

7 Steps to Size Up Your School District's Local Control Accountability Plan

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We're heading into the home stretch of the school year. That means that school districts (and charter schools) throughout the state are releasing drafts of their spending and academic plans, called Local Control Accountability Plans or LCAPs. Districts must develop these multi-year plans with community input under the landmark school finance law known as [Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\)](#).

While this lengthy LCAP document might make for suitable bedtime reading — with some thick enough to lay your head on — don't be discouraged! You can conquer this plan day by day. Here is a list of 7 steps to guide you through the document. Take on one a day, and in a week, you'll be the neighborhood expert on your school district's LCAP. Use this new expertise to make sure your district budget responds to priority educational needs and reflects community engagement!

Without further ado, here are 7 steps for sizing up your LCAP. Please click on each tip for more guidance!

1. Assess whether the plan reflects Meaningful Community Engagement.
2. Analyze the Annual Update for 2014-15.
Did the district follow through on its plans?
3. Review the Goals & Actions for 2015-16.
Do you agree with these goals and strategies?
4. Review what actions the district plans to take to improve outcomes for high-need students.
5. Monitor the Money. Does the district clearly describe spending required to implement actions?
6. If the district is only including a sliver of its total LCFF dollars for 2014-15, ask why and press for greater transparency.
7. Make sure the district is using funds generated by high-need students to improve the education for those students.

VIEW OUR WEBINAR: To learn how to Monitor the Money, view the recording of [our recent webinar](#): Ensuring Targeted Services Reach High Needs Students.

Now for the details ...

1. **Assess whether the plan reflects Meaningful Community Engagement?**

- How will the district share out its draft plan and get feedback? Is outreach well publicized and designed to engage community?
- In Section 1 of the plan, does the district describe how it consulted with parents and caregivers, students and other stakeholders? How did community impact the plan?

Implementation Process	Impact on LCAP
Annual Update:	Annual Update:

- Did the district use a Parent Advisory Committee and an English Learner Parent Advisory Committee (if it has more than 15% English Learners), which is required by law?
- Did the district meet the minimum requirements to consult with students and what was the result?
- Is the draft plan translated and did the district provide translation at engagement meetings?
- Does the description of engagement match up with your experience?
- Remember, the superintendent *must* present the draft LCAP to the Parent or District Advisory Committee and the English Learner Parent Advisory Committee or District English Learner Advisory Committee (if applicable) for review and comment.

2. **Analyze the Annual Update for 2014-15. Did the district follow through on its plans?**

Now skip ahead to Section 2, and flip past pages of goals and actions for the next three years. Stop at the *Annual Update* table. For each goal from last year's LCAP, the school district must report on all the actions it had planned. Because this will likely be a long document, suitable for sleepy bedtime reading, start by focusing on the goals that are most important for you and community.

Annual Update

Annual Update Instructions: For each goal in the prior year LCAP, review the progress toward the expected annual outcome(s) based on, at a minimum, the required metrics pursuant to Education Code sections 52060 and 52066. The review must include an assessment of the effectiveness of the specific actions. Describe any changes to the actions or goals the LEA will take as a result of the review and assessment. In addition, review the applicability of each goal in the LCAP.

- Does the district explain in the “Actual Annual Measurable Outcomes” whether it made expected progress?

Original GOAL from prior year LCAP	Related State and/or Local Priorities: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. COE only: 9. 10. Local: Specify _____	
Goal Applies to:	Schools	Applicable Pupil Subgroups
Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes		Actual Annual Measurable Outcomes

- Review the left-hand side list of “Planned Actions/Services” and identify priority actions and services.
- Now check, on the right-hand side, under “Actual Actions/Services,” did the district follow through? Did it spend the amount it had budgeted?
- If this action was to take place at school sites, what was your experience with this strategy at your school?
- If not, does the district explain why an action or service was not taken or funded?

LCAP Year 2014-15			
Planned Actions/Services		Actual Actions/Services	
	Budgeted Expenditures		Estimated Actual Annual Expenditures

- Finally, in the bottom box, does the district explain what it plans to do differently? Do you agree or have advice based on your experiences with these actions and services?

What changes in actions, services, and expenditures will be made as a result of reviewing past progress and/or changes to goals?	
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3. Review the Goals, Actions, Expenditures & Progress Indicators for 2015-16.

Now flip back to the first part of Section 2 to review what the district plans to do over the next three years. We recommend focusing especially on Year 1: 2015-16.

- Do you agree with the goals that are listed? Are any missing? Identify the goals that are priority for you and your community and drill down deeper.

- Below each goal, the school district must identify expected annual outcomes. Do you agree with these outcomes? Are they ambitious enough? Do they focus on students with greatest needs?
- Then under “Actions/Services,” the district should list *all* actions and services it plans to take in support of that particular goal. Do you agree with these strategies? Are there any that you believe are missing or should be changed?

GOAL:	Related State and/or Local Priorities 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ 6__ 7__ 8__ COE only: 9__ 10__ Local Specify: _____		
	Identified Need: _____		
Goal Applies to:	Schools: _____ Applicable Pupil Subgroups: _____		
LCAP Year 1: 2015-16			
Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes:	_____		
Actions/Services	Scope of Service	Pupils to be served within identified scope of service	Budgeted Expenditures
		<input type="checkbox"/> ALL OR: <input type="checkbox"/> Low Income pupils <input type="checkbox"/> English Learners <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Youth <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Redesignated Fluent English proficient <input type="checkbox"/> Other Subgroups (Specify): _____	

- Bonus question: When reviewing all of its goals, does the district address all required [eight state priorities](#) and metrics? (See the checklist on the upper right corner of each goal table.)

