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# A Leap in the Right Direction for California Public Education: The Local Control and Accountability Plan and its Effects on Latino English Learners

Sarah E. Owens  
*Scripps College*

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**A Leap in the Right Direction for California Public Education:  
The Local Control and Accountability Plan and its Effects on Latino English Learners**

By

SARAH ELIZABETH OWENS

SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
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Professor David Menefee-Libey  
Public Policy Analysis

Professor Jennifer Wood  
Hispanic Studies

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ADA – Average Daily Attendance  
API – Academic Performance Index  
AYP – Annual Yearly Progress  
CCEE – California Collaborative for Education Excellence  
CCSS – Common Core State Standards  
CDE – California Department of Education  
CELDT – California English Language Development Test  
COE – County Office of Education  
CUSD – Claremont Unified School District  
DAC – District Advisory Committee  
DELAC – District English Learner Advisory Committee  
EL – English learner  
ELA/ELD – English Language Arts / English Language Development  
ELAC – English Learner Advisory Committee  
ESL – English as a Second Language  
LCAP – Local Control and Accountability Plan  
LCFF – Local Control Funding Formula  
LEA – Local Educational Agency  
LEP – Limited English Proficient  
LI – Low Income  
LTEL – Long Term English Learner  
NCLB – No Child Left Behind  
NGSS- Next Generation Science Standards  
PAC – Parent Advisory Committee  
PBIS – Positive Behavior Intervention System  
PD – Professional Development  
PLC – Professional Learning Community  
RFEP – Reclassified fluent English proficient  
RtI – Response to Intervention  
SARC – School Accountability Report Card  
SBAC – Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium  
SBE – State Board of Education  
SEI – Structured English Immersion  
SPSA – Single Plan for Student Achievement  
TBE – Transitional bilingual education

## **I. Introduction**

### **Inadequate and Inequitable Funding**

The Local Control Funding Formula and the Local Control and Accountability Plan are an effort to remedy an inequitable and inadequate school funding system in California. These twin-policies are significant for the future of public education in the state, for both funding and accountability systems, respectively. This thesis comes after the first full year of LCAP implementation, and is motivated by a desire to understand whether the policy is meeting Governor Brown's and the State Legislature's goals of creating a more adequate and equitable public education system for California's students.

Prior to the 2013-14 academic year, California public schools received state funding through a categorical system. The categorical funding system was complex and fragmented, and school districts received funding from various sources for a wide range of purposes. The state legislature created specific categories, including educational technology, class size reduction, civic education, and school safety; and education funding took a prescriptive approach, with the state dictating what school districts needed to spend money on and how much they could use for each purpose. Funds from the categorical system were highly restrictive and had to be spent for specific purposes. As a result of this system, school districts and county offices of education acted as compliance organizations, dedicating scarce time and resources to showing how they were spending the various categorical funds. Additionally, school districts around the state received vastly different amounts of funding, with districts in wealthier areas benefiting from higher local property tax revenues.

The LCFF is a dramatic change in education funding, not just for its emphasis on local control, but for its awareness of and attention to issues of social justice. Policymakers recognized the significant needs that English Learner/Low Income (EL/LI) and foster youth have and did something to address it. This thesis will explain how there is more to be done to ensure these students receive the education they deserve, while also recognizing that the LCFF/LCAP are a crucial first step toward making California's public education system more adequate and equitable.

California is at a pivotal time in public education and locally controlled education funding is one piece of the puzzle that is the education system. Although there are various policies all being implemented at the same time, I believe the LCAP is central and shows how academic standards, assessments, and funding converge.

Academic standards are also undergoing a major overhaul in the state. California is currently implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the State Board of Education adopted new science and English language development standards in 2014. Districts include the implementation of these standards in their LCAP, so the accountability policy is fundamentally connected to these new academic standards.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) recently created new tests that are aligned to new curriculum and are supposed to present a more complete assessment of what students have learned. The new tests are important for the LCAP because school districts must include metrics about "student achievement" in their strategic plan. As will be discussed later, delayed releases of the new assessments posed some logistical problems for school districts that needed to include measures of student achievement in their LCAP.

## **Policy Background**

The LCFF concept originated from an academic report by a team of policy researchers at Stanford in 2007. Their research report proposed transitioning from a funding system based on categorical grants to one that gives school districts money based on a “Weighted Student Formula” (WSF). Among the group of researchers was Michael Kirst, the current President of the State Board of Education. Kirst was also President of the SBE during Governor Brown’s first term as Governor of California in the 70s and early 80s. Together, Brown and Kirst committed to improving the education funding system in California. Although the idea for the WSF was fully formed by 2007, it did not gain political traction due to the economic recession. After 2008, public schools experienced massive budget cuts and schools in low-income areas were especially hard-hit because they did not have the revenue from local property taxes to fill the major gaps in their budgets.

Governor Brown proposed the WSF in 2012, but it did not move beyond his budget proposal that year. In 2013, Governor Brown had the opportunity to make the WSF idea a reality. Prop 30 passed on the state ballot, and it created an additional revenue source for public education. With the money secured, Brown proposed a new funding formula once more, this time called the Local Control Funding Formula, in his budget. The State Legislature passed the bill and created the LCFF and LCAP.

Proposition 13 was enacted in 1978 and more than 35 years later, Californians are still dealing with its effects. Prop 13 created significant changes in the tax code, and its effects have been consequential for many different policy areas in the state. Due to the connection between property taxes and education spending, Prop 13’s effects are seen



visible in public education spending. Before Proposition 13, per-pupil funding in California was one of the highest. After Prop 13 was passed, school funding in California declined significantly, and now California has the second-lowest per-pupil funding levels in the country.

Proposition 30 was passed in 2013, and was in part a response to Prop 13. Prop 30 was a relatively modest tax, with a temporary increase in sales tax and income tax for upper-income earners. Californians voted for tax increases in order to fund education and other social services, with many younger and lower-income voters turning out for the election. The state needed to find a way to fund the LCFF and found the necessary resources when Prop 30 was passed in 2013. With the additional funds from Prop 30 the LCFF was passed and schools received more funding. Governor Brown said: Governor Brown: “I think this is the only place in America where a state actually said, ‘Let’s raise our taxes for our kids, for our schools, for our California dream.’”

Prop 30 did not raise enough to adequately fund California’s education system, but it kept the state from enacting major budget cuts to education and has been a move in the right direction toward adequately funding the California public education system.

The goal of the law is to reduce inequity in public schools, and it recognizes that providing equal resources to students in unequal situation is not equitable. The LCFF recognizes differences in student populations and acknowledges that low-income students, English learners and foster youth need more support and services than their English-speaking, more affluent peers.

## **English Learners in the LCAP**

The policy's focus on English learners is related to a long history of language policies in the United States and California. This thesis examines why the policy addresses the needs of English learners and explores the history of language policies in the state.

The majority of students in California public schools are Latino, thus it is essential to talk about the population of Latino students and explore the specific needs and educational outcomes of this group. Additionally, a majority of ELs in the state speak Spanish and are Latino. The LCAP's focus on ELs and on identifying needs of student subgroups (potentially by race and ethnicity) allows us to explore what the policy means for Latino students and their families. The LCAP has the potential to create an empowering opportunity for students and parents to participate in the education sphere and in policymaking.

### **Overview**

In this thesis, I outline the LCFF and LCAP and explain their key characteristics. I then present my findings about the first year and half of LCAP implementation, based on research from reports, press coverage, and a case study of Claremont Unified School District. I then recommend a number of ways that the state, county offices of education, and the school district can alter their current practices so that the LCAP reaches its full potential of creating a more equitable education system. Then, I discuss language policies and English learners in California, explaining how ELs, specifically Latino ELs, are affected by the LCAP.

## **Research Questions**

1. Based on the first year and a half of implementation of the Local Control and Accountability Plan, how is the policy meeting the goals of the LCFF and LCAP law to:

- A) Create a more adequate and less fragmented funding system for California public schools, and
- B) Enable public engagement and local control to make the California public education system more equitable.

2. What is the history of English learner policies in California, and how do these policies affect Latino students? What are the potential effects of the LCAP on Latino student achievement and student/parent engagement?

## **II. Chapter 47, Statutes 2013 (AB 97)**

The California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 97 (AB 97) in June 2013 and Governor Brown signed it into law on July 1, 2013. The legislation then became Chapter 47 of the Statutes of 2013. The law created the Local Control Funding Formula by adding and amending sections of the California Education Code (Ed Code), the Government Code, the Health and Safety Code, and the Revenue and Taxation Code. The new funding formula and accountability plan change the way that public schools in California receive and spend education funds.<sup>1</sup>

### **Local Control Funding Formula**

The LCFF eliminated about three-quarters of the existing categorical programs, and streamlined the way that school districts receive funding. Thirty-two categorical programs were eliminated, and 14 categorical programs remain under the LCFF system. The elimination of the categorical programs does not mean that the services school districts used to offer with those funds disappear. School districts can now use money from the LCFF to provide those services as they see fit. The LCFF gives school districts more autonomy and flexibility in how they choose to spend their funds. Every school district has different needs, and the local-control approach allows districts to identify the needs of their students and determine the best way to provide the services they need.

Public schools in California receive state funding based on a per-pupil formula, also known as a weighted student formula. The formula is still fairly complicated because it changes depending on grade level, and the number of English learners, low-income students, and foster youth. The formula seeks to remedy some of the inequity in the

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<sup>1</sup> The LCFF and LCAP also apply to charter schools, but the charter school policies are outside of the scope of this thesis.

public education system. School districts around the state have varying per-pupil expenditure levels because of funding from local property taxes. As a result of funding from property taxes, wealthier school districts tend to spend more per-pupil. This unequal funding exacerbates existing inequities in the state, where more affluent students attend schools with more funding and resources, and students from low-income families attend schools that are under-resourced. Students who are English learners, low-income and foster youth generate 20% more per-pupil based on the rationale that these students should have access to additional resources and services to meet their higher needs. Many ELs, low-income students and foster youth would benefit from having additional services, like tutoring, after school programs, summer school, and designated support personnel. By providing additional funds to these students, the LCFF attempts to correct some of the inequity in the California public school system.

The LCFF also provides a “concentration grant” for school districts that have more than 55% of their student population qualifying as EL/LI. Both supplemental and concentration funds are meant to provide services and programs that benefit EL/LI students. See Figure 1 below for a summary of the different funds.

For the purposes of the LCFF funding, “high-needs” students are English learners, foster youth, and students from low-income families.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, all foster youth in the state of California are qualified as “low-income,” so for the purpose of simplicity, the target student population can be referred to as EL/LI, which stands for English learner/low-income. When the state calculates how much money each school district receives they count how many students are EL/LI. However, the formula is a bit

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<sup>2</sup> Low-income status is determined by eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, which is already reported by schools and is the state data system.

complicated because it uses the number of “unduplicated” students. This phrase means that if a student is both low-income and an English learner, or they are EL and foster youth, they will only be counted once for the purposes of the LCFF fund. Although this funding formula is simpler than the previously complex system of categorical grants, it is still complicated. The LCFF provides state funding to public schools through three funds: base funding, supplemental funding, and concentration funding.

Figure 1

<b>Base Fund</b>
Every school district receives base grant funding The per-pupil dollar amount is different for different grade levels
<b>Supplemental Fund</b>
Additional funds (20% more) for every student that is an English learner, low-income or foster youth A student who falls under more than one of these categories is only counted once for the purposes of the formula (“unduplicated”)
<b>Concentration Fund</b>
Not every school district is eligible If 55% of school district “unduplicated” pupils are high-need, then they get an additional amount (50% more) of money per student who is above the 55% threshold.

The 2013-14 school year was the first year of LCFF funding. There is an eight-year phase-in timeline, with the goal of reaching the target level of funding by the 2020-2021 school year.

In November 2014 the State Board of Education adopted spending regulations that clarified what proportion of supplemental and concentration funds school districts must spend on high-needs students. School districts must be able to show that the funds generated by high-needs students are used to increase and/or improve services for those students. The SBE created a calculation based on the amount of funding expected, how much was spent in the previous year, and the progress the state has made toward funding the LCFF targets. According to WestEd, which is non-profit education research

organization that the SBE contracts with, the SBE’s regulations about proportionality, “reinforce LCFF’s intent to improve equity, performance, transparency, and simplicity while allowing LEAs (Local Education Agencies) to make targeted investments that are responsive to local and state priorities.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Local Control and Accountability Plan**

The Local Control and Accountability Plan is key component of the LCFF. When AB 97 created the LCFF it also added sections to the Education Code that require that school districts create a plan explaining how they will use funds from the formula. School districts adopted their first LCAP by July 1, 2014, so the 2014-15 was the first academic year that school districts were operating with the locally created plan. School districts are required to adopt their LCAP before July 1 each year.

The LCAP is especially important to ensure that school districts set goals and articulate how they will spend funds on services that primarily benefit low-income, English learners and foster youth students. Additionally, the LCAP seeks to transfer responsibility and control over district actions away from the state and back to the individuals and communities who are closest to the students. In his 2013 “State of the State” address, Governor Brown explained that the LCFF/LCAP are based on the “principle of subsidiarity.”<sup>4</sup> This means that districts, rather than the state, will be primarily responsible for deciding what educational programs and services to fund, and that the state will perform only the functions that the district and County Offices of Education are unable to perform. With the previous system of school finance many

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<sup>3</sup> (*Local Control Funding Formula Spending Regulations* 2014)

<sup>4</sup> (Brown Jr. 2013)

education policies and goals were decided at the state-level without always including parents and students in the process.

Under the LCFF school districts have more discretion about how to allocate funds and what programs they want to continue and create in their community. Although the state delegated this authority to school districts, legislators and education advocacy groups wanted to make sure there was a way to ensure that schools spend state funding appropriately. Along with creating a funding system that will ideally be more adequate for students in California, the LCFF/LCAP are designed to bolster local stakeholder involvement. The law requires that school districts work with parents, teachers, staff, students and community members in creating their plan. Thus, the LCAP demonstrates a substantial shift in California education policy toward a more equitable and participatory system.

Each school district's LCAP must follow the state's substantive and organizational requirements. School district LCAPs must meet certain criteria as established in Ed Code Sections 52060-52077. The statutes explain what information must be in the plan and how school districts must consult with stakeholders. The Ed Code also details the adoption and review process of the plan and explains how county offices of education (COEs) and the state have a role in reviewing district LCAPs.

To ensure that school districts knew how to organize their plan, Ed Code required the State Board of Education to create a LCAP template by March 31, 2014. The template serves as the primary vehicle through which the state's policy priorities are communicated to the district and COEs.



The LCAP template for 2015-16 (Figure 2) asks school districts to create goals and then explain what strategies and actions they will use to meet those goals. For each goal, the district must specify the identified need, or why they are creating that goal. They must then list the relevant schools and student subgroups. The school district must also indicate which students are served by specific actions and services. Actions taken and services provided can be described as serving all students, LI, EL, foster youth, redesignated fluent English proficient, or other subgroups. “Other” subgroups might include homeless students, students with disabilities, or racial/ethnic groups. The final column shows that each action and service must have a budget expenditure, showing how much money the district plans to allocate.

Figure 2

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

For each goal that the school district includes, they need to list an “Estimated Annual Measurable Outcome.” The state established measurable outcomes, or metrics,

that school districts must report each year. There are 24 state-required metrics used to measure performance, including assessment scores, Academic Performance income, EL reclassification rate, dropout and graduation rates, and suspension/expulsion rates. School districts may also include their own annual measureable outcomes.

Figure 2 is the first page of the template that school districts use to list their goals and align actions as services. At the top of the template it says “LCAP Year 1.” The school district must complete separate pages for years 2 and 3, but the “Goal,” “Identified Need,” and “Goal Applies To” sections would remain constant.

Although school districts select their own goals, each goal must be connected to one of eight state priority areas (Figure 3). The state established these priorities in order to guide strategic planning and help school districts organize their goals. School districts are allowed to create additional local priorities. The eight state priority areas can be divided into three main areas: conditions of learning, pupil outcomes, and engagement. Under “conditions of learning,” LCAP goals must connect to basic services, implementation of state standards (Common Core), and course access. The “pupil outcomes” priorities include student achievement and other student outcomes. The “engagement” priority areas include student engagement, parent involvement and school climate.

Figure 3: 8 State Priorities<sup>5</sup>

Conditions of Learning	Pupil Outcomes	Engagement
<p>Basic Services <i>Fully credentialed teachers, instruction materials, school facilities</i></p>	<p>Student Achievement <i>State assessments, Academic Performance Index, A-G graduation requirements, % of ELs making progress toward English proficiency, EL reclassification rate, Advanced Placement test results, % demonstrating college preparedness</i></p>	<p>Student Engagement <i>Attendance, dropout and graduation rate, expulsions/suspensions</i></p>
<p>Implementation of State Standards <i>Common Core State Standards English Language Arts/English Language Development Standards Next Generation Science Standards</i></p>	<p>Other Student Outcomes <i>Local assessments for history/social science, arts, physical education, science</i></p>	<p>Parent Involvement <i>(No statewide metrics)</i></p>
<p>Course Access <i>Extent to which students are enrolled in a broad course of study</i></p>		<p>School Climate <i>Suspension and expulsion rates</i></p>

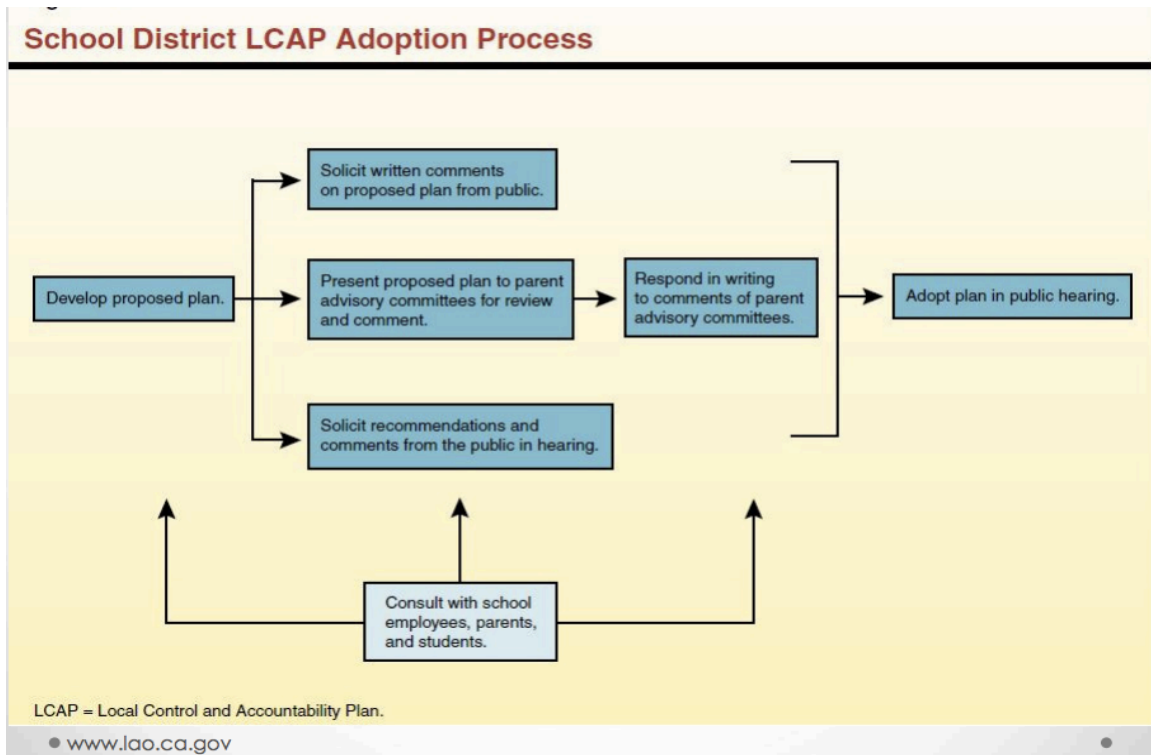
The LCAP is a three-year plan that is updated annually. For every goal, the district must explain the services/actions, budget expenditures, and estimated annual measurable outcomes for the next three years. In the first year of LCAP creation, school districts created goals and listed actions/strategies for Year 1: 2014-15, Year 2: 2015-16, and Year 3: 2016-17. As districts create their plan for 2015-16, their plan shifts by one year and they add a third, 2017-18. The plan was designed this way to make sure that school districts thought beyond just the upcoming school year.

