



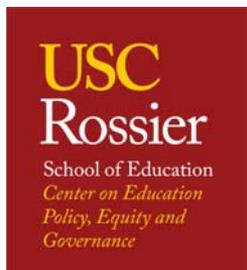
The Equity Promise of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

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My goals today

- What do we mean by equity?
- How does LCFF intend to advance equity?
- Is LCFF playing out as intended?
- What more could be done?

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What do we mean by equity?

- Fair or just distributions or social conditions



What do we mean by equity?

	Libertarian	Liberal	Democratic Liberal	Transformative
<i>Equity is...</i>	Fair competition	Equal opportunity	Universal high performance	Freedom from oppression
<i>Greater resources should go to...</i>	Gifted & advanced students	Disadvantaged students	Under-performing students	Marginalized students
<i>Equity is achieved through...</i>	A fair process to determine merit	Meeting needs to create a level playing field	Closing gaps to achieve high standards	Changing oppressive structures & promoting empowerment

Allbright, T., Marsh, J., Hall, Tobben, L, M., Picus, L., & Lavadenz, M. Conceptualizing equity in the implementation of California education finance reform. (paper under review)

What do we mean by equity?

- For years, school finance policies and court decisions have tried to remedy disparities between districts
 - Horizontal equity: same resources for same needs (equal per-pupil funding)
 - Vertical equity: greater resources for greater needs (weighted funding offering more resources based on student characteristics)

LCFF's equity intent

- LCFF passed in 2013 with a clear equity mandate – emphasizing vertical and horizontal equity
- Fair and just treatment of students with greater academic needs requires the provision of additional resources

“..... A child in a family making \$20,000 a year or speaking a language different from English or living in a foster home requires more help. Equal treatment for children in unequal situations is not justice.”

- Governor Brown, January 2013 State of the State

LCFF fits with liberal conceptions of equity

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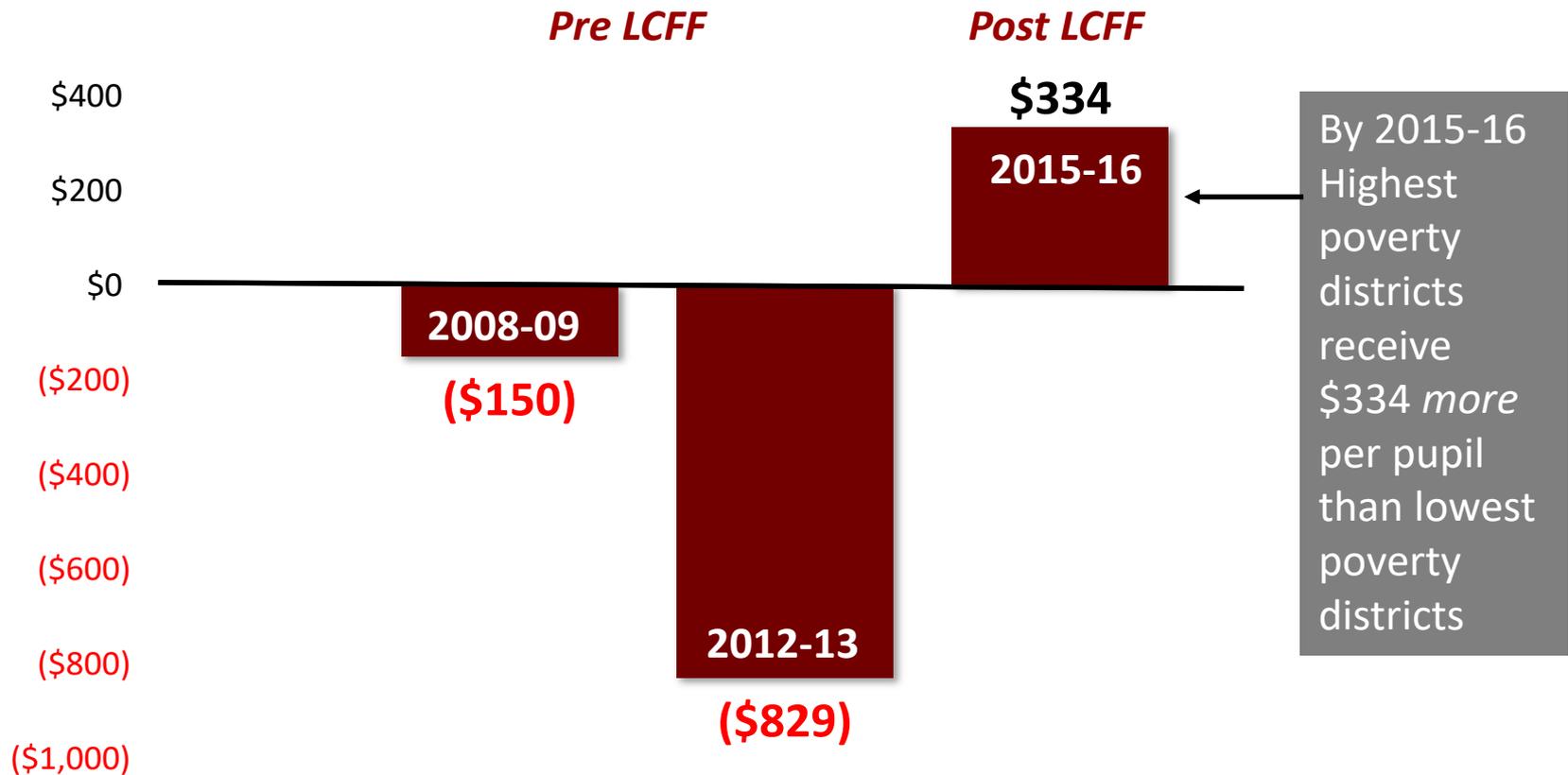
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Highest poverty districts are receiving more state/local funds than lowest poverty districts

