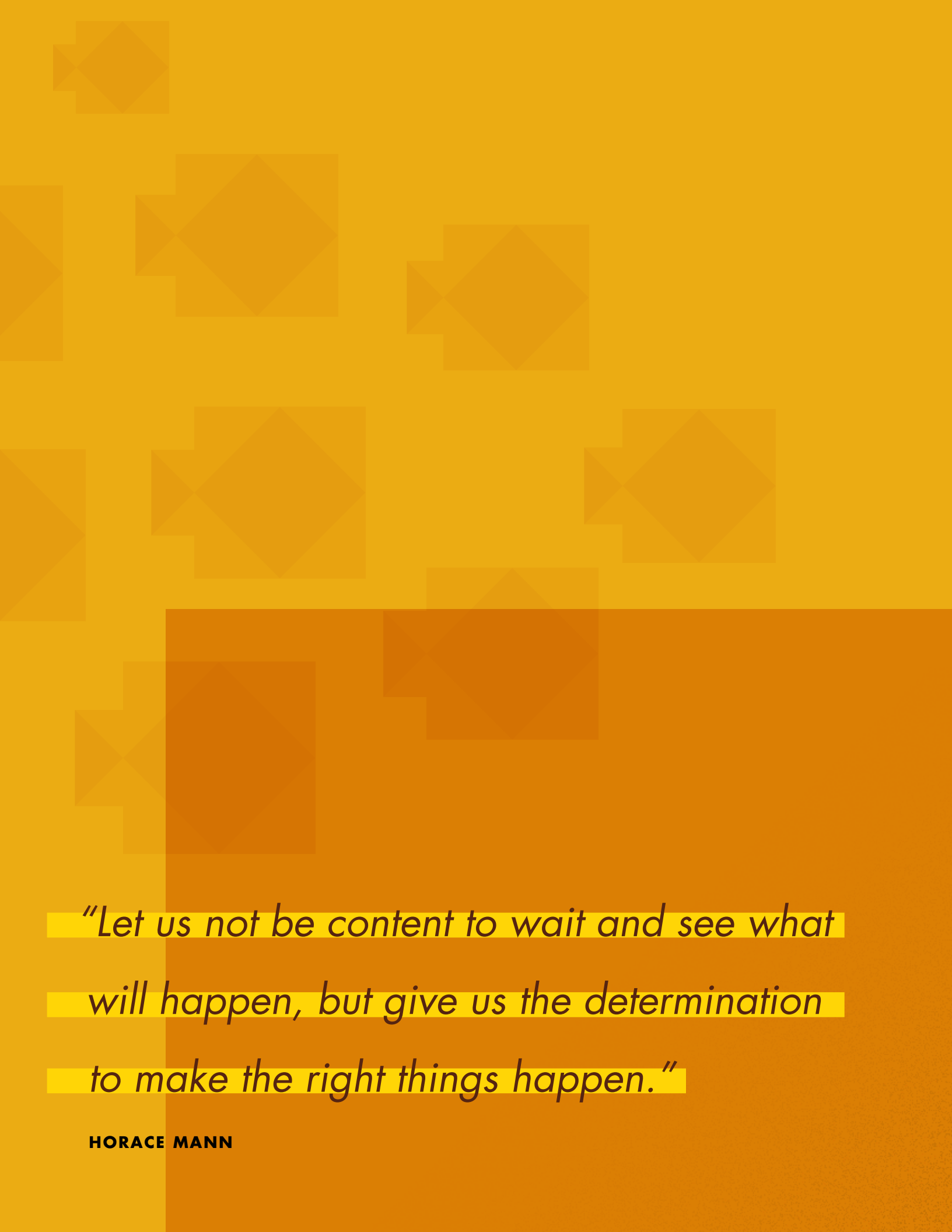


ONE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

MOVING TOWARD THE
COMMON CORE

May 2015



“Let us not be content to wait and see what will happen, but give us the determination to make the right things happen.”

HORACE MANN

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LETTER TO THE PARENTS, FUTURE COLLEGE PROFESSORS, AND FUTURE EMPLOYERS OF OUR STUDENTS

Dear Parents, Future College Professors, and the Future Employers of Our Students,

California’s education system is at an exciting moment of transition. For too long, we had a gap between the skills we know graduates need and the content knowledge our previous state standards laid out. In fact, while 91 percent of high school educators said in 2009 that their students were “well prepared” or “very well prepared” for college, only 26 percent of college professors agreed.¹

The successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards, adopted in California in 2010, has the potential to bridge that gap and ensure that all of our students are graduating truly college and career ready. These standards favor depth over breadth, and demand the deep reading of complex texts, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills 21st-century universities and jobs require. Though urgent, this movement to raise education standards is a fundamental paradigm shift and courageous undertaking for educators, students and parents.

Here’s what we have to gain if we are successful in making this leap: we can graduate more students prepared for college, diversify our college halls and workplaces, end cycles of poverty, elevate civic engagement and strengthen democracy in California. The greatest beneficiaries of these gains would be the very children prioritized by California’s new funding reforms — our English Language Learners, foster youth and children living in poverty.

This paper is our vision and roadmap for realizing these dreams for our students. As teachers, we have outlined exactly what this transition should look like. We have drawn upon academic research on the benefits of deeper learning, best practices from around our city, state and nation, as well as interviews with and surveys of our colleagues, students and communities. We ask for the needed patience, time and scaffolding to make the transition a success. We also recognize that you, our students’ parents, future employers, professors and neighbors deserve a clear pathway forward and accountability for results along the way. And we also know that our students — brimming with potential — can’t afford to wait and need us to take bold action to provide deeper learning and college access to more students, more quickly.

Our paper provides a platform for a new conversation between teachers and other education stakeholders about how to move forward together in the transition to Common Core.

The Educators 4 Excellence—Los Angeles 2015 Teacher Team on Common Core Implementation

WORKING TOGETHER FOR STUDENTS

Every policymaker in our system, from our statehouse to our classroom, plays a vital role in ensuring student success. But we all work best when we all work together.



E4E-LOS ANGELES POLLED...

150 parents, 497 middle school and high school students, and 355 teachers from across Los Angeles, 63 percent of whom were unionized.

MOVING TOWARD THE COMMON CORE

VISION



Focus on Vision and Communication

LEADERSHIP



Focus on Teacher Leadership

TRANSPARENCY



Focus on Transparency

The state should create and articulate a clear vision and timetable, with a communications plan for sharing this vision across the state.

The state should provide access to adequate student data.

Districts should create and communicate a clear vision and timetable.

Districts should create Common Core-focused teacher leadership roles at the district level to ensure district-wide equity.

Unions should publicly support Common Core, and demonstrate that support by investing in and providing messaging materials to members and to the community.

Unions should advocate for Common Core-focused leadership roles, and more planning and collaboration time in the schedule.

Schools should create Common Core-focused teacher leadership roles at the school level to support implementation at the school site.

Schools should provide Common Core workshops to families and the community.

