

**Berkeley Unified School District
Superintendent's Response to Comments Submitted by
Members of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Regarding Berkeley's 2015-16 Local Control &
Accountability Plan – August 2015**

PAC comments related to Sections: 1.4 & 1.6 - LCAP Goal 1

Provide certificated staff for all K-5 schools to support the implementation of RTI in literacy and math

- The PAC has not seen any data that indicates these resources served 27.6% of unduplicated students district-wide. On the basis of what criteria is the district increasing the portion of LCFF supplemental funds to 45-49% over the next 3 years?
- The PAC has not received data about how this resource has been utilized or added value at elementary schools this year in a way that tangibly improve math and reading scores, which form the basis of evaluating this position. One PAC parent reports that at her school this resource primarily gathers data for the district and does not provide any direct services to students; another PAC parent reports that at her school the RTI resource is being used for direct math intervention in small groups.
- The PAC would like to see RTI data broken up into the actual sub-categories the LCFF is funding instead of placing all RTI services under one umbrella.
- Site specific program evaluation data of PAC interest includes: (1) How many students received RTI services this year and how many of them were unduplicated (2) Did the new RTI resource provide direct services (3) Did over-crowded schools receive adequate RTI services; and if not, how many students that need RTI services could not be accommodated? (4) Has RTI successfully lowered the number of children who might have needed an IEP? (5) Do teachers believe this position has added value to their academic support needs this year?
- RTI FTE's are being allocated in proportion to the number of unduplicated students without subtracting out the number of unduplicated students who already have IEP's and receive Special Ed. Thus this allocation model can result in over serving students with identified learning disorders or under serving students in need of RTI services.

Superintendent's Response:

Multiple funding streams have been combined to fund many of the action steps in the LCAP. As LCFF funding grows over time, the plan calls for increasing the number of high need students we are able to serve. In 2014-15, funding from LCFF focused on expanding services to elementary age students, with increases in funding over the next three years incorporated in the plan in order to expand RTI services to middle school and high school students, including those attending Berkeley Technology Academy.

RE: Response to Instruction & Intervention

The part-time RTI (TSA) Coordinator positions at each elementary school were newly created in 2014-15 as part of the actions identified in the first LCAP year (2014-15), and allocated at .2 FTE and .4 FTE based on total elementary school enrollment. The .2 FTE is equivalent to one work day a week, and the .4 FTE is equivalent to two days a week (although the hours and work can be spread over several days a week).

The action step of hiring a district Teacher on Special Assignment (TSA) to lead the RTI work in the schools was not completed as the position went unfilled. As a result, the Director of Schools assumed leadership and has worked with principals and RTI coordinators to define their role and scope of work. In this first year of having part-time RTI Coordinators working in every elementary school, the Director of Schools and School Principals worked closely on hiring and training the eleven newly funded RTI Coordinators, and setting up a system of service for high need students at each school site.

The revised LCAP for 2015-18 includes an annual update which provides more detailed data on the progress of students served in the first LCAP year (2014-15). Locally developed benchmark assessments are used to regularly monitor student progress, and data is collected over time on each of the students receiving RTI services. We are still reviewing much of the student data and measures of progress that will help us strengthen our services moving forward.

Our on-going data collection and analysis work includes some of the information noted in the PAC's comments. Data included in the "annual update" as part of the recently adopted LCAP indicates, for example, that 68% of the over 500 high need students in our unduplicated count participated in small group or 1:1 literacy interventions.

Some of the data collected is included in the final LCAP for 2015-16 (p. 62-101), and other data is maintained in Illuminate, and is being further evaluated to assess program effectiveness over the summer and into next year.

I am very committed to ensuring that there is equitable distribution of the supplemental grant resources. As we improve our ability to track student need and progress, we will also be able to determine if fund allocations by school site need to be adjusted to better address student needs at different grade levels and school sites.