<sup>5</sup> (AB 97, Assembly Floor Analysis 2013)

In addition to creating a plan that involved the next three academic years, school districts are also asked to create an Annual Update. The Annual Update is a way to reflect on the previous year and explain what progress the district made in achieving their expected outcomes. School districts can begin working on their Annual Update at any time throughout the year, and it can be a helpful tool for checking in about the status of certain district goals.

Figure 4, below, demonstrates how the LCAP is created and adopted, and how school districts are required to “engage” with stakeholders throughout the LCAP creation process. Parents of low-income students and English learners can provide input about the goals, services and actions by participating in district-hosted LCAP meetings. School districts have existing advisory councils and committees consisting of parents, teachers and other community members. Under the law, these groups are supposed to be active participants in creating the LCAP. Before the school board adopts the final LCAP, the school district must release a proposed version of the plan. At that point, the public and other stakeholders can submit comments about the plan. The school district must then respond in writing to the comments of the parent advisory committees. Once the school district meets the state’s adoption process requirements, the school board can vote on and adopt the LCAP.

Figure 4<sup>6</sup>



Once the school board adopts the district’s LCAP, the plan goes to their County Office of Education for review. The COE can provide assistance creating the LCAP and can also ask for clarification about the plan after the district adopts it. The COEs principal responsibility is to ensure that the district LCAP “adheres to the SBE template and includes ‘expenditures sufficient to implement the specific actions and strategies included in the LCAP.’”<sup>7</sup>

The State Board of Education is developing “Evaluation Rubrics” to assist school districts and COEs evaluate its strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement.<sup>8</sup> These rubrics “must reflect a holistic assessment of district and school performance and must allow districts to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, allow county

<sup>6</sup> (Taylor 2015)

<sup>7</sup> (Taylor 2015)

<sup>8</sup> (AB 97, *Assembly Floor Analysis* 2013, 97)

offices of education to determine districts' technical assistance needs, and assist the state in identifying districts in need of intervention.”<sup>9</sup>

According to Ed Code, the SBE has until October 1, 2015 to develop the rubrics. As a result, school districts and COEs did not have these evaluation rubrics during the creation of their 2014-15 and 2015-16 LCAPs. This does not, however, present a major problem for school districts since the SBE acknowledges that the LCAP is still a work-in-progress and will use the evaluation rubrics for future LCAPs, not for LCAPs produced during the years prior to the rubric's development. In addition to facilitating self-evaluation, the rubrics will allow the state Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to identify school districts and counties that need intervention and additional support.

AB 97 authorized the creation of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE). The CCEE will be a network of education specialists who can “advise and assist school districts and COEs in achieving its goals established in its LCAP.”<sup>10</sup> This organization can provide technical assistance and help districts think strategically about which actions and services will improve student outcomes.

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<sup>9</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> (AB 97, *Assembly Floor Analysis* 2013, 97)

### **III. Implementation Research and Findings**

#### **Methods**

This thesis combines multiple methods of research in an effort to evaluate the early stages of implementation of the Local Control and Accountability Plan. This multi-modal research combines secondary research and primary research. I reviewed various research reports about the first year of LCAP implementation, followed new coverage of school district actions, reviewed the existing resources for school districts and COEs, and conducted a case study at Claremont Unified School District.

In order to understand the LCAP policy and its implementation, I reviewed government documents, including the California Education Code (Ed Code) and the California Code of Regulations. I also looked at the text of the legislation (AB 97) and the California Legislative Counsel Digest about the law. I also read journalistic reports about LCAP implementation in California, relying heavily on Ed Source and John Fensterwald's coverage in particular.

In order to contextualize my research and case study about Claremont Unified School District I reviewed research reports about LCAP implementation in 2014-15 and 2015-16. I read multiple research reports about the LCAP and first year of the LCFF. These reports approach the LCAP from different perspectives. Daniel Humphrey and Julia Koppich's report was one of the first analyses of the policy and presents findings from the beginning stages of implementation. Carrie Hahnel is the Director of Research and Policy Analysis at The Education Trust – West. Hahnel's report is interested in understanding how participatory and equitable the first year of LCAP implementation was. Bruce Fuller and Laura Tobben conducted research with UC Berkeley, and their

report is focused on informing future research and creates a series of empirical questions that should be used in future research at the state, county, district, and school site level. Although the reports had different aims, I identified commonalities among them and noted key differences, which are presented in Chapter 2. I also noted any mention of specific districts that were doing well in the areas of transparency, capacity development, or other best practices. I relied on multiple policy reports to inform my research about current practices of school districts in California.

Part of my research was identifying what school districts around California were doing to develop their second annual LCAP. I used Google News Alerts to track what school districts were doing and how they were involving the community in the LCAP and updating stakeholders throughout the year. I reviewed local online newspapers as well as school district press releases to understand how the press and the district were explaining the LCAP policy to parents and community members. Local news stories were also helpful for keeping track of what school districts were doing with regard to stakeholder engagement and consultation. Many of the press releases were about forthcoming community forums and some also provided links to online surveys for stakeholders who could not make it to the meetings.

A number of organizations have compiled resources for school districts throughout the state. The State Board of Education contracts with WestEd, which is a non profit education research organization. WestEd provides online resources about the LCAP, including FAQs, webinars, and news coverage. I wanted to understand how various organizations help foster the capacity to create, review, monitor and implement district LCAPs. There are capacity-building efforts underway at the state, county, district



and school level, so an important task was making sense of the relationships between various education policy actors throughout the state. In an effort to have a better sense of how organizations work with one another, I researched the actions services of organizations like WestEd, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), School Services of California and the California School Boards Association.

I used WestEd's online information to get a better sense of the types of resources school districts and County Offices of Education had access to during their second LCAP and inaugural Annual Update process. There were many webinars and training sessions on the website, and although I could not watch them all, I did watch two. One was a presentation by State Board of Education Fellow Nancy Brownell to the LACOE about using metrics in the LCAP and the importance for formative evaluations<sup>11</sup> and the other was an explanation about the changes made to the LCAP template.<sup>12</sup> I watched these WestEd LCAP Webinars to see how the state and its partners are providing information and support to school districts.

This thesis builds on a policy implementation report about the required creation and adoption of the 2014-15 LCAP. I conducted two site-visits and interviews at the Claremont Unified School District (CUSD) in 2014. In September 2014 I spoke with the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services who oversaw the creation of the district's first-ever LCAP. In November 2014, I interviewed the Director of Educational Services at CUSD. In March 2015, I returned to the school district offices to conduct another interview with the Director of Educational Services.

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<sup>11</sup> (Brownell 2014)

<sup>12</sup> ("LCAP Webinar Part 1-A Tour of the Revised LCAP and Annual Update" 2014)

Since the second part of my thesis focuses on English language policies, I attended two District English Learn Advisory Committee meetings at CUSD, one in October 2014 and another in March 2015. The March meeting was not listed on the school district's master calendar because it was not a regular order DELAC meeting. This meeting was called to talk specifically about the LCAP and to discuss English learner priorities for the LCAP and 2015-16 academic year. In addition to these interviews and site visits at Claremont Unified School District, I reviewed district-provided materials, including documents and PowerPoint presentation slides from stakeholder meetings. I also reviewed the district's LCAP implementation timeline (for both 2014-15 and 2015-16) as well as their strategic goals.

In order to understand how CUSD's actions compared to the actions of school districts around the state, I reviewed other school district documents. These documents included strategic goals, community presentations, community/parent/student surveys, and executive summaries of their LCAP.

The majority of information about English learners in California was informed by research from Californians Together, a non-profit research and advocacy group, and research conducted by Ed Trust – West about ELs.

In order to write the section about English learners and Latino students in California, I relied on a number of academic articles and books, especially Patricia Gándara's *Latino Education Crisis* and *Forbidden Language*. I reviewed a number of texts about the history of language policies in the United States and in California. I was also able to incorporate information from a sociology class called "Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in Education" that I was in while writing this thesis.

I reviewed CUSD and LACOE materials about EL instruction. I also read the new English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) standards and the SBE’s comments about the standards to reach a fuller understanding of the policy context in which the LCAP was operating.

### **Research Reports**

This thesis comes at a formative time in the LCAP policy because it is midway through its second of eight years of implementation. This thesis is interested in presenting a clear picture of the status of the LCAP in California education policy, and to do so it must rely upon the most current research reports. The following sections will discuss three research reports that were conducted in 2014 and 2015 about LCAP implementation in California.

Daniel C. Humphrey and Julia E. Koppich’s created a report titled, “Toward a Grand Vision: Early Implementation of California’s Local Control Funding Formula.” This research was one of the first analyses of the LCFF policy. Humphrey and additional researchers work for SRI International, a research firm in Menlo Park, CA. Koppich is the President of J. Koppich & Associates, an education consulting organization. The report was released in late 2014, and includes information about the first year of LCFF implementation. Their research is concerned primarily with school districts and how they are using their funds, engaging with parents and stakeholders, and what opportunities and challenges districts foresee with the LCFF. Their final research question asks, “what can state policymakers learn from these early experiences?”<sup>13</sup> According to the authors, “the LCFF represents a remarkable experiment in local democracy.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 1.

Humphrey and Koppich conducted interviews with school districts, COEs, and people familiar with the LCFF/LCAP at the state level. They conducted an in-depth study of 10 districts across California, and also reviewed more than 40 district LCAPs. The 10 districts were selected based on enrollment, geographic region, proportion of EL students, and proportion of low-income students so that the sample was representative of school districts in the state. In addition to conducting district interviews, they spoke with officials at 20 different COEs that serve 458 districts in the state. The interviews covered both the LCFF and the LCAP, but the LCAP-related questions they asked were about parent, community, and educator engagement as well as supports for completing the LCAPs.

Humphrey and Koppich found that overall there was enthusiasm for the LCFF and the idea of local control, but that school districts still had some concerns about what the future may hold. School districts liked being able to decide the best use of their fiscal resources and determine what their students need.<sup>15</sup> Although school districts are enthusiastic, they are concerned the state “will change the system before it has time to mature,”<sup>16</sup> and that they will have to readjust to a changing policy. Districts have already had to adapt to policy developments, including the LCAP regulations passed in November 2014 and a new LCAP template for the 2015-16 school year. Furthermore, positive responses to the LCFF are tempered by the fact that there is some uncertainty about the state’s overall finances and whether or not the state will be able to continue funding the LCFF. Most relevant to the LCAP are concerns that as education advocacy groups push for more reporting about supplemental and concentration grant use, school

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<sup>15</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 4.

districts will lose some local control. School districts worry that local control might be undermined as “advocacy groups are pressuring the state for tighter regulations and reporting requirements around supplemental and concentration grants.”<sup>17</sup> A final concern is that the LCAP process is particularly straining on school district in isolated rural areas. School districts are having some difficulty with the metrics and aligning programs, services and resources allocation with the correct measures of progress.<sup>18</sup> COEs also expressed concern about the LCAP, in particular their “capacity to continue to monitor and support districts effectively.”<sup>19</sup>

Humphrey and Koppich’s report focuses on four primary areas: district budget practices, the challenges of LCAPs, the responsibilities and challenges for COEs, and meaningful community engagement. First, Humphrey and Koppich find that completing the first LCAP was a “burdensome task.”<sup>20</sup> LCAP development also varied by school district, and demonstrated how districts have diverse needs and varying levels of resources.

The first year of LCAP creation was particularly challenging for school districts because they were adjusting to a new policy and had a short amount of time to create an entirely new document. Although the timeline issue will be resolved in future years, there are other issues that “will require proactive changes at the state level to make the process less cumbersome for districts.”<sup>21</sup> One primary challenge with first-year LCAP development was that school districts were not sure how comprehensive their plans should be. There was variation in how much detail districts included in their LCAPs.

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<sup>17</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 6.

Since districts were concerned about getting approval from their COE, they often included more information, “sacrificing readability and clarity for local audiences.”<sup>22</sup> Some school districts explained how they used all their funds, including federal funds, and as a result the LCAP became a sort of “compliance document” rather than a story about the district. In an effort to make the LCAP accessible to parents and the community, some school districts created a summary document that synthesized the longer LCAP and was better suited for public consumption.<sup>23</sup>

School districts around the state have different student population characteristics, which sometimes complicated LCAP creation. There was confusion about which district actions and services should serve all students and which should be only for subgroups. For example, districts that were accustomed to working with students who are both EL and LI were not used to thinking about these students as two separate groups. Smaller school districts, on the other hand, were not used to thinking about populations of students and instead were accustomed to thinking about individual students. In both of these circumstances, the LCAP template did not align with how the school district was used to thinking about providing student services.

Humphrey and Koppich explain that there are capacity issues at play. Some school districts have limited staff, and the LCAP presents another task to which they must devote time and energy. Interviews with school districts indicate that “lack of capacity placed a significant, almost unbearable, strain on the time of one or two individuals.”<sup>24</sup> Since districts are required to measure progress in the eight state priority areas as well as for their own goals, smaller districts were particularly overwhelmed with

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<sup>22</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 7.

the task of creating an LCAP. The review of more than 40 LCAPs indicated that few districts “clearly and completely described the metrics they planned to use to measure progress toward their goals” because their goals “were not always specific, measureable, or reasonably attainable.”<sup>25</sup> Additionally, school districts are required to create other documents, like district and school plans, and Title I plans. To some school districts the LCAP is just another document that they need to create. The research also found that school districts are required to align their School Accountability Report Card (SARC) with the LCAP. This presents a challenge for school districts because the two documents focus on different metrics and timelines. Policy changes may be necessary to make sure school districts do not have to duplicate and triplicate efforts.

Humphrey and Koppich found that school districts had technical issues with the LCAP format and Word document. Filling out the document was often a tedious process and some districts found that they were repeating the same information in multiple parts of the template. The state took note of this initial feedback and developed a new template for the 2015-16 school year that sought to remedy some of the common problems. Initial feedback from school district officials familiar with the new template was positive, describing it as “more understandable for everyone” and that it “allows the reader to ‘follow the actions and the money better.’”<sup>26</sup> Humphrey and Koppich suggest that school districts would benefit from being able to look at model LCAPs and summary documents. They also propose that smaller school districts should be eligible for a “short form” LCAP option that takes the district’s student needs and staff capacity into consideration.

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<sup>25</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 8.

County Offices of Education are adjusting to their changing role in response to the LCFF and LCAP. COEs have a significantly expanded role because they are responsible for reviewing and approving district LCAPs. COEs around the state organized workshops and training sessions for their districts and provided individual support when needed.<sup>27</sup> Humphrey and Koppich explain that COEs relied on materials and support from the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA). CCSESA provides trainings, toolkits and manuals for COEs to help them review district LCAPs. In a similar way to how school districts felt under-resourced, the COEs interviewed as part of this research indicated that the new LCFF responsibilities “have stretched them beyond thin.”<sup>28</sup> COE staff had to readjust their thinking from a categorical mindset to an entirely new funding system. Since many COEs have limited staff resources, working on the LCFF and LCAP often meant that they had to put other work, like Common Core implementation on the backburner. There were capacity issues at the county level because the state did not provide additional funds to hire staff that could be adequately dedicated to the LCFF/LCAP. These capacity issues are particularly significant for COEs that serve small and rural districts. These COEs handle responsibilities that are typically handled by districts, so they are already fairly resource constrained. According to Humphrey and Koppich, “many COE officials expressed deep concern that the kind of patchwork arrangement they were able to put together this year cannot be sustained without an infusion of resources,” especially as the pace of work picks up and the state finalizes the evaluation rubric.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 9.



The third important focus of Humphrey and Koppich’s report are their findings about meaningful community engagement. They propose, “meaningful engagement is perhaps the most ambitious and challenging aspect of the LCFF.”<sup>30</sup> The law specified which stakeholders districts must engage with, but the definition of “engage” was left open for interpretation. Humphrey and Koppich found that although districts were interested in getting input from stakeholders, they “were challenged by limited resources, the lack of a civically-engaged public, and a relatively short timeline.”<sup>31</sup> Engagement was also made more difficult given the short timeline of the first year of implementation. Governing boards of school districts were required to adopt their 2014-15 timeline by July 1, 2014, but most districts did not start holding meetings and seeking input until after January of that year.<sup>32</sup> Some district officials interviewed as part of the study indicated that they were not satisfied with the level of parent engagement they received the first year. They suggested that there should be money associated with parent engagement and that school sites should take the lead on seeking parent and community feedback.

Parent and community engagement was especially challenging since not many people knew about the old system of funding and were not aware of the significant changes that had taken place. Thus, the first order of business for many school districts was to inform the community about the new funding system and explain why it was significant. There was variation in how and to what extent districts sought stakeholder engagement. Some districts included parent and community input in creating the district’s priorities, and other districts “only sought feedback on a district-produced draft LCAP.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 10.

Humphrey and Koppich explore how the LCAP demonstrates the challenges of achieving a deliberative democratic process, or “finding a way for citizens and their representatives to make justifiable decisions for the public good in the face of the fundamental disagreements that are inevitable in diverse societies.”<sup>34</sup> Stakeholders involved in the LCAP process are interested in pursuing their own interests and making sure that the school district considers their needs in its development of actions and services. One case study demonstrated the transformative potential for civic engagement of the LCAP policy. In one of the observed school districts “the majority of parents were not eligible to vote due to their immigration status, but were suddenly invited to give their input about complex budgetary issues.”<sup>35</sup> Although some school districts scheduled meetings that working parents could attend and provided other services for parents, other districts did not sufficiently consider the “complications” of language, and transportation and childcare needs. In general, parent engagement was higher in districts that had fewer high-needs students, which indicates a need to think about how parent engagement can be improved in districts with more high-needs students.