THE ORIGIN OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

The United States ranks 25th in science and 32nd in math on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)², an internationally benchmarked exam taken by 15-year-olds worldwide and administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

2006

A first draft of standards is sent to state-level committees composed of teachers, union leaders, pedagogical and research experts, administrators, parents, and state leaders for review and feedback.⁴

2009-10

2007

In response to the clear need for higher standards to remain internationally competitive, a bipartisan coalition, led by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), brings together educators, researchers and policymakers. The coalition commits to creating a set of common standards, with the intention of ensuring students are receiving the same high-quality education focused on 21st-century skills, regardless of their home state.³

2010

California, along with 38 other states, adopts the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics.⁵

California begins the implementation process by drafting frameworks, creating key committees and joining the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) to create Common Core-aligned assessments.⁶

2011

California passes a budget that guarantees \$1.25 billion over two years for Common Core implementation. Los Angeles Unified receives \$113 million for local implementation.⁷

2013

States across the nation begin piloting Common Core-aligned assessments. California puts the release of assessment results on hold for an additional year through the passage of Assembly Bill 484.⁸

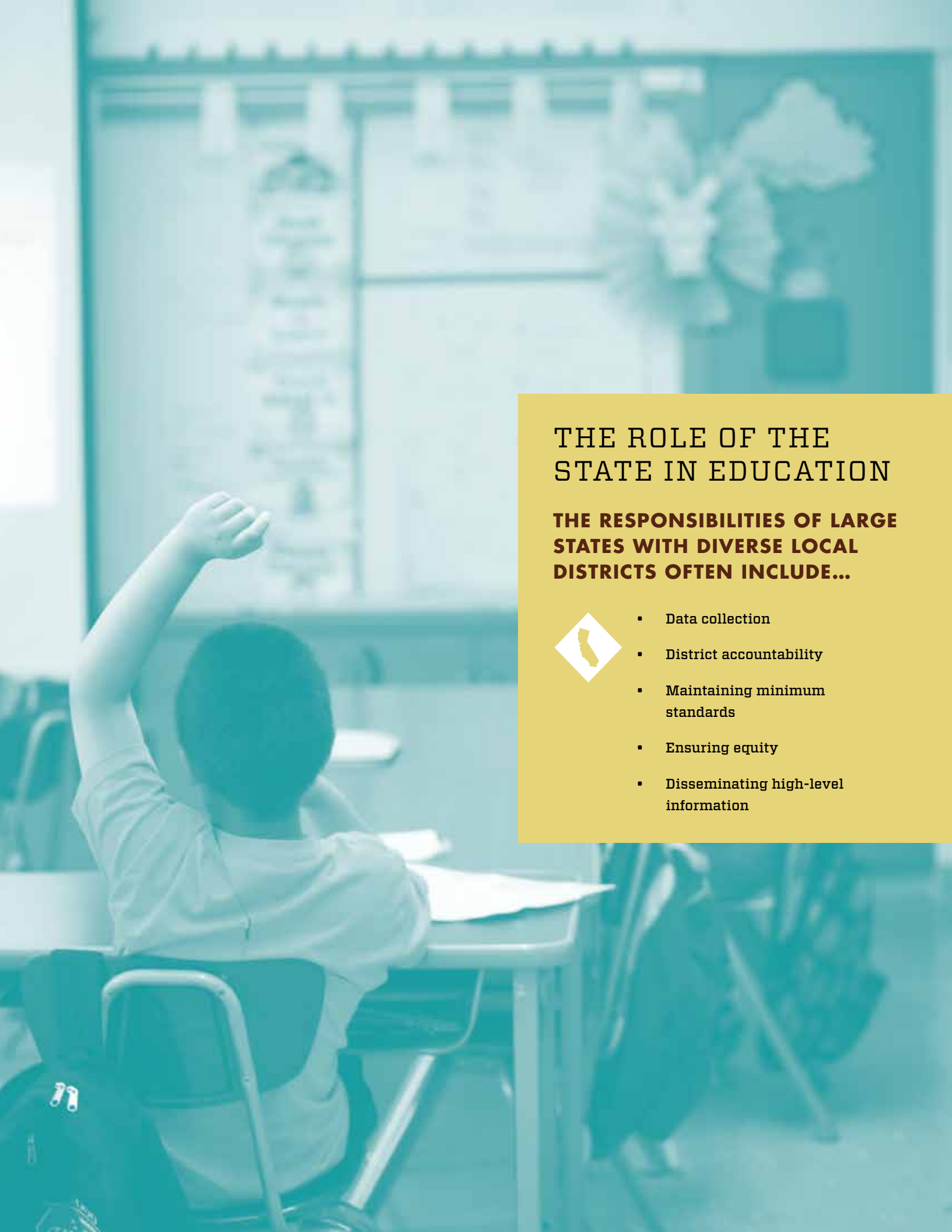
2014

California passes the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which directs more dollars toward high-need students and districts, and highlights Common Core as a key state priority for local spending.⁹

2013

Students across California take the Smarter Balanced Assessment in both math and English and will receive results later in the year. However, schools and districts will not be held accountable for results until at least 2016, if not later.¹⁰

2015

A student is seen from behind, sitting at a desk in a classroom. Their right arm is raised, and they appear to be participating in a lesson. The background shows a whiteboard with some faint writing and a map of the United States on the wall.

THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN EDUCATION

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LARGE STATES WITH DIVERSE LOCAL DISTRICTS OFTEN INCLUDE...



- Data collection
- District accountability
- Maintaining minimum standards
- Ensuring equity
- Disseminating high-level information

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

THE PROBLEM

California’s new funding system, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), is clear in its intent — more dollars for our children who need more support. LCFF also is clear in its delegation of responsibility to local districts, who are empowered to spend those dollars as they best see fit, as long as they can justify the benefits for the highest-need students. The delegation and shift of responsibility to local counties and districts, though, has also led the state to largely abdicate its role as vision-setter and accountability-provider. The state’s absence has given a bullhorn to a wide variety of community and civil rights partners to share their priorities and concerns, which they have done to the benefit of hundreds of thousands of our students. But the activism of community cannot supplant the state’s obligation to set a vision and hold local districts accountable to meeting key goals and benchmarks while preparing all students for college and careers.

OUR SOLUTION

Our state should continue to allow individual districts to innovate and meet local needs, but still set and communicate a broad vision and overarching goals, and provide data so that districts are held accountable to their own plans. The state can and should still collaborate with community, civil rights and philanthropic partners in setting and communicating this vision.

“Absent a strong voice from the state about the value of Common Core, it is left to detractors to fill in the messaging void, and we miss the opportunity to share the vision and promise of deeper learning.”

Xochitl Gilkeson,

English teacher, El Camino Real Charter High School

FOCUS ON TRANSPARENCY

The state should provide access to adequate student data to inform instruction, keep community informed and monitor progress toward student, school and district growth.

- **The State Board of Education should pass a resolution creating a data strategist office and laying out the key responsibilities of the office.**
- **The California Department of Education (CDE) should, through the data strategist office, analyze and produce timely data results to districts for state assessments, while also providing a platform for districts to upload and share local assessments.**

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: Currently, many California teachers and parents are still unclear about when or in what form they will receive state assessment data for their students or children.¹¹ In a recent poll, 55 percent of California public school parents had heard “little or nothing” about the new assessments.¹² In reality, the contract California developed for its assessments guarantees districts will receive results within four weeks, but up to eight weeks before Individual Student Reports (ISRs) are available to families and students.¹³ If students are taking tests in April, a delay of four to eight weeks could mean the end of a school year before results are received. Given that tests are administered online, it seems only logical that teachers, parents and students should be able to view results online, which would tighten the timeline by eliminating the need for production and dissemination.

A new data strategist office could make the process of analyzing and sharing these results seamless and user-friendly. Other states have created useful “teacher portals” that are transforming classroom practice. In Tennessee, the state department of education created an online system that allows teachers across the state to log in at any time to view their students’ data, and conducted focus groups with teachers across the state to ensure the reports were aligned with what teachers wanted and needed from the data. As a result, log-ins to the site have increased dramatically and more importantly, teachers log in continuously throughout the year, demonstrating the portal’s value as a planning and instructional tool.¹⁴ During this same time period, data on student outcomes showed strong improvement. Tennessee has had three consecutive years of student gains on their statewide assessments, and gains have been particularly strong for low-income youth and students of color.¹⁵

This data strategist office could also build an important bridge between data from our schools and state-level policymakers. By providing clear reports on where students

are struggling and excelling statewide, the data strategist office would be an invaluable resource to legislators and the CDE itself as they make key policy and regulatory changes that impact classrooms. In Delaware, the state partnered with the Strategic Data Project and the federal Department of Education to create a data strategist position and found this office to be a game changer. According to Delaware’s Secretary of Education Mark Murphy, “if you do not have people who have great capabilities in how to use that data and how to turn that data into usable formats for educators and policymakers, then it will just live and die in that database and not actually inform policy, not actually inform practice.”¹⁶ The reports produced by this office allow the Delaware legislature to highlight and replicate best practices, and address areas of growth that need additional dollars or new policies.¹⁷

Given California’s significantly larger size, it’s also important that this office focus on leveraging its economy of scale, rather than taking on the work of all of California’s districts. To this end, the data strategist office should also create a platform where districts can upload and share data from their local assessments. Georgia created a comparable “Data Tunnel” where, on an opt-in basis, districts could upload, share and align their assessments. Within one year, all districts in Georgia had voluntarily joined the effort.¹⁸ In California, this could give districts the opportunity to share data on non-tested subject areas, and provide more data points on student performance than a single, end-of-year assessment. Many recognized state-level thought leaders, such as the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) have been advocating for this kind of a system for years,^{19,20} and could be valuable research partners in creating such a platform. Districts or counties could then appoint someone locally to upload the data as needed.

