



November 2017

Governance Brief

The California Dashboard

What Boards Need to Know for 2017–18

by Mary Briggs

Introduction

California has been working for several years to redesign its education accountability system to reflect the state's current standards, assessments, and approach to school finance, and to align it with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements. As part of this system, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) requires all districts, county offices of education, and charter schools to develop Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) that describe how they align their goals with student needs, services, and spending, along with a report of student outcomes related to those goals.

Although the school funding formula and LCAP have been in place since 2013, the accountability component of the LCFF has only recently been developed. The State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the first version of the California School Dashboard in 2016 and submitted the state's ESSA plan in September 2017.

This brief is intended to provide guidance and assistance to governing board members when working with the current version of the Dashboard. CSBA will continue to advocate for improvements to the Dashboard to increase its effectiveness as a communication and accountability tool that supports local educational agencies (LEAs), informs local communities and advances efforts to improve student achievement, including closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

What is the California School Dashboard?

The California School Dashboard is an interactive website that displays LEA and school performance on several measures aligned with California's educational priorities

What's in this Brief?

- » An update on the Dashboard prior to its anticipated December release
- » An overview of the proposed indicators and data sources
- » Next steps for school boards
- » Links to additional Dashboard resources

(see below). Before 2014, the Academic Performance Index rated the state's schools and districts using a single number that focused primarily on standardized test scores and graduation rates. Rather than reporting a single number, the current Dashboard communicates information about county, district, and school performance on the state's educational priorities outlined in the LCFF:

1. Basic services
2. Implementation of state standards
3. Parental involvement
4. Pupil achievement (including the English language development progress of English learners)
5. Pupil engagement
6. School climate
7. Access to a broad course of study
8. Pupil outcomes within a broad course of study

County offices of education are responsible for two additional priority areas: coordination of instruction for expelled students and coordination of services for foster youth.

The Dashboard reports an LEA's or school's most recent reported performance in these areas and tracks changes over time. The state refers to these as *Status* and *Change* indicators, respectively. Together (current performance coupled with performance growth or decline), they are used to calculate an overall performance level for several indicators.

The SBE is working to align the Dashboard with federal ESSA requirements in order to provide a coordinated accountability system. Some state and federal regulations are not yet fully compatible, and the U.S. Department of Education is reviewing California's proposed ESSA plan, submitted in September 2017. Therefore, the extent to which the state and federal systems will be consistent remains to be seen.

Starting in 2017, the SBE will update the data reflected in the Dashboard every fall to help LEAs develop their LCAP strategies for the following academic year. The public can access the California School Dashboard online, and search by school name, district name, or county office of education.

Technical Guidance from the California Department of Education

Several of the indicators for measuring student progress and LEA performance are still evolving. In addition, details about the data included in the Dashboard, how Dashboard results are calculated, and what Dashboard colors and graphics mean can be complicated. To help stakeholders understand and use the Dashboard, the CDE has developed a Technical Guide and a series of webinars that are referenced in the Resources section at the end of this brief.

Preparing for the Dashboard's Release

School and county boards play a central role in goal setting and allocating resources. Once LEAs have their data, governance teams should review local student performance and discuss strategies for making improvements. Ideally, these conversations would occur during the preview period, before their LEA and school performance data are available to the public online.

School and county boards also play a central role in explaining the Dashboard to their communities. Governance teams can collaborate with central office staff to develop

Status and Change Indicators

For most state indicators on the Dashboard, the CDE will provide two reports: status and change.

