

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
*Office of the Superintendent*

**Friday Memo**  
**November 8, 2019**

**Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy**

November 8 & 9: TEDx Talks, DeAnza Theater, 7:00 PM  
November 11: Veterans Day Holiday, Schools and Offices Closed  
November 12: Agenda Setting, Superintendent's Office, 4:30 PM  
November 12: DLCAP Meeting, Kennedy Library, 6:30 PM  
November 14: Governance Committee, Alvarado, 6:00 PM  
November 14: Safety Committee Meeting, Alvarado, 6:00 PM  
November 14 & 15: *A Wrinkle in Time*, Hercules High Theater, 7:00 PM  
November 19: AASAT Meeting, DeJean Library, 6:00 PM  
November 20: Board of Education, DeJean, 6:30 PM  
November 22: Richmond High School Groundbreaking, Richmond High School, 10 AM  
November 22: Minimum Day All Schools  
November 25-29: No School  
November 28-29: Thanksgiving Holidays

**Upcoming Agenda Items November 20 - Matthew Duffy**

Budget Update  
Charter School Petition Hearings  
CSO / SRO Update  
FSCS Update

**Grant Submitted to the Hewlett Foundation to support Learner Centered Education and Deeper Learning - Matthew Duffy**

Last Friday, the district submitted a significant grant application to the Hewlett Foundation. The foundation invited us to a convening in August to learn more and subsequently awarded us a planning grant. Our grant application aims to build three significant learner centered models of education, network many more promising schools together, provide some district infrastructure and support some of the district's equity to make sure all learners benefit. I ask you to please take the time to read the grant attached. Whether we get it or not, I believe it exemplifies a powerful vision for the learning experience we want all students to have each and every day. And it is work that we will continue to do. Also, the Ed Fund played a significant part in this project, and they are becoming a stronger partner in our work.

**"Live" Community Budget Event, December 9, 2019 - Matt Duffy and Tony Wold**

Engaging with all stakeholders regarding the state of the District Budget and receiving meaningful input will help the Board to make decisions on priorities moving forward toward mitigating the \$47.8 million in budget reductions necessary for the 2020-2021 school year. As we have been working with our stakeholders groups and providing them detailed information on the non-salary components

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
***Office of the Superintendent***

of the budget, the feedback has been that the information is overwhelming and there has been requests for clarity and ways to provide useful feedback. To move forward, we have identified an opportunity to hold a major community event regarding the budget which will culminate with the release of a survey to all stakeholders to obtain meaningful prioritization input to bring back to the Board in January for evaluation and implementation.

On Monday, December 9, Superintendent Duffy and Dr. Wold will host a live event across the district. The format will include a live broadcast and/or live stream of a budget presentation to audiences at a school in each of our high school families. The night will be a two-hour event with a 45-minute presentation of the story, one hour of questions and answers, and then the release of a budget survey, which is currently being developed.

Cabinet members and District staff will be facilitators at each of the satellite sites during the event and will relay questions to the moderator at the main site where Dr. Wold and Superintendent Duffy will respond to the questions during the live event.

The timeline for events with the Board is as follows:

- November 20th - presentation on management staffing (still in progress and may not be completed until time of meeting)
- December 9th - live budget event
- December 11th - First interim report which will show the updated budget and where we are now
- January - presentation of first round of possible areas of reduction and survey results. Closed session discussion on management staffing and beginning of conversations on priorities for reduction to begin to come forward for approval each meeting as of February.

**Bond Ratings - S & P Surveillance -Tony Wold**

The District was informed that Standard and Poors will be doing a review of the District's outstanding Bond issuances and current rating as part of their yearly surveillance process. This is a very normal process and was expected. Our Financial Advisor, KNN and the Business Services Office will be participating in this review next week. The timing of this review is actually very beneficial to the District and allows us to have validation of our ratings before any issuances are considered and have market perspective prior to the consideration of any new bond possibilities. While it is likely that we may see a change to a negative outlook, we believe that it is possible that the underlying ratings will remain the same as presented by KNN at the last board meeting. As soon as we receive more information we will share it with the board.

**Bond Measure Discussion - Marcus Walton**

On Wednesday, Board members received the results of the survey conducted by Godbe Research to determine voter support for bond and parcel tax measures in 2020. The results were optimistic for the

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
***Office of the Superintendent***

bond item, with nearly 58% support in a March election and more than 60% in November. This exceeds the 55% needed to pass the measure.

While the parcel tax had nearly 56% support for a March ballot measure and nearly 57% in November, 2/3rds of voters must approve it for passage.

While time is short for an independent campaign, the results of the survey show a good chance for a new bond measure to pass in March without an independent campaign. There is time for an independent campaign to shore up support for a parcel tax before the November election.

While a new bond is necessary in order to address the priorities established in the Facilities Master Plan, a parcel tax will be needed to restore the people and programs that serve students after \$48 million in cuts are identified and implemented.

Staff will recommend going forward with a bond measure in the March election and moving forward with the parcel tax in November.

A resolution regarding the bond measure will be brought before the Board at the November 20 meeting. The parcel tax recommendation will be brought back in the summer.

**Lead Sample Reports from EBMUD - Marcus Walton**

Last month, 14 district schools had water fixtures tested for lead through [EBMUD's testing program](#). The first set of results (for Fairmont, Grant, and West County Mandarin School) were returned this week.

The District is required to report any tested samples that reveal lead levels that are above 5 parts per billion (ppb). One ppb is equivalent to about one drop in an Olympic-sized swimming pool. If any readings are above 15 ppb, the District could be required to continue monitoring the lead levels, treat the water and pipes, educate the public and/or replace the water lines. This is [the same level of lead that requires action if found in your home](#).

The results indicated some fixtures exceeded allowable levels.

At [Fairmont](#), eight fixtures were at or above the 4.0 ppb level, and four were at or above 15 ppb.

At [Grant](#), one fixture tested at 14 ppb.

At [West County Mandarin](#), one fixture tested at 5.2 ppb, one at 11 ppb, and 13 ppb.

All fixtures at or above 4.0 ppb have been taken out of service and will be replaced and retested before being put back into operation.

Letters announcing the results and explaining the removal and replacement of fixtures have been shared with each of the school communities. Full results of the testing, including those from last year, are at [www.wccusd.net/waterquality](http://www.wccusd.net/waterquality).

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
*Office of the Superintendent*

**Staff Attendance - Marci Williams**

During the Roadmap 2.0 presentation at the Board meeting on Wednesday there was information regarding staff attendance. Our overall yearly average staff attendance for both certificated and classified is less than ideal to support the educational goals for our students. In order to support better attendance the District provided a comprehensive training along with supporting documentation for our administrators in August 2019. This training included the necessary conversation material, letter templates and supporting documentation needed to address serious illness or injuries under FMLA and/or Reasonable Accommodations under the ADA and FEHA. If these conversations with our staff rule out the need for these State and Federal programs then the progressive disciplinary process can begin with the employee if attendance does not immediately show improvement. Human Resources has already seen a positive response from this presentation. Many administrators have reached out to us for additional support regarding staff attendance. We will continue the conversation and training with our managers and administrators to keep the focus on regular and reliable attendance for all staff.

**Media Stories of Interest - Marcus Walton**

The following news stories may be of interest. Copies of the articles are attached.

California schools closed for an unprecedented number of days due to fire, power outages -  
<https://edsources.org/2019/california-schools-closed-for-unprecedented-number-of-days-due-to-fire-power-outages/619488>

Kennedy High finally gets by rival in wild finish -  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/sports/article/Kennedy-High-finally-gets-by-rival-in-wild-finish-14809656.php>

Richmond Promise Scholar spotlight: Jada Saechao -  
<https://richmondstandard.com/richmond/2019/11/03/richmond-promise-scholar-spotlight-jada-saechao/>

As California spends billions on high-needs students, calls grow for more oversight -  
<https://calmatters.org/education/2019/11/california-school-funding-oversight-audit-teachers-lcff/>

State audit finds education money not serving high-needs students, calls for changes in funding law -  
<https://edsources.org/2019/state-audit-finds-education-money-not-serving-high-needs-students-calls-for-changes-in-funding-law/619504>



## **Learning Every Day (LED): Building a Learner-Centered District**

### **Background**

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) is an economically and ethnically diverse district in the San Francisco Bay Area serving the cities of Richmond, El Cerrito, San Pablo, Pinole, Hercules, and unincorporated areas of Bayview, Montalvin Manor, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, North Richmond and Tara Hills. WCCUSD enrolled 28,121 students in the 2018-19 school year and has 54 schools and 3,356 full and part-time staff.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of WCCUSD's student population qualifies as low-income, which means they receive free or reduced-price meals (FRPM). WCCUSD is the third largest district in Contra Costa County and serves the highest percentage of low-income students in the county. WCCUSD also serves 137 foster youth and 755 homeless children. Close to one in three students (32%) are English Learners (EL), exceeding the state's rate of 21%. Most English Learners (78%) are native Spanish speakers, with at least 46 other non-English languages represented.

The District's recent successes include Middle College High School and Kensington Elementary School receiving a California Distinguished School Award. US News & World Report named Middle College one of the nation's best schools. We are home to 13 California Gold Ribbon Schools. Over the past two years, nine WCCUSD teachers won West Contra Costa Public Education Fund's Teaching Excellence Awards. We are also home to numerous Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year finalists and winners. The district has added new models and programs over the past three years, including Mandarin and Spanish immersion, K-8 schools, Internationals programs and additional career pathways.

WCCUSD also faces many challenges: poor teacher retention, declining enrollment, a fiscal deficit, chronic performance gaps among African American and Latino students, a set of chronically underperforming schools, and stagnant/minimally incremental scores on the SBAC English Language Arts and Math assessments (California's standardized exams).

### **Our Story**

The West Contra Costa Unified School district is in an incredible period of inflection. For nearly two decades following the district's bankruptcy and subsequent state receivership, strict state budget controls and oversight created a district culture driven by compliance and a narrow definition of student outcomes based on test scores and bottom lines. It was a time of central office-driven policies, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), and new standards with proscribed "teacher-proof" educational models in hopes of higher test scores. This command model took

agency away from our local school leaders, particularly at our Title 1 schools, and all but shut out student voice from our classrooms, and parent and community partners from our schools.

In 2015, WCCUSD began a search for a new superintendent for the first time in over a decade. The new leader's mandate was clear - WCCUSD needed to improve the culture of our schools and the quality of instruction in our classrooms. In Fall 2016, Matthew Duffy, a visionary new leader was selected as Superintendent. In his first year, he conducted an extensive yearlong listening tour including town halls, community meetings, stakeholder interviews, and classroom visits. What he heard and saw was:

- Innovative voices and practices were stifled. One example included a cohort of teachers and principals who were implementing the Teachers College Readers Writers Workshop model in "secret" to avoid punitive action or pushback from the central office (Teachers College is now the district's ELA model).
- There was widespread fear of retaliation from speaking your mind about what students and school communities needed.
- The community felt, which was affirmed by data, that we lacked and could not retain experienced teachers.
- Teachers were driving lessons based in rote learning with little inquiry or student voice.
- Schools were dependent on the district office for their vision.

