

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Darshana R. Patel, Chair
AB 2496 (Solache) – As Amended March 19, 2026

SUBJECT: Local educational agencies: reports: school accountability report card: California School Dashboard: local control accountability plan: local control funding formula budget overview

SUMMARY: Removes the local educational agency (LEA) responsibility to produce a School Accountability Report Card (SARC) on an annual basis and removes the state's role in supporting the LEAs for this purpose. Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to maintain an archive of historical SARC data and develop a crosswalk identifying where that information can be accessed going forward. Removes the requirement for the midyear update to the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) budget overview for parents. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Removes a requirement for the governing board of each school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be implemented for each school in the school district a SARC. Removes a requirement for the governing board of each school district annually to issue a SARC for each school in the school district, publicize those reports, and notify parents or guardians of pupils that a hard copy will be provided upon request. Removes a requirement for each school district to make hard copies of its annually updated report card available, upon request, on or before February 1 of each year.
- 2) Requires the CDE to maintain a website that includes a history of the SARC, including a crosswalk that indicates where information comparable to what was required to be included in the SARC may be found on the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), the CDE's DataQuest website, or any other internet webpage or system managed by the CDE.
- 3) Requires, if the CDE determines that comparable information related to California's state priorities is not readily available or cannot be made readily available within the CDE's DataQuest website or any other webpage or system managed by the CDE, the CDE to notify the State Board of Education (SBE), which may consider it for inclusion in the Dashboard.
- 4) States that the Dashboard is the SARC for the purposes of the California Constitution, as established by Proposition 98 (1988). Requires a school district to publicize the Dashboard and notify parents or guardians of pupils when the Dashboard is released annually.
- 5) Requires county superintendents of schools to prioritize schools for visits pursuant to the *Williams* settlement to include the accuracy of data on the Dashboard, rather than the SARC.
- 6) Removes the SARC as a component of the verification required in a financial and compliance audit.
- 7) Removes the requirement for each school to report on the status of the school safety plan, including a description of its key elements, in the annual SARC.

- 8) Requires the SARC to provide data by which a parent can make meaningful comparisons between public schools that will enable him or her to make informed decisions on the school in which to enroll his or her children.
- 9) Removes the requirement for school districts to be reimbursed for creating SARCs, only if the information provided in the SARC is accurate, if the Commission on State Mandates finds a school district is eligible for a reimbursement of costs incurred complying with the SARC.
- 10) Removes a requirement for the CDE to develop and recommend for adoption by the SBE a standardized template intended to simplify the process for completing the SARC and make the SARC more meaningful to the public by July 1, 2006.
- 11) Removes an authorization for the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to recommend additional data elements for inclusion in the Academic Performance Index (API).
- 12) Removes a requirement for the results of the physical fitness testing of students to be included in the SARC.
- 13) Removes a requirement for each school district that is connected to the internet to make the information contained in the SARC accessible on the internet. Removes a requirement for the SARC information to be updated annually. Removes a requirement, commencing with the 2008–09 school year, that each school district connected to the internet to make its annually updated report card available on the Internet on or before February 1 of each year. Removes a requirement for each school district not connected to the Internet to make hard copies of its annually updated SARC available on or before February 1 of each year.
- 14) Requires, commencing with the 2026–27 audit of LEAs, each county superintendent of schools to include in the review of audit exceptions those audit exceptions related to use of instructional materials program funds and teacher misassignments, and to determine whether the exceptions are either corrected or an acceptable plan of correction has been developed.
- 15) Removes a requirement for the SPI to determine the statewide average percentage of school district expenditures that are allocated to the salaries of administrative personnel to be provided annually to each school district for the SARC.
- 16) Removes a requirement for each school district, except for school districts maintaining a single school district, to include in the SARC specified information regarding the salaries of teachers, principals, and superintendents in the district.
- 17) Requires, as a component of a charter school petition, information related to the method by which pupil progress in meeting pupil outcomes will be measured. Requires, to the extent practicable, the method to be consistent with the way information is displayed on the Dashboard, rather than on a SARC.
- 18) Removes a requirement for a charter school, superintendent of the school district, or county superintendent, as applicable, to present a report on the annual update to the LCAP and LCFF budget overview for parents on or before February 28 of each year as part of a nonconsent item at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body of the charter

school, governing board of the school district, or county governing board, as applicable. Requires the report to include both of the following:

- a) All available midyear outcome data related to metrics identified in the current year's LCAP; and
 - b) All available midyear expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the current year's LCAP.
- 19) Removes a requirement for information provided to parents and guardians of pupils who speak a language other than English are properly notified in English and their home language of information on the SARC.
- 20) Removes the requirement for a nonpublic, nonsectarian school to prepare a SARC.
- 21) Removes a requirement for the governing board of a school district to report the aggregate results of its physical performance testing administered on its SARC.
- 22) Updates the definition of core curriculum courses to mean courses of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and history/social science as it relates to reporting on the SARC related to the requirement for a middle or high school pupil who is classified as an English learner (EL) to not be denied participation in the standards instructional program of a school by being denied enrollment in courses that are part of the standard instructional program of the school that the pupil attends.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires any school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be prepared an annual audit accounting for such funds and to adopt a SARC for each school. Requires every local school board to prepare a SARC to guarantee accountability for the dollars spent. (California Constitution, Article XVI, Section 8.5)
- 2) Requires the governing board of each school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be implemented for each school in the school district a SARC. Requires the governing board of each school district annually to issue a SARC for each school in the school district, publicize those reports, and notify parents or guardians of pupils that a hard copy will be provided upon request. Requires, commencing with the 2008–09 school year, each school district to make hard copies of its annually updated report card available, upon request, on or before February 1 of each year. (Education Code (EC) 35256)
- 3) Requires the SARC data provide data by which a parent can make meaningful comparisons between public schools that will enable him or her to make informed decisions on the school in which to enroll his or her children. (EC 33126)
- 4) Requires the SARC to include, but is not limited to, assessment of the following school conditions:
 - a) Pupil achievement by grade level, as measured by the standardized testing and reporting programs;

- b) Progress toward reducing dropout rates;
- c) Estimated expenditures per pupil and types of services funded;
- d) Progress toward reducing class sizes and teaching loads, including the distribution of class sizes at the schoolsite by grade level and the average class size for the most recent three-year period;
- e) The total number of the school's fully credentialed teachers, the number of teachers relying upon emergency credentials, the number of teachers working without credentials, any assignment of teachers outside their subject areas of competence, misassignments, including misassignments of teachers of ELs, and the number of vacant teacher positions for the most recent three-year period;
- f) Quality and currency of textbooks and other instructional materials, including whether textbooks and other materials meet state standards and are adopted by the SBE for kindergarten and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, and adopted by the governing boards of school districts for grades 9 to 12, inclusive, and the ratio of textbooks per pupil and the year the textbooks were adopted;
- g) The availability of sufficient textbooks and other instructional materials for each pupil, including ELs;
- h) The availability of qualified personnel to provide counseling and other pupil support services, including the ratio of academic counselors per pupil;
- i) Safety, cleanliness, and adequacy of school facilities, including any needed maintenance to ensure good repair;
- j) The annual number of schooldays dedicated to staff development for the most recent three-year period;
- k) Suspension and expulsion rates for the most recent three-year period;
- l) For secondary schools, the percentage of graduates who have passed course requirements for entrance to the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU), including the course requirements for high school graduation, and the percentage of pupils enrolled in those courses;
- m) The number of advanced placement (AP) courses offered, by subject;
- n) The API;
- o) Contact information pertaining to organized opportunities for parental involvement; and
- p) Career technical education data measures for secondary schools. (EC 33126)

