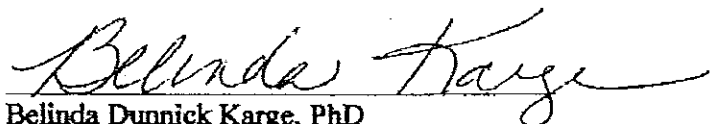
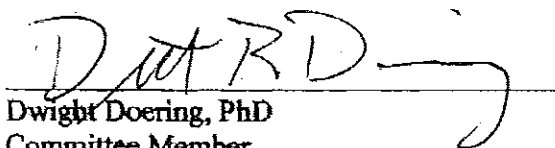


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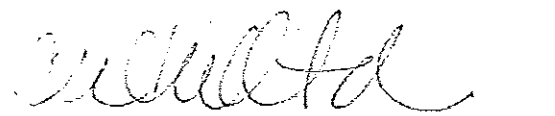
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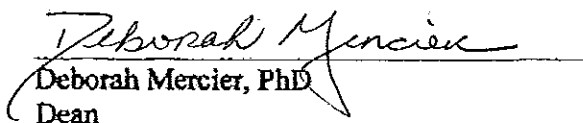


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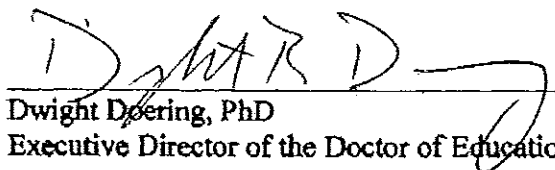


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HOW CALIFORNIA DISTRICTS ARE MAXIMIZING THEIR LOCAL CONTROL  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL DEMANDS OF  
THEIR TARGETED STUDENTS

by

Teresa Ann Egan

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements for the  
Degree of  
Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership  
December 16, 2017

School of Education  
Concordia University Irvine

## ABSTRACT

In 2013, Governor Jerry Brown and the State Board of Education signed into law the Local Control Funding Formula in a bold attempt to provide equitable educational opportunities for all. This study sought to analyze the effects of districts' LCAPs to determine what staffing changes have been made at the district level, which programs and services have helped to close the achievement gap, and which methods of stakeholder engagement have supported continuous student improvement.

The author of this study invited 197 randomly selected district superintendents throughout California to participate in an electronic survey. Thirty-four participants provided answers to questions about staffing and district office responsibilities pertaining to the development of the district's LCAP. Additionally, questions were posed around stakeholder engagement opportunities and program models that have been implemented. Five personal interviews were conducted with superintendents from various regions in California for a more in-depth look at LCAP implementation. The LCAPs of the five districts were also reviewed. Overall findings indicate that not all districts have hired personnel to support LCAP development. Moreover, all of the survey respondents and superintendents interviewed use a combination of surveys and meetings to gather stakeholder input. Larger districts provided more opportunities for stakeholder engagement than their smaller counterparts. There has been some success in improved stakeholder engagement through electronic surveys that are delivered directly to personal cell phones. Finally, it is too early to tell which programs or services are proven to be the most effective in meeting the academic needs of California's targeted students.

*Keywords:* Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), school finance, continuous improvement, school reform.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have not traveled this journey alone. There are many people who have supported my efforts through love, encouragement, and the sharing of their expertise. I would first like to thank my Chairperson, Dr. Belinda Karge for her patience, guidance, and expert advice. From late evening phone calls to emails around the world, Dr. Karge has been my rock. I am also grateful for my Committee Members, Dr. Dwight Doering and Dr. Christine Olmstead, both highly respected experts in their field and dedicated to those they serve. In addition to my amazing committee, I am in debt to the professors of Concordia's doctoral program. This veteran educator learned more about leadership, diversity, research, and technology than she thought possible. Moreover, I am thankful to the superintendents who participated in my study, especially those who took time out of their day to meet with this humble researcher. Each and every one of them is fighting the good fight in making a difference for kids each day. To my doctoral sisters, also known as 32.5, although I am amazed that we are nearing the end of the road as collegiate peers, I know we will always be just a group text away.

So much gratitude goes to my family and friends. I have appreciated their encouragement, understanding, and patience along this long winding road. I am grateful to my dad, Orville, for helping me become the best version of me and to my mom, Sandy, for her undying love and constant reminder that girls can do anything. To my strong, intelligent, beautiful daughter, Jennifer, and her talented, kind husband, Nick – thank you for listening, sorting papers, providing tips, and supporting me along the way. Finally, to my husband, Mike, my best friend of 35 years, this study would not have been possible without his unconditional love. I am grateful for his encouragement, help around the house, and for his willingness to drive around the state, and purchase the much-needed reams of paper and highlighters at a

moment's notice. In my opinion, he has earned an Honorary Doctoral Degree from Concordia University – Irvine. Together we can do anything!

This dissertation is dedicated to the newest member of our family, granddaughter Elliott Rey. In the words of Walt Disney, “All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.”

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) legislation represents the most comprehensive transformation of California's school funding system in forty years (Humphrey & Koppich, 2014). According to Humphrey and Koppich (2014) the LCFF "passed with bipartisan legislative support and signed into law by California's Governor Jerry Brown on July 1, 2013" (p. 1). The LCFF and accompanying District Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) have changed California school funding and accountability.

Several studies have been conducted the past few years in which researchers have analyzed LCAP compliance (Affeldt, 2015; Fuller & Tobben, 2014; Hahnel, 2014a; Warren, 2015). To date, very little research has been done on whether LCFF and the accompanying LCAP will make a significant difference in the academic achievement of English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals, and foster youth.

The researcher is a school administrator who has worked in the public school system for twenty-five years and is currently serving as an assistant superintendent of education. It is the researcher's goal that district leaders focus on the potential outcomes of LCFF legislation instead of simple compliance. The model provides many opportunities for underserved students throughout California. This paradigm shift in school funding may lead to educational equity for all students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As Fensterwald (2013) stated, "For decades, California schools and the state's more than six million students have labored under a financing system that has been described as irrational, dysfunctional and inequitable by a wide range of researchers, educators, and policymakers"

(p. 3). Additionally, “the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers has raised many questions about whether California’s school finance system provides disadvantaged students with enough revenue to meet the state’s academic goals” (Rose & Weston, 2013, p. 2). In 2013, Governor Brown and the State Board of Education signed into law the Local Control Funding Formula in a bold attempt to provide equitable educational opportunities for all. Since the inception of the law, researchers have described the efficacy of districts’ Local Control Accountability Plans (Affeldt, 2015; Darling-Hammond & Plank, 2015; Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014; Fensterwald, 2015a, 2015b; Fullan, 2015; Fuller & Tobben, 2014; Hahnel, 2014a, 2014b; Hahnel, Wolf, Banks, & LaFors, 2014; Hill, 2015; Humphrey & Koppich, 2014; Kirst, 2015; Menefee-Libey & Kerchner, 2015; Owens, 2015; Perry, 2012; Potter, 2014; Rose & Weston, 2013; Sciarra & Hunter, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Warren, 2014, 2015). However, there is little empirical research on the effectiveness of LCFF.

Hill (2015) surmised, “It will be years before we can assess the effectiveness of district spending by examining student outcomes” (p. 1). Due to the impatient nature of California’s varied stakeholders, when California experiences a period of economic decline, the LCFF model may be modified or even abandoned. This study sought to analyze the effects of districts’ LCAPs to determine the best strategies and practices used to close the achievement gap.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study is to determine how districts across the state are meeting the needs of California’s most at-risk students through LCAP development and implementation. It is important to learn if this funding model will make a difference for the students in California.

This study sought to determine what changes were made to the organization of districts as a result of the implementation of LCFF. Additionally, this study examined stakeholder engagement activities used by districts to support LCAP development. Finally, this study analyzed proposed research-based instructional strategies, programs, procedures, and staffing as defined in District LCAPs to determine if said strategies are promoting increased student achievement and closing the achievement gap.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed to determine the effectiveness of the Local Control Funding Formula and the accompanying Local Control and Accountability Plan:

1. What changes have been made at the school district level as a result of LCFF?
2. Which instructional strategies and programs described in California school districts' LCAP goals have resulted in improved academic achievement for English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals, and foster youth?
3. What strategies have districts used to improve stakeholder engagement as they work to develop their LCAPs with an aim toward continuous improvement?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is the most ambitious and bold change to school finance in more than forty years. California's move towards a more equitable school finance model through the LCFF has transformed education in the Golden State (Chen, Hahnel, Wheatfall, & Wolf, 2016). According to Wolf and Sands (2016), "no other state, particularly one as large as California has enacted a similar reform" (p. 4). The law governing LCFF provides increased flexibility and local control to district officials and simultaneously requires districts to seek stakeholder input on goal setting and resource allocation. The California



Department of Education has provided a mandatory Local Control and Accountability Plan, which outlines district goals, programs, strategies, assessment methods, and stakeholder engagement efforts based on state priorities (Wolf & Sands, 2016). According to Jongco (2016),

All those committed to transforming our educational system to serve our high-need students must invest the time to figure out how to make the new law work as it was intended to fulfill the promise of equity, transparency, local accountability, and meaningful community engagement (p.1).

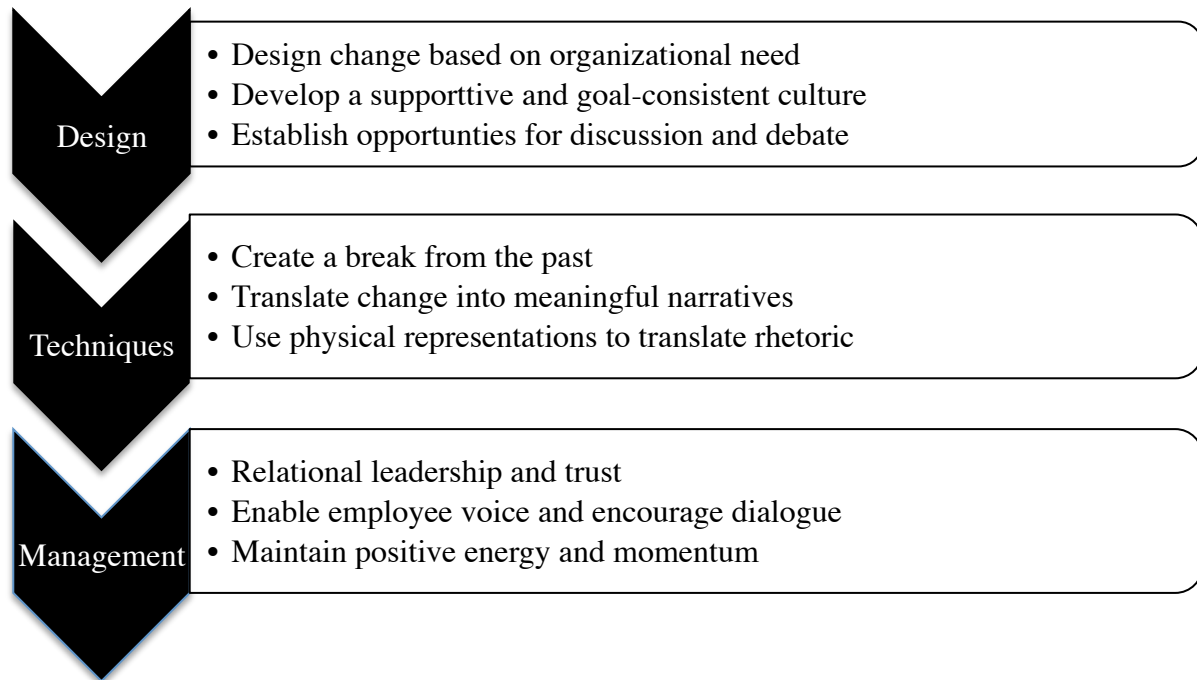
A balance of local control and fiscal transparency can safeguard the transformational promise of LCFF of increased equity for children in our state (Chen et al., 2016).

Leaders in governmental agencies, business and industry, and education have used the transformational change theory with mixed results (Daszko & Sheinberg, 2005). As Daszko and Sheinberg (2005) state, management usually focuses on an incremental change that is neither sustainable nor systematic. It takes great courage and action to transform a system into something that is new and profound (Gass, 2010).

In order for transformational change to occur, there must be a high need for change. As Daszko and Sheinberg (2005) have stated, “We adopt the most difficult and challenging strategy because we must” (p. 2). Once on the transformation journey, there needs to be a shared vision concurrent with open communication and collaboration. The development of process and procedures is the next step in the transformative process. Ongoing analysis of the processes and procedures needs to occur in a transparent manner. Shifting courses of action are a must. In time, integration of the transformation throughout the system with a feedback and reflection loop will ensure the transformation continues to be a progressive and reactionary process (Daszko & Sheinberg, 2005).

Hawker (2016) shared the progress the United Kingdom has made in transforming education and offered three transformational themes. In his first theme, Hawker (2016) states that educational systems should develop national standards, public accountability, and consistent measures of student performance. Additionally, he recommends that educational systems should be concerned with children's overall wellbeing and development. In Hawker's final theme, educational leadership took center stage. He believes the overall quality of an education system depends on the quality and action of its leaders. Through transparent dialogue with on-going student accountability, and with courageous leaders at the helm, educational transformation is possible (Hawker, 2016).

Similarly, Balogun, Hailey, and Cleaver (2015) suggest there are three essential aspects with ten themes to systematic transformation change. The first is to work "backstage" to design change. Building understanding and garnering commitment through the use of clear, consistent messaging is key. Successful transformation can take place under well-managed conditions in which change advocates are encouraged, obstacles are removed, and tools are provided to ensure systemic success. BBC Worldwide, Zurich UK Life, and News UK were successful in transforming elements of their corporations by using the model in Figure 1.



*Figure 1.* Transformational change themes. Adapted from “Landing Transformational Change” by J. Balogun, V. Hailey & I. Cleaver, 2015, Retrieved from the CIPD website: [https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/landing-transformation-change\\_2015-gap-theory-practice\\_tcm18-9050.pdf](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/landing-transformation-change_2015-gap-theory-practice_tcm18-9050.pdf)

Governor Brown, California’s Board of Education, and the State Legislature set out to transform school finance with the passage of laws governing LCFF in 2013. It took courage to reinvent California’s school finance model with an emphasis on equity and increased stakeholder engagement. According to Jongco (2016), “Through sincere efforts at community engagement, we are beginning to see LCFF’s great promise for lasting transformation – a transformation that will not only shift strategies but alter school culture and eventually drive greater student achievement” (p. 24).

### **Significance of the Study**

This research study provides valuable insight into the ways in which districts are utilizing their LCFF dollars to improve student academic achievement as defined in the district’s LCAPs.

The notion of local control as it applies to funding California schools is a new concept with limited research.

Integral to the Local Control Funding Formula is the development, implementation, and review of districts' Local Control and Accountability Plans. This researcher will study district LCAPs to determine the effectiveness of programs and strategies. As Fuller and Tobben state, ...some argue that we should go deep into schools in future years, after learning about district-level budget processes and resulting LCAPs. But we should establish baseline conditions and conduct preliminary work to observe early implementation of new school-level efforts initiated by district leaders (p.15).

The results of this study may contribute valuable insight and theoretical actions associated with weighted pupil funding and local control.

### **Definitions of Terms**

To avoid confusion, key terms and concepts are defined as follows:

*Average Daily Attendance:* This is defined as the total days of student attendance divided by the total days of instruction (Current Expense of Education, 2015).

*California Collaborative for Education Excellence:* A collaborative group was formed to advise and assist school districts, county superintendents, and charter schools in achieving the goals in their Local Accountability Plans (California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, 2015).

*California Department of Education:* This is a department of California's Government that oversees public education, testing, accountability, and student achievement.

*California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System:* This is a longitudinal data system used to maintain individual-level data including student demographics, course data,

discipline, assessments, staff assignments, and other data for state and federal reporting (California Legislature, 2016).

*Categorical Funding:* This funding model is responsible for restricted dollars used for specific programs and services.

*County Office of Education:* This department supports districts within their boundaries. They approve district budgets and accountability plans, provide professional development, and serve as a resource for various district programs.

*Crowdsourcing:* This is an online distributed problem-solving model (Brabham, 2008).

*English Learner:* Students for whom there is a report of a primary language other than English indicated on the state's Home Language Survey and lack the necessary skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English as determined by a state-wide assessment, achievement scores, and teacher observations (California Department of Education, 2015).

*Foster Youth:* Any child who has been removed from the custody of their parent(s) or guardian(s) by the juvenile court, and placed in a group home or foster home. The child is under the direct supervision of a county social worker or probation officer (Napa County Office of Education, 2016).

*Local Control Accountability Plan:* A plan, required by the laws governing the Local Control Funding Formula, in which districts set goals and describe the actions and services they plan to take to achieve the goals stated in their plan. Districts must describe in the plan how they will provide for enhanced services for English learners, low-income pupils, and foster youth (Taylor, 2015).

*Local Control Funding Formula:* This weighted-pupil model of school funding provides districts with base funding with grade span adjustments; supplemental funding for English

learners, low-income pupils, and foster youth; and concentration funding for districts with more than 55% English learners, low-income pupils; and foster youth (Taylor, 2015).

*Revenue Limit:* A funding formula which provides the basis for the majority of public school funding (Weston, 2010).

*School Accountability Report Card:* A report developed by each school in California to provide information to the community to allow for comparisons of schools in the areas of student achievement, environment, teacher quality, resources, and demographics (California Department of Education, 2016).

*Single Plan for Student Achievement:* A coordinated action plan, developed by each school site, to improve student academic performance (Zhou, 2016).

*Smarter Balanced Assessment System:* A computer-adaptive assessment system used in California which allows students in grades third through eighth and grade eleven to demonstrate their knowledge of the Common Core California State Standards in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics (California Department of Education, 2014).

*State Board of Education:* This is the K-12 policy-making body for academic standards, curriculum, instructional materials, assessments and accountability. The 11 members of the State Board of Education are appointed by the Governor and serve four-year staggered terms except for the student member who serves a one-year term. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction serves as the executive officer and secretary (California Department of Education, 2016).

*ThoughtExchange:* This is an online platform developed by The Group Insight that fosters information exchange. Stakeholders can share their thoughts and ideas through this application.

*Unduplicated Students:* Refers to students qualifying for free and reduced-price meals, are English learners, and foster youth (Affeldt, 2015).

### **Historical Perspective of Funding in California**

For more than one hundred years, the constituents in California have struggled with how to provide the necessary funds to ensure their children receive a high-quality education. Local funds raised through property taxes were the basis for school funding throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. By the late sixties, early seventies California ranked among the highest in the nation for providing their students with an excellent education. This all changed with the passage of Proposition (Prop) 13 in 1978. Prop 13 established a ceiling on property taxes and denied districts the right to seek additional revenues through local measures.

Since the passage of Proposition 13, the state of California has controlled and distributed the major share of funding for education. As a result, school districts across the state are subject to the fluctuations in the state's total revenue. Approximately 70% of the state's revenue is comprised of three income sources; property tax, personal income tax, and sales tax. The largest source of revenue for the state is personal income tax, followed by property taxes, and sales tax. Other state revenues are derived from smaller taxes such as bank, corporation, vehicle, fuel, insurance, lottery and tobacco (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

The decision makers in California have long grappled with how to distribute these funds in a fair and equitable manner. They struggled with how to ensure those students with the most need received adequate funding. Proposition 98 guaranteed a specific portion of the State's general fund to be allocated to school funding. Categorical funds were used for specific programs and provide support to targeted student populations. Between established revenue limits and additional categorical dollars, the system of funding education in California became

complex and difficult to manage. The laws and regulations surrounding the funding sources served as a challenge for districts.

Beginning in 2007, California experienced a great recession. Funds for programming were unstable, state dollars were deferred, districts experienced layoffs, programs were cut, and class sizes were increased. High-wealth districts relied on their foundations or other types of parent support to help weather the crisis. Unfortunately, students living below the poverty level suffered the most. As the state and country rebounded from the recession, decision makers in California explored other options for financing education.

By 2012, the concept of a weighted student-funding model began to surface. This model of funding would ensure a base level of funding for all districts with adjustments by grade level span. Additional funds would be provided for students living below the poverty level, English learners, and foster youth. To simplify the funding model, categorical programming would all but be eliminated. As part of the weighted-pupil model, districts would be required to seek input from various stakeholder groups to develop a spending plan, which described their goals and the actions they would take to improve academic achievement for the students they serve.

After the Local Control Funding Formula had been signed into law in July 2013, it became apparent that the law simplified school funding and compliance, however, districts struggled with the new regulations. As districts worked hard to understand the new law, they felt a new level of responsibility that accompanied local control funding. This responsibility was compounded by California's transition to new state standards, Smarter Balanced assessments, and a new system of accountability.

Advocates were out in force to ensure district funds were being used in the appropriate manner. Understaffed district offices were doing their best to comply with the LCFF law.



LCAPs were being developed. However, as this researcher reviewed the literature, a question that has not been evaluated in depth is the effect the Local Control Funding Formula and the accompanying Local Control and Accountability Plan had on district offices.

Additionally, much has been written on the importance of stakeholder engagement in the development of district LCAPs. Little has been written about the most effective stakeholder engagement strategies. Which strategies will yield an LCAP document, which will serve as a guide for continuous student improvement? It is too early to tell which research-based instructional strategies or other services will provide students with the skills they need to achieve at high levels. More research remains to be done in both of these areas.

### **Limitations**

This study has the following limitations:

1. This researcher completed her dissertation in Fall 2017. It will be years until results from state assessments provide adequate information regarding increased student achievement and the closing of achievement gaps found between significant subgroups of students.
2. This researcher lacks the time or resources to study all of the districts in California.
3. District leadership varied in its ability and willingness to participate in the current study.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations utilized by the researcher in this study were determined by the desire to focus on a subset of districts across the state. While email surveys were sent to 197 sample districts throughout California, 34 were received. Personal interviews of five superintendents

were completed. Years of in-depth study will be necessary to assess fully the impact of Local Control Funding and the results associated from district LCAPs.

### **Assumptions**

This study included the following assumptions: (a) all districts in California are funded through the Local Control Funding Formula, (b) all districts in California are required to develop a Local Control and Accountability Plan which is approved the County Superintendent, (c) the data collected provided insight in the implementation of LCFF and LCAPs from the perspective of district office personnel, (d) the data collected represents the most effective approaches to engage stakeholders, (e) the data collected identifies the most effective strategies utilized in district LCAPs to improve student outcomes, and (f) the summary of the data collected from personal interviews accurately reflects the perceptions of the respondents.

