The Role for Students in the Local Control Funding Formula

In 2013, California passed a new law called the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) to decide the amount of money schools should receive every year.

What the “Local control” part means:
Instead of the State deciding how school districts should spend their school budgets – now it is decided locally, by the people who govern, work and go to local schools!

Who decides:

The School Board: Made up of 5-7 adults who are elected every two years by voters in the school district to serve the students, schools and community. They are responsible for governing and making decisions to improve the district.

District Superintendent: The school board supervises the superintendent as to the direction for schools and rules he or she needs to follow. The superintendent implements the school board’s vision by managing the principals who govern each school and its teachers.

Local Control Accountability Plan or “LCAP” : A three-year plan updated each year that explains the goals, direction and budget for all the schools in the district. The school district goes through this decision-making process every year. The district's school board has the power to vote to approve this plan.

The Community (You!) Schools boards have to be very open and honest about their choices. They have to let the community know where the money is going, and explain what the results will be. Most importantly for the Student Voices Campaign, they need to involve the community, including students, parents and the public, in the decisions about what strategies and programs are the best and most important in helping students. The district is supposed to have community meetings, where everyone can give their opinions about what makes school a better place to learn.

| SCHOOL EMPLOYEES: Teachers, Principals, Administrators, Classified Employees, etc. |
| PARENTS & STUDENTS: School-site and District-Level Committees |
| COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Advocates, agencies, programs and services, etc. |
They are required to hear directly from students, parents, teachers and other community members about what they feel is best for schools and students. This is where your voice and vision come in. You need to share what you think, and the school board needs to listen!

[Diagram of Local Control & Accountability Plan (LCAP)]

1. Community Engagement
   - Parents and Legal Guardians are consulted and advisory committees are formed.
   - Parents: Find out about joining your district’s parent advisory committee! Talk to your student’s principal.

2. Public Comment
   - District provides LCAP updates in a public hearing and presents any revisions to stakeholder groups.
   - Parents: Even if you can’t commit to being on your district’s parent accountability committee, keep a look out for town hall or public meetings!

3. District Response
   - Before revisions are finalized, the district presents the updated LCAP to the community. Parents/guardians and community members are encouraged to comment.
   - Parents: Share your comments with the district on the updated plans. Make your voice heard!

4. Annual Adopted Plan!
   - The school board will adopt the LCAP and submit it to the County Office of Education and State Board of Education for review.
   - Parents: Remember that these plans are reviewed every year, and it’s an ongoing process.

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What the “Funding Formula” part means:

LCFF gives each school the same basic amount of money to all schools, and allows them to be able to decide where exactly to spend it. LCFF provides additional funding to districts with high numbers of low-income students, English Language Learners (ELL) and Foster Youth to support specific strategies aimed at closing the achievement between high needs students and their peers.

EdSource.org Local Control Funding Formula Guide

Schools get to decide on the best ways to spend this money to help all of their students, as well as high needs students succeed. They can spend it in any way they feel is effective to help students learn the required curriculum for graduation, and to prepare for careers and college. California has decided that there are “Eight Priorities”, or most important items for schools to address. These are explained below.

**LCFF’s 8 Priorities**

Although local districts are given the power to decide how to spend their budgets, they must invest in programs and services that will help them meet the law’s eight priority areas. These priorities are exciting because they go beyond simply measuring schools by the results of standardized tests to include a broad range of things like how well a school is engaging its students, if it provides a happy, healthy climate and other vital aspects of student success.

Source: Legislative Analyst’s Office, “An Overview of the Local Control Funding Formula” (03/13)
Your Vision

So, what is your vision to make school a better place to learn? Where do you start? Since you are in school, and your experience and ideas really do matter, you should think about what stands out in school that makes it a better place for you. What subjects spark your creativity, imagination and passion in school the most? Think about your different subject areas. Which are most important or make the biggest difference in your understanding of the world, or how you feel about school? Which make you want to come to school, or make you excited about learning?

Think about what these subject areas need to run. Are there people involved? Are there books and materials? Is there training that teachers need? You might ask your classmates, your group members, and your friends. You might ask students who may have a difficult time in school, and ask those who seem to do well. You might ask, “What is the best part of school? What makes it a great place to go? And what helps students to learn the things that are important to learn?”