- 5) Requires county superintendents of schools to prioritize schools for visits pursuant to the *Williams* settlement to include the accuracy of data on the Dashboard, rather than the SARC. (EC 1240)
- 6) Requires the accuracy of the information reported on the SARC to be included in the verification required as a component of the financial and compliance audit. (EC 14501)
- 7) Requires, commencing in July 2000, and every July thereafter, each school to report on the status of its school safety plan, including a description of its key elements in the annual SARC. (EC 32286)
- 8) Requires the CDE develop and recommend for adoption by the SBE a standardized template intended to simplify the process for completing the SARC and make the SARC more meaningful to the public by July 1, 2006. (EC 33216.1 and 33216.15)
- 9) Authorizes the SPI to recommend additional data elements for inclusion in the API. (EC 33126.2)
- 10) Requires the results of the physical fitness testing of students to be included in the SARC. (EC 33352)
- 11) Requires each school district that is connected to the internet to make the information contained in the SARC accessible on the internet. Requires the SARC information to be updated annually. Requires, commencing with the 2008–09 school year, each school district connected to the internet to make its annually updated report card available on the internet on or before February 1 of each year. Requires each school district not connected to the Internet to make hard copies of its annually updated SARC available on or before February 1 of each year. (EC 35258)
- 12) Requires the audit of LEAs, each county superintendent of schools, to include in the review of audit exceptions those audit exceptions related the to use of instructional materials program funds, teacher misassignments, and information reported on the SARC, and to determine whether the exceptions are either corrected or an acceptable plan of correction has been developed. (EC 41020)
- 13) Requires the SPI to determine the statewide average percentage of school district expenditures that are allocated to the salaries of administrative personnel to be provided annually to each school district for the SARC. (EC 41409)
- 14) Requires each school district, except for school districts maintaining a single school district, to include in the SARC specified information regarding the salaries of teachers, principals, and superintendents in the district. (EC 41409.3)
- 15) Requires, as a component of a charter school petition, information related to the method by which pupil progress in meeting pupil outcomes will be measured. Requires, to the extent practicable, the method to be consistent with the way information on a SARC. (EC 47605 and 47605.6)
- 16) Requires a superintendent of a school district, county superintendent, or charter school, as applicable to present a report on the annual update to the LCAP and LCFF budget overview

for parents on or before February 28 of each year as part of a nonconsent item at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board of the school district, county governing board, or governing body of the charter school, as applicable. Requires the report to include both of the following:

- c) All available midyear outcome data related to metrics identified in the current year's LCAP; and
 - d) All available midyear expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the current year's LCAP. (EC 47606.5, 52062, and 52068)
- 23) Requires a school district to take all reasonable steps to ensure that parents and guardians of pupils who speak a language other than English are properly notified in English and their home language of the rights and opportunities available to them, including information on the SARC. (EC 51101.1)
- 24) Requires a nonpublic, nonsectarian school to prepare a SARC. (EC 56366)
- 25) Requires the governing board of a school district to report the aggregate results of its physical performance testing administered on its SARC. (EC 60800)
- 26) Defines core curriculum courses as it relates to reporting on the SARC related to the requirement for a middle or high school pupil who is classified as an EL to not be denied participation in the standards instructional program of a school by being denied enrollment in courses that are part of the standard instructional program of the school that the pupil attends. (EC 60811.8)
- 27) Requires LCAPs to address how the district will address and improve in eight state priority areas, including pupil achievement as measured by, among other things, the percentage of pupils who have successfully completed courses that satisfy the requirements for entrance to the UC and the CSU, or the completion of career pathways. (EC 52060)
- 28) Requires LEAs to adopt and annually revise LCAPs. (EC 47604.33, 52060, and 52066)
- 29) Requires, notwithstanding any other law, as a condition of receiving federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funding, an LEA to ensure that each school of the LEA consolidates any plans that are required by those programs into a single plan, unless otherwise prohibited by law. Requires that plan to be known as the single plan for student achievement (SPSA). (EC 64001)
- 30) Requires in federal law, LEAs to ensure that each school within the LEA that operates a Schoolwide Program (SWP) develops and implements a comprehensive SWP plan. (20 U.S.C. § 1111 et seq. (2015)).

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill has been keyed as a possible state mandated local program by the Office of Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “By streamlining duplicative reporting requirements, AB 2496 would alleviate the increased reporting burden schools face while maximizing our educational resources. Designating the California School Dashboard as the state’s definitive tool for school accountability and public transparency would refine duplicative and outdated statutory requirements placed upon our education agencies. Because it is important that we use our educational resources efficiently to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

Much of the information historically reported through SARC is now reported through the Dashboard and related LCFF tools. As a result, the SARC largely duplicates existing reporting systems, creating unnecessary administrative workload for districts. In addition, separate requirements such as the mid-year LCAP update further contribute to reporting demands beyond the annual LCAP adoption process. Collectively, these overlapping requirements divert time and resources away from student-focused efforts and underscore the need to consolidate duplicative reporting statutes while preserving public access to essential information.”

