



# California Speaks on Fair School Funding:

Final Report of the School Success Express



Nov. 25, 2013



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## INTRODUCTION

California's new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) law outlines an inspiring vision for our schools, providing more funding to support students with the greatest needs and creating more local decision making over education and spending priorities.

Because local engagement plays a central role in the new law, it is essential that policymakers understand the reality of how school leaders interact with parents, students and residents so the state can provide appropriate oversight and guidance to ensure the promises of the law are fulfilled at the local level.

Too often, local voices are not heard in the state capitol, especially those of parents, students and residents who live in communities that don't receive their fair share of resources. For this reason, The California Endowment health foundation held 12 public forums across the state in low-income neighborhoods where we work to improve community health. We were pleased to collaborate with the state Board of Education, the California Department of Education, the office of California Gov. Jerry Brown and dozens of community partners in organizing the forums, which were attended by more than 1,600 people. The comments collected at these forums represent the largest single source of community feedback on LCFF that has been gathered in California.

We heard a range of perspectives at the forums, but these key themes emerged:

- The importance of accountability for how decisions are made, money is spent and progress is measured, especially regarding disadvantaged students whose learning needs and academic success are a primary focus of the new law.
- The essential role of parents and caregivers, and the need for major improvements in how school leaders engage them in the education of children and in decision-making about school priorities and spending.
- A meaningful role for students in providing input and being involved in decision making.
- The importance of positive learning environments that keep students engaged and in school, with more support staff and services such as guidance counselors, nurses, mentors, health services and after-school activities.
- The need for well-maintained and well-equipped schools to support learning and health.

We hope State Board of Education members and education leaders will find this report helpful in their decision making that will play a crucial role in shaping how this new law is carried out in communities across California.



## THE SCHOOL SUCCESS EXPRESS

The School Success Express tour took place from Sept. 30 to Nov. 13, 2013, with 12 community forums in places that are the focus of The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative, which focuses on improving health and strengthening



grassroots leadership in underserved communities.

Forums were held in Central Santa Ana, City Heights (San Diego), Del Norte and Adjacent Tribal Lands, East Oakland, East Salinas, Eastern Coachella Valley, Fresno, Los Angeles, Richmond, South Kern County, South Sacramento and Southwest Merced/East Merced County.

The goals of the forums were to raise community awareness about the historic changes that the new law is bringing to California schools, to provide community input to the state Board of Education regarding its upcoming decisions related to LCFF implementation and to engage local leaders about how the law will be rolled out.

The forums were open to the public and promoted in advance by local community partners, school districts, and local news media. All forums were held at times and locations convenient for parents and students. Some forums were held in English and others in Spanish, and translation services were also offered in Hmong, Vietnamese and Somali. All forums



included child care, food and transportation to the events via the custom-decorated School Success Express bus that accompanied the tour.

Each forum lasted about two hours and included an overview of LCFF, introductory comments from parents and youth leaders, and open time for community conversation and input. Attendance per event ranged from 80 to 200 people. All told, more than 1,600 parents, students, school district leaders, teachers and residents attended the forums and provided nearly 600 comments in person and in writing.

In particular, the forums encouraged feedback on parent involvement and student engagement, but the comments received were wide-ranging and reflected the interrelated nature of the many factors involved in improving academic achievement and preparing students for a successful and healthy life.

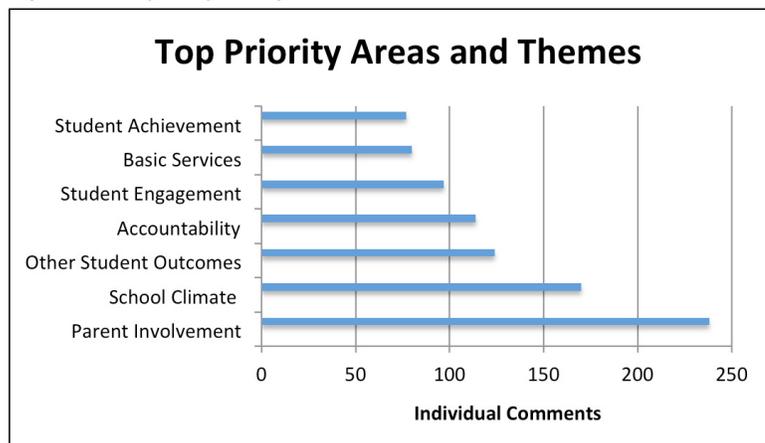


## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT

Our findings reflect data gathered from all 12 forums, resulting in a total of 573 individual comments (400 comment cards and 173 public statements captured on video). Filmed public statements do not include prepared comments, e.g. moderators' comments or panelists' comments – our analysis is specific to forum attendees. Attendees did not always identify themselves as they provided comments, but the largest group of input stemmed from parents, followed by students.

