

From the EdSource Guide to the Local Control Funding Formula

The funding law requires that in return for greater control over how they spend state funds, districts must involve parents and the public in setting academic goals and in linking expenditures to those goals. Districts must also subsequently share data on whether the spending achieved the desired results at the school site and district levels for all students and for student subgroups receiving additional dollars. The requirement that instructional and budget goals be tied together through a community process marks a fundamental shift in budgeting in California.

The framework for doing this will be the Local Control and Accountability Plan or LCAP, a three-year plan, which must be updated annually, that every district must create. In January 2014, after multiple revisions, the [State Board approved an LCAP template](#) that all districts must use, starting July 1 with the 2014-15 budget year.

After writing the plan, the school superintendent will present it to a District Parent Advisory Committee and — if English learners constitute 15 percent of a district's enrollment or at least 50 students — an English Learner Parent Advisory Committee. The superintendent must not only listen to the suggestions, but also

respond in writing to the advisory committees' recommendations before adopting the final plan following a second public hearing.

The school board must invite comments and recommendations at a public hearing and also reach out to parents and community members for recommendations. Beyond the minimum levels of parental involvement the State Board is requiring, parents on their own can press their school boards to be more inclusive in writing their local plans.

What's in the Local Control and Accountability Plan

The 12-page template contains three sections:

1. Community engagement: The funding law requires that a school district document how it reached out not only parents but also to guardians of foster children, parents of English learners, community organizations, teachers unions and students. While not dictating how districts should do this, the template's guiding questions imply that the engagement should occur early in the process and be genuine and comprehensive: Did the engagement occur early in the process to allow for meaningful discussions? What information and metrics did the district provide parents and members of the district advisory committee? What changes were made to the district's LCAP as a result of the suggestions it received? Did it listen to school site councils, which will continue to meet and make recommendations for their schools, as before?

2. Goal and progress updates: The LCAP requires that districts set annual goals covering multiple measures of school and student performance as defined by eight broad priorities set by the Legislature. Districts must update the progress annually toward meeting their objectives, using data and metrics, some of which, such as graduation and student suspension rates, were cited in the funding law.

Districts must cite how the goals will apply to each subgroup of high-needs students, as well as to all students. If individual schools have different goals, the LCAP must include those. The goals should cover all eight state priorities (see below).

3. Actions and expenditures: The LCAP spreadsheet then asks for a full listing of programs and services that a district will provide, along with the costs, to implement each of its goals. The district must include a separate breakdown for foster youth, low-income students, English learners and redesignated fluent English proficient students. The district must specify – and justify – if money earmarked for high-needs students is being used for a districtwide or schoolwide purpose. The combined expenditures should equal the amount, determined by a formula, earmarked that year for high-needs students. The LCAP should illustrate how the money spent increases or improves services for those students.

The LCAP will be a three-year plan that must be updated

annually. After writing the plan, the school superintendent will present it to a District Parent Advisory Committee and — if English learners constitute 15 percent of a district's enrollment or at least 50 students — an English Learner Parent Advisory Committee. The school board must invite comments and recommendations at a public hearing and also reach out to parents and community members for recommendations.

The superintendent must not only listen to the suggestions, but also respond in writing to the recommendations of the parent and English learner advisory committees before adopting the final plan following a second public hearing.

The LCAP is a planning tool that is intended to encourage a year-long process, starting in the fall and culminating in the adoption of the plan and the district budget in May or June. If the process is working as intended, the superintendent and school board will solicit and incorporate ideas and priorities suggested by the district advisory committees, school site councils, parents and the public at large. Those districts that made the mistake of waiting for the State Board to adopt the LCAP template in January 2014 to jumpstart the process face a compressed schedule for adopting the initial LCAP in June 2014, and may have to scramble to set up the advisory committees and gather feedback called for in the plan.

Deadlines and Milestones

The next several years are crucial, requiring parents, community members, school boards and the State Board of Education to play their respective roles in shaping the outcomes for individual school districts.



TOWARD BROADER MEASURES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Districts will be held accountable, not just for test scores but also for results in eight priority areas.



Eight Priority Areas

The LCAP groups the eight state priorities into three categories:

Conditions of learning:

- Access to core services as measured by the extent to which students are taught by fully credentialed teachers, have

- standards-aligned textbooks and materials, and attend classes in safe and clean facilities.
- Implementation of state standards, including the Common Core and the Next Generation Science Standards, for all students, and implementation of the new Common-Core aligned English language development standards for English learners.
 - Access to a broad course of study and programs for high-needs and exceptional students: One measure will be levels of enrollment in all required courses for admittance to a 4-year state university.

Pupil outcomes:

- Student achievement as measured by performance on standardized tests, the Academic Performance Index, the proportion of students who are "college and career ready," the percentage of English learners who are reclassified as fluent in English, the share of high school students who pass Advanced Placement course exams with a score of at least a 3 out of 5, and other measures.
- Other student outcomes as measured by performance in other required areas of study such as physical education and the arts. Other forms of assessments, such as SAT or ACT college entrance examination scores of high school students, could also be included.

Engagement:

- Student engagement as measured by graduation and middle and high school dropout rates, chronic absenteeism and attendance.
- Parent involvement as measured by the extent to which parents participate in key school decisions.

School climate as measured by suspension and expulsion rates, and other measures as defined by local school districts.