

California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-003 (REV. 11/2017)

pptb-iad-nov18item02

# California State Board of Education November 2018 Agenda Item #03

## Subject

Update on the Development of California’s System of Support for Local Educational Agencies and Schools.

## Type of Action

Action, Information

## Summary of the Issue(s)

This item provides an update on the development of California’s system of support for local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools. The item was created in collaboration with several agencies charged with specific responsibilities to provide assistance and support to LEAs under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

Since August 2016, the State Board of Education (SBE) has received a total of 10 updates regarding the development of the statewide system of support, each building on the other and providing an update on the progress, implementation, and continuous improvement of initiatives, policies, and assistance efforts of stakeholders engaged in California’s system of support.

Over that period of time, details about the system of support have been clarified and refined collaboratively by the agencies charged with providing assistance and support under LCFF, based on feedback from stakeholders and the SBE. Additionally, the 2018 Budget Act, signed on June 27, 2018, includes a substantial investment of state funding aimed at developing the infrastructure of the statewide system of support by increasing the capacity and expertise of agencies required to provide assistance within the system, and providing greater clarity of roles and responsibilities to ensure that California’s continuous improvement approach to support can be sustained. Finally, during this period, the SBE finalized California’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan, which describes how California will use federal funding and addresses various school accountability and support provisions under federal law.

The core design of the system of support, including the overall goal and design principles, remains unchanged. In fact, the recently enacted state budget reflects, and in many instances codifies, key elements developed over the past two years. There are, however, some areas where the initial design has evolved.

This item attempts to provide a comprehensive review of the system of support’s development and implementation to date, with particular attention to areas where the initial design has evolved or become further defined over the past year.

## Recommendation

No action is recommended at this time. However, the California Department of Education (CDE) requests that the SBE provide feedback on the system of support update.

The CDE also recommends that the SBE take additional action as deemed necessary and appropriate.

## Brief History of Key Issues

This item addresses key developments in the system of support, including developments related to the different lead agency selection processes; the development of the formal communication processes; and the year two feedback and communications plans.

Attachment 1 describes key aspects of the system of support, including areas where the design has evolved since 2016. This overview reflects the recently enacted state budget, ongoing work among state agencies and the System of Support Planning Group, and changes to the ESSA state plan that the SBE approved earlier this year to obtain approval from the U.S. Department of Education.

Attachment 2 provides an update on the lead agencies and formal communication process.

Attachment 3 provides an update on the system of support communications plan, which is designed to increase statewide knowledge, ownership, and support of California’s system of support.

Attachment 4 provides an update on the system of support year two feedback plan, which is designed to provide valuable information that can be used to continuously improve the system of support.

## Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

In September 2018, the SBE received an update on the systems of support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/sep18item02.docx>).

In June 2018, the SBE received the following Information Memorandum:

* Update on the Development of California’s System of Support for Local Educational Agencies and Schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-pptb-iad-jun18item01.docx>).

In May 2018, the SBE received an update on the system of support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/may18item01.docx>).

In March 2018, the SBE received an update on the system of support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/mar18item02.docx>).

In January 2018, the SBE received an update on the system of support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/jan18item03.docx>).

In November 2017, the SBE received an update on the system of support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/nov17item04.doc>).

In September 2017, the SBE received an update on the system of support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/sep17item03.doc>).

In July 2017, the SBE received an update on the proposed goals and characteristics of an integrated system of support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/jul17item02.doc>).

In June 2017, the SBE received the following Information Memorandum:

* Developing an Integrated Statewide System of Support (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-exec-ocd-jun17item02.doc>).

In August 2016, the SBE received the following Information Memorandum:

* California’s Local, State and Federal Accountability and Continuous Improvement System: Framework for Supporting Local Educational Agencies and Schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-sbe-aug16item02.doc>).

## Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate)

The Budget Act of 2018 invested nearly $80 million ongoing state funding and $30 million in one-time state funding to build the infrastructure and capacity within the statewide system of support. The Budget Act of 2018 also allocated some federal funds on an ongoing or one-time basis to activities aligned with the statewide system of support.

Assembly Bill 1808, chaptered June 27, 2018, appropriated $4 million to establish the California Geographic Lead Agency Program. Funding will continue on an ongoing annual basis.

AB 1808 appropriated funds in the amount of $13,274,000 from the general fund to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to allocate to the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence’s administrative agent (Marin County Office of Education). Of that, $660,000 is to be allocated to the administrative agent for administrative costs for the Community Engagement Initiative.

## Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: Key Aspects of the System of Support (5 Pages)
* Attachment 2: Lead Agencies and Formal Communication Process Update (7 Pages)
* Attachment 3: System of Support Communications Plan (2 Pages)
* Attachment 4: System of Support Year Two Feedback Plan (16 Pages)

# Attachment 1: Key Aspects of the System of Support

This attachment describes key aspects of the system of support, including key areas where the design has evolved since 2016 to today, and reflects the recently enacted state budget, ongoing work among state agencies and the System of Support Planning Group (planning group), and changes to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan that the State Board of Education (SBE) approved earlier this year to obtain approval from the U.S. Department of Education.

## Background

California is in year two of creating a coordinated and coherent state structure to ensure that local educational agencies (LEAs) receive resources and support to meet identified student needs, including disparities in student outcomes or opportunities. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is the foundation for reimagining California’s accountability and continuous improvement system. As a result of the LCFF, California worked with stakeholders to develop tools for educators that will help improve outcomes for students including the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and the California School Dashboard (Dashboard).

In addition to those tools and a new funding formula, the LCFF outlined a vision for support and assistance, with three key policy decisions central to the LCFF serving as the foundation designing the system of support:

* **More than a Single Number.** Quality education is defined by more than a test score.
* **Resource Decisions Driven by Student Need.** Educators and policymakers should adapt services to meet identified needs, including disparities in opportunities and outcomes.
* **LEAs are the Primary Unit of Change.** LEAs play the essential role in supporting schools to sustain improvement.