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Many important community partners have already begun Common Core implementation. Below are but a few examples — and certainly not an exhaustive list — of the partners and resources that can and should be consulted as the state takes on this work.

- The California Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE)
- Children Now
- Public Broadcasting System (PBS)
- National Public Radio (NPR)
- Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC)
- Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE)
- National Association of Chambers of Commerce

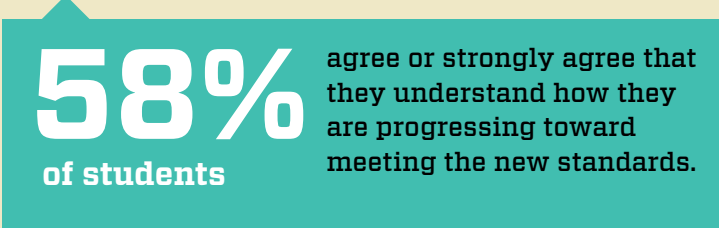
MEASURING SUCCESS: To measure implementation, the state could replicate Georgia’s model and look to the number of districts that choose to upload local assessments as a measure of success, as well as the number of teacher, parent and administrator log-ins over the course of the year.

To measure impact, the results captured in this data system should be integrated into both the Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs), in which districts account for expenditures under LCFF and show the link to student outcomes, as well as the new Academic Performance Index (API), which is the state’s overall measure of district performance. The API is currently being reconfigured to reflect the new assessments.

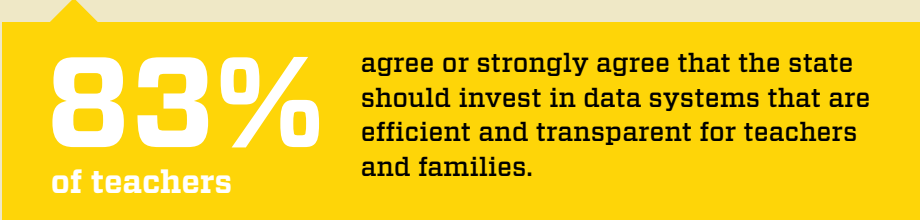
CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

- We also recognize that many of California’s data systems are still siloed and integrating them will be a long and complex process. In the interim, the State Board could simply contract with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to allow parents, teachers and community to log in and see results when districts do, with privacy measures that ensure they see only the most relevant data, such as individual student or aggregated performance data.
- This recommendation will need to work in concert with the plan and vision mentioned on page 14. The need for proactive communication can’t be stressed enough, as we have seen support for Common Core diminish in large part due to panic over dropping test scores.²¹ It is critical that we help the public keep their eyes on the larger vision of increased standards and expectations for our students.

Parents and students recognize the problem



Teachers agree on a solution



FOCUS ON VISION AND COMMUNICATION

The state should create and articulate a clear vision and timetable for Common Core implementation, with a communications plan for sharing this vision across the state.

- The State Board of Education should pass a resolution calling for the creation of a vision, timetable and communications plan.
- The California Department of Education (CDE) should create and execute on the vision, timetable and communications plan, partnering with community, civil rights, union, philanthropic, media and business organizations.

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: The Common Core State Standards Systems Implementation Plan for California currently exists on the CDE website.²² However, in our poll of 150 parents, only 16 percent said they felt like they understood “why, how and on what timeline California is implementing the Common Core State Standards.” This resonates with larger polling of the California public. In the 2014 PACE/USC Rossier poll of California voters, only 47 percent of the public said they were familiar with the Common Core at all, with 35.4 percent saying they only know “a little bit.”²³ This may be because the Implementation Plan has not been coupled with a broader outreach plan, or because the intended audience of the plan is only education insiders, rather than the community at large. Regardless, the central goal of communicating the statewide purpose, vision and timeline of Common Core can be strengthened and shared with more stakeholders.

This lack of widely known information presents a clear challenge as well as a clear opportunity. A “blank slate” presents an opportunity to share successes and proactively respond to questions and concerns the public may have.

A clear vision and roadmap of Common Core implementation should set a minimum bar for where the state and local districts should be by the end of each year. For example, the state could share a calendar of assessments that are being piloted, field tested or fully implemented. The state could provide districts guidance on training, including a minimum percent of teachers that should be trained on scoring interim assessments or the number of parent workshops that should be offered. Kentucky rolled out a very similar roadmap in 2011, called the “Innovation Configuration Map” or IC Map. For every element of Common Core implementation, from professional development to technology and assessments, the IC Map lays out a clear picture of fully developed, in progress and emerging implementation.²⁴ Using this rubric, districts can

assess their own status and have a clear set of action steps for reaching the next level. (*For an example of an IC Map, see the appendix A, page 34.*)

Similarly, California could provide these maps to local districts, while also setting expected levels for each year of implementation. Fortunately, the foundation for much of this work is already seen in California’s existing Common Core plan, but the information is focused on activities rather than goals.²⁵ For example, the California plan tracks what kind of professional development should be offered each year, while the Kentucky plan tracks what percent of teachers are engaging in professional development each year. While the activities are important, tracking inputs alone does not allow teachers, parents or community to see progress toward the overall goals or monitor whether or not we are on track. Fortunately, we can adjust course. As stated by State Board President Michael Kirst, implementation will be ongoing for the next four to five years.²⁶ We recommend the implementation plan going forward be reworked to be more similar to an IC Map: focused on a balance of outputs and outcomes, and a user-friendly tool for district leaders, teachers and parents.

As mentioned, the implementation plan has existed on California’s website for well over two years. If this vision is to be effectively followed and implemented, it needs to be accompanied by a communications plan. The communications plan should be multifaceted: public service announcements, op-eds, radio ads, board meetings, district website pages and partnerships with media outlets in multiple languages. This is an opportunity to democratize conversations about Common Core that enable parents and students to articulate questions and concerns and avoid top-down, one-way feedback.

This communications plan would certainly be an investment, but could also be shared with philanthropic and business partners who have a clear interest in ensuring

our children are graduating college-and-career ready. Already, coalitions like the Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation (CDEF), led by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, have brought together business, philanthropic, community and education leaders to create a Communications Toolkit.²⁷ Exciting collaborations like these should be replicated and expanded upon by bringing in additional partners and utilizing the weight of the CDE and the State Board to lead the effort. For example, the state could partner with NPR, PBS, Disney, Nickelodeon or even local museums to share information and draw on these partners' expertise in reaching parents and students. In Kentucky, the state department of education partnered with the state's Chamber of Commerce to create the "Ready Kentucky" campaign. The campaign included video spots and messaging materials from both business leaders and teachers, which demonstrated to the community at large the tie between these important educational shifts and the employment outcomes for our students.²⁸

Taken together, the vision, timetable and communications plan would ensure that teachers, parents, community members and students are informed and empowered advocates of their rights to a high-quality education.

MEASURING SUCCESS: One of the eight state priorities under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is Common Core implementation. The portion of each district's LCAP that addresses CCSS implementation should correspond directly to the state's vision and timetable, explaining how the district is meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements for that year.