School districts prioritized parent engagement above the engagement of other stakeholders, like teachers, administrators, union officials and students. In an effort to improve parent engagement, some school districts collaborated with outside organizations like Building Healthy Communities, WestEd, and Ed Trust–West. These outside organizations helped organize meetings and assisted school districts in thinking strategically about outreach and how to interpret stakeholder feedback. Some stakeholders were under the impression that the new law gave their school district more

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<sup>34</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 10.

money than it did, so districts were put in the position of having to clarify and “manage expectations.”<sup>36</sup> Humphrey and Koppich found that districts “recognized they needed to continue to learn how best to ensure meaningful public engagement in the future.”<sup>37</sup> One of the biggest areas for improvement is including local school administrators in the LCAP and budget process. Many principals and school-site leaders were not included in school district decisions. Where school districts did consult with teachers, those discussions “built on earlier school and district goal-setting processes that were part of strategic planning efforts.”<sup>38</sup> School districts built on existing strategies and engagement actions in order to develop their LCAP, which again demonstrates the influence of local context and prior practice in shaping local education policies.

Overall there is support at the district and county level for the LCFF and LCAP. Political actors are cautiously optimistic that the new law will be good for California public schools. One of the biggest challenges for school districts and counties is simply adjusting away from a categorical mindset. School districts should be given the time to adjust to a new system, and Humphrey and Koppich’s research “suggests that district and COE officials need time and experience, but also support and additional resources to successfully transition to the LCFF.”<sup>39</sup> A significant finding about the LCAP is that “the majority of district LCAPs did not provide a solid bases for measuring districts’ success in meeting their goals” and that “districts will need clearer guidance on how to create measureable goals and accompanying metrics.”<sup>40</sup> In order for the LCAP to be a useful tool for districts, COEs and the state in the future, there needs to be a way to see how

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<sup>36</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 11.

student and school outcomes change over time. Humphrey and Koppich suggest that the SBE evaluation rubrics might help districts create such metrics. At the time of the study, Humphrey and Koppich found that districts did not have the necessary capacity to “truly engage citizens, parents, advocacy groups, students, and educators in decision making around the complex and sometimes contentious issues inherent in LCFF.”<sup>41</sup> Even with significant capacity issues, the LCAP is in the early stages of implementation and the general sense of optimism about the policy sets the stage for important policy adjustments that can help make the California public education system more adequate and equitable.

The Education Trust – West’s (Ed Trust – West) research, led by Carrie Hahnel, catalogs the academic and wrap-around services and supports that school districts propose in their respective LCAPs, but does not evaluate the programs’ quality or likely effectiveness.<sup>42</sup> Hahnel’s report is a first look at implementation, and additional reports should be created in order to continually assess whether or not the LCAP policy is having the intended effect of making school funding and allocation more adequate and equitable. In addition to future research, school districts should also “monitor implementation of LCAP plans to see which programs have a positive impact on student outcomes.”<sup>43</sup> Hahnel and her team of researchers reviewed 40 district LCAPs and conducted case studies of districts around the state.

The report determined that school districts have three main areas of expenditures, and chose to look at how districts address “academic services and supports” and “wrap-around services and supports.” Their research does not look specifically at school district

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<sup>41</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 19.

<sup>43</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 19.

operating costs. Academic services and supports include: standards and assessments; academic interventions; and college-going supports. Wrap-around services and supports include: socio-emotional supports and school climate; health, wellness, and safety; and community engagement.

The first year was full of learning, at the state, county, district and school site levels. Some of the policies surrounding the LCAP and the LCFF are still under development and those involved should be prepared for adjustments as the policy is implemented over the coming six years. After the first year, the general consensus in the education advocacy and interest group community, as well as from other education policy researchers, seem to be that a lot of good work was done and that school districts were committed making the school funding system more transparent, participatory and community-based. However, there is still a lot of room for improvement in the coming years. This section reviews Hahnel’s findings about what districts did during the first year and introduces some ideas for policy recommendations. A more detailed account of policy recommendations can be found in Chapter IV.

In order to meet the law’s goal of enabling public participation and input from parents and students, the LCAP should be transparent and clear. However, the first year template “discouraged a clear narrative or community accessible style.”<sup>44</sup> The State Board of Education responded to feedback about the 2014-15 template and made some changes that they hope will improve clarity. In reaction to the less accessible LCAP templates, some school districts included appendices and/or executive summaries to

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<sup>44</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 16.

present the information contained within the template in a more readable and accessible way.<sup>45</sup>

In general, school districts tailored their LCAP to the specific needs of their student population. School districts with larger populations of English learners, foster youth, low-income students, or subgroups (like migrant or homeless students, African American youth) tend to include more information about these high-needs populations in their LCAPs than other school districts. For example, most 2014-15 LCAPs did not significantly address the needs of foster youth in the district. However, school districts with high populations of foster youth, like Los Angeles Unified and the Santa Cruz Office of Education, included a more substantive explanation of the services they planned to provide to foster youth.

Hahnel succinctly explains: “because districts were not necessarily required to propose actions for student groups beyond low-income students, English learners, and foster youth, few did so – even when other student groups might have specific and significant needs.”<sup>46</sup>

Hahnel found that “districts’ LCAPs do not always address each of the eight state priorities.” The SBE provided metrics that can be used to measure these eight priorities, however not all districts include all the suggested metrics. According to Hahnel, “state law also lists roughly 20 required metrics such as chronic absence rates, suspension rates, and a measure of safety and school connectedness. District LCAPs rarely address all of these. When they are included in LCAPs, the extent to which they are substantively

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<sup>45</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 22.

addressed varies considerably.”<sup>47</sup> The most variation occurs in how school districts develop goals and actions by student subgroup, and some districts fail to meet the legal requirement to do so.

School districts also tend to interpret the eight state priorities fairly broadly and claim that a few actions address nearly all or all of the priorities. Hahnel found that “LCAPs often lack a clear, direct link between a state priority and the district’s goals for addressing it. [...] many LCAPs fail to link a district’s goals to its action.”<sup>48</sup> Districts need to work on proposing specific actions for improving student outcomes, rather than just stating what they hope to do, or what changes they want to see in their metrics (like a drop in High School expulsion or dropout rates).

Hahnel found that many school districts aligned their LCAP to what they were already doing, and their existing strategic plans. School districts aligned their existing programs and actions with the eight state priority areas. This strategy of starting with existing practices and working backwards toward the goals might have contributed to the lack of clear connections between goals and actions in some districts’ plans.

Many school districts used LCFF funds to restore programs and positions they had cut during the recession rather than fund new programs or services. Although the majority of school districts did not fund new or innovative programs, some school districts did choose to allocate LCFF funds towards pilot programs that seek to improve student outcomes. These programs include a “teacher evaluation and support program” at Lucia Mar Unified, a similar teacher professional development program, accelerated language development courses, and programs “to incubate best practices for teaching

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<sup>47</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 17.

newcomer English learners” at Oakland Unified, and “school redesign efforts” in San Jose Unified.<sup>49</sup> It is important to note that these innovative programs were implemented at a few schools in the district, not district-wide.

In an effort to increase “truly local control” and equitable allocation of LCFF dollars, some school districts (Oakland Unified, Sacramento City Unified, Torrance Unified, Antioch Unified, and Los Angeles Unified) gave “pass-through grants” to school sites. This decision to give school sites more control was both a reaction to community demand for control and district desire to allocate funds equitably. The distribution of supplemental and concentration money from the district to school sites was especially important in school districts with wealth inequality. For example, in Oakland Unified, some schools have a large percentage of low-income students and others are much wealthier. As a result, it was important that the districts’ supplemental and concentration funds were channeled toward the students that had generated those additional funds rather than being spread evenly throughout the district.<sup>50</sup> This idea is in keeping with the overall policy goal of equity rather than equality. Hahnel suggests Oakland Unified’s efforts to be transparent about school-site funding should be replicated in other school districts. School districts should be transparent about how “neighborhood-level needs translated into school-level funding.”<sup>51</sup> School districts can also bolster transparency-centered practices by requiring any schools given supplemental and concentration money to create their own school-site LCAP, detailing goals and actions for ELs, LI and foster youth.

School districts can indicate on their LCAP whether a service and program is for a student subgroup or for all students. Hahnel found a trend that “the larger the low-income

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<sup>49</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 18.

<sup>51</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 18.



population within a district, the more likely it was that the district would describe these services as being offered to all students.”<sup>52</sup> School districts often said that their school-wide actions also served low-income, English learners and foster youth and did not always detail what, if any, services they were going to provide specifically for ELs, low-income and foster youth. This only presents a problem when the school district does not have a large low-income population. In that case, the money generated by high-needs students should be spent on programs for them, not spent broadly on all students.

Education advocacy groups, or interest groups, were involved in the development of the LCAP concept and have continued to be involved during the first year of implementation. These groups include: Californians for Justice, Californians Together, Families in Schools, FosterEd, and PICO California. These groups contributed to the Ed Trust –West report and presented their perspectives about what is working in the LCAP policy and what needs to be improved. These organizations serve specific populations of students and their families and are interested in ensuring that school districts provide their constituencies with adequate and appropriate levels of funding.

PICO California, a grassroots, faith-based organizing network, contributed a summary of the community engagement that took place in the LCAP’s first year. They also included information about what should happen in the coming years as implementation of the policy continues.

Hahnel’s report presents an overall optimistic analysis of the LCAP while recognizing that there is room for improvement. PICO echoes that sentiment by referring to LCAP implementation as both a challenge and an opportunity. Since partnerships and collaboration are central to creating an adequate and equitable system, the state, COEs

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<sup>52</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 20.

and districts should invest time and resources in building and maintaining relationships. Due to the local nature of the policy, many of the key relationships will be at the district level. As PICO explains, “committing time and resources to capacity building and to nurturing the partnerships that will be critical to ensuring that LCAPs are living documents that are understood and owned by the communities whose support will be critical to their implementation.”<sup>53</sup>

PICO suggests a few ways to make sure that communities are active participants in the LCAP process: “[...] providing translation of meetings and materials so English learners and their parents can be full participants in the process [...] Providing parents and students with access to budget information, as well as achievement and other data to better understand who is – and isn’t – being served by current policies and practices [...] Partnering with parents and students to create trainings that are accessible and that connect to their experiences [...] Being intentional about aligning school site and district plans, rather than engaging in separate and disconnected planning processes.”<sup>54</sup> These recommendations are echoed in other parts of Hahnel’s report and in other research reports.

Although these practices are crucial for ensuring community and stakeholder engagement, many school districts did not always engage and consult with stakeholders in an inclusive and welcoming way. PICO’s perspective is that “a commitment to capacity building and partnership means shifting the culture in districts from one of compliance to one that recognizes the wisdom and expertise of parents and students and embraces the opportunity to bring the voice of those directly impacted into the local

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<sup>53</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 15.

planning and decision-making process.”<sup>55</sup> A key point I take from PICO, other reports and my own research is that school districts should see parents, students and community members as assets and as partners in creating and implementing the LCAP.

English learners are one of the three groups of high-needs students and Californians Together, a coalition that focuses on English learners in the state, contributed a brief analysis of how English learners were served in the first year of the LCAP. The research and advocacy organization will release their own report in spring 2015 detailing the initial effects of the LCFF/LCAP for English learners.

Californians Together finds that “promising trends are emerging” in school districts and COEs around the state. The LCAP allows school districts to spend money on programs and services that might not have existed before the policy was created. Some school districts began innovative programs and paid attention to populations within ELs that might require additional services. For example, some school districts “address the unique language and academic needs of their significant numbers of Long Term English Learners (LTELs), providing specific services for these students, such as accelerated language courses.”<sup>56</sup> Other districts plan to “begin or expand their dual language immersion programs for English learners and native English speakers.”<sup>57</sup> Although some school districts are thinking strategically and carefully about their EL population, there are still a number of ways that districts can improve their LCAPs for English learners. Possible improvements will be discussed in Chapter IV: Policy Recommendations.

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Hahnel concludes the report with a commitment to continuing evaluation and monitoring of the LCAP and LCFF: “As California enters its second year of this bold

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<sup>55</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 21.

<sup>57</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 21.

reform, we look forward to monitoring and supporting LCFF so that students and communities realize the benefits of a more flexible, equitable, participatory, and transparent school funding system.”<sup>58</sup>

Overall, Hahnel and Ed Trust – West are “heartened” by what they have observed in the first year of LCAP implementation. The first year of implementation was on a short timeline, but people around the state took on the challenge of creating a more adequate and equitable system for students in California. People at every level worked diligently to help the LCAP meet the intended goals of the law. Although there are many improvements and policy changes to be made, “the promise of new opportunities for California schoolchildren has emerged.”<sup>59</sup>

Hahnel’s report focuses on equity and the participatory and engagement aspects of the LCAP, and Fuller and Tobben’s report is interested in establishing a guide for future evaluation research. Fuller and Tobben present an academic-oriented approach to LCFF and LCAP research.

Fuller and Tobben selected school districts in different geographical regions, with varying enrollment sizes and proportions of high needs students in order to represent districts around the state. They conducted site visits and phone interviews with senior district staff at eight school districts.<sup>60</sup>

Fuller and Tobben are interested in “designing and carrying out a sound long-term assessment of progress” and providing guidance for future policy research so that there is “thicker” and more useful data about school districts across the state. “Thicker” data means that there would be evidence from multiple districts and school sites about the

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<sup>58</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 26.

<sup>59</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 26.

<sup>60</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 9.

same aspects of the policy, and the data would be comparable. They determine four key questions that analysts should ask when conducting research about the LCFF and LCAP.<sup>61</sup> Each question has a series of sub-questions.

Figure 5

What is the impact of results-based budgeting?	What changes are the result of a new participatory process?	Are school and classroom mechanisms changing?	Do districts have the capacity to learn and adjust?
<p>Do districts now define measurable goals that aim to reduce disparities in student achievement?</p> <p>Are there common themes/strategies for staffing, program models or civic partnerships from this first year?</p> <p>What kinds of school-level problems do the programs hope to alleviate?</p>	<p>Are district budgets created differently?</p> <p>Are different district personnel and community stakeholder now involved in the budget process?</p>	<p>What kinds of programs will be funded by supplemental and concentration funds?</p>	<p>How will districts track LCFF/LCAP implementation?</p> <p>Will districts be able to connect the LCAP to school-level change and achievement gains?</p> <p>Will districts move beyond relying heavily on surface-level administrative data?</p> <p>How will districts learn about what's changing at the school level, what's working, what's not, and why?</p>

In addition to guiding future research about the LCAP, these questions can be used to frame initial findings about what school districts did in their first full year of LCAP implementation. However, precisely because this is such a new policy, school districts are still figuring out what works and what does not. In this formative stage,

<sup>61</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 6.

impacts and changes cannot yet be fully measured. That said, continuous feedback and formative evaluations could help direct district actions and establish the mechanisms and capacity for future success.

The four questions guide research at four organizational levels: schools, districts, county offices of education (COEs), and state agencies.<sup>62</sup> These state agencies include the California Department of Education (CDE), the State Board of Education (SBE), the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO), and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE). With more than 900 school districts in California, each district will likely have different experiences during LCAP implementation, and COEs will also have varying levels of capacity. These multiple organization levels will be simultaneously evaluated and evaluating LCAP implementation. Further complicating the process of monitoring and evaluation, school districts now “employ a wide variety of budget strategies and program models.”<sup>63</sup>

Fuller and Tobben explain how the new funding and accountability systems have the potential help districts better understand what is working for students in their districts and how they can improve programs and services. Their report begins with the claim that “all districts could benefit from *formative feedback* regarding local implementation: what promising practices are taking hold inside schools and what are not.”<sup>64</sup>

Fuller and Tobben foresee a monitoring system that uses a combination of “district-led tracking of implementation and the cultivation of formative feedback” and “objective monitoring [...] via case studies, sample surveys, and quantitative research.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 7.

LCAP implementation research can be used to distinguish patterns between schools, districts and counties. Fuller and Tobben argue that “studies emanating from these four levels may add-up to generalizable findings over time” if researchers focus on the four previously mentioned core questions, use rigorous methods, and use both statistical and qualitative techniques.<sup>66</sup>

Fuller and Tobben found that school districts often situated their LCAP planning “within pre-existing strategies.”<sup>67</sup> For example, some school districts already delegated considerable budget authority to school principals or leadership teams” so giving schools control of district funds was not a new practice. Since school districts build off of existing practices and use the LCAP to meet their local needs, local context matters.

The ultimate goals of the LCFF and accompanying LCAP are to narrow achievement gaps and raise learning overall.<sup>68</sup> No one is attempting to claim that these outcomes should occur after the first year of full LCAP implementation. However, all levels of education policy in California must think about the long-term goals as they create their LCAP for the next 3 years and reflect on the prior year in the Annual Update.

The study focused on six key components of implementation in school districts.<sup>69</sup> These components were internal structure, theories of action, stakeholder engagement, focusing dollars on high-needs students, prevalent program models and budget categories, and district capacity to monitor progress.

On the topic of internal structuring, Fuller and Tobben were interested in which staff was involved in LCAP planning. They found that some district business/finance

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<sup>66</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 9.

<sup>68</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 10.

departments led LCAP creation and education services departments took the lead in other districts. Some school districts also used a cross-departmental approach. The educational services department led the LCAP for four of eight districts. Fuller and Tobben found that when Education Services was involved (rather than Business Services), there tended to be a wider conversation about school improvement. Internal leadership varied across districts, and larger districts had cross-office teams that spent a lot of time coordinating and deliberating.<sup>70</sup>

Fuller and Tobben were also interested in how school districts related their goals to the state-mandated eight priority areas. This line of questioning allows researchers to evaluate whether school district actions were in keeping with state theories of action. Their research found the majority of districts “referred back to their pre-existing strategic plans or goals”<sup>71</sup> which shows that the LCAP policy is framed and influenced by existing practices and thinking about school performance. Some districts saw the LCAP as an extension of what they were already doing; while others saw the new policy as an opportunity to change the way they work with stakeholders and develop their budget. Districts responded positively about engaging with stakeholders and “reported that one benefit from engaging stakeholders was discovering where their priorities differed from discussions occurring inside the district bureaucracy.”<sup>72</sup>

The state’s requirement that districts consult with stakeholders indicates an intention to involve new groups in the strategic planning and participatory budgeting process. Fuller and Tobben want LCAP research to look at stakeholder engagement and the involvement of various stakeholder groups. They found that “districts tended to tap

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<sup>70</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 10.

<sup>72</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 10.



into institutionalized channels, such as EL advisory groups (DELAC), large parent advisory councils, and school site councils that historically have overseen categorical aid.”<sup>73</sup> Additionally, school districts conducted surveys to solicit input from parents and community members. School districts also consulted with civic organizations and interest groups. “A few districts convened community forums, some led by student leaders.”<sup>74</sup>

School districts are conducting community meetings and surveys, especially in the second year of implementation as they have more time than the year before. Furthermore, now that the policy is not entirely new, school district staff might feel like they have the time and capacity to engage more with stakeholders outside of the district offices.