Previous SBE Information Memoranda and Agenda Items have laid the foundation for California’s system of support, which includes the following levels of support:

* **Support for All LEAs and Schools (Level 1):** Various state and local agencies provide an array of resources and voluntary assistance that **all** LEAs may use to improve student performance at the LEA and school level and narrow disparities among student groups across the LCFF priorities, including recognition for success and the ability to share promising practices.
* **Differentiated Assistance (Level 2):** County superintendents, the California Department of Education (CDE), charter authorizers, and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) provide **differentiated** **assistance** for LEAs, in the form of individually designed assistance, to address identified performance issues.
* **Intensive Intervention (Level 3):** The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or, for charter schools, the charter authorizer may require more **intensive interventions** for LEAs with persistent performance issues over a specified time period.

**The goal for support at all levels is to assist LEAs and their schools to meet the needs of each student served, with a focus on building capacity to sustain improvement and effectively address inequities in student opportunities and outcomes.** This means that the outcomes for this work include not only improvement on Dashboard indicators from year to year, but also progressing on interim measurements that LEAs collect locally and use throughout the year.

Key shifts in support reflect the intent of the LCFF for differentiated assistance to be tailored to locally identified needs, rather than imposed as a one size fits all solution. Table 1 identifies several key changes in the approach to assistance.

**Table 1. Shifts in California’s Approach to Improvement**

| Education Improvement Before LCFF | Education Improvement After LCFF |
| --- | --- |
| Top down transactional exchanges focused on schools in isolation | Support providers work alongside LEAs and their schools to identify key challenges and opportunities |
| Packaged approaches for interventions | Systemic approach tailored to locally identified needs and strengths |
| Isolated team decision making | Engaging with local educators and communities as part of decision making |
| Redundancy and contradictions across state and federal programs | Streamlined and coherent expectations for LEAs across state and federal programs |
| Assistance disconnected from local priorities and focus | Assistance supports LEAs in aligning, prioritizing, and using resources to meet student needs identified in the LCAP |

In order to coordinate support at all levels and to ensure these shifts become reality, the agencies charged with providing support under the LCFF expanded their initial cross agency group to include stakeholder perspectives and practitioners from the field. This larger team is the planning group that will address common concerns and interests from the field regarding support for LEAs and schools.

## School Identification under the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act

The bullets above describing the three levels of support have been modified from prior formulations, with the second bullet on differentiated assistance and third bullet on intensive intervention no longer referencing schools. This clarification is necessary to reflect key differences between California’s initial proposed approach to school identification and assistance under the federal ESSA and the final version of California’s ESSA state plan.

In early iterations of the ESSA state plan, California proposed to use the existing state LCFF process for identifying LEAs for assistance to meet federal school improvement requirements. California would also identify any LEA that had at least one school with very low performance on all Dashboard indicators for assistance. The assistance provided by county offices of education (COEs) to those school districts with at least one school with very low performance on all Dashboard indicators would focus on helping the school district determine how it could better support these schools to improve.

The U.S. Department of Education raised concerns about this proposed approach based on a narrow reading of federal law. As a result, California’s approach to school identification and assistance in the final, approved version of the ESSA state plan is not directly related to the LEA assistance process under LCFF. Instead, LEAs are responsible for developing and/or approving school-level improvement plans for identified schools. As described in an August 2018 Information Memorandum (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-exec-gad-aug18item01.docx>), California will use the existing LCAP and school level planning processes to meet these federal requirements, with the state providing general resources and technical assistance to support LEAs.

Consistent with one of LCFF’s key policy decisions noted above, these supports will be aimed at increasing the capacity of LEAs to meet the needs of all students, including how the LEA supports its schools and differentiates those supports based on data about opportunities and outcomes within the LCAP process. Rather than being targeted to a limited set of LEAs and therefore individually tailored, as would have been the case under California’s initial proposed approach to school identification and support, the assistance provided by the **state** is now more appropriately viewed as Support for All (Level 1). The LEA itself is responsible for differentiating the supports that the **LEA** provides to its schools and determining the use of additional resources provided to identified schools. In sum, all LEAs will have access to resources to help them better support schools, and the districts with identified schools will be responsible for using those resources to meet ESSA’s school improvement requirements.

ESSA’s school identification and support requirements intersect with Differentiated Assistance (Level 2) only when a school has been identified for comprehensive support and has not met the exit criteria within four years. At that time, the LEA will be identified for differentiated assistance based on the persistent low performance of one of its schools. A November 2018 SBE Item on ESSA includes clarifying edits to reflect this in sections of the state plan that refer to the system of support.

## Recent Developments and Updates

At the September SBE meeting, key developments related to the system of support were introduced, including:

1. The Budget Act provisions of 2018, which provide important clarity around roles, responsibilities, and expectations within the system of support and include a substantial investment of state funding aimed at increasing the capacity and expertise of agencies required to provide assistance within the system of support. The following lead agencies and/or initiatives have been identified as part of the system of support:

| Leads | Number of leads, agencies, or consortia |
| --- | --- |
| Geographic Lead Agencies | 6–10 |
| Community Engagement Lead | 1 |
| Multi-Tiered System of Support | 1 |
| Equity Leads | 2, along with partnerships |
| Early Math Initiative | 1 |
| Special Education Resource Leads | Statewide Coverage - 3–4  Expertise leads - Up to 7 |
| Title III English learner Specialists | 11, with 1 lead representative |

1. The Budget Act provisions of 2018 also require that formal communication and stakeholder engagement processes are developed by the CDE and the CCEE for the geographic lead agencies which may include the additional lead agencies.
2. A year two system of support feedback plan to capture information about the system of support in a systemic way to inform continuous improvement from year to year, and when possible, allow for course corrections during the year.
3. A system of support communication plan designed to build awareness, clarity, and ownership of the statewide system of support at the local education community level; ensure that political support for the statewide system of support is maintained and strengthened to ensure continuity; and build cohesion and collaboration in communication outreach efforts amongst all agencies, education, and equity partners. It also identifies opportunities to share information about the system of support and California’s accountability system with a broad range of stakeholders, through the use of conferences, newsletters, and online communication platforms.
4. Integration of our state and federal accountability and support systems to include the provisions of the ESSA related to accountability and school improvement within the context of California’s LCFF as the foundation. An August Information Memorandum includes an overview of the timeline and milestones for implementing provisions of the ESSA (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-exec-gad-aug18item01.docx>).