Although discussion and guiding questions varied across forums, moderators and facilitators generally posed questions around parent involvement, student engagement and school climate. This approach was intended to help focus the conversation but participants were not restricted to those three topics. Figure 1, below, reflects the frequency of topics mentioned in individual comments. Most comments addressed multiple topics.

**Figure 1: Frequency of Topics Mentioned**





## THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Accountability for Shared Leadership and Transparency in Decision Making**

Parents, students and residents expressed enthusiasm for the promise of LCFF as well as serious concerns that implementation would fall short given their experiences to date with schools and school leaders. Participants reported little or no communication from school leaders about LCFF, though the law is bringing sweeping changes to schools and LCFF funds have already been disbursed to districts.



Parents had little trust in current processes aimed at involving them in decision making. Many who served on school site councils and other advisory committees felt they were expected to serve as a rubber stamp rather than as true partners. Parents who have taken a great deal of time to provide input to districts aren't sure of the "return on investment" for their effort because they often don't hear back from school officials about whether any of their suggestions were appreciated or adopted.

Students, the primary clients of schools, felt excluded from LCFF and asked for an official and meaningful role in advisory and decision-making processes.

Forum participants were glad to see the state is investing more in education and a higher priority is being placed on closing the achievement gap for low-income students, English learners and foster youth. However, there was concern that the money will not be used for its intended purpose. Parents and students want to be able to "follow the money" and see LCFF funds result in tangible improvements in learning, services, staff and facilities at the school site level.

The LCFF engagement process that school districts undertake will be essential to building trust, engagement and faith in local school leadership. It is clear from

the forums that communication and collaborative decision making are not areas of strength for many school districts. They would benefit greatly from additional guidance and oversight from the Board of Education to ensure that baseline standards of communication and transparency are in place statewide.

### **Recommendations**

- Work with parents, students and local leaders to develop a publicly-announced timeline and plan for LCFF community engagement. Communication should be in the appropriate languages for each community and distributed through information channels that reach parents and students, not simply posted on a web site.
- Announce opportunities for community involvement in LCFF advisory committees, including roles and responsibilities of committee members. Consider a democratic selection process for committee members to build trust.
- Establish a role for students in advisory committees and decision-making processes.
- Provide training in how to understand school budgets, success measurements relevant to LCFF and other operational matters so community stakeholders and committee members can be full participants in the decision-making process.
- Create budgets that clearly explain how many LCFF dollars are being received to support low-income, English learner and foster youth students, and how this incremental funding is being spent.
- Provide at least two weeks public notice about important upcoming decisions regarding LCFF implementation.
- Establish a clear feedback process for advisory committees so that participants understand how the input they provided was used.
- Publicly communicate recommendations of the advisory committees to all parents and community stakeholders.

### **Parent and Caregiver Involvement**

Research has clearly demonstrated that parent and caregiver involvement is a crucial factor in student success.

Parents are eager and willing to be involved, but many are unsure about how to do that and school districts don't always make it easy.

Time and again, parents expressed the need for school leaders to get better at the basics, including holding meetings at convenient times and places, making materials available in the languages they speak and read, and offering translation, child care, transportation and food at meetings.

*“A back to school night and a once-a-year parent-teacher conference is not real engagement.”*

– Richmond high school student.

Many parents expressed frustration at school districts’ heavy reliance on one-way communication, such as automated “robo-calls” and emails, as a proxy for meaningful parent engagement. Parents want to see schools make more of an effort to “meet them where they are” through approaches such as home visits, employing parent outreach workers (promotoras) and partnering with community organizations that have trusted relationships with parents.

Parents do not always feel welcome and respected at schools and sometimes face high barriers to participation. In Richmond, for example, parents said they were required to pay for a \$35 identification card in order to volunteer in classrooms. At several forums, parents asked for every school to have a parent center where they could gather, meet other parents and receive information. Parents are eager to learn more about how to support their children, understand how to interpret grades and test results, and how to communicate more effectively with teachers.

California has more than 55,000 children under the age of 21 in foster care. They are among the state’s most vulnerable youth and a group that was singled out for attention under LCFF. Specific approaches are needed to engage those who care for foster youth. Foster youth often struggle in school because of frequent moves and require coordination of services and supports for their health and learning.

