



# Bridging California Connections

A Quarterly Publication by California's Geographic Lead Areas

SUMMER 2021

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## GEOGRAPHIC LEAD AGENCY LEGISLATIVE AUTHORIZATION

Assembly Bill 1808 appropriated \$4 million to establish the California Geographic Lead Agencies to build the capacity of county offices of education (COEs), to ensure that counties are equipped to build the capacity of their 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, and address the gaps in achievement between student groups as defined in *EC* Section 52052 in alignment with the California System of Support.

## PURPOSE OF GEOGRAPHIC LEAD AGENCIES

There are seven (7) Geographic Lead Areas led by nine (9) Geographic Lead Agencies (Geo Leads). The Geo Leads are responsible for building the capacity of COEs to ensure that counties are equipped to build the capacity of their LEAs to support the continuous improvement of student performance within the eight Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) state priorities.

Geo Leads:

- Assist in building the capacity of county offices of education within the geographic lead agency's defined geographic area to provide effective assistance and support to school districts under the state priorities and federal programs.
- Provide assistance and support if another county office of education within the geographic lead agency's defined geographic area is unable to provide appropriate assistance and support to one or more school districts in that county office of education's boundaries, or at the request of a school district or county superintendent of schools.
- Develop new resources and activities, designed to build capacity within school districts and county offices of education across the state under the state priorities or other areas of identified need upon request by the California Department of Education (CDE) and California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE).
- Identify existing resources, professional development activities, and other efforts currently available within its designated geographic area to assist school districts and county offices of education to improve outcomes under the state, and upon request, share information about these existing resources.
- Coordinate and calibrate assistance and support provided to LEAs within its defined geographic area and with other geographic lead agencies, expert lead agencies, special education resources lead agencies, CCEE, and CDE.
- Perform other duties as specified by CDE and CCEE.

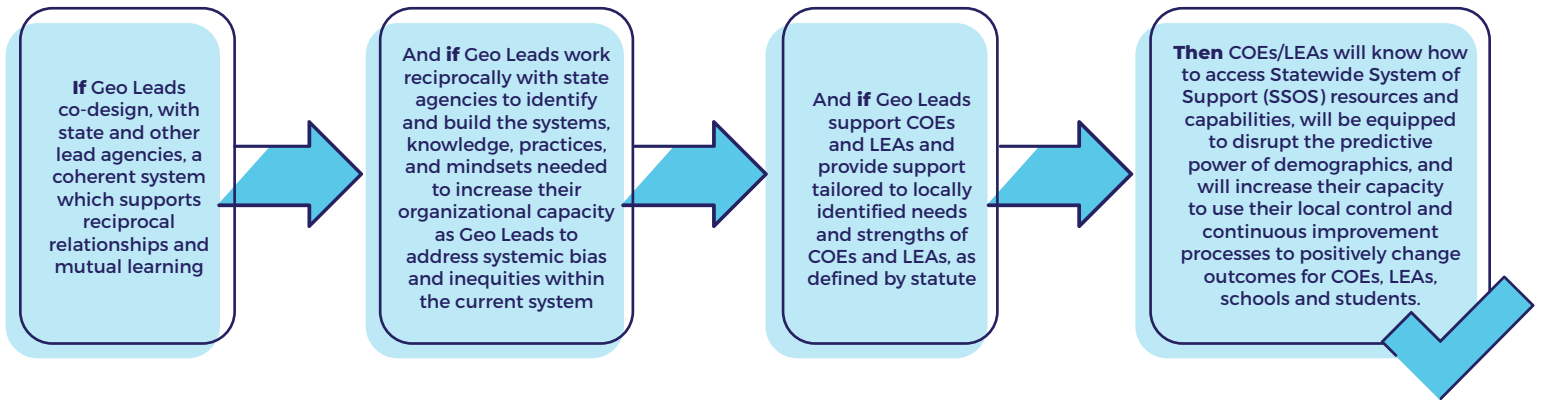
The Geographic Lead Agencies also connect COEs to the other initiatives within California's System of Support.

