



The **LCAP** Common Message

LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN



California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association

March 2020

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The LCAP Common Message



The purpose of the LCAP Common Message is to promote continuous improvement in student outcomes within the LCFF State Priorities as part of the Statewide System of Support.

Opportunity and Responsibility

County Offices of Education (COEs) uphold the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) principles of equity, transparency, and accountability as we assist and empower local educational agencies (LEAs) to work with stakeholders to develop a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) that reflects local wisdom and responds to the needs of their communities. We have an opportunity and responsibility to approach our work with realistic optimism that focuses on strengths, a commitment to fully understanding problems, and a belief that those closest to the problems have the knowledge and greatest power to solve them. COEs emphasize a shared responsibility for outcomes as we work alongside LEAs to find solutions that will lead to continuous improvement and equity for all students.



The LCAP is . . .

- A comprehensive strategic plan for **ALL** students
- A continuous improvement tool
- A blueprint to address local needs
- A document that communicates to stakeholders how equity will be operationalized
- A living document collaboratively developed with meaningful stakeholder engagement



The California Way rests on the belief that educators want to excel, trusts them to improve when given the proper supports, and provides local schools and districts with leeway and flexibility to deploy resources so they can improve.

California Department of Education. 2019. Introduction: Our Journey Together on The California Way <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/bp/bp2intro.asp> (accessed January 15, 2020).

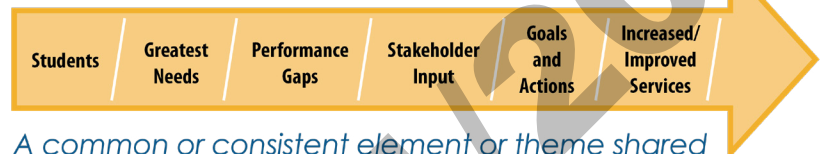
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LCAP Through Line

All sections of the LCAP work in concert to serve as a through line connecting the individual sections of the plan into a coherent story. An LCAP through line naturally develops when LEAs use best practices while developing the LCAP. A strong through line, or connecting thread throughout, begins with forethought.

THROUGH LINE



A common or consistent element or theme shared by items in a series or by parts of a whole

An LCAP has a through line when . . .

- Actions align with identified needs, goals, and corresponding metrics
- Contributing actions are designed with forethought that seeks to understand and address the unique needs and underlying root cause impacting specific outcomes for English learners, low-income, and foster youth.
- Budgetary resources respond to student and community needs and address performance gaps including the obligation to increase or improve services for English learners, low-income students, and foster youth.
- All sections of the LCAP align to the reflections in the *Plan Summary* and *Stakeholder Engagement*.
- Stakeholders can read a part of the LCAP and easily understand how it connects to the whole LCAP.



“ Few things are brought to a successful issue by impetuous desire, but most by calm and prudent forethought. ”

– Thucydides, Ancient Greek Historian

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Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

The LCAP provides LEAs the opportunity to describe their comprehensive efforts to lift up the voices of parents, students, and community members along with staff to collaboratively develop goals and actions designed to serve every student. LEAs embrace transparency by describing how they gathered stakeholders'

LEAs actively build the capacity of their stakeholders to not only understand, but to be interested and involved as partners in the engagement process.

perspectives and insights about the LEA's program, services, and effectiveness of previous actions. LEAs also describe how stakeholder input informed the design of the current goals, planned actions, and budget. LEAs actively build the capacity of their stakeholders to understand why and whether existing strategies are leading to improved opportunities and outcomes for students. To involve stakeholders as meaningful partners

in the planning and improvement process, LEAs meet with them in their communities in more informal settings. Informed and involved stakeholders ensure accountability and support decision making that leads to equity and effective programs.

LEAs seek to understand and overcome their local barriers to meaningful engagement. COEs assist LEAs with the analysis of local barriers and the identification of solutions that will continuously improve meaningful stakeholder engagement efforts. With equity as a central tenet of LCFF, the LCAP highlights outreach to the families and community partners who represent students with the greatest needs, ensuring equity of voice in decision making. Meaningful engagement from a wide range of stakeholders is central to improvement and LCAP development. COEs support LEAs and community leaders in the development of a comprehensive plan for stakeholder engagement in the important decision-making process that informs local priorities and budget decisions.



