



Test Kitchen Launches to Advance Quality LCFF Implementation

San Mateo, California—Three California districts have begun efforts to improve Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) implementation through the launch of the LCFF Test Kitchen. Azusa Unified School District (USD), Elk Grove USD, and Oceanside USD will engage in a user-centered design process to develop alternative approaches to meet the purposes of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCFF Test Kitchen will be led through a partnership between the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), the California Collaborative on District Reform, Pivot Learning, WestEd, and the three participating districts.

LCFF has introduced positive and much-needed improvements into California’s education system, but unresolved flaws with the existing LCAP template undercut LCFF’s goals and threaten its political survival. The current LCAP lacks the transparency needed to gauge commitment to LCFF’s equity goals and comes with regulations that burden district staff and reinforce a compliance mentality. With key officeholder turnover looming in 2018, improvement is necessary to adequately and equitably serve all students so that incoming policymakers preserve the key components of the state’s school finance system.

The LCFF Test Kitchen directly addresses the recommendation of the LCFF Research Collaborative in its 2017 report to “allow local districts...to develop alternative and innovative purposes to achieving the core purposes of the current LCAP.”¹ Our approach builds on the philosophy that engaging the end user in the design of a product will result in a stronger product. Through a facilitated design process, with input from key LCFF stakeholders, Azusa Unified USD, Elk Grove USD, and Oceanside USD will work to develop alternative approaches to meeting LCFF goals. The process is intended to develop products that (1) improve the strategic alignment of resources to match goals to improve student outcomes, (2) support continuous improvement practices in the school districts, and (3) provide for greater transparency and engagement in local communities. According to Elk Grove Superintendent Christopher Hoffman, “Our team is excited to take a deep dive into the LCAP process to help move that work forward. The LCFF Test Kitchen also provides an opportunity for us to build capacity within our district by engaging in the design process and developing a skill set that will help us operate more effectively.”

We will document the work of the LCFF Test Kitchen with periodic updates, briefs, and presentations about the design process and the products that emerge from it. For the most current information, please visit <http://lcfftestkitchen.org>.

About the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence

The CCEE was established pursuant to Education Code section 52074, which states that “[t]he purpose of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence is to advise and assist school districts, county superintendents of schools, and charter schools in achieving the goals set forth in a local control and accountability plan.” The CCEE Executive Director is Dr. Carl Cohn, and the Riverside County Office of Education serves as the CCEE’s fiscal agent. Learn more at <http://ccee-ca.org/index.asp>.

¹ Humphrey, D., Koppich, J., Lavandez, M., Marsh, J., O’Day, J., Plank, D., et al. (2017). *Paving the way to equity and coherence? The Local Control Funding Formula in Year 3*. Stanford, CA: Local Control Funding Formula Research Collaborative. Retrieved from https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/LCFFRC_04_2017.pdf

About the California Collaborative on District Reform

The California Collaborative on District Reform was formed in 2006 to join researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and funders in ongoing, evidence-based dialogue to improve instruction and student learning for all students in California's urban school systems. The Collaborative is housed at and staffed by American Institutes for Research. Learn more at www.cacollaborative.org.

About Pivot Learning

Pivot Learning is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to revitalize our public school systems so that all students have the opportunity to succeed in college and career. Pivot Learning partners with education leaders at all levels and provides them with the knowledge, skills, and support proven to strengthen educational systems and transform teaching and learning. Learn more at <http://www.pivotlearning.org/>.

About WestEd

Since its inception in 1966, WestEd's prime focus has been success for every learner, and WestEd has been tackling real-world challenges, often in partnerships with other organizations, to make a positive difference in the lives of millions of children and adults. Across the nation, WestEd staff meet the needs of clients and customers through consulting and technical assistance, evaluation, policy analysis, professional development, and research. Learn more at <https://www.wested.org/>.