The communications plan will need to be grounded in high-quality survey data that reveals the key communications gaps, problems and opportunities. The state could partner with universities or other research institutions²⁹ to both find out key concerns or misperceptions and to monitor the effectiveness of the plan over time.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

- Although the conversation around LCFF has rightly focused on some important concerns around ensuring equity and accountability in an era of almost total flexibility, this freedom has also allowed some districts to try new and innovative approaches to school improvement. The state should use this opportunity to highlight districts that are embracing their autonomy and excelling in their achievement for students. For example, the CDE could feature a different district each month or quarter on its website, highlighting the district's best practices.
- Many of our local schools, districts and teachers have been executing their own "communications plans" with parents since the adoption of Common Core in 2010. The state can and should leverage these resources in its own work. For example, the state could ask districts to nominate one of their teacher leaders (*see page 20*) to participate in a working group to create talking points, or to film TV spots explaining Common Core to parents and community.

16%

of parents agree or strongly agree that they understand why, how and on what timeline the state is implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Parents recognize the problem

Teachers agree on a solution

90%
of teachers

agree or strongly agree that the state should invest in a vision and timetable for CCSS implementation, and

91%

agree that the state should invest in a media plan.



THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT IN EDUCATION

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS OFTEN INCLUDE...



- Data collection and analysis
- School accountability
- Administrator oversight
- Professional development
- Parent engagement
- Ensuring equity
- Disseminating district-specific information

DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

THE PROBLEM

Los Angeles Unified School District received \$113 million in 2013 to implement Common Core, and created an exciting budget that leveraged teacher leaders, as recommended by the 2013 E4E-Los Angeles Teacher Policy Team on Career Pathways. These “Common Core Advisors” were tasked with supporting school site implementation and delivering a professional development program.³⁰ Once this one-time funding had expired, the onus for implementing CCSS has largely been pushed down to schools and Educational Service Centers (ESCs), the smaller districts within LAUSD. While implementation ultimately does happen at school sites, during this vital time of transition, the district can and should play a stronger role in ensuring equity through a consistent vision for all schools and students.

OUR SOLUTION

Our district should provide a clear local plan that enables each school to assess where they are and then lay out a path forward. The plan should include an overall vision, aligned to the state’s timeline and vision, and be as clear and concise as possible, with teachers, community and parents as its target audience. This vision and plan needs to be developed with teacher leaders at the helm, and open to parents and community for both shared responsibility and accountability.

“A teacher-led vision for Common Core implementation has the potential to change hundreds of thousands of students’ lives. Great teacher leaders can make an incredible impact.”

Lovelyn Marquez-Prueher,

English teacher, Dodson Middle School, 2015 California Teacher of the Year

FOCUS ON VISION AND COMMUNICATION

The district should create and communicate a clear Common Core transition plan, together with a vision and goals, to the schools and the community. This plan should include benchmarks, and provide public access to student progress data to monitor and evaluate plan implementation.

- The LAUSD School Board should pass a resolution demanding a clear transition plan and laying out the scope of what needs to be included in the plan. It should be aligned to the state vision and timeline, and integrated into the budget and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).
- The district administration should develop this plan with specific benchmarks and goals.

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: As results from the first round of Common Core-aligned assessments are returned, there will be much focus on the success of our students and teachers on implementation. But in order to truly move our students forward, we must also measure the success of district and school leadership on implementation. The vision and plan set forth here is intended to be that measure.

The vision should include both long-term goals and short-term benchmarks of implementation. To make execution more realistic, the district should select one to two high-priority goals each year. These goals should be aligned with the statewide vision (*see page 14*) and timeline, and use a similar IC Map-style template to ensure consistency. While the goals should be consistent across schools, each site should have autonomy in determining how they will

achieve those goals. For example, one site may choose to invest heavily in teacher-led professional development to meet a goal around technology implementation, while another school may have a partnership with a technology company and choose to bring in experts from that organization.

This is in line with the current approach of the district in having each school complete a Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). Under the SPSA, schools are asked to spell out how they will achieve set goals.³¹ Unfortunately, these plans are often opaque to families and community, and even to teachers. The clear, user-friendly IC Map (*see Appendix A*) can replace pieces of the SPSA and also serve the dual purpose of a communication tool to families.

Parents recognize the problem

16%
of parents

agree or strongly agree that they understand why, how and on what timeline their district is implementing the Common Core State Standards.

23%

agree or strongly agree that they have access to data on how their school is progressing toward meeting the Common Core State Standards.

Teachers agree on a solution

89%
of teachers

agree or strongly agree that the district should create and communicate a clear plan for transitioning to Common Core, and

81%

agree or strongly agree that the district should provide public access to data.

The district will also need to lay out a transparent plan for accountability that specifies how long schools will have to meet goals, and next steps, in terms of intervention support, if schools are not meeting those goals. For example, a first step might be more intensive intervention from district teacher leaders, and a second step might be a district-created plan for improved school implementation.

It is vital that this plan be publicly available, and include a mechanism for ongoing, active, two-way communication so stakeholders are informed and involved in the planning process. A recent guide from the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association states, “Teachers, principals, students, parents, and community leaders...need to know how learning will be evaluated... there is a need to be specific, using actual instructional modules and assessment tasks, in order to bring the standards to light.”³² A profile from the Council for Great City Schools highlighting best practices in communicating on the Common Core from across the country stated: “Communications needs to be a major part of any comprehensive plan to implement the CCSS.”³³ The district can leverage union materials (*see page 24*) and state materials (*see page 14*) to inform parent communication. The transparency of this plan is a key piece of its success. Just as the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is intended to be public so that the whole community can hold districts accountable for tax dollars, the Common Core implementation plan should be public so that the whole community can remain actively engaged.

MEASURING SUCCESS: The district-level goals should be integrated into the Local Control Accountability Plan and held accountable through the same LCAP process.

School-level plans should be publicly available so that parents and teachers can ensure the school is staying on track. The relevant school-level goals should also be integrated into administrator evaluations.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: A key piece of this plan needs to be a path toward integrating Common Core into teacher, administrator and local superintendent evaluations, as high-quality evaluations are critical for monitoring the effectiveness of any policy implementation.

The plan should err on the side of brevity and simplicity so that all stakeholders can engage in holding the plan accountable. (*For an example of an IC Map, see the appendix A, page 34.*)

This plan should be aligned to the statewide vision. However, if California does not choose to share and reimagine their statewide vision, districts can and should create clear visions independently.



FOCUS ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The district should leverage teachers as leaders by empowering them to lead professional development (PD) approved by the district, build out a database of resources and provide training around technology.

- The LAUSD School Board should pass a resolution demanding that Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) dollars or Common Core-focused LCFF dollars be used for Common Core-focused teacher leaders.
- The district administration will need to create the specific job description and evaluation, and develop the hiring process for bringing on these teacher leaders.

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: A study from Hanover Research on Common Core Professional Development best practices found that “teachers need ready access to one or more teacher leaders in their buildings who are broadly expert on Common Core State Standards and related curricula and assessments.”³⁴ In a district as large as LA Unified, building on-the-ground capacity and expertise is critical to ensuring schools are able to efficiently and effectively make the transition to Common Core.

Therefore, the district should hire a cadre of teacher leaders, across all subject areas and grade levels, and task each teacher leader with supporting a manageable cluster of schools. These leaders should be hired through a clear and transparent but rigorous application and interview process. These leaders should then be distributed across the district based on the Student Needs Index, the mechanism currently used to distribute LCFF dollars according to student need.³⁵ This will help ensure that our highest-need schools are receiving the most support, and naturally call for multiple teacher leaders in schools and feeder patterns³⁶ that need more intensive support. The application should be open to all teachers, but grounded in a multi-measure evaluation system.

The teacher leaders will be responsible for attending a summer institute to receive intensive training and alignment around common expectations for the role to enable these teacher leaders to create a learning community. In Tennessee, teacher leaders were required to attend a very similar summer learning intensive, and over 80 percent of attendees said the professional development would help them improve instruction. Tennessee now has over 750 teacher leaders who are leading Common Core implementation across the state.³⁷ In turn, 71 percent of Tennessee teachers said they had access to Common Core coaches, and 65 percent said the state’s Common Core plan had been clearly communicated.³⁸

During the school year, the district-based teacher leaders should create and present professional development modules on both instruction and technology to school-based teacher leaders (*see page 31 for more information on this position*), and coach them throughout the year on adapting to the needs of their local school site. For this reason, it is imperative that the district screen for previous experience in leadership roles at school sites as they select their cadre of leaders.