### **Organization of the Study**

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 included the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, definition of terms, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and the assumptions of the study. Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature about school funding, Local Control Funding Formula, Local Control and Accountability Plans and funding oversight. Chapter 3 described the methodology used for this research study. It includes the selection of participants, questionnaires, data collection, and data analysis techniques.

Chapter 4 presented the study's findings including demographic information, testing the research questions, confirmatory factor analysis, and results of the data analyzes for the three

research questions. Chapter 5 summarized the study, draws conclusions based on findings, and presents recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents the rationale for conducting research on the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), which attempt to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students in California. The law acknowledges that English learners, foster youth, and students living in poverty require more support and resources to be college and career ready (Owens, 2015).

After many years of financial instability, California made a commitment to give schools and districts the flexibility and resources they need to effectively meet the needs of the students they serve in the form of the Local Control Funding Formula. LCFF distributes funds based on a weighted student model. Unduplicated, targeted students receive more dollars to support their unique needs. LCFF gives districts control of how to spend the state-allocated dollars through their LCAPs, which are developed collaboratively with community stakeholders to meet their targeted goals (Darling-Hammond & Plank, 2015). These plans are reviewed and updated annually to ensure the strategies, practices, and services found in the LCAP are producing results.

According to Towney and Schmieder-Ramirez (2015), for more than 80 years, the state legislature and courts have played a vital role in financing public education in California. In the late 1960s, school districts were reliant on property taxes, which provided approximately two-thirds of their total revenue. In addition to local property taxes, the state's "foundation program" provided a minimum of guaranteed support to all districts. However, students living in high-wealth districts received more per-pupil funding than their peers living in low-wealth communities. Years after the landmark decision *Serrano v. Priest* (Sullivan, 1971), which

challenged the differences in per-pupil spending based on property wealth, inequities in student funding still existed.

Proposition 13, passed by voters in 1978, essentially decimated the school funding system. Only a few basic aid districts have been able to adequately meet the financial needs of their schools as state funding has declined. California's incoherent approach to education policymaking since the passage of Proposition 13 left state educational agencies uncoordinated and ineffective. The state's reliance on categorical funding post-Prop 13 resulted in more fragmentation and division.

This dizzying array of categorical grants—which became smaller in size and ever more specific in their uses—deflected state and local attention away from developing well-functioning, efficient school systems to the bureaucratic requirements of administering hundreds of small, disconnected programs, many of which did not allow districts to underwrite the major areas where they needed to make investments. Rather than giving poor districts unrestricted funds that could be used to raise teacher salaries, improve working conditions, or fix crumbling buildings, the state gave them (or allowed them to apply for) dozens of smaller grants – often late in the planning cycle for purposes that were not always renewed from year to year (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 159).

California undertook an ambitious task by changing its funding model, assessment system, and content standards all at the same time (Fensterwald, 2015a). LCFF is a significant shift in decision-making, resource allocation, and planning. We must be patient, humble, and persistent as the system slowly develops into one that can serve as a model for other states (Kirst, 2015). As stated by Sciarra and Hunter (2015), “Because California schools enroll one in every

eight students in the U.S., the strength of its educational system will impact the entire nation” (p. 20).

In response to the new funding formula and required Local Control Accountability Plan, this research study sought to find out the changes made at the district level as a result of LCFF, the instructional strategies and programs that have resulted in improved academic achievement for unduplicated students, and the strategies districts have used to improve stakeholder engagement as they work to develop LCAPs with an aim towards continuous improvement.

The following five themes are the basis for the topics discussed in the review of the literature: Landscape of School Finance in California; Inadequate Funding; Funding Reform; Local Control and Accountability Plan; and Oversight.

### **School Funding Reform**

School funding across the United States is based on a combination of property taxes, local and state taxes, and federal grants. Each state has the opportunity to put into place systems of funding that determine the state level allocation and the extent in which communities can raise taxes to support their schools (Sciarra & Hunter, 2015). According to Sciarra and Hunter (2015), “Although the state constitutions establish the states affirmative responsibility to provide education to all school-age children, far too many states fall short of effectuating that right in a meaningful way, consistent with contemporary needs and demands” (p. 5). Sciarra and Hunter (2015) go on to state, “resource accountability is a crucial ingredient for students to achieve the constitutional guarantee of a free, public education, which prepares them for civic and economic participation” (p. 24).

## **Weighted-Pupil Model**

Weighted-pupil funding is not a new concept. Across the country, many states have attempted to provide equity in school funding. New York, for example, in response to a court order in 2003, began to provide more funding to support students living in low-wealth districts. This school finance formula was to be phased in over the next few years, but due to the state's economic downturn, the funding model, to begin in 2006, has yet to be fully implemented (Baker & Corcoran, 2012).

More than twenty-eight years ago, Texas adopted a weighted-student formula for district funding. Their funding model begins with a basic allotment that is adjusted for local and regional costs and is based on district size. Districts in Texas receive additional funding to support special and bilingual education, career and technical programs, gifted and talented, and pregnancy-related programming. The state requires districts to spend a specific portion of their allotment on direct services and has an established accountability system to track spending and instructional goals (Perry, 2012).

In May 2013, Colorado unveiled its new school funding system, which provides sufficient resources that are equitably distributed across the state (Herman, 2013). A base-pupil allocation is established for all districts based on district size. Additional resources of up to 40% are provided to districts with students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals or who are learning English. This system requires districts to provide stakeholders with school-level data reporting in an easy-to-read format to ensure their constituents can track programs, spending, and eventually best practices, which will lead to increased efficacy in spending.

In 1990, the governor of Kentucky signed the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) into law, state sales and property taxes were raised, and education spending increased by 32%

over two years (Wright, 2013). KERA's accountability system measured both student performance and teacher effectiveness. Nine years after its passage, Kentucky's reform effort was thriving. Kentucky had improved its historically low nationwide ranking, but promised funding levels failed to keep pace with student needs and, in some cases, have been misdirected into programs unrelated to academics (Wright, 2013).

In addition to Texas and Kentucky, the states of Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Florida have all developed progressive funding models that move precious dollars to high needs districts and students (Baker & Corcoran, 2012).

### **School Funding and Student Achievement**

While many states have adjusted their per-pupil spending formulas with the ultimate goal of increased student achievement, their efforts have produced mixed results.

The challenge is finding "plausibility exogenous variation in spending to estimate a causal effect" (Hyman, 2013, p. 1). Wenglinsky (1997) found that money did matter and schools can make a difference in student achievement when funding is allocated in a manner that promotes positive social environments in school. Additionally, in their meta-analysis of more than 60 studies, Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine (1996) found that a "moderate increase in spending may be associated with significant increases in achievement" (p. 361).

Similar results were found in Massachusetts with the passage of the 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA). This act raised achievement across the board but did little to close the achievement gap for low-income students and English learners (Downes, Zabel, & Ansel, 2009). However, Downes, Zabel, and Ansel (2009) went on to state that without the Reform Act of 1993, the gap would be much wider than currently realized. Additionally,



Jackson, Jonson, and Persico (2016) reported in their longitudinal study of the effects of school spending on educational and economic outcomes throughout the United States

that a 10% increase in per pupil spending each year for all 12 years of public school leads to 0.31 more completed years of education, about 7% higher wages, and a 3.2 percentage point reduction in the annual incidence of adult poverty. (p. 157)

These effects were found to be even greater for children living in poverty. Card and Payne (2002) also reported that equalization of per-pupil spending leads to a modest increase in student achievement for U.S. students living below the poverty level. Moreover, Michigan's Proposal A of 1994 significantly increased student funding to the lowest spending districts in the state, resulting in improved student performance (Roy, 2011).

Hyman (2013) confirmed Roy's suppositions and through his study found that increased funding did improve student achievement for students in Michigan. Additionally, Hyman (2013) noted a 9% increase in the probability of students enrolling in college when the state of Michigan spent 12% more on students per year in Grades 4 through 7.

Conversely, Hanushek (1989) found in his meta-analysis of 187 studies of the impact of differential expenditures on school performance that "there is no strong or systematic relationship between school expenditures and student performance" (p. 47). Additionally, Downes (2004) found no evidence of increased test performances of students in second and eighth grade after Vermont's Act 60 school spending reform of 1997. Furthermore, Neymotin (2010) reported that there was little to no evidence of increased student achievement as a result of the changes to Kansas' School District Finance and Quality Performance Act from 1997 to 2006.

Questions posed by Hanushek in 1989 are still relevant today: “What incentives will help schools increase their effectiveness? Can the institutional structure be altered to facilitate improved performance?” (Hanushek, 1989, p. 50). It will take many years of additional research to fully understand the implications of school finance reforms on student achievement (Card & Payne, 2002).

### **Landscape of School Finance in California**

There are more than 1,000 school districts in California serving approximately 6.2 million students each day. The per capita income for California residents in 2012 was \$47,505. Still, California remains well below the national average in overall school funding. In 2013 - 2014, California’s 292,505 teachers’ salaries ranked fourth in the nation with an average annual salary at \$71,396 per year. This was well above the national average of \$56,610. In contrast, California’s per pupil average expenditures ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation at \$9,072 (National Education Association, 2015).

From the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, California schools have struggled with providing their students with the materials, facilities, and appropriate staffing to support high-quality education. For more than 80 years, the state legislature and the courts have played a vital role in the financing of public education. In the late 60s, school districts were reliant on property taxes, which provided approximately two-thirds of their total revenue. In addition to local property taxes, the state’s “foundation program” provided a minimum of guaranteed support to all districts. Unfortunately, students living in high-wealth districts received more per-pupil funding than their peers living in low-wealth communities (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

A court case in 1971 and a senate bill enacted in 1972 dramatically changed the landscape for school funding in the state of California.

**Serrano v. Priest**

In 1968, John Serrano, Jr. was a second-grade student in the Baldwin Park Unified School District. His school district was spending \$577 per pupil, while less than 15 miles away his more affluent peers were afforded more educational opportunities provided by the \$1, 223 Beverly Hills spent per pupil. This inequity of funding was due to the difference in assessed valuation of property in the two districts. The average property value in Beverly Hills was \$50,885 as compared to \$3,706 found in Baldwin Park.

John's father, with the support of a group of attorneys, brought suit in the California courts against Ivy Baker Priest, the state treasurer at the time. Through this process, the plaintiffs not only exposed the difference in per pupil spending but that the tax rate applied in each district revealed a reverse inequity. Those living in Baldwin Park were paying \$5.48 per \$100 of assessed valuation while residents in Beverly Hills paid only \$2.38. The attorneys for Serrano argued that it was unconstitutional for school revenues per pupil to be linked to local property wealth. By August of 1971, the California Supreme Court decided the case for the plaintiff stating the state tax system violated the rights of students to receive an equal education.

**California Senate Bill 90**

In response to the decision of *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), the California Legislature established a ceiling on the potential revenue for every district in the state. Senate Bill 90 (SB 90), approved in 1972, limited the maximum amount of state and local revenues a district could receive. The bill also reduced the taxing power of local school boards by limiting the amount of per-pupil income that could be derived from local taxation without voter approval (Lindman, 1974). Additionally, SB 90 provided for inflation and adjustments, which provided a higher dollar amount to low-revenue districts (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

The revenue limit formula was based on each district's 1972 – 1973 expenditures per-pupil, otherwise known as its base level of funding. A district's revenue entitlement was based on the multiplication of the district's Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and its revenue limit (Weston, 2010). For example, if a district's revenue limit was \$1,000 and the ADA was 3,000, then the state guaranteed the district \$3,000,000 in unrestricted funding. Because the funding formula was based on each district's 1972 – 1973 expenditures, there were significant differences in the amount districts received.

To demonstrate the difference, in 1973 – 1974, Berkeley Unified School District had a revenue limit of \$1,549, while Compton Unified received \$886. Berkeley's funding for 1973 – 1974 was increased by \$39 from their 1972 – 1973 base of \$1,510, and Compton Unified received \$103 more than their starting base of \$697. While Compton received an increase to their base revenue limit in 1973 – 1974, their per-pupil funding remained almost half of what the schools in Berkeley received. Tax rates were increased slightly for residents of Berkeley Unified and decreased substantially for those living in Compton to provide for more equalization (Lindman, 1974).

In addition to setting a revenue limit and revising the tax model, SB 90 included two new categorical aid programs to improve early childhood education and students with special needs. This new approach to categorical funding required eligible districts to develop plans for the effective use of these additional funds (Lindman, 1974).

The goal of SB 90 was to equalize educational funding throughout the state by establishing a revenue limit, tax reform, and categorical funding. However, the legislature wanted to preserve the rights of voters to supplement their local schools through taxation. Their

plan was to monitor and amend SB 90 over the course of several years while retaining its basic principles (Lindman, 1974).

*Serrano v. Priest* (1971) had a significant effect on California's educational system. It challenged the fairness of California's system for funding K-12 education. Changes did not happen overnight, but the educational opportunities of students living in low-wealth districts in California have continued to improve since the verdict in 1971. Not only did the *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) case have a significant impact in California, but it was also followed by cases in 45 other states that claimed education funding violated the rights of students. Of the 45 cases, 25 upheld the challenge. Only Delaware, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nevada, and Utah have never had a lawsuit in regards to the access to quality education (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

In *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), the members of the California Supreme Court noted high-quality education allows for economic and social success. It provides a unique influence on a child's development as a citizen and ability to participate in the American society (Sullivan, 1971).

However, even after *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), the educational opportunities continued to be a function of the wealth of the children's parents and the geographical accident of the school district in which children reside (Sullivan, 1971). The California school system still failed to provide all students with equal educational resources. In fact, due to a loophole in SB 90, school districts were able to override their revenue limits through local referenda (Weston, 2010), thereby providing their students with more.

Similarly, when the California Department of Education analyzed per pupil expenditures post-Serrano, they found high-wealth districts had small student populations while low-wealth districts served large populations of students. High-wealth districts were able to provide their

students with more programs, educational opportunities, and resources than their neighboring low-wealth districts (Lindman, 1974). Students living in Beverly Hills were more likely to receive a high quality education than their peers living in low-wealth districts. According to Sullivan (1971), “Thus, affluent districts can have their cake and eat it too: they can provide a high-quality education for their children while paying lower taxes. Poor districts, by contrast, have no cake at all” (p. 6).

California Assembly Bill 65 was approved in 1977 in response to the *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) decision. This bill provided for annual inflation adjustments based on a sliding scale in an attempt to equalize revenue limits among California school districts. The higher cost of living increases went to low-revenue districts while districts with high wealth received less of an increase (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

### **California Proposition 13**

In the 1970s home prices and property taxes had increased at such a substantial rate that an ever-growing number of retirees on fixed incomes were forced to sell their post-World War II homes due to the escalation in their property taxes. Jarvis and Gann leaders of the tax revolt, Prop 13, changed the system of taxation in California and throughout the nation (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015). Prop 13 imposed a property tax rate of 1% calculated at the 1975 – 1976 value of the property with a maximum increase of 2% each year or on the purchase price upon the sale of property. It also prohibited voters from approving an increase in ad valorem property taxes above the 1% rate. This tax rate ceiling dramatically reduced property taxes across the state and broke the link between local voters and their local schools. Proposition 13 shifted the power in education from local control to Sacramento. The state took control of

allocating local property taxes to local governments and education funding has relied on the state ever since (EdSource, 1994; Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

As Towney and Schmieder-Ramirez (2015) noted, Proposition 4, also known as the Gann Limit in 1979, quickly followed Proposition 13. The Gann Limit imposed limits on allowable growth in state and local government spending. Government spending could not increase at a rate faster than inflation and the change in population. The goal of the Gann limit was to reduce the percentage of state spending on personal income.

Proposition 13 and subsequent Gann Limit had a devastating impact on education. Many districts realized a substantial reduction in funding. Programs such as driver's education, home economics, industrial art, music, and sports were slashed. Schools limped along doing their best to provide a basic education. Californians were no longer willing to financially support the first class education of the past.

### **Senate Bill 813**

School funding finally improved by 1983 after a brief recession. Funding allocations, however, remained a function of the state. A group of frustrated parents, educators, and business leaders formed a coalition to rehabilitate the education the California. Together, they worked to pass the Hughes/Hart Education Reform Act, otherwise known as Senate Bill 813 (SB 813). Through this bill, the mentor teacher program was implemented. SB 813 mandated the length of the school year and number of required instructional minutes each day. The salaries for beginning teachers were improved as well as additional funds for instructional materials and counselors for high school sophomores. While the additional funding supported schools, California still ranked below the national average in funding for its pupils (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

The following year, California voters approved the State Lottery Act. With its approval in 1984 and implementation in 1985, schools were guaranteed 34% of lottery proceeds. Although Lottery funds were not a significant portion of overall funding, districts appreciated and fully utilized this small source of discretionary income (EdSource, 1994).

### **California Proposition 98**

In 1988, school funding remained below the national average. As a result parents, educators, and the California Teachers' Association united to pass Proposition 98. This measure amended by Proposition 111 in 1990 established a guaranteed minimum funding level for schools and community colleges. Local property tax revenues and dollars from the state's general fund were used in conjunction to meet this guarantee.

Three tests determined the calculation for the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee: Test 1 provided approximately 40% of the state's general fund to K-14 education. Test 2 required districts to receive at least the same state and local tax allocation as in the prior year, plus growth for inflation and average daily attendance. Test 3 adjusted prior year Proposition 98 funding for changes in K-12 attendance and per-capita general fund revenues. This test became operative when state revenues grew more slowly than personal income per capita (Taylor, 2014).

Test 2 was utilized in thirteen of the last twenty-five years as it was unrelated to economic factors. When the state experienced economic difficulties, Test 3 was implemented. When times were good, Test 1 was in effect. Test 3 was used on seven different occasions in the past twenty-five years while Test 1 was only utilized three times. Proposition 98 also included a provision, which allowed the state to suspend the guaranteed minimum funding with 2/3 vote by the legislature and a signature by the governor. Suspension of Proposition 98 occurred on two



occasions. In addition, Proposition 98 required each school to develop a ‘School Accountability Report Card,’ which reported student achievement, class size, and dropout rates.

The Traffic Congestion Relief and Spending Limitation Act of 1990, Proposition 111, provided for the same percentage of revenue as guaranteed by Prop 98. It also included a “maintenance of effort” guarantee. This Act assured school and colleges received their prior year funding adjusted by increases in enrollment and cost of living. Prop 111 changed the cost of living to be based on per capita income rather than the lower U.S. Consumer Price Index (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

In addition, to the guarantee afforded by Proposition 98 were the more than 80 state categorical aid programs, which required districts to spend dollars in a designated manner. Over time, categorical programming became a vehicle to keep state increases from being absorbed in teachers’ salaries and helped perpetuate programming favored by decision makers throughout the state. With categorical funding came compliance, annual reporting, and auditing mechanisms that became burdensome to districts (Bersin, Kirst, & Liu, 2008).

As California was continuing to develop new categorical grants to support the ever-growing English learner population and increased number of students living below the poverty level, the state increased its funding for the jail system. Districts across the state scrambled to meet the categorical grant deadlines and jump through bureaucratic hoops, as its underserved students wondered if they were going to have dinner that night, or simply wait for breakfast to be served at school the next morning. This nearsighted approach to state finance caused many California school systems to spiral into previously unforeseen depths of financial disarray.

Seemingly wealthy, Orange County, California had its challenges as well. Affluent districts such as Laguna Beach and Irvine were able to provide their students with the necessary

funds through local taxes and foundation support, while high poverty and high minority districts like Anaheim City and La Habra struggled to make ends meet. The Orange County bankruptcy in 1994 made financial matters worse and left many Orange County school districts in disarray. Wealthier districts were able to weather the storm, but once again, students of color, living in low-wealth districts, suffered the most.

As with other municipalities, Orange County was faced with demands for improved county services with limited funding. Proposition 13 prevented counties from seeking additional funds through tax increases. Bob Citron, an experienced county treasurer, became creative with investments in order to meet the needs of his constituents. Citron was in charge of an investment pool of more than 200 public agencies. School districts in Orange County were required to participate in this pool. Citron's strategy was to borrow funds from the investment pool to purchase high yield bonds and derivatives. In 1994, the interest on his investments equated to 12% of the counties revenue. In an effort to continue to increase interest income, Citron borrowed two dollars for every one dollar invested. By November 1994, Citron had lost approximately \$1.64 billion, and the county did not have enough cash to withstand a run on the money by Wall Street or local governments participating in the pool. Citron resigned, and the county was forced to declare bankruptcy on December 6, 1994. At the time, all of the school districts in Orange County had large sums of money on deposit. Their money was frozen.

In March 1995, Orange County Board of Supervisors put a proposal on the ballot for a half-cent sales tax as part of the financial recovery plan. Voters rejected the increase. School closures, increased class-size, elimination of sports programs, and reduction of administrative staff were some of the suggestions heard at budget reduction meetings countywide. Through the crisis, districts were unable to secure additional revenues from increased local property taxes. As

a result, students in Orange County continued to be affected by the lingering effect of Proposition 13 (Baldassare, 1998). Districts sued the county of Orange, and it took years to settle with districts receiving far less than their original pooled investment.

In addition to districts in Orange Country, nine districts across the state required emergency loans from the state. The loans for Inglewood Unified, South Monterey County Joint Union High, Vallejo City Unified, Oakland Unified, West Fresno Elementary, Emery Unified, Compton Unified, Coachella Valley Unified and West Contra Costa Unified ranged from \$1,300,000 to \$100,000,000. In June 2004, California Assembly Bill 2756 was passed, declared an urgency statute, and took effect immediately. This bill required standards for district budget development to be updated. Also, in the bill was a requirement that mandated the County Superintendent of Schools to notify the California Board of Accountancy in the event a district audit was not properly conducted. County oversight was strengthened, and there were added requirements in county review of collective bargaining agreements (Towney & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015).

### **Inadequate Funding**

Before the late 1970s, California school funding ranked among the highest in the United States. The “sunshine state” and its high quality of education was the envy of the nation. After Proposition 13, California’s per-pupil spending began to decline at a rapid pace resulting in an all-time low of 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation in 2008 – 2009. While school funding was declining, California’s population was growing and changing. The number of English-speaking white students was declining as the number of non-English speaking students continued to rise (Towney & Schmeider-Ramirez, 2015). By 2013, English learners represented 22% of the total enrollment of California schools equating to more than 1.4 million students learning English.

