

March 20, 2014

Dear Collaborative Members and Guests,

We look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming meeting of the California Collaborative on District Reform on April 2 and 3 in Los Angeles. Many thanks to John Deasy, Matt Hill, and the team in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) for putting forward their district's work to help us explore the opportunities and challenges associated with this first stage of implementing the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

The Collaborative has engaged in issues of school finance almost since our inception, from producing briefs on school finance and governance for the *Getting From Facts to Policy* convening in 2007 to more concentrated efforts in 2012 and 2013 to support the development and passage of LCFF. With a new statewide funding policy now in place, district attention turns to the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), a tool through which districts are to use LCFF's increased flexibility to address the priorities of the state and their local communities while enhancing educational opportunities for underserved students. This meeting will address some of the key elements of LCAP development and implementation, including strategic alignment, authentic and meaningful community engagement, and site-level expectations and supports.

As in previous meetings, we will incorporate a variety of session formats, including smaller working groups and sessions that rely on panels and district consultancies. Our hope is that all Collaborative members will feel they have opportunities to contribute to the meeting dialogue. We are also continuing a practice we began last year by emailing you a much smaller set of advance readings that we will use directly in the meeting, in addition to this binder of resources to read and use as your time permits. This email should arrive on or shortly after March 21.

Meeting Overview

Day 1:

Alignment: We will begin Wednesday morning with a brief orientation to the LCAP guidelines approved by the State Board of Education in January, including the timelines and expectations that districts must meet. Having established a common understanding for what state guidelines entail, we will turn to issues of alignment and coherence in the LCAP process. Leaders from three districts will participate in a moderated panel about district efforts to align the LCAP with other strategic planning efforts; conversation among panelists and subsequent full group discussion will address issues of alignment both in planning and in allocation of resources. We will then turn to an exercise designed to help us grapple with the realities of using dollars to improve student outcomes in effective and equitable ways. Karen Hawley Miles of Education Resource Strategies will lead us in a game of School Budget Hold'em adapted specifically for the California context under the new funding formula.

Engagement: On Wednesday afternoon we will turn our attention to issues of parent and community engagement in the development and implementation of the LCAP. We will begin with small group discussion about conceptions of community engagement, both to surface differing perspectives and to move towards some shared understandings about the term. We will then transition to the specific efforts underway in LAUSD to engage community members in the LCAP development process. A panel of district and community leaders will share some of the strategies, successes, and challenges experienced so far in Los Angeles before we conclude the session with a broader discussion of community engagement issues facing all districts.

Consultancies: We will end the day by exploring additional problems of practice facing member districts as they implement LCFF. At our November 2013 meeting in Sacramento, we split into several consultancy panels, each featuring a different problem of practice in a smaller group setting. We received very positive feedback about this approach—both for the active participation that the smaller groups enabled and for the opportunity for multiple districts to receive feedback about their ongoing work. We will employ a similar strategy in Los Angeles, this time to surface a range of challenges and strategies in LCFF implementation.

Group Dinner: As is our usual practice, after a day of thought-provoking dialogue, we will gather for more informal conversation and relaxation at a group reception and dinner at Esquire Grill.

Day 2: Thursday morning will begin with reports from Wednesday afternoon’s consultancy panels and discussion about the range of implementation challenges and strategies presented.

School site planning and support: We will then turn to the problem of implementing LCFF effectively at the site level. LAUSD features a range of school governance models, which gives us an opportunity to learn about the ways in which the new policy might affect planning and resource allocation in a variety of school types. We will begin the conversation by breaking into small groups to learn from LAUSD principals about their budget planning process and the central office supports that could make their efforts most effective. Following these small group discussions, we will reconvene as a full group to share insights and to learn about lessons emerging nationally as local systems work to improve resource planning and use at the school level.

We will conclude the meeting by identifying the key takeaways from our two days of discussion. Many organizations have actively contributed to education and advocacy efforts around LCFF implementation. We hope to identify any areas in which the Collaborative has a unique perspective to offer and to explore steps we might take to help achieve the policy’s goals of equity, local responsiveness, and improved performance.

Readings

As usual, all readings and reference materials for the sessions are included in this binder. **As noted above, you will also receive an email with a small subset of preparatory readings attached.** We have instituted this practice in response to your requests for a more targeted and easily digestible set of pre-meeting materials. **We strongly encourage you to read this subset of materials prior to the meeting, as they have been incorporated into our group activities.**

For your convenience, all of the meeting materials are also available on the Collaborative website at <http://www.cacollaborative.org/meetings/meeting24> and via DropBox at a link you will receive via email. A small number of CDs that contain the briefing binder materials will also be available at the meeting if necessary.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting logistics, please don’t hesitate to contact Suzanne Claussen at 650.843.8192 or sclaussen@air.org. If you have any other questions, please email me (joday@air.org) or give me a call (202.262.4987). I look forward to seeing you all next month!

Sincerely,



Jennifer O’Day, Chair
California Collaborative on District Reform
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