A REVIEW OF YEAR 2 LCAPS:
A WEAK RESPONSE TO ENGLISH LEARNERS

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INTRODUCTION

California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), a historic and bold step, was signed into law in 2013, ushering in a new school finance system[1] intended to provide both more local control over the use of funding and a more equitable school finance system. Local districts were given the flexibility to determine how best to meet student needs, and were entrusted with the responsibility to pay particular attention to increasing or improving services for three populations that have historically been underserved and in need of more support: low income students, English Learners, and foster youth. Recognizing that students with additional academic needs and a history of being underserved would require additional financial resources, this new LCFF allocated supplemental and concentration grants for these three populations. And thus, a Local Control Funding Formula process was set in motion through which local districts would create a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)[2] laying out their outcome goals, a plan for addressing student needs overall and the target populations, and their uses of funds to support that plan.

Pressed to implement a new process of local democracy and stakeholder engagement, using a brand new planning template, and facing time constraints, LEAs throughout the state did the best they could. As with the first year of any major reform, it was a learning year. After the development of the first round of Local Control Accountability Plans, educators, policymakers and advocates throughout the state reflected on what was being learned and what needed refinements. Aware that a first year of implementation is not sufficient to evaluate whether a reform can work, the assessments of the LCFF process at the end of the first round were cautious.[3]

Several reports were issued analyzing the first round of LCAPs. Among them, was *Falling Short on the Promise to English Learners: A Report on Year One LCAPs*, a review of 29 school districts throughout California including those with the highest number and the highest concentrations of English Learners[4]. The districts represented all regions of California and together served 449, 325 English Learners (32% of the English Learners in the state). That report found that LCAPs tended to be characterized by woefully inadequate specificity about what they were funding and how they were using funds, weak attention to how schools would meet the needs of English Learners, lack of specificity about targets for improvement or how impacts on English Learners would be captured, and missed the opportunity of new flexibility and increased funding to move towards research-based effective practices for this historically under-served population. Concerned that English Learners might be left behind and that the LCAP was functioning in a way that was inadequate as a vehicle for improving student outcomes and as an accountability mechanism, the report called for renewed intentionality to serve English Learners, and stronger state guidance for doing so. The report concluded, "It appears that if the LCAP system is left as is, English Learners will once again be left behind."

In the year since that report, throughout the state, local communities have geared up for the second year revisions to their LCAP plans. The state sought to provide clearer guidance to the field. A new LCAP template was released which required a three-year plan and an annual evaluation of the first year implementation of the LCAPs. The county offices of education's tool to review the district LCAPs was revised and county offices provided more technical assistance to districts prior to the writing of the year 2 LCAPs. The *Ten Research-Aligned Rubrics*

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[1] Local Control Funding Formula (AB 97, SB 91, and SB 97)

[2] Local Control Accountability Plan (Education Code 52060-52077)

[3] Koppich, J. & Humphrey, D. (2014). Toward a Grand vision: Early Implementation of California's Local Control Funding Formula. PACE: Berkeley, CA.

[4] Armas, E., Lavadenz, M., & Olsen, L. (2015). Falling Short on the Promise to English Learners: A report on year one LCAPs. Californians Together: Long Beach, CA.

document[5] was shared on the California Department of Education's LCFF website as a valuable resource to help districts self-assess their LCAPs for high quality programs and services to English Learners. LCAPs were a major topic at education conferences and convenings, providing opportunities for professional sharing of challenges and approaches. All of this learning and activity suggested that California was moving closer to the promise of a local control system that would indeed allow LEAs the flexibility and opportunity to demonstrate the commitment to meet student needs - including the specific intent of addressing the needs of English Learners, low-income students and foster youth.

Meanwhile, the emerging development of a new accountability and continuous improvement system for California added new urgency to strengthening the LCAP as a vehicle for meeting student needs. While some districts may have initially viewed the LCAP process as one of local budget allocation and reporting, the "accountability" portion and the "plan" aspects have become more clearly prominent as part of an emerging state-wide system (It is, after all, the Local Control *ACCOUNTABILTY PLAN*). As a drive for alignment across federal, state and local planning and accountability and the drive for coherence across planning processes at the local level replaces what have been multiple federal, state and local planning requirements[6] (sometimes conflicting and overlapping), it becomes more essential that the LCAP be a strong vehicle for identifying and addressing the equity and achievement challenges facing our communities. As California works to develop a continuous learning and continuous improvement system and culture, the LCAP's role in being able to measure impacts and describe what is being done in local communities to meet student needs and close gaps becomes more urgent.

This review was undertaken to provide state and district leadership with information about what must be done in approaching Year Three LCAPs in order to deliver on the equity commitment and promise of the LCFF for English Learners, and strengthen the LCAP as a meaningful planning and accountability mechanism.

About this Review

Many have looked to the second year of LCAPs for indications of whether the plans were stronger, clearer and closer to being the vehicle of planning and accountability they were intended to be. The coalition of organizations that issued the *Falling Short on the Promise to English Learners* report on first-year LCAPs, returned to analyze the second year LCAPs of the same school districts. These included districts with the highest numbers of English Learners in the state, districts with the highest concentrations/percentages of English Learners, and districts representative of California's geographic regions and district types (see Table 1). In addition, a sampling of six districts with reputations for providing quality services for English Learners were also reviewed as a means of understanding how the LCAP process can reflect the kind of focus and "story" of how funds are allocated and how LEA's are using those resources to target, improve or increase services to meet the needs of English Learners.

Using the actual LCAPs as the unit of analysis, the driving questions for this review repeated the review of first-year LCAPs:

- To what degree did second-year LCAPs specify goals and identify outcomes for English Learners, with appropriate and specific metrics for measuring impacts on these students?

- To what degree did second-year LCAPs identify action steps and allocate funds for increased or improved services for all types of English Learners?

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[5]Californians Together, Center for Equity for English Learners, California Association for Bilingual Education, California Rural Legal Assistance (2015). *Does Your Local Control Accountability (LCAP) Plan Deliver on the Promise of Increased or Improved Services for English Learners? 10 Research-Aligned Rubrics to Help Answer the Question and Guide Your Program.* Californians Together: Long Beach, CA. https://www.californianstogether.org/does-your-local-control-accountability-plan-deliver-on-the-promise-of-improved-or-increased-services-for-english-learners/

[6]"Draft framework and Implementation Plan" presented at the California State Board of Education, January 2016 Agenda Item #2.

- To what degree are the actions, programs and services included in the second year LCAPs reflective of research-based practices for achieving language proficiency and academic achievement of English Learners?

- To what degree did stakeholder engagement reflect English learner parent input for development and implementation of second-year LCAPs?

And, importantly, this second-year review added:

- What key differences were seen between first and second-year LCAPs in demonstrating increased evidence about services for English Learners, particularly in greater specificity in the areas of goals and outcomes for English Learners, articulated actions and services that are in-line with research-based practices, and stronger stakeholder engagement of the English Learner community?

A full research report based upon this analysis of the LCAPs and interviews and focus groups with administrators, parents, community members and board members will be released within the next few months. But given the urgency of sharing key findings while districts are still in the process of developing their third year LCAPs, this policy brief summarizes the analysis and key findings from reviewing the LCAPs.

Review Panel and Processes

In October 2015, a panel of 32 reviewers representing a cross section of the California educational community convened at Loyola Marymount University to review the second year LCAPs *(A list of the reviewers is presented in the Appendix B)*. The group reviewed the intent of the LCAP and its requirements. The *Ten Research-Aligned Rubrics to Help Answer the Question and Guide Your Program* were reviewed and sample indicators explained across a four point rating scale ranging from low to high: "No Evidence Included", "Weak", "Good", "Exemplary." A sample district LCAP provided the basis for group rating and established Inter-rater reliability ensuring consistent application of the rubric indicators. LCAPs were read in their entirety, and then consensus ratings were agreed upon for each indicator on all rubrics. Review panel members recorded sample evidence statements to support rubric ratings. A research team at Loyola Marymount University's Center for Equity for English Learners compiled all rubric ratings to identify patterns, trends, and identifiable evidence of increased or improved services for English Learners for each of the district typologies – high concentration/ percentage of ELs, high number of ELs, high quality, and geographic representation.

