February 11, 2014

To All Members of the San Rafael City Schools Community:

Ever since Governor Brown signed the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) into law on July 1, changing the rules on how state money is allocated to school districts and how districts can spend those funds, there has been significant conversation and chatter moving through our school community about California’s new formula and how it will impact San Rafael City Schools. This shift impacts all 1,000 public school districts in California.

The LCFF represents the most historic shift in how California funds public schools in over 40 years. This major restructuring of the state’s school finance allocation methodology is based on the importance of local decision-making, equity, accountability and transparency.

Making It Local

Beginning with our strategic plan, “Roadmap to the Future”, San Rafael City Schools we have been focused on improving student outcomes, closing achievement gaps and ensuring transparency, while engaging our staff, students, families and members of our community. These are all key components of both the LCFF and the LCAP.

The state’s shift away from state categorical funding (restricted funds for specific purposes) will require that districts be strategic in their spending and instructional program delivery, in ways that have not considered before. To achieve the goals the state has outlined will require that districts collaborate with key stakeholders of the district, parents, teachers, principals, other school personnel and administrators, community groups and students themselves.

How Funding Changes - Local Control Funding Formula

Today in California, more than 1 in 5 children in live in poverty and 25% of California’s K-12 students are English learners. In San Rafael City Schools over 50% of students live in poverty with more than 40% of students being English Learners.

In California and in San Rafael City Schools, poor students, Latinos, and English learners are over-represented among students scoring at the lowest levels and under-represented among the highest scoring. These achievement gaps between poor and non-poor and among various ethnic groups have over several decades been the catalyst for many laws and education reforms.

School districts have long been asking the state for local flexibility in how funds are used to support students in their districts. When the Local Control Funding Formula is fully implemented (estimated 7 years) most education funds are expected to be based on specific student needs and will allow maximum flexibility at the local school district level.

LCFF provides supplemental funding and concentration grants for the state’s most vulnerable students – specifically low-income, English language learners, and foster youth. These funds come to the district and not the local school site. It is the district's responsibility to develop an action plan and budget based on the needs of all students, with an intentional focus on increasing or improving services for high needs students. The district must demonstrate improved student outcomes based on identified annual goals, and aligned with the 8 state priorities.

LCFF is designed to provide public school districts with:
- Local flexibility to meet student needs.
- Increased funding transparency.
- Clarity on how funding is used locally that significantly impacts student achievement for those students in the district that have been historically underserved.
- Explicit requirements to engage and involve parents, families, and community in helping to guide and shape how schools and districts expend state funds.

**How Will State Education Funds Be Allocated?**
- Most of the state funds will consist of a base grant that districts will receive for every student in attendance.
- The base grants will be adjusted upward each year to reflect cost-of-living increases.
- Districts will also receive a supplemental grant based on the number of high-needs students in the district.
- Districts with more than 55% high-needs students. *(i.e. San Rafael City Elementary School District)* will additional funds through what are called concentration grants.
- Full funding is expected to occur in 2021-2022.

**Developing & Designing a Plan That Meets Student Needs - Local Control Accountability Plan**
The State requires that all California school districts engage parents, educators, employees, and the community to establish a **Local Accountability Plan**. In these plans, districts will describe their overall vision for students, outline their annual goals and enumerate the specific actions they will take to achieve their goals. Part of this includes a financial accounting for the use of the budget as well annual assessments that measure how well the strategies in the plan were able to improve student outcomes.

**What Does The State Require To Be Included In These Plans?**
School districts are responsible for developing goals and actions in eight priority areas defined by the state:

1. **Williams Act** – Providing credentialed teachers, instructional materials that align with state standards, and safe facilities for all students.
2. **Academic Content and Performance Standards** – Implementing California’s Common Core State Standards.
3. **Parental Involvement** – Involving parents in their student’s educational programs and in the decision-making process of the district.
4. **Pupil Achievement** — Improving student outcomes and increasing college and career readiness.
5. **Pupil Engagement** — Supporting students in consistent school attendance.
6. **School Climate** – Nurturing students in a healthy school environment where they feel safe.
7. **Access and enrollment** — Ensuring access for all students to classes that prepare them for the future.
8. **Pupil Outcomes** – Measuring student progress and outcomes to guide the teaching process.