Key provisions of the bill. This bill would remove the LEA responsibility to produce a SARC on an annual basis and remove the state’s role in supporting the LEAs for purposes of this report. This bill would also remove the requirement for the midyear update to the LCAP and LCFF budget overview for parents. The bill would also require the CDE to maintain an archive of historical SARC data and develop a crosswalk identifying where that information can be accessed going forward. According to information provided by the author’s office, the changes proposed in this bill would prioritize and strengthen the Dashboard as the state’s primary transparency and accountability tool.

SARCs. Since the passage of Proposition 98 in November 1988, state law has required that schools receiving state funding to prepare and distribute a SARC, including charter schools and nonpublic schools (NPSs). A similar requirement is also contained in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as ESSA. The original purpose of the report card was to provide information about each school so parents could make meaningful comparisons between public schools, enabling them to make informed decisions on the school in which to enroll their children. The public may also use a SARC to evaluate and compare schools on a variety of indicators. SARCs are required to be updated annually by February 1st. ***The Committee may wish to consider*** that this annual deadline falls at a time in the school year just prior to, or the start of, the administration of state assessments.

Each SARC begins with a profile that provides background information about the school and its students. The profile typically summarizes the school’s mission, goals, and accomplishments. State law requires that the SARC contain the following:

- Demographic data;
- School safety and climate for learning information;
- Academic data;
- School completion rates;
- Class sizes;

- Teacher and staff information;
- Curriculum and instruction descriptions;
- Postsecondary preparation information; and
- Fiscal and expenditure data.

This bill would remove the LEA responsibility to produce a SARC on an annual basis and remove the state's role in supporting the LEAs for purposes of this report. The bill also would require the CDE to maintain an archive of historical SARC data and develop a crosswalk identifying where that information can be accessed going forward.

Schools are required to notify parents of SARC availability. State law generally encourages schools to make a concerted effort to notify parents of the purpose of the SARC and to ensure that all parents receive a copy of the report card for the school their child attends. Specifically, schools are required to notify all parents about the availability of the SARC and to provide parents with instructions about how the SARC can be obtained both through the Internet (if feasible) and on paper (upon request). If 15% or more of a school's enrolled students speak a single primary language other than English, state law requires that the SARC also be prepared and made available to these parents in the appropriate primary language.

Parents with Internet access can also access SARCs via the CDE's "Find a SARC" website, maintained via contract with the San Joaquin County Office of Education (COE). This web page contains the current and two prior years of SARC reports that have been submitted to the CDE by the LEAs. Schools or LEAs provide their SARCs by either using the online electronic SARC template located on the SARC CDE web application system to complete and post their SARC, or uploading a website address where their SARC has been posted on their school or LEA website that takes the viewer directly into their posted SARC.

CDE support of local SARC development. The CDE maintains the myCDEconnect unified system for LEAs to manage multiple program reports all in one location. Using myCDEconnect, LEAs can register one user account for multiple programs and work on their program reports in one location. The myCDEconnect provides access to the SARC and the LCAP eTemplate.

The CDE populates the majority of the electronic SARC template tables where data are required and provides corresponding downloadable data files. The data that CDE pre-populates into the public school electronic SARC templates are data that the public schools/LEAs provided to the CDE during the school year.

The SARC web application and the Find a SARC web page have been designed to enable the download of translated SARCs in over 70 languages using the Google Translation function for SARCs posted using the electronic SARC template located on the SARC web application.

NPSs are required to prepare a SARC. NPSs are private schools certified to educate students with disabilities using public funding. Pursuant to AB 1858 (Steinberg), Chapter 914, Statutes of 2004, all NPSs, are required to prepare a SARC. This requirement applies to NPSs, nonsectarian schools, but does not apply to nonpublic agencies. ***The Committee may wish to consider*** that this bill removes this requirement. For traditional public schools and charter schools, most

information included in the SARC is available through other publicly available data sources. Data for NPSs is less readily available. NPSs are generally not included in the Dashboard accountability system.