This is accounted for almost one-third of all English learners in the United States (Hahnel et al., 2014). Schools in California faced a serious challenge of supporting their students in developing English fluency as they provided them with high quality, grade level content (Towney & Schneider-Ramirez, 2015).

Compared to forty years ago, there has been an increase in the concentration of high-wealth and low-wealth community isolation. Most children attend school close to their home; therefore, school populations mirror their communities (Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Most educators would agree that students living in poverty and learning English as a second language need more support and resources than their more affluent, English-speaking peers. Pundits should not be surprised to note a decline in California's student achievement, as measured by test scores, as the number of English learners living in low-wealth communities continues to rise.

While studies have determined that increased funding improves student outcome (Guryan, 2001), the question remains, how will California's school finance system support its disadvantaged students with enough revenue to meet the state's high academic achievement goals (Rose & Weston, 2013)?

### **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**

Policymakers in California recognized the need to realign and simplify school funding. According to Perry (2012), previous school funding recommendations were presented to the legislature in 2002 and 2007. The "Master Plan for Education" of 2002, supported by Democratic lawmakers, included a base level of funding for all districts, a set of adjustments based on location in the state, block grants to support high-needs students, and an initiative grant to aide in the implementation of new programs. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Committee on Education Excellence recommended a student-centered funding model in 2007. This

recommendation included a base level of funding and additional resources for high-needs students as described in the 2002 “Master Plan for Education.” In addition, Schwarzenegger’s committee consolidated most of the existing categorical programs into their proposed student-centered model. Education leaders, policy makers, researchers, social justice advocates, and members of the community agreed that California’s school funding model was in need of restructuring (Perry, 2012). Some stakeholders felt a weighted pupil formula, as implemented in other states, would be an improvement. Many were concerned about losing favored programming supported by categorical funding; others expressed a lack of confidence in local school district’s ability to manage the funds in the manner in which they were provided. There were worries that unequal funding would create winner and loser districts across the state and district circumstances; thus not just student characteristics should be the driving factors in developing a funding model.

As LCFF evolved, all but two state funding categorical programs were eliminated. Due to the challenges of rural districts, the state continued to fund home to school transportation through categorical funds. Additionally, categorical funds were set-aside for the Small School Bus Replacement Program and the Targeted Instructional Improvement Block Grant. There were provisions for a per-pupil base grant based on Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for all districts. The base grants were to cover the costs of materials, to maintain clean and safe facilities, and employ qualified personnel to provide a basic level of education (Bersin et al., 2008). In addition to base grants by grade span, the plan called for districts to receive a 20% supplemental grant for each student who was low-income, learning English, or in foster care. Finally, a concentration grant would be provided to districts where the high-need student population exceeded 55%. The supplemental and concentration grant funding would be based on

an unduplicated count of high-needs students based on California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) information. At full implementation, districts across the state would receive as much as they did in 2007 – 2008 when the state’s economy was at its peak (Perry, 2012).

In his state address in January 2013, Governor Brown asked Californians to approve the new Local Control Funding Formula, which would cut categorical programs and place maximum authority and discretion at the local level. His new plan would distribute supplemental funds to school districts based on the real world challenges they face. Brown went on to state; the LCFF recognizes that a child in a family making \$20,000 a year or speaks a different language than English or living in a foster home requires more resources (Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., 2013). After months of deliberation, the Local Control Funding Formula passed with bipartisan legislative support and was signed into law by Governor Brown on July 1, 2013. According to Humphrey and Koppich (2014), this new weighted-student model of school finance represented “the most comprehensive transformation of California’s school funding system in more than forty years” (p. 1).

As previously noted, high-needs students generate additional funding through LCFF. Due to the fact that the concentration grants are based on district-wide shares, some schools with high-needs students did not receive additional funding because their district-wide unduplicated pupil counts were below the threshold required for the supplemental and concentration grants. The majority of the schools affected were located in Orange County, California (Hill, 2015). This funding issue was debated as LCFF developed, however, a concern of districts redrawing school boundaries prevented a compromise from being reached (Fensterwald, 2015).

Instructional programming and supplemental resources that were cut during the recession have yet to be reestablished in most districts. Education funding in California is based on what the state has available rather than on a system that will provide adequate funding to support all students in their quest to obtain college and career readiness (Affeldt, 2015). California still has a long way to go in providing the necessary resources to ensure all of the California's students are college and career ready. The LCFF strategically distributes resources based on student need without the benefit of an increase in total resources available. The Local Control Accountability Plan supports local control funding by which delineated local goals and strategies are linked directly to the resources provided by each district's allocation of state funding (Darling-Hammond & Plank, 2015).

### **Local Control and Accountability Plan**

You and Richman (2014) have noted, "The LCAP is not a one-time state-required plan, but an ongoing new way of operating in all of California's 1,000 school districts" (p. 12). The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes how districts will serve all students, students with disabilities, low-income students, foster youth, and English learners. The plan outlines specific goals, actions, services, and expenditures based on the required eight state priorities.

### **The Eight State Priorities**

The eight state priorities include: Basic services, implementation of State standards, parental involvement, pupil achievement, pupil engagement, school climate, course access, and other student outcomes.

**Basic services.** Teachers are appropriately assigned and fully credentialed in the subject area for the pupils they teach; every pupil has sufficient access to standards-aligned instructional materials and school facilities are maintained in good repair.

**Implementation of State Standards.** Implementation of academic content and performance standards and English development standards, including how the programs and services will enable English learners to access the Common Core academic content standards and the English language development standards to gain academic content knowledge and English language proficiency.

**Parental involvement.** Include efforts to seek parent input in decision-making at the district and each school site, including how the school district will promote parental participation in programs for unduplicated pupils and individuals with special need subgroups.

**Pupil achievement.** Pupil achievement as measured by all of the following as applicable: state-wide assessments, Academic Performance Index, percentage of students who have completed A-G requirements, programs of study that align with state board-approved career technical educational standards and frameworks, percentage of English learners who made progress toward English proficiency is measured by the California English Development Test (CELDT), English learner reclassification rate, percentage of pupils who have passed an advancement placement test with a score of three or higher, percentage of pupils who participate in and demonstrate college preparedness as assessed in Early Assessment Program.

**Pupil engagement.** Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following as applicable: school attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, middle school dropout rates, high school dropout rates, and high school graduation rates.

**School climate.** School climate as measured by all of the following as applicable: Pupil suspension rates, pupil expulsion rates, and other local measures of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness.



**Course access.** The extent to which pupils have access to, and are enrolled in, a broad course of study that includes English, mathematics, social science, science, visual and performing arts, health, and physical education for pupils in Grades 1 to 6. It also includes foreign language, applied arts, and career technical education for students in Grades 7 to 12.

**Other student outcomes.** Measurable, observable outcomes in areas such as physical education and arts (Local Control and Accountability Manual, 2015).

Districts are required to use the LCAP template that has been adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). The SBE is on its third iteration of the LCAP template with an electronic version available for the 2017 – 2020 LCAP.

Jay Westover, Chief Learning Officer of InnovatEd, has stated LCAPs can be the catalyst for shifting from a compliance-oriented culture to developing a strategic focus on what matters most: Student achievement (Westover, 2014). Under LCFF, districts have flexibility in determining how to spend funds allocated from the state. Accordingly, districts must solicit input from district stakeholders in the development of the LCAPs and subsequent spending plan (Wheaton & Sullivan, 2014). You and Richman (2014) suggest districts should build bridges, be accessible and transparent, and that teachers and principals are vital links to the success of the LCAP. Parents should feel that districts genuinely value their input.

In addition to stakeholder involvement in the LCAP development process, districts must consult with a parent advisory committee and a separate committee of parents of English learners if the district has more than 15% students learning English. Under the guidance of LCFF, districts must consult with all collective bargaining units, teachers, students, principals, administrators, and other school personnel. School site plans must be aligned to the district's LCAP. Furthermore, districts must provide the community with an opportunity to offer written

and public comment on actions, services, and expenditures described in the LCAP. School districts' boards must approve their LCAPs by July 1 each year (Taylor, 2015). Within five days of board approval, each district must submit their LCAP to their local county superintendent for review and approval. The county office can make suggestions to a district's LCAP and any substantive changes to the LCAP must be discussed at a public hearing. The County Office Education must approve a district's LCAP if it follows the SBE template, adheres to the proportionality requirements of the supplemental and concentration grants, and budgeted expenditures are sufficient to implement the planned activities in the LCAP. The final approval or rejection of a district's LCAP must be made by October of each year (Taylor, 2015).

As defined in California statute, the SBE was required to develop rubrics to evaluate each district's LCAP. However, despite models of exemplar LCAPs, districts should take the spirit of LCFF and lay out how school programming and services will be enhanced by the strategic allocation of resources in robust, community-owned LCAPs (Affeldt, 2015).

### **LCAP Challenges and Concerns**

While the LCAP attempts to provide guidance and transparency, there are serious problems with the document. According to Warren (2014) of the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), the LCAP fails to meet even the most basic design elements of effective accountability plans. It is difficult for districts to focus their efforts on the required eight state priorities and 19 performance indicators. The well-intentioned LCAP may create more confusion than clarity.

Fullan (2015) describes three problems found within the first stages of LCAP development. The first problem is that the LCAP is too complex and complicated. The second is the state is requiring districts to overdo the front-end process of LCAP completion. The final

problem is some districts see LCAP completion as the main goal. Fullan (2015) goes on to state districts should go back the original principles of local control that identifies results for students. He suggests districts should develop a plan with transparency and input, but to continue to focus on student outcomes. According to Fullan (2015), “The irony is that the more that you try to directly control the process the less likely you are to be more effective at managing change” (p. 2). Carrie Hahnel (2014a), the Director of Research and Policy Analysis for Education Trust-West, worked with a team to evaluate hundreds of 2014 – 2017 Local Control Accountability Plans. In their analysis, they have learned most LCAPs present an incomplete picture of a district’s plan. Many LCAPs only included the actions and services supported by the Local Control Funding Formula dollars. She found the template to be cumbersome and hard to read. There was a concern that the template did not require districts to define their base program. It was difficult to determine which actions and services were new for high-needs students and challenging to discern how services had been increased for the targeted population. Hahnel (2014a) and her team could not determine if the new LCFF funds were just used to fund pre-existing programs or to shore up salaries. In the new LCAP template proposed by the State Board of Education for 2015 – 2018, it was easier to determine services for all students and students with high needs. Hahnel (2014a) felt the proposed template was better, but still, a challenge to read.

In the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) review of 2014 – 2015 LCAPs, Mac Taylor (2015) reports the state set ambitious requirements for LCAPs. The report describes the LCAP and the process of annual review. The LAO analyzed 50 representative LCAPs across the state. Like Hahnel, Mac Taylor (2015) reported that districts rarely differentiated between new and ongoing programs and failed to provide sufficient information on services for high-need

students. Many districts rarely included baseline data for metrics and failed to justify the rationale for providing district-wide or school-wide services. The LAO found districts varied in the extent to which they linked funding with actions and did not include all of the required metrics in their plans. Most districts set a single target for all students instead of by subgroup, and many of the required metrics did not apply to elementary school districts. Taylor (2015) shared that the COEs approached LCAP reviews differently across the state. The LAO made six recommendations to improve district LCAPs: (a) emphasize a clear, strategic plan – not an over detailed comprehensive plan; (b) allow districts to focus on key metrics; (c) clarify metrics in some areas to help monitor performance; (d) require districts to indicate whether actions are new or on-going; (e) monitor quality of information regarding targeted students; and (f) disseminate information on key ingredients of effective strategic plans (Taylor, 2015).

According to Warren (2015), a significant concern of districts across California is that the state would continually revise the LCAP process. From a local point of view, the requirement of monitoring all 19 required indicators seemed more like a compliance document than a plan for continuous improvement. As Warren (2015) noted, there was a lack of consistency throughout the state of the required elements of the LCAP budget.

Menefee-Libey and Kerchner (2015) explained, many educators fear that advocacy groups will not trust local districts to implement LCFF through collaborative LCAPs. It was the school boards that drew attendance boundaries that separated white children from students of color. It was the vocal, professional parents that got their school boards to develop programs for their students while ignoring their children of need. Advocacy groups are paying attention and watching for missteps. Humphrey and Koppich (2014) noted that there is strong concern among districts around tighter restrictions on LCAPs and spending plans due to advocacy input.

Successful implementation will require advocacy groups to both trust schools and local democracies to monitor them (Menefee-Libey & Kerchner, 2015).

### **District Implications**

After more than forty years under a compliance-oriented structure, districts have the flexibility to be more responsive to their local needs and invest strategically to meet those needs (Tran, 2014). As stated by Tran (2014), for many years, the state has used funding to incentivize and control district behavior. With LCFF, the governor and the SBE have made a commitment to local control. Michael Kirst (2015), President of the California State Board of Education, acknowledges the enormous transformation required by the state and districts that must take place under the new funding model. He stated we should continue to remember the goal is to improve programs and services for students at the local level. According to Kirst, district LCAPs should be easy to understand and have appropriate oversight. In support of parent engagement, many districts have successfully utilized executive summaries, infographics, slide presentations, and flyers to make the LCAPs more accessible to their communities. The reduction of jargon and acronyms has also proved to be helpful (Hahnel, 2014b).

Another consideration of LCAP implementation is districts in which only a few schools have a large percentage of high-needs students; districts will need to direct their supplemental and concentration dollars to those schools in order for their LCFF funding to support programming that is principally directed towards the students generating the money (Hill, 2015). Furthermore, many small districts have limited central office staff. The time and effort required for the development of the LCAP puts an unbearable strain on the one or two individuals assigned to the task.

According to Perry (2012), critics remain skeptical that local district officials will act in the best interests of students, particularly in large urban districts. Critics of a Weighted Pupil Formula (WPF) model of school funding also suggest the state's current accountability systems are not sufficiently effective to prevent or identify misappropriation of funding (Perry, 2012). While the state did not require specific accounting codes for supplemental and concentration grant funds, many districts have used alternative codes to track expenditures (Humphrey & Koppich, 2014). That being said, Kirst (2015) believes the accountability provisions and transparency requirements of the LCFF statute are more rigorous than any previous funding model.

### **Oversight**

While the LCAPs are principally, locally developed and implemented, LCAP oversight is written into the LCFF statute. According to the law, LCAP oversight is managed by each district's county office of education (COE) and by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE).

#### **County Office of Education**

The LCFF provided COEs with authority to approve, reject, or require changes in district LCAPs (Humphrey & Koppich, 2014). Over the past few years, COEs have spent considerable time providing technical assistance in the development of LCAPs. Many COEs offered training sessions, work groups, and provided ongoing updates on state requirements (Warren, 2015).

Some county offices were proactive in their approach to supporting LCAP development. While COEs are not allowed to require districts to include specific actions, they were able to provide guidance and pre-review LCAPs before board approval. This preemptive support was

beneficial to many districts; however, all COEs did not implement this practice across the state (Taylor, 2015).

As with district offices, the county offices experienced a steep learning curve in LCAP requirements. While The 2015 – 2016 state budget provided for \$40 million to county offices of education to support, review, and approve their districts' LCAPs (Kirst, 2015), many COEs moved staff from their usual responsibilities to support district LCAP development and review (Humphrey & Koppich, 2014). Unfortunately, there were conflicting messages from county offices to districts on what should be reported in the LCAP budget. Warren (2015) of the PPIC suggested the state give more authority to COEs to act as an accountability force as they review district LCAPs.

### **California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE)**

The goal of the CCEE is to support districts in promoting improved academic achievement through a cycle of continuous improvement. The newly developed CCEE will capitalize on the strengths of experts in the field to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Experts will also support school and district leadership. Districts have the option of requesting CCEE's assistance while the lowest performing districts in the state will receive guidance in meeting their goals as outlined in their LCAPs.

The collaborative will work to build a system within the state that will stimulate the transfer of knowledge and best practices to districts and schools across California. The CCEE will encourage experimentation, innovation, evaluation, and adaptation. By providing assistance, not punishment for failure, the CCEE will strengthen the state's capacity to ensure all of its students are college and career ready upon completion of high school (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014).

For the CCEE to be effective, there must be a comprehensive, well-designed data system that, unlike the dashboard of a car, will provide valuable information on student progress as measured by multiple sources (Darling-Hammond & Plank, 2015).

### **Summary**

According to Towney and Schmieder-Ramirez (2015), for more than fifty years, there has been a disparity in school funding between students living in low-wealth versus students living in high-wealth districts. Students of color and learning English as a second language lag behind their white, English-speaking peers in both achievement and per-pupil spending allocations. When LCFF was signed into law, California did something that had never been done before in school finance without a court decision; it changed the funding mechanism from an equality formula to one of equity. Finally, districts could begin the budget development process from the position of what do we need instead of what can we afford (Humphrey & Koppich, 2014).

The LCFF and complementary LCAP provide districts with the tools and resources to shift from a compliance orientation to a culture that supports continuous improvement (Westover, 2014). As Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, and Pittenger (2014) noted, California schools are primed for the opportunity to reconfigure themselves as learning organizations that support college and career readiness with new standards, curriculum, and assessments through a new funding formula based on equity. Westover (2014) goes on to state that if districts develop and implement their Local Control Accountability Plans in a manner that is based on Fullan's theory of action, they will be able to leverage their local resources to define creative solutions for closing the achievement gap.

According to Fuller and Tobben (2014), it is important to require baseline data for each district in the state and to closely monitor LCAPs in the future. An important step in future



monitoring is to determine programs or models that have proven to be effective in promoting student achievement (Fullan & Tobben, 2014). Though, as Hill (2015) suggests, it may take years until we can assess the effectiveness of local funding decisions by examining student achievement. In the meantime, districts will need to go slow to go fast (Fullan, 2015). It is important that our students benefit from the implementation of an equitable funding formula. District leaders will need to focus intently on what matters most as they actively promote a systems change (Westover, 2014).

As districts work in developing and implementing their LCAPs, it will be important to learn how they are managing their systems change process. Will LCFF be effective in helping to close the achievement gap, or will the LCAP serve as just another compliance document? Will districts use their stakeholders as a “rubber stamp” of affirmation or will they enlist the support and input of their community to cultivate an action plan that will make a difference for the students they serve? It is evident that more research is needed to determine the elements that will contribute to LCFF success.

Chapter 2 presented the review of literature. Chapter 3 addressed the methodology of the study.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) has been in effect since July 2013. Little empirical research has been conducted on neither the impact of LCFF nor the impact that the required LCAP have on districts, stakeholders, and, more importantly, students. This chapter explains the methodology used in this mixed methods explanatory sequential design. The chapter is organized into six sections: (a) selection of participants, (b) instrumentation, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) ethics, and (f) timeline.

### **Setting and Participants**

The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) divides California into 19 regions. The majority of districts in the state are represented by ACSA. To that end, this researcher enlisted the support of the ACSA to stratify the data.

This researcher contacted the ACSA office in Sacramento and requested a list of districts by region. This researcher was provided with a list of 946 districts across the state. An invitation was sent to 197 district superintendents across California to participate in a 26-question online LCAP survey. These districts were randomly selected based on (ACSA) regions (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Bar chart showing the 19 geographical regions. Reprinted from “Regions and Charters,” by The Association of California School Administrators (2017), Retrieved from <https://www.acsa.org/Regions-and-Charters>

In addition to the 197 superintendents randomly selected to participate, one district superintendent, also a professor at Concordia University Irvine, was personally invited to provide feedback to the researcher about the personal interview process. After one personal invitation letter sent by United States mail, one personal email, and three electronic reminders, 33 survey responses were collected from the 197 invited to participate. This resulted in a 16.75% response rate for the LCAP electronic survey. By including the superintendent, who was personally invited to participate, 34 district representatives responded to the survey as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Participants of Online Survey Based on ACSA's 19 Regions*

ACSA Region	Participant s	ACSA Region	Participants	ACSA Region	Participants
Region 1	3	Region 8	1	Region 15	3
Region 2	3	Region 9	5	Region 16	0
Region 3	0	Region 10	0	Region 17	1
Region 4	0	Region 11	4	Region 18	3
Region 5	0	Region 12	1	Region 19	2
Region 6	1	Region 13	0	Unknown	5
Region 7	2	Region 14	0		

One participant responded to the survey twice. Additionally, the respondent provided different replies to some of the questions. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, both responses from this district were deleted from the data sets, resulting in a total of 32 valid responses to the LCAP survey.

Twenty-three survey participants chose to state their title. Of the twenty-three, 16 indicated they were district superintendents, three were superintendent/principals, two were assistant superintendents of education, one was the chief business official, and one was a director. Furthermore, 29 shared their years of service in education. The majority (79.32%) of the participants worked in the field of education for more than twenty years. Three participants noted that they have been working in education for 16 to 20 years, while three participants indicated that they had worked in the field for 11 to 15 years.

Additionally, 29 shared their district's student enrollment. Eleven responses received were from districts serving less than 500 students. One survey participant worked in a district that serves 501 to 1,000 students. Nine respondents indicated that their districts serve between 1,001 and 5,000 students, while three were employed in districts serving 5,001 to 10,000 students. Four shared that they have 10,001 to 30,000 students, and one respondent is in a district serving more than 30,000 students.

Twenty-nine survey participants provided information about his or her district budget. The total district 2016 – 2017 budget is shown in the first column of Table 2. Numbers of participants responding to the survey question are noted, as well as percentage of those responding.

Table 2

*Total District 2016 - 2017 Budget*

Budget	Total Responses	Response Percentage
10,000 – 1,000,000	2	6.90%
1,000,001 – 20,000,000	13	44.83%
20,000,001 – 40,000,000	5	17.23%
40,000,001 – 60,000,000	1	3.45%
60,000,001 – 80,000,000	0	0.00%
80,000,001 – 100,000,000	2	6.90%
100,000,001+	5	17.24%
Not Sure	1	3.45%

Thirty survey participants shared their unduplicated student percentage, which is the district's percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals, English learners, and foster youth. Eighteen indicated that the district's unduplicated percentage for 2016 – 2017 was more than 76%. Four shared that their district serves 40% or fewer of unduplicated pupils. One district respondent reported 41% – 55% while four of the responding districts serve 56% to 75% unduplicated pupils. One survey participant was not sure of his or her district's unduplicated percentage. Table 3 provides a numerical representation of the details.

