

Two Years of California's Local Control Funding Formula: Time to Reaffirm the Grand Vision

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Research Questions

- How are districts allocating LCFF resources?
- What are the supports and strategies for the target student populations?
- What is the status of Local Control and Accountability Plans?
- How is stakeholder engagement being implemented?
- What are the implementation and capacity challenges?
- What are the policy implications?

Data Collection: 2014, 2015

- 216 interviews in case districts

Respondent type	# of Interviews (2014)	# of Interviews (2015)	Total interviews (2014 & 2015)
District staff	51	70	121
COE staff	9	15	24
School bd. member	6	7	13
Union member	7	22	29
Parent	7	12	19
Community orgs.	0	6	6
<i>Total interviews conducted</i>	80	136	216

Data Collection: 2014, 2015

- Interviews with staff in 36 of the state's 58 COEs

	# COEs interviewed (of 58 total in CA)	# Districts served (of 949 total in CA)
2014 interviews	20	405
2015 interviews	27	539
Total unduplicated interview count	36	701

- Reviews of 85 LCAPs
- Consultation with a range of state policy officials.

Continued Enthusiasm, But Nagging Concerns

“What is wonderful [about the LCFF] is the idea that funding is linked to what we do in our community, for our students, and is linked to the outcomes. The onus is on us to do it well.” (District administrator)

“I’ve been worried all along that the local is going to be the small ‘l’ and control is going to be the big ‘C’ in this whole process as it evolves.” (District administrator)

LCAP Woes

“Unwieldy”

“A nuisance”

“Self-defeating”

“A beast of a document”

“The LCAP doesn’t allow a district to create a narrative.”

“In theory [the LCAP] is a collaborative document that brings together parents, students, staff, community, civil rights groups, and board members to talk about where [we are], where we want to be, and how we get there. It’s about setting goals and looking at progress ...to see how close we are to reaching those goals. The template doesn’t lend itself to that.”

(District administrator)

LCAP Plagued by 5 Challenges

- Insufficient clarity about purpose
- Confusion about what funds to include
- The endless cycle
- Compliance orientation
- Lack of transparency and accessibility

Community Engagement: The Loudest Voices or All Voices?

- Variety of strategies employed to solicit stakeholder input
- Less engagement but more advocacy in year 2
- Adversarial model of engagement precluded discussion about the “common good” and equity
- School board members not particularly active or informed
- Lack of public awareness may be complicating efforts

Implementation and Capacity Challenges

- One size doesn't fit all
- Cultural shifts are hard
- Local context: District and community relations
- COE roles and capacity
- Looming teacher shortages
- Capacity building and role of the CCEE

Policy Implications: *State Policymakers*

- Use the bully pulpit to reaffirm the purpose of LCFF
- No immediate changes, unless they reduce burden
- Simplify the LCAP, and consider replacing it in the future
- Clarify districts' options and promote promising practices
- Attend to looming, big-picture problems that threaten the successful implementation of LCFF

Policy Implications: *County Offices*

- Support over compliance
- Calibrate the message
- Calibrate the LCAP approval process

Policy Implications: *Districts*

- Try to move beyond a compliance mentality as you implement LCFF
- Re-define meaningful community engagement
- Over time, consider ways to move local control down to the school level

Conclusion:

Reaffirming the Grand Vision

“This governor and this state board [of education] did something that has never been done in the United States without a court case. It changed the distribution mechanism from an equality formula to an equity formula. ...I think that that unto itself is noteworthy, stunning, and amazing.” (Superintendent)