



# Giving Learning and Graduation New Meaning: One Student at a Time

LOCAL CONTROL FUNDING FORMULA (LCFF) CASE STUDY:  
SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study summarizes how the state's school funding law, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), is being implemented in San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). The perspectives of various education stakeholders including students, teachers, principals, school board members, and district staff are drawn upon to better understand how LCFF is being implemented to achieve the goal of advancing equity in the district. The report is intended to inform educators and education system leaders how district practices have changed as a result of the law and to understand how it is being used to improve educational outcomes for historically under-served students.

SDUSD has undertaken a series of actions under its strategic plan and LCFF to improve academic outcomes for low-income students of color and English Language Learners. The case study shows that the effective use of LCFF funds is generating improved outcomes for these students. Some of the evidence of positive outcomes include: improved A-G course access and college readiness rates, a greater number of students taking Advancement Placement (AP) classes, an increase in the frequency of reclassification for students learning a second language, and more students completing the world languages requirement for A-G requirements. While a number of ongoing fiscal and implementation challenges remain for SDUSD, as the district works towards executing its Vision 2020 and continues to refine its approach to LCFF implementation, it is clear that progress is being made.

## FINDINGS

- 1. A focus on detracking and expanding access to rigorous college preparatory coursework for low-income students of color and English Language Learners is a high priority for the district.** The need to detrack advanced courses has long been acknowledged, but it was only recently that it was made a priority in the district. Staff examination of the transcripts of graduating seniors conducted as part of an "equity audit" revealed a strong need for detracking or pivoting away from low level course work for many of the students identified as high priority under LCFF, especially low-income students of color. Even with high graduation rates, a disproportionate number of students of color were taking too many non-A-G or college ready courses. LCFF resources have been used strategically to alter these patterns in order to increase college readiness.

- 2. Central office leadership has been restructured to ensure that schools are expanding access to college prep courses for historically under-served students.** District school counselors and instructional specialists work with secondary and middle school sites to ensure that there is a steady increase in access to college ready course offerings for high-need students. Student-centered coaching allows for site instructional coaches to have additional support from the district central office in order to establish greater coherence in common practices all tied to quality instruction across 22 secondary schools.
- 3. Local Area Superintendents are collaborating to support meaningful learning throughout the district.** All six local area superintendents now meet with executive leadership on a weekly basis to plan professional development for secondary school principals and to determine how best to support school growth for students with the greatest needs. School site leadership is also a strong priority, built around principals who are passionate about the district's vision and in many cases, instructional experts who have been promoted from within the system.
- 4. Small changes being implemented at school sites are yielding big results for students.** Pervasive patterns of inequality are being altered by technical fixes such as adjustments to the master schedule and course sequencing. Master schedule tools are now being utilized districtwide to guide scheduling strategies and technical support is provided by the district to ensure fidelity in this use of the tools the district has made available to school sites. SDUSD has also overhauled their management processes for determining reclassification eligibility and systematized the administration of the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) assessments and results.
- 5. A-G readiness rates, Advancement Placement participation, reclassification rates for ELs and the number of students who are completing the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) assessment represent significant points of progress for SDUSD.**

From 2011 to 2017, overall A-G (UC/CSU) readiness rates across all SDUSD student populations increased by more than 26%. The most significant increase percentage-wise overall has been for American Indian/Alaskan Native students at more than 45%. For African American students, rates have increased by 27% over the same time period. A-G rates have improved for Latinx students by 31.7%.

- Participation rates in AP course work has increased overall, while passage rates are down for some student groups.
- The district has seen a 45% reduction in the number of long-term English Language Learners.
- More students are taking and completing the Languages Other than English (LOTE) assessment, which qualifies them for the A-G world language requirement.

*Recommended citation:*

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