Table 1. Purposeful Sampling District Typologies

District Typology	Definition	Number
High Numbers of English Learners (HN)	Districts with highest numbers of English Learners in the state	14 total (1 district both HN & HP)
High Percentage of English Learners (HP)	Districts with at least 1,000 English Learners, and over 50% English Learners	10 total
History of Quality Services for English Learners (HQ)	Districts with histories of recognized quality services for English Learners	6 total
Representation of English Learners in Geographic Regions (GR)	Districts added to sample to provide better representation of CA geographic regions	2 total
Overall Total		**29 districts**

KEY FINDINGS

1. **The general patterns of LCAP responsiveness to English Learners are similar to Year One. While there are improvements by some LEAs in some areas, the majority of LEAs remain very weak in response to English Learners across all areas.** The findings from the review of second-year LCAPs are not substantially different from the patterns reported in first year LCAPs. Overall the majority of districts demonstrate the lowest ratings at the "weak" level for every measure reviewed. This is particularly true in areas most related to building capacity of teachers to serve English Learners (professional development), implementation of the new state ELD standards, program and course access, services and supports, and English Learner specific data to both inform goals and as indicators of improvement.

2. **There was a significant decrease in the number of districts that showed "no evidence" in Year 2 LCAPs. While this may be trending towards clarity about services provided to English Learners in some areas in Year 2 LCAPs, the majority of evidence was rated as "weak".** As Table 3 illustrates, , there is a trending towards lesser numbers of districts that were rated at the "no evidence" level in Year 2 LCAPs, indicating some improvement. However, it is still difficult to glean a coherent "story" of what is being done in response to English Learners' needs, given that there are key areas and indicators that showed overwhelmingly weak responses, in particular the areas of articulating EL student outcomes. The omission of specific articulated goals and outcomes for English Learners appear to hinder LEA's ability to track impacts on these students, making it unclear as to discern how districts are planning to meet the needs of English Learners in a coherent and accountable manner.

Table 2. Year 2: Rating Scale for Full Sample

Inclusive of High ELL Percentage, High ELL Numbers, and Geographic Representation Districts (n=25*)

FOCUS AREAS	YEAR 2 RATING SCALE NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES			
	No Evidence Included	Weak	Good	Exemplary
1 English Language Development (Year 2)	1 = 4%	17 = 68%	7 = 28%	
2AB Parents		14 = 56%	11 = 44%	
3 Professional Development	1 = 4%	18 = 72%	6 = 24%	
4 Programs and Course Access		21 = 84%	4 = 16%	
5 Expenditures		8 = 32%	14 = 56%	3 = 12%
6A District-wide Use of Funds	2 = 8%	11 = 44%	11 = 44%	1 = 4%
6B School-wide Use of Funds	6 = 24%	15 = 60%	4 = 16%	
7 Actions and Services		18 = 72%	6 = 24%	1 = 4%
8 Proportionality		20 = 80%	5 = 20%	
9A EL Data: Data Elements	3 = 12%	17 = 68%	5 = 20%	
9B EL Data: Teacher Recruitment & Assignment	18 = 72%	4 = 16%	2 = 8%	1 = 4%
10A Student Outcomes: ELD Measures	1 = 4%	19 = 76%	5 = 20%	
10B Student Outcomes: Academic Achievement	7 = 28%	17 = 68%	1 = 4%	

* The number of districts we used for analysis excludes those that did not meet the criteria of either high percentage, high number or geographic representation.

Table 3. Comparison of Level of Transparency

Change in districts that included some source of evidence in LCAPs from Year 1 to Year 2 (N=25)

Inclusive of High ELL Percentage, High ELL Numbers, and Geographic Representation Districts

FOCUS AREAS	No Evidence Included Y1	No Evidence Included Y2	CHANGE		
			# of Districts who *Increased from No Evidence*	# of Districts who *Remained at No Evidence*	# of Districts who *Regressed to No Evidence*
1 English Language Development	8	1	8	0	1
2AB Parents	2	0	2	0	0
3 Professional Development	9	1	9	0	1
4 Programs and Course Access	6	0	6	0	0
5 Expenditures	3	0	3	0	0
6A District-wide Use of Funds	6	2	6	0	2
6B School-wide Use of Funds	10	6	8	2	4
7 Actions and Services	1	0	1	0	0
8 Proportionality	3	0	3	0	0
9A EL Data: Data Elements	5	3	4	1	2
9B EL Data: Teacher Recruitment & Assignment	17	18	3	14	4
10A Student Outcomes: ELD Measures	11	1	10	1	0
10B Student Outcomes: Academic Achievement	23	7	16	7	0

3. **LCAPs show very minimal and weak attention to Implementation of the new English Language Development (ELD) Standards and ELD approach of the new ELA/ELD Framework.** The new CA ELD standards[7], and the historic ground-breaking combined ELA/ELD Framework[8] lay out an important new vision for addressing English Language Development for California schools. The shift in rigor, delivery, implied pedagogy and approach from prior approaches is tremendous, requiring professional development for teachers and administrators to learn about the standards and how to implement them, and also requiring planning time for teachers to adjust curriculum and enact the standards and framework. Well over two thirds (68%) fell into the weak category, with limited goals or activities related to building an articulated ELD program or standards-based curriculum.

A focus on this work should be a high-priority for schools serving English Learners. This kind of professional development and planning time are cost-factors for a district that should show up in an LCAP. In Year One, LCAPs revealed a major gap in this area, with 72% either offering no mention at all or evidencing weak efforts focused on understanding, planning for and implementing new ELD standards, setting goals related to strengthening ELD, or supporting activities related to it. It has been three years since the California Department of Education issued a state plan for implementation of the new ELD standards. This year, despite a state-wide continuing push to educate about the new standards and to promote sharing of best practices, the LCAPs reveal frighteningly weak response.

4. **LCAPs demonstrated minimal investment in building the capacity of teachers to meet the needs of English Learners.** Whether and how well an English Learner's needs for access and language development are addressed is directly related to the knowledge, understanding and skills of educators about English Learner needs. Almost three-quarters of LCAPs (72%) were weak in identifying how funds for professional development and professional collaboration related to the language, participation and access needs of English Learners, echoing a similar pattern of minimal attention to the ELD standards.

5. ***The vast majority of LCAPs lack specific attention to strengthening or providing coherent programs, services, and supports for English Learners, and fail to address issues of access to program and curriculum.*** English Learners face a barrier to equal educational opportunity because of the language barrier. Schools are charged with overcoming that barrier and ensuring the supports for participation and access. In this new era of rigorous academic standards and emphasis on college and career preparation, It becomes even more essential that districts and schools build the pathways and opportunities that make it possible for English Learners to succeed. This means comprehensive and coherent articulated sequences of language development courses, extended learning time when needed, quality preschools designed to address the needs of English Learners that offer an early foundation for closing gaps, courses and supports that prevent and address the specific needs of Long Term English Learners and newcomers as well as normatively progressing English Learners, and schedules that enable English Learners to earn full credits towards graduation and engagement in the A-G college preparatory sequence. Very few LCAPs mention use of resources, activities or goals related to improving access and strengthening programs for English Learners. More than four out of five are weak in this area (84%).

In examining the Actions and Services that are detailed in the LCAP that specifically are called out for English Learners, we sought to distinguish generic actions and services for all students which includes English Learners and determine which improved or increased services were specifically targeted and designed for enhancing English Learner education. Almost three out of four (72%) LCAPs were weak in this area.

