Governance Brief

LCFF Rubrics, Issue 1:
What Boards Need to Know About the New Rubrics (Updated)

by Mary Briggs, Teri Burns and Troy Flint

After more than two years of discussion, California has redesigned its accountability system to reflect the state's new standards, assessments, and funding formula. Under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) regulations, all districts, county offices of education, and charter schools must create a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) to document how they align their goals, student needs, services, and spending, as well as report student outcomes. The LCFF evaluation rubrics are the tools that will measure school and district progress toward their LCFF goals.

The following California School Boards Association (CSBA) brief is the first in a series of updates for our members about the new LCFF evaluation rubrics that the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted in September 2016, and plans to publish online in early 2017. In this brief, CSBA provides an overview of the proposed indicators and suggests next steps for school boards. This brief, initially published in August 2016, has been updated to reflect changes made by the SBE at their September 2016 meeting. CSBA wants to provide school boards with enough lead time to develop a strategic response now.

To help members develop an effective plan for sharing the rubrics with stakeholders, CSBA has also included a communications tip sheet and talking points at the end of this brief.

What are the LCFF evaluation rubrics?

The LCFF rubrics are designed to be a tool for evaluating district and school performance in each of California's eight LCFF priority areas: basic services, implementation of state standards, parental involvement, pupil achievement (including English learners' progress), pupil engagement, school climate, access to a broad course of study, and pupil outcomes within a broad course of study.

In 2015, the state suspended use of the Academic Performance Index (API), and the rubrics will replace API scores and rankings as a key component of California's

new system of accountability and continuous improvement. Information within the rubrics will provide the public with a quick snapshot of school or district performance in multiple areas. The rubrics will also serve as a reference for schools and districts as they develop strategies for continuous improvement. County offices of education will use the rubrics to identify Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and charter schools in need of technical support. Ultimately, the rubrics will be aligned to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements and interventions.

Beginning this November, the California Department of Education (CDE) is scheduled to provide counties, districts, schools, and charter schools with their populated rubrics. This will give local education agencies time to review their results before the rubrics are made available online in early 2017. The CDE will populate the rubrics with several state indicators such as test scores, English learners' progress towards English proficiency, high school graduation rate and other measures (see Table 1). Districts will also upload local data to the rubrics. CSBA anticipates that LEAs and charter schools will be allowed to contextualize their performance by providing an optional local narrative.

In future years, populated rubrics should be accessible in the late fall. This timeline is intended to support development of district and charter school LCAPs and LCAP updates for the following years. Alongside the displays of school and district performance, the state will post links to "Statements of Model Practices" and "Additional Resources" to support improvement efforts.

School boards should prepare for the release of the rubrics now.

School boards should begin working immediately to identify and address potential concerns about performance on any of the proposed indicators. Districts already have access to most of the data to be included in the rubrics reports (see Table 1). Therefore, governance teams can and should review relevant data and consider appropriate responses before district and school performance on the rubrics are released in early 2017.

School boards should focus on two major points: 1) how to address areas of concern and 2) how to communicate their local performance and plans to respond with stakeholders. SBE President Michael Kirst has noted that school boards have a key role in explaining the rubrics to their communities. Governance teams should start developing an effective communication strategy before the state releases school and district results. To do so, school board members should collaborate now with their district staff to interpret the data included within the forthcoming rubrics, identify strategies to contextualize the data for stakeholders, and decide on the messages they want to convey to their communities, including how the district will strengthen and target services to improve outcomes for students.

What will the rubrics include?

During the September 2016 SBE meeting, CDE staff presented revisions to the proposed design for what they described as the "Top-Level Summary Data Display" or "Dashboard." The SBE has not approved a final version of the data display. The Dashboard is ultimately intended to be an online tool with many dynamic features, including:

Indicators

The rubrics will include indicators for all eight LCFF priority areas. The SBE is finalizing the indicators to be included in 2016, along with methods for calculating results and cut points to be reported using color-coded performance bands. A number of indicators and performance standards will not be finalized this year, and SBE members are clear that the rubrics will evolve as the Board approves additional relevant measures.

