Update on Local Control Funding Formula Evaluation Rubrics: Background on User Acceptance Testing and Development of the Online Evaluation Rubrics System

On July 1, 2013, the Governor signed Assembly Bill (AB) 97 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2013) to enact the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The LCFF is designed to enhance the allocation of resources, integrating the budgets with locally approved goals, services, and actions for local educational agencies (LEAs) to improve student outcomes.

The State Board of Education (SBE) is charged with adopting the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) template for LEAs (*Education Code* [*EC*] Section 52064), as well as developing the regulations for how LEAs can use their supplemental and concentration funds (*EC* Section 42238.07). The permanent regulations for the LCAP template and spending regulations were approved by the SBE in November 2014 and approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) on January 8, 2015.

In addition, the SBE is charged with developing and adopting the LCFF evaluation rubrics for self-assessment of LEA performance and for use in providing technical assistance (*EC* Section 52064.5). The evaluation rubrics are an integral part of the LCFF performance and accountability system. Once developed, the rubrics will direct attention to areas in need of additional support to meet the adopted standards for district and school performance relative to the state priorities (e.g., pupil achievement, parental involvement, and other pupil outcomes). Specifically, the evaluation rubrics will: (1) assist LEAs in evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement; (2) assist county superintendents of schools in identifying Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in need of technical assistance and providing resources for technical assistance; and (3) assist the Superintendent of Public Instruction in identifying LEAs for which technical support and/or intervention is warranted. The SBE must adopt the evaluation rubrics by October 1, 2016.

Regular updates on the options for designing the LCFF evaluation rubrics have been provided to the SBE since September 2014. As the updates transitioned from concepts to specific examples, the SBE directed that the rubrics be grounded in the larger accountability policy context and research on meaningful educational indicators. The design of the evaluation rubrics requires a thoughtful, phased-in approach that entails more research, data analysis and technical assistance to better serve LEAs and to become a key component of the new local and state accountability system. The additional year for development provides the SBE with additional time to solicit extensive input from the primary end-user of the evaluation rubrics to inform their development.

Evaluation Rubrics

The evaluation rubrics will reflect a holistic and multidimensional assessment of school district and individual school site performance and shall include all of the state priorities

that are set forth in *EC* Section 52060 (d). Further, as part of the rubrics, the SBE must adopt standards for school district and individual school site performance and expectations for improvement in regard to each of the state priorities. The information that follows outlines the content that will be included in the development of the rubrics, how that content will be applied in an online environment, and how select users will provide feedback to inform the development of the rubrics.

At the September SBE meeting, the SBE provided guidance for organizing the indicators and metrics identified in statute for each of the state priorities for inclusion in the development of the rubrics (http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/sep15item14slidesrev.pdf). Based on existing research and the preliminary analysis of California data, the SBE endorsed specific policy statements that will inform the consolidation of key and associated indicators to help determine LEA strengths and weaknesses in meeting local goals. This consolidation of expectations is organized into three policy areas: (1) *Access and Opportunity*, (2) *Graduation*, and (3) *College and Career Readiness*. These categories provide the conceptual framework for analyzing progress relative to the standards and state priorities.

The conceptual framework presented in September 2015, outlined two types of standards within the evaluation rubrics: (1) *Practice Standards* (qualitative narrative statements that convey research supported practices), and (2) *Quality Standards* (measurement-based data displays). These standards align to the SBE's evaluation rubrics policy areas and provide specific reference to practices and measurements against which an LEA may assess strengths, areas in need of improvement, and local performance.

Practice Standards will describe research-supported practices related to areas within the policy areas inclusive of all state priorities. The Practice Standards will convey characteristics and examples of high functioning practices for LEAs to use as part of the reflective process.

Quality Standards will complement practice standards by providing a measurement-based system against which to assess local progress for all state priorities. The Quality Standards establish specific expectations for performance based on consideration of improvement and outcomes, which are assigned based upon how an LEA, school, or subgroups performs for a specific metric relative to the overall distribution of results for the state.

In addition to practice and quality standards, the LCFF evaluation rubrics will offer customized narrative statements that will be based on data analyses, a data metric selection tool comprised of pre-populated locally defined metrics, and practice guides to function as a resource to provide a deeper inquiry into data results and define effective practices.