The planning group looks forward to working with stakeholder groups to further build out the system of support by integrating the feedback received; implement the elements of support in the Governor’s budget; and develop and provide guidance related to ESSA implementation. Stakeholder sessions will be held in a variety of formats, including a monthly stakeholder meeting, the first of which was held on October 5, 2018 and included discussion on the following topics: ESSA state plan approval, status of the English Learner Progress Indicator waiver request, identification for LEAs and schools, COE funding for differentiated assistance, funding for school identification, LEA plans and school improvement plans, the Dashboard, state educational agency and LEA report cards, and per pupil expenditure reporting.

# Attachment 2: Lead Agencies and Formal Communication Process Update

## Summary

This is a status update for the geographic lead agencies, the community engagement initiative (CEI) lead agency, the special education resource lead agencies, the early math initiative lead agency, the expansion of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) lead agency, the lead Title III agency, and the equity lead agencies. It also includes an update on the processes and plans for a formal communication process as required by the Budget Act provisions of 2018. Assembly Bill 1808 established these efforts to support local educational agencies (LEAs) to:

* Support the continuous improvement of student performance within the state priorities as defined in California *Education Code* (*EC*) sections 52060 and 52066.
* Address the gaps in achievement between student groups as defined in *EC* Section 52052.
* Improve local pupil outcomes and community engagement.

## Background

### Application Process for the Geographic Lead Agencies and the Community Engagement Initiative Lead Agency

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), the California Department of Education (CDE), and the State Board of Education (SBE) administered the geographic and community engagement lead agency selection process with assistance from the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. The CCEE and CDE conducted five stakeholder input sessions during July 2018 to gather feedback from county offices of education (COEs), LEAs, and community groups. The sessions provided information about characteristics that well-qualified lead agencies should exhibit and suggestions for an application process that offers a wide variety of applicants a platform to demonstrate their expertise.

Applicants were able to apply as a consortium. Consortium members can be any type of education stakeholder, such as LEAs, institutions of higher education, or educational services providers. If the applicant is a consortium, a COE must be part of the consortium and should submit the consortium application. Lead agency applicants provided a narrative to demonstrate expertise and partnerships, which will support the key goals identified.

## Updates

### Geographic Lead Agencies

The CDE and CCEE have selected and the Executive Director of the SBE approved nine applicants to serve as a lead or co-lead. Of the nine, two will be co-leads, resulting in seven geographic areas.

The geographic lead agencies, which were announced on October 10, 2018 are:

| Geographic Lead Agencies | Lead or Co-Leads | Geographic Area Counties |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Alameda COE | Lead | Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Contra Costa, Solano, San Francisco |
| Kern County Superintendent | Lead | Fresno, Kern, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles |
| Sacramento COE and Placer COE | Co-Leads | Colusa, Yuba, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Alpine, Sacramento, Yolo, Sutter, Tuolumne, San Joaquin, Amador, Calaveras |
| San Diego COE and Riverside COE | Co-Leads | San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial, San Diego, Orange |
| Shasta COE | Lead | Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Butte, Glenn |
| Sonoma COE | Lead | Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma, Napa, Marin |
| Tulare COE | Lead | Tulare, Kings, Madera, Merced, Mariposa, Stanislaus, Inyo, Mono, San Benito, Monterey, Santa Cruz |

The goal of the geographic lead agencies is to support the continuous improvement process and connect COEs and school districts to California’s system of support. The geographic lead agencies must be guided by locally identified needs and have the expertise to build COE capacity to support school districts under state priorities across student groups within their defined geographic region. Below are key points about the roles and expectations for the geographic lead agencies:

**Provide support to the support providers**

* Geographic leads are expected to help COEs get what they need to be successful in supporting their school districts and building their capacity to provide support over time.
* Geographic leads are expected to serve their peers within the geographic area.

**Coordinate supports available statewide**

* It is neither realistic nor fair to expect all 51 COEs that support multiple school districts to know of every resource, service, or support that exists across the state or have appropriate expertise and capacity to respond to every locally identified need.
* Geographic leads are expected to help COEs access relevant services or expertise responsive to needs identified by school districts the COEs are supporting.
* Geographic leads are expected to work together and in conjunction with the CDE and CCEE to provide the statewide backbone of the system of support.

**All COEs are expected to continue directly supporting their school districts, with the geographic leads primarily focused on supporting and building the capacity of their peers at COEs in that work.**

* Geographic leads are therefore not intended to be “vendors” who directly serve school districts within the geographic area.
* The exception is where direct support for a school district is what a COE needs or, due to relational dynamics between a COE and a school district, having a third party engaged would be helpful.
* Even then, the approach of the geographic leads should be designed to build capacity of the COE to lead that work in the future or to help a COE and district improve working relationships.