a. State Indicators: The CDE will populate some indicators of LCFF priorities using data the state already collects. These include ELA and mathematics assessments, English learner progress, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, suspension rates, and college and career readiness (reported as the new "College and Career Index"). In September, the SBE approved five colors to represent the combined performance on the status and change reports for each indicator, ranging from high to low as follows: blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. Final graphic representation will be approved at a future SBE meeting.

b. Status Report: For each indicator, the SBE will rate the current overall performance of the LEA or school. This is the "status indicator," which will provide a snapshot of all students' performance within each area: very high, high, intermediate, low, and very low.

c. Change Report: Because the state's new accountability system emphasizes continuous improvement, the rubrics also report how the LEAs or schools perform over time. In addition to reporting the current status of each state indicator, the rubrics will also report changes to performance from earlier years: improved significantly, improved, maintained, declined, or declined significantly. The SBE staff have not finalized how the status and change indicators will be represented in the data display, but they have signaled that both status and change indicators are key components of the rubrics.

d. Local Indicators: These four LCFF priority indicators will be populated using data that the LEA or charter school uploads to the rubrics: basic conditions at school (i.e., the Williams Act checklist), school climate, implementation of academic standards, and parent engagement. Essentially, these are reported as pass/fail indicators. In lieu of the status and change indicators described above, LEAs and schools will report whether each indicator's standards were "met," "not met for one year" or "not met for two or more years."

Optional Local Narrative and Summary of Self Assessments for Local Indicators

The optional narrative will allow LEAs and schools to explain relevant circumstances and local activities related to performance across any local and LCFF priorities. The additional summary includes results of self assessments for local indicators.

Equity Report

For student achievement, pupil engagement and school climate, the rubrics will note any of the student groups identified in Education Code (EC) 52052 with a valid sample size: socioeconomically disadvantaged students, ELs, foster youth, homeless youth, students with disabilities and racial/ethnic student groups reflected in standard reporting and which are reported as having "low" or "very low" overall performance in each state indicator.

Navigation Pane

Next to each indicator, the rubrics will display tabs/ links pointing to subpages with detailed reports, model practices, and additional resources. This tool will expand as the rubrics are further developed, including the eventual ability to compare results with up to two other schools, districts, or counties.

What will the rubrics look like?

The SBE viewed the proposed design of the top-level data display in July and September 2016 and have directed CDE and SBE staff to continue making revisions that will make the information more user-friendly. Because the visual display may be modified substantially before its adoption, CSBA has focused this brief on the state and local indicators that will likely be included within the rubrics rather than its design. Therefore, Table 1 does not reflect the format of the data display; it lists what measures the SBE has said will be included as indicators for each of the LCFF priority areas. This information can be used to identify what data districts should review in preparation for release of the populated rubrics in November.

Table 1: Proposed LCFF Rubrics Data Sources and LCFF Priority Areas		
LCFF Priorities	**Indicators & Grade Spans**	**Proposed Data Sources for 2016 Rubrics**
Data populated by CDE		
Student Achievement	ELA Assessment (3-8)	2016 SBAC results.
	Math Assessment (3-8)	2016 SBAC results.
	English Learner Progress (K-12)	Proposed composite is the sum of the percent of ELs who moved up at least one performance level on CELDT plus the percent of ELs reclassified in the year prior. This year will use 2014-2015 data.
Pupil Engagement	Graduation Rates (9-12)	Will include four-year graduation rate from 2014-2015 data. Considering adding 5th and 6th year as allowed by ESSA.
	Chronic absenteeism (K-12)	Students missing more than 10 percent of the school year. Might not be populated this year.
School Climate	Suspension Rates	Will include suspension and in-school suspension categories. Will be weighted by LEA type (elementary, high school, and unified) and school type (elementary, middle, and high).
Student Access and Enrollment in a Broad Course of Study and Related Pupil Outcomes	College & Career Readiness (9-12)	Under development; will likely be presented as a list. Likely to be operational this year, but will evolve. Rankings based on a student's highest achievement on any one measure as incentive to move all students forward.