Questions remain about the extent of stakeholder involvement and about how districts incorporate feedback and suggestions from stakeholders in their plan. Fuller and Tobben wonder if parents and communities will be “meaningfully engaged” and “skepticism exists over the contribution of school site councils, often rubber-stamps for how school administrators seek to divvy-up categorical aid.”<sup>75</sup> Although initial research suggests that school districts are communicating with stakeholder groups, future research should continue to evaluate the involvement of outside organizations and individuals in the LCAP creation process. Stakeholder engagement may also vary widely across the state. Fuller and Tobben explain that stakeholder engagement is also connected to issues of capacity: “it’s unclear whether the capacity of parent and civic groups will improve over time. If not, then local mechanisms of accountability may remain uneven across

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<sup>73</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 10.

<sup>74</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 17.

districts.”<sup>76</sup> They suggest that in addition to monitoring school and district actions, LCAP evaluations can look at the engagement of parents and community members. Long-term tracking of local civic groups would inform how this participatory feature of LCFF is actually “playing out locally over time.”<sup>77</sup> There is not just one way to measure parent involvement, and school districts might measure participation differently.

Fuller and Tobben suggest that future research must study if and how districts focus dollars on high-needs students, as they are required to do by law. According to State Board of Education regulations from November 2014, “increases in services must be in proportion to revenues tied to [weighted students].”<sup>78</sup> There are different ways to meet the proportionality requirement, but if school districts give school sites money, the school sites need to provide a plan or some justification about how they are going to spend that money.

In keeping with the trend of relying on existing practices, the way that school districts distribute funds from supplemental and concentration grants also depends largely on existing practices. Some school districts give school sites supplemental and concentration funds based on their population of low-income students, English learners, and foster youth. In two out of eight districts, principals submitted budget proposal plans to the district. This practice is consistent with Hahnel’s recommendation that school sites create a school-level plan showing how they intend to spend concentration and supplemental funds.

The local context is significant in shaping school district practices. According to Fuller and Tobben, “the distribution of supplemental and concentration grants among

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<sup>76</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 15.

<sup>77</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 11.

schools is, in part, based on these localized histories [of prior existence] of school-based budgeting, receipt of categorical aid, and the racial or economic features of students and families.”<sup>79</sup> Fuller and Tobben found that at least one school district followed a “civic organization’s” suggestion to “create an index of disparity or “need” across schools with significant counts of weighted pupils.”<sup>80</sup>

Future research on the LCFF and LCAP should seek to identify prevalent program models and budget categories to enable helpful comparisons about programs across the state. Fuller and Tobben identified some initial commonalities among the LCAPs they reviewed. Like Hahnel’s report, they found that districts used LCFF funds to reestablish programs and positions that were lost during and after the economic recession. School districts also funded Common Core professional development, early literacy and English language development, classroom aides and counselors, specialists for at-risk youth, adult education, instructional technology initiatives, and were integrating digital tools. Some school districts were also using LCFF funds to hire police officers and custodians. Furthermore, many school districts initiated or expanded existing college readiness programs.<sup>81</sup> Identifying common programs is important for future monitoring and evaluation of the LCAP. After identifying such programs, analysts can look at and evaluate whether they are lifting student achievement, which can then inform school district decisions about whether to continue funding such programs.<sup>82</sup>

The final area that Fuller and Tobben emphasize is school district capacity to monitor progress. Districts are tasked with measuring and tracking metrics that measure

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<sup>79</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 11.

<sup>81</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 11.

<sup>82</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 11.

student achievement and are expected to use that data to inform programmatic or strategic changes. School district capacity is called the “missing link” in the LCAP policy because the policy requires a lot of time and data analysis. Not all school districts have the necessary staff and financial resources to closely measure and track the more than 20 required metrics. As Fuller and Tobben explain, “districts must define measureable objectives and peg new dollars to program models that are to move pupils toward these aims, but many districts lack the staff or research expertise to track student progress, or to learn how discrete program models actually unfold inside their schools.”<sup>83</sup> Districts will be held accountable by the plans they create and the outcomes of students, however “it’s unclear how districts are to learn what’s working and why, or why not.”<sup>84</sup>

When Fuller and Tobben conducted their study in early 2014 (before the first LCAP was approved) district staff were “just beginning to think about how they would monitor progress toward goals.”<sup>85</sup> Although school districts have accounting models that they have used in the past to track how funds are spent, these models are geared more towards a categorical funding model, rather than on how programs are working in schools. School districts have existing accounting models to track how funds are spent, but these models were based on a categorical system. Since the majority of state education funds now come from the LCFF rather than categorical grants, districts will need to develop new ways to evaluate how programs are working.

Although monitoring progress is a daunting task for many school districts, some districts are taking actions to track student progress. Some school districts assigned staff to track LCFF implementation. This staff person is able to explore ways to use existing

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<sup>83</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 11.

<sup>84</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 12.

data to learn more about school climate, EL reclassification and parent involvement. It is important to note that many of the metrics in the LCAP rely on school-level data. As a result, school-site capacity for capturing and monitoring data is crucial. School districts are working with schools to get school-level metrics, especially to understand measures of student achievement.

School-level data is fundamental for understanding how LCAP implementation is playing out across the state. School principals will collect school site data and be key resources for school districts, and will help the school districts understand what is actually happening at the classroom and instructional level. Additionally, “school-level staff may express fresh ideas for how to observe and measure intermediate mechanisms that link new resources to stronger outcomes.”<sup>86</sup> So-called “frontline” staff should be seen as a valuable resource for the state and the district, because they are closest to the students and most directly able to monitor how student learning changes as a result of programs implemented with LCFF funds. Although principals and other school-level staff are important resources for school districts, they are also tasked with many other responsibilities, and as a result, might not have the time or the capacity to devote sufficient energy towards tracking LCAP implementation. According to Fuller and Tobben, “the time available and capacity of principals and teachers to assess the relative effectiveness of new staff positions and program models will remain limited.”<sup>87</sup> Fuller and Tobben suggest that “professional learning communities” might help school-level staff and principals develop the capacity for program evaluation. According to Fuller and

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<sup>86</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 18.

<sup>87</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 18.

Tobben, “they offer organized supports and expectations for innovation and gaining feedback about what’s working for which students.”<sup>88</sup>

Fuller and Tobben explain how the objectivity of “in-house” evaluations is a concern. There may be a problem with biased data in district LCAPs, especially when principals and district superintendents feel pressure to “show results.” Although it will be important to districts to evaluate themselves, a third-party evaluation is necessary in order to counter the potential effects of bias. “Ideally the LCFF reform will prompt gains in analytic capacity within districts. Yet a dispassionate evaluation plan should include some kind of sampling of districts and schools – with data collected by dispassionate analysts.”<sup>89</sup>

They propose that a state agency or “trusted association” could take charge of conducting a longitudinal study of a sample of districts that are representative of the state.<sup>90</sup> They argue that since districts are tasked with evaluating their own progress for the purpose of the LCAP Annual Update, a longitudinal study should be conducted by an objective organization. Although the newly established California Collaborative for Educational Excellence could conduct ongoing research, it might be better if another organization could inform CCEE “in a dispassionate manner.”<sup>91</sup>

Communication between all levels involved (state, county, district, and school) will be crucial to ensure the LCAP meets the law’s goals of achieving an adequate and equitable public education system. In order for future evaluations to be meaningful, there needs to be a baseline study that explains the conditions that schools are facing. “We

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<sup>88</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 18.

<sup>89</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 12.

<sup>90</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 14.

should establish baseline conditions and conduct preliminary work to observe early implementation of new school-level efforts initiated by district leaders.”<sup>92</sup>

Although the funding model might be simpler than it was in the past, the accountability system that goes with it is a bit more complicated for policy-makers. “The tandem processes of building district capacity to learn *and* objectively evaluating whether LCFF’s moving parts yields district- or school-level change become[s] a bit complex.”<sup>93</sup>

Fuller’s found that there was more variation in how school districts were incorporating existing strategies. For example, some schools connected their LCAPs more loosely than others to their existing district strategic goals. In the short term, there are two main tasks that the state and other groups must work on. To begin, first-year LCAPs must be evaluated so that the state has a clear understanding of where school districts are starting. “Taking stock” of LCAPs will allow the state to identify themes among district budget priorities, measureable goals, and program models. Additionally, the State Board of Education is in the process of creating rubrics that will be used to evaluate district LCAPs. Depending on how the SBE designs the rubrics, they “could enhance or distract from a sound long-term evaluation of LCFF implementation.”<sup>94</sup> Fuller and Tobben conclude that LCAP evaluation will require collaboration and coordination, where “the tandem aim is to accumulate objective evidence on LCFF implementation and inform districts’ own efforts to build analytic capacity.”<sup>95</sup>

In the spring of 2015, the Public Policy Institute of California released a multi-part report about the future of California. The policy brief about K-12 education includes

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<sup>92</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 19.

<sup>94</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 19.

<sup>95</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 19.

a discussion on the various education reforms that are occurring in California, including the LCAP. PPIC echoes statements of support for the LCAP policy, while also emphasizing the need to think about capacity building. “These plans offer significant promise because they create a process to identify district weaknesses and supply educators with the training and tools they need to address them. To realize that promise, though, the state needs to recognize the immediate need for technical assistance of districts and county offices of education.”<sup>96</sup> Although PPIC does not include much more than this, it is clear they suggest technical assistance is necessary to help school districts succeed with their LCAPs.

### **Press Coverage and Internet Resources**

In general, school districts are conducting outreach to parents, students and community members to explain the LCFF/LCAP policy, their goals, actions, and services. Districts have communicated with stakeholders via meetings, online presentations and surveys. This section presents examples of school districts around the state and describes the actions they are taking. These examples demonstrate that some school districts started working on their 2015-16 LCAP and Annual Update during the fall of 2014 and have continued throughout the first part of 2015. It is important to note that these districts are not necessarily representative of all districts in the state. These school districts created press releases and advertised meetings in early 2015. Their timeliness and steps toward soliciting stakeholder input can serve as a model for other school districts.

Districts have been hosting community meetings throughout the school year, meeting in fall 2014 and early in 2015. They are not waiting until the spring, when budgeting normally takes place, and are having conversations with parents and

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<sup>96</sup> (L. Hill et al. 2015)



community members, as well as other stakeholders “early and often,”<sup>97</sup> as Hahnel recommends in the report from Ed Trust – West.

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) hosted a 3-part webinar series and solicited survey feedback from stakeholders after each webinar.<sup>98</sup> Their first webinar, titled “Consultation Webinar #1” was in November 2014. The second webinar was in December 2014 about parent involvement and school climate and their third webinar was in February 2015 and will focus on basic conditions and pupil achievement. The webinars explain LCAP vocabulary and provide an overview of the LCFF and LCAP policy, specifically the eight state priorities. Stakeholders were asked to complete a post-webinar survey. According to the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services at SMMUSD, “the input of our parents and community is extremely important to this process.”<sup>99</sup>

SMMUSD explained their process for evaluating implementation and articulated what data they still need to look at. For example, they indicated that they will not have baseline data for academic standard areas until June 2015, but once they have the baseline data, they can set annual improvement goals.<sup>100</sup> This supports the idea that part of the success of the LCAP policy relies on the collection and analysis of relevant data. They updated stakeholders about their progress on the state and local priorities. For example, they have a number of slides with the subtitle: “What Have We Done So Far?” These slides address Common Core State Standard implementation (CCSS), the New Generation Science Standards (NGSS), English Language Development (ELD), and

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<sup>97</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 26.

<sup>98</sup> (Pinsker 2015)

<sup>99</sup> (Pinsker 2015)

<sup>100</sup> (“2014-15 LCAP Webinar 1” 2014)

attendance goals. These updates are consistent with the State Board of Education’s recommendations that school districts communicate with stakeholders about their actions and outcomes thus far. The school district also indicates if there are school site-level actions taking place to address the priority areas, which is something policy analyses suggest should happen across the state.

In the December webinar, which focused on parent involvement, SMMUSD noted that there is no common statewide metric for measuring parent involvement. Rather, parent involvement can include communication, volunteering, helping students with schoolwork, training, governance, and fundraising/obtaining resources.<sup>101</sup> Policy analysts have also noted the lack of a metric to measure parental involvement. In addition, there are insufficient and/or inconsistent metrics across districts for measuring student achievement at the elementary level.

The John Swett School District in Rodeo, California held an evening community meeting in February 2015. According to the Contra Costa Times’ coverage of the meeting, the school district “hired four teachers, including two special education teachers, a librarian, a psychologist and a counselor after a series of community meetings on its LCFF accountability plan.”<sup>102</sup> This staff and teacher hiring is consistent with findings from LCAP policy reports about the use to which school districts put their funds.

The Turlock Unified School District in Modesto, California hosted two community forums in March at two different sites. The meetings were held at the schools

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<sup>101</sup> (“2014-15 LCAP: Parent Involvement and School Climate, Webinar 2” 2014)

<sup>102</sup> (Radin 2015)

and were meant to “give parents and community members a voice in school spending priorities.”<sup>103</sup>

Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) Board of Education included a 15-minute LCAP Overview presentation at their February board meeting. According to the San Jose Mercury News, the LCAP is “a key feature of the new state funding system for public education and one that entails broad community outreach and engagement.”<sup>104</sup> AUSD has a Parent Advisory Committee, in compliance with Ed Code, and maintains a page on their district website where parents and community members can find information about past and upcoming meetings.

The St. Helena Unified School District in the Napa Valley held a community LCAP meeting in February 2015. According to the District Superintendent, the meeting was an “opportunity to learn more about the school district as a whole, and what goals we have in place to move student achievement forward. In addition, each principal will talk about their school specifically, and student outcomes as they relate to their school.”<sup>105</sup> After hearing about district and school actions, parents and community members participated in small-group discussions.

The Education Services department of Vacaville Unified School District took the lead on the 2014-15 LCAP. This departmental leadership supports Fuller and Tobben’s finding that in four out of the eight districts they surveyed, the educational services department led LCAP development. According to the assistant superintendent, the school district’s number one goal “was reducing the achievement gap.”<sup>106</sup> This type of broad

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<sup>103</sup> (*The Modesto Bee* 2015)

<sup>104</sup> (Davis 2015)

<sup>105</sup> (*St. Helena Star (Napa Valley Register)* 2015)

<sup>106</sup> (Bammer 2015)

goal demonstrates how some school districts were less specific in their LCAPs than others, and that the degree of specificity for goals and actions/services varied widely by school district.

Pomona Unified School District had a DELAC meeting in February 2015 to discuss the LCAP. As of February 23, 2015 there was no information about the Annual Update or about any meetings on Pomona Unified's LCFF/LCAP webpage. The information about the DELAC meeting was on the Master Calendar, but was not clearly advertised. When I tried to call the district to ask if there were any forthcoming community meetings, the phone call was repeatedly terminated by the automatic answering system. This might be a sign that there are not enough district staff to manage all the phones, and it indicates that there is a potential information and community outreach issue in Pomona. Parents might try to call the district to find out about a meeting or to ask a question, but they will not be able to talk to anyone or leave a message.

As part of a sociology class and community partnership that I am enrolled in this spring semester, I have worked on a school-funding project with students from Pomona High School. We have talked about the LCFF/LCAP policy and my conversations with them indicate that few Pomona High School students have heard about the LCFF/LCAP and that their parents had not received information about the policy from the school district.

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) hosted a series of four town hall-style "Input Sessions" in March. Each session was three and a half hours, and the school district provided breakfast, childcare and translation for anyone who needed it. These meetings were co-hosted by school board members, district leaders and members of the

community. According to the flyer advertising the meeting, “students, parents, principals, teachers, classified staff come together to learn and make recommendations about the efforts underway to raise achievement of African American, English Learner, Foster, Latino, Low Income, and Students with Disabilities.”<sup>107</sup> OUSD asks that each school in the district send a team in order to identify “next steps for their site based engagement.”<sup>108</sup> This further supports the finding that school districts are trying to think about school site actions and needs, rather than only thinking about actions at the district level. Furthermore, these community meetings align with the district’s goal of continuous improvement, “specifically, learning to engage in meaningful democratic process to make the best decisions for student achievement.”<sup>109</sup> Due to the student population in OUSD, the district is expected to receive significant funding increases throughout LCFF implementation, which might explain why this district has given more attention to student subgroup populations than some other school districts have. However, student population and increased funding must not be the only factors influencing a strong community outreach campaign, because other high-needs school districts, like Pomona Unified, do not yet have the same levels of community engagement.

West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) hosted three community forums in February and early March. According to press coverage of the meetings, they “are an opportunity for parents, teachers, students and community members to engage in the decisions that impact their schools.”<sup>110</sup> Like many other school districts, WCCUSD provided translation and childcare services at the meeting. 75% of students in WCCUSD

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<sup>107</sup> (“OUSD Communities United To Raise Student Achievement: LCAP Input Sessions” 2015)

<sup>108</sup> (“OUSD Communities United To Raise Student Achievement: LCAP Input Sessions” 2015)

<sup>109</sup> (“OUSD Communities United To Raise Student Achievement: LCAP Input Sessions” 2015)

<sup>110</sup> (Johnson 2015)

are “unduplicated,” or low-income, English learners, and/or foster youth; like OUSD, the district receives supplemental and concentration funds.

WCCUSD also scheduled three evening “District Local Control Accountability Plan” (DLCA) parent committee meeting during the spring of 2015. While the “town-hall”-style meetings are meant to garner feedback from the entire community and all stakeholders, the DLCAP committee meetings focus more on seeking parent input. Compared to other district LCAP websites, WCCUSD provides a lot of information in a clear and accessible format. The information they provide as well as the way they present it should serve as a model for other districts.

In addition to providing information about the LCAP on their website, the district accepted feedback via a designated LCAP email address. The WCCUSD website is well maintained and organized, and includes a clear list of upcoming meetings, as well as links to agendas and minutes from past District LCAP meetings.

Lucerne Valley Unified School District, a district of about 800 students in San Bernardino County, also hosted stakeholder meetings in late February 2015. Their first meeting was on February 24, and their second meeting was on February 26 at 4 p.m.<sup>111</sup> This timing is notable because it is different from the evening time slot (about 6-8 p.m.) that other districts have used. An earlier meeting time might make it difficult for working parents to attend since it is not accessible for anyone who works until at least 5 p.m.

Conejo Valley Unified School District, in Ventura County, conducted a survey of parents, teachers, staff, and students in order to assess what these stakeholders thought was working in the district, and what could be improved. In their 2014-15 LCAP, CVUSD listed conducting a survey as one of their district goals. According to a district

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<sup>111</sup> (*The Lucerne Valley Leader* 2015)

staff person, the survey was an important part of the LCAP process and served to “reshape [district] goals as [the district] moves forward.”<sup>112</sup> CVUSD conducted the survey in December 2014 and received over 9,500 stakeholder responses. Parents, teachers and staff were asked to fill out the survey on their own time, and most students filled out the survey at school, which explains the high response rate. Other school districts have created surveys, but my observation is that many surveys are focused on seeking input from parents, not students.

