



Parents Supporting Teachers- Student Centered Funding Frequently Asked Questions

What is Student Centered Funding (SCF) and why is it different from current funding?

Today, the district uses SENI- Student Equity Needs Index- to figure out what level of support school communities need to help their students and families. The SENI measures things like how many students are English Language Learners, foster children, homeless, low income, have asthma, and other important factors that require better levels of support. ***The district uses an entire school's SENI measurement to give them additional money and resources for their community.***

SCF ties a school's funding to its individual student enrollment. ***Under SCF, a dollar amount is assigned to each student.*** There is a base amount for each child and then students with more needs “earn” more money — examples include English Language Learners (ELL), students who qualify for free lunch, and students in foster care. It is no longer about the school, but about each student's value.

Why would I care about it?

Small picture, your school will likely lose money. Big picture, “if the student leaves the school, the funding goes with them as if they carried a ‘backpack full of cash’.” ***This forces schools to compete against each other for students and the dollars attached to those students.*** The funding switch has its origins with Betsy DeVos, Donald Trump's Secretary of Education, who pushed school districts to explore Student Centered Funding.

How will the money be distributed under SCF?

LAUSD should have provided a clear formula for funding, but they haven't. They say they will figure it out, which is troubling. At a recent Board Meeting, a [presentation](#) on SCF laid out the funding for English Language Learners. The numbers are different on slide 12 (.2%), slide 13 (.3%), slide 15 (.8%) and slide 22 (.5%). The funding formula for each of these scenarios is different and we are still trying to understand what LAUSD is proposing.

Wait, my school could lose money?

This system strips away district money and support for school programs. Which might sound like more ownership for the schools themselves, but ***in reality it just makes principals have to pick and choose, without oversight.*** The way it works now, the needs of the school community determines what extra money and support the district provides. Under SCF, this district help evaporates, because money is now tied to individual students and not to specific school communities. ***Schools would have to figure out how to make up for this loss of money that ranges from thousands of dollars to millions.***

But what if my school gets Title I funding?

Title I money is used for our most vulnerable students in need of additional academic help. This money is closely regulated to guarantee that schools and districts are using the funds appropriately. ***Right now, schools must use Title I money only on programs and resources for academics.*** Title I funding supplies schools with additional teachers to lower class sizes, more mental health resources, staff to engage with the students' families, and other valuable resources. ***SCF eliminates the regulations on Title I money and would end the district's additional help to Title I schools.***

How will this impact my school?

Under SCF, schools would fight over students. As schools compete for students, principals would have to become CEOs and CFOs. ***Principals would have to make hiring and program decisions not based on student need, but based on the school's pot of money.*** Not enough money in the pot? Art programs could be cut or the library closed. Losing students to schools in another neighborhood? ***Your school could lose teachers.***

This couldn't impact my teacher though, right?

Wrong! For example... Right now, Ms. Sue works at School A and Mr. Bob works at School B. The district pays both of them. Under SCF, the district would give the money directly to the school, and they would determine how to spend it. Here's where it gets funky... let's say Ms. Sue, who is beloved, has a Masters in Education and has been working for 13 years in the district, so she makes more than Mr. Bob, who is a wonderful, but new, teacher. So now School A has to decide, is it worth it to pay Ms. Sue, or should we try to get Mr. Bob to come to our school?

Has this type of funding been tried elsewhere?

San Francisco, New Orleans, Chicago, and Denver, have all tried SCF. A former San Francisco School Board Member cautions that an SCF system needs to be tightly controlled in order to prevent problems. ***In these other cities, teachers have been laid off, libraries closed, arts programs ended, and schools shut down.*** It is important to remember that LAUSD is the second largest school district in the nation and would be much more difficult to closely regulate.

How come I have not heard about SCF from the District?

Because ***there has been zero community outreach or information*** shared by the district for families to learn more about how student centered funding impacts them and that is a concern.

Resources used:

<https://capitalandmain.com/will-lausds-new-funding-plan-help-the-school-choice-movement>

<https://mcusercontent.com/e51f39a03d845e2cafae71eff/files/3f012a4b-2e62-df22-3629-d2483fcabc3e/SCFReport202109FINALV2.pdf>

https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/123/07_Student%20Equity%20Needs%20Index%20SENI%20combined.pdf