

Demand Transparency, Accountability, and Equity from LAUSD!

In July of this year, Public Advocates filed a complaint on behalf of LAUSD parents charging that the district violated the state's education funding law (LCFF) because it did not properly report or account for more than \$1 billion in state funds that were supposed to serve low-income students, English language learners and foster youth in its annual spending plan, known as the LCAP ("6/18 LCAP"). As a result of the complaint and subsequent intervention by LACOE, LAUSD [amended its LCAP](#) ("9/12 LCAP"). The amended LCAP provided more detailed descriptions of services, reflection of effectiveness, and disaggregation of expenditures, *but many problems still remained*. After Public Advocates submitted a letter outlining the problems with LAUSD's amended LCAP (and a very short online public comment window), LAUSD [amended its LCAP again](#) ("9/20 LCAP"), in an attempt to wordsmith its way out of fundamental transparency and accountability problems. The Board will be voting on the 9/20 LCAP on October 1st. Here are some quick talking points on why the Board should reject this LCAP:

OVERARCHING CONCERNS

- ***Make Funding Decisions Transparent.*** LAUSD has a practice of bundling multiple, separate, and often unrelated programs into a single action without providing disaggregated expenditures (i.e. 1.5 School Autonomy, 1.9 A-G Immediate Intervention Plan, 2.9 English Learner Supports, 3.2 Targeted Student Supports), which prevents stakeholders and the public from seeing how much money is spent on each program and whether it is an equitable and effective use of funds. Although the amended LCAP disaggregates expenditures for much of the School Autonomy action, the other actions are unchanged after two amendments. ***Demand that LAUSD unbundle its expenditures so community can hold it accountable for its spending plan.***
- ***Accurately Document Expenditures in the LCAP to Provide Transparency.*** The newest amended LCAP that is before the Board makes significant, unexplained changes that undermine the integrity of the document. For example, after Public Advocates pointed out the dramatic disinvestment in English Learner Supports (Action 2.9), the actual expenditures for 2018-19 suddenly increased by \$13.5 million from \$20.6 million in the 6/18 and 9/12 LCAPs to \$34.1 million in the 9/20 LCAP and the planned expenditures tripled from \$7.8 million in the 9/12 LCAP to \$22.9 million in the 9/20 LCAP. None of these radical shifts were explained and the 9/20 LCAP did not indicate any major new investments or initiatives to account for these dramatic increases in funding over 8 days. In addition, the 9/20 LCAP suddenly changes the description of a \$238 million line item under School Autonomy (Action 1.5) from "Increase in salaries for teachers of high need students" (9/12 LCAP, p. 143) to "Additional Teachers to Support A-G Access" (9/20 LCAP, p. 146), without any explanation. The community is left wondering whether LAUSD intends to hire hundreds of additional teachers, or if the new description is an attempt to wordsmith their way out of an inappropriate use of supplemental and concentration funds. ***Demand that LAUSD provide accurate information in its LCAP so that the public knows how it is spending its money.***
- ***Make All School Level Allocations Transparent.*** LAUSD sends over half a billion a year in equity dollars to school sites but does a very poor job of showing either what all those funds are spent on or how those investments are principally serving high need students. In its amended LCAP, LAUSD does reference for the first time the "[School Allocations for Targeted Student Populations \(TSP\)](#)," which lists every school, their SENI rank and allocation, as well as a number of other school based allocations, such as arts, nurses, counselors, Class Size Reduction Teachers, and Librarians, among others (9/20 LCAP pp. 147-48). All the funding identified on this spreadsheet is generated by high need students and must be used to provide new or better services for their benefit. However, the document shows that some lowest need schools receive much greater allocations of resources than higher need schools. These allocations should not be funded using equity dollars. Also, hundreds of millions of other school allocation dollars are not disclosed on this spreadsheet, including, Diploma Counselors (1.8), School Innovation Funds (1.10), Targeted Student Supports (3.2), and most of the categories in the \$794 million School Autonomy action (1.5). ***Demand that all school level equity dollars be disclosed and demonstrated as serving high-need students to ignite transformation locally.***