### Community Engagement Initiative

The CDE and the CCEE has selected and the Executive Director of the SBE has approved the San Bernardino COE with the California Association for Bilingual Education and Families in Schools to co-administer the CEI with the CCEE. The goals of the community engagement lead are to foster meaningful stakeholder engagement, especially as it relates to the school district local control and accountability plan development process, and to build capacity in communities and school districts to have meaningful and, at times, difficult conversations with each other focused on improving outcomes for pupils. The participants in the CEI will include teams of community members, pupils, school site staff and leadership, school district staff and leadership, and COE staff and leadership for a common single school district. The community engagement lead agency and the CCEE will establish professional learning networks of these teams to identify, document, and disseminate best practices in community engagement.

Four key roles for the community engagement lead agency are:

1. **Facilitate** successful partnerships within and among these teams.
2. **Connect** participants to resources.
3. **Build local capacity** and mentor others interested in developing community engagement activities.
4. Demonstrate successful **community engagement** practices.

### Special Education Resource Leads Process

The CDE and CCEE jointly select between 6 and 10 Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs) to serve as special education resource leads (SELPA Leads). The SELPA Leads will be of two types:

* SELPA System Improvement Leads (three or four), which focus on processes.
* SELPA Content Leads (no more than seven), which focus on specific areas: inclusive environments, quality curriculum and instruction, preschool, transition services, increasing graduation rates, reducing suspensions and expulsions, family engagement, reducing disproportionality, and English learners.

Responsibilities include working with COEs to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. At least three resource leads must focus directly on building SELPA capacity statewide to work with COEs. Applications were due October 26, 2018, and grantees will be announced on November 26, 2018.

### Early Math Resource Lead Process

The early math resource lead will focus on students in pre-Kindergarten through grade three. The early math resource lead’s work will include the development, identification, and distribution of early math resources; professional learning and coaching for educators; and mathematical learning opportunities for children. It must be developed and implemented within the system of support. Applications are due November 16, 2018, and grantees will be announced November 29, 2018.

### **School Climate Lead Agency–Multi-Tiered System of Support**

The Orange County Department of Education and Butte COE were appointed by the Legislature in AB 1808 as the MTSS lead agency. Responsibilities include expanding the state’s MTSS framework to foster a positive school climate in both academic and behavioral areas, including, but not limited to, positive behavior interventions and support, minimizing the use of emergency interventions, restorative justice, bullying prevention, social and emotional learning, trauma-informed practice, and cultural competency.

### Title III English Learner Specialist Lead Agency

The Title III English Learner Specialist lead agency is one of the 11 English Learner Specialists. The specialists are designated to provide technical assistance on English learner programs. San Diego COE was designated by their members to be the lead agency and participate in the formal communication process to promote alignment of their activities with the system of support.

### Equity Lead Agencies

The California Equity Performance and Improvement Program lead agencies were announced on April 20, 2018. The two agencies are Santa Clara COE and San Diego COE. The responsibilities include promoting equity in California’s public schools by supporting and building capacity within COEs, LEAs, and schools.

### Formal Communication Process

The recently enacted state budget includes a number of provisions that reflect, or in some cases codify, the SBE’s work to implement Local Control Funding Formula, particularly around the system of support.

As noted in prior SBE’s materials, the budget package clarified roles and responsibilities of different agencies in providing support and established several new roles with specific responsibilities aimed at building capacity of support providers and ensuring access to a broad range expertise within the system of support.

In conjunction with these changes, the legislature added requirements for formal processes for communication among the different agencies responsible for providing support and ensuring stakeholders are engaged to inform each entity’s work:

* “The department and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence shall establish a formal process to ensure that the department, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, and the geographic lead agencies communicate with each other regularly.”
* “The department and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence shall establish a process for the department, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, and the geographic lead agencies to engage with stakeholders to inform each entity’s work within the statewide system of support established by Section 52059.5.”

The CDE and CCEE are working with SBE staff to finalize the details around these processes for the 2019 calendar year. Below is an overview of the approach:

* Stakeholder Process: Maintain the System of Support Planning Group
* Expand to include lead agencies funded through the recent state budget
* Shift to quarterly meetings
* Consider opportunities to schedule in conjunction with other meetings where participants will already be present
* Formal Communication Process: Utilize System of Support Planning Group meetings as opportunity for lead agencies to share information and gather stakeholder input across focus areas
  + One or more additional full-day session with all leads, the day before or after the full Planning Group meeting, to plan for activities in conjunction with annual California School Dashboard release and/or late spring to debrief on prior year activities and plan for upcoming school year
  + As needed check-ins among “like” leads to coordinate work (e.g., all geographic leads; all Special Education Resource Leads)
* Formal Feedback Plan: Utilize feedback gathering as opportunity for broad stakeholder feedback and area for discussion and reflection among leads within the formal communication process

Because communication is a central role for all lead agencies, these meetings will be augmented by efficient, focused communication among its members. All lead agencies will be encouraged to discuss issues as they surface and to engage all members in these discussions. Planning is underway to develop systems for using online conferencing and collaboration tools to allow lead agencies to communicate about actual situations quickly.

An initial face-to-face meeting of all leads is being planned for January 2019 to facilitate this interagency communication.

# Attachment 3: System of Support Communications Plan

This attachment provides information about the system of support communications workgroup.

## System of Support Communications Work Group

### Representation

* Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)
* California School Board Association (CSBA)
* California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)
* California Department of Education (CDE)
* State Board of Education (SBE)
* WestEd
* Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation (CDE Foundation)

### Goals

* Build awareness, clarity, and support for the system of support.
* Build cohesion and collaboration in communications outreach efforts.

### Key Messages

#### **Tailoring Support to Local Needs and Context**

* Local education communities know best how to address local needs.
* California is too big and too diverse for one-size-fits-all approaches—each district has distinct issues that require unique approaches.
* Through the system of support, California agencies and partners are leveraging existing relationships to provide support that is more responsive.