6. ***Engagement of English Learner parents in both the LCAP process and content of the LCAP plans remains very weak in the second year.*** The engagement of English Learner parents in the development of LCAPs is a major vehicle for defining the needs of this high-priority community of students. The degree to which their voices are engaged and supported in the plan is one key component of developing an effective LCAP. Mechanisms might include holding specific English Learner focus groups or parent meetings, providing outreach and then translation for participation in meetings, circulating translated LCAP drafts, and involving members of the DELAC. This review found, similar to Year One LCAPs, that more than half (56%) of the LCAPs included only minimal efforts to engage the input of English Learner parents.

Even where LCAPs cited steps that had been taken to engage English Learner parents in providing some input to the LCAP development, it was not possible in most cases to track whether that input actually had an impact on the actual plan and use of resources.

Furthermore, an examination of the degree to which local funds are being designated through the LCAP process to engage English Learner parents through supporting Family-Community Liaison positions, funding translation equipment and services, and funding EL parent/family engagement activities also is weak. Almost 3 out of 5 LCAPs (60%) were rated as having minimal evidence, or at the "weak" level, in this area.

7. ***English Learner data was seldom cited as informing LCAP goals, and the use of English Learner indicators appears quite weak as a component of LCAP accountability.*** Data based planning to meet student needs begins with looking at data. A strong plan to address English Learner student needs would be informed by reviewing English Learner participation, achievement and progress, including answering the question about which English Learners are in need. English Learner data would include: achievement, progress and participation disaggregated by length of time in US schools, English proficiency level, program type. While a few LCAPs were simply missing in any reference to English Learner data, the majority (68%) presented only limited English Learner data and it appeared to have little to no impact on the articulated goals and plans, while 12% showed no evidence at all.

The vast majority of LCAPs (72%) showed no evidence at all of having looked at or planned around a review of teacher data related to credentialing and preparation to address the needs of English Learners. This may well explain why just a few that planned to use resources for specific teacher recruitment (e.g., bilingual teachers).

LCAPs are meant to be a vehicle of accountability. Districts are meant to define desired outcomes and measures of progress for their students. A system of local control rests upon the strength of these articulated student outcome goals, the appropriateness of the measures and indicators. For English Learners, there are some specific goals related to adequate progress towards English language proficiency and attainment of such proficiency, and goals related to closing the gap with English proficient students such that they can be equal participants in our schooling system. Thus, a review of LCAPs through the lens of English Learners includes looking at whether and how districts have articulated these outcomes.

While almost all did include some measure of either progress towards English proficiency (using CELDT) and/or attainment of English proficiency (reclassification), over three-fourths (76%) were weak - just using one of these measures, not including indicators of normative progress or identifying Long Term English Learners and students at risk of becoming Long Term English Learners.

Furthermore, a focus on English Learner outcomes should also include academic growth and achievement. This requires disaggregation of academic achievement measures by English Learner status, level of English Learner proficiency and grade level. The goals and targets should focus on the size of gaps. In this area, there is major concern. Less than a third (28%) had no mention of English Learner academic outcomes included in their outcome measures. Of the remaining, well over half (68%) were weak on having English Learner indicators to guide their direction.

8. ***It is difficult to discern the specificity between <u>district-wide</u> services and <u>site-specific</u> allocations for supplemental and concentration funding. Greater specificity and transparency in use of funds in Year Two LCAPs is still needed.*** As a vehicle for accountability, the LCAP template provides an opportunity to specify goals in response to the state's eight priorities and correspondingly describe in detail how budgeted expenditures are aligned to coordinated actions and services. The reviewers found no single LCAP that rated "good" or "exemplary" across all indicators. Our examination of Year 2 LCAPs revealed mostly general descriptions of District-wide use of supplemental and concentration funds related to goals for its unduplicated pupils in the state priority areas. In regards to allocations and services designated to <u>school sites</u>, most districts (60%) provided "weak evidence" and another 24% included "no evidence", with little or no mention of how schools will be held

accountable for the use of concentration or supplemental grant funds to specifically meet the district's LCAP goals.

For example, section 3 in the LCAP template requires districts to describe how the services provided in the LCAP demonstrate proportionate funding in supplemental and concentration funding for English Language Learners, and the steps taken to determine the proportionality percentage. Most districts (80%) presented a minimal description of increased programs and services in proportion to the increased funding specific to ELs. Additionally, minimal quantitative and qualitative sources of evidence were used to describe how services were increased or improved throughout the LCAPs. Thus, it appears that the LCAPs continue to describe

increases in funds without differentiating concentration and supplemental funding sources over the LCAP period.

9. ***It is difficult to determine how districts approached their Year 2 LCAPs with coherence or comprehensiveness in response to the needs of English Learners.*** Trying to glean a sense of English Learner needs and how the plan responds to those needs was difficult across most of the second year LCAPs. The lack of descriptiveness and scattered line items related to English Learners were insufficient for this review to determine whether research-based approaches were being invested in, or to piece together a picture of what is actually being planned and provided with regards to English Learners supports, services and programs. Most plans were convoluted and difficult to

Figure 1. Comparison of Rating of Minimum Target Level (Good)
Change in districts that achieved or maintained a rating of "Good" or "Exemplary" in LCAPs from Year 1 to Year 2 (n=25)
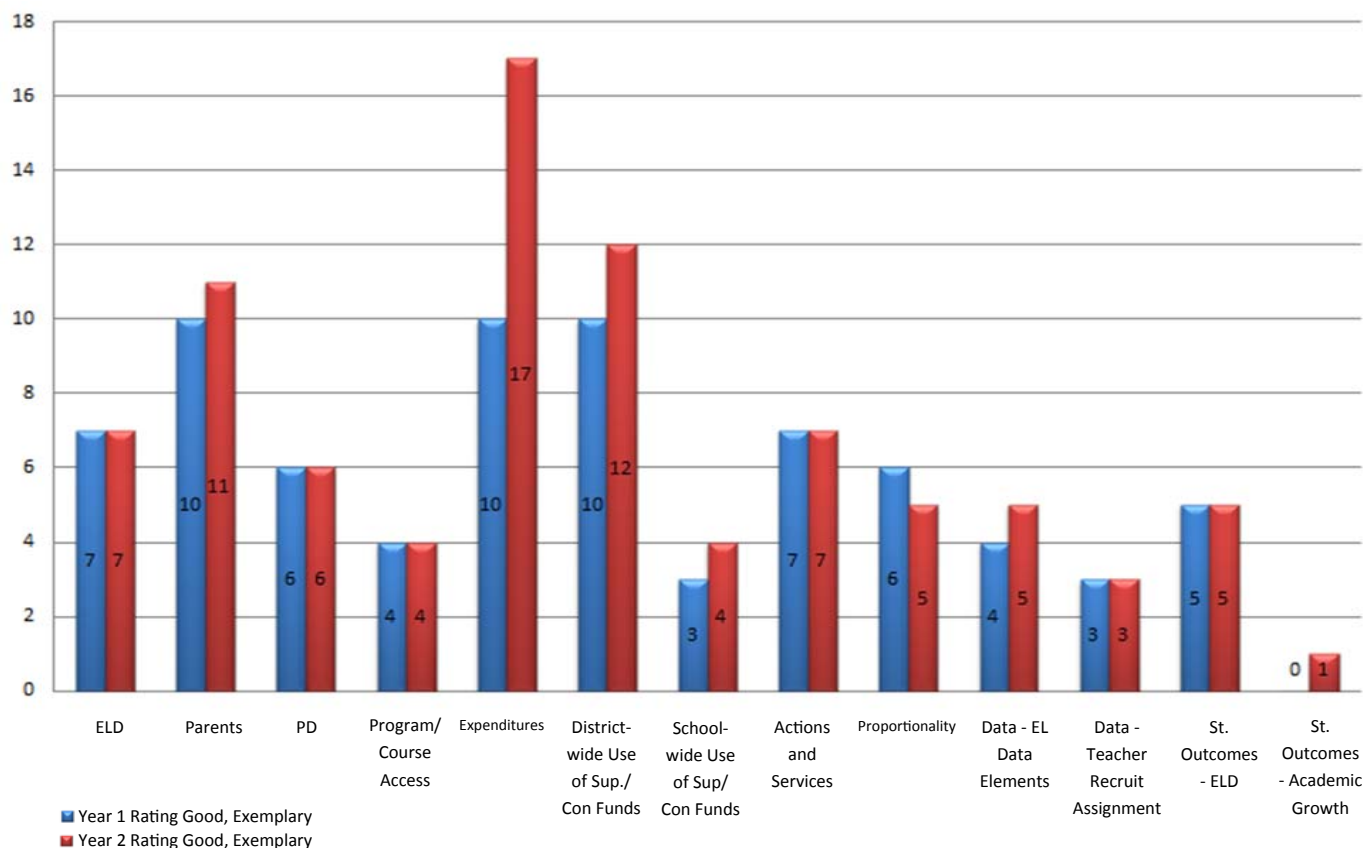

