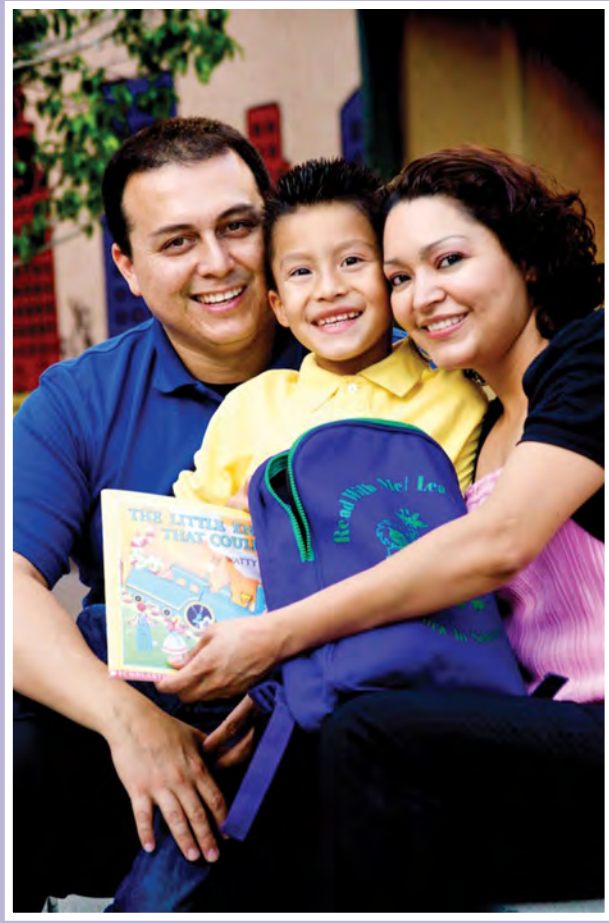
REIMAGINING PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN CALIFORNIA

Moving from 1.0 to 2.0



Families In Schools

Building Partnerships for Student Success

Executive Summary, September 2013

Summary of Priority Indicators

1 A Welcoming Environment

- Percentage of schools that have a Parent Center staffed with a "qualified family involvement coordinator"
- Percentage of parents that report feeling welcomed and respected at school as evidenced in parent surveys
- Percentage of schools that provide professional development to school staff on how to welcome and engage families effectively; number of training hours provided and average number of staff that participated per school

2 Effective School-Family Communications

- Percentage of schools with more than 50% response rate of parent surveys
- Percentage of elementary schools that conduct home-visitation programs; average number of home visitations conducted per elementary school
- Percentage of staff, parents and students who have signed a school-family compact

3 Meaningful Resources for Families

- Percentage of schools that offer workshops to parents on how to support student success (e.g. Common Core, family literacy, quality early education, college awareness and preparation, etc.); average number of hours provided by school, number of unduplicated parents that participated and evidence of effectiveness (e.g. pre/post results, surveys, etc.)
- Percentage of parents reporting that their school has increased the number of educational programs and resources for English language learners, low-income students, and foster youth as reported in parent surveys
- Percentage of schools with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with community organizations to provide support services to families that promote student success (e.g. parent workshops, afterschool activities, housing support, tutoring, mentoring, etc.)

4 Shared Leadership

- Percentage of schools reporting that more than 75% of parents in the school site council and advisory groups received proper training on how to fulfill their role as parent leaders (roles and responsibilities, school budgeting, decision-making, etc.); provide evidence of training effectiveness (e.g. pre/post results, satisfaction surveys, etc.)
- Percentage of parents participating in school site councils and advisory groups who report feeling engaged and respected as equal partners as reported in parent surveys
- Number of community sessions held to solicit input from parents and community members regarding the approval of LCAP; number of unduplicated parents who attended and evidence of community session effectiveness (e.g. pre/post results, satisfaction surveys, etc.)

5 Conflict Resolution

- Number of parent complaints submitted in an academic year through the Uniform Complaint Process (UPC) or any other complaint process
- Percentage of complainants reporting that their issue was resolved in a timely manner after submitting their grievance

6 Adequate Financial Resources

- Percentage of total district (LCAP) budget allocated for parent engagement
- Percentage of parent engagement expenditures allocated for personnel costs (Parent Center coordinator, translators, computers, etc.) and program costs (workshops, resources, etc.)

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Introduction

The promise of educational equity for all students in California is finally within reach. Having adopted the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California now has a golden opportunity to shift from the old inequitable and irrational way of funding schools to a simpler "need-based" funding formula ensuring that all children—especially those facing the greatest barriers—will have the necessary supports and resources to succeed in school.