#### **Promoting Local Ownership of the Process and Outcomes to Build Capacity**

* California is empowering all local stakeholders to examine data, engage in discussions, and make changes that improve schools for all students.

#### **Closing Achievement and Opportunity Gaps**

* The system of support gives each district the unique support they need to understand and address the underlying causes of achievement gaps.

#### **Encouraging a Shift in Mindset, not Quick Fixes**

* Past approaches to improving classroom learning focused on short-term problem solving rather than making lasting system-wide changes.
* The system of support is focused on continuous improvement—reviewing and refining practices and policies to bring about improvement that can be sustained.

### Strategies

* Presentations and information sharing at education conferences
* Articles shared through education news outlets and agency magazines or e-newsletters
* Podcasts, webinars, and videos hosted by agencies
* Presentations at agency membership meetings
* Information shared and re-shared through social media channels

# Attachment 4: System of Support Year Two Feedback Plan

## California’s Statewide System of Support: Formal Feedback Plan

This attachment reflects the final version of the feedback plan, which was presented and refined based on feedback from the August and October 2018 System of Support Planning Group meetings.

### Background[[1]](#footnote-2)

Beginning in the spring of 2017, the State of California officially launched its efforts to design, develop, and deploy the state’s system of support to offer resources, guidance, and tools to school districts[[2]](#footnote-3) and schools as they seek to improve the educational outcomes of students. While some groups within state agencies and other intermediary organizations had begun elements of this work, California set out to pull together all the state agencies or organizations with a role or responsibility for coordinating support to school districts and schools into a System of Support Planning Group. These agencies and organizations included the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), and county offices of education (COEs) operating collectively through the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), and the California State Board of Education (SBE). Over time, these state agencies and organizations were joined by other education associations, education advocacy organizations, and practitioners as a means to collect meaningful feedback into the strategies being developed under the system of support.

Feedback became an early and important theme for leaders from the state-level organizations who recognized that in order to improve their own work, it was important to hear from those “on the front lines” doing this work. This strategy of collecting feedback from the field and using it as a tool for continuous improvement is supported by research. A recently-released publication *Getting Down to Facts II* on Continuous Improvement in California suggests that the work of improvement requires the engagement of stakeholders across the system, particularly those closest to the work. Moreover, frontline workers should be viewed “not only as the recipients of change but as key to learning how to get innovations to work” and “Managers are responsible for supporting this local learning and developing problem-solving capabilities” (Grunow, Hough, Park, Willis & Krausen, 2018).

Planning group members also recognized that if state agencies espoused the need for districts to collect data as a means to identify areas of improvement then they, themselves, should be engaging in similar activities. Consequently, the System of Support Planning Group has begun to organize their work around a continuous improvement approach. This includes incorporation of the elements of an effective support system outlined in the recently released research brief on the system of support, *Always Room for Improvement*. Specifically, the report notes that:

Effective support systems should do the following: promote coherence at all levels; fit assistance to the context; foster the agency of local actors; ensure support providers have sufficient capacity to provide high-quality assistance, and create vehicles for ongoing improvement, both at the local level and for the support system itself (Massengale, Knudson & O’Day, 2018).

In addition to the feedback collected during the bi-monthly planning group sessions another vital source of feedback for state agencies and other stakeholders was through surveys and groups’ responses to questions about the system of support. Beginning in early 2018, various state agencies, with support from the California Comprehensive Center (CA CC) at WestEd, began to collect data about the first year of implementation of the system of support. However, efforts to collect data on the first year of the system of support were not coordinated under a clear feedback plan. Furthermore, much of the feedback collected was related to the support provided to school districts identified for differentiated assistance rather than the system as a whole. The feedback focused on five general areas:

1. Successes in Year One: describes areas in which respondents felt that the system of support was positively contributing to growth and advancement in supporting school districts.
2. Areas for Improvement Identified during Year One: describes areas that respondents felt that the system of support needs to respond to in order to better support school districts and COEs.
3. Recommendations: describes respondents’ suggestions for strategies and actions that should be taken by state agencies and other actors in the system of support in the near to immediate future.
4. Themes across School District Root Cause Analysis: describes common areas identified during Root Cause Analysis phase of differentiated assistance as a result of districts working with COEs.
5. Improving Communication within the System of Support: describes feedback received from respondents for how stakeholders can work together to ensure clear communication of messages, actions, and results throughout the system of support (e.g., from the state agency heads to staff engaged with supporting school districts).

Analysis of these data was presented at the June 2018 planning group meeting. The response to the analysis from planning group members was overwhelmingly positive because it provided information to members to guide improvement efforts for Year Two implementation, including recommendations on how to improve the way support for school districts is structured and areas for further focus. For example, some county superintendents identified the need to restructure staffing in their offices to dedicate more staff time to the differentiated assistance process, while others identified the need to focus on adjustments to their timeline for reaching out to districts identified for differentiated assistance due to the challenge of scheduling meetings with teams of district leaders. State agencies identified their own areas for improvement. These focus areas included the need for continued support for COEs as they build capacity to serve as support providers and partners with districts, and the need to improve communication about the system of support, to develop a common language to describe the work and to support shifts in mindset away from differentiated assistance as a compliance exercise to an opportunity to accelerate improvement.

In addition, the planning group identified the need to create more coordinated and tighter cycles of data collection, analysis, and reflection to support ongoing improvement in the system of support. This need drove the development of the formal feedback plan outlined in the following sections, designed to more systematically provide opportunities to connect insights from the data to changes in structures and strategies developed by state and county actors. As such, the system of support planning group called for a feedback plan where the collection and analysis of data are designed to drive improvement, or actionable steps in the system (Hough, Byun & Mulfinger, 2018). Accordingly, the System of Support Planning Group intends to engage in “improvement research” to develop the knowledge to accelerate and improve the delivery of support for school districts agencies as they work to improve student outcomes (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu). As part of this effort, some of the state agencies and membership organizations represented in the planning group will take a more active role in the collection and analysis of data to inform improvement.