Additionally, the early years of observation further reinforced the notion that Deeper Learning has not taken root in communities farthest from opportunity. Schools in wealthy areas find ways for students to participate in inquiry-based projects, take part in experiential learning and allow for greater student voice. Conversely, schools with "low achieving" learners (usually poor, students of color) tend to focus on more remediation, see high incidences of teacher-directed lessons, isolated interventions and less opportunity for student voice and choice in their learning.

From these learnings, Superintendent Duffy created an ambitious plan called "Roadmap 2.0," which centered around students, focused on reimagining our schools and the student-learning experience. This plan is rooted in our communities call for social justice, to apply our educational mission equitably to improve outcomes for students farthest from opportunity. As Paulo Friere stated, "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

With this in mind, our Roadmap charted a course to disrupt long-standing structures in our district and shifted our focus to three Deeper Learning core values: that the learning experience should be Challenging, Engaging and Empowering. This Deeper Learning framework of Challenging, Engaging, and Empowering is coupled with our guiding principles. Those guiding principles are:

1. **Learner-Centered:** Create the conditions for learning, so that educational experiences for students and adults foster deeper learning and build the lifelong skills of the graduate profile.
2. **Student Voice:** Dedicate time and energy to listening to our students and be ready to act to make changes based upon what they recommend.

3. **Resource Smart and System-Aligned:** Resources are strategically aligned to goals. Spending is disciplined.
4. **Data-Informed:** Foster a culture of data where we ask questions and have the right tools to answer those questions.
5. **Whole System Agency and Accountability:** Cultivate agency and accountability among the practitioners around vision, strategies, ownership and results.

Together, the Deeper Learning frame and the guiding principles give the district a powerful opportunity to transform our educational system to allow each student to discover and build their competencies outlined in the district Graduate Profile (see WCCUSD Roadmap).

Over the past three years, the district has worked to empower the voices of teachers and leaders and encouraged them to make smart and creative decisions that best fit the needs of their communities. We have seen growth in many areas: schools have found new and creative ways to add more professional learning to their calendars in the face of a fairly restrictive teacher contract. Schools have strengthened their school-based Theories of Actions, being more aligned together as a staff around what they want to be true for students and adults. More communities of practice have been sparked, established by individual schools, school district initiatives and outside partners, all allowing teachers and leaders to come together more frequently to share their learning. Principal meetings have shifted back to the classrooms, observing and debriefing classroom visits, and discussing problems of practice together.

Senior leadership has been particularly inspired by its participation in the Deeper Learning Dozen, a community of practice dedicated to the exploration of Deeper Learning at the system level led by Harvard scholar Jal Mehta. We have been motivated by the core tenets of this working group: student learning and adult learning are symmetrical, leadership accelerates emergence, and (in)equity is structural. We have slowly started to share these concepts with the wider leadership group in the district.

We have seen emerging practices in student-centered learning spring up all across the district. Some of these student-centered learning practices are new Student-Led Conference models, other schools are working through fully flexible learning environments, and some are pushing Senior Defenses. We have established an IB program and two International Academies. All of these programs are designed around inquiry with the learner at the center.

We created a Kennedy Family strategy for nine schools in a neighborhood filled with trauma, violence, a patchwork of social supports and struggling schools. This plan included explicit support from Partners in School Innovation, a student-sports league focused on strengthening neighborhood and community, stronger STEM resources and more. We have opened two International Schools for our growing, vulnerable newcomer population. These supports, along with a new Director of African American Student Achievement, intensified work around PBIS and Positive School Climate aim to reduce discipline disproportionality and advance learning for those farthest from opportunity.

In working to think differently about instructional practice, teachers and leaders in our district have called for stronger learner-centered models to strengthen Deeper Learning in the

classroom. We slowly piloted Lucy Caulkins Units of Study, a workshop model, in many schools before it became district-wide curriculum. Our math team has focused on “number talks” to allow teachers and students to interact more deeply around numbers - talking out their thinking together. We have used Lesson Study in areas of the district to study in depth what we are doing in math classrooms, to examine our teaching and examine what the learner is doing in the classroom. We have introduced the idea of “Conditions of Learning” to lay out what needs to be in place for a learner to be successful-whether that is a student or an adult, and we have explored key questions such as what is it that really enables people to be in a learning space and how can we make sure we create those spaces for our adults and children?

We have iterated and prototyped around a generalized set of values and core principles but have not yet been definitive in exactly what it means to be “learner-centered” nor created a playbook for facilitating Deeper Learning. Our task now is to create coherence and systematize where we can. Our community intuitively knows that the current model is not working. And in some ways they have embraced the changes we have made. In other ways, they have not, demanding strict accountability and higher test scores without a more nuanced examination of our learning environments and experiences.

Despite challenges, we believe we have the opportunity to solidify our “system” in a small number of schools while continuing to quickly widen that circle. We believe we can create three proof points in three schools already on their way. We also know there is a second set of schools that have an increasing number of emerging practices that can be linked together for learning. Examples of these emerging practices are Student-Led Conferences, portfolio defenses, flexible classrooms space and project-based learning. While we believe that true equity happens in the classrooms themselves, we have a number of district-wide resources for equitable outcomes that need to be continually strengthened and we propose support for those in this grant.

**Mission, Vision, and Goals**

We envision a district where all schools embrace teaching and learning through our Deeper Learning filter of Challenging, Engaging and Empowering student-learning experiences. With our stakeholders, we have outlined the “ideal” learning experience for students and use this frame to guide us at the classroom level. These learning experiences are built on a traditional structure of planning, delivery and assessment.

THE WCCUSD IDEAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS		
...is Well Planned	...is Well Delivered	...is Well Assessed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creates an inquiry- driven, standards-based unit with a clear, final outcome and ongoing formative assessments.</li> <li>● Includes both content and language objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Engages ALL students through culturally responsive, relevant, real world connections to students’ lived experience.</b></li> <li>● <b>Empowers ALL students through opportunities for voice and choice.</b></li> <li>● <b>Challenges ALL students through</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aligns to content area standards.</li> <li>● Includes formative, summative, and regular progress monitoring.</li> <li>● Articulates criteria for mastery and gives timely</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Includes daily reading, writing and speaking opportunities.</li> <li>● Develops key questions for students and opportunities to read and write.</li> <li>● Accounts for classroom culture and positive relationships.</li> </ul>	<p><b>opportunities to ask questions, solve problems, think critically, read complex text and write critically.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitates varied instructional design such as mini-lessons, small and large group instruction, technology-based, workshop and experiential learning.</li> <li>● <u><i>Radiates high expectations and that students have unique gifts and abilities to master those expectations.</i></u></li> </ul>	<p>and clear feedback to students against a standard and an exemplar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Informs Tier I instruction and leads to effective Tier II/Tier III academic, and social and emotional interventions.</li> </ul>
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*Influenced by WCCUSD Community, Learning that Lasts by R. Berger & Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain by Z. Hammond*

While 74% of the students in our district are “supplemental” students and the majority of our community are those who the education system has not served, it is essential for us to continue to name our commitment to equity. The last bullet in our “ideal learning experience” is an equity statement and it is our way of saying that we believe in a vision for all of our students, where they can and will learn, and collectively, we will make that happen for them.

In our vision, you see and hear the adults less and see, hear, and “feel” the students more. Students in our vision experiences a day, regardless of background, where they are very motivated to be in school and experience caring adults who know their passions and interests and are fully supporting them to master content and competencies. They feel free in their school, able to move more flexibly through their learning experience with choice and empowerment over how they do some of their work. They are not allowed to fail, as they know clearly, what they need to master and they are sufficiently supported to meet their goals. They feel challenged and pushed and know the challenge and the push are for their growth.

In our vision, teachers have the time they need to design and deliver inquiry-based lessons that allow learners to “go deep” and work toward an enriching and empowering final product. Teachers are not rushing to cover content and moving to the next standard even if many students did not fully comprehend. Teachers are not planning activities to “do” in the classroom but are working toward a “deeper learning” end to student learning.

All of our schools have begun to implement some forms of this vision with over a dozen seeing school-wide practices that seek to encourage student voice, choice, and lift up their unique strengths take hold. These practices include:

Parent & Family Engagement:

Montalvin Manor K-8 has begun to foster student voice through the implementation of student-led parent conferences. In this process, students cultivate their work and then explain their progress, reflecting on accomplishments, and setting short- and long-term goals with their parent and teacher. This practice has transformed parent engagement at the school with 100% of families participating.

Advisory/Post-Secondary Planning:

De Anza High School is in the process of creating a model advisory period, which includes college advising best practices. Through key partnerships with community-based organizations, De Anza seniors are provided with a series of workshops where each student is given the space

to explore college opportunities, complete applications and financial aid and scholarship forms. Further, students are supported in the review of financial aid awards and scholarships and receive college enrollment support. Through this work, De Anza saw the district's largest gains in A-G completion, increasing the percentage of students eligible from 27% in 2016 to 53.8% in 2018.

### One Student at a Time:

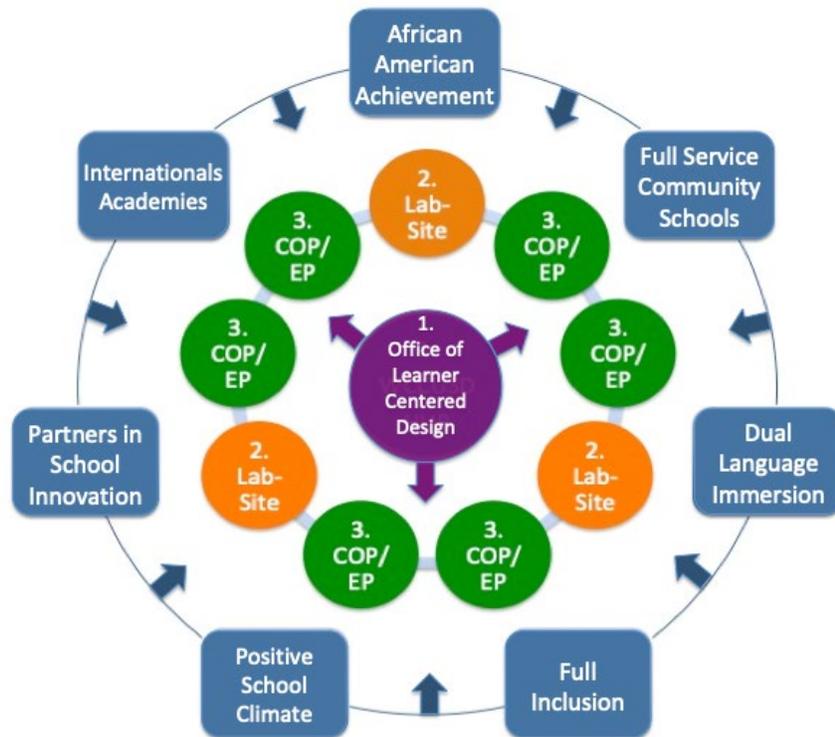
Helms Middle School and Richmond High School recently opened International Academies for the district's newcomer students. The Internationals Academy (IA) model embodies the best of student-centered practice, providing individualized educational and social-emotional interventions for those who need additional support. IA model includes after-school tutoring, social and cultural groups and clubs. Supported by flexible grouping for all grade levels, students have access to technology-assisted programs and resources, summer school enrichment programs, and programs for students with special needs. Based on early success from Richmond High School where 93% of IA students met A-G requirements, we anticipate these programs becoming "hub" sites for all newcomers in the district. Beyond the newcomer population, IA provides replicable practices for WCCUSD.

