

California Schools: Still Chronically Underfunded by the State



While the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is an exciting, positive step for public schools because it requires parent engagement in planning and decision-making, provides additional funding for students with greater challenges, and gives local school districts more flexibility for how to spend money to improve local schools – LCFF does not change the fact that, overall, California’s schools remain chronically underfunded.

The LCFF reforms how dollars from the state get distributed to, and spent by, local school districts, but it does not address the true need for adequate funding so schools can provide the level programs and services that all students deserve.

For more than three decades, California has funded its public schools below the national average. During the recession that started in 2008, the funding went from bad to worse.

The 2014 Education Week *Quality Counts* report ranked California 50th among states in adjusted per-student expenditures.* A recovering economy and a temporary tax helped to stabilize funding in 2012-13 and 2013-14, but it will be many years before the deep cuts that were made are restored. Even when the new LCFF is fully implemented, without further action, school funding in California will still lag behind other states.

*This analysis accounts for regional cost differences and is based on 2011 data. California spent an average of \$8,341 per student compared to the national average of \$11,864. For more information about California schools, check out Education Week’s Quality Counts 2014 and interactive state report cards online at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/01/09/16shr.h33.html>.



While the new LCFF and LCAP represent a major positive reform, it does not change the fact that California’s schools remain chronically underfunded. The 2014 Education Week Quality Counts report ranked California 50th among states in adjusted per-student expenditures.

What can you do?

Even with the passage of Proposition 30 in 2012, which provides a temporary tax increase, education funding is still sorely insufficient to provide all children with the educational opportunities required for them to be successful in the 21st century.

California State PTA continues to speak up for adequate funding for all students.

Urge your locally elected state legislators to **END THE CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING OF CALIFORNIA’S SCHOOLS**. Urge legislators to approve a long-term plan to address this funding crisis once and for all, and to move California up from the basement in school funding, so that the programs that all children need to be successful can be restored and built up.

Send an email, letter, or request a meeting with your legislator in his or her local office. Urge your legislator to make sure that schools are adequately funded. It is critical to ensuring the long-term success of the new LCFF.