### Formal Feedback Plan Proposal

To support continuous improvement, the planning group recommended the development of a formal plan to gather feedback on the system of support in the 2018-19 and subsequent school years. Therefore, this feedback plan proposal provides an overview of data collection and analysis based on recommendations from the planning group. The feedback plan may be expanded if additional resources are identified to support this effort. Importantly, the feedback plan is built around a two-way communication model. Almost all of the opportunities for data collection from the field are coupled with a presentation on current developments in the system of support. Therefore, district and county leaders are given an opportunity to respond and provide input on current developments before they are fully operationalized.

### Purpose

The purpose of the feedback plan is to capture data about the development, design, and early stages of the system of support to provide CDE and planning group members with timely and relevant information to inform necessary adjustments to the system, and ensure it is accomplishing its goal. Implementation data from the field will be examined in combination with student outcome data analyzed by CDE. A formal feedback plan will systematize the collection of data from the field so that these efforts are coordinated and avoid overburdening school district leaders and educators with requests for participation in surveys and interviews. In addition, the feedback plan is intended to more systematically provide information about the work of the System of Support Planning Group to key stakeholders. In other words, the feedback plan is intended to more strategically create two-way communication for the System of Support Planning Group and the agencies and organizations they represent. For example, the timeline includes opportunities for system of support planning members to share current information on the work of the planning group at the Curriculum and Instructional Steering Committee (CISC) and CCSESA General Membership Meetings and at the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Leadership Assembly at the same time that they collect data from COE and school district leaders about their experience with the system.

### Theory of Action

The feedback plan is built around a theory of action that achieving improved student outcomes (the ultimate goal) rests on the ability to build the capacity of individuals/organizations (short-term outcomes).

**Figure 1. Proposed System of Support Theory of Action**

| Core Strategies | Short-term Outcomes | Long-term Outcomes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * A coordinated approach to systems improvement with additional resources * Cross-agency collaboration * Formal feedback plan * Context-specific technical assistance with local discretion over improvement * Identify and measure capacity building | * Increased capacity at COEs to support local educational agencies (LEAs) and to model a culture of improvement * Increased LEA capacity to lead, implement, and sustain improvement efforts * Increased instructional capacity at the school level | * Individuals, systems, and structures that support mutual accountability and continuous improvement * A continuous improvement culture and mindset * A disciplined approach to improvement * Improved student outcomes |

The process of change in the education system, given the size and scale of California’s public school system, can feel overwhelming at times. Over the last five years, there have been substantial changes across California’s education system, including changes in standards and curriculum with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter-Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) standardized tests; changes in funding via the Local Control Funding Formula; changes in governance, monitoring, and oversight via the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), and system of support; and an Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan that is aligned with this new accountability system. It has been widely acknowledged that it will take time for these state level policy changes to impact student outcomes. In the meantime, it is necessary to identify how these policy changes are impacting structures and practices at the state, county, and school level, and whether those shifts are—in the intermediary—increasing the capacity of system leaders to effect change. Therefore, ongoing data collection for the system of support, before causal inferences can be made about the system’s impact, must focus on interim measures such as how implementation is changing the practices and structures of system actors and how it is increasing instructional, organizational, and leadership capacity as interim measures of change.

To this end, data will be collected to provide insight into whether the system of support (and the state and local agencies involved) are progressively moving to realize the short-term outcomes and what contribution the core strategies have been making towards those short-term outcomes. More specifically, data will be collected on:

1. **Shifts in the way COEs and other support providers structure and deploy support for school districts**, including data on the capacity of county leaders to provide technical assistance to district leaders in their improvement efforts (see capacity-building framework) and data on the systems and structures in place at the county level to support improvement in student outcomes in school districts.
2. **The System of Support Planning Group demonstrates the five elements of collective impact**[[3]](#footnote-4) including the collection of data on system of support design, implementation, and communication (with a particular focus on what is working well, the types of support that are most valuable, and what needs improvement).
3. **Shifts in districts’ practice** **as a direct result of the support provided by county, state, and other support providers**, including data on the capacity of district leaders to improve their systems, with a focus on changes that address root causes (see capacity-building framework) and data on the systems and structures in place at the district level to support improvement in student outcomes in school districts.
4. **Shifts in identification for differentiated assistance**. These data will be analyzed by the CDE. (See Appendix A for more information).

The CA CC will work in coordination with the CDE and the CCEE to collect and analyze multiple sources of data as a way to triangulate the findings across data sources. Based on the findings, the CA CC will provide a set of recommendations for how to improve support for COEs and school districts under the system of support in the following year. These recommendations will be included in a feedback plan report that will be presented during summer 2019 to the planning group and in the fall to the SBE.

### Survey Data

To build on the feedback collected in Year One of the system of support, data will be collected from COE and school leaders, community members and leaders from education associations, and planning group members, through an online survey. The COE survey will be designed in partnership with county leaders—with input from the county capacity work group and feedback from the full planning group—to surface statewide trends in the overall implementation of the system of support and how it is impacting the structure of support. The school district survey will be designed in partnership with district leaders, with input from the county capacity work group and feedback from the full planning group. The CA CC will administer the surveys with help from partners in the System of Support Planning Group. All planning group members will be asked to take an active role in promoting participation in the surveys. The table below outlines the survey content for each of these four stakeholder groups.