Figure 1: Comparison of Year 1 and Year 2 LCAP level of evidence at a minimal rating of "Good" and Exemplary.
Appendix A contains examples from these LCAPs which are intended to give some idea of what specific and targeted actions, services and programs might entail.

read. Individual line items describe scattered actions, but the comprehensiveness and coherence that is needed for strong ELL services and programs is difficult to gauge from the LCAPs themselves.

Furthermore, there was no single district LCAP that could serve as an example or model of good or exemplary practices in all the focus areas. However, as Figure 1 illustrates, there were several school districts that had one or two focus areas that contained quality efforts in supporting their English Learners.

ANALYSIS

The bold move and great promise of this new school funding system was the clear expectation that local flexibility and local control combined with a clear equity intent would result in improved, stronger and more appropriate responses to student needs - including an explicit expectation that English Learners would be served. Looking across a sampling of LCAPs from the largest English Learner serving districts in the state and those with the highest concentrations of English Learners for the second consecutive year raises increasing alarm that the equity commitment is falling short.

Second year LCAPs are distressingly weak in identifying English Learner needs, building capacity to serve English Learners, and supporting the programs and services that are responsive to English Learner needs

According to what evidence is provided in to the LCAPs, there has been little improvement in Year Two LCAPs from the disturbing patterns identified in the first round of LCAP implementation which found a lack of focus and minimal attention to the needs of English Learners.

Third year LCAPs will be particularly pivotal in terms of resource flexibility to correct these gaps and address unmet needs. The time to pay attention to English Learners needs is NOW.

As LEAs face Year Three of LCAP development, the influx of expected new funds is close to completing the funding goals of full LCFF allocation[9]. It is the last year for significant increases in revenue for most districts. Items that get locked in this year as continuing commitments (e.g., salaries) will preclude much flexibility in subsequent years to add new services, supports and activities. This is the year when the state's commitment to English Learners must become concrete, coherent, visible and meaningful.

The usefulness of the LCAP as a means of accountability is compromised by the difficulty in gleaning a sense of coherence and what the plan actually entails.

A key component of the LCFF vision is the commitment to stakeholder engagement not only in giving input to the development of local plans, but in "owning" and holding schools accountable for delivering on the goals set forth. This only happens where stakeholders have access to understanding the plan. A strong LCAP for English Learners would include robust enough information and description in readable and accessible form so for internal and external audiences it is clear what the plan for addressing English Learners is and how resources are being allocated to implement that plan. The description should enable the reader to know:

- Is there a coherent approach that comprehensively addresses the pressing needs of English Learners?
- Are these approaches, services, actions research-based?
- Are the goals responsive to English Learner needs, and do we have indicators so we can tell if we are actually making a difference in closing gaps and meeting English Learner needs related to those goals?
- Are we investing in building the capacity needed to pull off this plan?

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[9]Chorneau, Tom. January 27, 2016 *"Advocates pushing for subgroup accountability"*, With the improving economy, the coming year's state budget is expected to include enough of a boost in education spending to be within 5% of the funding goals set with the adoption of the LCFF. Most districts will be at 95% of their full LCFF allocation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made one year ago to districts and the state in *Falling Short on the Promise to English Learners: a Report on Year One LCAPs*, still stand with added urgency. In addition, we call upon the State to:

Reaffirm the equity commitment inherent in the design of the LCFF.

In guidance, resources and through leadership opportunities, the state must reaffirm the equity intents of the LCFF and echo this in the development of the state's accountability and continuous learning system that will tie to the LCAP process. The LCFF was designed with intentionality about targeting resources to serve traditionally underserved students, to close gaps in access, opportunity and outcomes.

The State must:

- Revise the template for Year 4 plans to include clear guidance to address the weak areas identified in this report.

- Work with CDE, CCEE and CCESSA to provide coherent guidance for districts on the expectations for including comprehensive, research-based programs and services for all profiles of English Learners in the LCAP.

- Include a visible, multidimensional approach to continuous improvement and higher growth expectations for ELs to target and close the gaps to the state standards to be set by the new accountability system.

County Offices of Education must:

- Involve staff with expertise on English Learners to conduct the LCAP reviews.

- Conduct training with districts on the critical elements of a comprehensive plan for English Learners to be included in the LCAPs.

- Include the critical areas in this report as part of the technical assistance and review offered to the districts which would require enhancing "The LCAP Approval Manual" to address these issues.

We call upon Districts to:

- Set a priority to build understanding and expertise about the needs of English Learners and research-based practices, and to use the LCAP planning process to focus upon implementing and supporting those approaches.

- Actively reach-out to and respond to the voices from English Learner communities, and reflect those activities and this commitment in the content of the LCAPs.

- Articulate meaningful goals and outcomes that specifically speak to and measure impacts with regards to providing full access to the curriculum, assuring meaningful movement towards English proficiency, and focus on closing gaps in academic achievement for English Learners.

- In addition to making the LCAP readable and available to stakeholders, write a narrative that tells the "story" of the plan, and that includes a section specifically on the goals, the plan, indicators and approach to meeting the needs of English Learners   This is the opportunity to also describe the way in which each year of the plan builds towards more depth and comprehensiveness in addressing goals.

CONCLUSION

Over the past year, efforts to strengthen the LCAP plan template and calls from the advocacy sectors seeking to strengthen the accountability uses of the LCAP have all sought to push for more detail, transparency and explicitness in the plans. Despite this, it is still difficult to glean a picture of what is actually being planned and provided with regards to English Learners supports, services and programs. Most plans were convoluted and difficult to read. Individual line items describe scattered things being done, but the comprehensiveness and coherence that is needed for strong ELL services and programs is elusive at best. One counselor hired, one item under professional development related to cultural proficiency, does not add up to a coherent program. For business planning, this kind of individual item approach is sufficient, and whoever actually writes the LCAP may have the full picture of how those individual activities add up to a coherent approach. However, for stakeholder understanding and for accountability this is inadequate. And, as the state moves to implement a continuous improvement and peer learning/sharing system, the LCAPs as currently written will be inadequate as a vehicle to determine a picture of what approaches are being taken in which schools and districts.

At this point entering the third year of LCFF implementation, this review concludes with serious concerns that the needs of English Learners are being left behind and unaddressed, that the LCAPs do not serve as either an adequate planning mechanism or a sufficient accountability measure to ensure that English Learners will have equitable access to the education they need.

With the new flexibility given to the districts and the increased funding, the LCAPs and LCFF must live up to the equity principle which is the bedrock of this new school finance system. The state, districts and county offices of education need to seize this opportunity to define the needs and develop comprehensive, research-based approaches, programs and services to once and for all make the remaining years of LCFF about closing gaps and raising the level of language and academic growth for English learners the core of our work. Now is the time! We must not allow this exciting, visionary reform to become yet another in a line of reforms that have left behind our English Learners.