PAC comments related to Sections 1.5 and 1.6 – LCAP Goal I

Provide district level math coaches to lead workshops, facilitated planning, and coaching to support the implementation of CCSS-Mathematics: 1.0 FTE K-5; .6 FTE for 6-8; 1.0 for BHS

- BUSD's evaluation goal does not assess the efficacy of its math programs. Measuring Math proficiency in 8th grade is too late in the game to evaluate the effectiveness of BUSD's K-5 and 6-8 math programs.
- BUSD's rationale for funding 85% of these positions with LCFF Supplemental funds needs to be borne out with data. At the end of the year, it is essential to know the need of unduplicated K-8 students aggregated by subgroup within grade level. % has dropped with the addition of CCSS \$200K
- Without knowing how much other money is being spent on math support or how it is being provided, this amount looks miniscule and implies that math support is under resourced in the district
- PAC parents want K-5 teacher feedback on whether or not they feel this math coach model is a sound approach to address the math struggles of unduplicated students.
- The math coaches and RTI services in the LCAP plan do not provide adequate math support. PAC parents feel that direct student services at the same level as is provided for literacy are needed

Superintendent's Response:

Part of the shift to the Common Core State Standards has included the adoption of new curricular materials aligned with the new standards in math, including the adoption of the Integrated ("International") Pathway for teaching mathematics. District math coaches, and school-based math teacher leaders in every school have been working with school teams to build formative assessments in line with the new standards and monitor student progress. Over the last two years, teaching core classroom math instruction (K-12) has been a focus of district-wide, school-based and grade-level professional development work and teacher collaborations.

While teachers at all grade levels are working on curriculum to ensure students achieve grade level standards in math, and assessing their skills and knowledge with the use of benchmark assessments, the 8th grade math proficiency goal aligns with the previously set math goal articulated with our 2020 Vision partners.

I agree that we need to ensure that our high need students, who show signs of struggle in math, have access to Tier 2 RTI supports in the form of small group interventions targeted at specific math skills/concepts. Math coaches work with our Super Science Saturday program has also extended math learning beyond the school day, offering interactive lessons in math to our high need elementary students. Teachers are increasingly using online resources to motivate and engage students around the math skills essential to their future success in higher level math.

There is evidence that investing in strong literacy skills will help students access much of the math curriculum. While I agree that math proficiency is as important as literacy, we are looking closely at student math achievement data and will take actions needed to ensure our math program is adequately resourced.

PAC comments related to Section 1.9 – LCAP Goal 1

Provide workshops for students (Super Science) in collaboration with Lawrence Hall of Science

- Aside from issues associated with getting students to attend voluntary programs, these programs successfully engaged families of unduplicated students, and this is a positive step forward.
- Next year the PAC would like to see data on the number of unduplicated students invited and the numbers that actually attend.
- This should not be used as a substitute for having a strong plan for implementation of Next Generation Science Standards during the school week and day.

Superintendent's Response:

The Super Science Saturday program is multi-funded, however, in this first year was not funded with LCFF supplemental funds due to the availability of other funds. Ninety percent of the students participating in the Super Science Saturday program are students who have a documented need for additional support in mathematics.

The new science standards are a great leap forward for science education. Teachers have already begun to revise the science curriculum to align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and we are in the process of hiring a Teacher on Special Assignment specialized in these new standards to help lead the work in the coming year. Teachers have a growing menu of professional development opportunities over the summer and in the new school year, including a focus on best practices in teaching the new science standards.

PAC comments related to Section 1.10 – LCAP Goal 1

- Section 2 provides no insight into why funding will substantially increase in years 2017 and 2018. It is not self-evident how these funding increases will translate into service increases.
- PAC would like more information from BUSD to explain why BTA is no longer receiving this resource. Amongst the unduplicated students, is the need for this service still there?

Superintendent's Response:

The funding for the intervention TSA at Berkeley Technology Academy (BTA) was listed as an action step as part of the original LCAP approved in 2014, but was not funded with money from the LCFF supplemental grant. The annual evaluation update is still being conducted. In 15-16, BTA will undertake a WASC Review for accreditation. This requires teacher staffing to be aligned with the required core subjects. It was determined that this alignment was the top priority for the school.

PAC comments related to Section 1.12 – LCAP Goal 1

Provide 1:1 and small group intervention classes and teacher coaching for literacy at elementary schools

- BUSD’s proposed staff additions for K-5 are not equitable; additional resources are being evenly distributed across all sites without taking any enrollment numbers into consideration.
- Data of interest to validate that LCFF supplemental funds are going to unduplicated students includes: (1) Number of students by school by cohort receiving Literacy Coaching beyond what is provided by their classroom teacher (2) Number of students by school by cohort in need of Literacy Coaching services beyond what their classroom teacher can accommodate (3) Numbers of students within LCAP targeted groups within numbers 1 & 2. 2018 drop in funding is a bit disconcerting.