### Recommendations

- Provide school districts with specific guidance on the basics of good parent and caregiver engagement and explain how they will be held accountable in this area.
- Ask school districts to include measures of parent involvement in LCAPs, not simply a description of actions that were taken. See Appendix B for specific suggestions from parent organizations such as Families in Schools.
- Ask districts to document the dollars and resources devoted specifically to parent and caregiver involvement and include that information in LCAPs and budgets.
- Assess language and communication needs of local parents to improve outreach.
- Provide a best practices guide including strategies such as home visits, parent centers at schools and parent academies.
- Recommend that school districts create partnerships with trusted parent and community organizations as part of outreach strategies.

### Positive and Welcoming Learning Environments (School Climate)

School culture and climate are emerging areas of focus in education given the growing research documenting the connection between positive learning environments and academic achievement. A positive school climate is one in which students, educators and staff feel safe, welcomed, supported and connected.

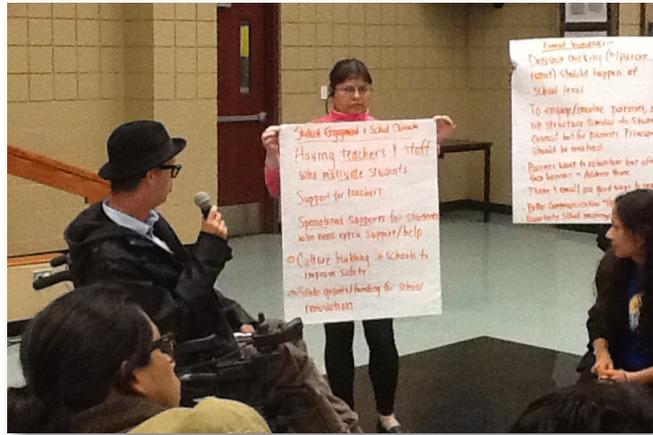
*“We need more counselors to counsel. More therapists to provide therapy for the children and parents and families. Full time community workers at all schools to provide more communication to the parents.”*

– Anabel Brown, Richmond parent



High rates of suspension and bullying are indicators of a negative school climate in which students feel unsafe and classrooms are not calm and focused places of learning. California schools issue more than 700,000 suspensions a year, and in the forums, students spoke out strongly against the

overuse of harsh and reactive discipline. Students called for the adoption of positive school discipline approaches, such as restorative justice, that keep students in school and resolve conflicts through communication, compassion and restitution. Also, these strategies can help reduce bullying, which was cited as a problem in nearly every forum.



Misconduct that is referred to law enforcement is particularly harmful in immigrant communities such as Santa Ana, where police inform federal immigration authorities who then act to deport young people. At the forum there, students provided documentation showing how this has contributed to Orange County having the highest rate of youth deportations in the nation.

Parents and students pointed to the importance of support staff and caring adults outside of the classroom to help and guide students. At the forums, we heard strong calls for restoring guidance counselors, nurses, health service providers, academic counselors and mentors whose positions had been eliminated through budget cuts.

*“What ways will the district use to inform and explain what LCFF means? Break it down for the community! This is the first step to transparency.”*

– Jocelyn Vargas, Coachella

Parents and students in multiple forums also called for schools to embrace, honor and reflect the state’s diversity, including its languages. More than 70% of Californians ages 25 and younger are people of color, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. Community engagement will not be successful if students and parents feel excluded because of the languages they speak, their immigration status or approaches that are not inclusive of diverse cultures.

### **Recommendations:**

- Implement school climate assessments at every school and track this data in LCAPs. There are a number of low-cost assessment options available, including a module of the California Healthy Kids Survey.
- Provide guidance in best practices for positive school discipline approaches that reduce suspensions and bullying, keep students in school and lead to more positive learning environments.
- Ask school districts to report on the number of support staff positions and services, including counselors, nurses and health providers, as part of school climate strategies in the LCAP.
- Provide guidance in how to improve school culture through increasing the level of cultural competency of school staff to deepen understanding about how to interact effectively with parents and students from California’s diverse cultures.
- Consider the use of supplemental data sources, such as the web site KidsData.org and the U.S. Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection, for inclusion in local measures.

### **Student Engagement and Educational Quality**

The topic of student engagement was prioritized during the forums, eliciting a range of feedback about ways to keep students motivated and focused on the future.

