

Communicating the California School Dashboard: Key Points

California is field testing a new website designed to help communities across the state access important information about K-12 districts and schools. Called the California School Dashboard (<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/>), the site features easy-to-read reports on multiple measures of school success, including test scores, graduation rates, English learner progress and suspension rates. The Dashboard is part of California's new school accountability system based on 2013's Local Control Funding Formula. It is the next step in a series of major shifts in public education that have raised the bar for student learning, transformed testing and placed the focus on equity for all students.

More Than a Number

- California's future success depends on tapping into the potential of all students -- no matter where they live -- so they graduate ready for college, careers and life.
- That's why California is leading the nation in developing a system for evaluating schools and districts that includes multiple measures of student success, including test scores, high school graduation rates, college and career readiness indicators, English learner progress and suspension rates.
- The California School Dashboard aims to synthesize and make accessible a wealth of state and local data to help schools achieve better outcomes for California's students.
- In the past, accountability systems for schools and districts relied solely on test scores. But one test taken on one particular day doesn't provide a complete picture of all the ways schools are helping students succeed.
- Think of it this way: You can't drive a car by only watching the speedometer. You must also keep your eye on the road, check the mirrors, monitor the gas tank and pay attention if the engine light comes on.
- In the same way, the Dashboard's multiple indicators give a fuller picture of a school's progress. The Dashboard also reports on growth to show a school's trajectory over time.
- Looking at different forms of data provides different information to help parents and educators understand all the ways schools and districts keep students on track for success.

Focus on Equity – Success for Every Student

- Equity is at the heart of the new accountability system and equity indicators are up front and center on the Dashboard.
- Under the previous system, data about student group performance was limited to test scores only.
- The new system provides information on graduation rates, test scores, suspension data and English learner progress disaggregated by student group.
- Highlighting disparities among student groups will help parents, educators and community members pinpoint specific areas in need of targeted assistance.
- Student group performance and progress also will be used to identify schools and districts needing additional assistance from the state.

- The California School Dashboard will help ensure that schools keep their promise to the community to improve learning for all students.

Supporting Local Decision-Making

- The Dashboard is part of California's landmark Local Control Funding Formula, which gives districts and schools more flexibility in using state and local resources in exchange for greater accountability.
- Through the Dashboard, districts and schools have access to the information they need to make the best local decisions about the education of children.
- The Dashboard will help schools and districts align resources to student outcomes through Local Control and Accountability Plans.
- Schools that do not improve over time will be identified as eligible for assistance.
- Those that are excelling can assist others by sharing their methods and practices.

A First Step

- This field test of the California School Dashboard is intended as an early model ("beta") of the accountability system that will be fully implemented after feedback and adjustments.
- Metrics will be added over time as data is collected.
- As with any trial run of a new system, there may be hiccups as unanticipated issues arise.
- The state will be working with districts and schools to gather feedback and make adjustments for the full implementation in the fall of 2017.
- The field test prior to implementation in 2017-18 will provide helpful feedback and allow time to solve glitches.

Celebrating Successes, Focusing on Challenges

- It will take time and a continued focus on improvement to fully implement all the exciting changes underway in California's public schools.
- These changes are moving schools in the right direction toward ensuring that every student at every school graduates prepared for college, career and life.
- By using the California School Dashboard to develop Local Control and Accountability Plans, schools and districts will be focusing on the alignment of resources to student groups that may need extra support.
- The goal of the state is to assist and support schools and districts so they can to address their challenges.
- Local challenges are best addressed at the local level, but and it will take time and understanding to build capacity to thrive.