Superintendent’s Response:

The level of suggested data provided here is very helpful for our ongoing evaluation efforts. Moving forward we are going to look at the number of high needs students being directly served by the literacy coach/reading specialist in order to better account for the amount of time that is funded by the LCFF Supplemental Grant.

PAC comments related to Section 1.13 – LCAP Goal 1

Extend the school day with small group ELA and Mathematics instruction for student sin grdes K-12 before and after school with classroom teachers using research-based intervention practices.

- Having this program funded with supplemental funds was not discussed in any 2014-15 PAC meetings
- Training for the classified staff in ELA and Common Core Math standards has not been adequately addressed in LCAP plans.

Superintendent’s Response:

This action item was not funded during the first LCAP year, and is not listed for funding in 2015-16. It is currently listed as a “year three” expenditure to be funded in 2016-17.

The Educational Services Department is in the process of developing a three-year Professional Development (PD) Plan to include all staff members who work with students whether in a certificated or classified position. The focus of the PD work will be on literacy, math, cultural competency, differentiation, and inclusionary instructional practices.

PAC comments related to Section 1.15 – LCAP Goal 1

Expand AVID. Use Transcript Evaluation Services to monitor and communicate student progress towards “on Track” college and career readiness

- The data presented to the PAC does not support that this program is impacting the number of targeted students hoped, and because the number of participants is so small, it is not an adequate sample size to measure the effectiveness at the high school level.
- This year’s AVID implemented did not reach targeted students at BHS who are in small learning communities because the AVID elective conflicted with these schools schedules. If the targeted students cannot access this class due to the structure of the small learning communities, this is not the best use of resources even if this is a good plan.
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- Collaboration with the learning communities that house the targeted students should be explored to find acceptable options for students in small learning communities. For example students might be open to participate on a Saturday/before/after school that may be an alternative.

- If the district thinks this is a good investment, given the targeted students enrollment numbers, the district needs to substantiate how other alternatives that are reaching more students who are not meeting the same academic goals as they appear to have relatively the same outcomes.
- The PAC was only presented GPA's at an average level. The PAC requested to see the numbers of students performing in each grade level range as the average gpa can be very misleading based on the number of students doing well which will bring up the average. 2015-16 budget amount of \$165,000 communicated in 6/4 meeting not reflected in 6/5 updated plan

Superintendent's Response:

We know that, while we are expanding our programs to reach more students, the demand and need continues to outweigh the spaces we currently have available for students in AVID, Bridge, and our other successful support programs at Berkeley High School. We are working to leverage our LCFF and other funding to serve more students.

AVID is a research-based program used nationwide to teach middle and high school students, who are likely to be the first in their family to attend college, the fundamental skills and knowledge they need to succeed on the path to college.

Scheduling conflicts at the high school do sometimes prevent students from having access to course offerings. Sections of AVID were offered before and after school at Berkeley High, but not all students are able to commit to the extended times.

A relatively small portion of the AVID program staffing and expenses come from the LCFF Supplemental Grant.

The data on students participating in AVID will be available for our review in the fall, and will help us to answer many of the questions you are asking. From national research, we know that more students can benefit from the AVID program when all of the program components are taught with fidelity, and we are expanding the sections offered at BHS in order to reach more students, while increasing training opportunities for teachers. With more teachers attending the AVID program training, we will be able to offer more sections of AVID at Berkeley High School. This will increase the accessibility and benefits of the AVID program to more students in each learning community.

PAC comments related to Section 1.16 – LCAP Goal 1

Expand Bridge Program to include 7th students (as well as 6th) and continue the BHS Bridge Program

- How many middle school students are being served? How many Bridge cohorts are there?

Superintendent's Response:

During the 2014-15 school years, 120 middle school students participated in Bridge. The middle school Bridge program began as a two-week summer program focused on study skills and leadership training, and is evolving to align with the case management/cohort-based Bridge program model that has met with much success at Berkeley High School.

Currently, there are five cohorts of about 25 students (approx. 125 total students) who are participating in the high school Bridge program. The expansion of the high school model to the middle schools is expected to serve 200 students in 2015-16.