Our system level goals over the next 36-48 months that we will use to monitor progress on achieving our vision is to see improvement in:

- Grade 3 reading
- EL reclassification
- Teacher retention and teacher absenteeism
- A-G completion
- African American math achievement
- Parent/family satisfaction

To build this vision, we will create three prototypes or "Lab-Sites" while networking more schools with emerging practices together to allow new exemplars of teacher practices. Cumulatively hundreds of teachers will be networked together to hone new approaches to instructional improvement. To be specific, our grant proposes the following components:

1. Three proof point Lab-Sites that are full schools dedicated to learner-centered education.
2. One Learner-Centered Network that brings together many schools engaged in learner-centered models.
3. An Office of Learner-Centered Design that facilitates the network, supports the lab schools in design and practice and builds the district-wide tools needed to operationalize the vision.
4. Further investment in District Equity Partnerships & Initiatives that bolster learner-centered education for those farthest from opportunity in both Lab school and the Learner-Centered Network.



### 1. Lab-Sites

To cultivate and spread these practices, we seek to create three prototypes or “Lab-Sites” by accelerating our most developed school sites where significant school-wide practices are taking root. Schools in this category will be invited to apply to become a Lab-Site and if accepted, will participate in a series of “design days” (co-facilitated by a partner organization) in the spring of the 2020-2021 school year. We will ask schools to develop plans that continue to reimagine their school with the student at the center.

To be considered a Lab-Site, schools must demonstrate clear evidence of school-wide practices that align with the district’s guiding principles. Again, those principles are:

1. Learner-centered: Create the conditions for learning, so that educational experiences for students and adults foster deeper learning and build the lifelong skills of the graduate profile.
2. Student voice: Dedicate time and energy to listening to our students and be ready to act to make changes based on what they recommend.
3. Resource smart and system-aligned: Resources are strategically aligned to goals. Spending is disciplined.
4. Data-informed: Foster a culture of data where we ask questions and have the right tools to answer those questions.
5. Whole system agency and accountability: Cultivate agency and accountability among the practitioners around vision, strategies, ownership and results.

Additionally, Lab-Sites will need to show classroom evidence of Deeper Learning where students’ learning experiences are Challenging, Engaging and Empowering.

Based on this criteria, (1) Elementary, (1) Middle School, (1) High School will receive intensive professional development to become demonstration sites for the rest of the district and larger education community. Teachers at these schools will receive in-classroom staff development to accelerate their journey towards becoming laboratories that illustrate best practices in deeper

learning. The goal of this model is to benefit the greater good of WCCUSD schools through the democratizing of knowledge by providing cross-site professional development.

To inspire school agency and innovation, each Lab-Site will receive (1) 1.0FTE Coach, funding to participate in a site-based Community of Practice, eligibility to visit other schools (locally, regionally, state-wide, nationally), the ability to directly engage with the cabinet about what systems changes their school needs (Schedule, Instructional Days, Money, Time), and autonomy over their school. In addition, we will look to these school sites to provide critical input to the district as to needed supports and policy recommendations to scale practices to other schools. Each Lab-Site will receive \$100,000 to facilitate its school's implementation of its practice.

## 2. Emerging Practices Communities of Practice (Learner-Centered Network)

In addition to the Lab-Site schools, all schools who have an established set of emerging practices will be invited into our Emerging Practices COP. The short-term goal is to create a network of schools/teachers within WCCUSD who are committed to building out learner-centered practices and provide WCCUSD with the processes to implement our vision for learner-centered schools throughout the district.

Ultimately, we want to showcase our Lab-Sites and COP across our district in order to see the type of quick and widespread adoption that we saw with our Teachers College model. We see all of these schools as places any teacher or leaders can visit to understand and learn about building student-centered experiences.

As we learned with Teachers College, we know growth will be organic and non-linear, but our goal is to start with approximately six to eight schools in year 1 (2020-2021) and add six to eight schools each year with the goal of reaching half of the district's schools in three years. Each year we will grow, deepen and spread our learner-centered work through our COP. At the end of three years, our COP will have gone through a process of identifying and building out emerging practices within their schools. Each of the school sites will be eligible to visit Lab-Sites and other schools in the COP to deepen their learning. Each school in the COP will receive \$50,000 to facilitate its school's implementation of its practice.

It will be the work of the District to institutionalize these practices, supported by data and aligned by resources to support the remaining schools to adopt learner-centered practices.

## 3. WCCUSD Office of Learner-Centered Design (OLCD)

To create this space, we will create a new Office of Learner-Centered Design (OLCD) within the Department of Teaching, Learning & Leading. When we envisioned the OLCD, we wanted to transform the district/school-site relationship in a way that would have schools raising their hands to participate. Our vision is to provide an authentic and meaningful opportunity for teacher leaders and students to work alongside their site coaches and OLCD staff who have a vested interest in supporting and implementing their learner-centered practices. Furthermore, partnering with OLCD will allow for students and teachers to have agency and voice in designing solutions that impact them the most.

The Office of Learner-Centered Design, staffed by two positions (Director and Coordinator), will support the superintendent and district in the continued transition of WCCUSD in becoming learner-centered and act as a champion of the vision. The Office will support the lab schools in design and practice, facilitate the network, and build the district-wide tools needed to

operationalize the vision.

1. **Lab School Support.** Work intensively with Lab-Sites to:
  - a. Develop, refine and implement a school-wide set of student-centered learning practices that produce Deeper Learning experiences in the classroom that are Challenging, Engaging, and Empowering.
  - b. Ensure an equity-centered culture through observation and debrief of student learning as well as leverage district and community resources for further support.
  - c. Create and leverage partnerships outside of the school district in order for Lab-Sites to have a multitude of thought partners, resource supports and other school models to use for growth.
  - d. Support three (1.0 FTE) coaches and other district resources working at these school sites to deepen learning and ensure quality supports are being provided.
2. **Network Facilitation.** Lead the Emerging Practices Network through:
  - a. Creating a COP between schools for shared learning, inquiry, problems of practice and networked continuous improvement.
  - b. Supporting individual schools to fully systematized emerging practice among all classrooms at the site.
  - c. Showcasing the emerging practices to other schools and community for continued learning about what learner-centered experiences and Deeper Learning looks like in real time.
3. **Build and source tools and resources.** Operationalize the vision through:
  - a. Determining, through work on the ground and listening to practitioners and students, to develop the right set of tools needed to accelerate the work.
  - b. Build a deeper learning/learner-centered tool kit to provide our Lab-Sites and network of emerging practices with the resources they need to strengthen and deepen their work. (Similar to our work with TC, we created a district tool kit of self assessments, lesson plans, ideological frameworks and professional development systems. An example of this would be Lindsay's Learner Centered Handbook that guides their instructional practice.
4. **Spread learning.** Champion the vision through:
  - a. Consistent communication across the system about effective practices in all of our learner-centered environments with an emphasis on students as the documenters and voices of success.
  - b. Ensuring that any school stuck in chronic underperformance has adequate opportunities to see advanced learner-centered models in action (especially those successfully serving those farthest from opportunity) and to prime those schools for future participation in the Learner Centered Network in Year 2 and 3.
  - c. Staying connected to emerging models and prototypes throughout the region and nation from which WCCUSD schools can learn.
  - d. Enabling the next phase of our strategic plan, Roadmap 3.0, that more thoroughly outlines a district framework, which defines the vision for our district, schools, leaders, teachers, students and community similar to the "Lindsay Strategic Design."

The Office (both leadership positions and coaching) will need to embody the following core competencies of:

- Deeper Learning
- Learner-Centered Design
- Inquiry-Based Units of Study
- Eliciting Student Voice
- Peer-to-Peer Learning
- Community Building
- Group Facilitation
- Innovation & Design (prototyping)
- Theories of Emergence
- Technical vs. Adaptive Change
- Resource and Partnership Management

#### 4. Equity Supports

While we believe that the key to equitable outcomes is a learning experience that is student-centered, we also believe that we must go above and beyond for our students farthest from opportunity. To that end, a number of district equity supports are in place to further ensure deeper learning happens for these students. Our proposal provides each lab site \$50,000 to expand effective equity supports currently in place at these schools. We want incredible attention paid to those students farthest from opportunity to disrupt past results.

Among these equity supports are:

African American Achievement: A Director of African American Achievement (new position) oversees a set of programs in both school and afterschool that range from tutoring to college access.

Positive School Climate Initiative: A district-wide PBIS initiative including trauma-informed practices training as well as targeted on-the-ground support (coaching, community of practice) focused on a group of schools with high disproportionality rates.

Dual Language Immersion: 10 schools support Dual Immersion in some form, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to master two languages as well as give newcomer students another option for success.

Internationals Academy: Dedicated to newcomers at the middle and high school level, this program supports hundreds of newly arrived students with the goal of A-G completion and college readiness.

Full Service Community Schools Initiative: 20 schools are equipped with Full Service Community School coordinators to connect students in need of social, emotional and mental health resources and service providers to enable more readiness for school and wider school success.

Kennedy Family Initiative/Partners in School Innovation: For the highest need (poverty, violence, newcomer, etc.) community in the district and a set of nine schools that annually accounts for close to one third of all teaching vacancies in our 55 schools, this initiative provides additional supports for students and staff in these schools.

Full Inclusion: Non severely handicapped students are fully included in core classrooms to ensure equitable access to academic and social success.

#### **Our Needs**

##### Our Own Models

We need our own “go-to” models and prototypes of student-centered learning and Deeper Learning. We need places in our district that we can visit, revisit and mine for practices and inspiration. It is also our desire to bring the community into our schools to see and experience our emerging practices. For too long, our community has looked outside of the district for

exemplars of excellence. We are arriving at a stage when we can bring people in to see the incredible work being done in our schools. Through the departments of Community Engagement and Communications, and our partner organization the West Contra Costa Public Education Fund (Ed Fund), WCCUSD will engage our broader community in defining and disseminating information on “Student-Centered Learning.” Through this effort, we will build a shared language for student success. Through this campaign, we will:

- a. Bring community into hub-sites and other schools with emerging practices so that they can see and feel the difference we want for our kids and directly hear from students about their experiences.
- b. Empower and engage our school leaders and community - specifically students - to seek and demand deeper learning and student-centered practice.
- c. Become a system that holds our schools accountable for the high quality, effective practices that are student-centered in every school.

Technical Assistance

Looking through the frame of the 6 (7) circle model outlined by the National Equity Project, we will need support both below and above the green line. “Below the Green Line” support will be needed to continue to help staff make the needed cultural adjustments, and “Above the Green Line” supports will be needed to determine the proper tools required to support the work. We intend to contract with experts in the field, including Big Picture Learning and Equitable Learning Environments to develop Lab-Sites and COPs. We believe leadership in our new office will be the bridge to the technical assistance we need.

