

## **West Contra Costa Unified School District**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Local Control Funding Formula / Local Control Accountability Plan / District's Strategic Plan**

##### **Q. What is the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)?**

**A:** The Local Control Funding Formula represents the most significant change in California's funding system for K-12 schools in four decades. It is the central feature of landmark legislation—Assembly Bill 97—currently being implemented in every California school district. It will affect every school in the state, including charter schools. One goal of the new law is to improve academic outcomes by providing more money to school districts that serve high-needs students. Another goal is to give local school districts more authority to decide how to spend education dollars, and hold them accountable for getting results.

##### **Q. What is the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)?**

The LCAP is an important component of the LCFF. Under the LCFF all school districts and charter schools are required to prepare an LCAP, which describes how they intend to meet annual goals for all pupils, with specific activities to address state and local priorities. Like all other districts in the state, the West Contra Costa Unified School Board has to adopt an LCAP on or before July 1, 2014.

##### **Q. What is District's Strategic Plan**

**A.** After 10 months of community meetings, focus groups and one-on-one interviews and plan development, the Board of Education accepted the [2014-2019 Strategic Plan](#) report which includes six overarching strategies, 35 objectives and 134 tactics. The plan is now being combined with the Local Control Accountability Plan requirements so that the Board can adopt Strategic Plan that includes the required elements of the LCAP.

##### **Q. When did the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) start?**

**A:** The transition to the LCFF began with the current school year, 2013-14, and will be phased in gradually. Based on revenue projections, districts will reach what is called "full funding" in eight years—in 2020-21. Until full funding is reached, each year districts will get additional funds based on student attendance and the percentage of a district's children who are low-income, English learners, and foster youth. This projection assumes that the state's economy will improve each year at a healthy rate. If the economy falters, it could take longer to reach full funding. If the state's recovery accelerates, it could be sooner.

##### **Q. How will state funds be allocated to districts?**

**A:** Funding will go to districts rather than individual schools. Most of the funds will consist of a *base grant* that districts will receive for every student in attendance. The base grant will be higher for younger elementary school students and highest for high school students. The base grant—when full funding is achieved—will be \$7,675 for students in grades K-3, \$7,056 for students in grades 4-6, \$7,266 for students in grades 7-8, and \$8,638 for students in grades 9-12.

These figures include a cost-of-living adjustment for 2013-14. The base grants will be adjusted upward each year to reflect cost-of-living increases. Districts will also receive a *supplemental grant* based on the number of high-needs students enrolled in the district. Those with more than 55% high-needs students will get even more funds through what are called *concentration grants*. The new law effectively eliminates 32 “categorical” programs—dedicated funding for everything from summer school and school counselors to building maintenance and principal training—that for decades were intended to serve specific needs. Instead, the categorical funds have been folded into the grant districts will get. Districts will have the option to provide the services funded by categorical funds, but they won’t be required to do so.

**Q. How much in additional funding will districts get based on their enrollments of low-income students, English learners, and foster children?**

**A.** Once full funding is achieved in 2020-21, each district will get a *supplemental grant* of 20% of the base grant for every English learner, foster youth, and low-income student.

If a student is in more than one of these categories—if he or she is both a low income student and an English learner, for example—districts will still receive only one supplemental grant of 20 percent for that student. The new system also recognizes that districts with large numbers of high-needs students face extra challenges and costs. So if more than 55% of a district’s students fall into the high-needs category, the district qualifies for an additional *concentration grant* for each high-needs student over the 55% threshold. In West Contra Costa 72% of our students fall into one of the high-needs category.

**Q. So will WCCUSD get more money?**

**A.** As a result of an improving state economy and funds generated by Proposition 30 approved by voters in 2012, West Contra Costa Unified should receive significantly more money over the next eight years than we are currently receiving. During the 2013-14 school year, WCCUSD received approximately \$6.5 million more than we would have under the old formula. When the formula is fully funded, West Contra Costa could receive as much as \$100 million more than we would have under the old formula.

**Q. What about funding for special education students?**

**A.** The new formula makes no changes in how special education is currently funded. A dozen other programs, including child nutrition, foster youth services, and after-school education funded by Proposition 49, a voter-approved initiative, will also continue as before.

**Q. Does a district have to spend the additional funds it will receive on low income and other high-needs students?**

**A.** The new law gives districts flexibility to spend their base grants as they choose. But districts must use the additional state funds—the supplemental and concentration grants—to “increase or improve services” for low-income students, English learners and foster children “*in proportion* to the increase in funds” they receive for these students.

**Q. How will districts be held accountable for how they spend state funds?**

**A.** The new law requires that information on how funds are spent be provided in a transparent way to the public. By July 1 2014, each school board must adopt a Local

Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) that sets out its goals and priorities, with special attention to high-needs students bringing additional funds to the district as a result of the law. The district must adopt a three-year plan and update it annually. The law requires that spending be aligned with eight state priority areas, which include test scores, graduation rates, the Common Core State Standards, measures of career and college readiness, parent involvement, school climate, and student engagement. County offices of education will review districts' accountability plans and approve them when appropriate.

**Q. How does the Strategic Plan fit in with the Local Control Accountability Plan?**

**A.** The six overall strategies of the [Strategic Plan](#) will provide the organizing framework for district planning. These strategies will be aligned with the required eight state priorities in the LCAP. The goals that have emerged as the strategic plan objectives have been consolidated with the requirements of the LCAP will guide the district in developing the measures and targets as well as the reporting framework for the new plan.

**Q. How are parents involved in the development of the Strategic/LCAP effort?**

**A.** The law requires that a committee of parents review and advise the Board on the draft Strategic/LCAP plan. Parents can volunteer for that committee through any of the principals at the school. The committee will begin meeting in late March.

**Q. Will there be consequences for school districts that do not improve sufficiently?**

**A.** Instead of the punishment-oriented approach of the current accountability system, the thrust of the new system is to provide support to schools and school districts that fail to show improvement. The state will establish a new entity—the California Collaborative on Educational Excellence—to help school districts improve. School districts will have to show progress in the state's priority areas. The State Board of Education will draw up evaluation guidelines or “rubrics” that districts will use to assess their strengths and weaknesses. County offices of education will use a “support rubric” to determine if a district, or even one of 12 student sub-groups, has failed to improve in any one priority area. In that case, the county office of education would be required to provide some form of support, such as assigning a team of experts to help the district. In cases of “persistently failing” school districts, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, with the approval of the State Board, can intervene directly, and even place the district under supervision of a state trustee or administrator.