PAC comments related to Section 2.6 – LCAP Goal 2

Hire certificated teachers at each site based on the number of ELs to provide direct ELD instruction to ELs, oversight, and instructional coaching for teachers.

Superintendent’s Response:

Being able to fund ELD teachers at every school site was a big leap forward in our ability to implement the district’s EL Master Plan. We made a lot of progress in supporting ELD programs at each school, and setting up professional development and collaboration opportunities for teachers. Teachers report that we are still in need of more Systematic ELD curricular materials as well as bilingual materials for our TWI program.

While we are required to assess English fluency for EL students annually on the state-mandated CELDT, this year ADEPT was used for the first time to monitor on-going student progress. Teachers have been encouraged to administer the ADEPT twice a year, in January and May. (Teachers do not administer the test at the beginning of the year since the CELDT is very time consuming.)

The ADEPT is a great assessment, yet only evaluates students' listening and speaking skills. We currently, use TCRWP data to assess student progress in reading and writing. One of the goals of our ELD teachers is to either find or create a rubric which analyzes each EL student’s writing proficiency, through the lens of English language development.

PAC comments related to Section 2.7 – LCAP Goal 2

Hire K-12 ELD TSA to provide coaching and support to ELD teachers as well as TWI and Bilingual teachers to ensure students make progress towards English Fluency.

Superintendent’s Response:

The district’s “ELD coach” (English Language Development Teacher on Special Assignment) plays a critical role in ensuring our new LCAP-funded ELD teachers across the district are supported and able to do their job well. Supervised by the Director of Special Programs, the ELD coach works directly with ELD teachers and principals to ensure the implementation of the district EL Master Plan, and the professional development, support, and curricular materials teachers need in order to serve all EL students.

While the ELD coach does track the program models in use at each school, and this year secured a significant increase in access to Systematic ELD curricular materials, each school principal is ultimately responsible to monitor the progress of the school’s ELD program and to ensure that all ELs are being well-served. Although we are still evaluating whether the proportional model of FTE allocation for ELD teachers is enough to meet the needs of students at every school, our new funding model ensured that all EL students received targeted ELD instruction.

Each school has a School Site plan that includes action items in support of goals for English Learners. As the work of the new ELD teachers becomes more integrated with the RTI² model at each school, I expect to see more explicit language in our site plans about our goals for ELs at each school, and the specific program designs being used. This will help to increase school-wide awareness of EL student needs.

This year, approximately 14 teachers attended EL Achieve's Symposium, and 12 elementary school teachers attended Alameda County Office of Education's English Learner Conference in February. In order to provide a consistent model of coaching and support for ELD teachers, the TSA is attending summer training with EL Achieve’s Train the Trainer course. Looking ahead, the district will continue to support on-going professional development and collaboration time for ELD teachers.

PAC comments related to Section 3.4 – LCAP Goal 3

Contract with outside agencies: SEEDS to provide professional development on Restorative Justice (RJ) and New Bridge to provide counseling services on Alcohol and Tobacco or Drug (ATOD) use.

Superintendent’s Response:

With the effective use of Restorative Justice (RJ) programs in our schools, our goal is to increase student engagement, improve school climate, and keep kids in school. We want to reduce the use of suspensions and other punitive discipline practices that push students out of class and out of school, making them less likely to want to return. In fact, a student who has been suspended is twice as likely to drop out of school as a student who has not been suspended. Restorative practices help to create a focus on relationship building and trust, and complement the work that has been on-going around Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports, and the LCFF-funded Toolbox social-emotional curriculum.

The Board and I agree with the importance of a dedicated staff person to coordinate our Restorative Justice programs and work to promote restorative practices in every school. That is why in the final stages of the LCAP development, the funding allocated to support restorative justice programs increased from \$20,000 to \$140,000, including money specifically allocated to partner with SEEDS, a Community-based Resolution group. SEEDS will be working to pilot an RJ program at one elementary school, all three middle schools, while expanding its existing relationship with BTA.

One of the reasons that Principal Pasarow was hired as the new principal for Berkeley High School is because of his demonstrated success in improving school climate through the use of restorative practices. Resources have been set aside for Principal Pasarow to work with the Berkeley High leadership and the OCI staff to determine next steps in the development of RJ programs at the high school.