At nearly every forum, young people questioned why student engagement seemed to be about them rather than directly involving them and asking what they need and want. Many students echoed the sentiments of state Board of Education Student Member Jesse Zhiang in asking for a formal student role on committees and other groups charged with developing school success strategies.

*“We are the next generation. We need to have a great impact on how the money is spent. We go to the school, we know the problems inside the school. So put an emphasis on student involvement because it affects us.”*

– Blain Haskin, Fresno high school student.

Students also spoke about the quality of the education they are receiving and expressed frustration that many schools were failing to provide them with access to courses and advanced placement studies that are gateways to higher education. In California, only 35% of high school graduates completed

A-G courses with a grade of C or better in 2009, according to state data. African-American and Latino male students posted the lowest A-G completion rates of 22%.

*“Authentically engage parents. Don’t use this as a way to have a rubberstamp from parents.”*

– Laura Rios, Sacramento parent

The quality and enthusiasm of teachers were often cited as key factors in student engagement, as were the value of after-school learning opportunities, the arts, sports and other extracurricular activities. Parents also expressed concern that special education programs would suffer under LCFF given the lack of funds dedicated to special needs students.



Poor attendance, chronic absence and graduation rates are all important indicators of student engagement. Absenteeism provides an opportunity to engage with parents and families about what may be going wrong in the life of a child and the additional supports that may be needed to help students stay in school. Parents want to be informed at the first signs of difficulty with their children, and expressed frustration that

communication with them often comes too late in the process such as after students have failed classes.

### **Recommendations:**

- Ask school leaders to create a meaningful role for students in LCFF decision-making and advisory committees.
- Undertake student surveys and informal discussion groups to seek student advice on how to motivate young people and increase attendance.
- Include completion rates for A-G courses for all students and student sub-groups in the LCAP.
- Monitor attendance data in real-time to help identify when students and families may need additional supports.
- Recommend the use of free tools, such as those provided by the organization Attendance Works, to track attendance and chronic absence.

## School Facilities

The California Education Code clearly states that all students must be provided with equal access to instructional materials and well-maintained school facilities.

During the forums, parents and students said attention to basic facilities and services has suffered greatly during recent years of budget cuts. Outdated academic materials, low-quality school meals, heating and air conditioning systems that don't work and even a lack of toilet paper were cited at numerous forums.

When these basics are not in place, students and teachers said they do not feel valued and respected. "Decaying environmental conditions such as peeling paint, crumbling plaster, nonfunctioning toilets, poor lighting, inadequate ventilation, and inoperative heating and cooling systems can affect the learning as well as the health and the morale of staff and students," the U.S. Department of Education has found.

At several forums, students said that school meals were unappealing and needed to improve. This is an issue related to facilities in that many schools lack kitchens where food can be freshly prepared versus heated in a microwave.

*"Our school has been deprived of the simple essentials needed to operate and function. No money allotment for copy paper, toilet paper, toner, tissue boxes, school supplies, cleaning products, etc. It is assumed our school parents will provide all needs for our school, teachers and most importantly our students!"*

– Sandie Burgess, Sacramento

Parents and students also reported limited access to information technology at schools, everything from computers to Internet access. Technology is a vital tool for learning as well as for future employment and forum participants wanted their local schools to prioritize resources in this area.

### Recommendations:

- Include the School Accountability Report Card assessment on school facilities in the LCAP.
- Document and publish spending on facilities at the individual school site level as part of the LCAP and budget.
- Promote the state’s easy-to-use Facility Inspection Tool and guidebook to parents and students so they can engage in assessing local school facilities and recommending priorities.
- Recommend an information technology audit of every school to report on the availability of computing equipment and Internet access.



## CONCLUSION

It’s clear that parents, caregivers, students and community leaders are ready to do their part to make LCFF a success. However, what we heard in the forums is that the playing field is not level when it comes to how schools determine priorities and



make spending decisions. School district leaders hold all the cards and often times keep them close to the vest.

The state Board of Education can help to level the playing field by empowering community stakeholders through issuing regulations and specific guidance aimed at opening up the process and holding

school leaders accountable for authentic community engagement. We also heard from many school leaders at the forums who welcomed clear guidance from the state and were at a loss regarding how to proceed in the interim. “We have many more questions than answers,” was a statement that school officials made about LCFF at several forums.

Among the eight priorities specified in the law, the areas of parent involvement, school climate and student engagement are the ones that are the least familiar to school leaders and that would benefit the most from specific recommendations

regarding best practices and measurements for inclusion in the LCAP to assess progress.