GOAL:	Related State and/or Local Priorities 1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ 6__ 7__ 8__ COE only: 9__ 10__ Local Specify: _____		
	Identified Need: _____		
Goal Applies to:	Schools: _____ Applicable Pupil Subgroups: _____		
LCAP Year 1: 2015-16			

4. Review what actions the district plans to take to improve outcomes for high-need students.

You can tell what student populations are being served by looking at what options are checked in the box titled “Pupils to be served within identified scope of service.” What is the district planning to do specifically for:

- English Learners?
- Socio-economically impacted or low-income students?
- Foster Youth?
- Other vulnerable populations or subgroups?
- Are these in line with community expectations *and is there sufficient funding?*

GOAL:	Related State and/or Local Priorities: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. CDE only: 9. 10. Local Specify:		
Identified Need:			
Goal Applies to:	Schools: _____ Applicable Pupil Subgroups: _____		
Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes:	LCAP Year 1: 2015-16		
	Actions/Services	Scope of Service	Pupils to be served within identified scope of service ALL OR Low Income pupils _____ English Learners _____ Foster Youth _____ Redesignated fluent English proficient _____ Other Subgroups (Specify) _____ ALL
			Budgeted Expenditures

5. Monitor the Money. Does the district clearly describe spending required to implement actions?

- For each listed action, does the district describe “Budgeted Expenditures” in dollars?
- Does it explain what kind of funding is being used? For example, LCFF, Title I, Common Core Block Grant or a foundation grant?
- For LCFF funds, does the district explain when it is using “LCFF base,” which is available for all students, versus “LCFF Supplemental & Concentration” funds which must be used to increase/improves services for high-need students?

Actions/Services	Scope of Service	Pupils to be served within identified scope of service	Budgeted Expenditures
		ALL OR Low Income pupils _____ English Learners _____ Foster Youth _____ Redesignated fluent English proficient _____ Other Subgroups (Specify) _____ ALL	

6. If the district is only including a sliver of its total LCFF dollars for 2014-15, ask why and press for greater transparency.

Are all the LCFF dollars the district receives included in the plan? Ask district staff for the total LCFF dollars in projected revenue for 2015-16. (This should match the amount contained in the district’s Adopted Budget for 2015-16 which must be reviewed/approved at the same meetings as the LCAP). Then ask how much LCFF spending is reflected in Year 1: 2015-16 of the LCAP. The LCAP is supposed to be a *comprehensive plan* that covers what a district is doing across its entire educational program. If the district is only including a sliver of its LCFF funding, ask why and press for greater transparency.

7. Make sure the district is using funds generated by high-need students to improve the education for those students.

School districts now receive dollars called “supplemental and concentration funds” that are specifically intended to improve outcomes for low-income, English learner and foster youth students (also referred to as high-need students). You can learn more about the

proper use of these funds by viewing [our recorded webinar](#) on Monitoring the Money. Turn now to Section 3 of the LCAP.

Section 3: Use of Supplemental and Concentration Grant Funds and Proportionality

- A. In the box below, identify the amount of funds in the LCAP year calculated on the basis of the number and concentration of low income, foster youth, and English learner pupils as determined pursuant to 5 CCR 15496(a)(5). Describe how the LEA is expending these funds in the LCAP year. Include a description of, and justification for, the use of any funds in a districtwide, schoolwide, countywide, or charterwide manner as specified in 5 CCR 15496. For school districts with below 55 percent of enrollment of unduplicated pupils in the district or below 40 percent of enrollment of unduplicated pupils at a school site in the LCAP year, when using supplemental and concentration funds in a districtwide or schoolwide manner, the school district must additionally describe how the services provided are the most effective use of funds to meet the district's goals for unduplicated pupils in the state and any local priority areas. (See 5 CCR 15496(b) for guidance.)

Total amount of Supplemental and Concentration grant funds calculated:	\$	
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- In Section 3.A, does the district list the total amount of Supplemental and Concentration funds? (It can be hard to figure out how the district reached this number. Feel free to [contact Public Advocates](#) for help.)
- Is there a clear description of how the district is spending Supplemental and Concentration funds this year? Do any of these uses sound funny to you? Examples of things to watch for: spending on special education services, spending on [staff salary increases](#), spending on debt payments. Public Advocates has [guides](#) on some of these questionable practices.
- Where the district plans to spend these funds on services for the entire district or for an entire school, it has to give a good explanation. Does the district explain how the services are “principally directed” towards reaching its goals for high-need students? Does the district explain how the services will be effective?
- If the district has less than 55% high-need students (or a school has less than 40%), does the district describe how the services are the “most effective use” of funds to increase/improve services for those high-need students?

- B. In the box below, identify the percentage by which services for unduplicated pupils must be increased or improved as compared to the services provided to all pupils in the LCAP year as calculated pursuant to 5 CCR 15496(a). Consistent with the requirements of 5 CCR 15496, demonstrate how the services provided in the LCAP year for low income pupils, foster youth, and English learners provide for increased or improved services for these pupils in proportion to the increase in funding provided for such pupils in that year as calculated pursuant to 5 CCR 15496(a)(7). An LEA shall describe how the proportionality percentage is met using a quantitative and/or qualitative description of the increased and/or improved services for unduplicated pupils as compared to the services provided to all pupils.

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- Now turn to Section 3.B. In the % box, does the district give a percentage for how much it must increase or improve services for high-need students as compared to all students? This is called the *proportionality percentage* and it lies at the very heart of LCFF's equity promise to increase resources and improve outcomes for high-need students. Does the district provide the basis for its calculation? If not, ask the district to explain.
- Does the district give a plausible explanation for how it is either adding new services or improving services for low-income students, foster youth and English learners by that percentage?

Phew! You've made it through your school district's LCAP. What have you learned? How can you share this information with your community? Remember, school districts are required to involve their community, especially parents and students, in *developing* the LCAP.