A very few examples of “strategies” and “programs” that one might support could include:

- Any subject area, including “the arts”.
- Extra time or support for certain subjects
- “Extracurricular” events, experiences (sports, arts, field trips, special visitors, etc.)
- Teacher assistance
- Lower class size
- More of certain materials, or technology
- More help for certain people that need it, such as English Learners

Does my district agree with me?

The next step is to find whether what you are asking for is already in the district and is supported well. It is all right to start by looking at your own experience. Do you see your idea in your classroom, or around the school? Do other students see it? Maybe you see some of your idea in the school, but you think there should be more. If it’s not clear to you, or the people around you, such as friends and family, you might ask your teacher, or an administrator, or a community member whether you are correct.

Supporting an educational program with evidence

It is a good idea to support for your idea or proposal with more information. Board members often want more than just an opinion about what is best. Is there “evidence” that will support your proposal? This would be researched evidence, or “data”, numbers and facts from scientific studies that show that your proposal actually does work and benefits students in the way you think it might. You can search for this kind of evidence on the Internet, for example by searching for something like, “research for the educational benefits of _______. You can also create your own evidence by conducting a poll, or survey of as many people as you can, but you would need to describe how you came up with the numbers.

In the example below, the California Alliance for Arts Education has assembled evidence to support arts in schools in a way that you may want to consider for your own idea. If you are advocating for more arts in schools, you are invited to include this information in your proposal, and in the video you produce.
**Arts Education Advocacy Example**

In this example, we see the 8 Priorities for LCFF in CAPITALS, and a statement based on research that follows. The research # refers to the research “source” below. These are powerful statements about the value of arts education for learning. They may help you to support your own ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS OF LCFF</th>
<th>BENEFITS OF ARTS EDUCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>Higher attendance rates and lower drop out rates (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT</td>
<td>Increases parent and community involvement (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL CLIMATE</td>
<td>Decreases disciplinary problems and encourages positive student attitudes about their classroom (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMON CORE STANDARDS</td>
<td>The arts have a central and essential role in achieving the finest aspects of the common core (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROAD COURSE OF STUDY</td>
<td>Theater, dance, music and the visual arts are a valued part of a broad course of study, as set out in the state education code (51210, 51220)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT</td>
<td>Boosts test scores and achievement in literacy, math skills and ELA especially for English Language Learners and low-income students (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUPIL OUTCOMES</td>
<td>Increases graduation rates; fosters 21st Century work skills like creativity, critical thinking and collaboration (6, 7, 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREDENTIALED TEACHERS</td>
<td>Credentialed arts teachers enrich standards-based learning in classrooms (9)</td>
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**SOURCES:**

1. Preparing Students for the Next America-FINAL.pdf
The School Board is my Audience

Once you have developed your proposal and you have discovered whether you can support it with evidence, you must consider how you present this to your audience, who is the District School Board. You might look up who is on the board. What kind of people are they? How might you best make your case to them? As you are creating your video, keep them in mind. But also, keep these points in mind:

• You are a very important part of this process. The School Board is required to include your voice in their decisions.
• The School Board will simply enjoy seeing what students can produce. Put effort into your work.
• Be creative! Come up with as many ideas as possible and go with the strongest one. And think creatively as you create the video.
• Seek the opinions of as many people as possible as you work, and definitely include people who are like the people on the School Board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCFF Primer Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Describe two things that the LCFF does.</td>
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<td>2. What are two reasons a district might get extra money from the state?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. How should districts spend the money they are given?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What is the LCAP, and what does it explain about the money?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. What is the “school board”?</td>
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<td>6. What is the role of students in this process?</td>
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<td>7. What are some things that you think make school better for you, or for other students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. What sparks your creativity, imagination and passion for school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Does your idea, or proposal relate to any of the 8 Priorities? Which one(s), and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Would you be able to present your proposal in pictures or video, or by creating a story about it for the camera? Describe what it might look like.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Could you find evidence to support your idea? What would it be and how would you present it?</td>
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