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APPENDIX A:
SAMPLES OF GOOD AND EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS FROM YEAR 2 LCAPs

Focus Area #1 - English Language Development

ELD standards-based research program is described. The description includes explicit goals, activities, standards-based curricular materials, instruction that is designed ELD and integrated in content areas. The differentiated professional development focuses on specific goals and activities for ELD Standards and CCSS presented simultaneously.

Rating: Good

Practice:

Year 1

Implement Designated and Integrated ELD Instruction

- Pilot ELA/ELD Textbooks (TK-12), including designated and Integrated ELD.

- Form ELD Curriculum & Instruction Committee to incorporate ELD into the CCSS Units of Study.

- Provide and distribute Core and Supplemental (Avenues, Academic Vocabulary Toolkit, and English 3D) ELD instructional materials.

Implement and Monitor Integrated ELD Language Instruction & Sheltered Instruction

- Train on Thinking Maps, Path to Proficiency for ELs, and GLAD Strategies to shelter instruction across the curriculum.

- Verify the implementation of ELD Instruction for ELs Levels 4 & 5 who are receiving ELD instruction through the ELA course.

Provide Structured Academic and Linguistic Interventions for LTELs

- Revise course descriptors for Academic Language Development (ALD) ALD1 and ALD2.

- Pilot ELD Intervention Textbooks in ALD Courses.

- Provide supplemental ELD instructional materials for ALD course in middle and high school.

Provide Professional Development to Better Serve ELs

- Train on the administration of the ELD Benchmarks (ELLA).

- Provide training on EL achievement data analysis counselors, and Guidance Techs.

APPENDIX A:
SAMPLES OF GOOD AND EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS FROM YEAR 2 LCAPs

Focus Area #1 - English Language Development (continued)

Provide Professional Development for Designated ELD/ALD Instruction

- ELD teachers will be trained on designing lessons for Designated ELD/ALD.

- Provide additional teacher voluntary PD (After-school or Saturdays).

Provide Professional Development for Integrated ELD and Sheltered Instruction

- All teachers will be trained on designing lessons that integrate the ELD standards.

Conduct ELD/ALD Instructional Rounds with Administrators and Teachers

- Conduct ELD/ALD instructional rounds to observe and monitor for quality integrated and designated ELD instruction.

Year 2

Implement Designated and Integrated ELD Instruction

- Implement ELA/ELD Textbooks (TK-12), including Designated and Integrated ELD.

- Maintain ELD Curriculum & Instruction Committee to incorporate ELD into the CCSS Units of Study and develop pacing guides.

- Provide and distribute Core and Supplemental (Avenues, Academic Vocabulary Toolkit, and English 3D) ELD instructional materials.

Implement and Monitor Integrated ELD Language Instruction & Sheltered Instruction

- Train on Thinking Maps, Path to Proficiency for ELs, and GLAD Strategies to shelter instruction across the curriculum.

- Verify the implementation of ELD Instruction for ELs Levels 4 & 5 who are receiving ELD instruction through the ELA course.

Provide Structured Academic and Linguistic Interventions for LTELs

- Implement revised course descriptors for ALD1 and ALD2 (Academic Language Development).

- Implement ELD Intervention Textbooks in ALD Courses.

- Provide supplemental ELD instructional materials for ALD course in middle and high school.

APPENDIX A:
SAMPLES OF GOOD AND EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS FROM YEAR 2 LCAPs

Focus Area #3: Professional Development

District led needs assessment-driven PDs that include administrators, counselors, teachers and other ELD Support Staff are held multiple times; the PDs include long term goals for the teachers and ELs. Description of PDs should include teacher collaboration, application of the CCSS and ELD standards, and teacher reflections. PD should address the different needs of the various language proficiencies and profiles [cultural and linguistic] of ELs. Assessment of the effectiveness of the PDs should be explicit and based on implementation, participant feedback and student outcomes.

Rating: Good

Practice:

- Provide teachers and site administrators professional development to consistently and effectively implement California English Language Development (ELD) standards in tandem with content standards, including both designated ELD and integrated ELD during content instruction.

- Invest in resources and professional development to provide focused support for Spanish-speaking EL students to build on their home language assets and ensure equitable access to curriculum in order to increase English language proficiency/reclassification (e.g., if enrolled in language pathway, ongoing data discussions to inform instruction that will lead to increased achievement in English and Spanish, Spanish to English Biliteracy Transfer (SEBT) where students apply their developing knowledge of Spanish literacy to English literacy, etc.).

- For English Learners: Provide professional development focused on social emotional and cultural awareness for staff working with ELs and help Newcomer ELs transition into our school system by providing services and/ or referrals for emotional support and psychological counseling through site based Wellness Centers.

- 1.0 FTE staff position will be funded to support the expansion of the Ethnic Studies course to all high schools, the development of the expansion of the middle school units of study, and the alignment of the Ethnic Studies course to the Common Core State Standards.

- There will also be funding for Ethnic Studies professional development throughout the year as well as instructional coaching for Ethnic Studies teachers. The current funding model wherein the costs of the teacher FTE's is shared between site-based budgets of participating schools and centralized budgets will continue.

APPENDIX A:
SAMPLES OF GOOD AND EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS FROM YEAR 2 LCAPs

Focus Area #4- Program and Course Access

Details are provided in description of learning programs, activities, and opportunities for EL students. The descriptions address all English learners with additional attention given to preschool students and long-term English learners. Rigorous academic content includes primary language development, English language development, enrichment courses (e.g., GATE, AP, IB, music) during regular school day and during extended learning times. Academic instruction is differentiated for EL students with varying learning needs. EL students have the same access to all regular school programs as non-English learners.

Rating: Good

Practice:

Support for Early Learning Programs

- School Readiness for PreSchool English Learners: Fund three teachers at strategic sites to increase student access in two program. from half-day to full-day preschool instruction, and to maintain highly qualified staffing at three sites that serve predominantly EL students.

- Hire two para-educators: one full-time and one 3.5 hr. to support sites with expanding half-day to full day preschool instructional programs.

- Purchase the necessary curriculum to augment half- day to full-day preschool at two sites and ensure sufficient instructional materials and supplies districtwide.

Rigorous Academic Content

- Increase A-G Requirement completion rate by 1% for all student groups, up to 28.5% (DO), 5.2% (EL) and 28.9% (SED).

- Implement 7th grade social studies course in Spanish with an existing teacher; explore 9-12 students meeting A-G requirements in existing Spanish courses.

- Wall-to-Wall Academies and AVID Initiative: Career Technical Education provides real world relevance to academic instruction and has been found to increase student engagement, raise graduation rates, and prepare students for college, career and citizenship for all student populations including English Language Learners and students with disabilities. District supports all student populations who enroll in Career Technical Education classes.

Long Term English Learners

- Continue to fund English Learner Services Assistants (ELSAs) for two extra hours a day to work directly with Beginning through Early Intermediate EL students during or after the instructional day. ELSAs will review, generate, monitor and adjust Individual Language Plan (ILPs) for LTELs to meet Reclassification goals in a timely manner.

- Saturday Language Academy: Design, implement and monitor an intensive language support program for grades 5-10 long term English learners (LTELs) who have demonstrated for two years no annual progress as measured by CELDT. Determine 4 sites for five consecutive Saturdays (September 13, 20, 27, and October 4, 11). Participating student will receive a breakfast snack, and transportation will be available upon need.

- Implement individual learning plans (ILP) to decrease the number of Long Term English Learners (LTEL): EL Mentor will develop IPL for site Long Term English Learners (LTEL) in grades 5-8 focusing on students academic needs to become language proficient in English. EL Mentor will hold student conferences to inform student of EL status.