Williams v. State of California. In 2004, a settlement agreement was reached in the case of *Williams v. State of California*. Five bills implementing the agreement were signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger, and the court approved the agreement in 2005.

The Williams settlement agreement:

- Established minimum standards and accountability systems regarding school facilities, teacher quality, and instructional materials;
- Prohibited the operation of the “Concept 6” calendar program, which provided 163 days of classroom instruction, instead of 180 days;
- Required the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) to allow students, teachers, and others to submit complaints about insufficient instructional materials, teacher vacancies and misassignments, and unsafe or unhealthy facility conditions;
- Required annual inspection visits from the county superintendent of schools ranked in deciles one to three of the API in their counties to determine compliance with the new instructional materials and facilities standards and whether the schools’ SARCs accurately reported this data;
- Required county superintendents of schools to review teacher misassignments;
- Required SARCs to be posted online and in paper form and include accurate and current information regarding sufficiency of instructional materials, the number of teacher misassignments and vacancies, and the condition of school facilities;
- Updated K-12 audits and audit guides; and
- Provided up to \$800 million beginning in the 2005-06 fiscal year for districts to repair facility conditions that threatened health and safety, and approximately \$25 million in 2004-05 for a one-time comprehensive facilities needs assessment of schools ranked in the bottom 3 deciles under the 2003 statewide API. Funding for this program became unrestricted pursuant to SBX3 4 (Chapter 12, Statutes of 2009), enacted February 2009.

Williams settlement and the SARC. SB 550 (Vasconcellos), Chapter 900, Statutes of 2004, implemented portions of the settlement agreement in the case of *Williams, et al. v. State of California, et al.* that impacted the SARC. As a component of the settlement agreement, the bill added additional reporting requirements relating to any needed maintenance to ensure "good repair" of school facilities, the number of teacher "misassignments" and "vacant teacher positions," and the availability of "sufficient textbooks and other instructional materials."

This bill would remove the SARC additional requirements required by the *Williams* settlement. ***The Committee may wish to consider*** that as proposed, these requirements would be included in

the CDE required history of SARC requirements and crosswalk of other places to find these datasets, including the Dashboard. Some of the required *Williams* data related is displayed on the Dashboard at the LEA, rather than school level, as a component of the local indicator “Basics: teachers, instructional materials, facilities.” For example, information regarding appropriately assigned teachers is available on the Dashboard at the LEA level, with a link to another CDE webpage that hosts the same information at the school level. However, information related to instructional materials and facilities in “good repair” is not currently available in the same way.

Proposition 98. California voters enacted Proposition 98 in 1988 as an amendment to the State Constitution. This measure, which was later amended by Proposition 111, establishes a minimum annual funding level for K-14 schools (K-12 schools and community colleges). Proposition 98 requires any school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be prepared an annual audit accounting for such funds and to adopt a SARC for each school. Requires every local school board to prepare a SARC to guarantee accountability for the dollars spent. SARC requirements are further outlined in the EC.

This bill would specify that, for the purposes of the SARC created by Proposition 98, the Dashboard is the SARC for the purposes of the California Constitution. The bill would require a school district to publicize the Dashboard and notify parents or guardians of pupils when it is released annually.

ESSA Schoolwide Program Plan requirement. The federal ESSA, signed in 2015, is the main U.S. K-12 public education law, replacing No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and was originally established as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The stated purpose of the ESSA is to shift authority from federal to state governments while maintaining testing requirements, aiming to improve accountability, advance equity for disadvantaged students, and ensure college/career readiness. The ESSA requirements are organized by several titles and associated funding streams, including Title I, which was established to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. As a condition of receiving Title I, Part A funding, LEAs are required to ensure that each school within the LEA that operates a SWP develops and implements a comprehensive SWP plan, also known as the SPSA.

