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Broad Support and Lingering Challenges for the Local Control Funding Formula in Survey of California Superintendents

California's superintendents overwhelmingly support the state's [Local Control Funding Formula](#) (LCFF) and its underlying goal of promoting more equitable allocation of resources for high-needs students, according to the first comprehensive survey of how district superintendents view the five-year old law.

In "Superintendents Speak: Implementing the Local Control Funding Formula," being released June 27 by the [Local Control Funding Formula Research Collaborative](#) (LCFFRC)*, 94 percent of the 350 superintendents surveyed agree with the statement, "Students with greater needs should receive additional resources."

The LCFF is one of Governor Jerry Brown's signature accomplishments and the most significant overhaul of California's school finance policies in 40 years, allocating additional funds for English learners, foster youth, and low-income students to improve their opportunities for success in school, college, career, and life. But there is no guarantee that the LCFF will continue after Governor Brown terms out this year.

"The survey results coincide with a pivotal time for California," says Julia E. Koppich, co-author of the study and president of J. Koppich & Associates. "The state is on the cusp of electing a new Governor, new State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and many new legislators. Their understanding of how district leaders view the LCFF could shape the future of this funding policy."

Other **key findings** include:

- Nearly three-quarters of superintendents (74%) say that the LCFF's fiscal flexibility has enabled their district to spend in ways that match local needs.
- 78% say the LCFF has enabled them to improve services and programs for low-income students, foster youth, and English learners.
- 74% believe that the parent and community engagement required by the LCFF gives historically underrepresented students and families new opportunities to influence district decisions.
- 90% agree that districts should be allowed to use LCFF supplemental and concentration funds for other disadvantaged students who are not explicitly targeted by the policy.

“Superintendents are critical stakeholders whose leadership is fundamental to the continuing success of the LCFF,” says Wesley Smith, Executive Director of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), “We believe it is imperative that our policymakers look for solutions to address the concerns highlighted in this study.”

It is clear that by allowing districts to decide where to spend the additional funds, leaders feel better able to focus their districts’ budget priorities on improving academic outcomes for their English learners, low-income students, and foster youth.

“The superintendents’ support for the equity goals of the LCFF are extremely encouraging,” said study co-author Julie A. Marsh, an associate professor at USC’s Rossier School of Education, “yet the results also indicate there is still work to be done to fully achieve these equity goals.”

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Research Method

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) Survey of Superintendents was conducted online and by telephone by Fluent Research on behalf of the LCFF Research Collaborative between September 14, 2017 – March 8, 2018 among 350 qualified superintendents and other district administrators in public school districts in California. Results were weighted on district size and unduplicated pupil count (proportion of high-needs students) to bring these variables into alignment with their actual proportions in the population.

** The Local Control Funding Formula Research Collaborative is a group of leading researchers and policy experts from universities and organizations, who, since 2014, have been studying and documenting implementation of California’s Local Control Funding Formula. The LCFFRC operates through Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE).*