But the promise of LCFF—to improve student success—hinges on one critical component: Parent/Family Engagement.

If LCFF is to deliver the results that everyone hopes for, it must be implemented hand-in-hand with meaningful parent engagement. The shift of control and authority to the local level must be matched by a strong accountability framework, one that ensures that schools are using the funds efficiently and effectively on behalf of those for whom the funding is intended. While LCFF promises accountability (and specifically cites parents as an essential element of that accountability), it does not set a clear mandate for districts to invest in meaningful parent engagement, thus undermining the ability of parents to hold schools more accountable.

This document, produced by family engagement advocates across the state, offers a set of measurable family engagement indicators for the state to consider as it develops regulations and procedures on the implementation of LCFF. We believe these measures reflect the desire of thousands of Californian families to hold districts accountable for more effective, in-depth parent engagement practices, all of which align well with the Family Engagement Framework recently developed by the California Department of Education.

On behalf of all families, we urge the State Board of Education to use these recommended indicators to guide the development of requirements from districts when submitting their Local Control Accountability Plans. We believe this will help change the culture at every school site and in every district across the state, moving boldly from a culture of compliance (Parent Engagement 1.0) to a culture of real, meaningful engagement (Parent Engagement 2.0), yielding powerful educational outcomes for all students and for California.

Families In Schools will continue working with organizations across California in developing quality parent engagement indicators to ensure school districts are authentically engaging parents.

Building a strong parent engagement framework requires

- providing families with timely, accurate and actionable information to support learning at home and at school;
- communicating in the home language of parents to promote high quality engagement;
- encouraging families to become advocates for their children's needs;
- empowering families to make decisions in the best interest of their children;
- providing leadership and governance training so families are equipped to oversee school performance; and
- training of school staff and committing resources to proactively engage families.

Recommended Parent & Family Engagement Indicators

1 A Welcoming Environment

The foundation of a strong school-family partnership lies in how welcoming the school is to parents and encouraging of their involvement. The school environment should be welcoming at all levels, from staff interactions with families to the physical environment of the campus. Below are measurable indicators LCAP should require in order to keep districts accountable for creating a ***welcoming environment*** for families.

- Percentage of schools that have a Parent Center staffed with a "qualified family involvement coordinator"[1]
- Percentage of schools that have structured parent visitation programs and number of unduplicated parents that have participated
- Percentage of schools that provide professional development to school staff on how to welcome and engage families effectively; number of training hours provided and average number of staff that participated per school
- Percentage of parents that report feeling welcomed & respected at school as evidenced in parent surveys
- Percentage of school staff volunteering for afterschool parent engagement activities; average number of volunteer hours per school

2 Effective School-Family Communications

Fostering a strong school-family partnership for student success requires constant communication between the school and families in ways that are parent-friendly, culturally relevant and focused on student success. While many state and federal laws require "informing" families of key issues, quality communication requires more than just including information in a handbook or sending flyers home. Below are measurable indicators LCAP should require in order to keep districts accountable for ***effective communications*** with families.

- Percentage of schools that implement annual parent satisfaction surveys
- Percentage of schools with more than 50% response rate of parent surveys
- Percentage of elementary schools that conduct home-visitation programs; average number of home visitations conducted per elementary school
- Percentage of staff, parents and students who have signed a school-family compact
- Percentage of parents that report their child's school provides adequate language support as reported in parent surveys (e.g. translation of materials, interpretation needs, multi-lingual signage)
- Percentage of parents that report understanding the English Learner program options (e.g. program options, waiver process, final determination, etc.)
- Percentage of schools that report that more than 50% of their teachers discuss student progress with families on a regular basis as reported in parent surveys
- Percentage of schools that integrate email and text-messaging in their communication strategies to inform families about child's academic progress

[1] An example of a qualified family involvement coordinator job description can be found in Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family/School Partnerships, by Anne T. Henderson et al.

3 Meaningful Resources for Families

While all families care and want the best for their children, we know that many face obstacles that prevent their involvement in the schools. Sometimes these obstacles are due to their lack of familiarity with the school system or financial limitations. As a publicly funded institution, schools are responsible for providing resources to families that will allow them to better support their children's' learning at school and at home. Below are measurable indicators LCAP should require in order to keep districts accountable for providing ***meaningful resources*** to families that support student learning.