Revenue gap per pupil between highest poverty and lowest poverty districts



Inconclusive evidence on outcomes

- Some report achievement gaps between high and low needs students are increasing (CalMatters, 2017)
- + Others report improved student outcomes, such as suspension, graduation, admission to CSU for subgroups (Fullan & Rincon-Gallardo, 2017)

Still others argue more time is needed before LCFF translates into improved outcomes

Mixed evidence on services/opportunities

- + Some evidence of increased access to services & opportunities in high-need schools (EdTrust West, 2017)
 - Improvements in student-to-staff ratios
- Yet signs that students in low-income schools/districts are *not* consistently seeing improved services & opportunities (EdTrust West, 2017)
 - Less access to support personnel, rigorous curriculum
- Lack of data on expenditures makes this hard to gauge
 - Proposed reporting changes in Governor's new budget could help here

Policy ambiguity contributes to implementation challenges

- Advocacy groups argue districts are not properly using & justifying use of supplemental/concentration funds
 - “Principally directed” language & “effective” use of funds (Public Advocates)
- LCFF Research Collaborative found variation in district-level conceptions of equity (Humphrey et al., 2017)
 - Most viewed LCFF as a mechanism to distribute more resources to students with greater needs; some adopted different approaches
 - These conceptions shaped their approach to resource allocation ...

Contrasting approaches to equity

District 1: *greater resources for students with greater needs*

- used LCFF funds for targeted staffing, adding staff at high-unduplicated schools and cutting back staff at more affluent campuses
- Consistent with the intent of LCFF

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District 1: *greater resources for students with greater needs*

→ used LCFF funds for targeted staffing, adding staff at high-unduplicated schools and cutting back staff at more affluent campuses

→ Consistent with the intent of LCFF

“Here we talk about giving each student what they need, not an equal amount of money or service or dollar.”

Superintendent

Contrasting approaches to equity

District 1: *greater resources for students with greater needs*

- used LCFF S&C funds for targeted staffing, adding staff at high-unduplicated schools and cutting back staff at more affluent campuses
- Consistent with the intent of LCFF

District 2: *greater resources/greater needs & equal resources for all*

- used LCFF funds for services benefiting all students (e.g., district-wide PD, SAT fees) with some targeted spending for high-unduplicated schools
- Partially at odds with the intent of LCFF

Contrasting approaches to equity

“[LCFF] seems like reverse equity, because [some schools are] not Title I...when people think of equity they think of the underserved...our students [in mid-unduplicated schools] are just as in need as the students in [high-unduplicated schools].”

Principal

District 2: *greater resources/greater needs & equal resources for all*

→ used LCFF funds for services benefiting all students (e.g., district-wide PD, SAT fees) with some targeted spending for high-unduplicated schools

→ Partially at odds with the intent of LCFF

Limited stakeholder engagement may also play a part

- LCFF policy assumes engagement will ensure accountability and advance equity goals
- Yet research suggests significant variation and challenges with engagement requirement (Humphrey et al., 2017; Marsh & Hall, 2017)
 - Low levels of participation
 - Limited depth of engagement
 - Concerns about “loudest voices” dominating
 - Low public awareness (PACE/Rossier poll)
 - Limited capacity among districts & community

Constraints pre-dating LCFF have not been addressed

- Increasing costs reported to constrain ability to adjust or innovate with resource allocation strategies
 - Retirement benefits, Special Education, health care
- Lack of adequate funding widely reported
 - Clearly shaping district allocation decisions, in ways that could conflict with LCFF equity goals

(Humphrey et al., 2017; EdTrust West, 2017)

Constraints pre-dating LCFF have not been addressed

“School adequacy, I think that that really is the elephant in the room. There lacks adequacy to fulfill all of our obligations.”

Central Office Administrator

- Lack of adequate funding widely reported
 - Clearly shaping district allocation decisions, in ways that could conflict with LCFF equity goals

(Humphrey et al., 2017; EdTrust West, 2017)

While support for LCFF equity goals is strong ...

PACE/USC Rossier Poll

The LCFF provides additional funding to school districts that have more English-language learners, lower-income students, foster youth, and homeless youth and gives local school districts more flexibility over how state funding is spent. In general, do you favor or oppose this policy?

Percent of California voters strongly or somewhat supportive



Some pressure is mounting for change

- Some groups are concerned about lack of transparency around spending & choices
 - Proposed reporting changes in new budget could help
- Some districts raise questions about color-blind policy
 - If data show a racial/ethnic group is struggling, supplemental/concentration funds cannot be used for targeted supports

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“In a district like ours where it's 79% of our students being Hispanic, identifying them as specific group to serve is really important. But yet, if I write and say, "Hispanic students go to college in a much lower rate than white or Asian students, there's a gap in performance," technically, that wouldn't necessarily be an approvable expenditure for our county to approve as using supplement and concentration dollars for.”

- *Central Office Administrator*

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- Some groups are concerned about lack of transparency around spending & choices
 - Proposed reporting changes in new budget could help
- Some districts raise questions about color-blind policy
 - If data show a racial/ethnic group is struggling, supplemental/concentration funds cannot be used for targeted supports
 - Yet, it's not clear if a race-conscious approach is feasible or if the public favors one.

What more could be done to ensure a more authentic pursuit of equity?

- Address broader funding issues: overall allocations, rising costs of retirement benefits, special education, health care
- Clarify equity goals and intent: underlying equity conception and regulations (e.g., principally directed)
- Consider allowing use of LCFF funds for one or more locally determined subgroups (e.g., racial/ethnic subgroup that is low-performing)
- Build capacity of community stakeholders to engage in LCFF/LCAP process

Thank you!

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