PAC comments related to Section 3.5 – LCAP Goal 2

Provides Behavior Specialists at K-8 and a Full-time Counselor for BHS students and counseling from Berkeley Mental Health and ATOD Counseling Services for New-Bridge at BTA with IEPs to build relational trust and provide alternatives to punitive discipline through behavioral intervention

Superintendent’s Response:

By allocating resources to fund Behavioral Specialists and a counselor for BHS students, as well as accessing mental health resources in our community, we are building a team of professionals to better serve our students. Part of the work ahead is developing a team structure that ensures an effective case management support model to serve our highest need students, and that includes coordination between OCI and our Special Education teachers, counselors, and other specialists.

PAC comments related to Section 3.7 – LCAP Goal 3

Hire a TSA to monitor progress on LCAP Goals.

Superintendent’s Response:

LCAP Evaluator (and Evaluation)

We have a Research, Evaluation and Assessment Department (BREA) primarily funded by the Berkeley School Excellence Program (BSEP) to provide evaluation of all District programs. The work includes providing support to schools in the use of data to inform instructional practices and support the needs of students; the planning, development, implementation and analysis of all local, state and federal assessments and surveys; and the ongoing assurance that every staff member has up to date access to student academic, demographic and program information. The LCAP evaluation program is an integral part of the work of this department, and for the coming year, we have increased the amount of staff time that will be dedicated to assessing qualitative and quantitative student progress indicators related to our LCAP-funded programs and services.

For 2015-16, as a result of the evaluation and key program suggestions, we are improving our ability to track progress of students in LCAP-funded programs and ensure that all data is monitored and available at the site level. There are thirty metrics required by the state and included in the LCAP Annual Update providing tools for measuring the extent to which goals for all students, and for the focus students, are being met over the years of the Plan.

A key component of our evaluation program includes on-going observation of program implementation and the monitoring of student participation to ensure that the programs primarily serve "unduplicated" students (students who are either English Learners and/or Low Income) as well as student subgroups identified by the District including students with disabilities, students who are African-American or Hispanic.

The results of program evaluation will continue to inform revisions or adjustments to the actions and services in the Plan each year. We expect to have another LCAP data presentation at the August 26, 2015 Board meeting.

PAC comments related to Section 3.8 – LCAP Goal 3

Provide increased mental health services to students dealing with trauma and other emotional issues

Superintendent's Response:

With the growing amount of district and community resources available to support the mental/behavior health of our students, I expect there will be more coordination of counseling and mental health services under the direction of the Director of Student Services. We created a new part-time position for a trained counselor to work with the various mental health partners in the schools. We are creating a coordinated approach to providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed practices. Mental health services are a critical component at every school for supporting an effective RTI model, and we must ensure that each school is positioned to identify students in need and to refer them appropriately.

Berkeley Technology Academy has been working with Berkeley Mental Health to become a trauma informed school where all staff has the skill and ability to respond to student needs as well as to refer students for counseling and life coaching.

PAC Comments related to Section 3.9 - LCAP Goal 3

Provide PBIS coach/behavior specialist to develop culturally relevant positive behavioral intervention supports (PBIS) and Toolbox.

Superintendent's Response:

All K-6 teachers were trained in the Toolbox curriculum and schools used school-wide assemblies to further teach students how to use the tools in their toolbox. As with any new curriculum, implementation will come with time as teachers learn how to integrate it with their classroom management practices and lessons. It will continue to be an expectation that every teacher teach and model the tools to further our students' social-emotional literacy.

PAC Comments related to Section 3.10 – LCAP Goal 3

Implement Alive and Free and Lifelines Programs to teach high-risk youth the skills to avoid violence and remain unharmed and free from suspension and incarceration and provide professional development for staff.

Superintendent's Response:

For the 15-16 school year, the district will partner with SEEDS, a community based organization, to provide Restorative Justice Program development, professional development and student skill development in restorative practices. Additionally, SEEDS will provide Restorative Conferencing for students who commit suspendable and expellable offenses. The Lifelines classes will continue. This work will be coordinated by Director of Student Services.

PAC Comments related to Section 3.12 – LCAP Goal 3

Provide Coordinators for family engagement to conduct outreach and attendance intervention

Superintendent's Response:

This team was able to begin to build a successful model of parent engagement during 14-15. There will be a more targeted research-based approach in 15-16, that will include working much more closely with the Student Services Department, and partnering with Oakland Children's Hospital FIND Program.