Risk Assessments

We are at a critical stage in our development as a district and in the learning culture that we want to establish. We are operating around a set of principles and values with a group of schools on the move. We believe additional resources can significantly accelerate our progress toward strong learner-centered experiences for WCCUSD students and families. Every system is in its own unique stage of development. Theories of emergence shed light on how systems authentically grow and develop. WCCUSD is working to knit together a set of emerging practices across our system into a cohesive vision and set of strategies for the future, and we know we will continue to face internal and external challenges.

STRENGTHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Our Roadmap is centered around three Deeper Learning core values-that the learning experience should be Challenging, Engaging and Empowering. Schools are building school- based Theories of Action around this idea. We have a graduate profile that calls out these Deeper Learning competencies and a set of Guiding Principles that call out Learner Centered Education and Student Voice.</li><li>● Leadership (Superintendent, school leaders, lead teachers) who have galvanized the community around a vision for change.</li><li>● Teacher pay raises: WCCUSD has invested heavily in its teachers, making them among the highest paid in the East Bay.</li><li>● Tenure revamped: Tenured teachers no longer have priority to transfer to other schools, giving site leaders greater choice in choosing staff.</li></ul>

- Relationship with Union: WCCUSD has an unprecedented partnership with United Teachers of Richmond.
- We also have many structures in place to get parent feedback from the traditional SSCs and the DLCAP and MDAC committee to more unique structures like an African-American parent advisory system.
- Established Communities of Practice: School leaders and teachers are in the mindset of Deeper Learning in their current work.
- New School Development: The district has established multiple new models of success from a new Mandarin School to new K-8 programs, additional Dual Immersion and Internationals showing the district has the capacity to build and transform.
- Emerging Practices are present across the district.
- We have some schools where exhibitions and presentations of work are taking place (Student-Led Conferences, Portfolio Defenses) and now more frequently with Writers Workshop’s publishing parties as students are pushed to publish, present and explain their work. We do not have a whole district system for this where every student is required to publicly share, explain and defend work to the community.

#### WEAKNESSES

- We currently do not have system-wide tools to further drive Deeper Learning or help us assess where our students (and adults) are in their growth in the Deeper Learning competencies (Graduate Profile).
- While labor unions and the Board of Education are generally behind the concepts of learner-centered education, these groups still sometimes operate in an accountability-first model, which is a singularly linear way to assess progress. As labor relations are fairly positive, we must leverage this relationship to move forward.
- We have a small Youth Commission but have very few district-wide structures in place to support youth voice. While we have used different surveys in the past and have touted youth voice as a key guiding principle for the district, we have few systemic ways in which we promote youth voice and let the youth actively lead district processes.
- Remnants of old WCCUSD culture persist in some district schools/leaders specifically around compliance, retaliation, and adult-centered culture.
- Persistent achievement gaps for students farthest from opportunity specifically African American and Special Education student.
- A set of low-performing schools and high performance schools aligned to community wealth perpetuates beliefs about what makes for effective teaching and learning.
- School board volatility. All board member seats will be up for election in 2020.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- We believe additional external resources can significantly accelerate our progress toward strong learner-centered experiences for our students and families.
- We have external partnerships with Mills Teacher Scholars to help us to continue to build reflective leaders and teachers, Partners in School Innovation to help us think about systems, Internationals to think through newcomers, TC to support student literacy and inquiry, Equal Opportunity Schools to push diversity in access to AP classes, Lindsay Unified and Big Picture Learning to think about learner-centered schools and systems and a host of other supporters.
- CORE District: WCCUSD is strengthening its ability to use data to provide support to schools as part of the CORE collaborative, another external partner.
- New sites, like Wilson with “Flexible Classrooms/Furniture” will reimagine what teaching and learning can look like for our community.

- Opportunity to rebrand our district as a beacon of excellence in the Bay Area and beyond.

## THREATS

- Although strong over the last many years, we face significant new financial challenges that may distract from this work. Distractions could include district staff and board spending time and resources identifying, negotiating and communicating potential cuts, the loss of some key personnel and pressure to spend money to save jobs rather than look at other supports and investments.
- WCCUSD is under community pressure to be data-driven and improve test scores. WCCUSD will need to establish additional metrics/flexibility to measure school growth and success beyond test scores so that Lab-Sites/COPs can take risks.
- We have five cities and seven municipalities, which make creating a cohesive district and an aligned vision challenging. At times, different communities (racial, ethnic, geographic) feel and express being underserved, creating a sense of competition for limited resources and preventing more unity around the district.

## Timeline

Please create a timeline with activities and benchmarks for your plan over the next 36-48 months. Within this timeline, please identify what it is you will learn about your school district and how you will learn this. Please include your driving questions in the timeline and identify how you will share what you are learning with your community and the education field. Be sure to describe what will look different over the course of this time and how you will know it looks different. Describe the learnings and outcomes you expect to see using the following timeframes:

Jan 2020 – June 2020	Summer 2020
<p>Office of Learner Centered Design (OLCD):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deepen district understanding of Learner-Centered/Deeper Learning</li> <li>● Community engagement campaign</li> <li>● Hire Office of Learner-Centered Design Staff: Director &amp; Coordinator</li> <li>● OLCD staff trained, work plans created</li> </ul> <p>Lab-Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Select 3 Lab-Sites</li> <li>● Launch a series of "Design Days" to develop school redesign model.</li> <li>● Identify and contract Lab-Site redesign partner organizations (e.g. BPL, NEP, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>Learner Centered Network (LCN):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify LCN Schools (6-8 Emerging Practice Schools)</li> </ul>	<p>OLCD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Design COP curriculum</li> <li>● Work with Lab-Site leaders on redesign models</li> <li>● Create school project plans</li> <li>● Hire 3 Lab-Site Coaches</li> <li>● Prep for the first LCN Cohort</li> <li>● OLCD to begin building toolkit</li> <li>● OLCD works with district equity programs create structures for Procurement/Contracting</li> </ul> <p>Lab-Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify PD &amp; funding priorities for incentive grants</li> </ul>
August 2020 - June 2021	Summer 2021
<p>OLCD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Begin aligning other PD in district to Learner-Centered. OLCD to work with Lab-Sites to</li> </ul>	<p>OLCD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate Y1, Report to community/field learnings from Y1</li> </ul>

<p>align equity supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify 2nd cohort (6-8)</li> <li>● LC/Deeper learning toolkit sourced/piloted</li> </ul> <p>LAB-SITES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lab-Sites receive 1 FTE Coach, Consultant, and additional resources to implement design.</li> <li>● Lab-Sites visit other schools</li> </ul> <p>LCN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learner-Centered Network COP &amp; Lab-Site COPs begin &amp; meet monthly</li> <li>● LCN visits other schools</li> <li>● LCN identifies targeted investments to further the work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish Y2 goals for Lab-Sites and 1st Cohort</li> <li>● Prep for LCN Cohort 2</li> <li>● OLCD creates framework for aligning district strategies</li> </ul>
<b>August 2021 - June 2022</b>	<b>Summer 2022</b>
<p>OLCD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify 3rd cohort (6 schools)</li> </ul> <p>Lab-Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to develop through COP &amp; supports</li> <li>● Lab-Sites visit other schools</li> <li>● Refine/expand tool kit for teachers &amp; schools</li> </ul> <p>LCN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LCN meets monthly during the year</li> <li>● LCN visits other schools</li> <li>● Piloting of tool kit for teachers &amp; schools</li> </ul>	<p>OLCD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate Y2, report to community/field learnings from Y2</li> <li>● Establish Y3 goals for Lab-Sites &amp; Cohort 2</li> <li>● Prep for LCN Cohort 3</li> <li>● OLCD formalizes toolkit, district framework, and processes for aligning equity supports in schools</li> </ul>
<b>August 2022 - June 2023</b>	<b>Summer 2023</b>
<p>OLCD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify practices to scale district-wide</li> <li>● Provide to all schools a framework to facilitate their transition to LC practices in</li> </ul> <p>Lab-Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to develop through COP &amp; supports</li> <li>● Lab-Sites visit other schools</li> <li>● Finalize tool-kit for teachers &amp; schools</li> </ul> <p>LCN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LCN meets monthly during the year</li> <li>● LCN visits other schools</li> <li>● Refine of tool kit for teachers &amp; schools</li> </ul>	<p>OLDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate project, report to community/field learnings from 3 years.</li> <li>● District to transition from Roadmap to Learner-Centered framework created by OLCD, identifying clear strategies for learner-centered district to be implemented district-wide.</li> <li>● OLCD to identify targeted supports to non-LCN schools to help them implement LC practices.</li> </ul>

Our driving questions to ensure we are focused on a student-centered learning environment that is Engaging, Empowering, and Challenging for all students will be:

1. Are our Lab-Sites and COPs making the shifts towards learning centered practices and deeper learning for our students?
2. Do structures adequately support the scale of practice?
3. Is student voice authentically shaping these new models?
4. Are these practices creating the models and structures necessary to create equitable outcomes at scale?

In response to these questions, this timeline gives us the best opportunity to transition to a learner-centered culture, where students and adults are learning every day, where all schools are growing academically and socio-emotionally and where students farthest from opportunity grow at equal rates. This long-term project will continue over many years. If done well, we will experience a critical shift in our work over the next 24-36 months.

As discussed, the district has adopted the Teachers College Readers Writers Workshop model as our district ELA curriculum. We were able to cultivate the practice and work alongside teachers through COPs so that teachers were eagerly spreading Teachers College throughout the district. As a result, we went from a handful of schools to half our schools to district-wide adoption in just three years. Through our Learner-Center Network of schools, we believe we can replicate our learnings from Teachers College to gauge readiness and provide entry points to successfully implement this plan.

While we will certainly be constrained to analyze schools by benchmark assessments and CAASPP scores, we will look to the Office of Learner-Centered Design and our Lab-Sites to help stretch our board and community to look beyond these narrow measures. Chief among the data differences we want to see is the translation of practitioner agency to student success at all levels (student, family, and teacher). Data has played a major role in letting us know about the performance of our students and schools and our teachers and leaders have built their capacity to iterate based on their progress. However, only by watching, listening, and learning will we truly know if this shift has occurred.

### **Year Three and Beyond:**

Our end goal through this grant is a systematization of our model-our learnings, values, structures, expectations and key strategies in service of Deeper Learning. We envision formalized structures that would be evidence of district-wide implementation at the end of this grant cycle, including new school models, a Learner Centered Network, equity supports and the proof points listed above. Long-term success would be demonstrated by lasting structures and processes to support full district adoption of learner centered practices and could include:

- Competency Based Tools and Deeper Learning Tools for students and adults
- Social/Emotional Competency Tools for students and adults
- Student final learning products that are public and defensible in all schools
- A shift to no F grades in service of learning
- Detracking of middle school math courses
- Move to full inclusion of all non-severely handicapped students
- Explicit protocols and activities led by students to debrief Climate Surveys
- Eliminating homework in K-2 and moving to a Reading Every Night model

As a district, we will continue to operate and innovate around a set of guiding principles and our district-wide Roadmap. We understand that whole system change is complex and we know that we are still educating inside old structures that when left alone can continue to recreate the same patterns of success and failure. Therefore, we are convinced that the work outlined in this grant can greatly accelerate our ability to define and showcase engaging, empowering, and challenging learning experiences for students, and we can we create a demand for student-centered learning that will facilitate system change for all students in our district.