Teacher-led professional development has the potential to vastly improve the preparedness of teachers across the district to implement Common Core. In a recent study of the current state of CCSS implementation in California, teachers reported a lack of access to coaching support — “there are too few experienced coaches to go around.”³⁹ We also heard this theme emerge in our interviews with over 100 teachers, as teachers reported needing more immediate feedback and modeling of best practices. A cadre of central leaders can have a multiplicative effect, creating experts across many school sites at once and strengthening support for CCSS and sharing best practices across the district.

These teacher leaders can also contribute to, and encourage school-based teacher leaders to contribute to, a digital library of model lessons. Websites like AchievetheCore.org, BetterLesson.com and ShareMyLesson.com all provide excellent databases of lessons, but districts like Santa Ana Unified have also utilized their own teachers to build out helpful, localized databases.⁴⁰ LA Unified has the beginnings of such a database with MyPLN (My Professional Learning Network), but could improve usability and accessibility by making this an open platform. Users could provide ratings and reviews on content, providing crowdsourced vetting for materials and lesson plans. This could also be an excellent way for local charter networks and district schools to collaborate through sharing lessons on a common platform.

MEASURING SUCCESS: To measure implementation, the district should create and abide by a clear time frame for hiring and training teacher leaders.

To measure impact, as mentioned in previous Teacher Policy Team publications, these teacher leaders positions will need to have clear job descriptions and evaluations. The evaluations should include feedback from school-based leaders, and measures of student progress, as appropriate.

In addition, the district or smaller Educational Service Centers (ESCs) should schedule monthly meetings to reconvene and reflect on implementation effectiveness, conduct mid-year evaluations and continually support teacher leaders who work in schools with the most need. The retention and performance of these teacher leaders should then inform the evaluations of local superintendents to ensure robust accountability for implementation.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: We recognize that Common Core is still new for most teachers, so finding and defining “experts” can be difficult. In other districts and states, they have used a multi-measure evaluation system with more than two levels of effectiveness to seek out these teachers.⁴¹ As LAUSD pursues revisions to its evaluation system in the 2015-16 school year and beyond, the district should consider embedding greater teacher leadership roles for distinguished performance.

In some schools, there may not be the in-school capacity needed to support school-based teacher leaders, as laid out on page 31. In these cases, district-level teacher leaders should be assigned to schools on a 1:1 basis to provide more intensive support.

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Here are a few examples of models, partners and resources the district can look to in implementing Common Core:

- Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles Education Partnership
- LA’s Promise
- The Partnership for Los Angeles Schools
- Families in Schools
- Partnerships to Uplift Communities (PUC) Charter Schools

Parents recognize the problem

47%
of parents

agree or strongly agree that their school has access to the content, materials and technology needed to prepare students for college and 21st-century careers.

Teachers agree on a solution

90%
of teachers

agree or strongly agree that the district should train and leverage teacher leaders to lead professional development, including technology training.



THE ROLE OF THE UNION IN EDUCATION

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LARGE URBAN TEACHER'S UNION OFTEN INCLUDE...



- Supporting its members
- Negotiating contractual benefits
- Engaging in political and community affairs
- Being the voice of its members in media and the community

UNION RECOMMENDATIONS

THE PROBLEM

Individual teachers can be, and often are, the go-to source of information on education for parents and students. They tend to be more informed on education issues — in Education Next’s 2014 poll of over 5,000 respondents nationwide, 89 percent of teachers had heard of the Common Core, compared to just 49 percent of parents and 47 percent of the general public.⁴² Teachers are also highly trusted. A recent poll from PDK/Gallup shows that 64 percent of parents trust their students’ teachers⁴³ — in contrast, only eight percent of Americans trust Congress.⁴⁴ It seems only logical that the union representing these teachers should take on a leadership role in ensuring the transition to Common Core is smooth and efficient. Unfortunately, while our state union, the California Teachers Association (CTA), has been doing incredible work collaborating on professional development, our local union, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), has been largely silent on this critical topic, which is of great concern to its members.

OUR SOLUTION

Our union should advocate on behalf of high-quality implementation of Common Core at both the negotiating table and in the public discourse, taking into account the needs of both its members and their number one concern — students. Polling clearly shows that parents and the public need to see more proof that our union is truly advocating in the best interest of students. In a 2014 Pace/USC Rossier Poll, only 30.7 percent of respondents said that teachers unions had a “very” or “somewhat positive” impact on the quality of education in California public schools, compared to 49 percent who said the impact was “very” or “somewhat negative.”⁴⁵ A strong focus on Common Core would give our union a much-needed proof point of its student focus, and restore its position in the public dialogue as the trusted and respected voice on curriculum and education policy issues.

“Traditionally, the union has been there for us, the teachers. Being a leader on Common Core gives our union the opportunity to be there for students, by partnering with its members to improve student achievement.”

Adam Paskowitz,

Science and Engineering, Banning Academies of Creative and Innovative Sciences,
Los Angeles Unified

FOCUS ON VISION AND COMMUNICATION

The union should publicly support Common Core. It should then show this support by providing clear messaging and communication materials to its members. This will allow the union and its members to advocate for high-quality professional development, parent and family engagement and training, and additional dollars required for the implementation of Common Core.

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: The teachers union has the unique and important position of having a powerful voice and a conduit to communicate with both its members and the public. Individual classroom teachers are already taking on the work of communicating about the content of Common Core in parent conferences and conversations. But the union has the opportunity to support both its members and the students and families of LAUSD by providing training and materials on the purpose of Common Core.

UTLA has recently created positions called Chapter Parent Action Liaisons (CPALs), with the intent to have a CPAL at every school. Currently, the job description for CPALs is to inform parents on UTLA activities and share updates on bargaining or other relevant information.⁴⁶ While this information is important, CPALs should also be tasked with providing information to parents on the purpose of Common Core as well as materials to teachers on communicating Common Core to families and community. This will demonstrate UTLA's commitment to increasing achievement and reinforce the CPALs' position as a leader among both teachers and families. Of course, UTLA would need to integrate this training and guidance with the existing training provided for CPALs in order to ensure high-quality performance across school sites.

Fortunately, UTLA and CPALs have much information and many models to draw upon. For instance, a CPAL might download and print some of the information from the "Parents' Guide to Student Success" available on the California PTA website,⁴⁷ or the "Common Core 101" resources by the Alliance for Excellent Education,⁴⁸ and provide teachers with copies to hand out during parent conferences. During a back-to-school night, the CPAL might walk through this information with parents during a short presentation, and share the kinds of supports UTLA is advocating for to reach the important goals of Common Core. This sort of presentation has the potential

to simultaneously build community support for the union, while also forcing a clear line be drawn between union advocacy campaigns and student outcomes. The CPAL could also run a needs assessment at the school site to help plan out the parent workshop programming (*see page 30 for more information on parent workshops*). The needs assessment would ascertain the base level of knowledge among parents and staff, and get a sense from all stakeholders of the kinds of resources, information or training that is currently missing.

MEASURING SUCCESS: To measure impact on teachers, surveys should be administered at the end of each workshop or presentation to provide feedback on the performance of the CPALs.

To measure impact on parents, the union and district will need to collaborate on incorporating questions for parents into the School Experience Survey to get a sense of the baseline level of knowledge, so that CPALs can measure growth over time.

A central point person at UTLA should oversee CPALs, in order to periodically review feedback and make adjustments as needed.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: Given the number of languages spoken in LAUSD, CPALs will need to be at least conversant, if not fluent, in the language of the community surrounding the school.

Currently, the CPAL position is entirely voluntary. The union will need to use its budget to buy release time or provide an incentive so we attract high-quality candidates to fill these positions and recognize the immense work that goes into meaningful family outreach and engagement.

