

HOW THE LOCAL CONTROL FUNDING FORMULA (LCFF) CAN FIX SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Summary: We need more solutions to help students struggling with behavior in California, not suspensions. Two decades of research show that out-of-school suspension is an educationally unsound solution. Students who are suspended are far more likely to drop out and get involved with the juvenile justice system. Sadly, in California, we rely heavily on punitive and harsh discipline that doesn't work and are issuing more suspensions than diplomas each year.

This guide describes how you can use the new Local Control Funding Formula **RIGHT NOW** to improve school climate and reduce suspensions and expulsions in your district. It explains how:

- **LCFF works and how improving school climate—including by reducing suspension and expulsion rates—is one of the 8 priority areas that districts must use LCFF funding for.**
- **Districts must establish goals, and describe the actions they will take, to reduce suspension and expulsion rates** and otherwise improve school climate, which will be included in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) for each school and each district. By July 1 of this YEAR, your school district will be required to adopt a district-wide plan to spend this money and address the 8 state priorities.
- **You can participate in your district's planning process.** By law, your school district must get community input on the LCAP before adopting it. At a minimum, the school district must obtain comments and feedback from a Parent Advisory Committee; an English learner parent advisory committee (if 15% EL students); and from the public, in at least ONE public hearing.
- **Step by step what you can do to encourage and help your district in writing its LCAP to:**
 - **Create baseline school climate data for a needs assessment**, with recommendations about what specific data to include.
 - **Set yearly goals for reducing suspension and expulsion rates and improving school climate**, with examples of specific goals.
 - **Adopt specific actions** the district will take to reach the goals with detailed examples of specific actions including approaches like Restorative Practices, School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Social Emotional Learning, Trauma Sensitive Schools, and policies such as ending willful defiance suspensions.
 - **Make sure the district directs money toward fixing school discipline and for the students who need it most**, by advocating for your district to spell out how much money in its budget comes from each funding source—base, supplemental, and concentration—it is devoting to each of the specific actions and to meeting its overall goals for school climate.

This guide also includes a sample of the type of information school districts should develop in preparing their LCAP for school climate.

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This Document Was Adapted from a Comprehensive Toolkit available at:
<http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/toolkit/lcffcommunity/>

How can LCFF help fix school discipline and stop the school to prison pipeline?

The funding formula will increase the state's overall level of funding for public education, simplify the formulas for determining how much money each school district receives, and—for the first time—give districts additional funding specifically to improve services for low-income, foster, and English learner students.

While districts will have more flexibility over how to spend their money, LCFF funding has to be targeted at 8 state priorities, and improving school climate—**including by reducing suspension and expulsion rates**—is one of the 8 priority areas that districts must focus on.

By July 1 of this YEAR, your school district will be required to adopt a district-wide plan to spend this money and address the 8 state priorities. The new plan is called the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). In their LCAP, **districts must establish goals, and describe the actions they will take to address each of the 8 state priorities, including what they will do to reduce suspension and expulsion rates** and otherwise improve school climate. The goals and actions have to be not only district-wide, but also for each school and each student subgroup (such as race/ethnicity, English language learners, socio-economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities).

The LCAP will guide the district for the next THREE years (and must be updated annually). It must be linked with the entire school district's budget, and the budget and LCAP must be adopted at the same meeting.

More information on the Local Control Funding Formula can be found at: <http://lcff.childrennow.org/>. Handouts summarizing how the law changes school funding and the process for developing the LCAP are available at: <http://www.aclusocal.org/issues/education/local-control-funding-formula/>.

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How can I ensure that LCFF funding is used to fix school discipline and stop the school to prison pipeline?

There are several ways that you can get involved and make a difference.

Participate in your district's planning process

IMPORTANT: By law, your school district must obtain community input on the LCAP before adopting it! At a minimum, the school district must obtain comments and feedback:

- From a Parent Advisory Committee;
- An English learner (EL) parent advisory committee (if 15% EL students); and
- From the public, in at least ONE public hearing.

It is a state priority to have meaningful parent and community involvement. Make your voice heard in the process!

TIP: We recommend that you set up meetings with School Board Members, the Superintendent, and school district budget staff as soon as possible to tell them what you want to see included in the LCAP for school climate. See if you can identify School Board Members who would be most open to your proposals.

We also recommend that you meet with other allies and community and parent groups to ask them to support your recommendations.

If the Parent Advisory Committee is not representative of the community, make a request to the School Board or the Superintendent to expand the Committee or ensure there are other forums to receive parent input.