## **References and Resources**

[www.deeperlearningdozen.com](http://www.deeperlearningdozen.com)

[“Using Emergence to Take Social Innovation to Scale”](#)

Ron Berger: [Learning that Lasts](#)

[National Equity Project 6 Circle Model](#)

<https://www.lindsay.k12.ca.us/>

[www.bigpicturelearning.com](http://www.bigpicturelearning.com)

Michael Fullan: [“Choosing the Wrong Drivers for Whole System Reform”](#)

Zaretta Hammond: [Culturally Responsive Practices and the Brain](#)

Jal Mehta: [Edweek blog on equity as a liberating as opposed to conservative force](#)

## California schools closed for unprecedented number of days due to fire, power outages

*State, school districts turning to facilities bonds to help fund solar, generators to keep schools open during future outages.*

NOVEMBER 5, 2019 | DIANA LAMBERT



PHOTO: RESCUE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

*This story was updated on Nov. 7 to include the total number of schools closed.*

**M**ultiple years of destructive wildfires and planned power outages have closed California schools for an unprecedented number of days, leaving school districts and the state struggling to adjust to what many call the “new normal.”

In the last month more than a thousand schools were closed for multiple days, robbing students of education hours and leaving school districts worried about losing state funds, which are based on student attendance.

In October more than a dozen large wildfires, including the Kincadee fire in Sonoma County, swept through the state burning over 110,000 acres, according to the [California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#).

Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison cut power to millions of Californians over multiple days to avoid the risk of sparking fires with their equipment during high winds. Both utilities have had a role in igniting fires that burned hundreds of acres in recent years.

Seven fires of various sizes were still considered active across the state on Tuesday. Some schools, evacuated because of wildfires, have been closed for more than a week.

Planned power outages and fires closed 1,510 schools, serving more than 587,000 students, between Oct. 23 and Nov. 1, according to Scott Roark, spokesman for the California Department of Education.

On Oct. 30 alone, 666 California schools were without power. Of those, 222 remained open. That same day 370 schools — some without power — were also [closed because of wildfires](#), according to the California Department of Education.

All six schools in the El Dorado Union High School District in western El Dorado County, just east of Sacramento, lost power in the last two weeks of October. El Dorado High School in Placerville was without power for five days.

“I think in those areas specifically served by PG&E we all feel a need to develop a plan,” said Superintendent Ron Carruth. “They have said publicly that this is a condition that will exist for the next 10 years. We have to find a way to not be dependent on PG&E, so we don’t have a school year disrupted like we had for the last two weeks.”

The El Dorado Union High School District will put a \$120 million facilities bond on the ballot on March 3 that, among other facilities upgrades, will allow the district to purchase generators and backup batteries to keep the electricity on during power outages, Carruth said. He said the district will be eligible for matching funds from the state if voters passes a [\\$15 billion statewide facilities bond](#) in March.

Carruth said the district canceled school on more days this year than it has in the past 20 years.

“We determined, based on input with all of the principals, because of darkness in the morning, cold in the morning, absence of fire alarms and bells that we couldn’t safely open schools without power,” he said.

Some students were without power in their homes at times their schools had power, prompting principals and district administrators to open locker rooms for showers and to set up charging stations for electronics. Hot breakfast was served to the students as well.

“We did anything we could do to help them manage this outage,” Carruth said.

The shortages have been particularly difficult for students in poorer districts who rely on free and reduced-priced meals, Roark said.

“School closures affect families differently,” said Tony Thurmond, state superintendent of public instruction, in a statement. “Some families may not be able to make arrangements to stay home with their children or have healthy meals available at home. These students may be the same students that need school the most.”

School districts hit by the outages struggled to keep food from spoiling. El Dorado Union High School District trucked food from schools without power downhill to Oak Ridge High School in El Dorado Hills, which only lost power to part of its campus on a single day. The district had to discard food that could not be used by the time-stamped freshness date and couldn’t take delivery on fresh food while schools were closed.

“You can’t confirm the power is going on until late in the afternoons, so coordinating deliveries is very challenging,” Carruth said.

Rescue Union School District, which has two middle schools and five elementary schools in El Dorado County, lost nearly \$5,000 worth of food during the recent outages — just shy of its insurance deductible, said Superintendent Cheryl Olsen.

District staff kept schools open for its 3,700 students all but the first few days of the public safety power shutoffs by using lanterns, space heaters and a handful of generators.

“We decided to get creative if this was going to keep happening and we bought space heaters and additional generators and ordered Porta Potties,” Olsen said. The portable bathrooms were for two school sites that required electricity to pump water uphill.

There is a common misconception that a generator can power an entire school, Olsen said. The district has a handful of generators, which will be used to get water to the two school sites as well as to keep school offices and the district’s transportation office running, Internet systems up and to power space heaters to warm classrooms before school starts, she said.

“It’s quite an ordeal when the power goes out,” she said. “We purchased and ordered several more generators.”

One of the problems with opening schools during a power outage is the lack of fire alarms. Schools without functioning alarms are required to hire someone as a fire watchman to walk the entire campus continuously during the day to look for fire danger. Rescue Unified used school employees to fulfill that requirement.

Rescue Union also is seeking a \$74 million facilities bond in March, a portion of which could be used to buy generators or solar equipment to keep schools open during future power outages.

Rebekah Rocha, principal of Cesar Chavez Language Academy, a TK-6th-grade charter school in Santa Rosa, worried Tuesday about what her staff would encounter when the school reopened. The school was closed last week during the Kincadee fire.

“When we get back, we have lost another week of instruction and social emotional supports,” she said. “Do we need another food bank distribution? What kinds of social emotional supports do we need to have in place for the kids? This will be on their minds and we can’t just jump back into learning and the routine.”

The students at the school had been through this before, when the Tubbs Fire burned 36,807 acres across Sonoma, Napa and Lake counties in 2017. The smoke in the air on the last day

school was open before it was evacuated last week had many students on edge and complaining they didn't feel well.

"I think it was the stress from what happened two years ago," Rocha said.

Districts that have lost school days due to power outages or wildfires can file a [waiver](#) that will allow them to receive full funding and to reduce the required 180 days of student instruction, Roark said.

Districts that have emergency days built into their calendar must use them before filing for the waiver, Roark said. Looking to the future, the state is encouraging school districts to build emergency days for power outages and fires into the school calendar, much as some districts do for snow days, he said.

But deciding whether to stay open or close when the [air is too smoky](#) or there is no power is up to each school district. "We are a local control state, we can't tell people what to do," Roark said.

Instead, the Department of Education is asking district leaders to [consider factors](#) like access to the school, whether the site can maintain fire and safety monitoring and whether low-income families would have options for child care if they close during power outages.

"Our conversations with districts cover everything from where we look to find backup generators to questions about how will they be impacted in terms of revenue if they have to close," said Thurmond on Tuesday. "We provided information that really spells out how to safely make the decision about when it's OK to remain open and when to close."

*EdSource reporter Sydney Johnson contributed to this report.*

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### Mitch Stephens

Nov. 4, 2019 | Updated: Nov. 4, 2019 9:04 p.m.

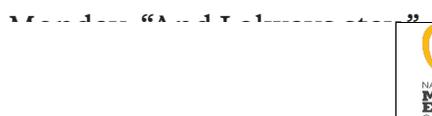


Kennedy High School head Coach Greg Marshall (Richmond, Calif.).

Photo: Darren Yamashita / MaxPreps

Since the birth of his first child seventh months ago, Kennedy-Richmond football coach Greg Marshall has been trying to leave each practice a little earlier than normal.

“The guys always saying to me, ‘One more play, Coach. One more play,’” Marshall said



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It came down to one last play, a 7-yard touchdown run by Trey Baker as time expired to give Kennedy a 23-21 victory that Marshall called an “instant classic that neither team deserved to lose.”

Both teams overcame huge odds. Down 17-13, Salesian faced a 4th-and-10 from its 20 with 1:07 remaining.

“I thought to myself, ‘We finally got these guys,’” said Marshall, noting Salesian had beaten Kennedy five straight times by a combined 170-26 count.

Instead, Salesian quarterback Ronald Robertson rifled a perfect strike over the middle to Dominic Fontanilla for a 62-yard gain.

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### Chronicle Top 25 football

Rk.	Team	W-L	LW
1.	De La Salle	9-1	1
2.	Serra	9-0	3
3.	Valley Christian	8-1	2
4.	Pittsburg	9-1	4

Local	Sporting Green	Politics	Biz+Tech	Food	Culture Desk	Datebook	US & World	Opinion	Vau
6.	Wilcox					7-2	7		
7.	Cardinal Newman-x					7-1	8		
8.	McClymonds					8-0	9		
9.	Marin Catholic					9-1	10		
10.	St. Ignatius					7-2	11		
11.	San Ramon Valley					7-3	17		
12.	Monte Vista					7-3	6		
13.	Campolindo					8-2	13		
14.	James Logan					9-1	14		
15.	Las Lomas					9-1	15		
16.	Half Moon Bay					9-0	16		
17.	Mitty					6-3	12		
18.	...					...	...		

Local	Sporting Green	Politics	Biz+Tech	Food	Culture Desk	Datebook	US & World	Opinion	Vau
19.	Menlo-Atherton					6-3	19		
20.	Vintage					9-1	20		
21.	Benicia					9-1	21		
22.	California					7-3	22		
23.	Acalanes					8-2	23		
24.	Piner					9-0	24		
25.	Amador Valley					8-2	NR		

x - Does not include game played Monday night

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“He zipped it right between two defenders,” Marshall said. “Nothing we could do. Great pass. Great catch and run.”

The play set up a 2-yard touchdown run by Kareem Sullivan, and following a two-point-conversion pass from Robertson to Kailan Chang, Salesian was up 21-17 with 17 seconds left.

“They got us again, and we let Michael (Richardson) down,” Marshall said. “I couldn’t believe it.”

Richardson’s grandfather died the morning of the 2018 Kennedy-Salesian game, and the

Kennedy's only hope, but it got half of that when Salesian's ensuing squib kick was returned by Baker approximately 45 yards to the Pride's 30-yard line. With 10 seconds left, the Eagles had time for one or two plays.

Offside and pass-interference calls against Salesian put the ball at the 7 with three ticks left. Marshall originally called for a halfback option — one that worked in the third quarter for a Camron Young-to-Kenny Roberts 60-yard score — but the players convinced him to get the ball to Baker (19 carries, 141 yards), a 6-foot, 195-pound senior who followed excellent blocking over the left (short) side into the end zone.

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## Related

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SPORTS

MITCH STEPHENS

**Richmond rivals Salesian,  
Kennedy meet with league title  
on line**

“The whole place just erupted,” Marshall said. “We finally got the monkey off our back, beating Salesian, and I finally got (Salesian coach) Chad (Nightingale). He and (former De La Salle coach Bob) Ladouceur are the best coaches, I think, in the Bay Area. It felt great.