FOCUS ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The union should prioritize Common Core and student-focused negotiating. Specifically, it should prioritize teacher leadership roles focused on Common Core, and a balance of classroom and planning hours.

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: California has a long and proud history as one of the most labor-friendly states in the nation. But as mentioned, support for unions is falling. This may be in part because the public has a great regard for individual teachers, and the stances of the union do not always align with the views of its rank-and-file members. For example, while UTLA has remained largely silent on Common Core support, 81 percent of teacher union members we polled⁴⁹ agreed or strongly agreed that the union should provide resources to members to help articulate Common Core to parents, and 77 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the union should be advocating for additional summer planning time for Common Core. Clearly, its members do not want UTLA to remain silent.

In order to repair public trust, it is vital that the union draw clearer lines of connection between its bargaining positions, the true views of its members and benefits for students. To that end, the union should advocate for clear, incentivized leadership pathways that use the strengths and passions of accomplished teachers to improve Common Core instruction across their school site and across the district, and a better balance of classroom and planning hours in teacher schedules.

Here locally, teacher support for Common Core-focused teacher leadership positions is abundant. Of teachers polled, 88 percent support Common Core leadership positions at the school level, and 90 percent support them at the district level. This is a trend also seen nationwide; unions around the country have worked collaboratively with their districts to create such positions. For example, Baltimore City Schools and the Baltimore Teachers Union worked together on the Career Pathways Initiative, which provides additional responsibilities, opportunities and compensation for teachers who are rated highly on a multi-measure evaluation system.⁵⁰ These roles serve to both lift up excellent teachers and further the development of students, the school and the district as a whole.

LAUSD has money from the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grant to support these roles⁵¹ and the union could advocate

for working collaboratively with LAUSD to develop the selection and screening process. It could look to its affiliate, CTA, for a model. Recently, CTA has partnered with Stanford and the National Board Resource Center to train thousands of its members statewide in delivering high-quality professional development through a cohort model,⁵² similar to the district-level leaders proposed in this report (see page 20). These teachers are provided intensive training and are then tasked with passing the training on to their colleagues. These sorts of roles are a clear benefit for both the teachers that participate as well as their students and school community.

To complement these leadership roles, UTLA should prioritize a reduction in the ratio of classroom to planning hours, now that it has secured the class size caps that were a high priority for many years. While research is mixed on the effects of class size on student achievement,⁵³ the research is clear that additional collaboration and planning time benefits student outcomes.⁵⁴ In Finland, for example, actual in-classroom time for teachers ranges from four to five hours, and teachers spend the rest of their day collaborating, planning and learning from one another. Finland has also consistently outperformed the United States on international assessments.⁵⁵ Here in the United States, the Envision Schools in Oakland, California, provide an excellent example of what an emphasis on planning and collaboration time can look like, with three hours of on-site PD each week and a collaboration-focused schedule. This is also resulting in strong outcomes for students — 90 percent of Envision graduates attend college, compared with a national average of 60 percent.⁵⁶ In Rhode Island, the state department of education mandated that middle schools incorporate additional planning and collaboration time into the calendar by 2012, but gave individual schools full autonomy in creating those calendars.⁵⁷ Of course, increased planning time in a silo cannot affect change. Rather, these case studies show that increased planning time, coupled with other school-based supports and strategies, have the potential to be powerful levers for impact.



LEVERAGING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Here are a few examples of models, partners and resources the union can look to in communicating with parents and training its members:

- CADRE
- CalTURN
- EngageNY
- California Teachers Association (CTA)
- School-site parent committees and councils with strong participation

Parents and students recognize the problem

62%
of students

agree or strongly agree that they have access to assignments and content that uses the new standards.

48%
of parents

agree or strongly agree that the instruction at their child's school focuses on problem solving and critical thinking.

Unionized teachers agree on the solution

78%

agree or strongly agree that the union should prioritize additional collaboration time for Common Core implementation in contract negotiation.

79%

agree or strongly agree that the union should prioritize Common Core-focused leadership roles.

UTLA and LAUSD could take a similar approach and bargain around the total amount of added time, while giving schools flexibility to make a customized calendar that fits teacher and student needs. An increase in collaboration and professional development hours will of course require additional staffing, so the focus on hours over class size presents a win-win-win proposition — we see a clear, research-backed link to student outcomes, the district retains teachers and is able to utilize their expertise in leading professional development rather than hiring consultants, and the union receives a significant increase in membership.

MEASURING SUCCESS: With a clear job description and evaluation for these leadership positions, our district can begin to leverage leaders within our teaching corps to coach and support each other.

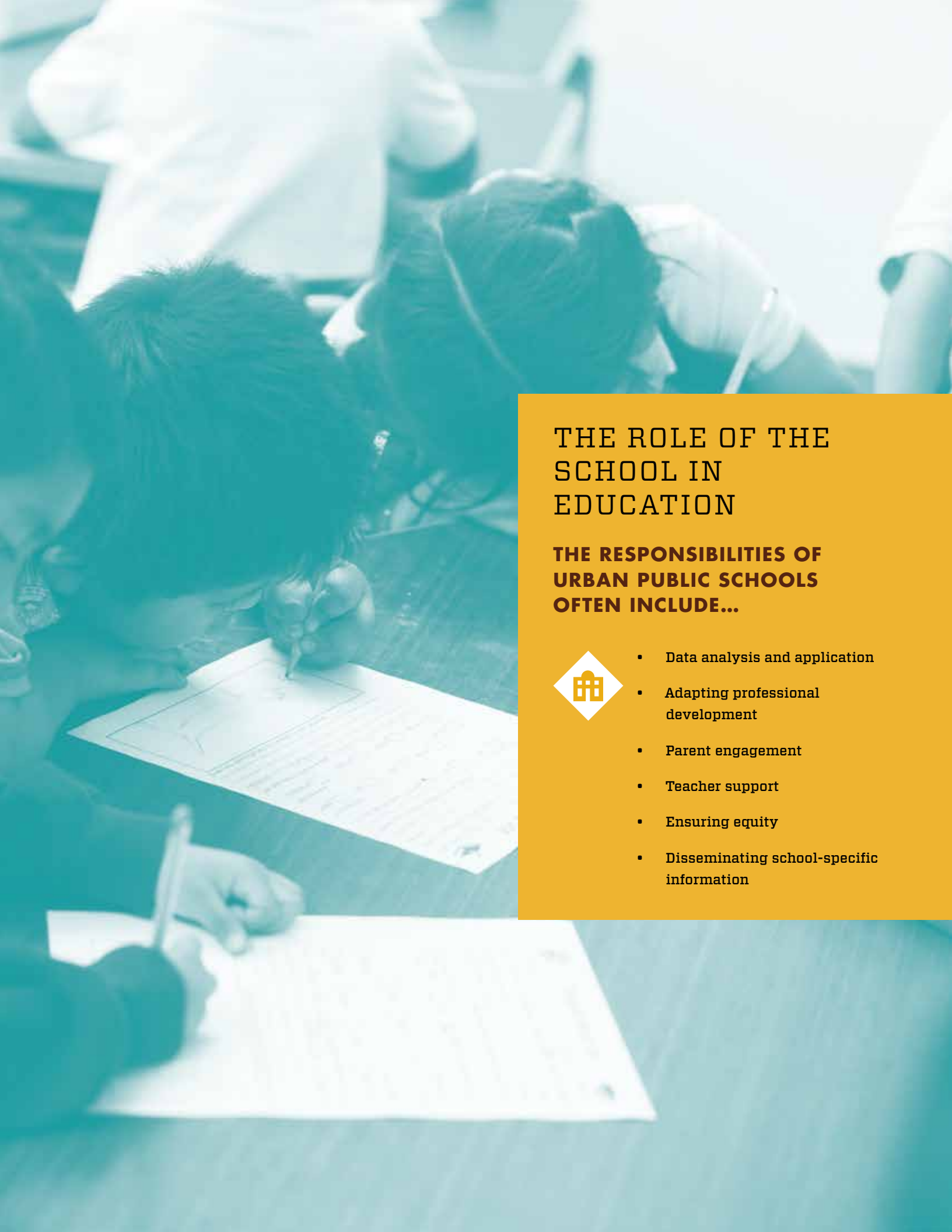
Over time, the district could look to the retention rates of the teacher leaders, as well as the retention and evaluation outcomes for the network of teachers those leaders support, to measure impact.