User Acceptance Testing (UAT)

A statewide sample of LEAs (county offices of education, school districts, and charter schools) will participate in a pilot test of select components of the LCFF evaluation rubrics. The pilot participants will provide information on the proposed content and user interface with the evaluation rubrics system (e.g., user access, file upload and interface with front-end data display). Recommendations from the UAT will be used to develop the technical requirements of the system. The goal will be to test portions of the developing system with the UAT so that the system as a whole (practice standards, quality standards, customized narratives, and practice guides) will be finalized based upon research and the reported usefulness by LEA users.

The LEAs participating in the UAT will provide input on select prototype sections of the evaluation rubrics as the rubrics are being developed. Specifically, representatives from specific LEA testing sites will provide information on local data management practices, design options for data displays and analyses that are user friendly, helpful for local reflective processes, and options to determine if technical assistance is necessary. These LEAs will clarify the connection points to the workflow process through their interactions with the rubrics. County offices of education, in particular, will provide input based on internal planning and evaluation teams for LCAP and Annual Update development, as well as completing mock district reviews as the role of the technical assistance provider. These interactions with prototype versions of the evaluation rubrics will take into consideration the planning, reflecting, and evaluating processes of LEAs.

The UAT project is designed in the following three phases:

Phase	Topic	Schedule	Time Required
I	Content and Structure Feedback	October 12, 2015 – November 16, 2015	3-4 total hours
II	Standards and Design	December 1, 2015 - December 18, 2015	6-8 total hours
III	Acceptance Testing-Online Prototype	March 14, 2016 - March 25, 2016	6-8 total hours

The LEA UAT representative will receive a packet of materials that includes the latest draft of the evaluation rubrics presented to the SBE at the September 2015 meeting. Phase I testing will also include a review of the draft practice standards, an assessment of the alignment of the rubrics with the LCAP planning process, and feedback on the parameters and functionality needed to support the selection of local measures (e.g., parent involvement) for use in the online Web-based evaluation rubrics system.

Next, in Phase II the LEA UAT representative will review a prototype of the display options that are available for data analysis and program effectiveness related to district goals and indicators and metrics for determining progress.

Finally, in Phase III, the LEA UAT representative will receive a password and secure access to test the online Web-based evaluation rubrics system. The materials used for the UAT will be posted on the WestEd LCFF Web Portal (http://lcff.wested.org/) and will be shared with the SBE during the regularly scheduled public meetings as part of the status update on the LCFF evaluation rubrics. The information obtained from LEAs will be summarized and the group responses will be shared with the SBE and members of the public in the form of Information Memoranda and SBE items.

Online Evaluation Rubrics System

On June 24, 2015, Governor Brown signed AB 104 (Chapter 13, Statutes of 2015), which appropriated $350,000 for the California Department of Education (CDE), in collaboration with and subject to the approval of the executive director of the State Board of Education, to enter into a contract with the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) to perform activities that ensure alignment of the evaluation rubrics with California's accountability system, accommodate state and local data availability, and reflect consistency with implementation of the LCFF.

The online (Web-based) evaluation rubrics system will include, but will not be limited to, the following components: (1) data analysis and report section, (2) data metric selection tool, (3) practice standard analysis and report section, (4) quality standard analysis and report section, and (5) practice guide sections.

Based on the content and design specifications provided by the SBE and WestEd, the SJCOE will build the technological infrastructure to support an online Web-based application system for the evaluation rubrics. Specifically, the SJCOE will develop the system design and architecture, user requirements, functional requirements, and implementation of the requirements. The SJCOE is the contractor for the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) and their extensive experience and expertise with the latest programming technology, languages, and best practices allow them to develop Web, mobile, and software applications that provide unique solutions to over 5,000 school districts nationwide.

The SJCOE will provide support for the final stages of the UAT through a validation testing of the final evaluation rubrics system. Progress on the Web-based evaluation rubrics system will be provided for the SBE through Information Memoranda and SBE items. Once completed, the SJCOE and WestEd will continue to provide ongoing support for the research and content development and technological infrastructure of the Web-based evaluation rubrics system.

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