“The best part, though, is we didn't let Michael down. We won it for him.”

In all, the lead changed hands six times, including three times in the final 1:31. The TCAL

pushed back a week because of the Kincade Fire, Kennedy and Salesian, like most teams in the section, have the week off.

That gives the Eagles more time to enjoy the win.

“Our guys refused to give up,” Marshall said. “They refused to lose.”

*MaxPreps senior writer Mitch Stephens covers high school sports for The San Francisco Chronicle.*

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# Richmond Promise Scholar spotlight: Jada Saechao

November 3, 2019



Jada Saechao

*Meet the Richmond Promise Scholars, a growing movement of hundreds of students from Richmond and North Richmond who are currently attending over 100 colleges and universities. They are beneficiaries of the Richmond Promise college preparedness, scholarship and guidance program, which is part of a \$35 million, 10-year investment by Chevron to help make college more affordable and attainable for local students. For some students, the Promise wasn't just an opportunity to achieve their college dream, but also to help younger generations do the same. In this series, we feature interns from the Summer Associates program talking about their experience.*

Jada Saechao is a 2018 graduate of De Anza High School who also attended Juan Crespi Middle School in El Sobrante. Despite obstacles she endured, she outperformed and shined among her graduating class, walking the stage as salutatorian with a 4.8 GPA. She went on to complete her first year at UC Davis and cannot imagine it going any better. She is motivated to go directly into a Ph.D. or Masters program right after completing her bachelors, as she dreams of one day being a Professor and Researcher at her Alma Mater.

**Q: Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Expand on hardships/motivational factors that influence you to this day.**

A: "Having grown up in a split household, navigating through school had always been a challenge and there was a perpetual sense of not belonging. Although I did cultivate lasting relationships with peers and faculty, there was never a day that I didn't feel excluded from my counterparts. Unable to experience the traditional experience of a single household, I was placed under a constant state of anxiety and I had no real sense of home. However, this nomadism was a source of direct fuel for my academic inclination. School became a source of stability in my life when all other outlets failed me, and these circumstances prompted me to become the student that I am today. Although this hardship was strenuous and draining at times, it directly characterized the journey that I was meant to take."

**Q: How has the Richmond Promise played a role in your education?**

A: "The Richmond Promise has given me the opportunity to fulfill an overarching goal of mine: to be apart of something bigger than myself. Through this organization, I have gained a support system and a sense of belonging that I've been in search of for a very long time. Throughout my first year of college, there were definitely times in which I questioned if the struggle was really worth it and if I would be able to get through the tribulations. However, Richmond Promise provided me with constant support and provided me with a source of aid in times of need. Now I am currently a Summer Associate and am so grateful to be apart of a team that is dedicated to giving back to the city of Richmond. Being the resource to other students that I never had is an extremely humbling experience and I wouldn't change it for the world."

**Q: What do you want to contribute to Richmond or the world?**

A: "I want to contribute to the education that I'm currently receiving to individuals all over the world. I plan on becoming a professor in the future to carry out this goal in order to inspire others to do the same. I am extremely grateful to be afforded the current opportunities that I have access to and want to be a resource for others as well."

**Q: Can you tell us about your current college experience?**

A: "To say that I love UC Davis would be an understatement. Initially, during my years within secondary schooling, my dream institution was UC Berkeley; I was adamant on attending due to it being my father's and three aunts' alma mater and I did everything in my power to do so. Graduating as the salutatorian of my class with a 4.8 GPA while maintaining a part-time job and EAOP summer programs, I thought that there was no doubt that I'd be able to accomplish this long-awaited dream of mine. However, I, unfortunately, was denied admission and the world as I knew it started crumbling before my eyes. I experienced a state of denial for quite some time and SIR'ed to Davis just because it was my best option. At that point, I just wanted to give up and felt as if all my hard work amounted to nothing. However, after the completion of my first year at Davis, I am proud to say that I am an Aggie and view it as my second home. The sense of community and the great faculty on campus are just some aspects that I've come to love about the city, and I continue to fall more in love with it every day. In the end, my rejection became the catalyst for the realization of where I truly belong and only further reiterated that everything happens for a reason regardless if you don't understand what that reason is in the moment."

**Q: What are you looking forward after receiving your bachelor's/transferring?**

A: "After I receive my Bachelor's degree in both Economics and Political Science, I plan on pursuing a Ph.D. in Economics and becoming a professor thereafter. Throughout my pursuit to higher education, I have cultivated a genuine love for learning and I hope to become a source of light for others to learn from in the future. I feel as if it is a personal responsibility of mine to educate others and cannot wait to be able to live out my dreams of becoming an educator."

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- [csac.ca.gov](http://csac.ca.gov) (for California students who are currently undocumented or in the process of becoming legal residents)

**November 30th:** Deadline to submit CSU and UC college applications

**December 1st:** Richmond Promise Scholarship Opens at [richmondpromise.org](http://richmondpromise.org)

**March 2nd:** Last day to submit your FAFSA or California Dream Act for Cal Grant Priority

**March 14th:** Deadline to submit Richmond Promise Scholarship Application

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4. Complete a FAFSA or California Dream Act application for financial aid by March 2nd

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EDUCATION

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POLITICS

# As California spends billions on high-needs students, calls grow for more oversight

BY RICARDO CANO



PUBLISHED: NOVEMBER 5, 2019



A state audit of school funding spot-checked districts in San Diego, Clovis and Oakland. Here, a teacher at Sequoia Elementary School in Oakland talks to her first grade class, April 26, 2017. Photo by Anda Chu/Bay Area News Group

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## IN SUMMARY

Auditors say it's impossible to tell whether the 2013 school funding overhaul is working. The findings points to a likely effort to fine-tune the formula next year.

Seven years after California started pumping billions of dollars into schools with the neediest students – an attempt to narrow a chronic academic achievement gap – [a new state audit](#) has found that the state's landmark school funding law isn't adequately ensuring that targeted money is actually going to the disadvantaged students it's supposed to help.

The audit released today is the latest in a [growing body of research](#) fueling [calls for more state oversight](#) of California's groundbreaking 2013 overhaul of school finance.

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The Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF as it is known, simplified the way the state pays for schools, directing extra money to districts with high proportions of low-income students, foster



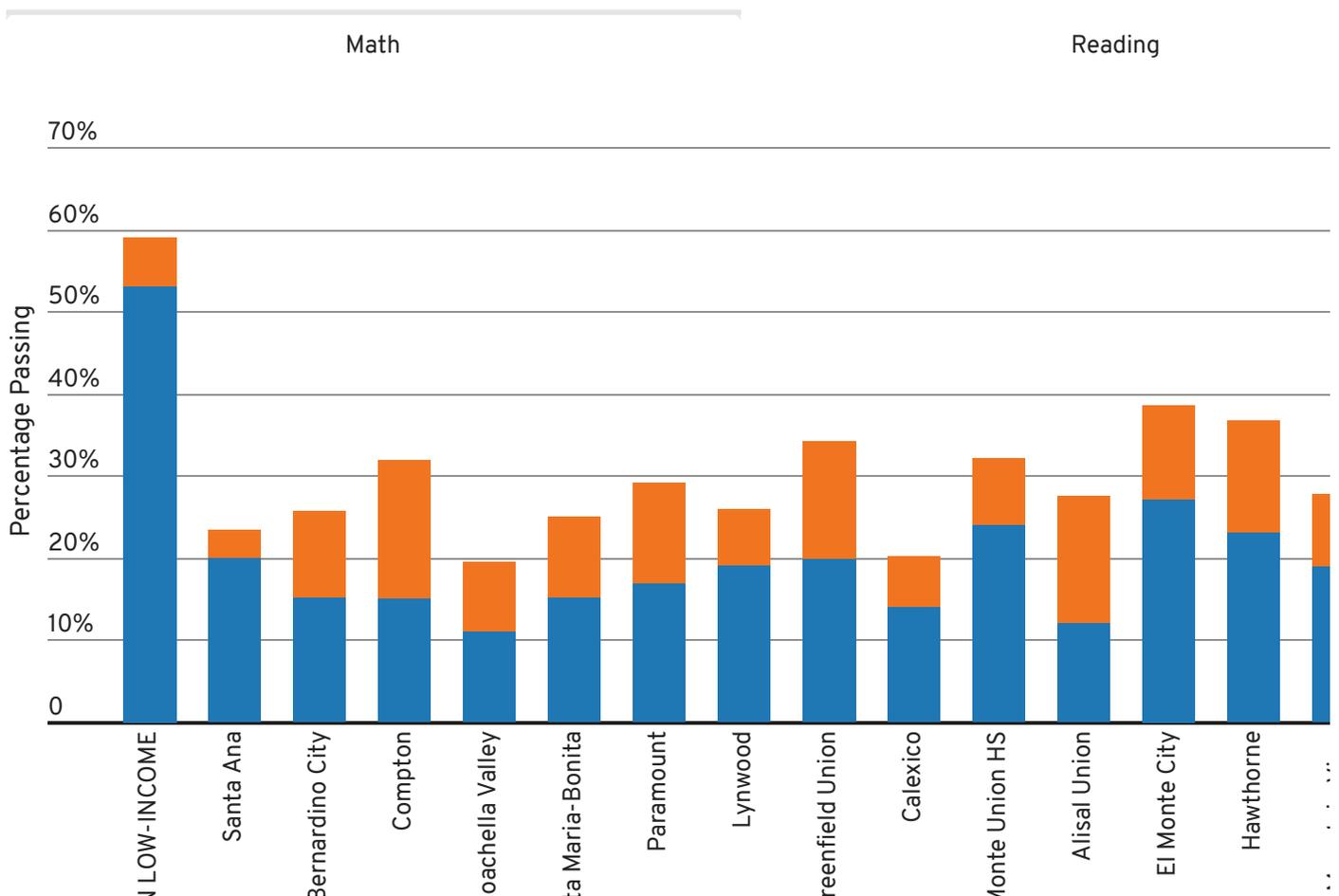
spending transparency.