Table 3

*Unduplicated Percentage for 2016 - 2017*

Unduplicated Percentage	Responses	Response Percentage
0 – 40%	4	14.29%
41 - 55%	1	3.57%
56 – 75%	6	14.29%
76 – 100%	18	64.28%
Not sure	1	3.57%

The majority of participants work in districts that serve students in Transitional Kindergarten – Grade 8 (58.62%). Figure 3 below shows grade ranges of the responding districts.

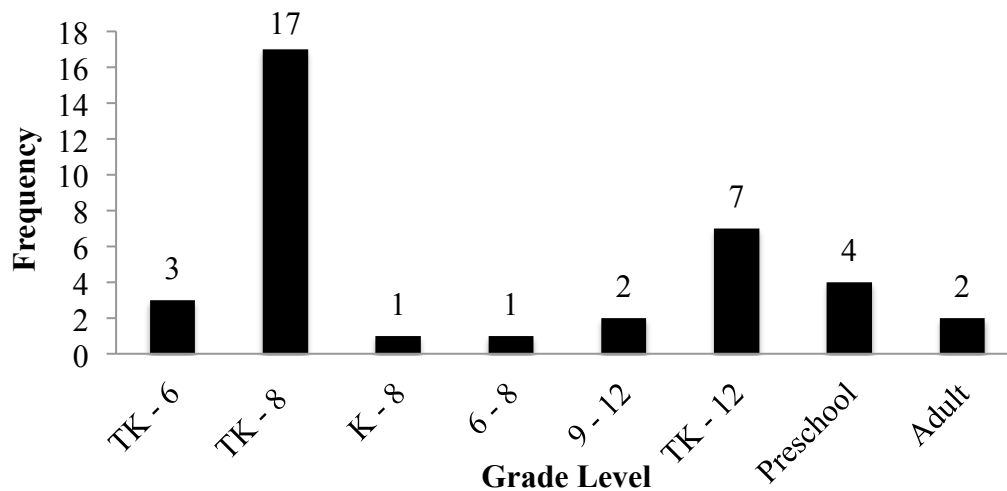


Figure 3. Bar chart showing the representation of the grade levels of the districts responding to the LCAP survey. TK = Transitional Kindergarten.

Districts representing 12 of ASCA's 19 regions participated in the LCAP survey. Regions not represented were: Region 3, Region 5, Region 6, Region 10, Region 13, Region 14, and Region 16. Two participants were not sure which ASCA region served their district (see Figure 4).

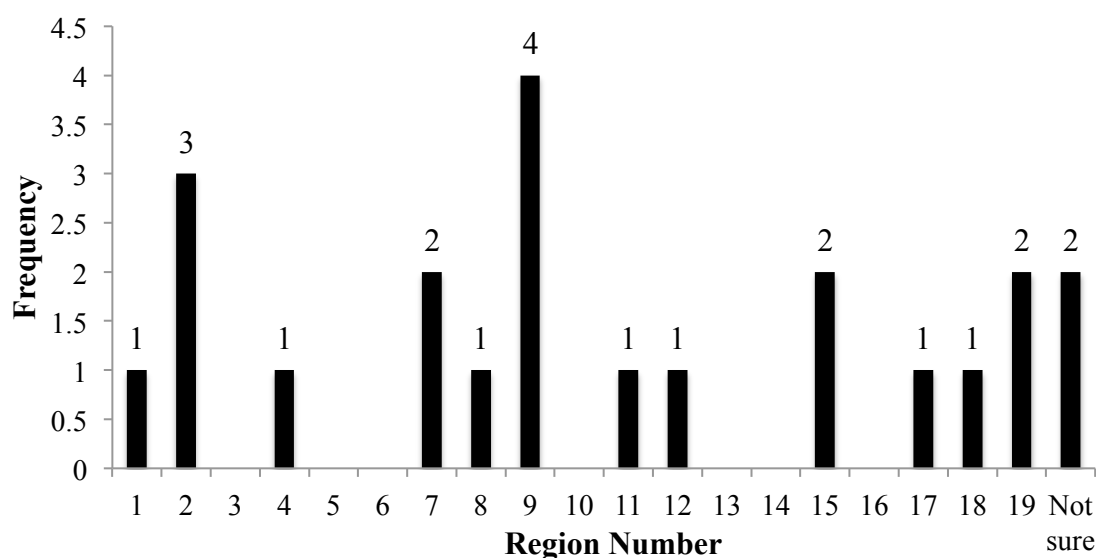


Figure 4. Bar chart indicating the number of participating districts in each of the ASCA regions.

### Sampling Procedures

According to the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), there are 533 elementary school districts, 336 unified school districts, and 77 union high school districts in the state of California. All 946 elementary, unified, and union high school districts were considered as potential participants for this research study. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), when the population is 946 a sample size of 189 is recommended. For this study, a stratified random sample ( $N = 197$ ) that represented a random sample of public school districts in a California-based geographical region as determined by ASCA's designated regions were used. Once grouped into ASCA's 19 regions, districts were assigned a number. The researcher then used Excel's random number generator formula to select 25 numbers. The random 25 numbers were



matched to the previously assigned numbers in each ACSA region subgroup to determine the 197 districts that would be asked to participate in this study. The target population for study participants was district superintendents. Contact information was obtained from ACSA, the California Department of Education, and district websites.

A total of nine districts indicated on the LCAP survey that they would be willing to be interviewed. These districts were then assigned a letter and listed by ACSA region. Codes were assigned to each district's budget, enrollment, and unduplicated percentage to maintain confidentiality as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*School Districts in California that Indicated on the LCAP Survey that They Were Willing to Participate in a Personal Interview*

District	ACSA Region	Budget	Enrollment	Unduplicated Percentage
District A	15	100 Mil+	5,001 - 10,000	56 – 75%
District B	18	1 – 20 Mil	1,000 – 5,000	56 – 75%
District C	1	10,000 – 1 Mil	1 – 500	76 – 100%
District D	9	1 – 20 Mil	1 – 500	76 – 100%
District E	1	1 – 20 Mil	1,001 – 5,000	56 – 75%
District F	7	1 – 20 Mil	1 – 500	41 – 55%
District G	2	1 – 20 Mil	1,001 – 5,000	76 – 100%
District H	17	100 Mil+	10,001 – 30,000	76 – 100%
District I	19	20 – 40 Mil	1,001 – 5,000	56 – 75%

*Note.* Each district was assigned a letter. The ACSA region was noted. District budget, student enrollment, and unduplicated percentage for each district are represented.

The researcher sought to personally interview school districts that varied by geographical region, budget, enrollment, and unduplicated percentage. To this end, the researcher traveled across California to interview superintendents from District E, District F, District H, District I, and District B. These districts were purposely not reported in the order in which they were visited; rather, they are reported in order by location in California. District E is the northernmost region represented in the data, while District B is the southernmost.

District E is located in a coastal town, two hours from the California-Oregon border. This small kindergarten through eighth grade school district serves fewer than 5,000 students. The current configuration of District E is a result of the recent merging of two smaller districts. The superintendent has been working with the Board of Education to unify the district. There are sections of the district, that have a significantly lower unduplicated percentage than the other portions of the district. There is low employee turnover in District E, with the superintendent serving in various capacities for more than 30 years.

As with District E, District F also has low employee turnover and is served by a seasoned superintendent. District F is located in the foothills of the California Sierra Mountains. District F is a one-school school district, which is common in the region. The district serves approximately 347 families, which equates to roughly 500 students in kindergarten through Grade 8. This district would be known as a “bedroom community,” serving mostly middle class students and families.

District H is a large urban school district in Orange County, California. This district serves a large percentage of English learners who also qualify for free or reduced price meals. Students and their families in District H struggle to make ends meet. As a result, there are many agencies throughout the area working together to support the basic needs of the students

attending school in District H. The district works to set high academic expectations for its students while providing behavioral and emotional support.

As with District H, District I serves a high-needs student population in a suburban community in Riverside County. District I consists of five schools (four elementary and one middle school) serving approximately 4,000 students in kindergarten through Grade 8. This district was recently recognized as an excellent place to work in the region. District I is experiencing an increase in its student population and is in the process of modernizing the entire district.

District B is a rural district located in San Diego County. The district serves approximately 3,000 students across more than 600 square miles. In addition to three Indian reservations, District B contains a California-Mexico border crossing. The district consists of three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative school. This sparsely populated district requires extensive bussing of students through steep mountain terrain.

### **Instrumentation and Measures**

The researcher developed a survey to examine the impact LCFF and the required LCAP had on districts, stakeholders, and, more importantly, students. Surveys that were developed by other researchers were considered, as well as the researcher's preliminary survey. The initial survey consisted of 26 questions; five short answers, 12 multiple-choice questions, and nine demographic questions. Questions 2 through 6 of the LCAP survey focused on the effect LCAP development has had on district offices throughout the state of California. For example, Question 2 asked, "Who takes the lead in developing your LCAP each year?" Question 4 was, "In the past three years, have you hired new personnel to support LCAP development?"

Stakeholder engagement activities were gathered in Questions 7 through 11. Question 7 was, “Which stakeholders have been included in your district’s LCAP?” Question 8 asked, “In your best estimate, how many opportunities did your stakeholders have to provide input in the development of your district’s most recent LCAP?”

Effective actions and services or program models serving students in each district were gleaned from Questions 12 through 16. An example question from this section is survey Question 13: “What program or model has proven to be the most successful for ALL students as measured by the metrics found in your district’s LCAP?” Subsequently, Question 14 asked, “What program or model has proven to be most effective for English learners as measured by the metrics found in your district’s LCAP?”

The demographic questions located at the end of the survey were posed to obtain information on LCAP authorship, the experience level of the superintendent or district personnel, district enrollment, budget, staffing, grade levels served, ACSA region, and percentage of unduplicated students.

In addition to the online survey, superintendents from five districts across California participated in a personal interview and subsequent in-depth case study. Superintendents from each of the selected districts participated in a semi-structured, open-ended personal interview. Furthermore, to garner a deeper understanding of each district, the 2016 - 2019 LCAPs were examined. The researcher reviewed stakeholder engagement opportunities and major programs and initiatives proposed in each district’s LCAPs.

### **Validity**

The researcher ensured validity by seeking the scrutiny of experts: a professor of educational doctoral studies at Concordia University Irvine, a superintendent of schools, an

assistant superintendent of education for the Orange County Department of Education, and nine scholar-researchers from Concordia University Irvine. Survey items and layout were screened for purpose, clarity, and appropriateness. The wording and vocabulary throughout the survey were reviewed. Modifications to the directions, types of questions asked, and survey layout were made based on the input from experts in the field.

To gather more systematic data on the instrument, a field test was conducted with four assistant superintendents in Orange County, California.

Table 5

*Field Study Participants Based on Enrollment and Unduplicated Student Percentage*

Enrollment	Participants	Unduplicated Percentage	Participants
< 1,000	0	0 – 25%	1
1,001-5,000	1	26% - 40%	1
5,001-10,000	2	41% - 55%	1
10,001-30,000	1	56% - 75%	1

As a result of the field test, further modifications were made to the LCAP survey. The researcher's expert judgment and the expertise of others in the field justified its appropriateness. Additionally, data from the online surveys and archival records study were corroborated with the notes from each personal interview. This triangulation of information enhanced the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2013).

### **Reliability and Ethics**

In compliance with ethical standards, the researcher maintained accurate, confidential records of all participating districts and ensured data input was impeccable to guarantee

reliability. Expert judgment of the researcher and the expertise of others in the field were used to justify the instrument used and its appropriateness. Throughout the study, the researcher acted in a responsible and fair way. The researcher deemed the research topic as one that could be ethically studied. Additionally, the researcher did not benefit financially from completing this study; therefore, a conflict of interest did not exist.

The researcher considered the needs, interests, and protection of participants (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). All superintendents participating in the study did so voluntarily and with informed consent. Additionally, confidentiality was maintained for all respondents. The researcher saved the data in a confidential manner. All computer files were stored on the researcher's personal hard drive which was password protected. Back-up computer files were stored in a locked cabinet. The surveys were completed using a paid subscription of SurveyMonkey. The SurveyMonkey program used Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to encrypt the LCAP survey as it was transmitted through the Internet. The encryption was effective on all browsers used by the participants.

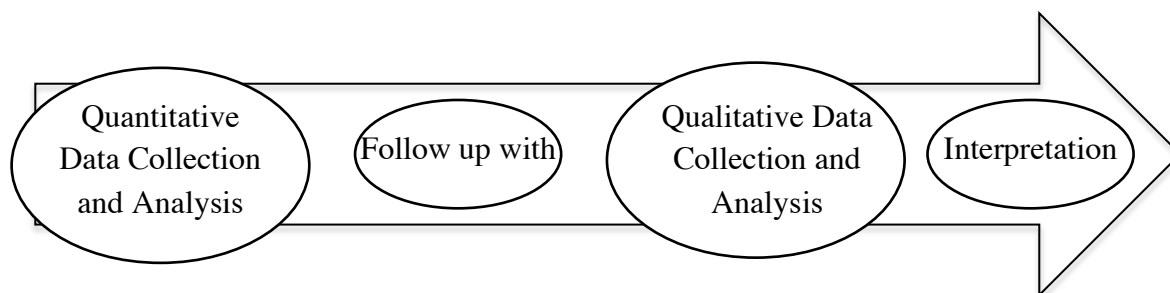
The services of REV were used to record and professionally transcribe each interview. The REV application was downloaded onto the researcher's personal cell phone, which was password protected. In order to maintain confidentiality, REV used Transport Layer Security (TLS) 1.2 encryption, each REV transcriptionist signed strict confidentiality agreements, and the files were kept private and deleted upon request. The researcher paid to have each interview professionally transcribed by REV within 24 hours of each interview.

Audio recordings were destroyed on the researcher's personal cell phone and a request was made to REV to delete all files after the completion of the research study. The datasets were

not manipulated or fabricated by the researcher. Data was checked three times to ensure accuracy. Finally, the author did not plagiarize the content of others in the study.

### **Data Collection**

A mixed-methods approach allowed the researcher to use quantitative data to formulate an understanding of the relationships between districts while using qualitative methods to deepen the understanding of commonalities and differences between the districts (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). There are several mixed-methods models. After careful consideration of the purpose, research methods, research questions, and validity concerns, an explanatory sequential design was selected for use in this study (see Figure 5). This design was completed in two phases. The quantitative data was collected first. Once analyzed, results from the quantitative study informed the qualitative work.



*Figure 5.* Mixed-methods explanatory research design.

This study was conducted using multiple sources of evidence that connected responses from an online survey to data collected from personal interviews and a study of archival data. Three separate phases of data collection were included as components of the study.

#### **Phase 1**

The first step in the data collection process included mailing a letter of introduction to the 197 selected participants through the United States Post Office. The same letter was also sent to all selected district superintendents via electronic mail. The LCAP survey was sent to all

participants by electronic mail three days later. SurveyMonkey automatically generated a follow-up email, which was sent after the third week to the selected district superintendents to elicit participation and to thank those who completed the survey. At the end of four weeks, an email was sent to serve as a final reminder to those who had not completed the survey.

Email addresses of superintendents determined to be undeliverable by the web server were replaced by another district from the same region of the state as the original district selected in the random sample. Each superintendent was guaranteed anonymity and assured his/her feedback would be kept confidential. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary. District superintendents selected to participate in the survey were provided the opportunity to enter their electronic mail address to indicate an interest in receiving results of the study. Additionally, all survey participants had the opportunity to indicate their willingness to be interviewed by the researcher by telephone or in person.

## **Phase 2**

The second phase of the data collection was based on the detailed transcripts from five personal interviews. Superintendents participating in the interviews responded to ten open-ended questions that were based on results from the online surveys. Questions for the interviews were derived from the responses from the online survey. A quiet location was selected for each interview. Questions for the interview, as well as the audio use informed consent form, were sent to each interviewee prior to the personal interview. After arriving at the interview, the researcher ensured the consent form was signed and established rapport with the superintendent. The researcher recorded each session after obtaining consent and took notes throughout each interview. A personal note of appreciation was sent to each participant immediately following the meeting. The interview was professionally transcribed by REV within 24 hours of the



interview (Creswell, 2013). The researcher read each transcription carefully and made minor edits.

### **Phase 3**

The final phase of data collection included a study of archival records for each district participating in the case study. Documents are a viable source of data (Merriam, 2002). They already exist in the situation and are not subject to the whims of human beings. For this study, data existed and was readily available for examination. Initially, the 2016 - 2019 LCAPs were reviewed. Specific areas such as enrollment, number of unduplicated pupils, and stakeholder engagement opportunities were recorded. Moreover, careful notes about major district programs and initiatives were logged.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Stake (1995), “All researchers have great privilege and obligation: the privilege to pay attention and the obligation to make conclusions drawn from those choices meaningful to colleagues” (p. 49). In this study, the researcher paid close attention to all data collected from the survey, the professionally transcribed recordings from five personal interviews, and all documents collected. Meaningful conclusions were drawn from online surveys, interviews, and archival records of school districts in California.

This study employed a quantitative and qualitative methodology of data collection and data analysis. The two methodologies will be explained independently.

### **Quantitative**

A variety of data analyses were used to quantify the results from the LCAP survey. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the percentage and frequency for Questions 1

through 4, 6 through 8, 10, 11, and Question 15. Verbatim responses were included for Questions 12, 13, 14, and 16.

Three Spearman rho correlations were completed for Questions 5 and 9. In the analysis for Question 5, “How many goals are described in your district’s LCAP?”, the researcher used SPSS Statistics Version 23 to correlate number of district goals as compared to student enrollment, unduplicated percentage, and district budget, resulting in three separate correlations. The level of significance was set at  $p = .05$  for each correlation completed.

The same method of analysis was used for Question 9: “In your best estimate, how many opportunities did your stakeholder have to provide input in the development of your district’s most recent LCAP?” Since both Questions 5 and 9 provided survey answer responses in number bands, each band was coded as shown in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6

*Coding for Responses for Question 5*

Number of LCAP Goals	Coding
1-5	1
6-10	2
10+	3

Table 7

*Coding for Responses for Question 9*

Number of Opportunities	Coding
1-10	1
11-15	2
16-20	3
21+	4

Additionally, responses to questions about enrollment, budget, and unduplicated percentage were also banded on the LCAP survey. The coding for these variables are reported in Table 8 for Enrollment and Table 9 for Budget. Table 10 represents the coding for Unduplicated Percentage.

Table 8

*District Student Enrollment*

Number of Students	Coding
1 - 500	1
501 – 1,000	2
1,001 – 5,000	3
5,001 – 10,000	4
10,001 – 30,000	5
30,001+	6

Table 9

*District Budget*

Total Budget	Coding
10,000 – 1,000,000	1
1,000,001 – 20,000,000	2
20,000,001 – 40,000,000	3
40,000,001 – 60,000,000	4
60,000,001 – 80,000,000	5
80,000,001, 100,000,000	6
100,000,001+	7

Table 10

*Unduplicated Student Percentage*

Unduplicated Percentage	Coding
0 – 40%	1
41% - 55%	2
56% - 75%	3
76% - 100%	4

The researcher sought to gather insight into the number or stakeholder opportunities as compared to districts' student enrollment, budget, and unduplicated percentage. Additionally, the researcher sought more information about the number of district LCAP goals as compared to districts' student enrollment, budget, and unduplicated percentage. The hypotheses to be tested

that provided insight where significant correlations exist were bivariate analyses that test hypotheses of association:

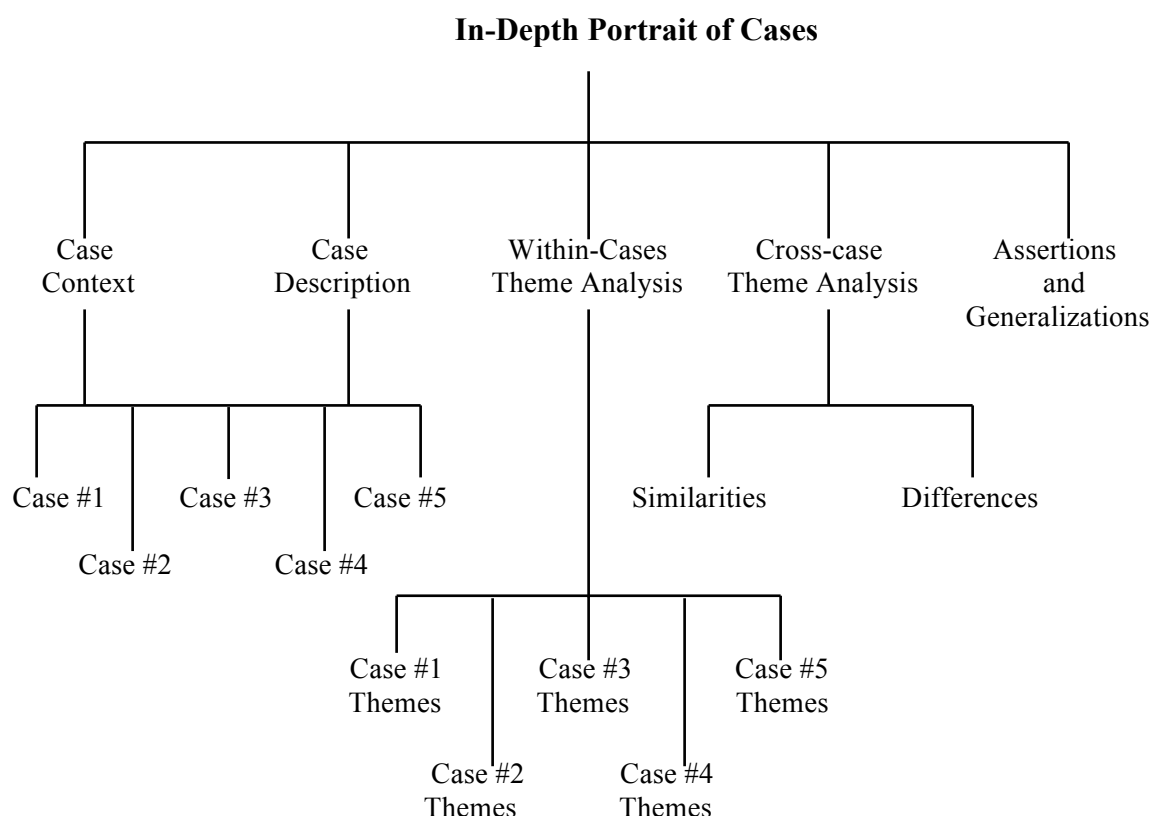
1. Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the number of stakeholder opportunities and districts' student enrollment.
2. Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the number of stakeholder opportunities and the districts' budget.
3. Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the number of stakeholder opportunities and the districts' unduplicated percentage.
4. Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the number of LCAP goals and districts' student enrollment.
5. Null Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between the number of LCAP goals and districts' budget.
6. Null Hypothesis 6: There is no significant difference between the number of LCAP goals and districts' unduplicated percentage.

