

# Advocating in Your Schools

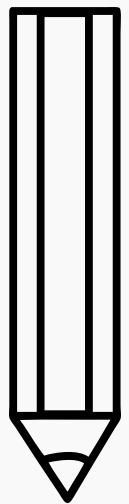
CoCo v. LAUSD

**The Community Coalition v. LAUSD, et al. settlement is a unique opportunity for parents, community members and students to advocate at their school sites to ensure increased funds are invested in resources and programs that support low-income students, English learners, and foster youth. Below, we break down two school-based councils and committees that may serve as platforms to address any concerns you may have about your school's spending plans. We also provide tips on how to sharpen your advocacy skills so that you are well-prepared to engage with your School Site Council and/or school principal.**

## School Site Council(SSC)

The SSC is a group of teachers, classified staff, parents, students (at high schools) and sometimes community members who work with the principal to make decisions about a school's programs and budget. The SSC consults with relevant stakeholders to plan, monitor, and evaluate the activities and expenditures for programs operated at the school to improve student achievement. The SSC approves the school spending and education plan called the Single Plan for Student Achievement.

The SSC is comprised of an equal number of school staff on one hand, and parents, students and community members on the other. SSC members are typically elected by members of the school community at the beginning of each school year. SSC meetings are open to the public and those in attendance can provide input on the funding plans for each academic school year.



## English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)



The ELAC provides recommendations to the SSC regarding programs and services for English Learner (EL) students and funding needed to support their academic and social-emotional needs. Each school with 21 or more EL students must have an ELAC that includes at least the same percentage of EL parents as the percentage of EL students at the school.

\*Note: If you are interested in serving on your school's site council, call your school to find out how the selection process works at the campus. Members of SSCs are typically elected by their peers so it helps to be engaged with other active parents at the school site.



## Ask Questions

It is important to make sure you fully understand decisions made by your school and their potential impact on the school community. As a parent, you are not expected to know everything, especially when it comes to your child's school's funding decisions. It can be intimidating to ask your school's administrators or decision makers for clarity, but it is vital to do so if you are ever in doubt about how funds are being spent to make a difference for students. Asking questions is the most effective way of learning how your school comes to decisions and ensuring all dollars—including the settlement funds—are being effectively used!

### **Here is a list of possible questions for your principal:**

- How are School Innovation Funds making a difference at our school?
- Have any new personnel/staff been hired using the innovation funds? If so, who are the new hires and what is their role?
- What new programs, services, or resources has the school made available to students, because of the availability of the innovation funds?
- Is there anything I can do as a parent, to ensure my voice is accounted for when you update the school's spending plan?
- What is the school doing to ensure parents are engaged in funding decisions as it relates to School Innovation Funds (SIF)?



## Be Informed

Become familiar with our toolkit and review your school's spending plan. Plans for the 50 schools can be found at [www.aclusocal.org/coco-v-laUSD](http://www.aclusocal.org/coco-v-laUSD). If possible, attend School Site Council meetings and ask to discuss funding impacted by the Community Coalition v. LAUSD settlement. If you notice that no meetings are scheduled, call your school's main office and ask to confirm.



## Know your and your child's rights

Learn about your child's rights in school and yours as a parent to ensure your child is receiving a high-quality, free and non-discriminatory public education. Please visit [www.MySchoolMyRights.com](http://www.MySchoolMyRights.com) for more information about students' rights in school. Parents can also access their rights in the Los Angeles Unified School District by visiting this link: [www.bit.ly/lausd-parent-rights](http://www.bit.ly/lausd-parent-rights).



## Communicate Regularly

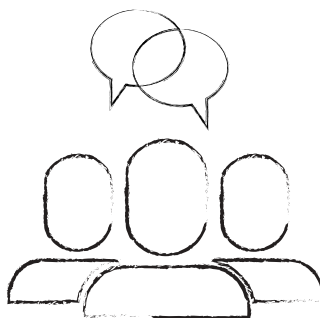
SSC meetings, district forums, parent meetings, and other similar spaces are great opportunities for you to get updates on the school's happenings. These are also opportunities to gain insight on funding decisions and may help you identify key players to follow up with if you have additional questions or concerns.



## Schedule a workshop for other parents

Educating others is a powerful approach to ensure parents with kids in the 50 schools are familiar with the settlement. Work with your school's parent center or parent engagement committee to schedule a presentation for parents where they can learn more about the Community Coalition v. LAUSD settlement. You can also contact Irene Rocha Rivera by email at [irivera@aclusocal.org](mailto:irivera@aclusocal.org) if you would like the ACLU Foundation of Southern California to host a workshop at your school.

This can be an opportunity to meet other parents and collectively discuss the needs for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth at your school. If a school is unable to provide you a space for your meeting, reach out to community based organizations who may be interested in supporting and hosting your event.



### Organizations

ACLU Foundation of Southern California

[www.aclusocal.org](http://www.aclusocal.org)

(213) 977-9500

Community Coalition

[www.cocosouthla.org](http://www.cocosouthla.org)

(323) 750-9087

Public Advocates

[www.publicadvocates.org](http://www.publicadvocates.org)

(415) 431-7430

### Websites

Community Coalition v. LAUSD—Access settlement agreement, toolkit, & spending plans for 50 schools.

[www.aclusocal.org/coco-v-laUSD](http://www.aclusocal.org/coco-v-laUSD)

LCFF Overview—Two page summary about the Local Control Funding Formula.

[www.aclusocal.org/en/everything-you-need-know-about-lcff](http://www.aclusocal.org/en/everything-you-need-know-about-lcff)

My School My Rights—Website aimed to educate students on their rights and empower them to have a say in their education.

[www.myschoolmyrights.com](http://www.myschoolmyrights.com)

Parent's Guide to School Board Advocacy— Explains how school boards and superintendents adopt district policies and regulations and includes additional ideas for advocacy in your school district.

[www.aclunc.org/docs/parents\\_guide\\_to\\_school\\_board\\_advocacy.pdf](http://www.aclunc.org/docs/parents_guide_to_school_board_advocacy.pdf)