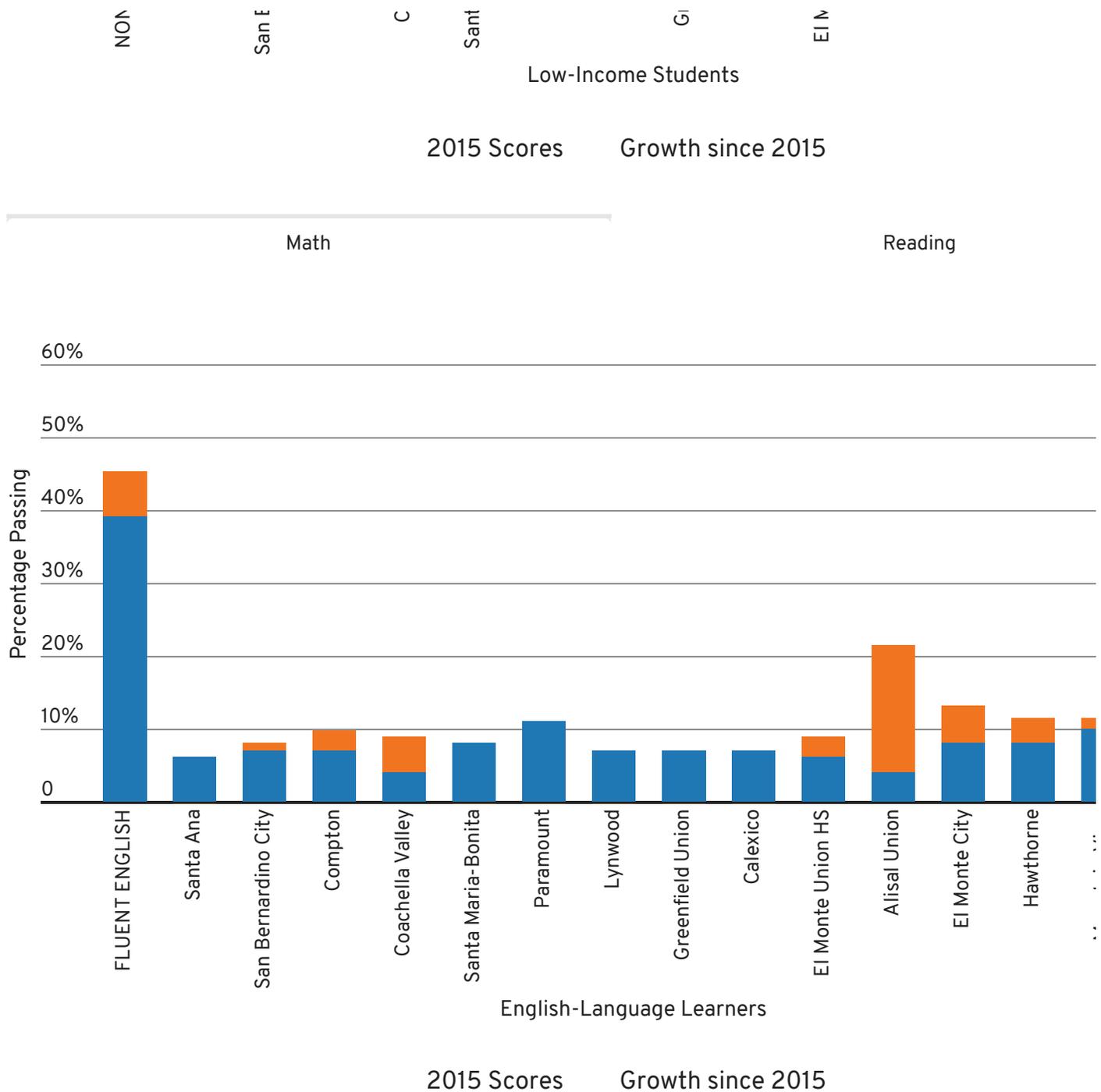
Legislators and advocates have long debated requiring districts to track spending, but Gov. Jerry Brown and some education leaders resisted, asking for more time to let districts settle into the new system.

The state audit points to a likely effort next year, under a new governor, to tweak to the landmark legislation. As the funding formula enters its seventh year, state test scores have been slow in elevating disadvantaged students' performance more into parity with their wealthier peers, which was one of the formula's key goals..

## More money, mixed results

Determined to close the achievement gap, California since the 2013-14 school year has invested ex-taxpayer money in schools with needy students. Many of the state's poorest districts have boosted low-income students, though English learner scores in some districts have stagnated or receded and has been slow.





Source: California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress



And lawmakers are concerned that some school districts may be using money intended to help high-need students to instead pay for salaries, pensions and other across-the-board services.

In a letter to Gov. Gavin Newsom, State Auditor Elaine Howle wrote that her team “had difficulty determining the extent to which the districts used those funds to increase or improve services for

intended student groups.”

Auditors also found that the state’s implementation of the new funding formula meant that the three districts singled out for a spot check – Oakland, Clovis and San Diego – identified \$320 million intended for disadvantaged students as money that could be used for basic district expenses.

Those errors, according to state auditors’ calculations, imply that billions of targeted dollars might have been identified by districts statewide as “base” funds.

“We are concerned that the state does not explicitly require districts to spend their supplemental and concentration funds on the intended student groups or to track how they spend those funds,” Howle wrote. The current rules, she added, don’t yield enough information to determine whether the money is being spent as intended and whether system is working effectively.

Legislators, school officials and advocates generally view the Local Control Funding Formula as a clear improvement to California’s previous and more restrictive school funding system because it removed burdensome spending requirements for local districts. Supporters of the funding law say it has resulted in better outcomes for students, pointing to studies that link the funding formula to [rising graduation rates](#).

But virtually since the outset, the new law has drawn criticism from some legislators and advocates who’ve argued several points included in the audit’s findings. Among them: that too many districts are [too technical or too vague](#) in documenting how they’re spending under the state’s funding formula, which distributed \$55 billion to school districts in 2018-19.

Under the current system, the state distributes money to districts through three separate buckets: “base” funds that all districts receive based on student attendance, and additional “concentration” and “supplemental” funds that districts receive based on their proportion of students who are low-income, English learners or foster youth.

The law intended for districts to steer those extra concentration and supplemental funds toward funding programs and services specifically aimed at those high-need students. But the [gradual statewide improvement](#) in standardized test scores hasn’t impressed critics. Nor has the [scant progress](#) in closing the achievement gap between black, Hispanic and poor students and their white, Asian and wealthier peers.

# “UNFORTUNATELY, THE STATE AUDITOR’S FINDINGS CONFIRMED WHAT I HAD SUSPECTED.”

– *Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi*

The audit stressed the difficulty state investigators had in linking spending toward actual, improved services for high-need students in part because the state’s requirements spelling out how districts prove they’re appropriately spending money is “essentially meaningless.”

The law lacks clarity, the report says, calling for the state to explicitly require that school districts spend all of their extra funds on disadvantaged students.

The audit also recommends that the state take steps to make districts’ Local Control Accountability Plans – which are supposed to communicate to parents student progress under the funding law – more readable and accessible to the public. The State Board of Education is already taking steps to improve the accountability plans and expects to adopt a new template for schools to use in January.

School officials in the audited districts indicated that the state does not give districts enough in base funds to cover all of their operating expenses, adding pressure to dip into supplemental and concentration dollars to cover basic costs. [A 2018 Stanford study](#) cautioned that funding challenges such as rising costs for pensions and special education threatened the long-term success of the Local Control Funding Formula and other education reforms if the state didn’t invest billions more on education.



Assemblywoman Shirley Weber, shown here on July 8, 2019, is among the state lawmakers who believe the state's school funding formula could use some fine tuning. Photo for CalMatters by Anne Wernikoff

Democratic Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi of Torrance said the state audit reaffirmed concerns about whether disadvantaged students are benefiting. He said it will be important to determine how the state would pay for tracking spending if the Legislature follows the state auditor's suggestion.

"Unfortunately, the state auditor's findings confirmed what I had suspected, that there are school districts that are not taking the necessary steps to make sure that the supplemental and concentration funds are being spent on the intended student groups," Muratsuchi said.

"I also think it's important to recognize that this is a reflection of the [tremendous financial pressures](#) that all school districts are facing in order to cover the basic costs of operating their schools."

[A recent report by the Public Policy Institute of California](#) found that the state's public schools are, in fact, steering more services, and thus funding, toward needy students, but that the new law has done little to break through longstanding challenges for low-income schools to hire and retain qualified and experienced teachers.

[A 2017 CalMatters examination of test scores](#) found little evidence that the funding formula had helped narrow the state's persistent achievement gap, but more recent data show more positive results. Among the 15 largest school districts with the largest clusters of disadvantaged students, scores remain below the state average. But in almost all, low-income students' scores have improved at a higher rate than the statewide trend for non-disadvantaged students. Nine districts recorded double-digit gains in math, and 11 did in reading. However, in most of these districts, passing rates for English learners either stagnated or, in some cases, regressed.

Carrie Hahnel, an education researcher who [examined opportunity gaps](#) under the funding law, said the most significant recommendation to come from the audit is the call to track supplemental and concentration spending.

"A lot of times, this has devolved into state agencies pushing back that the request for transparency and tracking is a bean-counting exercise," Hahnel said, "and this audit refutes the very premise of that and says that if you don't track spending to begin with, you cannot know the impact of those services."



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## State audit finds education money not serving high-needs students, calls for changes in funding law

*Legislature urged to amend Local Control Funding Formula.*

NOVEMBER 6, 2019 | JOHN FENSTERWALD

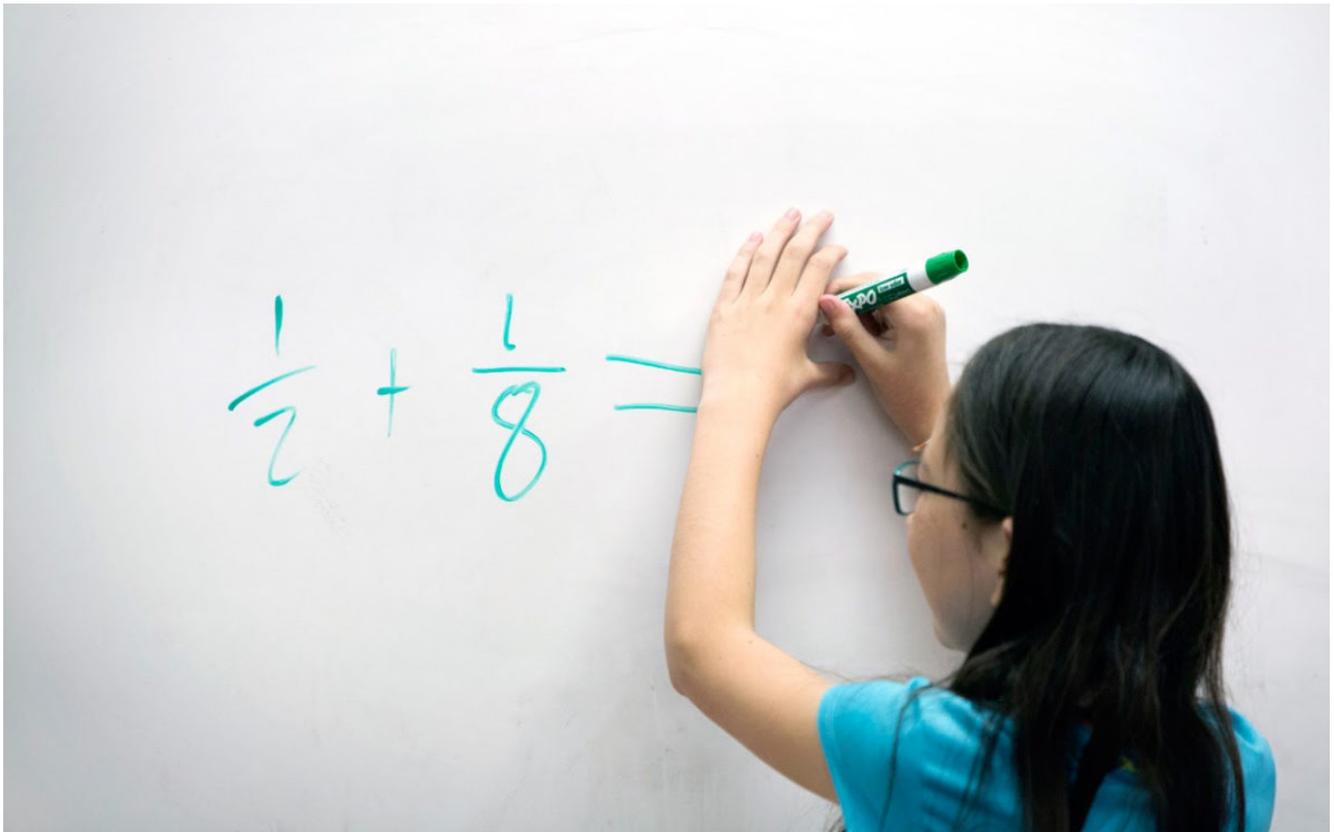


PHOTO BY ALISON YIN FOR EDSOURCE (2014)

In its [first detailed examination](#) of former Gov. Jerry Brown’s landmark school funding law, the California State Auditor sharply criticized the Legislature and State Board of Education for failing to ensure that billions of dollars have been spent on low-income children and other students targeted for additional state money.