APPENDIX A:
SAMPLES OF GOOD AND EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS FROM YEAR 2 LCAPs

Focus Area #4- Program and Course Access (continued)

- 18 EL Mentors at 15 sites developed ILPs for LTELs in grades 4-11 focusing on students academic needs to become language proficient in English.

- The district will continue with developing ILPs and identify new students to receive EL Mentor Support from site ELSAs.

Extended Learning Time, Differentiated Intervention Programs

- EL Summer School: 2016 Summer School for English Learners, up to 22 days. Target group are at risk and long Term English Learners.

- ASES Strategic Intervention for ELs and Migrant—ASES After School Writing Workshop: At-risk EL students in K-8 as determined by CELDT and program pre-assessments will receive strategic writing instruction 5 hours a week during after school tutoring. Tutoring will be offered four times a year for five weeks by grade levels/spans. Write From The Beginning curriculum will be used to strengthen and expand EL students' written and oral communication skills. Explore providing additional after school academic support for students in collaboration with ASES.

- Immigrant, Migrant, Newcomers and EL will participate in a two-week intensive intervention boot camp in collaboration with ASES to front load vocabulary and further their language development. Participants will receive one hour of strategic ELD in language arts and math in preparation for Units of Study.

- Resource Teacher on Special Assignment: One Resource TOSA assigned to Special Education Department to collaborate with EL Services regarding the identification, monitoring and guidance of instructional and academic accommodation for K-6 ELs, migrant, immigrant and/or Newcomer students with IEPs or 504 plans. TOSA will train and verify that IEP goals include a language target for compliance with local, state, and federal student civil rights.

Biliteracy Programs

- English Learner Services (includes EL Services, Migrant Education, AmeriCorps Lectura Program, Dual Language, and Seal of Biliteracy Program).

- Biliteracy classes were strengthened at seven sites for K-6 students through the 90/10 Developmental Biliteracy Model, with 50/50 balance sustained from 4th through 6th grades. We accomplished creating middle and high school course descriptions to continue Spanish biliteracy through social studies/history content grades 7-12. Emphasis on starting the 7th grade World History in Spanish course in 2015-16 school year because stakeholder forum parents expressed their preference to see more Dual Language classrooms at elementary and secondary level.

- LAS Links Online Form B will be used to assess student proficiency in Spanish content K-7th grade to ensure students meet state seal of biliteracy requirements at the end of 11th Grade. The goal is to increase the total number of students, district-wide, who meet and pass the state seal of biliteracy graduation requirements.

APPENDIX A:
SAMPLES OF GOOD AND EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS FROM YEAR 2 LCAPs

Focus Area #7 – Actions and Services

The specific services, programs and actions address the language and academic needs of the different EL student profiles and are based upon ELs being assessed appropriately and on an ongoing basis. Increased or improved services funded by supplemental and concentration grant funds are in addition to the base services for all students. The student needs, funding and parent preferences lead to appropriate program placement chosen from several program options staffed when possible by bilingual personnel.

Rating: Exemplary

Practice:

Supplemental Curriculum & Instruction for Developmental Biliteracy and Designated & Integrated ELD:

Research and purchase Spanish TK -6 Units of Study LA and Math supplemental curriculum & professional.

- Developmental Bliteracy supplemental curriculum: development for DB sites and secondary history in Spanish.

- Purchase materials for English learners in all content areas to address their linguistic needs and support state content standards through ELA/ELD frameworks. Materials to meet new proficiency spans and grade-level Units of Study for ELA and Math with embedded and ongoing professional development for ELD and Structured English Immersion (SEI) instructional programs.

ASES Strategic Intervention for ELs and Migrant

- ASES After School Writing Workshop: At-risk EL students in K-8 as determined by CELDT and program pre-assessments will receive strategic writing instruction 5 hours a week during after school tutoring. Tutoring will be offered four times a year for five weeks by grade levels/spans. *Write From The Beginning* curriculum will be used to strengthen and expand EL students' written and oral communication skills. Explore providing additional after school academic support for students in collaboration with ASES.

- Immigrant, Migrant, Newcomers and EL will participate in a two-week intensive intervention boot camp in collaboration with ASES to front load vocabulary and further their language development. Participants will receive one hour of strategic ELD in language arts and math in preparation for Units of Study.

Immigrant Newcomer's Academy

- For 7-12 Newcomer immigrant students who have been in the US for 3 years or less, participate in Newcomers Academy to reinforce primary language foundational skills to build upon 2nd language acquisition in order to mainstream into regular SEI program for a maximum of three semesters. Sites providing service will have a minimum of 20 students for a self-contained environment.

Saturday Language Academy

- Design, implement and monitor an intensive language support program for grades 5-10 long term English learners (LTELs) who have demonstrated for two years no annual progress as measured by CELDT. Determine 4 sites for five consecutive Saturdays (September 13, 20, 27, and October 4, 11). Participating student will receive a breakfast snack, and transportation will be available upon need.

Assessments:

- EL Director, EL TOSAs, teachers, principals and district administrators will collaborate to write research-based performance assessment tools to measure degree of implementation of Developmental Bliteracy (DB) and Designated & Integrated English Language Development (D/I ELD) instructional practices linked to Units of Study K-12. This includes an exploration of wireless aggregation and reporting of data.

APPENDIX A:
SAMPLES OF GOOD AND EXEMPLARY EXCERPTS FROM YEAR 2 LCAPs

Focus Area #7 – Actions and Services (continued)

- Schedule, train and coach principals and district administrators in using the DB and D/I ELD performance assessment tools in classroom walkthroughs.

- Collaborate with principals to create and implement a coaching schedule to keep, report, and log data on coaching for all teachers of DB and D/I ELD.

- Collaborate with principals to share trends monthly with staff to obtain feedback on progress & support, and to clarify & refine the DB and D/I ELD performance assessment walkthrough tools.

- Provide time at monthly principal meetings to debrief performance assessment walkthrough experiences, troubleshoot problems, share solutions with EL Services Director and staff regarding explicit DB and D/I ELD connections to Units of Study. 6. Collaborate with site principals to share DB and D/I ELD performance assessment walkthrough data quarterly with site ELAC and SSC for feedback and support.

Personnel Providing Services:

- Seven English Learner Teachers on Special Assignment (EL TOSAs) to serve 21 sites with implementing, training, monitoring, assessing, and evaluating programs and services for immigrant, migrant, and EL students.

- Explore the possibility of an English Learner Teacher on Assignment (EL TOAs): one EL TOA assigned at each middle and high school to support, coach, guide and model instructional strategies to support EL, long term English Learners (LTEL), and Reclassified fluent English Proficient (RFEP) student progress and performance.

- English Learner Services Assistants (ELSAs): Continue to fund ELSA for two extra hours a day to work directly with Beginning through Early Intermediate EL students during or after the instructional day. ELSAs will review, generate, monitor and adjust Individual Language Plan (ILPs) for LTELs to meet Reclassification goals in a timely manner.

- Explore hiring 1 English Learner Paraprofessional (ELP) per site (21 total) to assist ELs and LTELs throughout and after the instructional day.