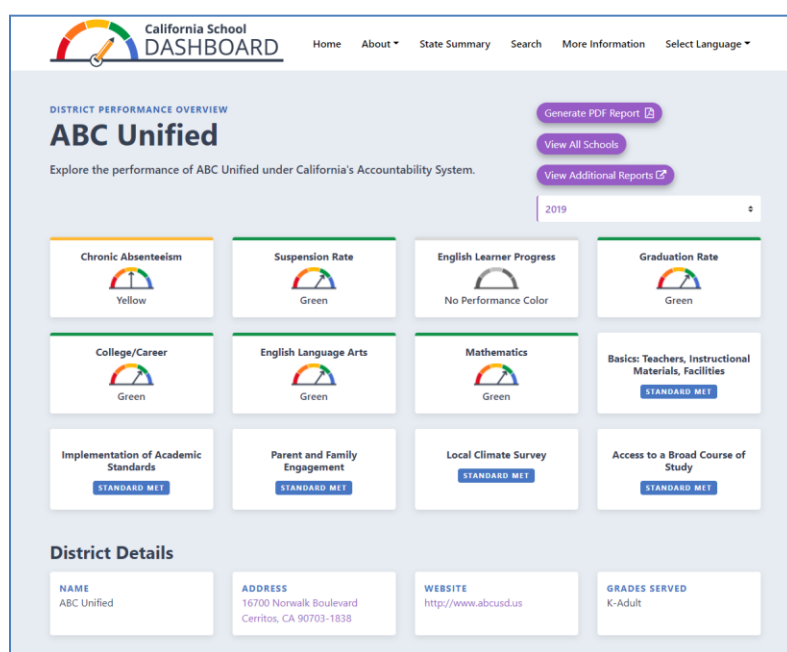
AB 716 (O'Donnell), Chapter 471, Statutes of 2018, authorizes the SPSA to meet the ESSA requirements for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) or targeted support and improvement (TSI) planning requirements. Single school districts and charter schools may use the LCAP, with the inclusion of all federal planning requirements, to meet the CSI or additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) planning requirements, provided the combined plan demonstrates all applicable state and federal planning requirements are met.

Single Plan for Student Achievement was an earlier effort to consolidate reporting requirements. Prior to the enactment of the LCFF in 2013, LEAs were required to submit annual plans for many of the dozens of categorical programs they operated. LEAs spent significant staff time complying with duplicative planning and reporting requirements for these programs. They were required to provide some information to the CDE (demographics of students, school codes, staffing information) dozens of times each year.

In response to concerns similar to those expressed by supporters of this measure, SB 374 (O'Connell), Chapter 724, Statutes of 2001, added numerous programs to the Consolidated Application, eliminated the Program Quality Review, and established the SPSA, which allowed LEAs to meet the reporting requirements for numerous categorical programs through a single plan. The Assembly Education Committee analysis for that bill notes, "Supporters of the bill believe that it will streamline state requirements for local planning and replace 'process' requirements with attention towards state standards and accountability for results."

LCAPs. The LCFF was established in the 2013-14 fiscal year to address the achievement gap by providing more equitable funding among LEAs, that is, to provide a higher level of funding to LEAs that enroll larger numbers of English learners, foster youth, and students eligible for free- or reduced-price meals (unduplicated pupils) so they could provide those students with additional services and support. The reforms to the funding system were accompanied by changes to the state accountability system, including LCAPs. The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the goals, actions, services, and expenditures to support positive student outcomes that address state and local priorities. The LCAP provides an opportunity for LEAs (school districts, COEs, and charter schools) to share their stories of how, what, and why programs and services are selected to meet their local needs. Current law requires that, before the governing board of a school district considers the adoption of an LCAP, numerous and specific steps be taken to ensure public input in the development of the LCAP, including consulting with parents and soliciting input from the public.

LCAP midyear update. All charter schools, school districts, and COEs are required to present a report on the annual update to the LCAP and the LCFF Budget Overview for Parents on or before February 28 of each year at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board or body of the LEA. The mid-year report is required to include the following: all available mid-year outcome data related to metrics identified in the current year's LCAP, and all available mid-year expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the current year's LCAP.



The state and local measures are

drawn from the eight priority areas of the LCFF. The Dashboard is updated annually. LEAs receive one of five color-coded performance levels on the state indicators. From highest to lowest, the five performance levels are: Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red. The data displayed on the Dashboard is used to determine which LEAs and charter schools receive support, known as Differentiated Assistance (DA) by COEs and the Statewide System of Support. Eligibility for DA is based on the LEA and school performance on the state (colors) and local indicators on the Dashboard. To a large degree, eligibility is based on gaps in achievement.