- » **Status:** Each LEA or school will be rated on their overall performance using the most recent data available (see Table 1 for a description of data used to calculate the ratings for the Fall 2017 Dashboard). This is known as the *Status* indicator, and it provides a snapshot of all students' performance within each area for a single year on a scale of: very high, high, intermediate, low, and very low.
- » **Change:** Because the LCFF accountability system emphasizes continuous improvement, the Dashboard also reports changes in performance from earlier years: improved significantly, improved, maintained, declined, or declined significantly.

a communications strategy for sharing school and LEA results, including ongoing progress on the factors reflected in the Dashboard data. For example, LEAs can report information about absenteeism at the mid-year point. They might also share data on their current 12th-grade cohort and their progress toward graduation. School board members can work with their district staff to discuss progress on Dashboard indicators and decide on key messages they intend to convey to their communities, including how the district will strengthen and target services to improve outcomes for all students and student groups.

What Will the Fall 2017 Dashboard Include?

In March 2017, the CDE released data on the pilot version of the Dashboard. A more complete version of the Dashboard, scheduled to be posted in December 2017, will include indicators for all eight LCFF priority areas (10 for county offices). The Dashboard will continue to evolve as the SBE approves additional measures. The following sections describe the current Dashboard components.

State Indicators

The CDE will populate the Dashboard with both state and local indicators. State indicators measure progress on LCFF priorities using data that the state collects. These include English Language Arts and Mathematics Smarter Balanced

Table 1: State Indicators and Data Sources for Fall 2017 Dashboard

LCFF Priorities	Indicators & Grade Spans	Status Report Data	Change Report Data
Student Achievement	ELA Assessment (3-8)	2017 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessments	2016 and 2017 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment Scores
	Math Assessment (3-8)	2017 Math Smarter Balanced Assessments	2016 and 2017 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment Scores
	EL Progress (K-12)	2016 and 2017 CELDT scores and 2016 reclassification data	2015, 2016, and 2017 CELDT scores and 2015 reclassification data
Pupil Engagement	Graduation Rates (9-12)	2015–16 four-year cohort graduation rate (Class of 2016)	Three-year weighted average (2014–15, 2013–14, and 2012–13) and 2016 cohort data
	Chronic Absenteeism (K-12)	Percentage of students who were absent (excused or unexcused) for more than 10% of the days they were enrolled	No change indicator for 2017 (Recommendations to SBE about the calculation of this indicator expected in Nov. 2017)
School Climate	Suspension Rates	2016–17 suspension rate (includes in-school and out-of-school suspensions)	2015–16 and 2016–17 suspension rates (includes in-school and out-of-school suspensions)
Access to a Broad Course of Study	College & Career Readiness (9-12)	2016–17 graduating class: Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway completion with C or better in capstone course ¹ ; CTE articulated course completion; 11th-grade SBAC performance in ELA and math; dual enrollment (number of semesters earning college credit with a C- or better); Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate passing scores; and A-G completion with a C or better in all courses.	No change indicator for 2017 ²
Outcomes from a Broad Course of Study			

Assessment scores, English learner progress, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism rates, suspension rates, and college and career readiness (known as the “College and Career Indicator”). Table 1 lists what measures the SBE will include to indicate progress in each of the LCFF priority areas. Information on how performance levels will be calculated can be found within the Technical Guide listed in the Resources section.

Changes to State Indicator Calculations

At the September 2017 meeting, the SBE revised the formula for calculating the English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI), giving greater credit to LEAs for the progress of students classified as long-term English Learners (LTELs), defined as English learner students who have been in U.S.

schools for six or more years but have not met reclassification criteria. The board will add an additional 100% weight for every LTEL who improved one or more levels on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT).³

Valid Sample Size

The Dashboard will report on the overall performance of the following student groups identified with a valid sample size in the school or LEA: socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, foster youth, homeless youth, students with disabilities, and racial/ethnic student groups.

When considering outcomes for student groups, the state considers 30 or more students (15 or more, in the case of foster or homeless youth) to be a valid sample size for making statistical calculations.

However, making calculations based on small numbers of students is less accurate. Just a few (or even one) very high or very low score can move the average significantly up or down when the sample size is small. When the sample for a group ranges from 11 to 29 students, the group will not receive a performance level or color rating, but their numerical Status/Change information will be displayed on the Dashboard. To protect the anonymity of students, no data will be displayed on the Dashboard when a student group has fewer than 11 students.