The results of the LCAP survey are available on the school district’s website. Their survey asked questions about educational programs, safety, technology, homework, and volunteer opportunities. The district compiled the results of the survey in a presentation that includes “highlights,” “areas of concern,” and “common themes.”<sup>113</sup> The student survey data is divided by grade level, with responses from elementary, middle, and high school students reflecting somewhat different priorities and perceptions. For example, high school students are less likely to report that they look forward to coming to school. Parents were concerned about homework times for students and certificated district staff were concerned about a lack of counseling staff. Although stakeholders expressed some concern, feedback was generally positive. The superintendent of the district has said that the district will look closely at survey responses and use the data to guide the development of their 2015-16 LCAP.<sup>114</sup> This survey administration and detailed analysis is a good model for what other school districts can do. The survey has the dual purpose of consulting with stakeholders and

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<sup>112</sup> (Whitnall 2015, 00)

<sup>113</sup> (Conejo Valley Unified School District 2014)

<sup>114</sup> (Whitnall 2015, 00)

gathering feedback that serves an important formative role for school districts as they develop their 2015-16 LCAPs.

School districts that host community forums tend to host multiple forums and also have them at various sites. Poway Unified School District in San Diego involved stakeholder groups in their 2014-15 LCAP process, and hopes to involve the same groups in the 2015-16 process. They organized four community forums in March and early April that are centered around “Five Critical Questions.” These central areas are safety, learning experiences, measures of success, fiscal responsibility, and communication.<sup>115</sup>

In keeping with the emerging trend, Riverside Unified School District hosted five “community engagement” meetings throughout March. All of the meetings were from 6-8 p.m. and each one was held at a different high school in the district. RUSD provided a link to a Google Form survey for stakeholders to submit their ideas online if they were not able to attend the meeting in person. This survey is titled “Let us know what you think: LCAP Year 2” and there are three questions. The first question asks: “What part of RUSD’s Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) do you want to comment on?” and asks respondents to choose between: high quality core curriculum and instruction; graduates prepared for college and career; students emotionally and socially healthy and ready to learn; students prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond; safe and secure learning environment; facilities and climate; engaged parents and community; students connected to school; and other. This question is single-response, so respondents cannot indicate that they want to comment on more than one of these areas.<sup>116</sup> This may prove to be problematic since it limits the feedback that parents and others can provide. The

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<sup>115</sup> (Breier 2015)

<sup>116</sup> Although respondents might be able to submit the Google Form more than one time, thereby commenting on multiple areas.



survey then provides an unstructured response section, where respondents can answer the questions: “What would you like to add to or change in the RUSD Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)?” This question, while trying to invite comment, might be too vague and open-ended for people who do not know about the LCAP or who have not had the time to read a document of more than 50 pages long.

Selma Unified School District, which is in the Central Valley, hosted information sessions to inform parents and community members about their school goals and budget. Their meetings are bilingual and written materials are also provided in English and Spanish. Selma Unified hosted a meeting in late February to explain the district’s goals and how they have addressed those goals. Press coverage of the first community forum presents a positive perspective about community engagement. According to a parent who was interviewed at one of these meetings, “you learn a lot just by being at these meetings. School district leaders are really open to parents asking questions and they want to hear from everybody.”<sup>117</sup> Some parents came to the forum to ask questions, and others came to learn about the policy and hear updates from the district. Selma Unified’s LCAP includes “hiring more intervention teachers, purchasing Chromebooks, teacher coaching in writing and math, providing summer programs and hiring staff to improve physical fitness at the kindergarten through sixth grade levels.”<sup>118</sup> These actions reflect larger statewide trends that focus on providing instruction for low-income and English learners, classroom technology integration, professional development, and funding after-school and summer services. The school district plans to have another community meeting in late March that will focus on evaluating current funding practices and determining whether or not

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<sup>117</sup> (Brown 2015)

<sup>118</sup> (Brown 2015)

funding levels are equitable. The focus on both programs and budget is a promising indication of integrating budget decisions with LCAP-specified actions and services.

While many school districts are using LCFF funds to restore previous programs or hire staff to provide services to high-needs students, some school districts are spending LCFF funds to bring more technology into the classroom. For example, Bellflower Unified spent \$3 million in the 2014-15 school year to integrate tablets, laptops, cameras and projects into classrooms. According to news coverage of this program, the system is “a testament to District planning that identified specific needs and system options as early as 2013, new funding provided through the Local Control Funding Formula and priorities set in the District’s first Local Control and Accountability Plan.”<sup>119</sup> With the LCAP process, school districts have the flexibility to spend money on programs and services that they identify as priorities for their schools.

While some districts have chosen to direct money to hiring intervention teachers or providing tutoring, some school districts have made technology in the classroom a priority. For Bellflower Unified, technology integration is aligned with both increasing student achievement and implementing the Common Core State Standards, because more technology will facilitate instruction of the more interdisciplinary and critical-thinking focused standards.

In an effort to increase student engagement in the LCAP Annual Update process, the Modesto City Schools Inter-High Council and LCAP Advisory Group student representatives held two meetings in February and March 2015 to get student and community input, respectively.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> (*Los Cerritos News* 2015)

<sup>120</sup> (*The Modesto Bee* 2015)

Press coverage of district and county actions during the 2015-16 LCAP creation, suggests that many district actions are consistent with community engagement suggestions in research reports. School districts might have already established these “best practices” before the LCAP, or they might have developed them after seeing what other districts were doing. School districts should continue to learn from each other and implement strategies for community engagement that have been effective in other districts.

### **Resources and Supports for Districts and County Offices of Education**

The California School Board Association (CSBA) is a nonprofit education association that provides resources and services to school boards around the state. They include LCFF and LCAP resources for school districts under the “Fair Funding” section of their “Governance and Policy Resources.”<sup>121</sup> CSBA maintains a webpage devoted to tracking LCFF/LCAP developments and resources. They have created LCFF Workshop presentations and the slides are available on their website. CSBA also tracks State Board of Education actions regarding the policy, and includes links to various SBE documents and meeting agendas. They also include links to additional resources, like policy briefs, fact sheets, archived webinar videos, and other LCFF presentations. Under “Other Resources” CSBA includes links to the California Department of Education, WestEd, the state PTA, and the Legislative Analyst’s Office.

In addition to these resources, CSBA provides a LCFF “Tool Kit” that has information about how governing boards of school districts should guide LCFF implementation. CSBA suggests that governance boards, or school boards, should

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<sup>121</sup> (“Local Control Funding” 2015)

“inform, consult, plan and adopt.”<sup>122</sup> For each stage, CSBA provides an overview, lists their recommended board actions, has a “Tools & Resources” section, and cites related state legislation (AB 97 and SB 97, Ed Code Statutes) and regulations.

Their online toolkit includes links to tools and resources from other education advocacy groups, like Education Trust-West, CCSESA, WestEd, Families in Schools, California State Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). This cross-fertilization of resources and ideas indicates how education advocacy groups are working in partnership to support school districts and the implementation of the LCFF and LCAP.

Additionally, CSBA links to sample LCAPs in order to help create professional networks among school districts, and enable school boards to learn from their peers. CSBA has also created sample documents for districts use, ranging from logistical community forum invitations and sign-in sheets, to generic forum presentation slides. Furthermore, CSBA included a few samples of school district online surveys, community meeting agendas, and models for parent involvement. They have also compiled a number of fact sheets and talking points to aide school district communication with the community and other stakeholders. The CSBA is helping build district capacity to create and implement their LCAPs by providing information, best practices, and samples to school districts.<sup>123</sup>

Interest groups and education advocacy organizations have formed working groups and collaboratives focused on LCAP evaluation and identifying best practices. According to California Forward (CA Fwd), an organization that supports various

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<sup>122</sup> (“LCFF Toolkit” 2015)

<sup>123</sup> (“LCFF Toolkit” 2015)

reforms around the state, the LCFF Collaborative working group helps schools navigate the LCFF. The Collaborative was created by CSBA and CA Fwd and “is composed of superintendents and board members from 17 statewide Local Education Agencies.”<sup>124</sup> In an effort to respond to feedback from Collaborative participants, the group will focus its future meetings on “student outcomes and equity, resource and funding adequacy, and community engagement and stakeholder expectations.”<sup>125</sup> A common recommendation from policy analysts is that there needs to be more institutionalized support for professional networks and that school districts should be encouraged to communicate and share what they are doing, what is working, and what is not working. The Collaborative is an example of this type of professional network and it helps foster working relationships among school districts and additional education organizations. Some working group presentations by school board personnel focused on parent engagement and making the LCAP accessible to community members, while others were about supporting student achievement and using disaggregated data in the “governance and decision-making process.”<sup>126</sup>

Reports like Hahnel’s indicate that there is a lot of collaboration and partnership among various education advocacy organizations. The CA Fwd group continues this collaborative trend by participating in round table discussions with representatives from Ed Trust-West, Californians For Justice and PICO California.<sup>127</sup> These are some of the same organizations that contributed to Hahnel’s report about the first year of LCAP implementation.

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<sup>124</sup> (Romasanta 2015)

<sup>125</sup> (Romasanta 2015)

<sup>126</sup> (Romasanta 2015)

<sup>127</sup> (Romasanta 2015)

WestEd and the SBE sponsored other trainings and webinars for school districts and COEs. These trainings covered a wide range of topics, including the changes in the new template, how to involve stakeholders, and how to better incorporate data and metrics into the LCAP.

The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools hosted a workshop on February 24, 2015 for school districts administrators and chief business offices. The workshop was free and open to the community as well. Janelle Kubinec, of the Comprehensive School Assistance Program led the finance and LCAP workshop as part of WestEd and State Board of Education outreach to county offices of education.<sup>128</sup>

### **Case Study: Claremont Unified School District**

Claremont, California is a city of about 35,000 people, approximately 30 miles east of Los Angeles. The Claremont Unified School District (CUSD) has over 6,860 students in seven elementary schools, an intermediate school, a comprehensive high school, a community day school, a continuation school, and a school for the orthopedically handicapped.<sup>129</sup> 5.6% of the school district are English Learners, and 39.8% of the student population receive free or reduced price meals, which is the measure used to determine low-income status.<sup>130</sup> 39.2% of students are Hispanic or Latino and 36% are White.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> (San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools 2015)

<sup>129</sup> Claremont Unified School District, "About CUSD - School Facts," <http://www.cusd.claremont.edu/about>.

<sup>130</sup> Claremont Unified School District Profile, "Special Programs," Ed-Data, [http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App\\_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/\\_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?Tab=1&level=06&reportnumber=16&county=19&district=64394&school=000000](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?Tab=1&level=06&reportnumber=16&county=19&district=64394&school=000000).

<sup>131</sup> Claremont Unified School District Profile, "Student by Race/Ethnicity," Ed-Data, [https://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App\\_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/\\_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?fyr=1314&county=19&district=64394&Level=06&reportNumber=16#studentsbyraceethnicity](https://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?fyr=1314&county=19&district=64394&Level=06&reportNumber=16#studentsbyraceethnicity).

The Claremont Unified Board of Education leads CUSD. The Superintendent, Dr. James Elsasser oversees four departments. These departments are Human Resources, Business Services, Educational Services and Student Services. Each department has an Assistant Superintendent. There are seventeen full-time professional staff at the district offices, and six Educational Service staff.

In 2013-14 and 2014-15, CUSD received supplemental funding from the LCFF based on the unduplicated count of English learners, low-income students, and foster youth in the district. They were not eligible for concentration funds, because the district did not meet the 55% threshold of unduplicated students. They will also receive supplemental funding for the 2015-16 academic year.

My research about Claremont Unified School district began in September 2014. The 2014-15 school year was the first year with both LCFF funding and the LCAP, and the school district was adjusting to the new funding and accountability system. The first stage of my research focused on how the inaugural LCAP was created and whether it was implemented in accordance with Education Code specifications. Since this thesis is interested in both the first and second year of the LCAP, I returned to CUSD to conduct more interviews with school district staff in 2015. I also attended District English Learner Advisory Council meetings in October 2014 and March 2015 to learn how the district engaged with stakeholders about services for ELs. I met with the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. Bonnie Bell, on September 19, 2014 and again on November 14, 2014.<sup>132</sup> I met with the Director of Education Services, Dr. Julie

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<sup>132</sup> A new Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services was hired shortly after my last meeting with Dr. Bell.

Olesniewicz on November 19, 2014 and on March 9, 2015. All of these interviews semi-structured, and were recorded and transcribed.

### *2014-15*

The CUSD Board of Education adopted the district's 2014-15 LCAP on June 16, before the July 1, 2014 deadline. The Educational Services Department at CUSD led the LCAP process and the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. Bell, began working on the LCAP in November 2013. According to Dr. Bell, she was accustomed to goal setting and leading district-wide initiatives, so it was natural that her department take charge. Since the state provided a hard deadline of July 1, 2014, CUSD worked backwards from that date, and "backward-mapped"<sup>133</sup> all that they had to accomplish in order for the school board to adopt the plan before the deadline. As research from around the state indicates, it is common for the Educational Services department to take the lead on LCAP creation.

As the revised 2015-16 template makes clear, school districts had to identify district goals, show how they intended to meet those goals (strategies and actions), and how they propose to measure the goals (various metrics, or Annual Measurable Outcomes). Since the plan is effective for three years, the district must include information about what their strategies and actions are for achieving that goal over the next three years. Once the plan is developed, the district assigns funding sources to the actions. The LCAP creation process is cyclical and goes through various feedback, editing and approval processes. For example, once goals are developed and funding is allocated, some goals might be rewritten in order to match available funding.

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<sup>133</sup> Dr. Bonnie Bell, Interview, November 14, 2014.



On January 8, 2014 Dr. Bell shared the proposed LCAP process with the School Board at a “Special Board Meeting.”<sup>134</sup> The CUSD timelines (for 2014-15 and 2015-16) are included as Appendix A and B. The first meeting with the LCAP Advisory Council was on January 21, 2014. The Advisory Council consists of people who have additional roles in the school district: classified association president, certificated association president, representatives of local colleges, parents representing diverse student populations, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, and a school-site principal (Dr. Julie Olesniewicz). These participants had already worked with the district and were used to providing their input on district-wide policies. There were also two students on the Council, who already held positions as school board representatives. The Advisory Council was convened for the explicit purpose of creating an LCAP, however most participants were accustomed to providing feedback and recommendations about education policies.

At the January 21, 2014 meeting, the Advisory Council reviewed the district’s current Strategic Goals and “shared the alignment of State LCAP priorities with current CUSD Strategic Goals.”<sup>135</sup> After they reviewed the existing goals, they began to draft additional goals for the LCAP. This demonstrates how the implementation of the LCAP was based on existing structures in Claremont. Dr. Olesniewicz indicated that the school-site goals were a good model for what the LCAP goals should look like. One of the first things that Dr. Bell did was analyze the existing district Strategic Goals and identify how they relate to the eight state priorities. She described this comparison as a “crosswalk,” between the two categories of goals. The chart that she created is included as Appendix C.

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<sup>134</sup> Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Timeline, Claremont Unified School District.  
<http://www.cusd.claremont.edu/file/1406346595124/1315636827829/810085443910594236.pdf>.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

As Dr. Bell explains, she wanted to see how the LCAP “fit in with the big picture of things.”<sup>136</sup> Existing CUSD goals (Appendix D) lined up well with the required eight state priorities and Dr. Bell found that the LCAP policy “is truly in line with what our strategic goals are and what the Board is trying to accomplish.”<sup>137</sup>

In addition to discussing existing goals, the Advisory Council discussed State and District Performance Indicators. The LCAP must include data about student outcomes. These metrics can and should be data that already exists, so the Council debated how to fit this existing information into the new template. Ed Code states that data should be reported in a way that is consistent with the pre-existing school report cards. It would have been challenging for the school district to include data in their LCAP if they did not already have it collected, thus the accurate inclusion of performance indicators was due to the reliance on existing data. The state performance indicators also helped the school district develop local performance indicators, which were then included in the LCAP.

The Advisory Council continued to meet during the spring of 2014, on February 5, February 27, March 5, April 2, and May 19. In addition to the Advisory Council meetings, the school board was regularly updated about the progress on the LCAP and the next steps the school district was taking. The School Board also participated in creating the LCAP by reviewing the plan and submitting input before the final version was proposed and approved. According to Dr. Bell, a number of existing administrators and elected officials participated in drafting goals and strategic actions. Dr. Bell worked with the school board, the Cabinet, and the larger Claremont community.

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<sup>136</sup> Dr. Bonnie Bell, Interview, November 14, 2014.

<sup>137</sup> Dr. Bonnie Bell, Interview, November 14, 2014.

The district began engaging “teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, local bargaining units of the school district, parents, and pupils” during an evening meeting on February 27, 2014. Dr. Bell provided an overview of the LCFF/LCAP and then opened up discussion about the eight state priorities. This was the only meeting at which all stakeholder groups and the LCAP Advisory Council were present. It is worth noting that the agenda for this meeting and the related presentation focus on the general policy and state priorities, and do not go into much detail about the development of goals and actions.

In order to connect the district and school goals to these eight priorities (as required by law), the district relied on advocacy coalitions. In this context, advocacy coalitions include “stakeholder groups as well as outside organizations and other education entities, like WestEd, School Services of America, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). According to Dr. Bell, CUSD also frequently communicates with the California School Boards Association (CSBA). CSBA provides draft policies that the school board can adopt, and indicates any policy that legally must be adopted. In my first interview with Dr. Bell in September she showed me the draft language that CSBA had provided about school board adoption of the LCAP. Dr. Bell and CUSD Educational Services also received some help from coalitions and other organizations. While these organizations did not participate directly in the development of CUSD goals and actions, they did help Dr. Bell think through the most effective ways to engage stakeholders in the LCAP process and how to link the district’s goals with the state priority areas.

Although the LCFF/LCAP were enacted on July 1, 2013, the State Board of Education still had to react to the legislation and create the LCAP template. Dr. Bell said that creating the LCAP for the 2014-15 academic year was difficult because the district was trying to “interpret what the legislation mean[t]” without complete guidance from the state. As a result, CUSD looked to the previously mentioned organizations and other vendors for resources and advice. CUSD also worked informally with other school districts, due to a personal relationship Dr. Bell had with a superintendent in another school district. District officials shared information about what they were doing in their plan and how they were engaging the community, thereby creating their own, small-scale professional learning network.

Other organizations supported districts in creating their LCAP. The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) was supportive because they were responsible for approving the LCAP and reporting to the state about all the district LCAPs in their county. WestEd provided a lot of information and additional resources about the LCAP to school districts because they also wanted to ensure that school districts created and adopted a LCAP. The State Board of Education contracts with WestEd, so WestEd is clearly interested in helping make LCAP implementation accurate and timely. The WestEd LCFF/LCAP homepage says “the resources available at this site complement information available at the California Department of Education with the goal of supporting local implementation of California’s new Local Control Funding Formula.”<sup>138</sup> Additionally, organizations like School Services of California and CSBA have an interest in helping school districts succeed. CUSD hires these “vendors” for their guidance and resources, and they want to support their clients (CUSD).

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<sup>138</sup> “Local Control Funding Formula,” WestEd Homepage, <http://lcff.wested.org/>.