This bill would require the CDE to maintain an archive of historical SARC data and develop a crosswalk identifying where that information can be accessed going forward, including the Dashboard. According to information provided by the author's office, the changes proposed in this bill would prioritize and strengthen the Dashboard as the state's primary transparency and accountability tool.

DataQuest. The DataQuest is the CDE's web-based data reporting system for publicly reporting information about California students, teachers, and schools. The DataQuest provides access to a wide variety of reports, including school performance, test results, student enrollment, EL, graduation and dropout rates, school staffing, course enrollment, and student misconduct data.

The Plandemic: Reporting requirements increase as new programs and initiatives proliferate during the COVID-19 pandemic. LCFF, enacted in 2013, eliminated most categorical programs and their associated applications, plans, reports, data submissions, and compliance monitoring.

Since then, and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, a surge in state and federal funding resulted in the proliferation of new programs and initiatives. These programs were accompanied by applications, plans, data submissions, and reports. The state's multiple measures accountability system has also required more reporting by LEAs to the state.

As was the case prior to LCFF, LEAs report that many reports are duplicative, cumbersome, and often require LEAs to report the same data (which the state already has) over and over. Adding to the frustration some LEA staff feel is the suspicion that not all of the information reported will be reviewed and used by the entities requiring it.

Balancing accountability and evaluation with opportunity costs. State reporting requirements serve important purposes, among them the safeguarding of public funds and the evaluation of policy initiatives.

But according to the California School Boards Association (CSBA), the cumulative impact of mandated state and federal reports, data submissions, and planning documents draws resources away from critical tasks and responsibilities of LEA staff, especially in California's smaller districts and COEs. In a 2024 report, *Drowning in Documentation*, CSBA notes the following effects:

- High price in time, human capital, cost, and opportunity cost: Administrators' planning and reporting efforts are so extensive that they cut into time available for instructional leadership, school improvement, school climate, and other critical functions.

- Ever-growing burden: While new programs and mandates add to the long list of reporting requirements, state and federal governments rarely phase out requirements, even when they become duplicative or are no longer actively reviewed by their respective agencies.
- Too much data to digest: Some districts, particularly smaller ones, lack the time and capacity to use the required data for their own purposes. State agencies often lack the staff capacity to analyze required plans, reports, and data submissions or provide constructive feedback and technical assistance to LEAs.
- Disproportionate burden for smaller districts: Large districts might have dozens of staff to meet these requirements. Small to medium districts might have anywhere from a handful to more than a dozen staff available to complete reports, plans, and data submissions. Very small districts might rely on the superintendent, principal, or superintendent/principal to meet these requirements, taking time away from their other administrative and educational leadership responsibilities. Alternatively, very small districts may have to hire outside consultants to do this work, consuming valuable resources that could be spent on student support and instruction. A significant amount of public funding is only available through discretionary grants that require additional time for applying, planning, and reporting. Smaller and less-resourced districts often cannot take on this additional workload, creating opportunity gaps for students, staff, and schools.

What kinds of information do LEAs send to the state? According to the author, LEAs produce approximately 170 reports per year – nearly one for each day of the school year. LEAs submit numerous sets of data through these and other systems to meet state and federal requirements:

- California Basic Educational Data System
- California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data
- Standardized Account Code Structure System
- Principal Apportionment Data Collection System
- Child Nutrition Information Payment System
- The Consolidated Application and Reporting System
- Federal Program Monitoring Reviews
- Fiscal and Attendance Data.
- ESSA Per-Pupil Expenditures System
- Civil Rights Data Collection
- Special Education

Some of the required plans, applications, and reports LEAs submit to the CDE fall into the following categories:

- Accountability
- Safety and Transportation
- State Block Grants and Special Funds
- Special Education
- Pandemic Recovery programs
- Discretionary Grants

Arguments in support. The California School Business Officials (CASBO) writes, “When Proposition 98 established the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) in 1988, it was a groundbreaking tool for transparency. However, the educational landscape shifted in 2013 with the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the subsequent launch of the California School Dashboard. Today, California districts are maintaining two separate, largely duplicative accountability systems. This “compliance overlap” increases administrative workload without a commensurate increase in transparency.

