

Frequently Asked Questions

CoCo v. LAUSD

Q. **What is the Community Coalition v. LAUSD settlement?**

The Community Coalition v. LAUSD, et al settlement provides more than \$150 million of additional funds to 50 middle and high schools in Los Angeles over 3 school years, for new or improved services for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth. Starting in 2017-18, funds to the 50 middle and high schools are being distributed according to the number of low-income students, English learners, and foster youth and other factors that indicate greater need at the school.

Q. **How did this settlement come about?**

The settlement was reached to resolve a 2015 lawsuit filed by Public Advocates Inc., the ACLU of California, and Covington and Burling LLP against LAUSD on behalf of parent Reyna Frias and Community Coalition, a South Los Angeles based social justice organization. The lawsuit was about LAUSD improperly spending millions of dollars of funds that were supposed to be spent on increased or improved services for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth each year.

Q. **How were the fifty schools selected?**

The 50 schools were selected based on multiple factors such as the number of high-need students, math scores, suspension rate, foster youth, and homelessness rates. Schools are receiving between \$630,000 and \$4.7 million in additional funding during the first two school years. The list of the 50 schools with amount of funding is available here: www.aclusocal.org/coco-v-laUSD.

Q. If my school is one of the fifty schools selected, how is the principal supposed to implement this settlement?

To access the funds, each school principal needed to submit a 2-year “School Innovation Funds” (SIF) plan by October 31, 2017 for school years 2017-18 and 2018-19. The school’s Local District Superintendent then reviewed and approved the plans. Once approved, the principal oversees how these funds are used. A best practice would be to communicate with the school community about how these funds are being used to improve services for lowincome, English learner, and foster youth students. For the 2019-20 school year, the principal must include the School Innovation Fund proposal in the annual site budget development planning process for submission in Spring of 2019. The School Site Council and the broader school community should be consulted in this process.

Q. What type of programs and services should my school spend SIF funds on?

The 50 schools must spend this new money on 6 types of new or improved services for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth. These 6 types of services are listed on the next page with examples.

Settlement funds must be spent on new or improved services for:



**Low-income
students**



English learners



Foster youth

Frequently Asked Questions

contd.

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1. Significant increases in investment in high need students, including academic support and mental health, social, and emotional support

- Hiring a Psychiatric Social Worker (PSW)
- Mentorship programs
- Hiring teacher assistants to provide one-on-one tutoring and assist teachers in classrooms

2. Increasing A-G and AP access and completion for high need students, including A-G intervention and recovery

- Increasing staffing by hiring:
 - Teachers in core content areas to support the three student groups
 - Academic counselors to focus on the three student groups
 - Specialized academic tutors & coaches in core content areas (e.g. math coaches, reading specialists, science instructors)
- Credit recovery labs for 9th-12th grade
- Educational licenses for online classes (e.g. TenMarks, Schooop)
- Summer bridge programs for graduating 8th grade students

3. Linked Learning (an approach that incorporates rigorous academics, career and technical education, work-based learning, and student supports)

- Implementing Linked Learning pilot program
- Hiring Linked Learning Summer Bridge coaches
- Concurrent/dual enrollment (Refers to an arrangement where students are enrolled in courses that may count for both high school and college credit.)

4. School climate initiatives including restorative justice

- Hiring a Restorative Justice counselor or staff to promote positive school climate
- School-wide training on Restorative Justice practices and implementation

5. High school graduation & student recovery for drop out prevention for high need students

- Hiring a Pupil Service and Attendance (PSA) Counselor
- Student recovery days and follow-up efforts to re-engage students who have dropped out or not returned to school.

6. Parent & community engagement, particularly for those from high need communities

- Hiring a Parent Coordinator or Parent Liaison
- Increased time for parent-teacher meetings and collaboration

Q. **Can the funds be utilized on professional development for school staff?**

Funds must be spent in alignment with the six categories listed in the prior page to increase or improve services for low-income, English learner, and foster youth students at the school. LAUSD appears to require, “a minimum amount of school’s allocated funds to be spent on professional development in the areas of mathematics and English language arts/English Language Development.” We have observed that many SIF plans appear to be investing significantly in professional development. This looks differently across all 50 schools so it is best to contact your school principal and ask about their plan to spend allocated funds on professional development to ensure that it is being done in a way that is truly providing a benefit to high need students.

Q. **Can schools update their SIF plans?**

Yes. Schools can submit amendments to their plans during budget development periods to reflect changes in the upcoming school years (2018-19 & 2019-20). Because the initial SIF plans were due under such a short timeline, we would expect that schools would want to take advantage of the opportunity to revise the plans for the upcoming year to ensure that students are receiving the best possible services.

Q. **What happens if my school does not spend the entire amount of money allocated to us?**

Schools must spend all funds received in the first two years of the settlement by June 30, 2019. Any unspent funding may be reallocated by the Superintendent among the other 50 schools. All settlement funds must be spent by the end of the 2019-20 school year; any unspent funds as of June 30, 2020 may be used by the District for any District purpose. In other words, schools must use the funds or else they lose the funds. That is why it is important to make sure that your school has a strong plan for how to spend these additional resources to truly serve students.

Q. **If I am concerned about how settlement funds are being spent, what can I do?**

Speak out and advocate for change. Please refer to our “Advocating in Your Schools” guide in this toolkit to learn what you can do to work with your school communities to ensure low-income students, English learners, and foster youth truly benefit from this settlement.

Q. **What will happen to my school after the settlement money "runs out"?**

While this settlement provides additional funds to some of LAUSD’s highest need schools, we know these additional funds will be exhausted by 2020 and there will likely remain a critical need for services at these schools. Parents should continue to advocate for their children in these schools and in the Los Angeles Unified School District to ensure decision makers are held accountable to school’s yearly site budgets and Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) requirements. For more information on LCFF please visit this link: www.aclusocal.org/everything-you-need-know-about-lcff.

Q. **Where can I get more information?**

You can get more information by visiting www.aclusocal.org/coco-v-laUSD. Here you can access several items including your school’s most updated SIF plan, the amount of money allocated to each settlement school, the settlement agreement, and this toolkit. You can also contact Irene Rocha Rivera, Education Justice Advocate, ACLU Foundation of Southern California at irivera@aclusocal.org.