Local Indicators

The Dashboard will also include data uploaded by LEAs in the following LCFF priority areas: basic conditions at school, school climate, implementation of academic standards, and parent engagement. County offices will report on two additional priorities related to services for foster youth and expelled students. For local indicators, LEAs and schools will upload reports about whether each indicator's standards were "met," "not met for one year," or "not met for two or more years." Meeting or not meeting the standard on local indicators is not related to LEA performance in those areas, but indicates only that they have completed the following required activities:

1. Measuring progress using local indicators,
2. Reporting the results at a regularly scheduled public school board meeting, and
3. Uploading and reporting the results to the Dashboard by December 1, 2017.⁴

If the local indicators are not uploaded by the December 1 deadline, the Dashboard will report that the standards were "not met" by default.

The local indicators are:

1. **Basics (LCFF Priority 1).** Measures the availability of textbooks, adequate facilities, and correctly assigned teachers.
2. **Implementation of State Academic Standards (LCFF Priority 2).** Indicates the current level of implementation based on local data (including data included in the Student Accountability Report Card), using the narrative summary option OR the self-reflection tool provided by the CDE.
3. **Parent Engagement (LCFF Priority 3).** The narrative summary of the LEA's progress in seeking input from parents/guardians in school/LEA decision making and promoting parental participation in programs can be

New "Safety Net Methodology" for Small N-Size

Although sample sizes greater than 30 (15 for foster or homeless youth) for a state indicator are considered valid, CDE analysis determined that LEAs and schools with small student populations were over-represented in the lowest (red) and highest (blue) categories on several indicators. To address this, the SBE approved a Safety Net Methodology for the 2017 Dashboard.

When a valid group or LEA sample size is less than 150 students, a 3x5 performance grid will be used in place of the 5x5 grid to determine the LEA or school's performance rating. The Status indicator will still be evaluated using five possible ratings, ranging from "very low" to "very high." The Change indicator, however, will only be rated in one of three ways: increased, maintained, or declined. "Declined significantly" and "increased significantly" would be omitted from the grid.

This method is based on the available sample for any given state indicator with fewer than 150 eligible students, *not* the enrollment size of the LEA or school. For example, every student in a K-12 district that serves 500 students is included in calculating the suspension rate. Thus, the 5x5 grid would be used to determine the suspension performance level. That same district, however, would likely have less than 150 students in their most recent graduation cohort and would be evaluated using a 3x5 grid for its graduation indicator.

developed using information collected through a survey of at least one grade span served by the LEA (e.g., K-5, 6-8, 9-12) or other local measures.

4. **School Climate (LCFF Priority 6).** LEAs will provide a narrative summary of the local administration and analysis of a climate survey that addresses student perceptions of school safety and connectedness in at least one grade within each grade span served by the LEA (e.g., K-5, 6-8, 9-12).

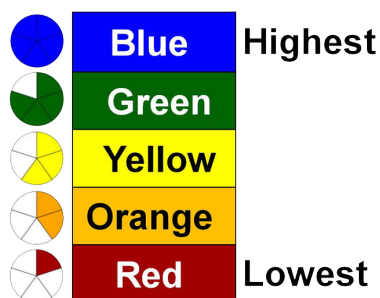
5. **Coordination of Services for Expelled Students and Foster Youth (LCFF Priorities 9 and 10, County Offices of Education Only).** Annual survey that measures progress in coordinating services.