Student achievement was not used as a criterion variable due to the fact that California has only three years of standardized test scores as reported by the Smarter Balanced Assessment System.

### **Qualitative**

Five personal interviews of superintendents were recorded. Professionals then transcribed the recordings. The research used Creswell's (2013), "Template for Coding a Case Study" to determine assertions and generalizations across all five districts (p. 209). To complete an in-depth portrait of cases, codes were assigned for the context and description of each case. Advanced codes were given for themes within each case and for themes that were similar and

different in cross-case analysis. Codes were then assigned for assertions and generalizations across all cases (Creswell, 2013). See Figure 6.



*Figure 6.* An in-depth portrait of cases used in the study.

Finally, data was collected from the Local Control and Accountability Plans from the five districts in which their superintendents were personally interviewed. The researcher reviewed the plans for additional personnel hired to support LCAP development. A review of stakeholder engagement opportunities and district goals, actions, and services were also conducted. These data were triangulated with interview and online survey data. As such, engaging multiple methods led to more valid, reliable, and diverse construction of reality (Golafshani, 2003).

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the research questions were presented and the purpose of the study was reviewed. The participants were selected through a random, stratified sample of districts throughout the state of California. The selection of the 197 participant samples was discussed. The development of the LCAP survey was described, as was the data collection process. Procedures for analyzing the quantitative data by using a Pearson correlation were explained. Five California School District Superintendents were selected to participate in a personal interview. Archival records of their district LCAPs were also reviewed. Finally, ethical considerations were addressed.

The next chapter will present and analyze the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the LCAP survey, subsequent personal interviews, and review of LCAPs.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this study, data was used to examine the relationships between districts and the way in which Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) development has affected each district's office. Additionally, stakeholder engagement practices were evaluated. Finally, the data collected were used to determine how districts' instructional strategies and program models as described in their LCAP improved student outcomes. This researcher used separate instruments to this end.

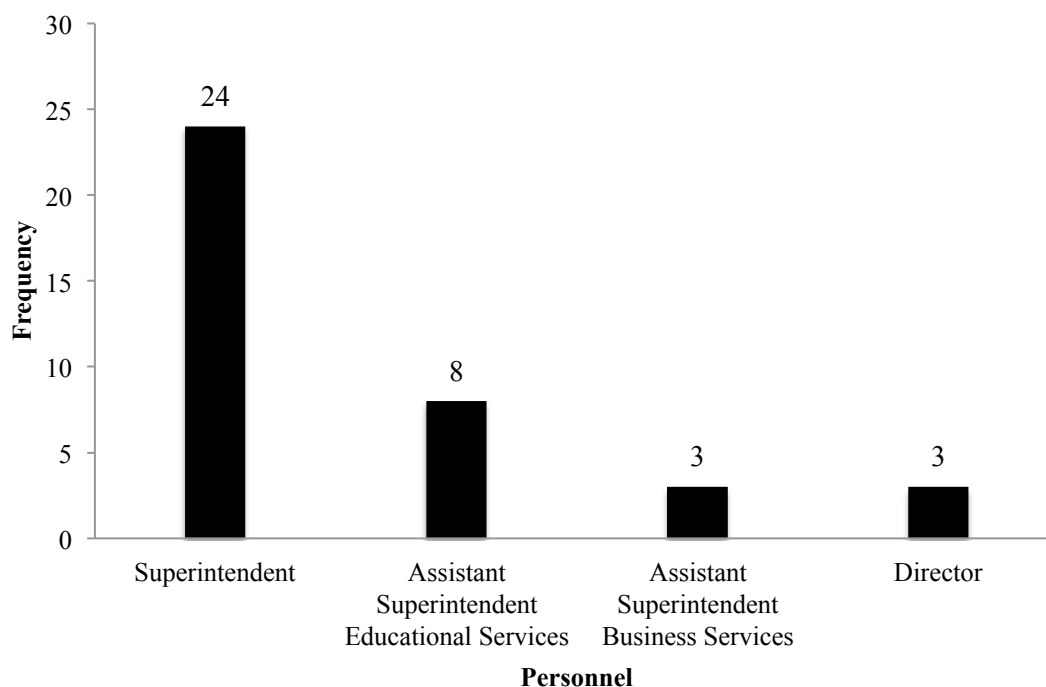
This study intended to investigate how districts across the state are meeting the needs of California's most at-risk students through LCAP development and implementation. The chapter begins with descriptive statistics of LCAP survey responses. This chapter continues with the presentation of the results of the qualitative data obtained from four open-ended LCAP survey questions, five personal interviews with district superintendents, and review of five district LCAPs.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The LCAP survey was sent out to 198 California superintendents. Thirty-four superintendents or other personnel participated in the survey. Thirty-two of the respondents to the LCAP survey answered "Yes" to Question 1, "I understand participation in this survey is optional and I may discontinue taking the survey at any time." These 32 participants also answered Question 2, "Who takes the lead in developing your LCAP each year?" In this question, respondents had the opportunity to select multiple choices. It was reported that the superintendent takes the lead in developing the district's LCAP in 75% of the surveys ( $n = 24$ ), with the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Assistant Superintendent of Business



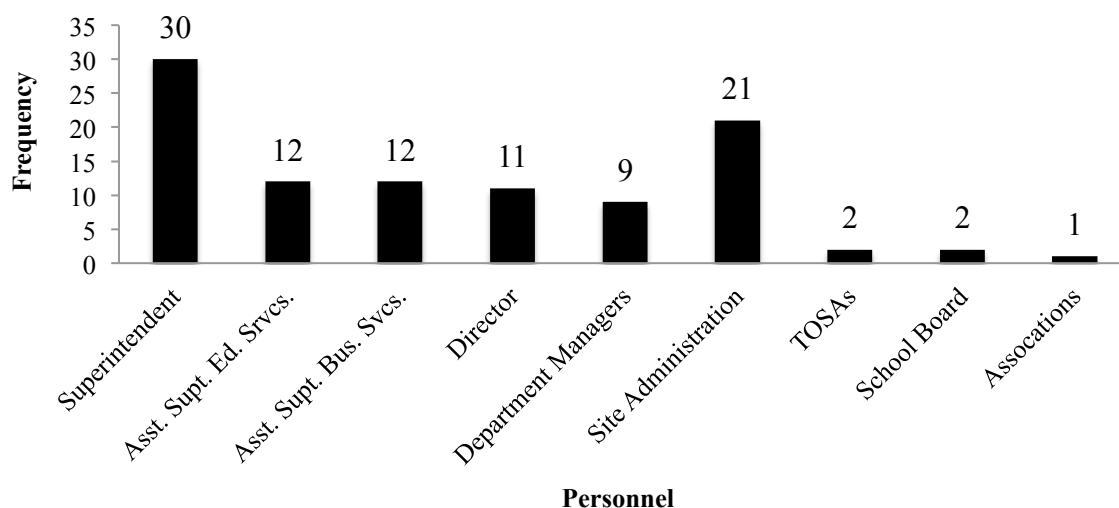
Services, and Director sharing the lead as shown in Figure 7. One respondent was a superintendent and school principal.



*Figure 7.* Bar chart showing district personnel who take the lead in LCAP development.

Some districts had more than one lead.

The original 32 respondents also answered Question 3, “Who ensures the actions and services described in the LCAP are implemented?” This question also provided the survey participants with the opportunity to select more than one person. According to those surveyed, many people in the organization ensure that the actions and services described in the district’s LCAP are implemented. The majority agreed that the superintendent was responsible as reported in 94% of the surveys ( $n = 30$ ) as well as assistant superintendents of educational services and business, directors, department managers, and site administrators. Others responsible were teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), associations, and the board of education (see Figure 8).



*Figure 8.* Bar chart showing district personnel responsible for ensuring the actions and services in their District's LCAP are implemented. Asst. Supt. Ed. Svcs. = Assistant Superintendent Educational Services; Asst. Supt. Bus. Svcs. = Assistant Superintendent Business Services

The majority of districts have not hired new personnel to support LCAP development with 56% ( $n = 18$ ) responding "No" to Question 4, and 44% ( $n = 14$ ) of the respondents stating "Yes" as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

*Have Districts Hired New Personnel to Support LCAP Development?*

Hired Personnel	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Yes	14	44%
No	18	56%

In order to determine if there were correlations between number of district LCAP goals and unduplicated percentage, budget, or enrollment of participating districts, three separate analyses were conducted using the LCAP survey results for Question 5.

A Spearman's rho correlation was completed between the number of district LCAP goals and percentage of unduplicated pupils by district. Since the calculated  $r$  is less than the  $r_{cv}$ , we accepted the null hypothesis. There is not a significant correlation ( $r(27) = .310, p < .05$ ) between the number of LCAP goals and percentage of unduplicated pupils by district (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Correlation Between Number of District Goals and Unduplicated Percentage*

Variable	Statistic	Number of LCAP Goals	Unduplicated Percentage
Number of Goals	Correlation Coefficient	1	.195
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.310
	$n$	29	29
Unduplicated Percentage	Correlation Coefficient	.195	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.310	
	$n$	29	29

*Note.* Correlation is not significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman's rho correlation was also completed between the number of district LCAP goals and district budget. There is not a significant correlation ( $r(28) = .271, p < .05$ ) between number of district LCAP goals and district budget as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

*Correlation Between Number of LCAP Goals and District Budget*

Variable	Statistic	Number of LCAP Goals	District Budget
Number of Goals	Correlation Coefficient	1	.271
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.147
	<i>n</i>	30	30
District Budget	Pearson Correlation	.271	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.147	
	<i>n</i>	30	30

*Note.* Correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A final Spearman's rho correlation was completed for Question 5 between the number of district LCAP goals and district student enrollment. Since the calculated  $r$  is less than the  $r_{cv}$ , there is not a significant correlation ( $r(16) = .418$   $p < .05$ ) between district LCAP goals and district student enrollment as indicated in Table 14.

Table 14

*Correlation Between Number of LCAP Goals and District Enrollment*

Variable	Statistic	Number of LCAP Goals	District Enrollment
Number of Goals	Correlation Coefficient	1	.418
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.084
	<i>n</i>	18	18
District Enrollment	Correlation Coefficient	.418	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	
	<i>n</i>	18	18

*Note.* Correlation is not significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

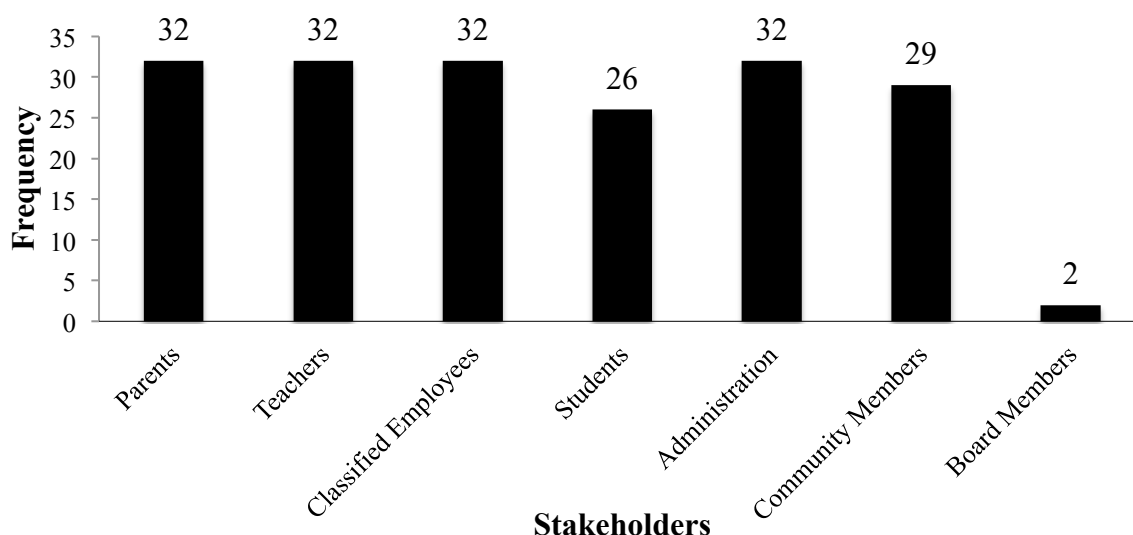
When asked, “Did your County Office of Education review your LCAP prior to Board approval in June 2016?” in Question 6, the majority, 97% ( $n = 30$ ), indicated “Yes.” One participant indicated “No”(see Table 15).

Table 15

*Did County Office of Education (COE) Review District LCAP?*

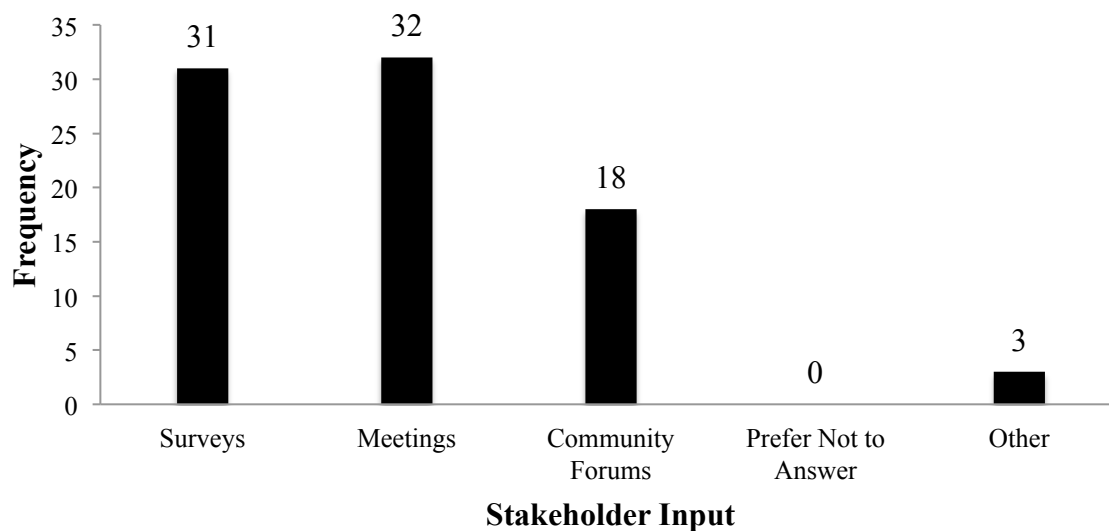
COE Review	$n$	Percentage
Yes	30	97%
No	1	3%

All of the participants who responded to the LCAP survey ( $n = 32$ ) indicated that parents, teachers, classified employees, and administration have provided input in their district’s LCAP. Twenty-six survey respondents reported they included students, while 29 incorporated input from community members. Two indicated on Question 7 that their school board was included in their district’s LCAP as shown in Figure 9.



*Figure 9.* Bar chart showing stakeholders included in district LCAPs. Multiple stakeholders are included in districts reporting.

Question 8 of the LCAP survey asked, “How has your district solicited input from stakeholders?” Participants had the opportunity to select from five choices: (a) community forums, (b) meetings, (c) other – please specify, (d) prefer not to answer, or (e) surveys. Thirty-two responses were gathered from this question resulting in the data displayed in Figure 10. Districts reported more than one method of data collection. One hundred percent of the respondents indicated they solicited LCAP input at meetings. Additionally, 97% ( $n = 31$ ) shared that surveys were a way in which they gathered input from stakeholders, while 56% ( $n = 18$ ) indicated that they used community forums. Furthermore, the following three methods of stakeholder input were utilized: (a) crowdsourcing, (b) ThoughtExchange engagement, and (c) through use of the existing meetings or committees, not just events focused on the LCAP.



*Figure 10.* Bar chart showing the method of gathering input from stakeholders for the development of District LCAPs.

In order to determine if there were correlations between number of stakeholder engagement opportunities and district budget, unduplicated percentage, or enrollment of participating districts, three separate analyses were conducted using the LCAP survey results for Question 9. A Spearman's rho correlation was completed between the number of stakeholder opportunities and the district budget. Since the calculated  $r$  is less than the  $r_{cv}$ , we accepted the null hypothesis. There is not a significant correlation ( $r(27) = .359, p < .05$ ) between the number of stakeholder engagement opportunities and district budget (see Table 16).

Table 16

*Correlation Between District Budget and Number of Stakeholder Opportunities*

Variable	Statistic	Budget	Stakeholder Opportunities
Budget	Correlation Coefficient	1	.359
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.056
	<i>n</i>	29	29
Stakeholder Opportunities	Pearson Correlation	.359	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.056	
	<i>n</i>	29	29

*Note.* Correlation is not significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman's rho correlation was also completed between the number of stakeholder engagement opportunities and unduplicated student percentage. There is not a significant correlation ( $r(26) = .302, p < .05$ ) between the number of stakeholder opportunities and student enrollment as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

*Correlation Between Number of Stakeholder Opportunities and Unduplicated Percentage*

Variable	Statistic	Stakeholder Opportunities	Unduplicated Percentage
Stakeholder Opportunities	Correlation Coefficient	1	.302
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.119
	<i>n</i>	28	28
Unduplicated Percentage	Correlation Coefficient	.302	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.119	
	<i>n</i>	28	28

*Note.* Correlation is not significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).



A final Spearman's rho correlation was completed for Question 9 between the number of stakeholder engagement opportunities and student enrollment. Since the calculated  $r$  is more than the  $r_{cv}$ , there is a significant correlation ( $r(16) = .532, p < .05$ ) between district LCAP goals and district student enrollment as indicated in Table 18.

Table 18

*Correlation Between Number of Stakeholder Opportunities and Student Enrollment*

Variable	Statistic	Stakeholder Opportunities	Student Enrollment
Stakeholder Opportunities	Correlation Coefficient	1	.532*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
	$n$	18	18
Student Enrollment	Correlation Coefficient	.532*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	
	$n$	18	18

*Note.* \* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

The question, "Who facilitated stakeholder engagement at the district level?" provided the opportunity for respondents to select all that applied and to provide input for others not included on the survey list. In 72% of all responding districts, the superintendent facilitated stakeholder engagement. Additionally, the assistant superintendents of educational services and business shared in the responsibility of facilitating stakeholder engagement, as well as directors, teachers, principals, and outside consultants (see Figure 11).

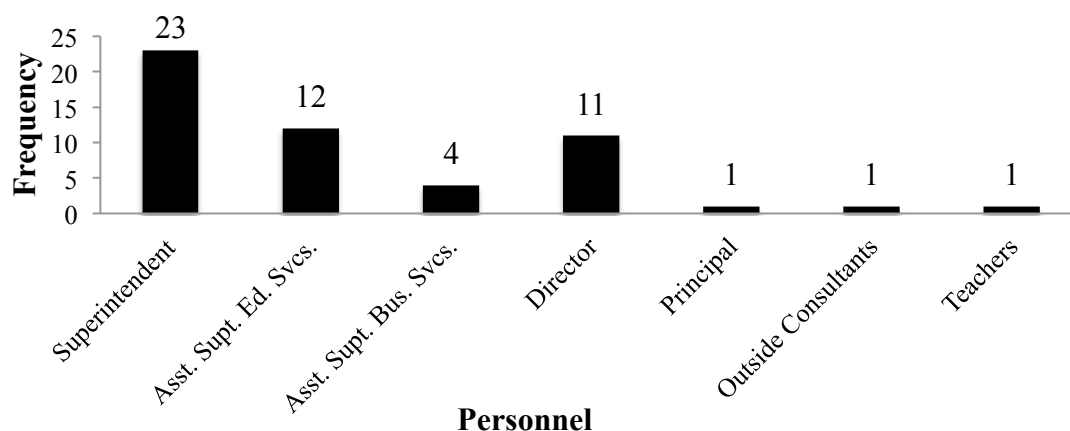


Figure 11. Bar chart showing districts' selection of one or more facilitators of stakeholder engagement.

Thirty-one survey participants responded to Question 11, "Did stakeholders have the opportunity to analyze district data?" Thirty of the district personnel responding to the survey indicated "Yes" (97%); the stakeholders did have the opportunity to analyze district data, while one shared the stakeholders did not, as shown in Table 19.

Table 19

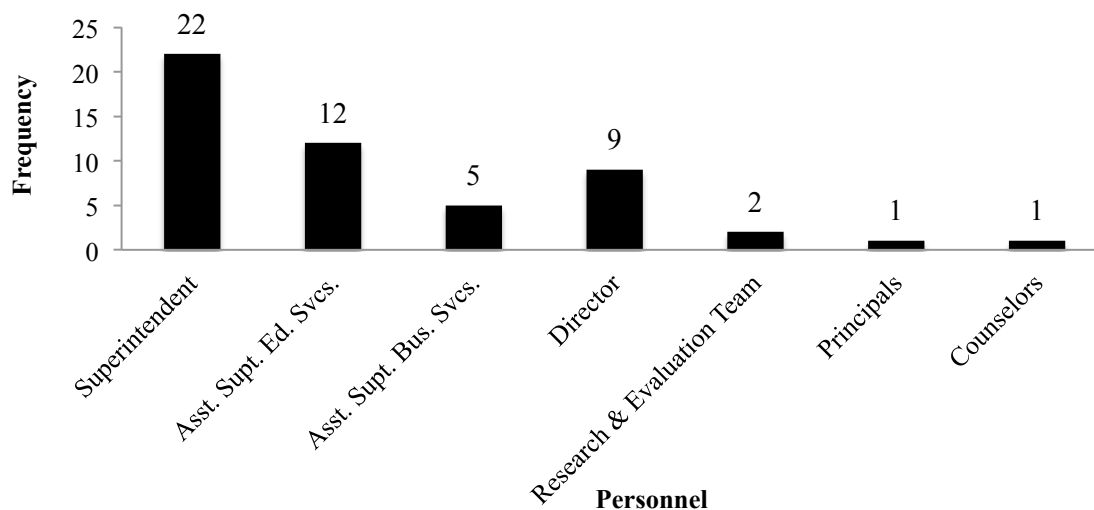
*Did Stakeholders Analyze District Data?*

Data Review	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Yes	30	97%
No	1	3%

Note. *n* = Number of participants responding to question. Percentage is of total responses.