CUSD continued to rely on advocacy coalitions, and made LCAP information public on their website on March 11, 2014. The district posted the link to an online survey in order to garner additional community feedback that would then inform their LCAP. Stakeholders needed to participate in order for CUSD to meet the legal requirements in Ed Code, so CUSD created opportunities for participation, both in-person and online.

In addition to reaching out to stakeholders and interested community members, CUSD met with existing committees to seek their input in drafting goals and identifying strengths and challenges in addressing the eight state priorities. CUSD hosted a meeting with K-12 administrators on April 1, and then with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Steering Committee on April 3, 2014. These committees existed before the LCAP policy was created, so CUSD did not have difficulty finding sufficient expert input about goals and priorities. The CCSS Steering Committee provided targeted advice about drafting goals that related to the “implementation of state standards” state priority.

Since LCFF concentration and supplemental funds are based partly on English learner population, it was important that the school district meet with parents, teachers, and administrators who knew the most about the needs of those students. LCFF funding is also targeted to low-income and foster youth students, and the District Advisory Committee (DAC) includes parents who represent these student populations. On April 24, 2014 there was a joint meeting with the District English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC) and the DAC. These committees were already established and meeting regularly about a wide range of EL policies and programs. As a result, the district had the support they needed in drafting goals for English learners.

The 2014-15 CUSD timeline shows that these committees provided input about the goals, but that district staff did most of the goal writing. Dr. Bell took the lead on the “actual wordsmithing” and editing of the goals and she and her assistant, Pamela Kling created the draft goals and Action Plan. From Dr. Bell’s perspective, the LCAP’s goals were not much different from what they already had in place. She said “Claremont was probably ahead of the ballgame, because our strategic plan had goals and actions under each one of them, similar to the LCAP, so we’ve been doing this for several years already.”<sup>139</sup> As a result, there was not a lot of base writing to do. Once Dr. Bell drafted the initial goals (between April 25 and May 5, 2014), she presented these goals to the district Cabinet for their feedback. Once the district established their goals, they went back through the LCAP and created their “Action Plan.” At this point they evaluated what the district and schools were trying to achieve and then determined what services they could provide or actions they could take in order to meet those goals. The Advisory Council met for the last time on May 19, 2014. They reviewed the draft and they, along with the CUSD Cabinet, provided another round of feedback to the school district.

Between May 19 and May 27, 2014, the school district assigned funding to the proposed LCAP actions and continued refining the plan “based on stakeholder feedback.”<sup>140</sup> By the week of May 27, CUSD posted a draft of the LCAP to the district’s website and also sent a copy to the board members. The district responded to the DELAC and DAC committees in writing about the committee’s comments and feedback. The CUSD Board of Education discussed the LCAP on June 5, and held a public hearing on

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<sup>139</sup> Dr. Bonnie Bell, Interview, November 14, 2014.

<sup>140</sup> Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Timeline, Claremont Unified School District. <http://www.cusd.claremont.edu/file/1406346595124/1315636827829/810085443910594236.pdf>.

June 16. The LCAP was adopted by the Board on June 26, 2014 and included information required by the Ed Code.<sup>141</sup>

### *2015-16*

The LCAP timeline for 2015-16 is not significantly different from the timeline for 2014-15. At the time of my March 9, 2015 meeting, CUSD was meeting with stakeholders and sharing results from their mid-year update. Dr. Olesniewicz explained that she and her staff at the district offices used their 2014-15 LCAP to guide their actions during the school year. Beginning in November 2014, the Education Service department reviewed their LCAP and created a summary document to share with stakeholders.

Just as the lack of a template posed an issue for the first year of implementation, CUSD expressed some concern that they were working on their second LCAP without knowing what the final SBE Evaluation Rubrics would look like. Similarly, since the Smarter Balanced Assessments were released later than originally anticipated, the school district had difficulty establishing benchmarks for student achievement. Dr. Olesniewicz expressed some frustration that the state often passes policies and requires school districts to take action without having first developed all necessary parts.

Dr. Olesniewicz and other district staff continued to attend trainings and workshops from WestEd and LACOE during the second year of implementation. There was some concern that district staff was overburdened with work and that the LCAP was taking time away from other tasks the department needed to work on. For example, Dr. Olesniewicz was also in charge of implementing the new ELA/ELD standards in CUSD and had a role in organizing the logistics for spring testing.

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<sup>141</sup>CUSD's 2014-15 LCAP,  
<http://www.cusd.claremont.edu/file/1406346595124/1315636827829/5373560386328437582.pdf>

Overall, my findings from CUSD were reflective of larger trends identified in LCAP research reports. This case study confirmed that school district staff are generally receptive to the goals of the LCAP, but that a lack of capacity, time and resources are major barriers to effective implementation.



#### **IV. Policy Recommendations**

The LCAP is in its second year of implementation and research indicates that many school districts are making progress toward creating goals, actions and strategies that will make the education system more equitable and participatory. Since the policy is still at a formative stage, these recommendations are timely and potentially important. It is critical that policymakers and state legislators are mindful of the initial effects of the LCFF/LCAP and make necessary “mid-course corrections” to assure that the policy goals of creating a more adequate and equitable education system are met. This section draws on the findings of research reports and my own observations. Many of these recommendations are connected to the Evaluation Rubric that the State Board of Education is developing and will release in Fall 2015.

To guide our understanding of these policy recommendations, we ask: what changes should be made to the LCAP policy to build district, school, and county capacity, monitor student outcomes, best serve high-needs students, and ensure stakeholder participation?

Hahnel, of Ed Trust – West, recommends that state policymakers and education leaders can help realize the goals of “engagement and equity” by: building district capacity, creating more funding transparency, strengthening county oversight and holding districts accountable for results. School district leaders can help the LCAP meet its goal of creating an equitable funding system by making LCAPs easy to read, showing how supplemental and concentration funding is spent, engaging stakeholders, innovating, and monitoring for impact.

## **District Capacity**

County offices of education, the California Department of Education and the newly formed California Collaborative for Education Excellence (CCEE) are key resources for school districts. These organizations should continue to provide school districts with “best practices” or exemplary LCAPs and should offer support, technical assistance, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. The state should help create professional learning networks so that school districts can share best practices and school-site leaders can learn from one another. The newly established CCEE will likely have a role in this capacity building over the next few years. Professional development, such as WestEd training sessions, should continue.

Since few districts address all 8 priorities, one solution would be to allow districts to focus on just a few priority areas. This change would work best once the evaluation rubrics are created and districts receive feedback on their plan. Based on feedback, they can determine the areas that they need to focus on and can dedicate more of their limited resources to fully developing goals, actions and services for a few areas.

The SBE should try to align the LCAP template with other compliance documents, including School Accountability Report Cards, and Title I Plans, which are documents that school districts already have to create. Hopefully, aligning plans will help school districts maximize their limited staff resources.

## **County Capacity**

The state should also support COEs so that they can review LCAPs and provide training for school districts in their jurisdiction. Since COEs are responsible for making sure all the funding is in order, their capacity development is particularly important.

County oversight of the LCAP process varied across the state, with some counties heavily involved in their districts' creation of the plan, and other counties approving LCAPs that were missing information. For example, one county office of education in Northern California approved LCAPs that failed to include their total supplemental and concentration funding, even though there is a section on the LCAP template for that purpose. Another school district included an inaccurate supplemental and concentration total in their plan. This clearly shows a need to dedicate resources to training COEs for LCAP review.

The state might need to allocate additional funds so that the COEs and districts can hire an LCAP staff member. As of now, some districts are stretched too thin by all their responsibilities and some are outsourcing their LCAP creation to education consulting businesses.

### **School Site Capacity**

Although the LCAP focuses primarily on school districts, the bulk of education actions and services are implemented at the school site. For that reason, districts should take the initiative to think about school site actions and how to build the capacity of their school staff to implement the LCAP. One way to do this is to give school administrators a more central role in LCAP creation and to provide training about strategic planning and participatory budgeting.

LCFF funds are distributed to school districts, but schools within the same district might have varying levels of high-needs students. Therefore, school districts should establish formulas for distributing funds to schools so that the students who generated those additional funds receive the benefit of supplemental series. Districts should be

transparent about their efforts to distribute funds. One way to do this is to require school sites to create their own mini-LCAP explaining how they will use district-provided funds. If school districts give school sites money, then schools should have to create plans explaining how they will use those funds (especially supplemental and concentration grants).

### **Monitor Outcomes**

According to Hahnel, “districts should monitor the impact of their programs and be willing to modify or discard ideas that aren’t working.”<sup>142</sup> This monitoring can happen internally or with external evaluators and community partners. If they have not done so already, school districts need to design program evaluations, collect detailed data on student outcomes, assign staff to monitor implementation, and share progress reports with the public. Some school districts, like Berkeley Unified assigned a teacher on special assignment (TOSA) to track the plan’s implementation.

Schools and districts should use the LCAP as an opportunity to think critically about what services and programs they provide for students and to evaluate what works and what could be improved.

Although school districts have the primary responsibility for measuring and tracking metrics about student outcomes, parents and stakeholders should be included in that process as well. Some districts are “helping [Parent Advisory Committee] members become familiar with school performance data and the district’s programs and policies.”<sup>143</sup> By bringing parents into the conversation about metrics, data, and policy implementation, the LCAP becomes a more participatory policy.

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<sup>142</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 26.

<sup>143</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 26.

## **Supplemental and Concentration Funds and Services for High-Needs Students**

Districts should specify which funds (base, supplemental or concentration) they intend to use for their listed actions and services. If funds are clearly linked to actions and services, the district, COE, state and education advocacy groups can track what the money is being used for and can identify trends across school districts. This will help evaluate the LCAP policy and make it easier to monitor what types of programs are most effective at improving student outcomes. This might make the LCAP more like a compliance document, but such expenditure information is important to improve equity for high-needs students. I argue that transparency about funding programs for ELs, foster youth and low-income students is worth the additional work for school district.

The state can also create more funding transparency about what funds are used by requiring common accounting codes that track base grants separately from supplemental and concentration funds. The SBE might also want to consider revising the LCAP template to require disaggregated expenditures by grant type to show what funds are used for each action/service. Additionally, The California Department of Education could report how much supplemental funding each district receives, rather than just reporting the total LCFF funds. Under the current policy, supplemental and concentration fund totals are reported district by district, so having the CDE report them would provide a centralized place to find information about supplemental and concentration funding across the state.

Districts should include information about previous spending and previous services offered. This way, LCAP evaluations can track how services have changed over time and analysts can use these spending patterns to evaluate how services and actions

connect to changes in student outcomes. As the LCAP continues, there will be a clear image of how school district funding allocations change over time, because evaluators will be able to look at the Annual Update section of the Template to see what schools spent money on the previous year. With the LCAP as it is now, it is not clear which actions and services were already in place, which makes evaluating the effect of the LCFF on educational outcomes nearly impossible. Evaluators need to have information about how funding has changed (or stayed constant) over time.

School districts should justify their decision to use supplemental and concentration funds for all students, rather than for subgroups, especially in districts where not all students are high-needs. Their rationale for using funds on a school or district-wide basis should be research-based. Hopefully this will help ensure that the funds generated by low-income, English learners and foster youth go towards improving their educational outcomes.

### **Ensure Stakeholder Participation**

Districts should use the LCAP as an opportunity to build relationships with parents, students, and community members. The stakeholder engagement component of this policy presents an opportunity for districts to rethink their approach to working with the community and to see stakeholders as potential partners in making and implementing education policies. Districts should first make sure that stakeholders know about the significant changes in the funding and accountability systems, and use that information-sharing as a way to start a dialogue with stakeholders about what they think and suggest.

Hahnel recommends that districts engage stakeholders early and often, since the iterative nature of the LCAP policy makes formative evaluations especially valuable.

This means that district staff should talk to stakeholders throughout the year, not just in the spring. The district can work on their Annual Update throughout the school year and can share their mid-year findings with stakeholders. That way, stakeholders are more integrated into the LCAP process, rather than only being consulted once the district has developed the proposed LCAP in late spring.

When districts work with stakeholders, they should provide translations of LCAP documents and meetings so that parents and community members that do not speak English can fully participate. Additionally, there should be childcare at meetings so that parents can attend and participate even if they are unable to secure their own childcare. School districts should also offer transportation to parents and community members to diminish any possible barriers to participation. Community meetings should be scheduled for different times, and should mostly be in the evening so that working parents can attend.

Since many district LCAPs are more than 50 pages long, school districts should create executive summaries so that the information contained in the plan is accessible and understandable. Districts should also be mindful to limit their use of education jargon and abbreviations (like the list at the beginning of this thesis). Other “community friendly” practices include: info graphics, slide presentations, videos and flyers.

Districts should articulate how and to what extent they incorporated stakeholder input in the LCAP, rather than simply explaining that they talked to stakeholder groups. It is especially important that the school district explain what input from the DELAC and DAC it incorporated into the LCAP since these committees are focused on high-needs students.

## **V. Language Policies in the U.S. and California**

### **The Politics of Language**

The United States does not have an official language policy, but “has laws that provide non-English speaking students a right to acquire the English language and to have access to an equitable education while they are doing so.”<sup>144</sup> Language policies in California public schools are deeply connected to a history of oppression and “Americanization.” Spanish-speaking students in particular were forced to shed their language in favor of learning English. In a state with a complicated history and a mix of languages, “language becomes a critical marker of social and political status.”<sup>145</sup> In *Forbidden Language*, Gándara and Hopkins explain how language is political and connected to larger societal factors. As a result, “minority languages are always culturally subordinated to the majority or “official” language and thus so are their speakers. Such cultural subordination always carries economic consequences. In sum, the stakes are very high for language policies, as they shape the core identity of groups of people and determine their social, educational, and economic opportunities.”<sup>146</sup>

English education has historically been connected to social and economic factors. Changes in language policies reflected U.S. national interests, whether that was controlling Native Americans during Western expansion or reacting to European immigration in the early twentieth century. The two world wars of the twentieth century spurred a political desire to have a unified country, and English-only policies symbolized national unity. Gándara et al. trace the history of English-only policies and find that there was a large push toward homogeneity in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century “spurred by

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<sup>144</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 21.

<sup>145</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 21.

<sup>146</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 22.



many factors, including the standardization and bureaucratization of urban schools (Tyack, 1974), the need for national unity during the two world wars, and the desire to centralize and solidify national gains around unified goals for the country.”<sup>147</sup>

Language practices established in the past have continued today, with non-English speaking people expected to acquire English if they live in the United State. “The United States continues to consider linguistic assimilation of immigrants, or the achievement of English monolingualism, as the final step in the multigenerational assimilation process.”<sup>148</sup> As Gándara indicates, language is a mechanism of assimilation and language policies interwoven with the belief that teaching someone to speak English imparts knowledge of what it means to “be American.”

Current education policy is influenced by past practices in the United States and in California. “Our historical intolerance toward non-English speakers on our soil, in our institutions, still influences the course of immigration and education policy.”<sup>149</sup> Additionally, there are “deep connections for many U.S. residents between the right to citizenship and monolingual English-speaking – at least in the public sphere, be it in schooling or in singing the national anthem.”<sup>150</sup>

Economic and social conditions are deeply intertwined with educational achievement. High school graduation and higher education is highly important for future job earnings and related economic wellbeing.

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<sup>147</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 23.

<sup>148</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 24.

<sup>149</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 30.

<sup>150</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 30.

## Language Policy Background

In the late 1960s and 70s, a number of policies and court decisions established bilingual programs for English learners and were focused on ensuring that English learners had access to the same curriculum as English-speaking students. These policies came after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *Lau v. Nichols* (1974)<sup>151</sup> established that linguistic minority students have a right to have access to equal curriculum and requires that “schools facilitate [curriculum access] through whatever effective means they chose, including bilingual education.”<sup>152</sup> Funding for these bilingual programs was provided in the 1974 renewal of the Bilingual Education Act, and the act also emphasized the importance that children learn in their primary language as they learn English. These developments in bilingual and native language education ended in the late 70s with political pushback from conservatives.

An English-only movement developed in both the U.S. government and interest groups. This movement “redefined bilingual education as a barrier to cultural assimilation and citizen participation and successfully lobbied for the closure of bilingual education programs in several states.”<sup>153</sup> English-only policies are also known as restrictive language policies because they limit instruction in native, or home, language. English-only policies also limit bilingual instruction. In order to garner support for English-only practices, supporters of restrictive language policies contended that English-only instruction was necessary to keep the United States free of political and cultural conflict and to aide the assimilation of immigrants. “The English-only movement had anti-immigrant and nativist political goals that were similar to those of the Americanization

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<sup>151</sup> *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

<sup>152</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 25.

<sup>153</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 25.

movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>154</sup> These anti-English sentiments grew in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Gándara et al. propose that these education policy beliefs were connected to “increasing immigration, rising numbers of ELs, and a ‘close the borders’ mentality gripping the nation.” These political drivers are still present in 2015. For example, immigration from Central American countries has increased in recent years. At the national level, these education policies are not a partisan issue because the Clinton administration’s policies were in keeping with those of Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

In the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the cap on English-only programs was removed and school districts were no longer required to provide bilingual instruction. At the federal level, the Office of Bilingual Education was renamed the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students. School districts were no longer required to provide instruction in or supports for students’ native languages.<sup>155</sup>

English instruction became politicized in the 90s in the wake of the conservatism and neoliberalism of the 80s and early 90s. Education policies were used to address larger questions of immigration and economic issues, like unemployment. In other words, English learners became the scapegoat for the economic and social ills of the country. In the Foreword to *Forbidden Language*, James A. Banks explains:

The increase of immigration in the United States and around the world is another development that triggered the rise of conservatism and neoliberalism. [...] The restrictive language policies that were approved by voters in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts were manifestations of the neoliberalism, conservatism, and

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<sup>154</sup> Wiley & Wright, 2004 as cited in (Gándara et al. 2010), pp. 25-26.

<sup>155</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 26.

xenophobia that gripped the country in the early 2000s and that are still powerful and intractable forces in the United States and the rest of the world.<sup>156</sup> When there are economic difficulties, people try to find someone to blame and some way to explain the issues at hand. Often immigrants are blamed for unemployment and bear the brunt of various criticisms. Gándara and Hopkins claim “in a sagging economy, the issues of immigration and the children of immigration are politically volatile, and these students often find themselves used as political pawns [...] and so these young people are often denied access to postsecondary education and told to ‘go home’”<sup>157</sup> even though the vast majority of English learners were born in the United States.

In 1986, *A Nation at Risk* was published under the Reagan administration. *A Nation at Risk* was a report by the U.S. Department of Education about the failures of the US public school system. The alarmist and crisis rhetoric of the report inspired a number of education reforms, even though many of the claims in the report were unsubstantiated. This crisis-rhetoric is also used in policy discussions about English learners. For example, Patricia Gándara published a book titled *The Latino Education Crisis* in which she discusses the urgent need for policy-makers and the public to pay attention to the needs of Latino students. This general sense of urgency coupled with evidence of the EL achievement gap has made ELs “a focus of attention for education reformers and a convenient object of attention for some individuals who have used their plight to push English-only instructional policies in the states.”<sup>158</sup> In *Forbidden Language*, Gándara echoes some of the language of *A Nation at Risk* with: “given the large and increasing number of ELs in U.S. public schools, it behooves the educational community-and the

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<sup>156</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. xiv.