“In general, we determined that the State’s approach” to the Local Control Funding Formula “has not ensured that funding is benefiting students as intended,” State Auditor Elaine Howle wrote in [a letter with the audit](#), released on Tuesday.

Howle issued [her findings](#) after examining spending by three districts since the funding formula went into effect six years ago: Oakland, San Diego and Clovis. Her report's recommendations call for tightening rules for spending money explicitly allocated for low-income children, foster youths and English learners — the students targeted under the formula — and for making it easier for the state and the public to track spending within and across districts.

Gov. Brown had opposed some of those changes and sidetracked legislation that would have imposed what Howle wants: uniform spending codes to give lawmakers information they need to see if the law is working adequately. The audit may encourage legislators like Assemblywoman Shirley Weber, D-San Diego, who pushed for Howle's report, [to reintroduce a bill](#) for tighter controls.

Howle's conclusion vindicates [complaints](#) and [lawsuits](#) brought by Public Advocates and the ACLU of California and affirms longtime criticisms of student advocacy organizations like Education Trust-West and Children Now that spending for high-needs students often isn't monitored. A recent [report by the Public Policy Institute of California](#) found that statewide, "supplemental and concentration" dollars generally were being spent on targeted groups but it took an enterprising researcher exhaustive digging to determine that.

In a statement, Bill Lucia, president of the nonprofit organization EdVoice, said Howle's report "should be a wakeup call to all the politicians in Sacramento who say they care about closing achievement gaps. This audit uncovered serious control deficiencies lawmakers need to address immediately."

The 2013 funding formula eliminated dozens of highly restrictive "categorical" funds and instead gave districts more flexibility and authority to decide how to spend money. The formula awards additional funding based on the proportions of "high-needs" students. Districts are to be held accountable for showing progress on multiple measures on the California School Dashboard and to lay out improvement plans in a three-year Local Control and Accountability Plan, or LCAP.

### **Deficiencies in law and oversight**

The audit found fundamental flaws in the funding law, insufficient guidance by the State Board of Education and a lack of oversight over spending by county offices of education and the California Department of Education.

The audit cited a key administrator from the education department who said that state law allows county offices and districts to identify areas that require improvement but does not require the department to determine whether the funding formula is working.

“Nonetheless, we believe that as part of its responsibility to improve public education programs, it would be reasonable for CDE to have a method for doing so,” the audit said.

At a press conference Tuesday, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond said that although he had not read the audit, his department would follow up “when public resources are misused,” while adding that districts are faced with difficult options. “I firmly believe they are frankly underfunded and making choices to manage their financial bottom line.”

The audit said that the three districts and three county offices interviewed agreed that base funding does not cover necessary base costs. The audit found that districts consequently were using supplemental and concentration funds to cover “what appear to be base services,” such as \$5.2 million that San Diego Unified used for library services in all district schools.

Among its findings, the audit found that:

- Districts can treat any unspent supplemental and concentration funds at the end of a year as base funding to use however they want. The audit recommends amending the law to explicitly end this practice. Only San Diego rolled over unspent supplemental and concentration funding to use for high-needs students the following year, the audit said.
- In the first years after the adoption of the formula, the state board gave districts latitude in transitioning to the new system. As a result, the three audited districts undercalculated how much of their budgets they were required to spend on targeted students by \$320 million — dollars that instead were used for base funding for general uses. Based on that, the audit concluded that billions of dollars statewide that should have been spent on high-needs students were not.

- Districts' LCAPs often fail to clearly explain how districts will use funding for high-needs students. Districts have to state how much targeted funding they receive annually but don't have to list how they spend all of the dollars. Instead, they must explain how they will serve the students by expanding or improving services proportionately — an “essentially meaningless” approach, the audit said. For example, the audit noted, supplemental and concentration funding added 8.65 percent to Clovis' base funding. Not only is it difficult to measure the impact on any one student group, the audit said, but neither the county offices nor the state department of education is responsible for verifying that districts have achieved those spending increases.

The funding formula permits districts to use targeted funding for districtwide purposes, whether for staff training or improving library services, if high-needs students make up more than 55 percent of a district's enrollment. But districts must justify the use by ensuring that the money would be “principally directed” to those students and shows that the money will be used effectively.

The audit couldn't find the justification in nearly three-quarters of 53 expenditures of the audited districts' LCAPs. And often the goals and the actions were so numerous that it was difficult to prove that expenditures would be effective. “For example, Clovis Unified's first goal is ‘Maximize achievement for ALL students,’ which does not convey any information about which types of services would lead to achieving that goal,” the audit said.

Only Oakland Unified set an LCAP goal specifically aimed at English learners, the audit found.

The audit also recommended that the state require districts to align targeted funding to performance on the state dashboard and show whether it makes a difference.

In response to the audit, state board Executive Director Karen Stapf Walters said that the LCAP revision, which will go before the board for approval in January, will incorporate many of the audit's suggestions to make supplemental and concentration expenditures more transparent. And the detailed instructions to districts about the LCAP will require more explicit explanations on expenditures. A new budget summary for parents will make it clearer whether supplemental and concentration dollars will be spent on the students they're intended to serve, she said.

But Stapf Walters cited examples of why districts should have flexibility to use unspent supplemental and concentration dollars as they choose and disagreed with the call for accounting codes to track the dollars, as Howle urges.

She also warned against an incremental return to treating funding formula dollars as categorical funding. Decades of experience has shown the ineffectiveness of accountability “driven by year-to-year accounting procedures and compliance monitoring rather than a focus on whether spending decisions lead to improved outcomes,” Stapf Walters said.

Howle, in turn, responded that “we fundamentally disagree” with the notion that the audit’s recommendations would be a return to categorical funding. Contrary to the state board’s assertion, tracking the districts’ spending of LCFF funding is not merely “an accounting exercise.” It would “hold districts accountable for using the funding they receive to provide services to improve student achievement.”

John Affeldt, managing attorney of Public Advocates, seconded the call for more oversight. “The funding formula tried to establish a third way between overly restrictive categoricals and carte-blanche spending for improved outcomes down the road. The report is indicating that the Brown administration may have gone overboard in trying to get away from the categorical mindset.”

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▶ **Dr. Bill Conrad** 

12 hours ago



The Leadership in K-12 education from the District level to the County and State levels is affectionately referred to as a club. In reality, it is really an organized crime network dedicated to funneling resources within the system to the care and feeding of the adults within the system. It is first and foremost a Me First, My Family First, My Friends First System! All elements of the K-12 system are perfectly aligned to satisfy ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **Alan Pursell**

2 days ago



A good step towards oversight and accountability would be to give Parent (and Student) Advisory Committees teeth. In Oakland, several of the audit findings mentioned have been general recommendations made by the PSAC to the board and district for several years. Unfortunately, there is no teeth behind these recommendations, or even requirements that other districts have PACs that do more than rubber stamp district-made decisions. Enhancing the role of Parent Advisory committees in the Ed ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **Frances O'Neill Zimmerman**

2 days ago



Six years and millions of dollars later is better than never to address the blatant cynicism underlying Governor Jerry Brown's Local Control Funding Formula that gave school districts and their unions carte blanche to spend tax money on themselves rather than for intended recipients -- California's legions of under-educated children who are in foster care, poor, of color and non English-speaking. Now that the coast is clear and Governor Brown is retired up in ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **Todd Maddison**

2 days ago



Since we passed Prop 30 to raise taxes “to fund better education” in 2012, and then implemented the LCFF program a couple years later, funding for the K-12 system has skyrocketed. Since 2012, overall state spending per ADA has risen tremendously. According to the California Department of Education (CDE), per ADA spending has risen from \$8382 in 2012 to \$12,068 in 2018. That’s a 43.97% increase, for an average of 6.26% PER ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **Jack** 

2 days ago

Todd, with respect to salary data for school districts, you might look at the J90 report completed annually by the CDE, and based upon data reported by individual school districts. You should be able to access this information by doing a google search "J90 report California Department of Ed". If that does not work for me, feel free to contact me privately and I will assist you with securing the data. Reports are available ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **Todd Maddison** 

1 day ago

Thanks, appreciate the tip, but I'm already familiar with the J90's... As disclosure, I'm the guy who collects K-12 data for Transparent California - so I'm pretty familiar with pay data. (although nothing I say in any comments should be construed to represent TC in any way, it's just me...) You can't really do a longitudinal study using J90 data because it does not give individual employee numbers - only averages for the district. Comparing average to average ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **Brent** 

2 days ago

The idea an academic can decide for a local district what is or is not a base service is absurd. The idea the California legislature that continually funds a train to nowhere is somehow equipped to decide how education funding is used in local districts is also absurd. The same districts who struggled mightily under the old categorical system continue to struggle under the LCFF. Maybe the state should begin to look ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **el** 

2 days ago

I believe that the fundamental problem is that the base grant is too small. I am not aware of anyone who has made a credible case that it is adequate. Is someone going to argue that the library services should be restricted only to students eligible for the supplemental funding? If they examine those budgets, what

other base spending did they propose to cut? Or would it be better for the district not to have ...

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▶ **Doug Carlton**

2 days ago



One of the fundamental principles of the LCFF was that that school districts and their stakeholder groups would decide how to increase or improve services for unduplicated pupils, and that decisions about what services/expenditures are base vs. supplemental would be determined locally—the idea of subsidiarity. While Howe says she “fundamentally disagrees with the notion that the audit’s recommendations would be a return to categorical funding,” the audit also finds that districts “were using supplemental and ...

[Read More](#)

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▶ **Jack**

2 days ago



This report, while disturbing, is not surprising. The implementation of LCAP (LCFF funding model) decentralized and decategorized state funding, assuring much greater discretion to local school boards in California's districts. With no mandated training for local boards and limited monitoring of districts. A disaster in the making. And here we are today. The historical pattern in California has been neglect of and disregard for the needs of our most vulnerable children. The findings of the ... [Read More](#)