Twenty-nine participants provided an answer to Question 15, "Who is responsible for monitoring the metrics in your LCAP?" As in previous questions, the participants were provided the opportunity to select district personnel from the list provided on the survey and to list additional personnel. The superintendent was responsible for monitoring the metrics 76% of the

time, ( $n = 22$ ). The additional personnel listed as “other” were principals and counselors. Please note the responses of 29 participants in Figure 12.



*Figure 12.* Bar chart showing district personnel responsible for monitoring LCAP metrics.

Respondents had the opportunity to select all that applied.

Survey participants had the opportunity to provide multiple responses to Question 19 as they shared who wrote their district’s LCAP. Fifty-nine percent indicated that the superintendent wrote the district LCAP, ( $n = 17$ ), while 41%, ( $n = 13$ ), shared the assistant superintendent of education wrote the LCAP. District directors wrote the LCAP at a frequency of 35%, ( $n = 11$ ), and 19%, ( $n = 6$ ) indicated their assistant superintendent of business wrote the LCAP. Additionally, respondents indicated others in the district such as the leadership team, an outside consultant, teachers, coordinators, the board of trustees, and the LCAP Advisory Committee wrote their district’s LCAP.

As evidenced in the thirty responses to Question 23, many people have an impact on district LCAPs. Twenty-seven of the 28 (96%) respondents indicated the superintendent had an

impact on their district's LCAP. Assistant superintendents (46%,  $n = 13$ ) and directors (32%,  $n = 9$ ) were also noted as having an impact on their district's LCAP (see Table 20)

Table 20

*Number of Staff Members That Have an Impact on LCAP*

Title	Number of Staff				
	0	1	2	3	4+
Superintendent	1	27	0	0	0
Assistant Superintendent	5	13	1	2	1
Director	4	9	4	1	5
Coordinator	4	4	2	2	3
Principals	0	0	0	0	2
Teachers	0	0	0	0	3
Parents	0	0	0	0	2
Classified	0	0	0	0	2
CBO	0	1	0	0	0
School Staff	0	0	0	0	1

Further analysis was completed in the examination of the open-ended questions from the LCAP survey, responses from five personal interviews, and review of district LCAPs.

### **Findings of Qualitative Research**

In addition to the quantitative data previously reported, the researcher used qualitative data to investigate how districts across the state are meeting the needs of California's most at-risk students through LCAP development and implementation. This chapter continues with the

presentation of the results obtained from four open-ended LCAP survey questions, five personal interviews with district superintendents, and the review of five district LCAPs.

Question 12 of the LCAP survey was open ended. Sixteen respondents chose to provide an answer to the question, “The State of California has many ways in which to monitor actions and services in district LCAPs. What local measures are used in your district to determine the success of actions and services as outlined in your district’s LCAP?” Of the 16 responding, 56% ( $n = 9$ ) indicated they used district benchmarks to determine the success of the actions and services as outlined in their district’s LCAP. Thirty-seven percent ( $n = 6$ ) shared that they used surveys to determine the success of the actions and services. Additionally, 37% of the participants ( $n = 6$ ) use attendance data to demonstrate success. Please see Table 21 for detailed responses.

Table 21

*Local Measures Used to Determine the Success of Actions and Services Outlined in LCAP*

Participant Number	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Benchmarks, attendance, suspensions, CAASPP
Participant 2	Surveys, and locally adopted benchmark tests
Participant 3	Math and ELA scores, attendance data, and behavior data
Participant 4	Currently being developed
Participant 5	Academic growth using local measures tracking of parent participation
Participant 6	Social emotional learning participation by parents at meetings
Participant 7	We use both quantitative and qualitative measures. Suspensions, attendance, surveys, school visits, morale surveys, various sources for student achievement
Participant 8	Under development

Participant 9	The District has used multiple measures benchmarks for many years prior to the LCAP or LCFF. The measures vary by grade level.
Participant 10	Local assessments, local attendance tracking
Participant 11	Local surveys, observations, district and state test data
Participant 12	Attendance, Suspensions rates, Local ELA and Math Assessments, iReady, Parent participation numbers
Participant 13	Surveys, CAASPP, budget allocations
Participant 14	A timeline has been established to determine when to gather data (for review/analysis) as well as to determine monies spent
Participant 15	Classroom observation data, climate surveys
Participant 16	Attendance, discipline information, district assessments

Additionally, Question 13 was open ended. Table 22 provides the verbatim responses from the nine who responded to the question, “What program or model has proven to be the most successful for all students as measured by the metrics found in your district’s LCAP?” The responses varied from program models, to additional staff to technology support.

Table 22

*Program or Model that has Proven to be the most Successful for all Students as Measured by the District LCAP*

Participant Number	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Reading by third grade
Participant 2	Systemic model
Participant 3	Hiring of additional staff to reduce class size
Participant 4	We are not focused on programs, we are focused on systems. Our

	priority is solid instructional strategies and then we branch out from there. We have created a solid multi tiered system of support than ensures we are measuring the progress of all students. We are focused on mastery of skill and overall growth.
Participant 5	The District has maintained most of our curriculum and instructional practices from the past decade and made only minor adjustments during the CCSS adoption.
Participant 6	Increase technology embedded instruction and tools
Participant 7	Ongoing and intensive PD, in-classroom coaching, and hands-on experience for teachers.
Participant 8	Too early to make a determination
Participant 9	Additional staff to handle mental health, socio-emotional and counseling needs appears to made the greatest difference, although it is hard to determine for sure.

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Question 14 was also an open-ended question in the LCAP survey. It asked, “What program or model has proven to be most effective for English learners as measured by the metrics found in your district’s LCAP?” The majority of participants indicated that they are still working to develop an effective program or model (40%,  $n = 4$ ). Thirty percent shared additional professional development has proven to be most effective for English learners as measured by the metrics found in their district’s LCAP. Two respondents shared that their English learner coordinator or coach has proven to be effective. Additionally, two indicated that time specified for Designated and Integrated English language instruction has been effective for their English learners. Table 23 shows the 10 specific responses to Question 14.

Table 23

*Program or Model That has Proven to be Most Effective for English Learners as Measured by the Metrics Found in the District's LCAP*

Participant Number	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Still working on this one
Participant 2	Still monitoring
Participant 3	Hiring of EL Coordinators and support staff
Participant 4	Designated and Integrated ELD. New systems for reclassification. Training for teachers.
Participant 5	We are not focused on a program, but we are focused on teaching all K-5 teachers how to effectively work with EL students and to understand the new ELD standards and how to effectively utilize integrated and designated ELD.
Participant 6	Professional development to support teachers as they deliver instruction to better support ELs.
Participant 7	Increase Response to Intervention and leveled Reading.
Participant 8	This is still a work in progress, but generally it is the same as above. We are not where we'd like to be (yet) with regard to ELLs.
Participant 9	Too early to make a determination.
Participant 10	The addition of instructional staff, including curriculum coaches and digital learning coaches, as well as the addition of several dual immersion programs.

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LCAP survey Question 16 asked, "What are the top three expenditures in your LCAP that are funded with Supplemental and/or Concentration grant dollars?" The answers to this question varied from hiring additional staff to providing additional funds for community outreach. Thirty-two percent ( $n = 6$ ) shared that funding intervention teachers was among the top three



expenditures in their district's LCAP. While 26% ( $n = 5$ ) shared that professional development was among the top three expenditures in their district's LCAP. Twenty-one percent of the participants ( $n = 4$ ) shared that expenditures for teachers on special assignment (TOSAs) were found in their district's top three expenditures of Supplemental and/or Concentration funds. Furthermore, 21% of the participants ( $n = 4$ ) indicated that funds to support class size reduction and/or instructional assistants were found in the top three expenditures. More details to Question 16 can be found in Table 24.

Table 24

*The Top Three Expenditures in the LCAP That are Funded with Supplemental and/or Concentration Grant*

Participant Number	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Additional staff to support intervention
Participant 2	TOSA support, professional development, instruction resources
Participant 3	Professional Development, intervention, class room size
Participant 4	Intervention in reading and math
Participant 5	Additional staff (GE classrooms) counselors and psychologists, reading specialists
Participant 6	Teachers for smaller classes and to provide additional support for struggling readers. Network school partners. School site security officers.
Participant 7	Instructional coaches, counselors, annual allocation for technology
Participant 8	Professional Development. New hires i.e. Math teacher, Medical and A - G Academy Programs
Participant 9	Instructional aide time, reading specialist, EL support aides

Participant 10	Extra teachers to reduce combo classes, student support personnel – aides, Technology devices
Participant 11	Response to Intervention, Counseling, PE instructional assistant
Participant 12	Professional learning for teachers, extended learning opportunities for students (summer & after school), interventions
Participant 13	Curriculum coach (math and science), PD in English Language Arts, smaller class sizes
Participant 14	Personnel, Technology, additional instructional minutes
Participant 15	Summer School (staffing, materials, etc.), Teachers on Special Assignment, Classified Staffing
Participant 16	Community Outreach
Participant 17	Staff (electives), Staff (student support), Transportation
Participant 18	Personnel – Mental Health (Behavior Interventionists, Behavior Health Aides, Psychologists), librarians and nurses, Resources – Supplemental instructional materials and supplies. External providers to enhance educational programs.
Participant 19	Student support services, After school programs, retaining qualified teachers

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The researcher continued the study by completing five personal interviews with superintendents across California. The 10 interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

The researcher initially asked, “In what ways, if any, have changes been made in staffing at your district office as a result of LCFF?” The responses can be found to this first question in Table 25.

Table 25

*Superintendent Responses to the Changes in Staffing at the District Office as a Result of the Local Control Funding Formula*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	“No changes whatsoever. We don’t have any money to do that.”
District F	Not coded
District H	“We realized mid-year last year that we were in desperate need of a controller for the accountability. So, we're adding a person whose entire job is to account for LCAP dollars and to make sure they reconcile with the business office. They'll be working with the state and federal programs' office, but they'll be reconciling with the business office to make sure that the dollars match.”
District I	“No.”
District B	“No. We have not added any staff to support LCAP.”

The second question posed by the researcher was, “Who wrote your LCAP? Approximately how long did it take to write? Did you have co-leads in the process?” The results from the first and third part of this question are found in Table 26. Table 27 provides the more information about the length of the LCAP writing process.

Table 26

*Superintendent Responses to “Who Wrote Your District’s LCAP?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p data-bbox="431 363 505 396">“I do.</p> <p data-bbox="431 436 1317 506">Plus our county Office of Education is really wonderful in Humboldt County and they assigned a person to work with us on our LCAP.”</p>
District F	<p data-bbox="431 583 1281 690">“I’m one of the lead writers on the LCAP because I help facilitate stakeholder meetings. It’s really easy with staff and board because you’re in contact with them all the time.”</p>
District H	<p data-bbox="431 768 1325 982">“We have an office that is in charge of that. Under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, we have a director of instruction and a director of federal programs who work together. There are more than just those two as well. I think she (Assistant Superintendent of Education Services) has a little mini team at C&amp;I (Curriculum and Instruction) that is putting it together.”</p>
District I	<p data-bbox="431 1060 1325 1388">“The Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. He has taken complete ownership of it. He is literally the one plugging away until the wee hours of the morning and by no means is a procrastinator, but there’s a lot of changes that come in as a result of this meeting or that meeting, and a new template every year. I think it has changed every single year. He’s taken responsibility for that writing piece and works in conjunction with the county to get feedback to ensure that they are going to approve it so there are no hiccups on our end. Of course, we do all the stakeholder input. He is the one who ultimately writes it.”</p>
District B	<p data-bbox="431 1465 505 1499">“I do.”</p>

Table 27

*Superintendent Responses to “How Long Did it Take to Write the LCAP”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p>“Well, LCAP is a year-long process for me. There are parts of the year where I am doing research. I am collecting data and then probably a three to four month period that I'm actually writing it, revising it, reviewing it. So, I'd say three to four months for the actual writing of it, but I also work with my budget manager, who assists me with that as well, because there's obviously a lot of budget issues that are involved in LCAP.”</p>
District F	<p>“You just have to remember throughout the year to spread it out. Okay, in the fall we need to be dealing with LCAP. We need to be dealing with it in the spring and the winter, so that when you're ready to actually write goals, you are ready.</p> <p>This year, we had all new goals. So it was little more work, but that was based on feedback we got from the stakeholders. So, time wise, it's a little bit throughout the year, and when you actually sit down and write it, you're talking about maybe eight to twelve hours of actual time.”</p>
District H	Not coded
District I	<p>“He really starts in January when we start our stakeholder meetings, and if you were asking for complete days, I'd have to say probably at least ten. If you were to just parcel out ten full days ... It might be like five hours here, four hours there.”</p>

District B

“That's a really difficult question to answer because you just don't sit down and write it. You know, it's kind of like a dissertation. You go out and get information and then you bring it back and you look at what you've got, and you think, oh, we need to tweak this. But we start actually looking at it for next year in about December. Because I like to take a mid-year update to the board, kind of how we're doing towards the goals. That sort of forces us to re-look at the goals. And then in January, February, March, I sit down with my leadership team, which is generally my principals, and we go through each goal and say, "Okay. Individually, by schools, how have you addressed these goals? And then let's look at it as a district.

We start having our community meetings in March. Well, I do have a community update in February, do community input meetings in March and April, and then we sit down again as a leadership team in early May and kind of take all of that and draft it into our new LCAP or our revised LCAP.”

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The third interview question was also asked in three parts: “What type of surveys did you use to gather information for your LCAP? What was your response rate? Was the information useful?” Table 28 provides data to the first part of Question 3. Results from the second part of the question can be found in Table 29. Finally, Table 30 represents the responses to the final part of Question 3.

Table 28

*Superintendent Responses to the Types of Surveys used by their District to Gather LCAP**Information*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p>“A couple years ago, we started out with doing staff surveys, entire district staff surveys, as well as seventh and eighth grade students. All parents/guardians were sent a link to fill out the survey online. [We] got very, very little response, so that really was not effective. So, this past year we did something different. Every one of our school sites does a site counsel survey each year. So what I did was I took those surveys and we actually streamlined them so all four schools have a very similar survey. Then I included really pertinent LCAP questions in each of their surveys so that when they're filling out for their school, they're actually filling out for me and LCAP as well. I can glean data from their site surveys and not have to bug parents to try to do another survey.”</p>
District F	<p>“We brought it to the Site Council. They are our oversight committee. They provide important feedback and they conduct all the surveys we do, whether it is staff, community, or parents.”</p>
District H	<p>“We had a school climate survey. We sent a survey to each level of employee, so we had classified, certificated, administrative, and parent.”</p>
District I	<p>“We, of course, had our parent guardian survey. We also had our staff survey that went out to everybody – administration, classified, and certificated. We also did a technology survey. We used an organization called BrightBytes.”</p>

District B

“The first year we did a survey. Just a paper survey we sent home.

So the next year we did a community café model. Every principal was responsible for inviting at least six people from their school, and we met at one school. I had my principals lead the different tables, and they just had a conversation about our three target goals for our LCAP. It was kind of an open-ended: 1) What do you think about these three goals? 2) How you think we're addressing them? 3) What could we do better?

This year we kind of did a meeting kind of like that, but then we did an online survey, which was better, because people could just access that either on their phone or on their computer. I still don't think I have the magic bullet for how to get feedback, but we've tried different things.”

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Table 29

*Superintendent Responses to the Survey Response Rate*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	“We got a lot of data this year.”
District F	“My goodness, it seemed like they had at least 60 to 70% response rate, because they had linked it to a text.”
District H	<p>“The parent response rate was phenomenal. We set up kiosks in the offices. We were encouraging parents to come and giving them little tchotchkes if they would come and do the survey.</p> <p>So the parent response was really good. Classified and certificated were not as good.”</p>
District I	“I am guessing it was somewhere in the neighborhood of 25 to 30%.”
District B	“Participation, I guess if you just counted surveys, was okay.”

Table 30

*Superintendent Responses to “Was the Survey Information Useful?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	“Yes.”
District F	<p data-bbox="431 489 1321 598">“Yes. It really is. One of them had to do with the Board. They're a big voice in this and they have certain goals that they have and they want to do. So yeah.</p> <p data-bbox="431 636 1321 856">People feel safe here. The climate is good here. Communication always comes up. I don't know why that it is. It seems like you think that you have communicated in seven different ways, but there's always a deficit in the feedback that you get. It is ... You need to communicate more, whether it's teacher-parent, administration to the school, whatever.</p> <p data-bbox="431 894 1321 1003">We're putting communication under volunteerism. We have a big volunteer push going forward this next year, and that was an LCAP goal.”</p>
District H	<p data-bbox="431 1077 1321 1297">“Really what we've done with our LCAP is to augment study safety and intervene in terms of difficult behaviors. So, the parent and student surveys really were a lot about whether or not kids felt safe, whether or not they felt there were adequate services for mental health and counseling. Those kinds of things led directly to us adding teams to our schools.”</p>
District I	<p data-bbox="431 1371 1321 1591">“Yes. It was useful. We really like the information from stakeholders because it just kind of our dipstick to see if we think what we're doing right is what parents and guardians think what we're doing right. We learned some things like they feel welcome at the schools, and they feel comfortable going there. We also learned that they don't feel like they really understand the Common Core.”</p>
District B	<p data-bbox="431 1665 1321 1772">“It was because I could disaggregate it by school and by level, which was kind of nice. I asked specific questions and just having that data already in a database was easier to manipulate.”</p>

The fourth question in the personal interview was, “What has your district done to improve stakeholder engagement as a result of LCFF?” The participant responses are found in Table 31.

Table 31

*Superintendent Responses to “What has your District Done to Improve Stakeholder Engagement as a Result of LCFF?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p>“We did the average, please come and talk about the LCAP and hardly anybody shows up. We got maybe two or three parents to come to a couple meetings and it was just really not working at all. So this past year I changed the format. What I did was, when each of our schools had their site council meetings once a month; they also did a slash LCAP stakeholder meeting as well. It's a site council meeting as well as an LCAP stakeholder meeting.</p> <p>I developed a schedule for my principals to take a look at what I want covered at each of those meetings. They report back to me what their stakeholders have reported to them. So this past year worked really well because I got data every single month. I got information and more. There was more feedback than we'd ever had before. We started getting other parents coming into the site council slash LCAP meetings. There was more involvement. It worked really well for us. So we really increased parent participation by using this format. So it was just basically dovetailing on an already established meeting that everybody knows about. It worked really well for us.”</p>
District F	<p>“They get feedback in the parent bulletin, but it's really about the one-on-one interaction with people. The surveys are great, because people do write comments. The site council takes all comments, good and bad, and posts so that everybody gets to read it.</p> <p>We had an incredible response on the surveys, but I think it was because it was linked to a text.”</p>
District H	<p>“Well, I think probably the survey would be the big one. One of the things that we've added is a parent empowerment ... It's like</p>

coursework for parents.

It's more like parent leadership. So we've used our account funds to develop a parent academy where they'll learn about what are A-G requirements, what are my kids going to be expected to know and be able to do by the end of their high school career, those kinds of things. But it's the 'trainer of trainers' idea, so we give these parents nice blue polo shirts and they're lead parents, and they go out and they've been training other parents.

They have been showing up at every local community fair we have. Let's say the YMCA has their big extravaganza in the park? The parents are the ones at our booth, selling our schools.

So they've really engaged them in meaningful ways. It's kind of shocking, because when you come up to them you think, 'Oh, these are staff members,' and then you realize, 'These are parents.' That was a use of LCAP funds, very intensive parent training. Weeks of working with parents to improve their knowledge of the school system and then having them help others.

This is building parent knowledge. A parent university kind of a concept.

I wouldn't say its touched thousands, I would say it's touched those parents and those they touch. So the next step is, it'll keep growing and growing."

#### District I

"The surveys are definitely new and we're pretty much to the point where none of them now have to be paper so they're all electronic and if you don't have the technology at home you can come into our schools and take the surveys. So that's really good. We deploy, through Facebook and social media, the link to the survey so that they can do it that way.

We have our LCAP 2020 group, our stakeholders group for the district. So in creation of the LCAP, we have a representative from every school that's a parent or guardian, certificated, classified, and administrative. There are about 40 people who actually create the LCAP. We review data and then we review the things that we're doing to improve that data and the stakeholders get to really have a say in it if they find those things meaningful or not."

District B            “I would say the biggest success is people just know more about what we do now. I feel like they really didn't know too much about what we did. I mean, they knew what their child did in their child's classroom, but as a district, they really didn't know what the district did.

Since we are so spread out, each community has its very own unique personality. Years ago, each of our little communities were their own school district.

I think the biggest success I come back to is that people just know more about what we're doing. We're starting to retain more kids in our middle school and then going into high school. So, it's slow, but you know, we're definitely seeing growth in that area.”

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The fifth question consisted of two parts. This first question was, “What is the biggest success your district experienced through the stakeholder engagement process this year? The second part to question five was, “What was the biggest challenge?” The first part of the question can be found in Table 32.

Table 32

*Superintendent Responses to “What was the Biggest Success Your District Experienced Through the Stakeholder Engagement Process?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	“We just tagged LCAP onto an existing meeting that we're already going to be attending anyway. [To capture] at least those five parents at each school site that are members of this council. The hype really expanded to more parents. So we had like up to ten parents maybe at some council meeting that would never have been there in the past. It wouldn't have been that way at all. Far more than ever attended just the single LCAP district meeting.”
District F	“I think letting them know in advance through Board agendas. I have more staff participate anytime it is on the Board agenda. They will come just because of that item.”
District H	“The leadership of a group of parents.”
District I	“We established a nice way of empowering our principals to have stakeholder meetings. We went to a couple of them just so the people knew who we were.”
District B	“I would say the biggest success is people just know more about what we do now.”

The responses to the second part of question five are shown in Table 33.