- Stop Undermining Equity and Diverting Hundreds of Millions of Dollars from High-Need Students:** High-need students of color in LAUSD generate \$1.14 billion in additional revenue that must be used on new and improved programs that benefit them and close the achievement gap (p. 1). However, the LCAP suggests that LAUSD uses most of its equity dollars on services for all students that are not targeted at high need students. For example, despite the district's new verbiage that equity dollars are used to provide additional resources to high need students above and beyond District-normed resources (9/20 LCAP, p. 255), that is a reference to the \$247 million dollar SENI allocation, which is only a fraction of LAUSD's total equity dollars.¹ The [School Allocation spreadsheet](#) referenced in the LCAP demonstrates that the \$63 million School Nurse/HS Counselor and \$35 million Class Size Reduction/ Librarian resources embedded in School Autonomy are allocated according to norms and not equity. Schools with lowest need that are not even Title I schools receive the same, or greater, allocations than highest need schools with larger and more concentrated high need student populations.² As discussed above, LAUSD's 11th hour attempt to redefine its across-the-board salary increases as a proper use of equity dollars by changing the description to "additional teachers for A-G access" is highly suspect. ***Demand that LAUSD spend its equity dollars on increasing services for high need students above and beyond the general education program.***
- Provide a Meaningful Community Engagement Process:** LAUSD provided a woefully deficient LCAP to community stakeholders in May and June of 2019. After a legal complaint was filed and LACOE intervened, LAUSD amended its LCAP to provide greater detail and some substantial changes, such as a 60 percent reduction in English Learner Supports, integration of the School Innovation Funds with School Autonomy (and a net reduction in School Autonomy expenditures), and disclosure of hundreds of millions of dollars in previously unaccounted for spending. Yet, LAUSD refused to provide the families and community a meaningful opportunity to provide input. LAUSD posted its 274-page document on its website at the end of the day on September 12th with only a 5-day window for online feedback that consisted of meaningless survey questions. Moreover, LAUSD convened the parent committees to provide input on the accessibility of the LCAP but did not solicit substantive feedback or tell them about the online feedback process. On September 23rd, LAUSD posted a revised LCAP dated 9/20 that made significant changes to the LCAP without notifying the community of the changes or giving an opportunity to comment. ***Demand that LAUSD engage in a two-way dialogue with parents, students, and other community members concerning its LCAP.***

SPECIFIC SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS

- Preserve School-Based Investments in Parent Engagement and Restorative Justice:** This year, LAUSD is planning to shift \$8 million of its \$10 million in restorative justice resources (5.1) and \$5 million in certificated salaries and supplies for parental engagement (4.1) to School Autonomy (9/20 LCAP, pp. 54, 226-27, 233-34). Although we support more local control of these resources, there is no separate line item for Parent Engagement or Restorative Justice under School Autonomy (9/20 LCAP, pp. 146-49). To preserve investments in these important programs, it is essential to have transparency around school spending on these supports. ***If you believe parental engagement and restorative justice are crucial components to improving outcomes for students of color and other high need students, demand a separate line item for these programs under School Autonomy.***
- Stop LAUSD's Disinvestment in English Language Supports:** The 9/12 LCAP documented a dramatic disinvestment in English Learners, with budgeted investments for 2019-20 reduced to less than a quarter of investments planned for the prior year (9/12 LCAP, pp. 88-89, 195-96). The 9/20 LCAP tripled planned investments in EL supports over 8 days and increased actual expenditures by more than \$13 million with very little substantive change to the description of services, suggesting that this "reinvestment" is on paper only. The newest LCAP also changes the wording of its descriptions to *appear* more targeted. For example, in the 9/20 LCAP, device carts are suddenly intended for English Learners (instead of all students) and are designed to "provide additional curriculum and support beyond the District-provided base curriculum," instead of being "an intrinsic part of the curriculum and instruction"—but there is no change in expenditures. (Compare 9/12 LCAP at p. 195, with 9/20 LCAP at p. 199). ***Demand a line-by-line accounting of all expenditures under Action 2.9 (EL Supports) to determine whether LAUSD is still divesting from English Learners.***

¹ Even SENI, which is allocated equitably, does not automatically satisfy the requirement to use supplemental and concentration funds to increase and improve services for high need students. Since all schools get SENI, this allocation can only be justified in full if lowest-need schools are targeting these funds to serve high need students versus all students. LAUSD and its LCAP do not demonstrate that it is holding schools accountable for targeting SENI funds to high need students

² For example, Paul Revere Middle School has a 25 percent poverty rate, is ranked lowest need according to the SENI index, and has approximately 543 high need pupils, but receives much greater allocations for nurses, librarians, and CSR teachers than Berendo Middle School, which has a 95 percent poverty rate, is ranked highest need according to SENI, and has 787 high need students.