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Locally Designed Goals

The design of LCAP goals reflects the priorities of the local community informed by the stakeholder engagement process and a comprehensive needs assessment that considers all relevant data. Using language that is easily understandable to parents and the community, the goals clearly communicate what the LEA plans to achieve. COEs serve as thought partners as LEAs work to design an LCAP that addresses state and local priorities.

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The decision to articulate an LCAP goal as a *Focus Goal*, *Broad Goal*, or *Maintenance of Progress Goal* is a local decision that is reflective of the local context. *Focus Goals* enable LEAs to communicate what they plan to achieve through a specific, measurable, and time-bound approach. *Broad Goals* allow for a more comprehensive description of what the LEA plans to achieve measured through a series of metrics

aligned to the various components of the *Broad Goal*. A *Maintenance of Progress Goal* describes how the LEA intends to maintain progress in the LCFF State Priorities. LEAs have the autonomy to design the LCAP using any combination of goals. COE technical assistance to LEAs safeguards this autonomy while helping LEAs meet LCFF requirements.

Prioritization of Goals and Actions

The LCFF encourages LEAs to prioritize goals and actions based on their comprehensive needs assessment. The option to select *Focus Goals*, *Broad Goals*, *Maintenance of Progress Goals*, or a combination to communicate local priorities supports transparency and coherence within a flexible LCAP structure. The LEA's decision to use a *Focus Goal* or *Broad Goal* depends on whether the local priority is focused or broad in scope. COEs support LEAs with the identification of local priorities and with the development of goals based on all relevant data. COEs are available to assist LEAs in determining how their local priorities align best to the different types of LCAP goal options. COEs are also available to assist LEAs with communicating goals and actions in language that is easy for stakeholders to understand.



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Measuring the Effectiveness of Actions

As a continuous improvement tool, the LCAP provides LEAs the opportunity to annually reflect on their actions to determine if the current investment of time and resources is resulting in improved student outcomes. The integrated design of the LCAP *Annual Update* informs stakeholders of long-term trends in performance. LEAs have an opportunity and a responsibility to communicate to stakeholders how trends in performance, as measured by the LCAP metrics, guide the decision-making process for determining which actions are effective and warrant the continued investment of time and resources to address the needs of the local community.

Metrics are identified after careful consideration of what will be needed to monitor progress towards goals and the effectiveness of actions to realistically answer the question, “Where do we want to be in three years?” In addition to the requisite LCAP metrics aligned to the LCFF State Priorities as outlined in *California Education Code 52060(d)*, LEAs have an opportunity to design metrics that are meaningful and responsive to the greatest needs of their communities. The process of metric development is mindful of coherence among the various measures of California’s accountability system including the Local and State Indicators in the Dashboard. COEs are available to assist LEAs in the identification and development of metrics that are accessible by all stakeholders and effectively measure the impact of LCAP actions. In the interest of continuous improvement, COEs can assist LEAs in analyzing metric data to inform progress towards achieving their goals.



“If you can’t measure it,
you can’t improve it.”

– Peter Drucker,
Management Consultant,
Educator, and Author

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Ensuring Equity by Increasing or Improving Services

LEAs develop actions that increase or improve services to students identified in the LCFF as unduplicated pupils through a comprehensive needs assessment that identifies and considers the specific needs, conditions, and circumstances of each identified student group within the LEA in relation to the identified goal. COE support to LEAs in meeting this requirement is centered on the belief that when the needs of the identified students are a forethought and not an afterthought in designing actions, the explanation of how they are principally directed and effective will be evident and easy to describe.

The COE's role in supporting LEAs to address the requirement to increase or improve services focuses on understanding the unique needs of each of their unduplicated pupil groups and the design of actions that increase the quality or quantity of services to address those needs. COEs support LEAs to engage in a

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meaningful process that deepens their understanding of the needs, conditions, and circumstances of their English learners, low-income, and foster youth within their local context so they are well positioned to design specific actions that intentionally support the unique needs of each of these student groups. When an action clearly indicates how the needs, conditions, or circumstances of the unduplicated students were considered, what and for whom will be increased or improved, and how it will support improved performance for the specific student group, LEAs are prepared to write a description demonstrating how it increases or improves services. When there is clarity in the intentionality of actions that increase or improve

services for unduplicated pupils, the descriptions explain how the LEA's services overall are increased or improved through actions in the LCAP targeted to a specific unduplicated student group, schoolwide or on a districtwide basis.