| **Survey Question Clusters** | COE Leaders and Staff | School District Leaders | Planning Group Members | Ed. Assoc./ Ed. Advocates |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Successes in the current year | x | x | x | x |
| Challenges in the current year | x | x | x | x |
| Recommendations for improvement | x | x | x | x |
| Identification of school districts that need additional support beyond what the COE can provide | x |  |  |  |
| Steps in the process to get to the root cause | x | x |  |  |
| Steps taken to increase internal capacity to support districts identified for Level 2[[4]](#footnote-5) | x |  |  | x |
| COE strategies to provide Level 2 support for the implementation of actions[[5]](#footnote-6) | x | x |  |  |
| District willingness and ability to implement the actions identified through Level 2 support | x | x |  |  |
| Changes to COE or district systems to support improvement efforts | x | x |  |  |
| Changes to COE or district processes to support improvement efforts | x | x |  |  |
| Root causes identified (based on document analysis) | x | x |  |  |
| Sources of information and resources, including connections made to Leads[[6]](#footnote-7) | x |  | x | x |
| Identification of any additional support needed beyond what their COEs can provide |  | x |  |  |
| The focus of their efforts to improve outcomes for students, including: the implementation of actions, the regular review of leading indicators, and the monitoring of actions across the district systems |  | x |  |  |
| Steps taken to increase internal capacity to support students |  | x |  |  |
| Other changes implemented to improve outcomes for student groups identified for support |  | x |  |  |

### Discussion Data

As in Year One, data will be collected from key stakeholders to gather in-depth feedback and, when possible, to allow for course corrections throughout the school year. Stakeholders will consider the following:

1. What went well in the current year of the system of support?
2. What were the biggest challenges?
3. Where are they seeing the biggest changes in the system as a response to their work?
4. Where is change still urgently needed?
5. What recommendations do they have for improving the work of the system of support?

These data will be collected in the spring at the System of Support Planning Group’s in-person meeting, the spring CCSESA General Membership Meeting, the spring ACSA Leadership Meeting, and the spring CISC Membership Meeting. Discussion data will primarily be collected to inform improved implementation. These engagements will also provide updates on the current work of the system of support.

### Document Analysis

To gather information on the most pressing issues facing school districts identified for differentiated assistance, copies of the Strength/Weaknesses letters will be requested that counties or other support providers send to districts after they have gone through the Root Cause Analysis[[7]](#footnote-8) process. Analysis of these documents will provide information on:

* The frequency of specific root causes (and/or strengths and weaknesses) identified statewide
* The types of support, strategies, recommendations, next steps provided in the letter beyond identification of the root cause(s)
* The timing of the provision of the Strengths/Weaknesses letter
* The number of districts working with their COE, CCEE, or another support provider

This information will help the state identify where districts need additional support so that they can plan for the dissemination of resources to meet these needs.

### Key Leadership Interviews

As part of our effort to gather feedback on the system of support, the CA CC will conduct pre- and post-interviews with key leaders on the current year’s work under the system of support in the fall and spring. Interviews will allow us to gather more in-depth information on the successes, challenges, and recommendations of key leaders in the system. It will also allow us to better understand how counties and districts, along with Geographic, Community Engagement, Title III, and Special Education Resource Leads, are directing their efforts to increase capacity. These data may be combined with document analyses to develop case studies of specific districts or county offices of education. Individual interviews will be conducted with the following key leaders:[[8]](#footnote-9)

* Four executive staff members from the CDE
* One representative from the CCSESA
* Three COE leaders
* One representative from the CCEE
* One staff member from the SBE
* One representative from the ACSA
* One representative from the California Association of School Business Officials
* One executive leader from Special Education Local Plan Area
* One representative from Ed Trust-West
* One representative from Californians for Justice
* One representative from Children Now
* One representative from Families in Schools
* One representative from Capitol Advisors representing the Small School Districts Association