"College and Career Indicator" (CCI) Model currently contains AP exam results; 11th grade results for ELA/math; A-G completion; CTE pathway completion. Other considerations include IB and dual enrollment, State Seal of Biliteracy; Golden State Seal Merit Diploma, ROTC. |
Data populated by LEA/charter		
Basic Services	Basic Services (K-12)	Self-certified Williams Act checklist.
Implementation of Standards	Implementation of Academic Standards (K-12)	LEAs and charter schools will report some form of self-assessment, certifying whether they met or did not meet the requirements.
Parental Involvement	Parent Engagement (K-12)	Self-certification about ways they are involving parents in decision-making and promoting family participation.
School Climate	School Climate Survey (K-12)	Pupil survey — share of students still to be determined. Choice of multiple survey options.

How will the data be used?

2016-2017

This year is the first year of the LCFF rubrics implementation. Some elements will be modified once the U.S. Department of Education provides further clarification about ESSA accountability requirements before the 2017-2018 school year.

The SBE has explained that it intends the rubrics to inform decisions at the local level, especially in the eight LCFF priority areas. For 2016-2017, the rubrics will not initiate formal interventions, although counties will have access to the rubrics when reviewing an LEA's proposed LCAP update. Districts should consider this year an opportunity to prepare for the full rollout in 2017-2018.

Districts and charter schools can use the rubrics, along with the new SBE-adopted Statements of Model Practices and Additional Resources when developing their LCAP updates next spring. The rubrics might serve as a reference for assessing areas for support and technical assistance at individual sites or districtwide.

County offices will be able to review the rubrics alongside districts' and charter schools' proposed LCAP updates. This might be a tool for conversations between LEAs and LCAP Evaluation Teams. LCAP review teams may also use the rubrics as part of their evaluation of LCAP updates.

The public will have full access to the data reported within the rubrics, as well as the Statements of Model Practices and Additional Resources. Stakeholders can use this to inform their feedback and recommendations during the LCAP development.

2017-2018 and beyond

The U.S. Department of Education will clarify the ESSA accountability, and the CDE plans to update the rubrics to align with ESSA. Once ESSA is fully implemented, failure to meet the standards in two or more areas of the rubrics for more than two years will trigger technical support at the county or even state level. CSBA will address the steps and features of the accountability and continuous improvement system in supplemental briefs once the state and federal policies have been clarified.

What is the timeline for implementation?

The SBE has been working with the CDE to refine the content and format for reporting district performance in the rubrics. A broad overview of the process is listed below:

Time Frame	Activity
July 2016	SBE approved several performance indicators/standards for use in the rubrics and directed staff to continue their development.
	CDE staff was asked to develop a timeline for further work:
	» changes to indicators.
	» standards for several indicators.
	» statements of model practices.
	» alignment of the rubric to the ESSA state plan.
September 2016	SBE adopted the initial rubrics.
	CDE convened work groups for recommendations about composite scores and associated cut scores for EL proficiency and measures of school climate.
Winter 2016/ Spring 2017	LEAs draft the next LCAP annual update; rubrics used for data analysis and self reflection in developing the draft.
Early 2017	The evaluation rubrics will be available to the public in an online, interactive platform.
	The CDE will give LEAs the data that will be reported in the evaluation rubrics. LEAs will be able to review this information prior to the public release of the rubrics.
	The Federal government will clarify ESSA reporting requirements. California will adopt its ESSA state accountability plan in May and submit it to the federal Department of Education in July 2017.
Spring 2017	SBE will revisit the indicators of the rubrics and discuss modifications for 2017-2018.
Fall 2017	CDE will publish expanded rubrics with updated performance results.

What should school boards be doing right now?

Boards should begin conversations with district staff about the proposed rubrics. Districts currently have access to the relevant data that will likely be included within the rubrics when the public can access districts' completed data displays. While the standards for performance (i.e., what scores are associated with each "level" of performance) have yet to be finalized, governance teams can use the data to estimate the district's performance in broad terms. Some fundamental questions include:

» **What do we believe the rubrics will identify as our district's strengths?** These areas are important to celebrate with your district personnel and the public.

» **What areas likely require improvement?** What are we already doing to address any areas of concern? If this is an ongoing challenge, what are the trends in our performance? If this is a new area of concern, what initial steps might we take to make improvements?