Table 33

*Superintendent Responses to “What was the Biggest Challenge Your District Experienced Through the Stakeholder Engagement Process?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	“Initially just getting people to be involved.”
District F	<p>“I still think the biggest challenge is having the community stakeholders really see that there's value in their voice or just being part of the conversation.</p> <p>I just don't think they believe, yet, that LCAP is designed for their input. So, I still think we haven't really got down to that buy-in yet. Each year we've increased it a little bit. The first two years, nobody showed up to the LCAP meetings. My principal and I were the only two. We set up the gym, we set up the big projector, we had this whole plan, we had refreshments, and nobody came. Two years in a row, nobody came.”</p>
District H	“Not everyone on our own staff answered the survey.”
District I	“We didn’t have one [a challenge] this year.”
District B	“It has been difficult to engage people in the process. They are happy to get the information, but I don’t really find that they are engaged in the process as much as I would like them to be.”

Question number six of the personal interview asked, “What local measures do you use to track the success of the actions and services in your LCAP? Results are found in Table 34.

Table 34

*Superintendent Responses to “What Local Measures Do You use to Track the Success of the Actions and Services in your LCAP?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p>“We’re tracking re-designated EL's and percent of students meeting or exceeding standards. We also look at parent participation. How many parents are attending meetings? How many have returned surveys? Another local measure is students’ perception of school and school climate.</p> <p>We also track the amount of time the teachers are using electronic devices or technology in their classrooms for instruction.”</p>
District F	<p>“The surveys are one, but we also look at benchmarks and use some of the assessments. The academics are really easy, because there are a lot of tools for academics. Some of the other goals that we have are based on observation and anecdotal information that we get back from people. So the number, the times they meet with children or families or what have you.”</p>
District H	<p>“We have the climate survey. We have the parent survey. Then we have interim assessments we give throughout the year.”</p>



District I	<p>“Our assistant superintendent developed a shared Google doc. Each month he, his directors, and the principals have to enter information into the document. They're required to enter their attendance rates, their truancy rate, suspension days, suspension incidents, and <i>i-Ready</i> data three times a year. We also have district assessments, by units, that they have to enter six times a year.</p> <p>We also keep classroom walkthrough data. We use a program called digiCOACH. It's fabulous. We went from using Google docs for that to digiCOACH. It's better, because I can look at. I have a requirement that every admin team gives written feedback to every teacher twice a month, using digiCOACH. I can go in and see, if you have 40 teachers, do you have 80 pieces of feedback? If you don't, then my conversation is, ‘Do you need me to help you with your calendar?’ It’s never about, ‘I got you’ with teachers. It's about, how do we move forward the conversation around instruction and first best instruction and are we giving honest feedback? Are we helping teachers move forward?”</p>
District B	<p>“We have really stuck with the state measures. Just really getting a handle on those, making sure that all my principals know that those are state measures and this is how you can take that data and analyze it, has been a big focus. So we really haven't established any local measures per se. We're sticking with the state ones for now, which is good, because we're getting people who understand those now. I don't think they did in the past.”</p>

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Table 35 reflects the answers to the question, “What actions or services described in your LCAP have proven to be the most successful for all students?”

Table 35

*Superintendent Responses to ““What Actions or Services Described in your LCAP have Proven to be the Most Successful for All Students?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p>“I think hiring the EL-coordinators. We have two EL co-coordinators, one for that side of town and one for this side of town and a designated EL instruction time. We've seen some big increases our CELDT scores, year after year so, that's been a positive thing. A big chunk of our Supplemental Concentration money is used to hire additional staff to reduce class sizes.</p> <p>Another thing I should mention, a few years ago we received a grant for counseling. So it was a federal grant and we were able to hire counselors for every school site. We have seen good results. We saw a reduction in suspensions and behavioral issues in school sites. Plus, also implementing PBIS into our schools.”</p>
District F	<p>“Things we had reduced like counseling, athletics, and PE enrichment. We now have a full-time band-music person and resident artists that we bring on campus. We also have an art elective.”</p>
District H	<p>“A behavior support team. So the concept is that, the behavior support team is at the school, at the same time as each other. So it's a mental health slash socio-emotional learning support team that are all present at the same time to see the same things and to work together to support kids. It involves a school psychologist per school.</p> <p>Every school has a school psychologist, a school counselor, a behavioral health assistant, and a behavior interventionist. Those four people work together. The thing is, we've had extreme growth in acting out behaviors, erratic, difficult. Won't go to class, won't get off the roof, won't ... it's growing exponentially, very quickly here. The problems continue to escalate even with these teams in place.”</p>
District I	<p>“We hired counselors and are intentionally developing a program based on the Association of School Counselors. We also have our academic coaches and a Foster Youth liaison.”</p>

District B

“I think that the focus on English language acquisition has been huge. The other big focus of ours has been climate and culture in the schools. So we've done a district wide focus on positive behavior program. We started that at the elementary school [level] with a grant that funded a couple of our schools. And then we got another grant in collaboration with two other districts.

So it's district wide now. So every staff member classified, certificated is being trained in PBIS, trauma, informed care, compassionate care systems, those kind of things. Because we have a lot of traumatized kids in the district, whether it's broken families or alcoholism. There are just a lot of dysfunctional families. Our teachers do not come to the classroom knowing how to deal with those problems.”

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The eighth question asked was, “What actions or services described in your LCAP has proven to be the most successful for English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals, and foster youth?” Responses are shown in Table 36.

Table 36

*Superintendent Responses to “What Actions or Services Described in your District’s LCAP have Proven to be the Most Successful for English Learners, Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Meals, or Foster Youth?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p>“We have additional staff to keep our class sizes small. We are also pulling in classroom aides for the school with high needs to help with instruction.”</p>
District F	<p>“All of our goals are district-wide and the services are for all the students.”</p>
District H	<p>“We have used the LCAP to create distinguishing practices, like academies. So we have a cluster of schools that are visual and performing arts academies, a cluster that are STEAM academies, a cluster that are project-based learning, and dual-immersion. Every school has a signature practice that they market around. Funding has been in part through the LCAP.</p> <p>Actually, the LCAP pays for part of a gap-filling group that makes sure that kids have bus fare if they're homeless or just food, housing, and clothing.</p> <p>I think LCAP has helped us to make sure that the emotional needs are met in a more appropriate way. That's probably the number one. The behavior support teams are huge for the kids that were outliers, that were not being successful, that were not able to remain in the classroom because of behavioral issues. The academies are a big piece of our ability to compete. I think they're engaging for kids. Kids are loving them. We've funded the music teachers in part with LCAP. We've also been able to secure outside donations for all the instruments.”</p>
District I	<p>“We have an instructional coach who's focused on the instruction on teachers and their ability to appropriately use Integrated and Designated ELD time. She does trainings by grade level, so very small groups. She does one to one. She does very large groups. That's been very important.</p>

We have a foster youth liaison who sets up separate services and really works with social workers to ensure kids have what they need. Whether that's transportation, clothing, [or] school supplies. She does extra things for them, as far as, around holidays and those times where people give gifts and those kinds of things. It's really wonderful having someone just lookout for those kids who are usually most deprived by our system and unrecognized. She gives them a face and a name in our district and really spends the time on a group that's our neediest group.

Students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. I would say our focus is on best first instruction. We work with a group called NCUST. It's the National Collaborative for Urban School Transformation. That group has really helped our principals here learn how to move a school forward. We focused our reading around students in poverty and English learner students and set goals around that. Really working with that collaborative to keep our focus on that whole school reform has been very beneficial to us."

#### District B

"All of our actions and services are for all the kids, because we have such a high number of unduplicated students.

We definitely have used some of the LCAP money to support Dual Immersion for our English learners, because we've kept those class sizes really small. There are about 15 to 17 kids in a class."

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Question number nine asked, "How has the LCAP helped to improve student outcomes and close the achievement gap in your district?" The responses can be found in Table 37.

Table 37

*Superintendent Responses to “How has the LCAP Helped to Improve Student Outcomes and Close the Achievement Gap in your District?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	<p data-bbox="431 472 867 504">“I can't say that LCAP has helped.</p> <p data-bbox="431 548 1321 722">LCAP has really, I think helped to put the focus back in. Put us back on the track. Let's remember why we're here. We are an educational institution. Why are we serving these kids? What's our real purpose here? So it's helped in that regard. I think this kind of puts us back on course.</p> <p data-bbox="431 766 1321 982">What I'm glad [about] now is that we're looking at each school and you're comparing your school to your growth from last year to this year. I'm not being compared to every school across the state that has the same population and demographics as mine. I'm looking at my schools and how they did last year to this year and where can it go? Where do we need to go next year? So that's been better focus for us.</p>
District F	<p data-bbox="431 1060 1338 1199">“We have a tremendous population of kids who have IEPs that grew by [an average of] 45 points in math. We concentrated and put a lot of energy in helping with remediation in their day and it showed on their test results.”</p>
District H	<p data-bbox="431 1276 1330 1381">“Well, at some schools. Frankly, our achievement is all over the place. Some schools are flying, some schools are not flying. I don't know if I see a direct connect.</p> <p data-bbox="431 1425 1295 1493">Attendance has gone up, suspensions have gone down. But that's an overt effort, too.”</p>
District I	<p data-bbox="431 1570 1276 1640">“I don't think we really have enough data on the five by five yet to really say have we closed or not closed that achievement gap.”</p>

District B “So I think it's really made us focus on our three main goals. School plans align to the district goals, which never had been a requirement before.”

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The final question was, “What actions and services have not produced the intended outcomes and how have you adjusted?” Table 38 provides more information.

Table 38

*Superintendent Responses to “What Actions and Services Have Not Produced the Intended Outcomes and How Have You Adjusted?”*

District Code	Response Shared
District E	“Throwing money at technology for the sake of technology, without specific outcomes required.”
District F	<p>“People were frustrated about our math adoption. Which resulted in poor math scores.</p> <p>The only other area that really was obvious to us was enrichment classes, true enrichments. They wanted foreign language, which if I don't have anybody to teach it, we don't offer it.</p> <p>That happened with our sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, so we did add intramurals for our lower grades, which is great because we have two dismissal times. We have a bus run that leaves at 2:15 and we have a 3:15 [bus].</p> <p>Unfortunately, teachers were resorting back to study halls, free reading time, stuff like that and they weren't really enrichments. So then we added in a few that were really successful. Fishing was one of them. When the elective was over for the day, he was able to walk them over to the pond and tell them all about fishing.</p> <p>Bridge building, we had robotics, we had art, we have a lot of things that are enriching, but as you move through the year, you have to come back to what a teacher can actually accomplish, so some of those things get pared down.</p> <p>So I don't think we were totally successful. What we told the kids in</p>

the community is that we'll make these enrichments real attractive, real practical things. A few of them are, but I'd say most of them are just time fillers. How sad.”

District H “We had designed an intramural program, it didn't take off. We didn't have enough LCAP dollars to replicate it fairly to all students that should be receiving the service. We dropped it because it's like, ‘We can't reproduce this in 24 schools.’ It was done by the local Y and they can do five schools or so, but they couldn't do 24. So we dropped that.”

District I “I know we adjusted how we were first using our instructional coaches. They had a lot more autonomy. They were sort of connected to a school and we decided that that just did not work. We needed them to be more content focused, so we changed it to content driven and they now directly report to the assistant superintendent. They also work closely with the director, and there's a tracking system, if you will, for their time accountability. So that I can tell you that last year they had maybe 3,400 contacts with people. They're sitting down working one on one with people so that that accountability helped them kind of, not only keep track of their impact, but was also able to show our stakeholder group that it is worth investing \$500,000 dollars in these people because this is the impact that they are having on our instructional program.”

District B “I think the first year, we had way too many little goals. Like, we're going to grow by three percent; we're going to grow by five percent. When you look back at them, the second year, especially when they changed the template, kind of changed the measures, it was like, we're really not doing that anymore.”

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In addition to the personal interviews, the researcher examined the 2016 – 2019 Local Control and Accountability Plans from the districts personally visited. Detailed information about each district’s enrollment, unduplicated student percentage, and district budget are included in Table 39. Additionally, Table 40 includes the major initiatives found in one or more of the LCAPs reviewed.



Table 39

*District Enrollment, Unduplicated Percentage, and Budget*

District	Budget	Enrollment	Unduplicated Percentage
E	1 – 20 Mil	1,001 – 5,000	56 – 75%
F	1 – 20 Mil	1 – 500	41 – 55%
H	100 Mil+	10,001 – 30,000	76 – 100%
I	20 – 40 Mil	1,001 – 5,000	56 – 75%
B	1 – 20 Mil	1,001 – 5,000	56 – 75%

*Note.* Each district as assigned a letter. The budget, student enrollment, and unduplicated Student percentage is recorded above.

Table 40

*Review of District 2016 - 2017 Local Control and Accountability Plans*

Major programs/initiatives	District				
	E	F	H	I	B
Attendance Monitoring	X		X	X	X
CCSS Implementation	X	X	X	X	X
Classroom aides	X	X		X	X
Common Assessments	X	X	X	X	X
Counselors	X	X	X	X	
EL Coordinator/Coach	X		X	X	
Foster Youth /Community Liaison	X		X	X	
Early Childhood Education			X	X	X
Extended Kindergarten Day			X	X	X
Hardware/software	X	X	X	X	
Instructional Coaches	X		X	X	X
Music Program/Band	X	X	X	X	X
Physical Education Specialist		X	X	X	
Parent Communication	X	X	X	X	X
Professional development	X	X	X	X	X
Psychologists	X		X	X	
Reduced class size	X	X	X	X	X
Safe Facilities	X		X	X	X
Technology Support	X	X	X	X	X

### **Summary**

In this chapter, data was used to examine the relationships between districts and the way in which the Local Control and Accountability Plan development has affected the each districts' office. Additionally, stakeholder engagement practices were evaluated. Finally, the data collected from this study was used to determine how districts' instructional strategies and program models as described in their Local Control and Accountability Plans improved student outcomes. This researcher used separate instruments to this end.

The chapter began with descriptive statistics of the responses from the LCAP Survey. This chapter concluded with the presentation of the results of the qualitative data obtained from four open-ended LCAP survey questions and five personal interviews with district superintendents and data gathered from the review district Local Control and Accountability Plans. The next chapter will present discuss the findings, implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusions.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4, the presentation and analysis of data were reported. This chapter consists of a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusions. The purpose of the latter sections is to expand upon the information triangulated from the survey results, district interviews, and document review to provide a further understanding of best practices as they relate to the implementation of district's Local Control and Accountability Plans.

### **Summary of the Study**

This chapter begins with a summary of the purpose, structure, and major findings of the study. Implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusion are presented and discussed.

The purpose of this research study was to determine how districts across the state are meeting the needs of California's most at-risk students through LCAP development and implementation. The researcher sought to determine what changes were made to the organization of districts as a result of the implementation of LCFF. Additionally, the researcher examined stakeholder engagement activities used by districts to support LCAP development. Finally, this study analyzed proposed research-based instructional strategies, programs, procedures, and staffing as defined in district LCAPs to determine if said strategies are promoting increased student achievement and closing the achievement gap.

Multiple sources of data were used to examine the relationships between districts and the way in which the Local Control and Accountability Plan development has affected the staffing at the district office. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the responses from the LCAP survey. Presentation of the results of the qualitative data obtained from four open-ended LCAP

survey questions, five personal interviews with district superintendents, and five district 2016 - 2019 Local Control and Accountability Plans were also evaluated. The study included three research questions:

1. What changes have been made at the school district level as a result of LCFF?
2. Which instructional strategies and programs described in California school district's LCAP goals have resulted in improved academic achievement for English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals, and foster youth?
3. What strategies have districts used to improve stakeholder engagement as they work to develop their LCAPs with an aim towards continuous improvement?

The three research questions were answered both quantitatively and qualitatively. An in-depth analysis follows in the discussion of the findings.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

Previous researchers (Fuller & Tobben, 2014; Humphrey & Koppich, 2014; Wolf & Sands, 2016) have reviewed documents and conducted interviews to learn about the progress and implementation of district's Local Control and Accountability Plans throughout California. A discussion of the findings from the LCAP survey, personal interviews, and document analysis as well as detailed results of the research questions can be found in the following sections.

#### **Local Control and Accountability Plan Survey**

As stated in Chapter 4, an invitation was sent to 197 district superintendents across the state of California to participate in a 26 question online LCAP survey. These districts were randomly selected based on ASCA region. Additionally, one district superintendent was personally invited to participate. After several invitations to participate, 33 survey responses were collected from the 197 invited to participate. This resulted in a 17% response rate for the

LCAP electronic survey. By including the superintendent personally invited to participate, 34 district representatives responded to the survey.

### **Personal Interviews**

Five superintendents from districts of various sizes, percentage of unduplicated students, and location in California were interviewed. At the time of the study, the districts were located in five different ACSA regions from the Oregon to Mexico border and in between. The researcher personally met with superintendents responsible for one to 24 schools. Districts B, F, and E had district budgets less than 20 million dollars. At 184 million dollars, District H had the largest annual budget. The districts varied in their unduplicated student percentage from 47% to 90%. As in budget size, District H had the largest enrollment of more than 15,000 students and District F had the smallest district enrollment with less than 500 students.

### **Local Control and Accountability Plan Review**

The 2016 – 2017 LCAPs of the district superintendents interviewed were reviewed in a similar fashion as the districts reviewed in Fuller and Tobben's work (2014). The researcher read through each LCAP looking for examples of additional support at the district office as well as opportunities for stakeholder engagement. The goals, actions, and services detailed in the plans were also reviewed. As previously stated, the districts are located across California and vary in student enrollment from less than 500 to more than 15,000. The unduplicated percentage of students also varied from a low of 47% to a high of 90%.

### **Research Question 1**

The question was "What changes have been made at the school district level as a result of LCFF?" The development of the LCAP can be a daunting process. There are many stakeholders to consider, budget items to manage, and programs to develop. The leader of this project must

be knowledgeable in all facets of education. As such, it was reported on the LCAP survey that more than 76% of district superintendents take the lead in developing their district's LCAP. On Question 2 of the survey, participants had the opportunity to select all that applied, resulting in a total of forty responses. Based on the results from the LCAP survey, it would be interesting to know if there were co-leads in LCAP development. In addition, 59% of the survey participants responded that their superintendent wrote their LCAP, while 41% indicated that their assistant superintendent of education authored the document. Moreover, three of the five superintendents personally interviewed indicated they wrote their districts' LCAP. Two of the district superintendents shared that their assistant superintendent of educational services was responsible.

As in Question 2, Question 3 of the LCAP survey allowed participants to select all that applied. More than 94% of the superintendents ensured the actions and services described in the LCAP were implemented. Based on the 101 responses, it would appear that while the superintendent may, in most instances, ensure the actions and services in the LCAP are implemented, there are many other district personnel responsible as well. The information gathered from the personal interviews produced similar results.

While the majority of districts have not hired new personnel to support the development of district LCAPs, 14 of the 32 survey respondents reported on Question 4 that their districts had hired new personnel to support LCAP development as shown in Table 10. Additionally, 90% of those interviewed shared that changes had not been made in the staffing at the district level as a result of LCFF. This was simply stated by the superintendent of District E: "No changes whatsoever. We don't have any money to do that." However, the superintendent from District

H shared that his or her district recently hired a staff member in finance to track LCAP expenditures.

Although new hires specifically for LCAP development may not have taken place, redistribution of assignments at the district level may have occurred. The researcher knows from personal experience that the LCAP takes many hours to develop. While the LCAP is developed over the course of a year, it is a time consuming process to hold multiple stakeholder meetings, review and analyze data, write the LCAP, continue to meet with a variety of stakeholders, revise the LCAP, and move to final approval each June. In many instances it is a joint effort, but someone needs to take the lead in developing the LCAP and ensure it meets the state's requirements. In the case of the researcher's district, an additional director was hired at the district level to relieve other duties previously assigned to the researcher. This new director was not hired to develop the LCAP but to support the work of special programs and assessment.

In regard to support and oversight, all but one survey participant reported that the County Office of Education reviewed their district's LCAP prior to Board approval. The laws governing LCFF require final approval by the County Superintendent each year. The researcher has worked closely with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) to carefully develop the district LCAP since 2013. From the beginning, OCDE was supportive of the work and provided guidance and assistance as needed. The team at OCDE has reviewed each LCAP from the researcher's district prior to Board approval each June. This process has been similar throughout California as noted in Table 15 on page 72.

Districts across the state are slowly recovering from the "Great Recession" of 2008 – 2009. In fact, LCFF will not be fully funded until 2020. Even with full funding, the LCFF dollars will bring districts back to the revenues earned in 2007. With rising personnel costs,



especially in the area of pensions, district personnel are hesitant to hire new personnel. In many cases, the additions in personnel made in recent years have simply restored positions that were cut in 2008 – 2009. In the researcher’s case, positions at the district level have yet to be fully restored.

As a result of five personal interviews, a review of five LCAPs, and the findings from the LCAP survey, the researcher determined that few changes have been made at the district office as a result of LCFF.

## **Research Question 2**

The question was “Which instructional strategies and programs described in California school district’s LCAP goals have resulted in improved academic achievement for English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals, and foster youth?” In district Local Control and Accountability Plans, California’s unduplicated students benefit from the actions and services provided for all students. Additionally, LCFF states that a portion of the supplemental and concentration funding must be allocated for programs and services, which specifically benefit those most in need of additional support. While the actions and services described for all students also benefit targeted students, there are specific programs or personnel that support the needs of English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals, or foster youth. In responding to Research Question 2, it is important to note the details surrounding the development of district goals, as well as all of actions and services districts have planned to achieve these goals.

In the 2013 – 2014 school year, each district, as required by LCFF, developed their first LCAP. Many referred to this time as “building the plane while it was flying.” The number of LCAP goals was unlimited. In the researcher’s district, the Board of Trustees made the decision

to align the five goals found in the district's existing strategic plan with the newly created LCAP. Other nearby districts reported more than 20 goals. In subsequent LCAPs, these ambitious districts were then required to report out the results of each of their 20 goals. That was certainly an arduous process. It was later recommended by the state that districts focus on approximately five goals each year. The majority of districts now have one to five goals described in their LCAPs as reported on Question 5 of the LCAP survey.