<sup>157</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), pp. 12-13.

<sup>158</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 11.

nation as a whole-to improve the educational environments and opportunities for these students and their teachers. Failing to do so will put the entire education system at risk.”<sup>159</sup>

The economic and social context of the United States has shaped language policies, especially in California. Debates about English education policies are heavily influenced by the political climate and far less based on research or evidence about best practices for language instruction.

English learner instruction has continued to be an important part of education policy in California. Education advocacy group, Californians Together, is one organization that has conducted intensive research about English learners in the state. One of the key challenges for providing a quality education for English learners is ensuring that policymakers at both the state and district level understand the characteristics and needs of this student subgroup. In order to best serve these students, it is necessary to compile and present statewide quality data about this population of students.

Although speaking a language other than English in the home has recently been viewed through a deficit-model lens, this approach appears to be changing, as state policies and school district practices reflect a more asset-centered understanding of dual literacy. In a time where education rhetoric of most politicians is centered on notions of globalization and economic competitiveness, framing dual literacy in economic terms might help garner more support for such programs. Patricia Gándara argues that there are multiple benefits of being able to speak a language other than English. First, with knowledge of another language, people can communicate more effectively with clients

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<sup>159</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 17.

and in business settings. Additionally, there are familial and cultural benefits to being able to speak a language that reflects a person's heritage. Furthermore, there are cognitive advantages to having full literacy in multiple languages. Gándara proposes a shift away from thinking of non-English language skills as a deficit, towards a positive approach to multi-lingualism. This shift would emphasize the assets that Spanish-speaking Latino students bring to school. Gándara suggests:

Languages must be seen as resources, as invaluable human capital, and as doorways to enhanced cognitive skills. This is the one area in which many Latino students arrive at school with an advantage over their non-Hispanic peers, and it can be used to benefit all the children in a school.<sup>160</sup>

For example, dual-language programs would help both English learners and their English-speaking peers.

Bilingual education programs were replaced with Structured English Immersion (SEI) programs, which were supposedly designed to expedite English instruction and help English learners reach full proficiency in the quickest and most efficient manner possible. Oftentimes these structured programs upheld de facto segregation, since minority students were physically separated from white students in schools in order to receive English instruction.

### **Proposition 227**

Proposition 227 was a ballot initiative in California in 1998 that made bilingual education illegal. California voters approved the proposition. Prop 227 is a “restrictive language policy” because it limits the type of instruction that ELs and English-speaking students can receive. Prop 227 intended to prevent teachers from teaching students in their primary home language. Before Prop 227, about 29 percent of English learners were

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<sup>160</sup> (Gándara 2010), p. 6.

receiving primary-language instruction. The percent of ELs receiving primary-language instruction dropped to 8% following Prop 227.<sup>161</sup>

There was a lot of confusion in California about the effects of Prop 227, and some school districts actually created bilingual programs post-Prop 227. Due to the lack of specificity and instruction from the state, school districts were left to establish their own programs. This resulted in unequal instruction around the state, because some districts were stricter than others in their decision to provide bilingual instruction. Students' instruction was thus determined by the attitudes of the individuals in power in their respective school districts, leaving some students more vulnerable to English-only policies than others.<sup>162</sup> These differences were clearly shown in the way that school districts responded to parent waivers. Parents were allowed to seek waivers of Structure English Immersion, meaning their students would not be placed in expedited-English classrooms. School districts that already had bilingual programs continued to offer primary-language instruction, while school districts that had more negative, or even neutral, views of primary-instruction used Proposition 227 to eradicate all bilingual programs in their district.<sup>163</sup>

Studies of the effects of Prop 227 indicate that English-acquisition and proficiency did not improve, and in fact ELs experienced declines in proficiency in the first year after the Proposition's passage. Prop 227 was included on the ballot under the argument that "if [English learners] are denied instruction in their native language, they will be forced to abandon 'the crutch' of native language, and learn English more

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<sup>161</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 27.

<sup>162</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 29.

<sup>163</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 29.

rapidly.”<sup>164</sup> Education research, however, has shown that this model of language acquisition is incorrect, and that instruction in a student’s home language aids the development of his or her English skills. Restrictive language policies like Prop 227 have not been proven to improve student achievement.

English learner education policy in California was set by a referendum process, leaving little to no room for substantive policy debates based on actual research. Voters made a decision without knowing the full effect of what they were voting on. The passage of Prop 227 demonstrates how the referendum process that was originally intended to give citizens a voice was co-opted by wealthy individuals and interest groups to advance their policy agenda with little regard for the public good.

Proponents of Prop 227 made an argument about efficiency and waste in order to garner support. The “promises” of Prop 227 were that “(1) the state will spend (“waste”) less money on the education of English learners; (2) the changes the law mandates will raise their English literacy levels; and (3) imposition of Structured English Immersion will help them to acquire full fluency in English more quickly.”<sup>165</sup> However, as Gándara et al. argue, education policy about English learners has “been made in a relative knowledge vacuum,” which has resulted in policies that do not help English learners improve or reach proficiency.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 11.

<sup>165</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 28.

<sup>166</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 31.



## **VI. English Learners and Language Education**

### **History of English Learner Policies**

There is a lot of policy debate over whether students' home languages should be seen as an asset, or if students should be taught solely in English. Much of the rhetoric around English-only instruction is couched in neoconservative, neoliberal and xenophobic language.<sup>167</sup> Speaking a language other than English is often seen through a deficit lens rather than being appreciated as an asset. Thus, people who speak a language other than English are defined by what they lack, rather than what abilities they have.

Due to the large proportion on Latino English learners in California, English learner policies in California are important for the Latino population. In California, English instruction has a complicated history, with various policies that altered the way non-English speaking students are educated. Before 1998 dual-immersion and bilingual programs were relatively common in California public education. Dual-immersion programs may also be referred to as “two-way immersion.” However, in 1988, Proposition 227 was passed, effectively banning bilingual instruction in California. Bilingual instruction became less common, and Spanish-speaking students were placed in mainstream or remedial English classrooms. This was particularly detrimental for Spanish-speaking students, because language acquisition research suggests that when a child is taught to reach academic fluency in his or her home language, they are more likely to learn a second language as well. Dual-immersion programs for students who spoke Spanish at home would help them reach academic proficiency in both their home language and also in English. Although bilingual instruction declined in California, some

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<sup>167</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. xiv.

schools continued their programs, and now a proposition is being considered on the 2016 California state ballot that would repeal Prop 227.

### **What is Bilingual Education?**

Research shows that language development in a student's primary language helps literacy development in a secondary language. When students who speak a language other than English at home learn to read first in that language, their subsequent English development is stronger. Similarly, students who develop larger vocabularies in their home language tend to develop larger vocabularies in English. As Patricia Gándara explains in "The Latino Education Crisis," Latino parents, especially mothers, tend to have lower levels of educational attainment than their white peers. This has implications for how much parents are able to engage with their students about academic topics at home. As Gándara explains, "Latina mothers have the lowest average education of all ethnic groups, reducing their repertoire of informal educational activities."<sup>168</sup> That said, all parents regardless of educational attainment, could still support their child's education from home. When students are able to develop language skills in their home language, their capacity for learning is improved since "learning is most efficient when it builds upon prior learning; and knowledge acquired in one language is transferred to other languages once corresponding vocabulary and linguistic structures have been acquired."<sup>169</sup> Therefore, teaching the home language at school connects what students learn in the home to language development at school. "Teaching the child, at least part of the time, in the home language provides a bridge so that parents can extend that learning

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<sup>168</sup> (Gándara 2010), p. 2.

<sup>169</sup> (Gándara 2010), pp. 2-3.

in the home.”<sup>170</sup> This bridge is helpful for the child, even when the parent does not have high levels of education attainment.

Bilingual or dual immersion programs help students develop literacy in both their home language and in English. The research-based understanding of language acquisition informed the new English Language Arts/English Language Development standards in California, which are an attempt to more explicitly link what students already know or are able to learn at home, with what they are taught in school.

### **English Learners**

In 2012-13, about 22 percent of K-12 students in California were classified as English learners (EL). An additional 22 percent of students have a primary language other than English but have met their school district’s criteria for reclassification. As the California School Boards Association explains, “this means that 44 percent of the state’s students live in households where the language spoken at home – some, if not all of the time – is other than English.”<sup>171</sup>

For a discussion about English learner policies and the LCAP to make sense, the definition of “English learner” needs to be explained. There is a lot of variation by state and school district in how English learners are designated. School districts also have different practices for measuring student progress and for redesignating English learners as “fluent English proficient.” These different practices affect the types of supports that ELs receive and thus affect their academic achievement.<sup>172</sup>

When a child enrolls in any California public school, the parent or guardian of the student fills out what is called the “Home Language Survey.” If the parent/guardian

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<sup>170</sup> (Gándara 2010), p. 3.

<sup>171</sup> (*English Learners in Focus* 2014), p. 1.

<sup>172</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 15.

indicates that any language other than English is spoken at home, the child is classified as an English learner. Following this initial classification, the school administers the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Based on the results of the test, the student is designated as beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced or advanced. If the student scores early advanced or advanced, then they are placed in mainstream English classrooms and are not classified as English learners. If the student scores below early advanced then they are designated by the school district as an English Learner.

The state is ultimately responsible and held accountable for ensuring that English learners have equal opportunity and access to education in California. The state also administers federal Title III funds to school districts. Although the state provides some guidelines for English learner instruction, most of the authority is deferred to the school districts and school sites. Since the LCAP policy takes place at the district level, it is important to know that each school district handles EL instruction and reclassification differently.

School districts need to pay attention to their EL populations to ensure that they have access to education. The achievement gap in California public schools is especially large for English learners; “ELs score substantially lower on the California Standards Test (CST) than other groups of students.”<sup>173174</sup> According to the Public Policy Institute of California’s report of “California’s English Learner Students,” policy makers must “assess [their] understanding of this diverse group, highlight the opportunities to improve policies around demonstrating mastery of English, calibrate funding formulas involving

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<sup>173</sup> (L. E. Hill 2012)

<sup>174</sup> The PPIC found that “former ELs perform better than both English Only and English Learner students in English Language Arts on the CST.

EL students, and implement new curriculum standards thoughtfully.”<sup>175</sup> The LCFF and LCAP are primarily about the funding formulas for public schools, but the LCAP policy also includes the final point about the implementation of new curriculum standards, which would affect EL education.

### **California’s English Learners**

In 2013-14, 84.21 percent of English Learners in California public schools spoke Spanish. The next-largest groups of English Learners speak Vietnamese (2.31%), Filipino [Pilipino or Tagalog] (1.41%), Cantonese (1.33%), Mandarin [Putonghua] (1.17%), and Arabic (1.08%).<sup>176</sup> When limited to “Socioeconomically Disadvantaged” students, the percent of English Learners who speak Spanish increases to 89.1 percent. Of Migrant Education Students in California for the 2013-14 school year, 96.6 percent spoke Spanish and 1.97 percent spoke Mixteco, which is an indigenous language in Mexico. The large percent of Spanish-speaking ELs is important for language instruction policies because it indicates that Spanish-speaking students could be taught in their home language with “relatively little additional burden on the schools.”<sup>177</sup>

English learners are likely to attend segregated schools in urban and low-income areas and most ELs “attend schools with very high percentages of students like themselves, where the opportunity to hear good models of English and interact with peers who are native speakers are minimal.”<sup>178</sup> Additionally, the schools that ELs attend in high concentrations might be in less affluent areas and have fewer financial resources, which is something the Local Control Funding Formula hopes to remedy.

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<sup>175</sup> (L. E. Hill 2012)

<sup>176</sup> (*English Learner Students by Language by Grade, 2013-14* 2014)

<sup>177</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 8.

<sup>178</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 10.

17% of English learners in California are in Los Angeles Unified and San Diego Unified alone.<sup>179</sup> Los Angeles is the metro area with the largest number and proportion of Latino immigrants.<sup>180</sup> Los Angeles Unified School District is particularly focused on EL instruction and English proficiency. “Proficiency for All” is one of LAUSD’s five strategic goals.<sup>181</sup> Their sub goals are: increase student proficiency in ELA and math; greater focus on English Learner reclassification and English Proficiency; and decrease the number of Long Term English Learners (LTEL). Their goals are aligned to the following metrics: “percentage of English Learners who Reclassify as Fluent English Proficient” and “Percentage of English Learners who have not been reclassified in 5 years (LTEL).”<sup>182</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that although ELs are in districts across California, they tend to be concentrated in larger school districts. Although most ELs are in urban school districts, there are high concentrations of ELs in rural Imperial and Monterey Counties.<sup>183</sup>

The majority of ELs enter California public schools in Kindergarten. Students may be reclassified as proficient in English (officially called Reclassified Fluent English Proficient, or RFEP) by the school district, however most student are not eligible for reclassification until the second grade. More English learners enter schools every year, and can enter in any grade. Of the more than one million ELs in California, about 51

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<sup>179</sup> (L. E. Hill 2012)

<sup>180</sup> (Gándara and Contreras 2009), pg. 3.

<sup>181</sup> (Los Angeles Unified School District 2015)

<sup>182</sup> (Los Angeles Unified School District 2015)

<sup>183</sup> (L. E. Hill 2012)

percent are in grades K-3, 27 percent are in grades 7-12 and 22 percent are in grades 4-6.<sup>184</sup>

There is a population of English learners, known as Long Term English Learners, or LTELs. LTELs need additional support from schools in order to reach proficiency in academic English. Long Term English Learners are primarily in secondary school, because to be classified as LTELs they need to have been in the school system for at least six years. These students often speak English during the school day and have a sufficient command of the language to function on a daily basis. The educational issue is that there is a difference between this colloquial English and the “academic English” that is necessary for long-term success in school. According to the California Board of Education, academic English “refers to the language used in school to help students develop content knowledge, skills, and abilities, and the language students are expected to use to convey their understanding and mastery of such knowledge, skills, and abilities. For example, academic English would include words like “summarize” and “analyze.”<sup>185</sup> LTELs, as well as other ELs who have yet to acquire academic English, have trouble keeping up on subject area material, because they are focused so much on learning English. As a result, these students have trouble keeping up with their English-speaking peers in science, social studies, history and math.

LTELS make up 59 percent of the state’s ELs.<sup>186</sup> It is important for school districts to understand this category of LTELs so they can provide the best instruction for those students to help them reach proficiency and so they can educate other ELs in a way that keeps them from becoming LTELs.

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<sup>184</sup> (*English Learners in Focus* 2014), p. 3.

<sup>185</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 14.

<sup>186</sup> (*English Learners in Focus* 2014), p. 3 and Californians Together

Gándara and Hopkins explore the EL demographics in the first chapter of *Forbidden Language*. They argue that since the EL population is growing, the academic achievement of ELs increasingly affects the overall education of the United States.<sup>187</sup> As English learners have a “large and growing presence in American schools, the education of EL students in an increasingly urgent concern.”<sup>188</sup> Policymakers need to be attentive to the needs of ELs.

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<sup>187</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 7.

<sup>188</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 7.



## **VII: The LCAP and Latino English Learners**

Although many language policies are problematic, it is undeniable that students in American public schools have the right to learn English. It is important to clarify that learning English and learning another language are not mutually exclusive, so students can be ELs and receive instruction in their home language simultaneously. The issue of the “Achievement Gap” in education is particularly acute for English learners. ELs “perform at lower levels on virtually every measure from achievement scores to graduation rates than almost any other category of students.”<sup>189</sup> English learners are less likely than their native English-speaking peers to graduate from high school, and are more likely to drop out of middle and high school. In Los Angeles schools in 2007, “only 27% of EL students who began the ninth grade graduated 4 years later from the district.”<sup>190</sup> This demonstrates that there is a significant need to provide instruction of ELs and take proactive steps toward improving the education system that student population.

Many states require students to pass a high school exit exam, which is difficult for many English learners. First, passing this exam is difficult because ELs are not allowed to take it in their native language. Second, since many ELs were required to take English classes during the school day, they missed instructional time on the subject matter that is in the exams. Further evidence of the achievement gap are data analyses about high school exam passage rates that show that EL students passed at much lower rates than non-EL students. Similarly, results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that there are substantial differences in the percent of EL students and non-EL students who score “proficient” or above in both reading and math.

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<sup>189</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 7.

<sup>190</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 11.

## **The Local Control and Accountability Plan**

Gándara identifies six areas of public policy that can influence academic achievement for Latino students. These policy areas are: early and continuing cognitive enrichment; housing policies that promote integration and residential stability; integrated social services at school sites; recruiting and preparing extraordinary teachers; exploiting the Latino linguistic advantage; and college preparation and support programs.<sup>191</sup> School district Local Control and Accountability Plans are connected to all of these areas. Although housing is clearly connected to education and school quality, school district LCAPs cannot do anything explicitly about housing policies. Rather, the LCFF seeks to remedy some of the unequal funding from property taxes and other financial assets of wealthy school districts that is connected to residential segregation and instability.

Carrie Hahnel of Education Trust – West reviewed 40 district LCAPs and identified trends across the state. Of particular importance for this thesis are the common types of services that districts plan to implement for English learners. The most common types are: “outreach to parents of English learners, translation of documents, the administration and monitoring of language assessments, professional development for teachers of ELs, tutoring services, hiring bilingual aids, paraprofessionals and front-office staff.”<sup>192</sup> Some school districts include bilingual programs in their plan. Few school districts addressed the implementation of the new English Language Arts and English Language Development (ELA/ELD) standards.<sup>193</sup>

As one of the student subgroups that districts can assign particular services/actions to, Latino students’ needs should be addressed in school district LCAPs.

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<sup>191</sup> (Gándara 2010), p. 2.

<sup>192</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 20.

<sup>193</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 20.

Antioch Unified and Oakland Unified are “using LCFF funds to support initiatives focused on African American male achievement”<sup>194</sup> but they are “outliers” since most LCAPs do not propose such targeted use of funds. I propose that funding initiatives for Latino youth will be important in California, and it would also be worth looking into gender disparities in Latino education to inform the creation of programs. (i.e. more programs targeted toward Hispanic males in high school, who experience high dropout/pushout rates).

The Oakland Unified School District has a large Latino population and provides a good example of how school districts can think about specific student population needs while developing their LCAP. OUSD included Latino students as one of their target groups, along with African Americans and students with disabilities. Additionally, OUSD is focusing on raising achievement for the three state-mandated target groups: English learners, foster youth, and low-income students.

Fuller and Tobben found that some school districts set precise targets for EL gains. For example, Los Angeles Unified included a commitment to “raising language reclassification rates [and] moving a higher share of English learners to proficiency.”<sup>195</sup> This demonstrates that some districts are thinking specifically about how they can best serve ELs.

School districts receive additional funds based on the number of English learners in the district and the LCAP is designed to hold districts accountable for spending that money appropriately. School districts are required to consult with parents of English learners in the development of their LCAP, although the manner in which they must do

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<sup>194</sup> (Hahnel 2014), p. 22.