There is also an optional narrative section on the Dashboard that allows LEAs 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. **Because the Dashboard will go public in December, CSBA recommends that governance teams prepare and upload their narrative text by December 1, 2017.**

The Status and Change Reports

As described earlier, LEAs will be evaluated on state indicators using both their most recent performance results (status) and how performance has improved or declined over time (change). The Dashboard uses five colors to represent an LEA’s or school’s combined performance on the Status and Change Reports for each of the five state indicators. The colors range from high to low as follows: blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. Each rating is associated with a circular icon that allows performance-level identification if the Dashboard is not viewed in color. These reports are only generated for each state indicator with a sufficient sample size. Therefore, some LEAs will have fewer indicators on their Dashboards than others.

Figure 1. Performance Levels for California Dashboard



Source: California Department of Education

The Status and Change Report for each indicator is calculated using a 5x5 performance grid including rows associated with the five possible *status* levels and columns associated with each of the five *change* levels.⁵ In December 2017, LEAs and schools will receive ratings on the Dashboard in the following areas: ELA assessment (3-8), Math assessment (3-8), EL progress (K-12), graduation rates (9-12), and suspension rates (K-12).

Figure 2. Sample 5x5 Performance Grid

Level	Declined Significantly (Change)	Declined (Change)	Maintained (Change)	Increased (Change)	Increased Significantly (Change)
Very High (Status)	Yellow	Green	Blue	Blue	Blue
High (Status)	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Blue
Medium (Status)	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green
Low (Status)	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Very Low (Status)	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow

Source: California Department of Education

While Chronic Absenteeism and Career and College are both state indicators, the Dashboard will not report a Change indicator in the Fall 2017 release, so LEAs and schools will not receive a color-coded performance level. The Status Report, however, will be included.

The performance level and color are determined by locating where the column and row intersect. For example, in the sample grid above, if a district’s status is reported as “High” and is identified as having “increased” on the indicator, then the column and row would intersect in a green box. Thus, that district’s performance rating would be green for that indicator.

A hyperlink in the Status and Change Reports will also locate each school name or student group in the appropriate location on the grid for a quick visual snapshot of school or student group performance on the indicator for the district or school as a whole.

The Equity Report

The Equity Report is the first page of the Dashboard. On this page, viewers see the indicators (Table 1), followed by three columns:

- » **All Students’ Performance:** Overall performance rating for the indicator
- » **Total Student Groups:** How many student groups (socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, foster youth, homeless youth, students with disabilities, and racial/ethnic student groups) have a valid sample size for that indicator
- » **Student Groups in Red or Orange:** The number of student groups with a valid sample size that have a performance rating of red or orange for that indicator

The List of Schools Report (Added October 2017)

For the Fall 2017 Dashboard, the state is developing a district report for LEAs that displays all schools in the district on a single page. This page will post the school's overall performance levels on state indicators so that viewers can compare schools within the district.

California's System of Support

LCFF was designed to incorporate a statewide System of Support that provides differentiated assistance to LEAs. There are several pathways to this support. The LCFF law stipulates that LEAs are eligible for differentiated support if any student group meets the criteria approved by the SBE in September 2016 for two or more LCFF priorities. LEAs can also voluntarily request support. Additionally, a county office can deny approval of an LCAP and provide the LEA assistance.⁶ To determine eligibility for the statewide system of support, COEs will use performance indicators from the Fall 2017 Dashboard. At the time of this brief's development, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence and county offices of education are continuing to develop concrete protocols for how differentiated support will be provided.

Ongoing Development

The U.S. Department of Education has received but not responded to California's ESSA plan. Therefore, additional work may be necessary to update the Dashboard to align with ESSA requirements. The CDE intends to present an update about the Dashboard development at the March 2018 SBE meeting. In addition, some indicators require further development. The College/Career Indicator (CCI) Work Group and CDE staff, for example, have proposed a three-year timeline for additional measures to be incorporated into this indicator.

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 Dashboard. A broad overview of the process is listed to the right.

What Should School Boards Be Doing Right Now?