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Make sure your district’s plan includes what’s needed to fix school discipline

You can help ensure that the district’s LCAP includes the needed data, sets the right goals, and includes the actions needed to achieve those goals. In the LCAP, each school district must, for each school and subgroup:

1. **Identify the Need and Metrics Used during the Required Needs Assessment¹**: identify the needs that were identified and metrics being used to measure progress; this means that the district should review its existing data on suspension and expulsion rates, broken down by all student groups, including EL and foster youth, and by school and using survey data on school climate, to set a baseline for the goals that are included in the LCAP.
2. **Set Yearly Goals for Reducing Suspensions and Expulsion Rates and Improving School Climate.²**
3. **Identify Specific Actions³** the district will take to reach the goals.
4. **List Expenditures⁴**: include the amount of funding that will be spent to reach the goals.

Below we include some suggestions for recommendations you might make to your school district and where you can find information specific to your school district.

1. Creating a baseline. We recommend you ask your District to provide baseline data for suspension and expulsion rates to the community, broken down in the following ways:

- all pupil subgroups (providing this data is essential because law requires that the District establish goals for all District-level subgroups, schools, and school-level subgroups);
- by school, including by subgroup at each school (also essential for the reason stated above);
- the number of “willful defiance”—Education Code 48900(k)—suspensions;
- the number of students suspended (and not just the number of suspensions issued); and
- the numbers of both in-school and out-of-school suspensions.

All of this data can be found on the California Department of Education’s website:

<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.

You should also ask your District to look at the number **of teacher referrals (office discipline referrals)** and **suspensions from class**, which are not included in the data the state collects on in-school and out-of-school suspensions.

With more information, your school district will be able to target the areas of greatest need and create actions to solve those problems. For example, if your district issues a large number of willful defiance suspensions, a goal could be to reduce or eliminate such suspensions and a simple solution could be to eliminate willful defiance suspensions through policy as [Los Angeles and San Francisco Unified School Districts have done](#).

¹ EC 52060(c)(1).

² EC 52060(c)(1).

³ EC 52060(c)(2).

⁴ EC 52064(b)(1).

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Here is an example of how a district might report its baseline data for suspension when developing its LCAP. Of course, you will want to compare such data to the actual enrollment to understand whether there are disparities or disproportionality in the issuance of suspensions. Districts should also report similar information for each school within the district to determine whether that school should have a distinct goal different from the districtwide goal:

BASELINE DATA – SUSPENSIONS FOR ABC SCHOOL DISTRICT

	# of Suspensions	Rate of Suspensions (# of suspensions per 100 students)	# of Willful Defiance Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	# of Teacher Suspensions /Office Referrals	# of In-School Suspensions	# of Out-of School Suspensions
All students	500	7%	200	270	190	100	210
Hispanic or Latino	200	20%	70	100	90	40	70
African-American	150	15%	60	90	65	25	60
Any other group (with 30 or more students, e.g., EL, Low-income, Foster Youth, Students with Disability, White, Asian, etc.)	150	25	100	80	35	35	80

The data for your school district on in-school and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions is available at:

<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

www.schooldisciplinedata.org

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You will need to make a Public Records Act Request to get the data on teacher suspensions and office referrals, as it isn't being reported to the State! See the online Toolkit at FixSchoolDiscipline.org for a sample.

TIP: Create an excel sheet or a table with the data for your district and bring it to meetings so that you can show your school district what you want them to include in the LCAP and what you want them to think about when creating the LCAP! This will also help create a dialogue around the biggest issues that need to be solved. For example, in San Francisco, while African-American students make up less than 10% of the high school student population, they make up 42% of the students suspended for willful defiance. Given this data, SFUSD should create goals to address this significant civil rights and education equity problem.

The district should also conduct a **climate survey** to see if students feel safe, connected to adults at school, and that discipline is fair! The California Healthy Kids Survey is an instrument that a district might use to complete this requirement. If your district uses this survey, you should encourage it add the School Climate and Learning Conditions Module, which includes questions related to discipline that are not in the basic/core survey.

In addition, here are a few additional questions you can suggest that your school district ask to assess what types of resources and changes could be made to support staff and students in schools:

1. (for teachers) Do you feel that you have sufficient training to help you manage your classroom?
2. If not, what additional training do you need?
3. (for students) What do you think would make your school safer? Help students not to get in trouble in school?
4. (for administrators) What resources or training do you need to lower your suspension and expulsion rates while keeping your campus safe?

