



California's New Local Control Funding Formula

OVERVIEW OF PROVISIONS FOR FOSTER YOUTH

California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), a 2013 law that restructures the way the State funds education, fundamentally restructures the relationship between the State and school districts. Its overarching goal is to fund districts according to the cost of educating students in that district; increase their flexibility to make critical decisions on how resources are used; increase their accountability by requiring districts to develop plans that detail how they will improve educational outcomes; and increase parental involvement.

To that end, the Local Control Funding Formula¹:

- Replaces a complicated funding formula with one that provides districts with a base amount per student, supplemental funding for low-income students, English learner students and students in foster care, and concentration funding for districts with a high percentage of these at-risk students.
- Eliminates nearly all categorical programs, allowing school districts to spend funds as they think best to improve educational outcomes for their students.
- Requires school districts to develop local control and accountability plans (LCAPs), in which they must specify goals for each at-risk student subgroup and the actions necessary to accomplish their goals.
- Specifies a process through which school districts must involve parents/guardians in the drafting of their local control and accountability plan and provides parents/guardians a mechanism for filing complaints when the process is not followed.

Students in Foster Care

The State has a unique responsibility for children in foster care. As their legal parent, the State is responsible for their safety, health, well-being, which includes their educational success. Unfortunately, research consistently shows that students in foster care have extremely poor educational outcomes, even when compared with their low-income

¹ Detailed information about the local control funding formula can be found at lcff.wested.org

peers. As documented in The Invisible Achievement Gap², a groundbreaking study of California foster youth, students in foster care:

- Constituted an at-risk subgroup that is distinct from other low-income students.
- Were far more likely to change schools during the school year.
- Were more likely than the general population to be enrolled in the lowest performing schools.
- Had the lowest participation rate in California's statewide testing program.
- Showed a significant achievement gap on statewide testing.
- Had the highest dropout rate and lowest graduation rate.

Key Foster Youth Provisions of the Local Control Funding Formula

In recognition of its special responsibility for children in foster care, their historic poor success in school disproportionate to their capacity to succeed, the need to provide foster youth a tailored set of educational supports, and the cost of providing such supports, the Local Control Funding Formula contains a number of groundbreaking provisions aimed at improving the educational outcomes of foster youth. Most notably, the Local Control Funding Formula:

- Adds foster youth as a subgroup to the State's accountability framework, the Academic Performance Index (API). EC § 52052
- Requires school districts to detail their academic goals for foster youth in their LCAPs, along with the actions the district will take to meet their goals and corresponding expenditures. EC §§ 52060, 52061
- Includes foster youth as one of three subgroups of at-risk students for which school districts receive supplemental and concentration funding. EC §§ 42238.02, 42238.03
- Requires that the California Department of Education be responsible for regularly informing school districts which of their students are in foster care. EC § 49085

² http://cftl.org/documents/2013/IAG/Invisible_Achievement_Gap_Full_Report.pdf. October 2013.