## GEOGRAPHIC LEAD AREAS AND AGENCIES

- BAY AREA CONSORTIUM FOR STUDENT SUCCESS (BACSS)**  
**ALAMEDA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (LEAD)**  
**Counties Served:** Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano  
**Contact:** Ingrid Roberson, Acting Associate Superintendent, District and School Support  
[ingridr@acoe.org](mailto:ingridr@acoe.org) | (510) 670-4201
- CAPITAL, CENTRAL, FOOTHILLS AREA CONSORTIUM (CCFAC)**  
**PLACER AND SACRAMENTO COUNTY OFFICES OF EDUCATION (CO-LEADS)**  
**Counties Served:** Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sierra, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba  
**Contacts:** Jennifer Hicks, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
[jhicks@placercoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:jhicks@placercoe.k12.ca.us) | (530) 745-1488  
 Nancy Herota, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent | [nherota@scoe.net](mailto:nherota@scoe.net) | (916) 228-2226
- FAR NORTH PARTNERSHIP (FNP)**  
**SHASTA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (LEAD)**  
**Counties Served:** Butte, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity  
**Contact:** Wendy Hall, Director of Continuous Improvement and Support, Professional Learning and Leadership Support Services | [whall@shastacoe.org](mailto:whall@shastacoe.org) | (530) 225-0242
- MID-STATE COLLABORATIVE (MSC)**  
**TULARE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (LEAD)**  
**Counties Served:** Inyo, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Stanislaus, Tulare  
**Contact:** Andrea Perez, Assistant Superintendent, District Support Services  
[andrea.perez@tcoe.org](mailto:andrea.perez@tcoe.org) | (559) 302-3633 x 3109  
<https://sites.google.com/view/midstatecollaborative/mid-state-collaborative>
- NORTH BAY / NORTH COAST COLLABORATIVE (NB/NCC)**  
**SONOMA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (LEAD)**  
**Counties Served:** Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma  
**Contact:** Jennie Snyder, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent, Instructional Services  
[jsnyder@scoe.org](mailto:jsnyder@scoe.org) | (707) 524-2786
- SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (SOCAL) SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (SOS)**  
**RIVERSIDE AND SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICES OF EDUCATION (CO-LEADS)**  
**Counties Served:** Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego  
**Contacts:** Amanda Corridan, Chief Academic Officer, Educational Services | [acorridan@rcoe.us](mailto:acorridan@rcoe.us) | (951) 826-6648  
 Jeanette Chien, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent, Learning and Leadership Services  
[jeanette.chien@sdcoe.net](mailto:jeanette.chien@sdcoe.net) | (858) 298-2008  
<http://bit.ly/SoCalSoS>
- VALLEY TO COAST COLLABORATIVE (VALCO)**  
**KERN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (LEAD)**  
**Counties Served:** Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura  
**Contact:** Lisa Gilbert, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent, Instructional Services  
[ligilbert@kern.org](mailto:ligilbert@kern.org) | (661) 636-4631  
[www.valley2coast.org](http://www.valley2coast.org)



## GEOGRAPHIC LEAD AGENCIES' THEORY OF ACTION



## CALIFORNIA SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

California's system of support is one of the main components of California's accountability and continuous improvement system.

### Goal of the California System of Support

The primary goal of California's system of support is to assist LEAs and their schools in meeting the needs of each student they serve, with a focus on building local capacity to sustain improvement and to effectively address disparities in opportunities and outcomes.

The purpose of California's system of support, expressed in California Education Code (EC) Section 52095.5(b), is to build the capacity of LEAs in each of the following areas:

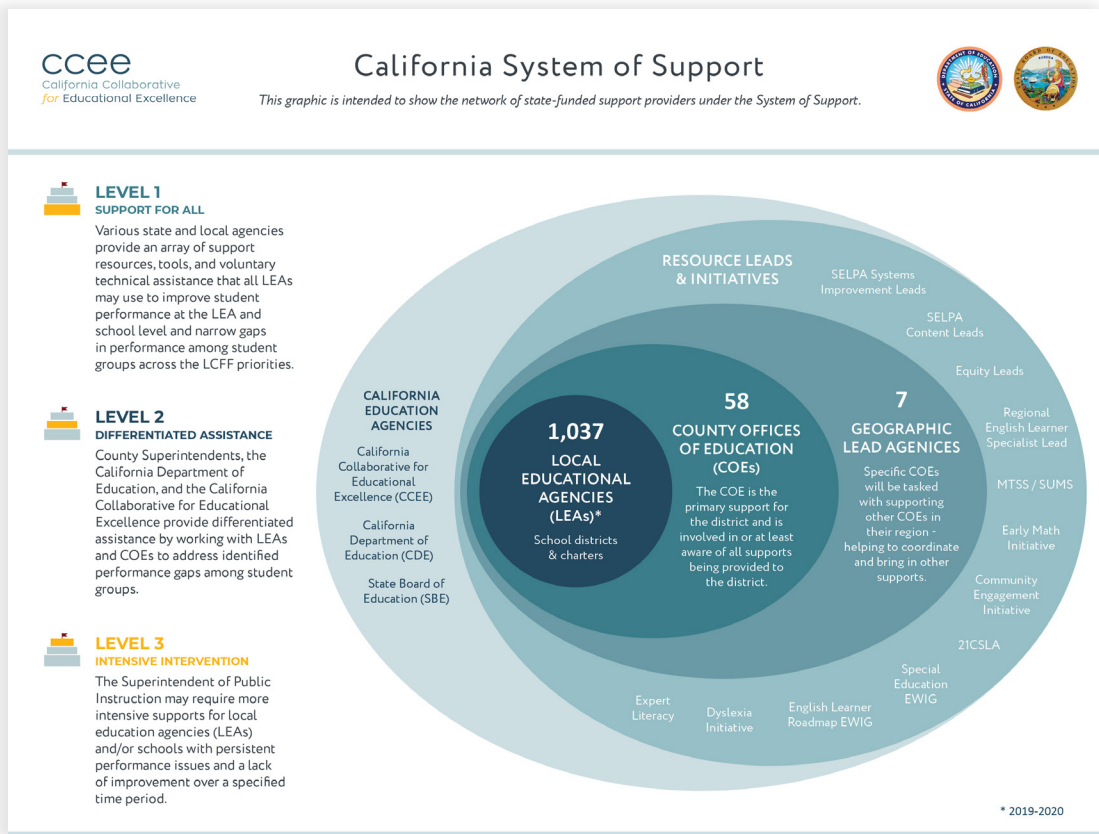
1. Support the continuous improvement of student performance within the state priorities across student groups as defined in EC Sections 52060(d) and 52066(d).
2. Address the gaps in achievement between student groups as defined in EC Section 52052.
3. Improve outreach and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that goals, actions, and services described in school district and COEs local control and accountability plans reflect the needs of students and the community, especially for historically underrepresented or low-achieving groups.

### Levels of Support

California's system of support provides three levels of support to LEAs and schools. The first level, general assistance, is made up of resources and assistance that are available to all LEAs and schools. The second level of assistance, Differentiated Assistance (DA), is targeted support that is available to LEAs that meet the eligibility requirements set by the State Board of Education. The third level of support, Intensive Intervention, may be provided to LEAs that are identified as having persistent performance issues and a lack of improvement in three out of four consecutive school years.

"California's System of Support." *California Department of Education*, [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/tl/csss.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/tl/csss.asp).





"California System of Support." California Collaborative for Educational Excellence.

## COLLABORATION

### CAPITAL, CENTRAL, FOOTHILLS AREA CONSORTIUM (CCFAC) DATA HUDDLE WORK

**Geo Lead Area: Capital, Central, Foothills Area Consortium**

**Geo Lead Agencies: Placer County Office of Education and Sacramento County Office of Education**

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

Beginning in the spring of 2020, the Capital, Central, Foothills Area Consortium (CCFAC) huddle members were working to find opportunities to provide support for COE teams (and the districts that they serve) around the effective use of data. After the administration of a geographic area survey, they found that timely access to accurate data was a challenge for COEs and districts and it was affecting the ability of COEs to respond to challenges (especially due to COVID-19) and to support LEAs with various accountability needs (Local Control and Accountability Plans, Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan development, staffing analysis, etc.).

After a close review of the Forecast5 Analytics 5Sight portal, the huddle recommended that CCFAC purchase the product, build geographic area capacity through professional development and began to organize ongoing training for COE teams. Huddle members completed a data literacy

course through Columbia University in order to become better equipped to support fellow CCFAC members. Training has been offered synchronously and asynchronously, and was developed in collaboration with colleagues at Riverside County Office of Education.