Districts also may include **additional measures of school climate**. You can advocate for your district to look at **school-based citations, arrests, and referrals to law enforcement**. If they don't collect this data, they should! Research shows that students with even one contact with police are 3 times as likely to drop out; those who have one court appearance are 4 times as likely to drop out.

National data shows that students of color were 71% of the referrals to law enforcement and 72% of the school-related arrests. These alarming rates are true for several school districts in CA; for example, in Oakland Unified black youth make up 73% of school police arrests despite being only 31% of the city or school district's population. In Los Angeles Unified, students of color make up 93% of all school police tickets and arrests.

It is critical that school districts and communities take a close look at whether our students are being referred to counselors or police officers to address behavior problems and think about how that impacts academic achievement and school climate.

2. Setting yearly goals. For suspensions and expulsions, ask your school district to make an objective and meaningful goal for reduction for each of the three years of the plan. Example goals include:

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- Reduce the overall incident suspension rate by 20% or more per year;
- Reduce the number of students suspended by 20% or more per year;
- Reduce the rate of suspensions for the district below the state-wide or national average; and
- Reduce the number of suspensions for non-violent offenses generally or specific offenses such as willful defiance by 20% or more per year.

The district **must set goals for each school within your district**, and different baseline data at different schools usually means that their goals should be different. Ask to be a part of that goal setting process.

The school district should also set goals focused on **eliminating disparities in rates among the subgroups**. So, if African-Americans make up only 10% of the student population, but they make up 50% of the students being suspended, your district should set a goal to over time eliminate the disparities in suspension rates for African-American students and any other group being disproportionately suspended!

Here is an example of what the baseline data with goals might look like for suspensions overall and related to a particular pupil subgroup:

BASELINE DATA AND GOALS – EXAMPLE SUSPENSIONS

	All students	Hispanic or Latino
# of Suspensions	200	40
GOAL	Reduce to 100 suspensions in year 1; 75 in year 2; 30 in year 3	Reduce to 20 in year 1; 15 in year 2; 10 in year 3
Rate of Suspensions	7%	20%
GOAL	Reduce to 5% in year 1; 2% in year 2; 1% in year 3	Reduce to 15% in year 1; 12% in year 2; 9% in year 3
Willful Defiance Suspensions	95	45
GOAL	Eliminate all out-of-school willful defiance suspensions (65 suspensions)	Eliminate all out-of-school willful defiance suspensions (30 suspensions)
Teacher Suspensions	40	24
GOAL	Reduce to 30 in year 1; 20 in year 2; 10 in year 3;	Reduce to 15 in year 1; 12 in year 3; 8 in year 3

3. Developing Specific Actions. The next step is to ask what your district can do to reach its goals related to school climate, including what kinds of evidence-based strategies exist and what kinds of

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policies or decisions they can make. We recommend that you ask your district to answer a few basic questions:

- What evidence-based strategies—such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Restorative Justice, programs teaching prosocial behavior or anger management, peer mediation, or other alternatives to suspension and expulsion such as those in Education Code 48900.5—will the district use to achieve the goal(s)?
- What training will the district provide to teachers, administrators and/or other staff to increase their ability to provide support to students struggling with behavior issues and to reduce disparities and disproportionality?
- Are the actions district-wide or school-wide and will the actions allow the district to meet the goal, particularly goals specific to a particular subgroup?
- Are there any policy changes that the district can take to meet its goals?

The accompanying document, entitled “Evidence-Based Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion,” contains **additional information on some of these alternatives to suspension and expulsion that districts can adopt as specific actions in their LCAPs**, including research on effectiveness in reducing suspensions and expulsions and costs of implementing them.

The following page has an example of what the baseline data, goals, and specific actions might look like overall and for two pupil subgroups:

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BASELINE DATA, GOALS AND SPECIFIC ACTIONS

	All students	Hispanic or Latino	African-American (AA)
Baseline # of Suspensions	200	40	30
Goal	Reduce to 100 suspensions in year 1; 75 in year 2; 30 in year 3	Reduce to 20 in year 1; 15 in year 2; 10 in year 3	Reduce to 15 in year 1; 10 in year 2; 4 in year 3
Specific Action	Implement School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in schools with highest rates of suspension	Implement Restorative Practices (RP) in schools with highest rate of Latino students suspended; conduct training on implicit bias for all staff; develop relationship building strategies for students and families of students repeatedly suspended	Implement RP in schools with highest rates of AA students suspended; conduct trainings on implicit bias; require dialogue with district prior to suspension for non-dangerous offenses
Baseline Willful Defiance Suspensions	95	40	45
Goal	Eliminate suspensions for willful defiance suspensions	SAME	SAME
Specific Action	Pass policy eliminating suspensions for willful defiance	SAME	SAME

4. Listing Expenditures. Your district is required to list the amount of money it is spending for each specific action in its LCAP. Districts also must explain how they are using the additional funding they receive for each English learner, Low-income and Foster student to increase or improve services for those students.