Boards should begin conversations with district staff about the proposed Dashboard. Districts currently have access to the relevant data likely to be included in the final Dashboard displays. While some standards for performance (i.e., what

Table 2: Timeline for Fall 2017 Dashboard and Differentiated Assistance (Subject to Change)

Time Frame	Activity
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Webinars for LEA staff and stakeholders begin (and continue through 12/2017) » Preview toolkit to support communication about the Dashboard and system of support » Content for Dashboard and agency websites finalized prior to the Dashboard release
November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » LEAs will be able to review the Dashboard and engage with key stakeholders prior to the public release » State Board of Education meeting will consider Academic and Chronic Absenteeism indicators for potential action » County superintendents and cross-agency groups will contact districts eligible for differentiated assistance » CDE will release final toolkit for use by communication staff, LEA leaders, and Dashboard coordinators
December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tentative public launch of the Dashboard (projected for December 1) » County superintendents and districts identified for differentiated assistance begin their needs-identification process
Spring 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Districts continue LCAP development process » CDE provides SBE update on Dashboard development at March 2018 meeting

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:

1. What do we believe the Dashboard will identify as our district’s strengths? These areas are important to celebrate with your district personnel and the public.
2. 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?
3. Are there contextual factors that can help us understand our performance (e.g., new initiatives, an unanticipated demographic shift, new discipline policies, etc.)?
4. How can we be proactive in communicating the Dashboard and our performance when they become available to our stakeholders?

The governing board should collaborate with the central office to ensure your district has planned a coherent and consistent response when the Dashboard is published. 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 a tip sheet with recommendations for developing an effective communications strategy.

Additional Resources

California School Dashboard Technical Guide (2016–17) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/documents/dashboardguidespring17.pdf>

How to Prioritize Equity in the New California Dashboard (Education Trust-West) <https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/ETW-Equity-Alert-Dashboards-April-28-2017-FINAL-PDF.pdf>

CDE Dashboard Webinar Series

Six webinars scheduled between October and December 2017. Topics include an overview of the Dashboard and local indicators, the CCI and graduation rate indicators, suspension and ELPI indicators, the state system of support, academic and chronic absenteeism indicators, and using the Dashboard in the LCAP process. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/fall2017webinars.asp>

California Department of Education California School Dashboard Communication Toolkit <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/>

CDE Dashboard Flyer

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/documents/dashboard-flyer.pdf>

CDE Dashboard Key Points

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardkeypoints.asp>

CDE Dashboard Fast Start Guide

<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/Content/fast-start-guide.pdf>

Update on Local Approval of the Recommended Revisions to the Calculations of the State Indicators for the Fall 2017 Dashboard Release; Update on the Local Indicators; and Update on the California School Dashboard: SBE September 2017 Agenda Item 02 <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/sep17item02.doc>

Update on the Development of California’s System of Support for Local Education Agencies and Schools: SBE September 2017 Agenda Item 03 <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/sep17item03.doc>

Endnotes

- 1 The CDE’s Career Technical Education Framework defines a capstone course as “the final course in a planned sequence of courses for a CTE program that provides a rigorous and intensive culmination of a course of study. Capstone courses are typically offered through regional occupational centers and programs (ROCPs)” (p. 447). Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/sf/documents/cteframework.pdf>.
- 2 For a detailed timeline and overview of the CCI calculation, please refer to the Technical Guide and the September 2017 SBE memo listed within the Resources section.
- 3 Refer to the Technical Guide and the September 2017 SBE memo listed in the Resources section.
- 4 The CDE has provided self-assessment tools that the SBE approved for measuring performance on the local indicators in the Technical Guide (referenced in the Resources section).
- 5 As described in the text box on page four, a 3x5 grid will be used for valid sample sizes under 150 students. Valid sample sizes are 30 students, except in the case of foster and homeless youth, in which case a valid sample is 15 or more students.
- 6 For more information on the state’s system of support, refer to SBE Agenda Item 03 in the Resources section. Additionally, the CDE has scheduled a webinar for November 2017 (see Resources), and an archived copy will be available for the public.

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