COEs support LEAs in understanding their obligation to increase or improve services in proportion to the funds allocated based on the number and concentration of unduplicated pupils. COEs also support LEAs in understanding the connection between the actions to increase or improve services, the *Expenditure Tables*, and the *Budget Overview for Parents*.

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Greater Transparency with Expenditure Tables

COE technical assistance to LEAs gives emphasis to the accurate completion of the *Expenditure Tables*, an important new element in the LCAP. In moving away from the budget reference sections embedded within each action, the intent of the new *Expenditure Tables* is to provide greater transparency for stakeholders by allowing LEAs to group all expenditures together in a logical sequence with pertinent action descriptions.

COEs are encouraged to embrace the new trend of broad alignment between the budget and LCAP rather than focus on the identification of individual actions in the budget. Yet, the need for precise alignment between the *Expenditure Tables* and *Budget Overview for Parents* is critical since they are separate documents with different data-entry points. In order to achieve the objective of a coherent LCAP that completely describes local wisdom, the fiscal data must be accurate, demonstrative of the budget, and tied to its corresponding actions and funding sources. While it may not be realistic for an LEA to include every expenditure in the LCAP, actions can certainly be accurately and generally



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representative of each budget expenditure. Even so, approaching COE technical assistance and the LCAP review with flexibility encourages subsidiarity, a key tenet of the LCFF. COE technical assistance to LEAs is mindful of the tension generated by the desire to create an LCAP that is succinct while striving to maintain a desirable level of transparency by providing sufficient detail.

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Greater Accessibility to the LCAP

The *Budget Overview for Parents* and the *Plan Summary* connect the individual sections of the plan into a coherent story. The objective of the *Budget Overview* is to draw parents and other stakeholders into the LCAP using a concise format. Primarily a fiscal document, the *Budget Overview* is a key component in aligning the LCAP and the adopted budget. The *Budget Overview* plays a pivotal role as the most visible element of the LCAP's fiscal components. COE technical assistance to LEAs supports the precise alignment of figures reported in the *Budget Overview* to the adopted budget.

In a snapshot, the *Budget Overview for Parents* provides stakeholders with insight into the LEA's view of the LCAP. LEAs that reflect the majority of their general budget within the LCAP may be striving to leverage the LCAP as a comprehensive plan or send the message to stakeholders that they are genuine in their efforts to be transparent. COE assistance to LEAs not only supports the accurate completion of the *Budget Overview*

for Parents and precise alignment to the budget and LCAP, but also encourages fiscal transparency to demonstrate its commitment to all students, including its highest needs students.

The *Plan Summary* follows the *Budget Overview* with sufficient detail to provide a clear picture of the entire LCAP. It delivers the opportunity to highlight what the local community believes to be the LEA's greatest successes. It outlines the needs of the local context and underscores the LEA's theory of action to address its needs.

To position the LCAP within a coherent accountability system, LEAs communicate the successes and needs of the community in alignment with the LEA's Dashboard performance. The *Plan Summary* reflects the collaborative development of the LCAP with stakeholders including the specific influencers on its design. The *Plan Summary* gives transparency to the LEA's continuous improvement journey. COEs serve as thought partners as LEAs consider how to communicate the through line in their LCAP effectively using language that is easy for their stakeholders to understand.



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Resources

The California State Board-Adopted LCAP Template, including full instructions, is located on the California Department of Education website. To access the template and instructions, visit <https://cde.ca.gov/re/lc>.

For information and assistance regarding LCAP development, contact your local County Offices of Education. To obtain COE contact information or link to a COE website, visit <https://ccsesa.org/regions/>.

Additional resources to support LCAP development:

California Department of Education website. To access these resources, visit <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lc/planninglcapschoolplan.asp>.

California Collaborative for Educational Excellence website. To access these resources, visit <https://ccee-ca.org/resource-collection.asp>.

DRAFT 02/21/20

