

What and Why: Introducing California's New Accountability and Continuous Improvement System

California is making a series of major shifts in public education with one overriding goal: To improve learning so all students can be successful in school, college, work and life. We are raising academic standards, empowering local school communities, renewing our commitment to equity and changing the way we evaluate and support schools. The California School Dashboard, the Local Control and Accountability Plan and the California Statewide System of Support are key features of this effort. Together, these changes are transforming California's public schools.

Multiple Measures

WHAT: The Dashboard shows how well all students within a district or school are performing on a variety of indicators, including test scores, graduation rates, suspension rates, English learner progress and college/career readiness. The indicators are color-coded – blue is the highest rating and red is the lowest.

WHY: In the past, test scores were often the only measure of student success. But students are more than test scores. Looking at more data – and more meaningful information -- helps more precisely identify a district or school's strengths and weaknesses and highlights performance gaps between groups of learners.

Focus on Equity

WHAT: The Dashboard's Equity Report shows – at a glance – how student groups are performing on various measures. Student groups include ethnic and racial groups, low-income students, English learners, foster youth and students with special needs.

WHY: The Dashboard makes inequities impossible to ignore and helps communities align resources to improving student group performance through the Local Control and Accountability Plan process.

Supporting Local Decision-Making

WHAT: The Dashboard supports California's groundbreaking Local Control Funding Formula, which gives districts and schools more flexibility in using state resources and provides extra funding to districts and schools serving students needing extra help.

WHY: Local education communities know best how to address local needs. Top-down approaches of the past haven't worked because California is too big and too diverse for one-size-fits-all approaches to district and school improvement.

Continuous Improvement

WHAT: The new California Statewide System of Support – which begins this school year – includes three levels of assistance to districts: **Level 1** is support for all districts. The support includes workshops for teachers, classroom coaches and sharing of “best practices” proven to help accelerate student learning. **Level 2** is support to districts and schools struggling to lift up the performance of one or more student groups. Together with partners, these districts will examine the factors behind low performance and develop strategies for improving classroom learning. **Level 3** is state intervention for districts that fail to improve student group performance in three out of four years.

WHY: Working collaboratively with districts to provide support and assistance will ensure that struggling districts get the services they need to better serve all of their students so they graduate prepared with the skills to succeed in college, work and life.