In the LCAP template, there is an area for district goals, and under each goal districts list the multiple actions and services that will help them meet their established goal. Along with the actions and services listed are the financial requirements for each. The LCAP survey participants reported their top LCAP expenditures as (a) instructional assistants, (b) intervention staff, (c) professional development, (d) reduced class size, (e) staff for community outreach, and (f) teachers on special assignments. Similarly, the major actions and services found in an examination of the Local Control and Accountability Plans were: (a) academic coaches, (b) hiring of staff to reduce class size, (c) music and band, (d) parent training, (e) physical education teachers, (f) professional development, (g) staff to support student behavior and socio-emotional health, and (h) technology, as shown in Table 39.

In measuring the actions and services found in their districts' LCAP survey, participants shared that benchmark assessments, surveys, and state required data were the most common measures. Some indicated that formal methods of measuring district outcomes were still under development. The researcher has learned that districts with high schools have data more readily available than elementary districts. High school graduation rates and students participating in A-G classes are just a couple of the metrics that can be utilized in reporting outcomes for students in Grades 9 through 12.

The five superintendents interviewed shared many ways in which their districts track the success of the actions and services found in their LCAPs. Some focus on the required state metrics; others have used local measures such as benchmark data, survey results, parent participation at meetings, classroom walkthroughs, and time on electronic devices. The superintendent in District I uses a Google document to gather information from each school site on a monthly basis. District I's superintendent stated, "They're required to enter their attendance rates, their truancy rates, suspension days, and suspension incidents." Additionally, District I administrators are required to enter their schools i-Ready data three times a year and unit assessment data six times each year.

All of the superintendents interviewed shared that counselors or staff to support mental health were proven to be successful for all students. The District H superintendent said, "We've had extreme growth in acting out behaviors." District B's superintendent reported, "We have a lot of traumatized kids in the district, whether it's broken families or alcoholism. There are just a lot of dysfunctional families. Our teachers do not come to the classroom knowing how to deal with those problems." In addition to socio-emotional and behavior supports, class size, enrichment opportunities, and physical education were discussed. The superintendents noted that their targeted students also benefited from the actions and services provided to all students. School academies, instructional coaches, liaisons, and a focus on first, best instruction specifically benefit their English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced price meals, or foster youth.

The survey participants provided nine responses to describe the program models proven to be most successful for all students are shown in Table 22 on page 81. The replies varied from instructional programming to professional development to technology integration. In the same

light, participants were asked to share their programs or models that have been proven to be effective for English learners, students qualifying for free or reduced price meals, or foster youth. Two of the respondents noted that their English learner coordinator or coach has proven to be effective. Professional development to support targeted students was also reported. More information is shown in Table 23 on page 83.

In the personal interviews, the researcher asked, “How has the LCAP helped to improve student outcomes and close the achievement gap?” The superintendent in District F reported that his or her special education students grew by 45 points in math because of the remediation provided. The other four indicated that the results were hit or miss, but it has at least forced the districts to focus on student outcomes. As the superintendent of District H shared, “Frankly, our achievement is all over the place. Some schools are flying, some schools are not.” The superintendent in District I summed it up by saying, “I don’t think we really have enough data on the five by five yet to really say have we closed or not closed that achievement gap.”

The final question asked in the interviews was, “What actions and services have not produced the intended outcomes, and how have you adjusted?” District E’s superintendent shared that their district had been “Throwing money at technology for the sake of technology, without specific outcomes required.” It was noted that this practice did not continue. The staff at District F tried to provide enrichment opportunities after school, but found they did not have consistency in programming to be effective. The well intentioned intramural programs in District H were dropped because they did not have the funding to replicate the model fairly and consistently to all schools in the district. District I realigned the duties of their instructional coaches, and District B reconfigured their LCAP goals.

Consensus from all data sources is that it is too early to determine which actions and services have resulted in increased academic achievement for targeted students. However, based on the triangulation of the data, common practices have emerged. Many districts reported hiring English learner coordinators and support personnel. Hiring academic coaches to support the needs of English learners was also noted. Additionally, districts have funded professional development, reduced class size, provided enrichment opportunities, and funded foster youth and community liaisons to support the explicit needs of their targeted students. With only three full years into California's accountability system, it is difficult to determine which actions or services have made the biggest impact on student outcomes. At this point in time, there are too many variables and not enough data to form solid conclusions.

### **Research Question 3**

The question was "What strategies have districts used to improve stakeholder engagement as they work to develop their LCAPs with an aim towards continuous improvement?" Since 2013, districts have worked to improve their practice in engaging stakeholders in the LCAP development process. Some districts continue to struggle with stakeholder engagement. The superintendent from District B reported, "It has been difficult to engage people in the process. They are happy to get the information, but I don't really find that they are engaged in the process as much as I would like them to be."

One hundred percent of parents, teachers, and administrators provided input into district LCAPs as reported on LCAP Survey Question 7. Ninety-seven percent reported that classified employees were included and 80% reported the inclusion of community members and students. Two survey respondents shared that their Board of Trustees provided input. In hindsight, this question should have included board members as an answer choice.

As reported in the LCAP survey, the majority of districts hold multiple meetings or forums with members of the community, parents, students, staff, and board members to provide an annual update of LCAP progress and to set goals for the subsequent year. Additionally, many districts use both online and paper surveys to gather input from all of their stakeholders. Some districts have created specific LCAP committees consisting of representatives from each school site, parents, union representatives, and, at times, students.

All 34 participants in the survey reported that they solicited input through meetings, while more than 97% used surveys. Approximately 53% shared that they used community forums to gather input. Question 8 of the survey provided the opportunity to select all that applied, so based on the 88 responses, districts used a combination of meetings, surveys, and forums. One district used “crowd sourcing” while another solicited input through “ThoughtExchange.” Both crowd sourcing and ThoughtExchange provide stakeholders the opportunity to share their suggestions and ideas with district leaders.

The number of specific stakeholder opportunities varied by district. When asked in Question 9 of the LCAP survey, participants reported that the majority of their constituents had 1 to 10 opportunities to provide input in the development of their districts most recent LCAP. Twenty-one percent stated their stakeholders had 11 to 15 opportunities, while 12% reported more than 16 opportunities to provide input. Additionally, of the 54 responses to Question 10, the superintendent, assistant superintendent of educational services, or a director facilitated stakeholder engagement at the district level. Furthermore, during the engagement process more than 90% of the respondents shared that their stakeholders had the opportunity to analyze district data as reported on Question 11. Moreover, in all of the LCAPs reviewed, there were multiple

opportunities for stakeholder engagement. All of the districts held various meetings and offered paper or online surveys for community members, parents, staff, and students.

Based on the data gathered from the LCAP survey, the researcher determined that there was a direct correlation between the student enrollment and number of stakeholder engagement opportunities. This correlation could stem from the need of larger school districts to provide more engagement opportunities for the stakeholders they serve.

As far as stakeholder engagement practices, all of the interviewees indicated that their district utilized a paper or online survey to gather information for LCAP development. Typical surveys used were staff, climate, parent, and technology. All of the superintendents shared that they had good responses from their district's surveys and that the information was useful. According to the superintendents interviewed, site based, LCAP meetings proved to be the most successful as were LCAP committee meetings. Additionally, some superintendents found success in adding the LCAP meeting to an existing parent or community meeting. While the stakeholder meetings were effective, districts received the majority of their input through surveys. It was reported that the surveys that went straight to stakeholder cell phones were effective, as noted by the superintendent of District F, "We had an incredible response on the surveys, but I think it was because it was linked to a text." Additionally, small incentives provided to stakeholders increased the survey response rate. Overall, the superintendents interviewed indicated that they had a good response rate to their surveys and that the information gathered from the surveys was useful. The superintendent of District B summed it up succinctly, "I would say the biggest success is people just know more about what we do now."

Whether districts are large or small, stakeholder engagement is key in LCAP development. In order to increase stakeholder engagement, district leaders have worked to

improve their surveys, schedule LCAP meetings in conjunction with other required meetings, and shared LCAP information at school sites. The superintendent of District I stated, “We established a nice way of empowering our principals to have stakeholder meetings.” The biggest challenge some faced was helping their stakeholders not only get involved, but to also understand that their voice matters.

### **Implications for Practice**

California’s Local Control Funding Formula was signed into law by Governor Brown in July 2013. This significant change in the funding system provides California the opportunity to fundamentally transform how districts are using their resources. As Miles and Feinberg (2014) have shared, “The choice is clear – do more of the same, or seize the moment so California leads the nation in creating systems that ensure all students reach new, higher standards” (p. 1).

The Local Control and Accountability Plan is the vehicle for change. It is through careful plan development and data analysis that districts can determine best practices, which in turn will improve student outcomes. In this study, the majority of districts did not add extra support to the district office to directly support the work of LCAP development. As we continue on our path of Local Control with a focus on continuous improvement, the focus in LCAP development should not be in the area of compliance, but should concentrate on the specific actions and services that lead to improved student outcomes.

While districts across the state are engaging their students, parents, staff, and community members in the development of their LCAPs each year, the level of engagement differs greatly. Vasquez-Heilig (2014) reported there is a grave concern with the capacity of local districts and communities to design and implement LCAPs on more than a superficial level. The researcher has learned that large district LCAP forums are not as effective as small, site-based input



meetings. Additionally, survey respondents, the researcher, and interviewees agree that surveys are an important vehicle in gathering stakeholder input.

As far as actions and services that have been the most beneficial to California's targeted students - districts just need to stay the course. The California Board of Education realizes that transformational change of this magnitude will take time. California has only recently adopted the frameworks and curriculum for English Language Arts and Mathematics. District staffs are in the process of implementing the curriculum aligned to the state standards. Moreover, the state assessment system is only in its third year. In addition to the new standards, teachers and students have yet to fully adapt to the technical aspects of online testing. As Fullan and Rincon-Gallardo (2017) recently posited regarding California's educational reform:

It is too early to tell how much impact there has been on academic performance because the SBAC assessment system is new, different, and its administration started only in the spring of 2015. Furthermore, it is hard to tell at this point how much of the improved graduation rates, reduced absenteeism, and increased eligibility for admission at CSU can be attributed to LCFF specifically, since all these figures have been increasing somewhat steadily since before the launch of LCFF. That the trend continues to be one of improved performance, however, is an encouraging sign. (p. 7)

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Fuller & Tobben and Humphrey & Koppich completed preliminary qualitative research in 2014 to learn how personnel in schools, districts, county offices of education, and the state supported the implementation of LCFF through LCAP development. In their research, Fuller & Tobben conducted site visits or phone interviews with senior staff at eight diverse districts to learn more about the implementation of LCFF. The results of the interviews were documented

and shared in, *Local Control Funding Formula: How to Monitor Progress and Learn from a Grand Experiment*.

Additionally, Humphrey & Koppich (2014) gathered information about the implementation of LCFF. Between June and October 2014, Humphrey & Koppich used a team of 12 independent researchers to interview key policy makers in Sacramento, district staff and stakeholders, and county office of education officials. After their initial interviews with policy makers in Sacramento, the team of researchers reviewed more than 40 LCAPs. The team went on to interview the superintendent, district staff, and stakeholders in ten diverse districts, completing a total of 71 interviews. Further, phone interviews were conducted with top ranked personnel from 14 county offices of education. The results of the interviews and document review are found in their study, *Toward a Grand Vision: Early Implementation of California's Local Control Funding Formula*.

In fall of 2016, the team from The Local Control Funding Formula Research Collaborative (LCFFRC) conducted a case study of ten diverse districts in California. They interviewed 151 stakeholders and reviewed a range of documents including LCAPs, district budgets, strategic plans, school site plans, and collective bargaining agreements from each district. *Paving the Way to Equity and Coherence? The Local Control Funding Formulas in Year 3* describes their findings (Humphrey et al., 2017).

The researcher recommends further qualitative research in the form of replicate studies of Fuller & Tobben (2014), Humphrey & Koppich (2014), and Humphrey et al. (2017) to determine the effectiveness of LCFF. Even with additional research, it will take years to determine if Local Control makes a difference for students in California.

## **Conclusion**

The researcher, in her professional practice and current study of LCFF, has found the process of LCAP development to be a time consuming, but valuable endeavor. This yearlong process involves multiple stakeholders, analysis of data, review of budget and expenses, and development and refinement of programs and services takes time and energy of district staff. In the researcher's opinion, a carefully crafted LCAP will make a difference for underserved students in California. In efforts to perfect LCAP development, it will be important to remind district personnel, the LCAP is not a compliance document, but rather a tool for continuous improvement.

Moreover, the County Office of Education (COE) and the California Collaborative for Excellence in Education (CCEE) should provide more guidance to districts across the state in proportionality. While Supplemental and Concentration funds, in many cases, can support all students in the district, a portion of the grant dollars need to be set aside to serve those most in need. Additionally, the researcher feels strongly that Supplemental and Concentration funds should not be used to assist district staff in balancing their budgets in times of economic downturn. These valuable dollars need to be allocated for the purpose intended by the laws governing LCFF and help to increase or improve services for students living below the poverty level, English learners, and foster youth.

Furthermore, California's educational system continues to be in a time of flux. There are relatively new curriculum frameworks in English language arts and mathematics. Additionally, with only three years of academic achievement data using a new method of assessment, California's accountability system of multiple indicators of success is still in its early stages of development. While it is too early to determine which programs and services are making a

difference for targeted students, some districts are experiencing success. The researcher suggests the CCEE and COEs serve as capacity builders by sharing programs and services, proven to have positive outcomes for targeted students, with districts across the state.

The notion of subsidiarity, or local control, while not a new concept to educational funding, has not had the time to prove its effectiveness in states throughout our country. The nation has its eyes on us. Will California's efforts work? Will district Local Control and Accountability Plans increase and improve services for the neediest students in our state? Only time will tell.

While there are signs of hope in those districts making a serious effort in shifting their culture, which include meaningful stakeholder engagement and candid reflection. It may be years until we can fully determine whether the Local Control and Accountability Plan will make a difference. However, it is through this transformative change that may make it possible (Jongco, 2016).

### **Summary**

This study sought to analyze the effects of district's Local Control and Accountability Plans to determine what changes have been made at the district level based on the new funding formula. An analysis of stakeholder engagement opportunities was conducted. Furthermore, the researcher sought to determine which programs and services have been proven to provide continuous improvement for California's English learners, students living below the poverty level and foster youth. To this end, the author randomly selected superintendents throughout California to participate in this study. The researcher personally interviewed five superintendents, reviewed their district LCAPs, and analyzed the data received from 34 electronic LCAP surveys. After careful analysis, the researcher determined that not all districts

have hired additional personnel to support the development of their Local Control and Accountability Plan. Additionally, the majority of districts use a combination of surveys and meetings to gather stakeholder input, with larger districts providing more opportunities for engagement. Finally, there is not enough data to determine if programs and services indicated in district LCAPs are making a difference for California's targeted student population.

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## APPENDIX A

## IRB Approval

Hello [teresa.egan@eagles.cui.edu](mailto:teresa.egan@eagles.cui.edu),

This message is from the  
Concordia University Irvine  
Office of Institutional Research.

TICKET ID:#3176

Date: Dec 22, 2016 @ 10:53 am

Creator: [irb@cui.edu](mailto:irb@cui.edu)

Summary: Doctoral Program, Education - IRB  
Application - Exempt Review - EGAN (Karge)

If you have any additional information regarding this case respond to this email. Please remember to keep "[Ticket #3176]" in email topic.

On Feb 16, 2017 @ 08:00 am Blanca Quiroz wrote:

Ticket closed: CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IRVINE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PROTOCOL REVIEW

IRB Protocol Number:

IRB Approval Date:

Mr./Mrs. Egan

Congratulations! Your research proposal has been approved by Concordia University-Irvine's IRB. Work on the research indicated within the initial e-mail may begin. This approval is for a period of one year from the date of this e-mail correspondence and will require continuation approval if the research project extends beyond a year.

If you make significant changes to the protocol during the approval period, you must submit a revised proposal to CUI's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please write your IRB # and "EdD IRB Application Addendum # (and the IRB Protocol number)" in the subject line of any future correspondence.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB's decision, please contact me by replying to this e-mail or by phone at [512 810 9172](tel:5128109172)

Kind Regards,

Blanca Quiroz  
EdD IRB Reviewer

On Feb 16, 2017 @ 08:00 am your ticket was marked as closed,



## APPENDIX B

## LCAP Survey

Welcome

This voluntary survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

The purpose of this confidential survey is to determine how districts across the state are meeting the needs of California's most at-risk students through Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) development and implementation. This survey consists of 23 questions. Four short answer, eleven multiple choice, and eight demographic questions at the end of the survey.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Teresa Egan  
Assistant Superintendent  
La Habra City School District

Doctoral Candidate  
Concordia University – Irvine

1. I understand participation in the survey is optional and I may discontinue taking the survey at anytime.
  - Yes

**District Office**

2. Who takes the lead in developing your LCAP each year?
  - Superintendent
  - Assistant Superintendent – Educational Services
  - Assistant Superintendent – Business Services
  - Director
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
3. In the past three years, have you hired new personnel to support LCAP development?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
4. How many goals are described in your District's LCAP?

- a. 1 - 5
  - b. 6 – 10
5. 10+ Did your County Office of Education review your LCAP prior to Board approval in June 2015?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
6. Who ensures the actions and services described in the LCAP are implemented? (Please select all that apply.)
- a. Superintendent
  - b. Assistant Superintendent – Educational Services
  - c. Assistant Superintendent – Business Services
  - d. Director
  - e. Department Managers
  - f. Site Administration
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

7. In your best estimate, how many opportunities did your Stakeholders have to provide in the development of your District's most recent LCAP?
- a. 1 - 10
  - b. 11 - 15
  - c. 16 - 20
  - d. 21+
8. Which Stakeholders have been included in your District's LCAP? (Please select all that apply.)
- a. Parents
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Classified Employees
  - d. Students
  - e. Administration
  - f. Community Members
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
9. How has your District solicited input from Stakeholders? (Please select all that apply.)
- a. Surveys

- b. Meetings
- c. Community Forums
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Who facilitated Stakeholder Engagement at the District level? (Please select all that apply.)

- a. Superintendent
- b. Assistant Superintendent – Education
- c. Assistant Superintendent – Business
- d. Director
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Did Stakeholders have the opportunity to analyze District data?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

### **Actions and Services (Program Models)**

12. The State of California has many ways in which to monitor actions and services in district LCAPs. What **local measures** are used in your District to determine the success of actions and services as outlined in your District's LCAP?

13. What program model has proven to be the most successful for **ALL STUDENTS** as measured by the metric found in your District's LCAP?

14. What program model has proven to be most effective for **English learners** as measured by the metrics found in your District's LCAP?

15. Who is responsible for monitoring the metrics in your LCAP? (Select all that apply.)

- a. Superintendent
- b. Assistant Superintendent – Education
- c. Assistant Superintendent – Business
- d. Director
- e. Research and Evaluation Team
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

16. What are the **top three** expenditures in your LCAP funded with Supplemental and/or Concentration Grant dollars?

17. What is your title?
18. How long have you worked in the field of education?
- a. 0 – 5 years
  - b. 6 – 10 years
  - c. 11 – 15 years
  - d. 16 – 20 years
  - e. 20+ years
19. Who wrote your District's LCAP in 2016? (Please select all that apply.)
- a. Superintendent
  - b. Assistant Superintendent – Education
  - c. Assistant Superintendent – Business
  - d. Director
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
20. How many students are enrolled in your District?
- a. 1 – 500
  - b. 501-1,000
  - c. 1,001 – 5,000
  - d. 5,001 – 10,000
  - e. 10,001 – 30,000
  - f. 30,000+
21. What is your District's total budget for 2016-2017?
- a. 10,000 – 1,000,000
  - b. 1,000,001 – 20,000,000
  - c. 20,000,001 – 40,000,000
  - d. 40,000,001 – 60,000,000
  - e. 60,000,001 – 80,000,000
  - f. 80,000,001 – 100,000,000
  - g. 100,000,000+
  - h. Not sure
22. Please indicate your Unduplicated Percentage for 2016-2017.
- a. 0 – 40%

- b. 41% - 55%
- c. 56% - 75%
- d. 76% - 100%
- e. Not sure

23. Please indicate the number of District Staff members by position:

Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_

Director \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

24. What grade levels does your District serve?

- a. K – 5
- b. K – 6
- c. K- 8
- d. 6 – 8
- e. K – 12

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

25. Which ASCA Region represents your district?

\_\_\_\_\_

Not sure

26. Please provide your name and email address if you are willing to participate in a short personal interview.

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!

## APPENDIX C

## Audio Use

As part of this research project, I will be making an audiotape recording of you during your participation in the personal interview. Please indicate which uses of this audiotape you are willing to consent to by initialing below. You are free to initial any number of spaces from zero to all of the spaces. I will only use the audiotape in the way in which you agree to. Your name will not be identified in any use of the audiotape. If you do not initial any of the spaces below, the audiotape will be destroyed.

**Please indicate the type of informed consent.**

The audiotape can be studied by the research team for use in the research project. Please initial \_\_\_\_\_

The audiotape can be used for educational publications. Please initial \_\_\_\_\_

The audiotape can be played at a meeting of educators. Please initial \_\_\_\_\_

The audiotape can be played in classrooms of adult students. Please initial \_\_\_\_\_

The audiotape can be played in public presentations to non-scientific groups. Please initial \_\_\_\_\_

The audiotape can be used on radio. Please initial \_\_\_\_\_

*I have read the above description and give my consent for the use of the audiotape as indicated above.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

(The extra copy of this consent form is for your records.)

## APPENDIX D

## Questions for Personal Interview

1. In what ways, if any, have changes been made in staffing at your district office as a result of the Local Control and Funding Formula (LCFF)?
2. Who wrote your LCAP?
  - a. Approximately how long did it take to write?
  - b. Did you have Co-leads in the process?
3. What type of surveys did you use to gather information for your LCAP?
  - a. What was your response rate?
  - b. Was the information useful?
4. What has your district done to improve stakeholder engagement as a result of LCFF?
5. What was the biggest success your district experienced through the stakeholder engagement process this year?
  - a. What was the biggest challenge?
6. What local measures do you use to track the success of the actions and services in your LCAP?
7. What actions or services described in your LCAP has proven to be the most successful for all students?
8. What actions or services described in your LCAP has proven to be the most successful for English learners; students qualifying for free or reduced priced meals, and Foster Youth?
9. How has the LCAP helped to improve student outcomes and close the achievement gap in your district?
10. What actions and services have not produced the intended outcomes and how have you adjusted?