The efficacy of increasing planning hours should be evaluated by outside partners, such as our local universities, to continue building the body of research around the impact of collaboration on student outcomes.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: As the union has its own budget for professional development, UTLA could provide incentives for many of these teacher leadership activities, even without the collective bargaining process. For example, UTLA could support its National Board Certified Teachers in developing PD modules, or create its own local Instructional Leadership Corps, replicating the model CTA co-developed at the state level.

In addition to changes to the class schedule to encourage collaboration, the union could advocate for compensated summer planning time as a way to give teachers space to collaborate with minimal impact on already-tight school year calendars.





THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN EDUCATION

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFTEN INCLUDE...



- Data analysis and application
- Adapting professional development
- Parent engagement
- Teacher support
- Ensuring equity
- Disseminating school-specific information

SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

THE PROBLEM

In Los Angeles, the implementation of Common Core has largely been left to the school site. The challenge of this approach is ensuring equitable and high-quality support for all teachers and readiness for all students. But the opportunity is that parents and community have deep trust in their schools and teachers, though not always in larger bodies like districts, state and unions.⁵⁸ So schools and school leaders have the opportunity to build buy-in and truly make CCSS implementation a grassroots effort.

OUR SOLUTION

Our schools should utilize their proximity to both teachers and parents to build buy-in at the local level. Among parents, schools can provide parent workshops to share information and training that helps parents feel informed and empowered on a consistent basis. Among teachers, schools can create leadership roles that keep teachers in the classroom while giving them opportunities to truly own and shape the implementation of Common Core across the school. By aligning both the workshops and the teacher leadership roles and responsibilities with the state and district visions, schools can meet the minimum standards set out by the state and the district. At the same time, schools can leverage this strategy to serve as hubs of innovation, utilizing the unique talents of their teachers and community to meet and exceed those goals.

“All of the planning and support at the state, district and union level comes down to real execution at the school site. It’s a serious responsibility, but nothing could be more important for the growth and achievement of our students.”

Angela Palmieri,

Kindergarten Dual Immersion, John Muir Elementary, Glendale Unified

FOCUS ON TRANSPARENCY

Schools should engage local communities by offering family and community workshops on Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: As mentioned, we have much work to do in ensuring parents are informed about Common Core — even in our own poll of 150 parents, only 49 percent rated themselves as “familiar” or “very familiar” with Common Core. Given the immense impact parent and community involvement has on student achievement,⁵⁹ it is vital that our families are informed about Common Core so that they can be educated advocates for their children. School-based parent and community workshops will allow families to become acquainted with CCSS, experience CCSS lessons, monitor student progress data and provide valuable input.

The district can set the scope and sequence for the workshops. The content could include: explaining the basics of Common Core, reading and analyzing student- and school-level data, rethinking homework help, and communicating about the Common Core with others, utilizing the school’s CPAL (*see page 24*). This would ensure that schools are meeting common goals set by the district for parent workshops, while also meeting local needs that are specific to the school site.

The workshops can be led by school-based teacher leaders (*see page 31*) or parent liaisons. Models of this have been created all over Los Angeles, and all over the country. Here locally, the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools has a teacher-led Parent College to help parents in navigating the educational system and supporting their children.⁶⁰ And in New York, the Common Core website, EngageNY, has a toolkit for creating a parent workshop, which can then be customized by teachers or school leaders in local schools or districts.⁶¹

In order to minimize the burden on working parents’ time and teachers’ schedules, schools can leverage meetings already in place, such as PTA meetings, back-to-school nights, school site committees or LCAP committees.

MEASURING SUCCESS: The district or charter network should provide a standardized needs assessment tool that schools should then use to set a baseline of how familiar and comfortable families are with CCSS. These questions could be integrated into the School Experience Survey or other equivalent surveys to improve response rates.

In order to get a useful and representative sample size, the district should set a minimum bar for survey completion and tie that goal to administrator evaluations. This would incentivize improving outreach efforts to families used to gather important data about their needs and perceptions.

If a school is failing to offer high-quality parent workshops (as measured by surveys), the district teacher leaders should intervene to provide support to improve quality and engagement.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: Many parents do not engage in large part because the dates, times and options for engagement conflict with their work. The needs assessment is a vital first step at every school to learn both the background knowledge of families as well as the best ways to access them prior to planning programming.

All materials and workshops will need to be offered in the language of the families at the school site. In Los Angeles, over 90 percent of our English Language Learners speak Spanish, but in total, 96 languages are represented across the district.⁶² Fortunately, the district has a robust translation services branch that schools can utilize. For schools with unique translation needs, the school or district can partner with community organizations that have expertise in multi-lingual family engagement.

Often parent engagement is left to volunteers who already take on many other roles. Looking at models like the Parent College in the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools or the Parent Academy in Kent, Washington,⁶³ we believe we need to provide structure and incentives for the leaders of parent workshops to attract high-quality talent.

FOCUS ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Schools should leverage teachers as leaders by empowering them to analyze student data, adjust the local implementation plan, provide professional development (PD) and adapt curricular and instructional materials.

WHAT THIS TOOL DOES: In our interviews with over 100 teachers across Los Angeles, a common theme emerged that teacher expertise is often not fully leveraged in Common Core implementation.⁶⁴ This resonates with studies showing frustration over lack of teacher voice in decision-making as a key cause of teacher turnover.⁶⁵

Leveraging teachers as leaders at the school site helps to answer this problem by empowering great teachers with additional authority and responsibility, while also capitalizing on their knowledge and skills to spread their expertise and impact to more students.

While the district-level leaders (*see page 20*) would go through a broader application and interview process, school-level leaders should be selected by administrators based on a multi-measure evaluation system. These leaders would be responsible for analyzing school-level data, together with administrators, to determine what professional development (PD) is needed.

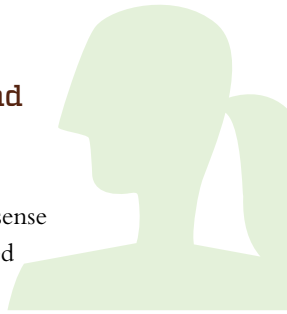
They would also provide additional coaching and support to teachers and make recommendations about adjustments to the implementation plan. For example, if the school-level leaders at an elementary school find that students continue

to lack a deep and thorough understanding of number sense and place value, they might determine that teachers need extra PD on the Common Core Math Practices.

These kinds of roles actually already exist within LAUSD itself, in many teacher-led “pilot” schools. For example, the Social Justice Humanitas Academy has a teacher-driven curriculum development and data analysis process that allows individual teachers to directly influence the school’s budgetary decisions.⁶⁶ This teacher empowerment works in concert with other important school policies and practices and is showing clear benefits for students, with a high school graduation over 90 percent.⁶⁷

Given the amount of work these roles would entail, schools should have flexibility to make them hybrid roles (roles that are part in the classroom and part out of the classroom) or simply additional roles taken on by full-time teachers.

The number and distribution of these leaders would need to vary by school, as determined by the leadership team. For instance, a large comprehensive high school may need two or three teacher leaders per department, while a small pilot elementary school may only need two for the entire school. Regardless, the school will need to select a single



Parents recognize the problem

22%

of parents agree or strongly agree that they understand why, how and on what timeline their school is implementing the new standards.

of teachers

91%

agree or strongly agree that schools should provide training for parents and to understand the Common Core and ways to support the implementation.

84%

agree or strongly agree that schools should provide training around reading and analyzing student progress data from Common Core-aligned assessments.

Teachers agree on the solution

Parents and students identify the problem

48%
of parents

60%
of students

agree or strongly agree that Common Core instruction is focused on complex problem-solving and critical thinking.