APPENDIX B:
YEAR 2 LCAP REVIEWERS

Thank You To The Educators, Researchers, and Advocates Who Participated in the Review of the LCAPs

Lynne Aoki, Californians Together

Elvira Armas, Center for Equity for English Learners, Loyola Marymount University

Valerie Brewington, Los Angeles Unified School District

Karen Cadiero Kaplan, San Diego State University

Cynthia Chagolla, California Rural Legal Assistance

Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez, Californians Together

Monica de la Hoya, California Rural Legal Assistance

Patty Delaney, Sobrato Early Academic Language

Laura Diaz, California Association for Bilingual Education

Elena Dineen, California Rural Legal Assistance

Sahar Durali, California Rural Legal Assistance

Dan Fitchner, California Association Teachers for Speakers of Other Languages

Norm Gold, Norm Gold and Associates

Jan Gustafson Corea, California Association for Bilingual Education

Toni Hernandez, California Association for Bilingual Education

Anya Hurwitz, Sobrato Early Academic Language

Elizabeth Jimenez Salinas, GEMAS

Magaly Lavadenz, Center for Equity for English Learners, Loyola Marymount University

Garth Lewis, Yolo County Office of Education

Claudia Lockwood, California Association for Bilingual Education

Jamila Loud, Advancement Project

Marina Madrid, Rialto Unified School District

Francisco Meza, South Whittier School District

Renee Miletic, Coachella Valley Unified School District

Darlene Neal, Advancement Project

Kris Nicholls, California Association for Bilingual Education

Gisela O'Brien, Center for Equity for English Learners, Loyola Marymount University

Deborah Pacheco, South Whittier School District

Ralph Pacheco, South Whittier School District

Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, Californians Together

Maria Valencia, California Association for Bilingual Education

Jocelyn Vargas, Raices Cultura

Californians Together is a statewide coalition of parents, teachers, administrators, board members and civil rights non-profit organizations. Our member organizations come together united around the goals of better educating California's 1.4 million English Learners by improving California's schools and promoting equitable educational policy.

PROP 58 HAS PASSED!   NOW WHAT?

KEY ASPECTS OF PROP 58:

- With the passage of Proposition 58, California school districts and sites will have more opportunities to consider in implementing a **multilingual/biliteracy program.**
- Starting in July of 2017, if there are parents of 20 students in one grade level or 30 students school-wide who request **a multilingual/biliteracy program,** it will trigger the exploration and implementation, to the extent possible, of a biliteracy program at the site.
- The California State Board of Education will approve guidelines and regulations concerning Prop 58.
- Keep in mind, quality **multilingual/biliteracy programs** are created with careful planning, resources, and at least one year of preparation. Don't rush!

WHAT ARE SOME BILITERACY PROGRAM MODELS WE SHOULD CONSIDER? CABE and Californians Together
recommend these different models to explore to see which is the best fit for your school community—PreK-12:

- Dual Language Immersion (90:10 or 50:50 model)
- One-Way Immersion Programs
- Heritage Language Programs
- Developmental Language Programs
- Foreign Language Experiential (FLEX) and Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) Programs

More information on these models can be found at http://www.resources.gocabe.org/index.php/home/programs/

OUR TOP 17 RECOMMENDATIONS! Here are our top 17 recommendations from Californians Together and CABE on how to get your multilingual?biliteracy program planning and implementation started:

GET SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE:

1) **Contact CABE's Professional Development Services for assistance in planning and implementing your PreK-12the grade biliteracy program!** cabepds@bilingualeducation.org or (626) 814-4441 ext. 212

LAY THE FOUNDATION:

2) **Commit to at least one year to plan for your biliteracy program**
   a. There are many policy implications that take time to consider and process

3) **Assemble a Biliteracy Program Leadership Team**
   a. Select representatives from district, site, and community stakeholder groups

4) **Seek support from the Board of Education and partnerships with civic and educational organizations**
   a. A great resource: https://www.californianstogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/The-Campaign-for-Biliteracy-2014_03_21-single-pages-3.pdf

5) **Identify the type of biliteracy program you would like or that has been requested by the parents**
   a. Descriptions are available at http://www.resources.gocabe.org/index.php/home/programs/

6) **Review the research on the program you've selected for PreK through 12th grade**
   a. https://rpnorton.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/el-pathway-flyer_all-els_jan-21_english.pdf
   b. http://www.lindholm-leary.com/resources/review_research.pdf

7) **Engage PreK-12th grade teachers, parents, and the public in the LCAP process to ensure inclusion, implementation, and funding for the biliteracy program from early childhood to high school graduation**
   a. https://www.californianstogether.org/does-your-local-control-accountability-plan-deliver-on-the-promise-of-improved-or-increased-services-for-english-learners/

SEEK OUT MODELS AND RESOURCES - You don't have to start from scratch! There are many schools and districts that have implemented biliteracy programs that can serve as models and research based evidence to support your work.

8) **Visit successful programs that are aligned with the program you are considering**
   a. Contact CABE Professional Development Services for a list of districts and schools with strong, effective biliteracy programs: cabepds@bilingualeducation.org   or (626) 814-4441 ext. 212

9) **Seek out customized consulting support and program-specific professional development for all staff**
   a. Plan for building the capacity of teachers in the biliteracy program for at least 5 to 6 years
   b. Contact CABE's Professional Development Services: cabepds@bilingualeducation.org

10) **Attend institutes and conferences to learn more about biliteracy programs**
    a. CABE 2017 http://www.cabe2017.gocabe.org/
    b. Californians Together https://www.californianstogether.org/
    c. Dual Language Education New Mexico http://www.dlenm.org/
    d. CABE PDS Teacher Institutes http://www.gocabe.org/index.php/educators/professional-development/
    e. Center for Equity for English Learners—CEEL, at LMU   http://soe.lmu.edu/centers/ceel/
    f. Sobrato Early Academic Language Model   http://www.sobrato.com/
    g. Center for Applied Linguistics   http://www.cal.org
    h. ATDLE https://atdle.org/conference/

DEVELOP SCHOOL-PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT PARTICIPATION - Key factors in developing quality biliteracy programs

11) **Recruit highly qualified biliterate and bicultural certificated and classified staff (PreK-12) and administrators**
    a. Information on bilingual authorization for teachers from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing: http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl628b.pdf

12) **Recruit students from both linguistic groups through a focused public relations campaign**
    a. Know your community and where to connect with parents of students for your program

13) **Request a long-term parent commitment to the biliteracy program, and be prepared as a district to make a similar commitment to sustain the program**
    a. At least 5 to 6 years, but even better, 13 plus years (PreK through 12th grade)

14) **Create a multicultural, multilingual, and collaborative school environment at the program site(s) from PreK through 12th grade.**
    a. Value the culture(s)/language(s) in your program; teachers collaborate with English-only colleagues

OTHER KEY ELEMENTS

15) **Have high expectations for all; use standards-aligned curriculum in English and the target language**
    a. Academic achievement and language acquisition to biliteracy; Seal of Biliteracy and Pathways Awards

16) **Document the success of all students in the program in both languages to ensure academic achievement and language development is on target**
    a. Important to have data to show student progress to all stakeholders

17) **Engage parents and offer educational and leadership opportunities for all**
    a. Multiple options for engagement--parent leadership, language classes in English and target language, etc.

CONTACT US FOR MORE SUPPORT!

CaliforniansTogether
Championing the Success of English Learners

cabe | PDS
California Association for Bilingual Education | Professional Development Services

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HIGHLIGHTING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