**When Will San Rafael City Schools Start Developing These Plans?**
The District began the planning process after the regulations and template were approved by the State Board of Education on January 16, 2014. We are currently initiating the collection of information, data and evidence that will be needed to identify the District’s highest priority needs based on current and historic levels of student achievement.

- **Step 1 - Data Teams & Needs Assessment** - Prior to developing a draft accountability plan, the District must complete a comprehensive Needs Assessment to determine the district’s highest priority needs based on the provisions of the Eight State Priority Outcomes.

We have initially established three representative data teams to initially review all relevant data and information to inform the initial development, so that this evidence can be used to draft the initial Accountability Plan for the period 2014 -2015 through 2017-2018. All 8 State Priority Outcomes must be addressed in this 3-year period.
The District’s 3-Year Accountability Plan must be developed based on the student needs identified in the review of the data and other objective evidence about student performance levels in the District. This data identifies the baseline for each of the 8 State priorities. Based on this information and the input received from the community, a draft accountability plan will be developed based on the level of funding available.

- **Step 2 – Develop Draft Accountability Plan Based on High Priority Needs** - Recommended priorities and draft actions must meet the components of the eight state priorities, must be affordable, and must be based on objective evidence determined by the district.

- **Step 3 – Community Engagement, Feedback & Input**
  The draft Accountability Plan must be presented to the greater school community, ensuring the involvement of a broad group of stakeholders including teachers, site and district administrators, parents and support staff. The District must collect community input, suggestions and recommendations from these stakeholder groups prior to presenting the draft plan to the Board of Education for consideration.

**Opportunities for Community Involvement & Engagement**
Over the next several weeks and months, we will be scheduling a range of opportunities to purposely engage our entire community in the discussion about how to improve outcomes for every student. Stakeholder involvement and input is a mandate component of the development of the accountability plan. The plan is to be based on the needs assessment review, with the recommended actions and budget aligned to the identified needs.

During this transition, San Rafael City Schools will provide on-going information and updates, outlining the results of the Needs Assessment, the identification of local priorities, and the recommended actions being considered for inclusion in the accountability plan. The draft plan must be linked directly to identified needs, including how performance gains will be measured that demonstrate the district’s progress towards specific goals and outcomes.

We will seek the direct input and feedback from our greater community. The state’s emergency regulations require that districts present the draft plan and collect direct input and feedback from specific populations in our community that represent those groups listed in the LCFF. Our existing District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), our Family Engagement Task Force, and for families who have children with an Individualized Education Plan, are all specific sub-groups we will specifically collect input from.

Information will be regularly shared at site and department staff meetings, as well as other public meetings. We will also distribute regular updates via school to home communications, bulletins and newsletters. In addition, we have developed a specific district website focused solely on LCFF and LCAP. You can check out this developing resource at [https://srcs-ca.schoolloop.com/LocalControl](https://srcs-ca.schoolloop.com/LocalControl)

**Creating Opportunities for Community Input & Engagement**
The District is finalizing our initial calendar of Community Meetings, encouraging participation by all stakeholder groups in the district. We will be seeking input and feedback specific to the draft elementary and high school accountability plans. A master calendar of dates, times and locations will be posted no later than Friday, February 14, 2014. Regular announcements and reminders will be pushed out to all members of our staff, to all school sites and departments, and to all segments of our school community.

If you have additional ideas, questions, or suggestions, please don’t hesitate to contact me directly.

*Sincerely,*

*Mike*

Michael Watenpaugh, Ed.D.
Superintendent

*cc: Board of Trustees*