AB 2496 seeks to remedy this by prioritizing and strengthening the Dashboard as the state’s primary transparency and accountability tool. The Dashboard already contains much of the same information required in the SARC, including academic performance, academic engagement, classroom discipline, and teacher assignments. It also reflects California’s current accountability system, including critical student group data, and is released over three months before the SARC, enduring timely sharing of information. AB 2496 would require the CDE to maintain a historical archive of the SARC and a crosswalk that identifies where to find the data that makes up each component of the most recent SARC template. If key information is not readily available in another location, the bill would require CDE to flag those items for the SBE to consider incorporating into the Dashboard.”

Recommended Committee Amendments. *Staff recommends that the bill be amended as follows:*

- Require the CDE to complete the crosswalk of SARC requirements within 60 days of the enactment of this bill.
- Require, based on the crosswalk, the SBE to move or collect, as necessary, any data elements included in the SARC not otherwise available on the CDE’s website. Provides the SBE with the authorization to move or collect data specifically for this purpose.
- Require, within two years of the enactment of the bill, the SBE to certify that all data elements included in the SARC as of December 31, 2026, are either available on the CDE’s website or are in progress towards being available on the CDE’s website. Requires those data elements to be available at the same level as required by the SARC (for example: school-level or LEA-level). Authorizes the SBE to denote any school accountability report card data elements that are either no longer required to be collected (such as the API), no longer in existence, or other circumstances with a corresponding

justification, and to not require the collection of those data elements denoted in their certification.

- Require, within 60 days of the SBE's certification, the CDE to update the crosswalk accordingly and include it as part of an internet website that includes a history of the SARC.
- State the intent of the Legislature to remove the SARC from the Education Code upon the certification of the SBE.
- Remove related sections that remove the SARC requirements, and those that replace the SARC with the Dashboard.
- Authorize, rather than remove the requirement for, the LCAP midyear update.

Related legislation. HR 87 (Muratsuchi) of the 2025-26 Session would declare that reporting requirements have become excessive and divert the resources of LEAs away from student and classroom services. The bill would urge lawmakers to consider specified questions when enacting new reporting requirements.

AB 2008 (Patel) of the 2025-26 Session would require that if a bill introduced or amended by the Legislature would require a school district, county office of education, or charter school to complete a plan or report with an undefined end date to either 1) include a provision that repeals the reporting requirement, or 2) makes the requirement inoperative, no later than a date four years following the date upon which the bill, as enacted, becomes operative or four years after the due date of any report required every four or more years.

SB 374 (Archuleta), Chapter 580, Statutes of 2025, extends by one year the date by which the CDE must provide a report to the Legislature regarding the number and types of reports that LEAs are required to submit annually, and removes the requirement for the SBE to adopt an Individuals with Disabilities (IDEA) Addendum to the LCAP relating to service improvements for students with disabilities.

SB 1315 (Archuleta), Chapter 486, Statutes of 2024, requires the CDE to conduct a report on the number and types of reports that LEAs are required to submit on an annual basis.

AB 716 (O'Donnell), Chapter 471, Statutes of 2018, revises and recasts provisions relating to the consolidated application, the SPSA, and schoolsite councils, and repeals the School-Based Program Coordination Act, to account for implementation of the LCFF and the ESSA.

AB 1858 (Steinberg), Chapter 914, Statutes of 2004, places new requirements on NPS, including requiring all NPSs, nonsectarian schools are required to prepare a SARC.

SB 550 (Vasconcellos), Chapter 900, Statutes of 2004, related to settlement agreement in the case of *Williams, et al. v. State of California, et al.*, adds information in the sufficiency of instructional materials, the assignment of teachers and the condition of school facilities to the SARC, and provides for annual district audits to review the accuracy of the information reported.

SB 374 (O'Connell), Chapter 724, Statutes of 2001, revises planning requirements for schools that receive categorical funds administered under the consolidated application process.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Association of California School Administrators
California Association of School Business Officials
California School Boards Association
Enterprise Elementary School District
Fresno County Office of Education
Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Marguerite Ries / ED. / (916) 319-2087