Teachers agree on the solution

88%
of teachers

agree or strongly agree that schools should create teacher leadership roles that ensure schools are analyzing data, adapting and delivering professional development.

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Here are a few examples of models, partners and resources schools can look to in implementing Common Core:

- Youth Policy Institute
- Charter Networks such as Partnerships to Uplift Communities (PUC) Charter Schools, Ingenium Charter Schools, Green Dot Public Schools or Alliance Charter Network
- School site parent committees and councils

point person to oversee the teacher leaders and conduct their evaluations. This role may be served by the principal, an academic dean or a district leader if the school does not have sufficient capacity.

It is vital that these school-level leaders work in conjunction with district-level leaders, receiving support and intervention as needed. This will ensure that local autonomy is not impacting district-wide equity in terms of implementation, and that these local leaders are not being overly burdened or undersupported.

MEASURING SUCCESS: As stated for the district-level roles, and in previous E4E Teacher Policy Team publications, a clear job description and evaluation for these leadership roles allows schools to ensure that promotion decisions are based on a teacher's desire to lead and track record of successful teaching.

The role should only be open to those teachers rated "effective" or higher on a multi-measure evaluation system, and should come with additional compensation to reflect the additional work these teachers will take on.

The dollars for this additional compensation should come from the school-controlled portion of the LCFF budget so that schools get the full autonomy to create the number and distribution of teacher leaders needed at their site. Evaluation for the role should include surveys from teachers at the school site to ensure PD is high quality, as well as measures of student progress, as appropriate.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: Schools need not wait for the district to create school-level leadership roles. Teachers can also do this work without district support, though the work will be more consistent and equitable with the cadre of district leaders mentioned on page 20.

In Los Angeles Unified, a group of 37 schools already received additional dollars for teacher leadership roles and support through the Reed Settlement agreement, which came as a result of a lawsuit that alleged the teacher turnover at high-poverty schools were disproportionately harming students of color and students living in poverty.⁶⁸ These schools could also be used as pilot sites for Common Core-focused teacher leadership positions, which would help inform best practices before a full district roll-out. In fact, many schools that are part of the Partnership for Los Angeles schools are already instituting Common Core leads that are very similar to these positions.⁶⁹ The district can study the impact of these roles and consider scaling this opportunity for all schools.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned throughout this paper, we recognize that we are raising the standards for teaching and learning and thus the stakes for our students and our profession. Any bold change requires great courage to not just begin a transformation, but truly stay the course toward ongoing growth and improvement in our public schools. Our students show us this courage each day as they learn brand new ideas and solve new problems, become the first in their families to go to college, and eventually step into new seats of career leadership and community influence. Our finest teachers show us this courage each day as they take on hard-to-staff classrooms and help students leap two grade levels in a year.

Though tough, change is possible. But teachers, students and parents simply can't make this shift alone. In this moment, we need our state, district, union, administrators and community to have courage along with us. Together, we can create a new generation of schools that offer the kind of deeper learning needed to access colleges, careers and — most importantly — the deepest potential of our students' minds.

APPENDIX A: KENTUCKY'S INNOVATION CONFIGURATION MAP

LEVEL 1

- Develops capacity of administrators and teachers to use CHETL resources as a common reference for established criteria about effective teaching and learning in every classroom.
- Gathers evidence monthly (e.g., staff professional learning, walk-throughs, looking at student data) to assess schools' progress toward full implementation of KCAS and identified student learning goals.
- Provides constructive feedback on KCAS implementation and progress toward student learning goals in a variety of formats (i.e., face-to-face, walk-through results, conferences, webinars, etc.).
- Develops with school leaders job-embedded strategies (e.g., PLCs, peer observations and feedback, protocols, coaching), expected outcomes, and timeline for improvement.
- Provides differentiated support to address barriers and problems related to implementation.
- Engages in monthly assessment of districtwide progress toward full KCAS implementation.
- Designs and provides districtwide interventions based on assessment data to accelerate implementation.

LEVEL 2

- Develops capacity of administrators and teachers to use CHETL resources as a common reference for established criteria about effective teaching and learning in every classroom.
- Gathers evidence quarterly (e.g., staff professional learning, walk-throughs, looking at student data) to assess schools' progress toward full implementation of KCAS and identified goals for student learning.
- Provides constructive feedback on KCAS implementation and progress toward student learning goals in a variety of formats (i.e., face-to-face, walk-through results, conferences, webinars, etc.).
- Develops with school leaders job-embedded strategies (e.g., PLCs peer observations and feedback, coaching), expected outcomes, and timeline for improvement.
- Provides differentiated support to address barriers and problems related to implementation.
- Engages in quarterly assessment of districtwide progress toward full KCAS implementation.
- Designs and provides districtwide interventions based on assessment to accelerate implementation.

LEVEL 3

- Develops capacity of administrators and teachers to use CHETL resources as a common reference for established criteria about effective teaching and learning in every classroom.
- Gathers semi-annual evidence (e.g., staff training, walk-throughs, looking at data) to assess schools' progress toward full implementation of KCAS and identified student learning goals.
- Provides feedback on KCAS implementation and progress toward student learning goals.
- Develops with school leaders job-embedded observations and feedback, coaching), expected outcomes, and timeline for improvement.
- Engages in semi-annual assessment of districtwide progress toward full KCAS implementation.
- Designs and provides districtwide interventions based on assessment to accelerate implementation.

CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF / CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING (CHETL)

Designs and implements a system for monitoring progress, providing feedback, and differentiating support for implementation of KCAS.

LEVEL 4

- Disseminates CHETL resources to administrators and teachers.
- Gathers annual evidence to assess schools' progress toward implementation of KCAS and identified goals for student learning.
- Engages in annual assessment of districtwide progress toward KCAS implementation.
- Provides districtwide professional learning on KCAS.

LEVEL 5

- Distributes CHETL resources to administrators and teachers.
- Engages in annual assessment of districtwide progress toward KCAS implementation.

LEVEL 6

- Fails to monitor implementation of KCAS to improve student performance.

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IDENTIFYING E4E'S POLICY FOCUS

E4E held more than 25 focus groups with roughly 220 teachers who serve our district schools and polled over 350 E4E members to identify the most important and impactful policy issues. Common Core implementation emerged as one of the most important and impactful issues in our polling.

REVIEWING RESEARCH

We met for eight weeks to review research on different national attempts to improving Common Core implementation as well as local strategies being proposed or piloted by LA's Promise, LAUSD, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, Youth Policy Institute and local charter networks. Additionally, we hosted conversations with leaders from Ed Trust West, the Los Angeles Education Partnership, the Office of State Senator Carol Liu, the Stanford Center on Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) and other local and national experts.

CONDUCTING LOCAL RESEARCH

Our Teacher Policy Team conducted over 150 peer and administrator interviews, and interviewed dozens of our students, to gather critical stakeholder feedback. We also conducted a survey of over 350 E4E-Los Angeles members and non-members to understand the most essential strategies for improving Common Core implementation. The polling data pushed our Teacher Policy Team to revise and rework policy recommendations to meet key needs and concerns among our peers. Finally, we surveyed 150 parents and 497 middle school and high school students to ensure we were addressing the needs of our most important constituents.

THE 2015 EDUCATORS 4 EXCELLENCE- LOS ANGELES TEACHER POLICY TEAM ON COMMON CORE IMPLEMENTATION

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This report, graphics and figures were designed by Kristin Girvin Redman, Tracy Harris and Tessa Gibbs at Cricket Design Works in Madison, Wisconsin.

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For far too long, education policy has been created without a critical voice at the table — the voice of classroom teachers.

Educators 4 Excellence (E4E), a teacher-led organization, is changing this dynamic by placing the voices of teachers at the forefront of the conversations that shape our classrooms and careers.

E4E has a quickly growing national network of educators united by our Declaration of Teachers' Principles and Beliefs. E4E members can learn about education policy and research, network with like-minded peers and policymakers, and take action by advocating for teacher-created policies that lift student achievement and the teaching profession.

Learn more at Educators4Excellence.org.

