, he represented District 15 in the Assembly, where he served on the Education, Health, and Human Services Committees and chaired the Labor Committee and the Select Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education. He authored legislation to expand the free lunch program, bilingual education, and the Chafee Grant college scholarship program for foster youth. His legislation also guaranteed preferential voting rights for student school board members, improved access to families for early education and childcare, and shifted millions of dollars directly from prisons to schools. He has served as a fellow in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship program. He is a graduate and former student body president of Temple University, and he holds dual master's degrees in law and social policy and social work from Bryn Mawr College.