



July 7, 2021

Linda Darling-Hammond, President and
Members of the State Board of Education
State Board of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Via email: SBE@cde.ca.gov

Re: Item #2: California's Draft State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund

Dear President Darling-Hammond and Members of the State Board of Education:

We respectfully submit this letter on behalf of the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee (CISC) of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA).

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input over the past few months on the ESSER III State Plan through both the budget development process as well as other avenues including the recent California Practitioners Advisory Group (CPAG) meeting.

The extensive stakeholder input through the development of existing Local Education Agency (LEA) level plans and the ongoing efforts to consult with and partner with students, parents, families, school and district administrators, teachers, principals, other school staff and bargaining units have provided opportunity for LEAs to understand and respond to local needs.

We support and appreciate the effort to promote coherent planning for LEAs and avoid duplication in the ESSER III Expenditure Plan by allowing LEAs to reference and describe existing plans. The idea that the ESSER III Expenditure Plan will coordinate and align with the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Template as well as other existing plans supports LEAs in thinking and planning strategically for how these funds build on and support existing funding and initiatives. Additionally, we fully support the continuous improvement mindset and the idea that like LEA plans, the State Plan is a living document that can be revised based on future priorities and needs.

The State Plan describes shortages in the current educator workforce as well as strategies for supporting and stabilizing our workforce. We support the expansion of the Classified Credential Grant, Local Solutions Grant, Teacher Residency Grants, and encourage future funding opportunities to develop and implement innovative teacher preparation programs, including those offered by County Offices of Education (COEs). Especially important now are programs to train and certificate early educators, specifically Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teachers given the expansion of Universal TK.

Ideas for Consideration

We support and encourage opportunities to highlight in the state plan the focused work to coordinate a system of support which includes strong partnership and collaboration with COEs. Sharing specific examples of the strategic partnership with COEs will strengthen the plan and provide context for how we as a state utilize the county office structure and network to support and provide technical assistance for LEAs, thereby better meeting the needs of students and families. The following are just a few examples of the partnership with COEs:

Guidance to LEAs to Support the Safe Return to In Person Learning: Through the process of providing guidance and supporting the safe return to in person learning, The Governor's Office and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) partnered with COEs to distribute personal protective equipment (PPE). Additionally, regular video calls with County Superintendents, CCSESA staff, CDPH, State Board of Education (SBE) staff and California Department of Education (CDE) have been and will continue to be an instrumental feedback loop for policies, procedures, challenges and barriers. This close communication ensures a safe return to in person learning.

Addressing Accelerated Learning Needs: CCSESA has organized a cross agency work-group which includes SBE staff, CDE, California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) as well as representatives from over fifteen COEs across the state. This workgroup is focusing on four primary work-streams related to Accelerated Learning: 1) Statewide Professional Learning 2) Community of Practice 3) Learning Acceleration Messaging 4) Resource Consolidation

As we consider how to best maximize state-level funds to support students, there is a large focus in the State Plan on expanded learning opportunities. While we support this as one strategy we would encourage the plan to highlight and describe additional evidence based interventions that can be implemented outside of expanded learning programs, including accelerated learning. Specifically, describing which evidence based programs (other than expanded learning) will best address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain groups of students.

Thank you for your leadership and support for California's public schools and students. We appreciate your consideration of our comments and look forward to a continued partnership.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Hicks, Assistant Superintendent Educational Services, Placer County Office of Education
Chair, CISC

Cc:

Brooks Allen, Executive Director, SBE
Sara Pietrowski, Policy Consultant, SBE
Stephanie Gregson, Chief Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education (CDE)
Rachael Maves, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, CDE