<sup>195</sup> (Fuller and Tobben 2014), p. 13.

so remains somewhat ambiguous. In contrast, state statutes are explicit that the parents of English learners must form the majority of a parent advisory committee. School districts are required to have a District English Learner Advisory Committees (DELAC) of ELs in the district and school-sites must have an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) at every school that has a certain number of ELs. Clearly, EL population is important for school districts as they develop their LCAPs.

In 2013, the California State Legislature passed AB 97, which authorized the Local Control Funding Formula and accompanying Local Control and Accountability Plan. Some school districts in California have addressed the needs of long-term English learners by designating funding for accelerated English instruction and dual immersion programs. The LCFF and LCAP changes the way that school districts are funded, shifting from an overly complex and burdensome system of categorical finance to a system that gives school districts more discretion over how they spend their funds. Since schools are funded in part by property tax revenues, district funds vary widely and exemplify the wealth inequality that is present in the state. The LCFF aims to reduce funding inequity by providing “Concentration” and “Supplemental” funds to schools based on attendance of English learners, low-income students, and foster youth. Although the new funding formula has only been in effect for two academic years, some schools are using the LCAP and budget planning process to involve more parent and student voices in education policy decisions. Some school districts, like Los Angeles Unified, have proposed increasing funding for accelerated English instruction and providing additional support for LTELs.

There is a large need for certified teachers to teach English learners. “English learners are more likely than any other group of students to be taught by a teacher who lacks appropriate teaching credentials.”<sup>196</sup> In California, English learners are not receiving instruction from teachers who are fully qualified to provide that specialized instruction. In order to provide two-way or dual immersion programs for English learners and English-speakers, the appropriate teaching resources need to be in place. There are not currently enough qualified teachers for these language programs. Since EL students need to receive instruction from someone, teachers without bilingual or EL instruction credentials are placed in classrooms with EL students. According to research by Gándara et al., many of these teachers do not feel qualified or comfortable teaching dual-immersion and bilingual programs. LCFF funds could be used for professional development and training to ensure that there are more qualified teachers for English learners.

Due to the variety of EL programs and the diverse needs of the English learner population, there is not consensus about what qualities and certifications a highly qualified teacher should possess. In addition to having the necessary training, EL teachers also need adequate school facilities and instructional materials. Furthermore, some education research suggests that cultural competency is important and that “teachers who are from similar communities or who share similar backgrounds with EL students may be best suited to understand the needs of this population and the most likely to continue teaching in these communities.”<sup>197</sup> School district funds can be used to recruit teachers

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<sup>196</sup> Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Rumberger, 2008 as cited in (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 15.

<sup>197</sup> (Gándara and Hopkins 2010), p. 17.

who will have that cultural connection with students and can ensure that their professional development programs include diversity and cultural training.

Some school district LCAPs address this issue of teacher certification by including rates of teacher misassignments in their plans. The school districts include metrics that can be used to evaluate whether or not teachers have the required credentials to teach English learners.

### **English Language Arts and English Language Development Standards**

In July 2014, the California State Board of Education adopted a new English Language Arts and English Language Development (ELA/ELD) curriculum framework. California is the only state to have such a combined curriculum, which attempts to better link English development with instruction in “academic English.” In the introduction to the framework, the State Board of Education expresses its support for bilingual language programs and instruction that values the linguistic diversity of the state. This articulated support for bilingual programs is especially notable given that Proposition 227 effectively banned bilingual education in 1998.

It is important to note that along with the changes with the Common Core State Standards, new ELA/ELD standards and the Smarter Balanced assessments, the state and districts are evaluating their use of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and are transitioning to a different test.

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) created a report about English learners in the state of California. The report, titled “California’s English Learner Students,” was written in September 2012 before the State Legislature passed the LCFF. Part of the report’s findings demonstrates a connection between English Learner students

and low-income family economic status. As PPIC explains, EL “poverty rates range from 74 to 85 percent, much higher than the 21 percent overall poverty rate for California school-aged children.”<sup>198</sup>

The school district and state should assess student strengths across more than one language, but there has not been sufficient research attention given to that question.<sup>199</sup>

### **College Preparation and the Common Core**

Part of the LCAP’s focus encourages school districts to identify goals and plan actions for improving college readiness for all students. This focus is particularly important for Latino students, who have higher dropout rates than their white peers and who are less likely to continue to higher education. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is one of the state’s priority areas that districts are required to address in the LCAP. The CCSS are an important piece of this focus on college readiness. The NAACP and MALDEF, the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, believe that the state’s articulation of college or career-readiness as a goal for all students is an important step in preparing all students for higher education or the workforce: “the Common Core standards expect every high school senior – not just those whose parents can afford extra tutoring – to be genuinely prepared to succeed in college or in other career pathways.”<sup>200</sup> Common Core is one “piece of the puzzle” for improving student achievement. The standards will not benefit student achievement if actual teaching practices in the classroom do not improve. Additionally Common Core fits in with the new assessment tests, Smarter Balanced.

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<sup>198</sup> (L. E. Hill 2012)

<sup>199</sup> (Gándara et al. 2010), p. 31.

<sup>200</sup> (Ellison 2015)

MALDEF President, Thomas Saenz supports CCSS and said: “because Latinos are an important and growing proportion of the public school population, our community has a particular interest in achieving swift and appropriate implementation of the Common Core Standards.”<sup>201</sup> CCSS sets the standard for what challenging and rigorous education should look like for all students, not just white students from high socioeconomic status homes.

Education is needed for future economic success, and education policies like the LCFF and LCAP are particularly important for the role they play in creating a more equitable system. “Part of the problem is that education matters more than ever. Data from the Economic Policy Institute indicate that real wages for those Americans with less than a high school education declined by more than 20 percent between 1979 and 2011, while wages for those with a college degree rose by 12 percent and wages for those with an advanced degree rose by 20 percent over the same period.”<sup>202</sup>

Gándara proposes replicating the most effective college support programs, like summer bridge programs, to help improve educational outcomes for Latino youth. These programs connect high school students with mentors who assist them in the transition to college. “Latino students who are the first in their families to go to college need a supportive network, and sensitive counselors, at the college level as well.”<sup>203</sup> School districts should also carefully monitor high school students to make sure that they provide the necessary support so that students do not drop out of school. Gándara proposes that school districts implement “programs that take teachers into students’ homes so that teachers and parents can partner in supporting students’ learning. In addition, [school

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<sup>201</sup> (Ellison 2015)

<sup>202</sup> (Pastor and Braun 2015)

<sup>203</sup> (Gándara 2010), p. 7.



districts] can implement programs to track students who are at risk of dropping out so that intensive intervention can occur.”<sup>204</sup> These dropout prevention programs tend to also prepare students for college.

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<sup>204</sup> (Gándara 2010), p. 10.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

The Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control and Accountability Plan represent a dramatic shift toward local control, away from the previously centralized funding and education policy-making system. The LCFF aims to reduce inequity in schools by providing additional funding for English learners, foster youth and for students from low-income families. Rather than receive state funding in categorical grants, school districts now receive funding based on a per-pupil formula. School districts still receive money from the federal government in categorical grants, but the state funding system has been significantly streamlined.

This thesis has shown that LCFF and LCAP have the potential to make the California public education system more adequate and equitable, but that there is room for improvement. Since the policy is in its early stages of implementation, now is a critical time to begin evaluating what is working and what needs to be corrected. As school districts throughout the state adjust to a new funding and accountability system, it is important that policy analysts identify common practices and areas that need attention from the state. The SBE Evaluation Rubrics will be a fundamental part of this accountability and will help districts to identify successes and areas for improvement.

LCAP plays a key part in ensuring that funding from the LCFF is spent in an equitable way. The policy dramatically changes the way that education policy is made in the state. Rather than implementing programs and services dictated by the state, school districts now have the discretion to choose what actions and services they think will best serve their student population. The shift away from a state-centered model toward local control also has significant effects on civic engagement and participation of parents,

students, teachers, staff and community members. Districts are required by the state to engage and consult with these stakeholders as they decide how to spend state funds. This type of local control can be a model for other states in the United States. California has often been at the forefront of policy developments and innovation, and again leads the way in creating a funding formula that is couched in values of equity, democracy, and civic engagement.

The LCAP creates a new accountability system for public education, where the state can evaluate school district performance based on more than test scores. Since the LCAP incorporates other measures that COEs and the state use for evaluation, the state is no longer as reliant on the Academic Performance Index (API).

The LCFF is designed to increase education funding back to 2007-08 funding levels. However, these funding levels were not necessarily adequate to begin with. With the supplemental and concentration grants added to this base funding, high-needs students should have access to programs and services that will improve their educational outcomes. Some district staff remain pessimistic that the LCFF will significantly improve outcomes for low-income, English learners, and foster youth. As one district administrator interviewed in Humphrey and Koppich's study said: "...I don't think you can provide targeted supports on top of a foundation that is deficient and expect to get great results. If you are able to have a solid base and then truly supplement, then there are opportunities [for the LCFF] to really be a game changer for [low-income and EL students, for foster youth] and for all students."<sup>205</sup>

Ultimately, the success of the funding formula depends on the economic conditions of the state. As discussed in the introduction, Proposition 30 was crucial in

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<sup>205</sup> (Humphrey and Koppich 2014), p. 4.

creating the revenues necessary to fund the LCFF. It remains to be seen whether California's economy will support increased education funding. It is possible that California will experience an economic recession before the LCFF is fully implemented by the scheduled 2020-21 school year, which would derail the LCFF and LCAP.

After the first year and a half, a number of trends have emerged around the state. School districts created their first-year LCAPs on a tight timeline and have been working on their Annual Update and 2015-16 LCAPs. Some districts did a better job than others creating specific goals and identifying measurable performance indicators. Additionally, some districts were more intentional with their stakeholder outreach and spent a great deal of time communicating with stakeholders and incorporating feedback. That said, other districts still have a lot of room for improvement and the ways that they created their LCAPs did not always foster an equitable and participatory process.

It is still too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of programs on improving student achievement and school districts are still establishing benchmarks. There is a general consensus among researchers that policy makers and analysts need to continue monitoring the LCAPs and evaluating school districts. School districts, COEs and state-level agencies are engaged in a continuous learning process and are still figuring out what works and what needs more improvement. Overall, good work is being done to involve stakeholders, to think about multiple indicators for student achievement, and to develop services and programs to improve student outcomes.

Education advocacy organizations had an important role in the first year of LCAP development and continued to have an important role in the second year. Although school districts did involve stakeholders in the creation of their LCAPs, not all school districts

acted in a way that created an inclusive culture. There continues to be uncertainty about whether stakeholders are meaningfully engaged. The issue of engagement is especially difficult since there is no easy way to quantify it. For example, data about survey response numbers do not necessarily show that stakeholder comments were incorporated in the LCAP.

The second part of this thesis provided an explanation of language policies and why it is important to think about the Latino student population when discussing education policy. Just as the Latino population in California has increased, the Latino population in the United States is also increasing. As a result, thinking about Latino education will continue to be important for the state and the country as a whole. Furthermore, a majority of English learners in the United States speak Spanish, so it is also important that policymakers think about the specific needs of Spanish-speaking ELs.

Since the majority of English learners in California speak Spanish, the LCFF's focus on English learners is significant for the Spanish-speaking Latino population in the state. Additional funds for ELs means that English-learning Latino students will hopefully receive additional support that will help them learn academic English and improve their educational outcomes. Although the policy is in early stages, some districts have already taken proactive steps toward improving services offered for ELs.

The LCAP is important for Latino students because it represents a shift away from measuring student outcomes based on tests alone. Hopefully school districts will begin to look at a larger picture of student success and will see that the "achievement gap" of Latinos is due to a system of tracking and unequal opportunities.

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The LCAP also has implication for broader societal equity, since it provides students and parents the opportunity to develop and practice civic engagement. Youth have not yet been involved throughout the state, but the instances of youth participation are encouraging and bode well for the future of the LCAP and a society that values equity and social justice. The most radical effect of the LCAP is that it requires school districts to listen to stakeholders that have previously not been heard. This is especially relevant for the parents of ELs and low-income students. Their students are the ones who need the most support from schools and now that parent voices are included in policy-making, we might begin to see more attention given to high-needs populations. This is an optimistic perspective about the LCAP and is based on the trust that school districts will work with parents of EL/LI as partners and see their contributions and input as valuable and worthwhile.

The LCAP is one part of a shifting education policy landscape in California. The LCAP needs to be evaluated as part of a larger system with the CCSS, ELA/ELD standards and the Smarter Balanced assessments. The LCAP process will likely improve over time as school districts become more familiar with the process and are not as rushed as they were the first year.

As LCAP implementation continues and once the policy is fully implemented, policy analysts and education advocacy groups must remain vigilant about school district actions. The LCAP has the potential to be a transformative policy, but we must make sure that school districts listen to the voices of stakeholders so that the public education system can become truly adequate and equitable.

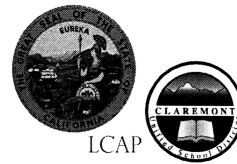
## Appendix

### A. CUSD 2014-15 LCAP Timeline

<b>January</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>8th</b> Share Proposed process with the School Board</li><li>• <b>21st</b> Advisory Council Meeting</li></ul>
<b>February</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5th</b> Advisory Council Meeting</li><li>• <b>10th</b> Update School Board</li><li>• <b>27th</b> Meeting with All Stakeholder Groups and LCAP Advisory Council</li></ul>
<b>March</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5th</b> Advisory Council Meeting</li><li>• <b>11th</b> Post LCFF/LCAP information on website</li><li>• <b>20th</b> Update School Board</li></ul>
<b>April</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>1st</b> K-12 Administrators's Meeting</li><li>• <b>2nd</b> Advisory Council Meeting</li><li>• <b>3rd</b> Common Core State Standards Steering Committee Meeting</li><li>• <b>3rd</b> Present update to School Board</li><li>• <b>9th</b> LCFF/LCAP Information Page on the CUSD Website</li><li>• <b>24th</b> DELAC/DAC Meeting</li><li>• <b>25th-</b> Draft Initial Goals</li></ul>
<b>May</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>-5th</b> Draft Initial Goals</li><li>• <b>6-9th</b> Update Goals based on Cabinet Feedback</li><li>• <b>9-19th</b> Draft Initial Action Plan</li><li>• <b>19th</b> Advisory Council Meeting</li><li>• <b>19-27th</b> Assign Funding Sources and Update Plan based on Stakeholder Feedback</li><li>• <b>27th</b> Post Draft LCAP on Website and give School Board a copy</li><li>• <b>27th</b> Provide responses to DELAC/DAC Committees</li></ul>
<b>June</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5th</b> School Board discusses LCAP</li><li>• <b>16th</b> Public LCAP Hearing</li><li>• <b>19th</b> Seek Board Approval of LCAP</li><li>• <b>26th</b> School Board Adopts LCAP</li></ul>

## B. CUSD 2015 Timeline

Claremont Unified School District  
**Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Timeline**  
**2014-2015**



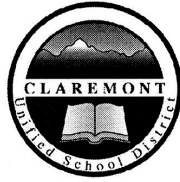
January 2015	LCAP Committee Confirmation/Organization
February 9, 2015	Board Study Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Share progress-to-date</li> <li>· Provide direction for amendments/additions</li> </ul>
February 9 – February 23, 2015	Educational Services Staff to Draft Updates Based on Direction from the Board
February 24, 2015	LCAP Advisory Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Share progress-to-date</li> <li>· Share draft actions</li> <li>· Provide direction for amendments/additions</li> </ul>
February 24 - March 16, 2015	Educational Services Staff and Business Services to Draft Updates Based on LCAP Advisory Council Input
March 24, 2015	District English Language Advisory Council (DELAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Review draft updates</li> <li>· Provide direction for amendments/additions</li> </ul>
April 23	Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Share progress-to-date</li> <li>· Provide additional direction for amendments/additions</li> </ul>
April 28, 2015	LCAP Advisory Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Share progress-to-date</li> <li>· Provide direction for amendments/additions</li> </ul>
April 29 – May 7, 2015	Educational Services Staff and Business Services to Draft Updates Based on DELAC and LCAP Advisory Input
May 7-14	Post Draft on Website
May 14, 2015	Board Presentation and Public Hearing on LCAP
June 4, 2015	Board Action on LCAP and Public Hearing on the District Budget
June 18, 2015	Board Action on Budget



C. Strategic Goals/State Priorities Chart

State LCAP Goal	State Performance Indicator for LCAP	Current District Strategic Goals
<b>1. Student Achievement</b>	Achievement Data	<b>#1 Student Achievement</b>
	Academic Performance Index (API)	
	Students that are College/Career Ready	
	English Learners that Become English Proficient	
	Reclassification Rate	
	Advanced Placement (AP) Pass Rate	
	Early Assessment Program (EAP) Results	
<b>2. Other Student Outcomes</b>	Other Indicators of Student Performance	<b>#1 Student Achievement</b> <b>#4: Fiscally Sound and Equitable Distribution of Student Resources</b>
	Attendance Rates Chronic Absenteeism Rates Middle School Drop-Out Rates High School Drop-Out Rates High School Graduation Rates Suspension Rates Expulsion Rates Other	<b>#2 The Whole Child</b>
<b>4. School Climate</b>	Rate of Teacher Misassignment Student access to Standards Aligned Instructional Materials Facilities in Good Repair Efforts to Seek Parent Input Promotion of Parent Participation	<b>#2 The Whole Child</b> <b>#5 Safe, Clean, and Appropriate Facilities</b> <b>#3 Highly Qualified Staff</b>
	Rate of Teacher Misassignment Student access to Standards Aligned Instructional Materials Facilities in Good Repair Efforts to Seek Parent Input Promotion of Parent Participation	<b>#4: Fiscally Sound and Equitable Distribution of Student Resources</b> <b>#5 Safe, Clean, and Appropriate Facilities</b> <b>#6 Engage Families and the Community</b>
	Implementation of CCSS for All students, Including English Learners (ELs) Student Access and Enrollment in All Required Areas of Study	<b>#1 Student Achievement</b> <b>#4: Fiscally Sound and Equitable Distribution of Student Resources</b>
<b>8. Course Access</b>	Student Access and Enrollment in All Required Areas of Study	<b>#4: Fiscally Sound and Equitable Distribution of Student Resources</b>

## D. CUSD 2014-2016 Strategic Goals



### **STRATEGIC GOALS** **2014 – 2016**

#### **GOAL #1**

Our students will achieve their academic and creative potential in challenging, relevant, and engaging learning environments that prepare them for career, college, and post secondary opportunities.

#### **GOAL #2**

Our schools will provide unique opportunities that develop the whole child by promoting involvement in extracurricular and co-curricular activities and encouraging positive student behaviors.

#### **GOAL #3**

Our district will attract, support and retain high performing, highly qualified staff.

#### **GOAL #4**

Our district will remain fiscally sound by maintaining a balanced budget, demonstrating long term financial stability and distributing resources equitably, based on student need.

#### **GOAL #5:**

100% of our facilities will be safe, clean, and appropriate to support student learning.

#### **GOAL #6**

All schools will engage their families and community to increase student success.

Discussed 1-8-2014

Board Approval 3-6-2014

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