State board chooses new way of measuring school progress on tests

JANUARY 11, 2017 | JOHN FENSTERWALD
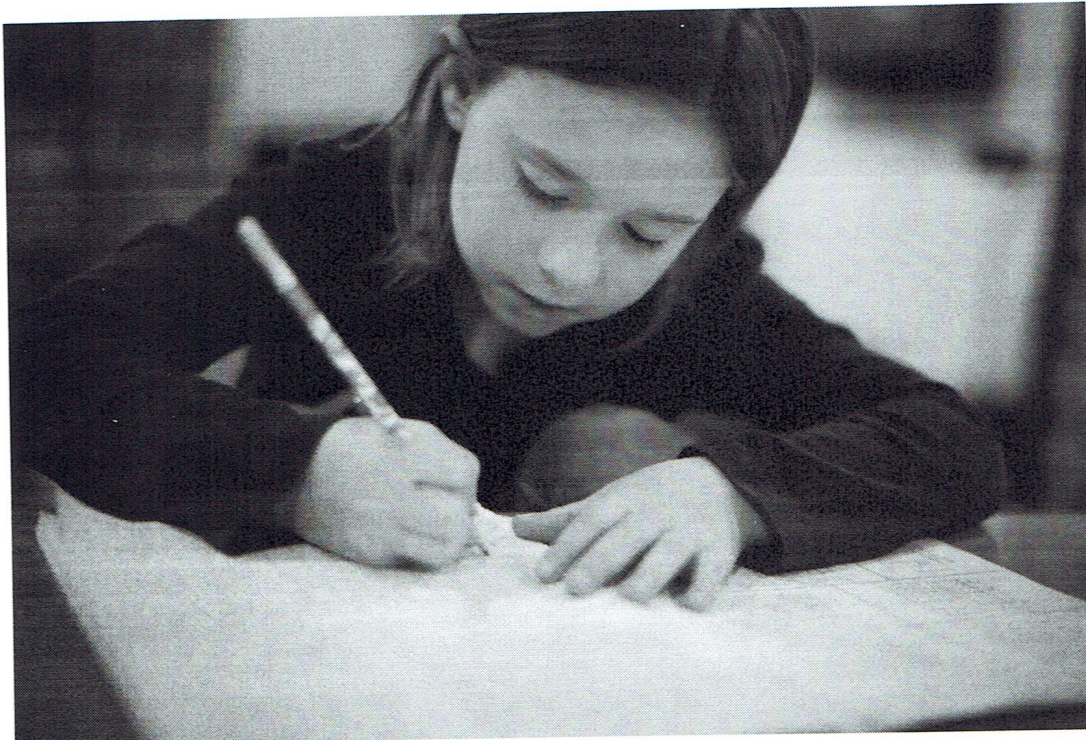
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The State Board of Education is revamping its school accountability system.

After hours of discussion, the State Board of Education on Wednesday settled two much debated issues that will enable state officials to move ahead this year with the state's new school accountability system.

One decision creates a different way to measure schools' and student groups' progress on standardized tests in math and English. The other, more contentious issue will determine which schools and districts will require intervention or technical help because their English learners did poorly on the math and English language arts tests.

In September, the board approved a framework for the new improvement and accountability system that will give a broader view of schools' and districts' performance through measures that will include students' readiness for college and careers, school climate, parent engagement and academic performance. The board set a timeline for refining the metrics over the next year.

The decisions on Wednesday define the academic performance indicator – a primary measure that will also designate the lowest-performing schools receiving federal aid under the Every Student Succeeds Act, which will go into effect next year. It will apply to students in grades 3 to 8.

The new way of measuring performance on standardized tests responds to critics' objections to the methodology the federal government adopted under the No Child Left Behind Act. That law measured success by the percentage of students in a school or subgroup of students who scored proficient on a test. Each year under NCLB, the federal government required a larger percentage of students to reach proficiency and penalized schools and districts that failed to do so.

One problem with this method, critics said, was that it ignored the success of low and high achievers: struggling students who improved significantly but not to the point of proficiency, as well as proficient students who reached advanced levels. Schools tended to focus on raising scores of students "on the bubble" – those performing just below proficiency.

The new system will present a more nuanced perspective of students' progress by measuring how far they score below or above the point of proficiency and how much their scores improve or decline over time.

Under the Smarter Balanced tests in math and English language arts, proficiency is defined as the point on a scale that designates Level 3, the second highest of four achievement categories. The state board's accountability system will combine the distance from Level 3 and how much the distance has narrowed or widened over time to designate one of five color-coded performance categories, from red to blue.

For example, any school or racial or ethnic student group with an average score falling 25 or more points below Level 3 and that declined over three years would fall in the "red" or "orange" zones – those schools most in need of help. Other schools that showed significant improvement but hadn't yet reached Level 3 would not require outside intervention. And schools that score above proficiency and have improved would fall in the enviable "blue" or "green" zones. "Yellow" would be in the middle.

State board President Michael Kirst and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson had asked the U.S. Department of Education to permit measuring academic progress by movement up and down the full range or scale of scores, as opposed to just one point – proficiency – on it. The final rules for the Every Student Succeeds Act permit that system of measuring progress.

Morgan Polikoff, an associate professor at the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education, wrote a letter signed by three dozen academics requesting a new approach. He praised the state board's alternative, but noted that a system based on scale scores, not proficiency percentages, would be harder to explain. "Communicating to the public could be a challenge, given it's slightly complicated how this all is calculated," he wrote in an email.

Which English learners?

Measuring progress of the state's 1.4 million English learners on standardized tests has been problematic because the population is fluid. Each year non-English speaking immigrants enroll in school, while English learners who have become adept in English exit the English learner group. As Stanford University education emeritus professors Linda Darling-Hammond and Kenji Hakuta described in an EdSource commentary this week, test scores have tended to stagnate as the least skilled in English enter the subgroup and the most skilled leave it. And, they noted, low subgroup scores created a disincentive for districts and schools to redesignate students as "fluent English proficient" – with the harmful effect of holding some of these students back from more advanced courses.

Congress, in passing the Every Student Succeeds Act, gave states a new option. For the purpose of designating which schools need assistance, they could include the test scores of former English learners in the English learner group for up to four years after they've been reclassified. On Wednesday, the state board adopted the policy.

For California, which already had a waiver under NCLB to fold in the scores of some former English learners, this presented a relatively small change. However, Californians Together and a coalition of other advocacy groups initially had pressed state officials not to include scores of any reclassified English learners. They said that mixing scores of high-performing former English learners would conceal the low performance of long-term English learners – those still not fluent after six or more years. Without shining a light on their struggles, districts would continue to ignore their needs, they argued. During testimony before the board, dozens of district administrators and English learner advocates stressed that point.

State board member Feliza Ortiz-Licon agreed. Blending the two groups' scores would produce a middling "yellow" category, she said. "If most are there, how do we show growth? We are masking two different groups with different needs."

Darling-Hammond, Hakuta and other academics wrote that including former English learners in the group gives districts a more complete picture of successful strategies that districts have used. And data projections by the California Department of Education reinforced the case for inclusion. They found that by including only English learners, ratings of two-thirds of schools and 60 percent of school districts would immediately fall in the red or orange zones – requiring technical assistance or intervention for English learners. That massive number would potentially overwhelm the capacity of the state and county offices of education to provide effective help. With the scores of reclassified English learners included, 20 percent of districts and 28 percent of schools would be designated red or orange.

In addition, by excluding reclassified English learners, 193 school districts and 1,213 schools would not have the minimum of 30 students that the state defines as an English learner subgroup. Local

officials would lack any information on how English learners were performing in those schools and districts.

In public testimony, many speakers said they agreed with combining English learners and reclassified students strictly for determining which schools need assistance but implored the board to report data for English learners, reclassified English learners and long-term English learners separately and prominently on the new California School Dashboard, a color-coded report card on school and district performance. They also want the data prominently located on the key document that districts use to determine spending priorities, the Local Control and Accountability Plan.

Districts are required to commit more money to English learners under the Local Control Funding Formula, and separating the data will enable parents and advocates to demand more resources and more effective approaches for these students, they said.

"It's important that the LCAP process be transparent and clear to stakeholders," said Manuel Colon, chief academic officer of the Anaheim Union High School District. "If English learners are hidden, services will be reduced, causing them to fail or drop out."

Colleen Pagter, legislative analyst for the Los Angeles Unified School District, agreed. Not only should data be reported separately, but districts should be required to address the distinct needs of English learners and reclassified English learners in the LCAP, she said.

To a person, board members said they got the public's message. Jenny Singh, an accountability administrator with the California Department of Education, assured the board that separate data for the English learner groups will be prominently shown.

How visible, in what form, and how many clicks it will take to find it will be decided another day – possibly at the board's next meeting in March, when it takes a look at the latest draft of the California School Dashboard.

💬 **Comments**

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Kim
2 months ago   ↩