- Percentage of schools that offer workshops to parents on how to support student success (e.g. Common Core, family literacy, quality early education, college awareness & preparation, etc.); average number of hours provided by school, number of unduplicated parents that participated and evidence of effectiveness (e.g. pre/post results, surveys, etc.)
- Percentage of schools that offer afterschool activities to families on how to support student success (e.g. college visits, community fairs, field trips, etc.); average number of hours provided by school, number of unduplicated families that attended and evidence of effectiveness (e.g. pre/post results, surveys, etc.)
- Percentage of parents reporting that their school has increased the number of educational programs and resources for English language learners, low-income students, and foster youth as reported in parent surveys
- Percentage of schools that have joint-use agreements that allow community resources to be provided at the school site in order to support student success (e.g. wellness centers)
- Percentage of schools with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with community organizations to provide support services to families that promote student success (e.g. parent workshops, afterschool activities, housing support, tutoring, mentoring, etc.)

4 Shared Leadership

Engaging parents in making programmatic and budget decision-making is critical in ensuring that LCFF resources are directed to addressing the needs of the communities they were designed to serve. Below are measurable indicators LCAP should require of districts to maintain accountability for ***shared leadership*** practices.

- Percentage of schools reporting that more than 75% of parents in the school site council and advisory groups received proper training on how to fulfill their role as parent leaders (roles and responsibilities, school budgeting, decision-making, etc.); provide evidence of training effectiveness (e.g. pre/post results, satisfaction surveys, etc.)
- Percentage of parents participating in school site councils and advisory groups who report feeling engaged and respected as equal partners as reported in parent surveys
- Percentage of parents who attend school budget-planning training and report an understanding of how they can become engaged, and understanding of their role in the development of LCAP
- Demographic breakdown of the LCFF District Parent Advisory Committee and how it reflects the demographic profile of the district, especially parents or guardians representing those groups LCFF intends to target (English Language Learners, low-income, and foster youth)
- Number of community sessions held to solicit input from parents and community members regarding the approval of LCAP; number of unduplicated parents who attended and evidence of community session effectiveness (e.g. pre/post results, satisfaction surveys, etc.)

5 Conflict Resolution

A critical component of engaging families is the ability to address their concerns and complaints. Below are measurable indicators that LCAP should require in order to keep districts accountable for addressing families concerns and arriving at ***conflict resolution.***

- Number of parent complaints submitted in an academic year through the Uniform Complaint Process (UPC) or any other complaint process
- Percentage of complainants reporting that their issue was resolved in a timely manner after submitting their grievance
- Percentage of schools that have a parent-friendly mechanism to collect and respond to grievance

6 Adequate Financial Resources

To successfully engage parents, it is critical that schools invest sufficient resources in supporting parent engagement activities, training staff on effective ways to engage families and provide quality and parent-friendly information and resources. Without adequate investment, parent engagement will be an unfunded mandate. Below are measurable indicators LCAP should require in order to keep districts accountable for investing ***adequate financial resources*** to engage families.

- Percentage of total district (LCAP) budget allocated for parent engagement
- Percentage of parent engagement expenditures allocated for personnel costs (Parent Center coordinator, translators, computers, etc.) and program costs (workshops, resources, etc.)

Partial Listing of Cosigners

Alliance for A Better Community

Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network Plan

Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
Invest in the Health and Success of California's Future

Californians for Justice
If they take us in the morning they will be coming for us that night

COFEM
Council of Mexican Federations

Californians Together
Championing the Success of English Learners

C.O.P.E.
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement

CSET
Community Services Employment Training
Where community happens.

Dolores Huerta Foundation

Early Edge California
Formerly Preschool California

Families In Schools
Building Partnerships for Student Success

First 5 LA
Champions For Our Children
www.First5LA.org

John F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation

Fresno Center for New Americans

Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley

ICUC

Los Angeles Urban League
Empowering communities. Changing lives.

Los Angeles Education Partnership

NCLR
National Council of La Raza

Partnership for Los Angeles Schools

Los Angeles Unified School District
Parent Community Student Services Branch

Parent Institute for Quality Education
PIQE
Since 1987

Lifting Up What Works
PolicyLink

Reading and Beyond

Proteus Inc.
... for Education, Employment and Community Services

StoneSoup
Fresno

United Latino Fund

United Way
Creating Pathways Out of Poverty

Youth Policy Institute

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Families
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Families in Schools (FIS) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to involve parents and communities in their children's education to achieve lifelong success.

To learn more about Families in Schools programs and services, please visit: www.familiesinschools.org

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