

Full and Fair School Funding

Our students and communities thrive only when all schools have enough resources **and** those resources are distributed equitably.

But too often, students are not given access to high-quality education opportunities. In California, some students have access to experienced teachers, the latest technology and curriculum, and modern facilities—while other students have no qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, outdated textbooks and unsafe school buildings. This deepens societal inequities and undermines our shared future.

For students to have equal opportunities to learn and thrive, they must have access to the necessary resources and support to make every student feel like they are seen and heard. More resources means more funding for teachers and counselors, arts and wellness programs, and up-to-date learning tools—**equitable operational funding**. It also means clean, safe, and modern facilities, including spaces that provide opportunities for health, curiosity, and art—**equitable capital funding**. We have the power to upend generations of inequity that have been built into our education system.

That's why Public Advocates works for:

- **More school funding** for high needs students and lower-wealth districts
- **Ensuring spending in every school district meets the needs** of their most impacted students
- **Creating transparency and accountability** tool regarding school funding
- **Partnership among students, families, educators and community** to make spending decisions

Our Work to Push for More Funding and Resources

California's School Funding History

For many years, California set the gold standard for education with its strong investments in public schools and universities. In 1977, California ranked 8th in the country in per-pupil spending based on enrollment. However, as the state's population became more diverse and as limitations on state property taxes took hold from [Proposition 13](#), California divested heavily from its public schools. By 2010, California had fallen to 49th place in per-pupil funding, going from one of the first in the nation to one of the worst.

After decades of organizing, litigation, and advocacy, the education justice movement won significant gains in school funding. However, California's education spending is still significantly below the national average and has not yet adequately met the needs of our students.

Throughout our history, Public Advocates has continued to work closely with students, families, and educators to increase funding for public education in California and to ensure that the needs of low-income and/or BIPOC students are being met equitably.

Learn more about California's school funding history:

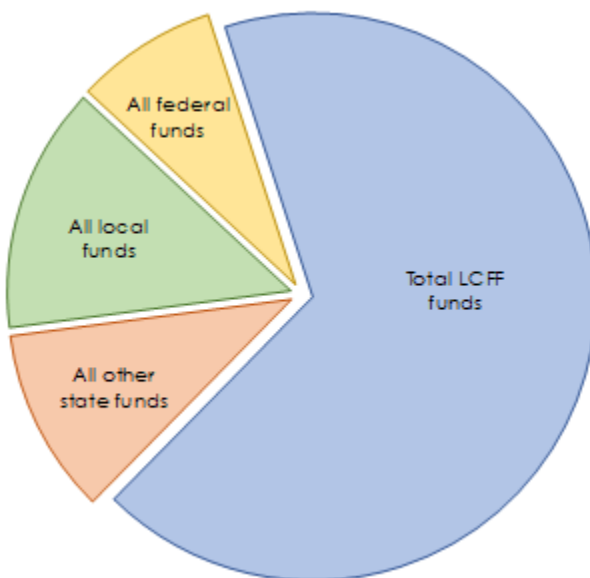
[The California Way: The Golden State's Quest to Build an Equitable and Excellent Education System](#)

[Prop 13 and Prop 98: Initiatives that shaped California's education system](#)

[Every School, Every Community: Funding the Future of Learning](#)

Distributing School Operational Funds—Equitably—Through the Local Control Funding Formula

California's public schools are funded through a mix of state, federal, and local funding. Public Advocates focuses primarily on the largest state funding source, the [Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\)](#), and other state sources.



[Alt text: Pie chart showing a sample school district budget. The largest slice is labeled "LCFF funds," and takes up more than half of the pie. The other three slices are smaller and are labeled "all other state funds," "all local funds," and "all federal funds."]

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is California's main funding system for kindergarten through 12th grade education. The landmark legislation is built upon three principles:

1. **Equity:** Providing more funding for the students who need it most (students who are low-income, English Learners, or foster youth)
2. **Whole-child view of student success:** Shifting the definition of student success from test scores to whole child wellness and achievement
3. **Meaningful engagement:** Making local spending decisions in partnership with students, families, educators, and other community members, which requires transparency and accountability.

[[Button to LCFF campaign page](#): Learn more about LCFF]

Operational Funding Transparency to Students, Parents, Educators, and the Community-at-Large Through the Local Control Accountability Plan

School districts have flexibility to decide how they are going to spend their Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funds to close achievement gaps—though it must be done strategically and equitably. To track whether school districts' spending decisions are aligned with LCFF's core principles of equity, whole-child view of student success, and meaningful engagement, each school district is required annually to collaborate with their community to create a strategic action and spending plan called the **Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)**.

[[Button to LCAP page](#): Learn more about LCAP]

Ensuring Low-Wealth Communities Also Have the Capital Funding Needed to Address Historic Disinvestment

Studies show that school facilities impact student engagement, learning, school climate, and health. School modernization needs, such as updating HVAC systems, repairing leaking roofs, upgrading electrical systems, and replacing old portables are considerable across the state. School facility modernization needs disproportionately impact low-income communities of color who historically have had less resources to modernize their facilities and, as such, often disproportionately experience greater levels of disrepair.

[Button to [School Facility Bond campaign page](#)]