



# Parental Involvement and Family Engagement: A Snapshot of California's 2019 Local Indicator Data

## Background

In 2016, the California State Board of Education (SBE) approved performance standards for local indicators for which no data had been collected at the state level. Under these performance standards, each local education agency (LEA) is to annually measure and report its progress to its local board and to the California School Dashboard, using the SBE adopted self-reflection tools.

Parental Involvement and Family Engagement (hereafter referred to as family engagement) is one of the local indicators. In 2019, LEAs were directed to use a revised self-reflection tool (see text box below for details about the tool) for reporting family engagement data in the Dashboard. To gain an understanding of the data reported during the first year of the revised tool's implementation, the California Department of Education, in partnership with the Region 15 Comprehensive Center and REL West, analyzed California's local indicator data on family engagement reported in the 2019 Dashboard.

This infographic provides an overview of the key findings of the narrative data analysis, and may be useful for LEAs and organizations interested in supporting improved family engagement practices and outcomes.

### THE REVISED SELF-REFLECTION TOOL FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- **Section 1: Building Relationships between School Staff and Families**
- **Section 2: Building Partnerships for Student Outcomes**
- **Section 3: Seeking Input for Decisionmaking**

Each section lists four research-based practices that contribute to equitable and authentic family engagement and partnership between educators and families. LEAs rated their stage of implementation for each practice using a scale of 1–5. For each section, LEAs also responded to the narrative prompt: “Briefly describe the LEA’s current strengths and progress in this area, and identify a focus area for improvement, including how the LEA will improve the engagement of underrepresented families.” (California Department of Education, 2019)

Note that findings from the quantitative analysis of LEA self-ratings are presented in California Department of Education (2021).



## Section 1: Building Relationships between School Staff and Families

### Current strengths

Using two-way communication with families (66% of LEAs). Examples:

- » Communicate with individuals by different formats (e.g., phone calls, text messages, parents portal, Parent Square, in-person meetings)
- » Hold group meetings (e.g., town hall or advisory meetings, meetings with stakeholders)
- » Make information accessible to all families
- » Host social/informal events (e.g., community dinners, coffee with the principal)

### Focus areas for improvement

Supporting underrepresented students and families (26% of LEAs). Examples:

- » Provide language and cultural support (e.g., translation services)
- » Reach out to individual families from underrepresented groups
- » Support homeless youth, foster youth, students with disabilities, and other underrepresented students and their families

## Section 2: Building Partnerships for Student Outcomes

### Current strengths

Providing families with information and resources to support student learning at home (63% of LEAs). Examples:

- » Provide digital and non-digital communication tools
- » Communicate with individual families (e.g., parent-teacher meetings)
- » Keep parents informed of expectations for students and their performance
- » Provide social-emotional support

### Focus areas for improvement

Engaging underrepresented families (24% of LEAs). Examples:

- » Be in direct contact with underrepresented family groups
- » Provide staff professional development to improve a school's capacity to collaborate and engage with underrepresented families
- » Remove barriers to engagement (e.g., providing transportation support, on-site child care, and/or options of varied times to meet)

## Section 3: Seeking Input for Decisionmaking

### Current strengths

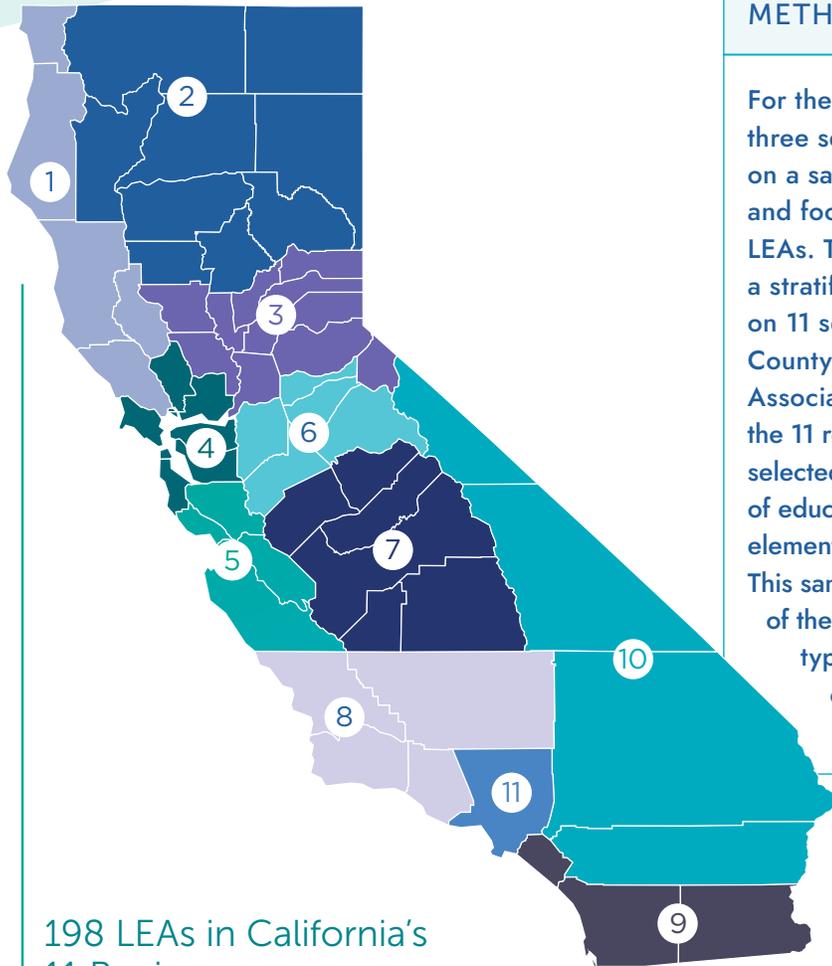
Engaging families and encouraging them to provide input (76% of LEAs). Examples:

- » Invite parents to participate in decisionmaking
- » Use surveys via multiple platforms (e.g., text and email) to solicit feedback from families and engage them in decisionmaking
- » Provide opportunities for parents to engage in workshops and forums, complemented by tools and materials to facilitate participation, share information, and gather feedback

### Focus areas for improvement

Providing families with opportunities to give input (36% of LEAs). Examples:

- » Improve family participation in decisionmaking (e.g., recruit more families and provide support to engage them in decisionmaking)
- » Create events, meetings, or programs where families can provide input and stakeholders can work together



198 LEAs in California's  
11 Regions

## METHODS

For the narrative response required for each of the three sections, a qualitative analysis was conducted on a sample of 198 LEAs to identify the strengths and focus areas for improvement reported by LEAs. The sample of LEAs was selected through a stratified random sampling method, drawing on 11 service regions defined by the California County Superintendents Education Services Association (see the map for the distribution of the 11 regions). Within each region, 18 LEAs were selected, consisting of 5 types of LEAs: county office of education, charter school, unified school district, elementary school district, and high school district. This sampling method ensures the representativeness of the findings, both in terms of location and type of LEA. Thus, the analysis results based on these 198 LEAs are generalizable to all 2,136 LEAs in California.

## Selected Resources

- California Department of Education. (2021). [Study of 2019 Priority 3 \(parental involvement and family engagement\) local indicator data](#). Author.
- California Department of Education. (2019). [Self-reflection tool for priority 3: Family engagement](#). Author.
- California Department of Education. (2017a). [Family engagement toolkit: Continuous Improvement through an equity lens](#). Author.
- California Department of Education. (2017b). [Editable templates for CDE's Family Engagement Toolkit](#). Author.
- Mapp, K. L., & Bergman, E. (2019). [Dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships \(version 2\)](#). SEDL.



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