If you don't know how much money your district will be receiving under LCFF this year, you can look at "Fair Share 4 Kids" at <http://fairshare4kids.org> and search for your district. Bring this information to any meetings with the District!

You can advocate for your district to spell out how much of its funding is being devoted to each of the specific actions and to meeting its overall goals for school climate and specifically how it is using the additional funding it receives for each English learner, Low-income and Foster students to help the district achieve the school climate goals it has set for those students.

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The **amount of money necessary to address school climate** depends on what the data shows in your community. It also depends on the specific program or structure.

For Restorative Practices, experts recommend at least one experienced training coordinator for the District (more if it is a big district) and one Restorative Practices coach for every two school-sites. In the beginning the coaches should be able to spend all of their time on Restorative Practices training and support, but after two years, once staff are trained and the culture changes, the coaches can reduce their presence. Go to FixSchoolDiscipline.org and read the interviews from Fania Davis and Millie Burns regarding their recommendations for implementing Restorative Practices.

For School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), the Principal of Pioneer High School in Woodland spent approximately \$30,000 for each of three years and partnered with her County Office of Education to train and implement the program. Now, her school-site is bringing in approximately \$100,000 each year due to increased attendance!

For Social Emotional Learning, one SEL approach, Positive Action, costs about \$7,000 for materials for a 500-student elementary school in the first year and about \$1,700 for updated materials for the school in subsequent years, while the initial training costs \$1,000 to \$3,000 plus travel expenses for the trainer. One rigorous study found it reduced disruptive behaviors by 72% and suspensions by 24%. Another rigorous study found it reduced suspensions by 73% and grade retention also by 73%.

There are **other funding sources** in the school budget in addition to LCFF funds, such as federal IDEA funding, that should be considered and can be used for school discipline. Go to FixSchoolDiscipline.org to see the funding sources in addition to LCFF that can be used to implement these critical programs!

MORE RESOURCES ON THE LOCAL CONTROL FUNDING FORMULA:

California Department of Education

- Website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/>
- Questions: lcff@cde.ca.gov
- LCFF Listserv: join-LCFF-list@mlist.cde.ca.gov
- WestEd LCFF Implementation: <http://lcff.wested.org/>

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Here is a sample for information that Districts can include in the LCAP for just one area of need under school climate.

Note: This format differs from the LCAP template, but could be used for planning purposes and presenting information to the community. See FixSchoolDiscipline.org for a link to the state approved LCAP template.

	All students	EL Students	African-American
# of Suspensions	200	40	30
Goal	Reduce to 100 suspensions in year 1; 75 in year 2; 30 in year 3	Reduce to 20 in year 1; 15 in year 2; 10 in year 3	Reduce to 15 in year 1; 10 in year 2; 4 in year 3
Specific Action	1. Fully implement SWPBIS in schools with highest rates of suspension	1. Implement Restorative Practices in schools with highest rate of EL students suspended; 2. Conduct training on implicit bias for all staff; 3. Develop relationship building strategies and events (home visits/dinners/lunch gatherings) for students and families of students repeatedly suspended or at risk of suspension	1. Implement RP in schools with highest rates of AA students; 2. Conduct trainings on implicit bias; 3. Policy change: require dialogue with district sup or designee on alternatives utilized and other resources needed prior to suspension for non-dangerous offenses
Funding Expenditures	Base funding: \$150,000 per year for implementation in 10 schools Develop relationship with Experts in SWPBIS and create MOU for training: \$1000	Supplemental funding: \$210,000 per year for implementation in 5 schools (to hire and fully train one district-wide RP coach and two school-specific coaches) Concentration funding: \$5,000 per year for implicit and explicit bias training and for specific relationship building events	Base funding: \$210,000 per year for implementation in 5 schools (to hire and fully train one district-wide RP coach and two school-specific coaches) Base funding: \$3,000 per year for implementation of policy change and training to school principals and staff \$5,000 per year for implicit and explicit bias training and for specific relationship building events (home visits/dinners/lunch gatherings) between school staff and parents/family of students at risk of suspension

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