Lastly, we urge Board members to keep students in mind as the most important constituency as regulations and guidance are developed. Students want a role in LCFF decision making and school leaders will benefit from their ideas and input. And if school districts receive more funding because they serve high-needs students, then those dollars should be used to provide more and better services to them in proportion to the funding they generate. Parents and students want more services, staff and programs they can see and experience at the school site level.

We thank the state Board of Education, the California Department of Education and the Office of California Gov. Jerry Brown for your partnership in organizing the School Success Express forums. We hope Board members will take these findings and recommendations to heart and incorporate them in the key decisions that lie ahead.

## **Appendix A: Acknowledgments**

We thank our leaders in state government for their support, including State Board of Education President Michael Kirst, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and Jamie Callahan of the Office of California Gov. Jerry Brown.

We thank our partners across California: ACLU of California; Asian Americans Advancing Justice- Los Angeles; Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN); Brothers,Sons, Selves Coalition; California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc; California State PTA; Californians for Justice; Children Now; Education Trust-West; Families in Schools; Fight Crime Invest in Kids California; Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC); Los Angeles Urban League; MALDEF; PICO California; Public Advocates; and Public Counsel.

In Central Santa Ana, we thank The Center OC, Century High School, CLUE Orange County, Kidworks, Latino Health Access, Orange County Congregation Community Organization (OCCCO), Orange County Labor Federation, Santa Ana Boys and Men of Color, Santa Ana College, and Santa Ana Unified School District.

In City Heights (San Diego), we thank Cherokee Point Elementary, Cherokee Point Trauma Informed Community Schools Partnership, City Heights Partnership for Children, Mid-City CAN and United Way of San Diego County.

In Del Norte and Adjacent Tribal Lands, we thank Building Healthy Communities Del Norte County and Adjacent Tribal Lands, Crescent City Cultural Center and Wild Rivers Community Foundation.

In East Oakland, we thank AYPAL, Black Organizing Project, East Oakland Building Healthy Communities, Fremont High School, Oakland Community Organizations, Oakland Kids First, Our Family Coalition, The Unity Council, Urban Strategies, Youth Together and Youth UpRising.

In East Salinas, we thank the ACTION Council for Monterey County/Building Healthy Communities East Salinas; Los Padres Elementary School; LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) of Salinas; MILPA; and University of California, Santa Cruz.

In Eastern Coachella Valley, we thank Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamérica (COFEM), Eastern Coachella Valley's Building Healthy Communities Our Lady of Soledad Catholic Church and PICO.

In Fresno, we thank Building Healthy Communities Fresno, Communities for a New California (CNC) Education Fund, Edison High School, Fresno Center for New Americans, Gay-Straight Alliance Network, Parent Institute for Quality Education, Stone Soup Fresno and Youth Leadership Institute.

In Los Angeles, we thank Alliance for a Better Community and Hollenbeck Middle School. Brothers, Sons, Selves Coalition, Inner City Struggle, Khmer Girls in Action, Building Healthy Communities South L.A., Building A Healthy Boyle Heights Collaborative, and Building Healthy Communities Long Beach.

In Richmond, we thank Building Blocks for Kids Collaborative, City of Richmond, Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO), DeJean Middle School, Healthy Richmond, RYSE Center, West Contra Costa Unified School District and Youth Enrichment Strategies (YES).

In South Kern, we thank Building Healthy Communities South Kern, the Dolores Huerta Foundation and Myrtle Avenue Elementary School.

In South Sacramento, we thank the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment; Asian Resources Inc.; Black Parallel School Board; Hmong, Mien, Lao Communities Action Network; La Familia Counseling Center, Inc.; Sacramento Area Congregations Together (ACT); Sacramento Building Healthy Communities; Southeast Asian Assistance Center; and Will C. Wood Middle School.

In Southwest Merced/East Merced County, we thank Building Healthy Communities Merced, the Merced Organizing Project, Merced Senior Center, and United Way of Merced County.