### Timeline for Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

| Month/Year | Date | Meeting/Data Source | Focus of Data Collection[[9]](#footnote-10) | Data Type |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| September 2018 | 9/6-7 | SBE Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support. | Discussion Data |
| September 2018 | 9/13 | CISC General Membership Meeting | Collect discussion data to inform October System of Support Meeting on Level 1 Support. | Discussion Data |
| October 2018 | 10/3 | System of Support Planning Group Meeting | Report data from CISC meeting on Level 1 support. | Data Reporting |
| October 2018 | 10/10 | ACSA Accountability Task Force | Collect discussion data on Level 1 support. | Discussion Data |
| October 2018 | 10/15-16 | CCSESA General Membership Meeting | Collect discussion data on recent developments in the system of support. | Discussion Data |
| October 2018 | Dates TBD | Interviews with key leaders | Interviews will be conducted to inform the current year’s work and as a point of comparison for interviews in the spring. | Interview Data |
| November 2018 | 11/8-9 | SBE Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support. | Data Reporting |
| November 2018 | 11/15-16 | CISC General Membership Meeting | Collect discussion data to inform December System of Support Meeting on deployment of support for districts identified in Year Two. | Discussion Data |
| November 2018 | Late November | Analysis of Year Two Identification Data | Identification data will be used to compare districts identified for differentiated assistance from Year One to Year Two. This analysis will be conducted by CDE. | Dashboard Data |
| December 2018 | 12/7 | System of Support Planning Group Meeting | Report data from CISC meeting on Year Two identification. Present initial analysis of Year Two identification data. | Data Reporting |
| January 2019 | 1/9-10 | SBE Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support. | Data Reporting |
| January 2019 | Date TBD | Meet with Leads | Discuss their plans for data collection to measure impact. Request to use these data for the Year Two report. | Planning |
| January 2019 | 1/17-18 | CISC General Membership Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support and collect discussion data. | Discussion Data |
| January 2019 | 1/29-30 | CCSESA General Membership Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support and collect discussion data. | Discussion Data |
| January 2019 | 1/30 | ACSA Superintendent Council | Report current developments on the system of support and collect discussion data. | Discussion Data |
| February 2019 | Date TBD | System of Support Planning Group Meeting | Report data from CISC and CCSESA on Level 3 support. | Data Reporting |
| February 2019 | 2/21 | ACSA Leadership Assembly | Report current developments on the system of support and collect discussion data to inform April System of Support Meeting. Discuss upcoming survey. | Discussion Data |
| March 2019 | 3/13-14 | SBE Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support. | Data Reporting |
| March 2019 | 3/21-22 | CISC General Membership Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support and collect discussion data to inform April System of Support Meeting. | Discussion Data |
| March 2019 | March-June | Survey of school district leaders | Analysis will include a comparison to Year One responses. | Survey Data |
| March 2019 | March-June | Survey of COE leaders on Level 2 | Analysis will include a comparison to Year One responses. | Survey Data |
| April 2019 | 4/8-9 | CCSESA General Membership Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support and collect discussion data to inform April System of Support Meeting. | Discussion Data |
| April 2019 | Date TBD | System of Support Planning Group Meeting | Report data from CISC & CCSESA on Level 3 support. Survey planning group members on Year Two implementation. | Survey Data |
| April 2019 | Dates TBD | Survey of education association and education advocates | Survey administration and design will be in partnership with education associations represented on the System of Support Planning Group. | Survey Data |
| May 2019 | 5/8-9 | SBE Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support. | Data Reporting |
| May 2019 | 5/9 | ACSA Leadership Assembly | Report current developments on the system of support and collect discussion data to inform June System of Support Meeting. | Discussion Data |
| May 2019 | 5/16-17 | CISC General Membership Meeting | Present preliminary analysis of Year Two feedback data; collect discussion data on Year Three planning. | Discussion Data |
| May 2019 | May-June | Follow-up interviews with key leaders | Data gathering on key issues; analysis will include a comparison to Fall 2018 responses. These interviews may be used as one of the primary data sources for case studies of school districts and/or COEs. | Interview Data |
| May 2019 | May-June | Analyze COE Strengths/Weaknesses Letters | Data will be reviewed for root causes identified; timing of letters. | Document Review |
| June 2019 | 6/24-25 | CCSESA General Membership Meeting | Present preliminary analysis of Year Two feedback data; collect discussion data on Year Three planning. | Discussion Data |
| June 2019 | Date TBD | System of Support Planning Group Meeting | Present preliminary analysis of Year Two feedback data; collect discussion data on Year Three planning. | Report Data; discussion data |
| July 2019 | 7/10-11 | SBE Meeting | Report current developments on the system of support. | Data Reporting |
| July 2019 | Date TBD | Meet with Leads | Collect interim data for inclusion in the Year Two report. | TBD/TBC |
| August 2019 | Date TBD | Finalize report on Year 2 | The CA CC will take the lead with input from planning group members. | Data Reporting |

\* The proposed timeline of data collection and updates to the field, including the specific engagements with membership organizations, may be subject to change based on the feedback needed to guide Year Two implementation.

## Appendix A: Dashboard Data/System of Support Identification Data

Each year, the California Department of Education (CDE) will generate descriptive statistics on the number of school districts identified for differentiated assistance and, once districts have been identified for Level 3 support in 2019-20, the number of districts identified for Level 3 support. This analysis will include comparisons to previous years as a way to monitor and report on changes in identification by student group and by Dashboard indicator. The analysis will include attention to changes in the indicators from year to year (e.g., chronic absenteeism) as well as changes in the way indicators are calculated (e.g., cohort graduation rates). Analyses will include some or all of the following:

* The total number of districts identified for differentiated assistance in the current year compared to previous years.
* The number of new districts identified for differentiated assistance in the current year compared to previous years.
* An analysis of districts by the number of years identified for differentiated assistance (broken down by the number of years identified) in the current year compared to previous years. This will include disaggregation between those districts in differentiated assistance again, but for new or different indicators and/or student groups, and those districts identified for differentiated assistance for the same student groups and indicators.
* The number of districts (and a list of the districts) that are no longer identified for differentiated assistance in the current year compared to previous years.
* The number of districts identified for differentiated assistance by student group and by indicator for the current year and in previous years. This would include analyses of year-to-year changes in student group and indicator identification to determine if there have been reductions/increases/stable identification for particular student groups or indicators.
* A list of the number of districts identified for differentiated assistance by county office of education in the current year compared to previous years.
* The same analyses as described above for districts identified for Level 3 assistance.

1. This work is supported by the California Comprehensive Center through funding from the U.S. Department of Education, PR/Award Number S283B050032. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. The California Comprehensive Center, a partnership of WestEd, American Institutes for Research, and School Services of California, is part of the federal network of 16 Regional Comprehensive Centers. The role of the California Comprehensive Center is to support CDE and other state agencies. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. We refer to school districts throughout this System of Support Year Two feedback plan. However, charter schools will also be eligible for differentiated assistance under the System of Support in future years. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. These five elements are: (1) a common agenda; (2) shared measurement; (3) mutually reinforcing activities; (4) continuous communication; and (5) backbone organization. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Examples include: professional learning for staff in improvement science, including the number that have received additional training; hiring new staff; and shifting staff focus. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. In particular for districts identified in the first year who are now implementing actions, including whether or not they are progress monitoring or tracking leading indicators to see if the actions they have identified and begun implementation of are actually showing early signs of progress/improvement. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Leads refer to the various types of lead COEs identified and funded in the California Governor’s Budget Act of 2019 including the Geographic, Community Engagement, Title III, Equity, Multi-tiered System of Support, Standards (Early Math) and Special Education Resources Leads. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. For more information on the Root Cause Analysis: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/t1/continuousimprovement.asp#NeedsAssessment> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Additional interviews may be conducted with superintendents in districts identified for differentiated assistance, and parents and community members if additional resources are secured. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Each meeting will also include time for information sharing on recent developments across the system. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)