» **Are there contextual factors that can help us understand our performance (e.g., new initiatives, an unanticipated demographic shift, new discipline policies, etc.)?**

» **How can we be proactive in communicating the rubrics and our performance when they become available to our stakeholders?**

The governing board should collaborate with the central office to ensure that when the rubrics are published, your district has planned a coherent and consistent response. This includes a unified approach to sharing results with the community and developing appropriate supports to strengthen services and outcomes for all students. To assist our members, CSBA has developed the attached tip sheet with recommendations for developing an effective communications strategy.

Tips for Communicating Effectively: Making Sense of the Rubrics Cube

The introduction of the LCFF evaluation rubrics provides a key opportunity to engage families and community in conversations and planning on student achievement, the conditions of children, school successes, areas for growth, district goals, and how dollars can best be allocated to support improved student outcomes. The success or failure of this engagement will depend heavily on the quality of the underlying communication. With that in mind, consider these strategies to demystify the rubrics and partner with your community on a path to student improvement.

K.I.S.S. (Keep it Super Simple)

Don't assume anything. The LCFF evaluation rubrics build on the work done with the LCAP during the past three years, but many people will be hearing about the rubrics — and even about LCAP — for the first time. So, keep it simple. That means providing information about the LCFF rubrics and what they are supposed to accomplish in plain language.

Start at the Beginning

Provide the context needed to understand why the LCCF evaluation rubrics are important. Share the work that has been done to this point and the broad cross section of groups and individuals that have been involved. This will help parents and community understand that the rubrics are now the primary method of measuring student achievement, school performance and progress toward more equitable outcomes for all students.

Great Values

Achievement. Equity. Better conditions and improved outcomes for students. Increased transparency for families and community. That's what the LCAP and the LCFF evaluation rubrics are designed to promote, so make sure your district's communications staff (or equivalent employees) establish how funding and programmatic decisions advance these goals and align with your district's overall objectives. Above all, focus on what these tools can mean for children, keep the discussion student focused and make sure local conditions and objectives remain at the forefront of the analysis.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Customize your presentations for different audiences. The best communicators adjust content and programming to reach target demographics and you should take a page from their book. Different portions of the community will have different interests and different needs, so tailor your content and your communications vehicles accordingly.

You're Not Alone

Partner with local community groups to expand the reach of your LCAP communications and to build on the foundation of trust these organizations have established with their members. No district, on its own, can properly spread the word and educate community members on every aspect of the evaluation rubrics. Make use of parent committees and community groups, involve students and host meetings at places beyond the district offices where families already gather.

LCFF Evaluation Rubrics Talking Points

1. **Although public education in California remains significantly underfunded, the LCFF represents a dramatic improvement over recent funding models.** LCFF restored funding to 2007 levels (and possibly higher for certain districts with high numbers of low-income, English language learner, foster and homeless students). Unlike previous systems, the LCFF prioritizes equity and tries to align funding with student need so that all students succeed.

2. **The LCFF evaluation rubrics are now the primary method of measuring student achievement, school performance and progress toward more equitable outcomes for all students.** This tool displays the results of our work and allows us to plan for the future.

3. **The LCFF rubrics replace the old, one-size-fits-all approach that used a single, narrow metric of student achievement with multiple, diverse measures of student learning.**

4. **The LCFF rubrics offer a more holistic picture of what's happening in our schools than previous systems.** It measures skills in English language arts and math, but also emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving and considers important factors like graduation rates, suspension rates, college and career readiness and the quality of school services.

5. **The LCFF rubrics play a critical role in identifying areas of growth and those that need targeted support to promote continuous improvement and accelerate achievement.** It indicates where we need to adjust strategies and shift resources to create better conditions for children and improved outcomes for students.

6. **The LCFF evaluation rubrics are also a powerful tool for local control and community engagement.** Those closest to the situation, right here in our district, understand best what our students need. The rubrics help indicate where we need to adjust strategies and shift resources to create better conditions for children and improved outcomes for students.

7. **We must review and analyze the LCFF rubrics data as a community, discuss the results together and collectively determine the best path forward for this district, its families and students.**

Mary Briggs is an Education Policy Analyst for CSBA.

Teri Burns is a Legislative Advocate for CSBA.

Troy Flint is Senior Director of Communications and Public Information Officer for CSBA.