## **Appendix B: Resources, Best Practices and Recommended Reading**

### **Parent Involvement**

- [Families in Schools: Reimagining Parent Engagement in California. Includes recommended LCAP measurements for parent involvement.](#)
- [MALDEF: Minority Parent and Community Engagement. Best practices for engaging Latino, African-American, Native American and Asian-American parents and caregivers.](#)

### **School Climate**

- [WestEd: A Climate for Academic Success, 2013 report showing how positive learning environments are a key factor in student achievement, especially in disadvantaged communities.](#)
- [Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators, including best practices and case studies with alternatives to suspensions and expulsions that keep students in school and improve achievement.](#)
- [Civil Rights Project at UCLA: Suspended Education in California, documenting the overuse of suspensions and expulsions in schools and racial disparities in school discipline.](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection, offering data at the school district and school level regarding college and career readiness, teacher absenteeism and turnover, and suspensions and expulsions.](#)

### **Student Engagement**

- [Attendance Works: Free data tools for calculating chronic absence.](#)
- [KidsData.org: Emotional and Behavioral Health Data for California students at the county, school district and school level.](#)
- [California Attorney General Kamala Harris: In School and On Track, report documenting the truancy rates in California schools.](#)

### **School Facilities**

- [California Facility Inspection Tool for schools. A guide and handbook for providing a visual assessment of school facilities.](#)  
[Guidebook](#)  
[Site](#)
- [Center for Cities and Schools: California's K-12 Educational Infrastructure Investments.](#)

## **Appendix C: List of Media Coverage**

9/30/13

ABC Bakersfield [State Looking for Parent, Teacher Input on New Funding: Bus Tour to Visit 12 Communities in California](#)

10/1/13

Hoy [Arranca el “Exprés al Éxito Escolar”](#)

10/4/13

El Popular [¿Cómo mejorar las escuelas en California?](#)

10/8/13

Univision Palm Springs [Pasajeros de autobús escolar hablan sobre una nueva ley](#)

10/11/13

Coachella Unincorporated [ECV Parents Voice School Funding Priorities](#)

10/13/13

EdSource [New Funding Formula Revives Push for Smaller Class Sizes](#)

10/16/13

EdSource [Potential Weaknesses in New School Funding Law Demand Attention](#)

10/17/13

South Kern Sol [South Kern Parents Voice Their School Funding Priorities](#)

10/18/13

Merced Sun-Star [School Funding Law Forum Scheduled for Thursday](#)

New America Media [What Do Schools Need? Janitors and School Buses Before iPads, Say Parents](#)

News Fix KQED'S Bay Area News Blog [A New Challenge for Oakland Schools — Extra Money From State](#)

10/19/13

Sacramento Bee [School Funding Law Forum Scheduled for Thursday](#)

10/21/13

Contra Costa Times [School Funding Forum Tuesday in West Contra Costa District](#)

10/23/13

Contra Costa Times [Richmond Parents, Students Gather for Town Hall on Fair School Funding Law](#)

10/24/13

Cabinet Report [Civil Rights Groups, Schools Face Off Over LCFF Flexibility Question](#)

Monterey County Weekly [Department of Education Seeks Community Input on School Budgets.](#)

10/25/13

Boyle Heights Beat [New State Funding Law Will Drive More Local Control at Schools; Join the Community Forum at Hollenbeck Middle School](#)

10/28/13

EdSource [Proposed Spending Regs Give Districts Leeway to Choose How to Serve High-Needs Students](#)

Impacto USA [SOCAL: Informan Sobre Nueva Ley de Financiación Escolar](#)

Univision Los Angeles [Padres Tendrán Voz Y Voto en el Distrito Escolar de LA](#)

11/1/13

EdSource [Implement Funding Formula that Helps Me Become Successful](#)

EdSource [Parents Push for More Prominent Place at the School Budget Table](#)

11/2/13

Asian Journal [Town Hall Meeting on Fair School Funding Law](#)

11/3/13

New America Media [Oakland Parent to Schools: 'Don't Forget Inner-City Kids'](#)

Richmond Pulse [School Success Express Comes to Richmond](#)

11/4/13

CBS Salinas [Millions of Dollars Coming to Salinas School Districts](#)

Press Telegram [LBUSD Stands to Collect Millions Because of New Funding Law](#)

Univision Monterey-Salinas [Foro Sobre Nueva Ley](#)

11/5/13

EdSource [Advocates Pile on Criticisms of Draft Funding Formula Regulations](#)

Speak City Heights [Event Highlights School Funding Change](#)

Univision Monterey-Salinas [Foro Educativo en Salinas](#)

We'Ced Youth Media [Merced Merced Parents Add Their Voice to School Funding Debate](#)

11/6/13

The Californian [Forum Explains New School Funding to Parents](#)

Fresno Bee [Fresno Unified School Funding Forum Set for Edison High](#)

Radio Bilingue *link unavailable*

11/7/13

EdSource [After 5 Hours of Testimony, State Board Sends Funding Law Regs Back for Revisions](#)

Fresno Bee [Fresno Unified Parents Want Say in How New State Funds Are Spent](#)

Orange County Register [Santa Ana Residents Weigh in on School Spending](#)

11/8/13

Cabinet Report [CA's SBE Struggles with LCFF Implementation](#)

Monterey County Herald [California School Funding Formula Tied to English Learners, Needy: Accountability on Use of Money a Concern](#)

Oakland Local [Oakland Students, Parents, Talk About Local Control Funding for Schools](#)

Univision Fresno [Millionarias Inversiones en la Educación Para el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno](#)

11/12/13

Asian Week [For Chinese Parents, Local Control is 'Lost in Translation'](#)

11/13/13

New America Media Farm Worker Parents Voice Their School Funding Priorities

Triplicate School Funding Increase to be Discussed Wed.

11/20/13

The kNOw Youth Media Millions in New Funding Coming to Fresno Schools - How Should the District Spend it?

New America Media In CA, Will New Education Funds Reach the Students Who Need It Most?

11/21/13

New America Media Black Parents: This Is What Our Kids Need to Succeed at School

## **Appendix D: New America Media**

### **Parent and Student Storytelling Sessions Organized by New America Media**

Starting in early October, New America Media, the nation's largest ethnic media network, began convening a series of listening sessions with small groups of 15 to 30 low-income parents to talk about their experiences with California's public schools and to solicit their ideas for how LCFF could improve the quality of education their children receive.

We designed these sessions to compliment The California Endowment's larger community forums by focusing each on a single racial or ethnic group -- Chinese, Black, Native American, Black single moms, Korean, Hmong -- in Los Angeles, Fresno, Oakland, Richmond and San Francisco. We also convened a special session of 20-plus students who represented "system youth" trying to get back on track. By inviting our ethnic media partners to cover the listening sessions for their respective audiences, and video-taping the sessions ourselves, we created platforms that were both intimate and informal but also public, with the aim of informing and engaging a wider audience.

Each session ran for about two hours, included lunch or dinner, and was held in a public library, community organization or ethnic media office. NAM editors moderated the sessions using ethnic media partners as translators. The moderators provided summaries of LCFF's goals and the importance of parent involvement and student involvement in determining its priorities.

As of November 24, NAM had convened five sessions involving a total of 70 participants. We will convene at least two more in-language sessions (Korean and Hmong) the first week of December. The multimedia coverage these sessions generate reaches a far wider audience -- KMEL's Sunday night one-hour interview with single black moms boasts the largest hip-hop radio audience in the Bay Area; KTSF-TV Cantonese news has the largest Chinese viewership in Northern California; the Sentinel is the oldest and largest circulation black newspaper in Los Angeles.

What follows is a list of the time, date and place of each session and samples of the coverage it produced. As the coverage shows, the issues and concerns raised by the parents -- and by the students in their session -- demonstrate how consistent the concerns outlined in TCE's report are across all low-income communities.

For example, there is a tremendous desire among these parents to be more involved in their children's schools but a frustration over how to do this in the face of language barriers, lack of time and lack of confidence that their voices will be heard. Better communications with the schools -- teachers who let you know your kid is failing before he actually fails; counselors who can address bullying--both the bullied and the bullier; in-language translators to help parents talk to teachers; training for parents to know how to help with homework or just understand what was going on in the school -- was the most frequent ask in virtually all sessions. There was also a heavy emphasis on improving basic services and infrastructure -- from arts programs, to computers, basic janitorial and bathroom supplies.

But the sessions also captured concerns unique to each group which are apparent in the video segments and which NAM will be summarizing in our final report. So, for example, language access is the most critical issue for Chinese parents but Black parents also spoke of the need to reinstate Standard English Language classes for black students and want the State Board explicitly to reinstate a special task force monitoring the progress of black students. Native American parents want to see more multi-cultural curricula, particularly recognizing American Indian history and cultures.

Each session ended -- as the videos demonstrate -- with parents feeling excited and empowered that sharing their experiences and insights might actually contribute to improving the schools. The media reporters who covered the sessions are equally excited about tracking what LCFF does to improve parent involvement. "Education is the civil rights issue for this generation, and parents getting involved can make it a civil rights movement," in the words of one ethnic media editor.

Odette Keeley

Parent Engagement Project Director, New America Media

**Native-American Parents Roundtable**, Oct. 21, 2013, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

San Francisco

NAM Video Report: <https://vimeo.com/77837702>

**Street Soldiers African-American Bay Area Mothers Radio Roundtable**

**Segment** Aired Live on 106.1 FM KMEL on Oct. 13, 2013, 8 pm to 10 pm.

Audio Links: <http://streetsoldiersradio.org/listen-watch/> and <http://richmond-pulse.org/street-soldiers-radio-parents-perspective-on-schools/>

**RYSE African-American Parents & Students Session in Richmond**, Nov.

5, 2013, 6 pm to 7:30 pm. Coverage by Richmond Confidential, <http://richmondconfidential.org/2013/11/08/richmond-parents-talk-education/> and

[Redeemed World Magazine, http://redeemedworld.org/?p=4643](http://redeemedworld.org/?p=4643)

**NAM-CAA In-Language Chinese Parents Roundtable-San Francisco, with simultaneous English-Cantonese translation. Nov. 7, 2013, 10 am to 11:30 am.** English language coverage by New America Media, <http://newamericamedia.org/2013/11/for-chinese-parents-local-control-is-lost-in-translation.php> and <https://vimeo.com/79457617>

Chinese media coverage in China Press, <http://news.uschinapress.com/2013/1107/526256.shtml>, New Tang Dynasty TV <http://www.ntdtv.com/xtr/b5/2013/11/09/a1000711.html>, World Journal, [http://www.worldjournal.com/view/full\\_news/24006662/article-instance=topics](http://www.worldjournal.com/view/full_news/24006662/article-instance=topics), The Epoch Times: <http://www.epoch-times.com/gb/13/11/8/n4006160.html>, Sing Tao:<http://std.stheadline.com/over-sea/1109ao34.html>, and KTSF TV-CHANNEL 26, which aired the segment on the roundtable on their live Chinese newscast that same evening, Nov. 7th.

**African-American Parents Roundtable - Los Angeles, Nov 12, 2013, 6 pm to 7:30 pm,** Baldwin Hills Library Branch, LA Public Library  
NAM coverage at <http://newamericamedia.org/2013/11/black-parents-this-is-what-our-kids-need-to-succeed-at-school.php>

## Appendix E: Methodology for Data Analysis

Our findings reflect data gathered from all 12 forums, resulting in a total of 573 individual comments (400 comment cards and 173 public statements captured on video). Filmed public statements do not include prepared comments, e.g. moderators' comments or panelists' comments – our analysis is specific to forum attendees.

In 7 of 12 forums – Del Norte and Adjacent Tribal Lands, Fresno, Los Angeles, Merced, Oakland, Richmond and Salinas – local community partners opted to dedicate time for small group discussions. Notes gathered from these discussions were not counted towards total units of feedback. In our comprehensive analysis of all modes of feedback, we determined that comments from one individual (as in comment cards and video transcripts) were comparable to one another but not to transcribed poster notes emerging from small groups, ranging from 8 to 40 attendees.

Table 1 below shows total units of feedback collected from each forum, delineating totals stemming from comment cards and video transcript comments.

**Table 1: Individual Comments by Source and Location**

Location	Total Units of Feedback	Individual Comment Cards	Video Transcript Comments
South Kern	71	51	20
Eastern Coachella Valley	38	13	25
South Sacramento	66	25	41
Richmond	56	39	17
Southwest Merced/East Merced County	48	34	14
Los Angeles	44	40	4
Central Santa Ana	62	40	22
East Oakland	32	10	22
East Salinas (Alisal)	31	23	8
Fresno	33	33	n/a*
City Heights (San Diego)	46	46	n/a*
Del Norte and Adjacent Tribal Lands	46	46	n/a*
<b>Subtotal</b>	-	400	173
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>573</b>	-	-

\* Transcripts for Fresno, City Heights, and Del Norte and Adjacent Tribal Lands were not available in time for inclusion in this report

## **Appendix F: Event Locations & Dates**

<i>Sept. 30</i>	South Kern
<i>Oct. 7</i>	Eastern Coachella Valley
<i>Oct. 9</i>	South Sacramento
<i>Oct. 22</i>	Richmond
<i>Oct. 24</i>	Southwest Merced/East Merced County
<i>Oct. 28</i>	Los Angeles
<i>Oct. 29</i>	Central Santa Ana
<i>Oct. 30</i>	East Oakland
<i>Nov. 4</i>	East Salinas
<i>Nov. 7</i>	Fresno
<i>Nov. 9</i>	City Heights (San Diego)
<i>Nov. 13</i>	Del Norte & Adjacent Tribal Lands