Professional learning is focused on getting COE users familiar with both Forecast5 as well as overall data literacy. While not all users need to be "data experts," they do need to know how to best access data. CCFAC hopes that the 5Sight portal will be a regularly used tool across various departments in the COEs. Training topics include: Introduction to 5Sight, Basics in 5Sight, 5Sight for Advanced Users, Using 5Sight for Alternative Metrics in the LCAP, and job specific training (personnel/human resources, financial data, academic data for content experts and academic data for data experts).

MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:  
BUILDING OUR CAPACITY TO SUPPORT LEAS IN VALLEY TO COAST COLLABORATIVE (VALCO)

**Geo Lead Area: Valley to Coast Collaborative**

**Geo Lead Agency: Kern County Office of Education**

**Lisa Gilbert, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent, Instructional Services, Kern County Office of Education**

Over the past three years, the Valley to Coast Collaborative (VALCO), composed of Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura County Offices of Education, has combined to share best practices and learn together to build capacity to support LEAs in their efforts to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

In addition to completing a continuous improvement process, which identified a collective problem of practice focused on supporting students with disabilities, VALCO has committed the three additional activities to better support LEAs in their efforts to support students with disabilities.

The first two opportunities were open to all VALCO members and funded by the Geo Lead grant. These professional learnings included a three-part series with the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and two four-day sessions with the Center for Systems Awareness. Additionally, three COEs within VALCO partnered with several other COEs for the California Coalition for Inclusive Literacy Grant (CCIL). These COEs include Fresno, Kern, and Los Angeles from VALCO, joining with Placer, San Joaquin, and Santa Clara.

Our partnership with NIRN and the University of South Carolina has opened up a number of tools and learning opportunities. Often, implementation is where teams struggle due to the complexity of system change. After discussion with the VALCO team, it was decided that we would partner with NIRN to collaborate and work around the implementation steps of the action plan specifically. The learning reinforced much of our work, and also assisted teams in identifying areas of implementation (including fit, readiness, and timing) that needed to be re-considered. The partnership is allowing us access to a variety of constructs and methods to support short, intermediate, and long-term implementation of our VALCO action plan. Our short-term outcomes focus on awareness and knowledge of resources that adults will need to have to effect change for our students with disabilities. The intermediate outcomes are centered upon professional learning and process changes to allow full access to curriculum and support for students with disabilities. The long-term outcomes are focused on improved student results on Dashboard and local student outcome data of our students with disabilities. This three-phase focus will assist our future planning to change knowledge, practice, and finally outcomes.

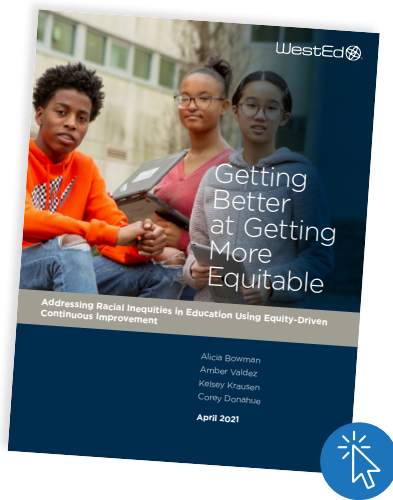


VALCO continues to work together to apply these resources to our implementation plan. As a group, we are seeing our short-term outcomes coming to reality as we continue to apply the learning. Our

collaboration and learning with Compassionate Systems from the Center for Systems Awareness was driven by the need to build capacity to adapt the system to meet the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs of all students and recognizing that students with disabilities needs will be more acute. With a historically high suspension and absence rate and the effects of the pandemic, students with disabilities will need a school system that is ready to flex and adapt and meet academic and SEL needs. As we are early in the process of applying this recent learning, COEs report that the tools and resources are still being processed and applied by the county teams. We continue to support each other in this process that will lead to greater capacity to support LEAs. During this unique time in educational history, VALCO realizes that we are uniquely poised to change the school environment to truly prioritize SEL needs of our most vulnerable population and this learning has helped build our capacity to work toward that goal.

The California Coalition for Inclusive Literacy (CCIL) is a five-county consortium funded through the Educator Workforce Investment Grant (EWIG) with the goal of supporting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in literacy instruction. The participating COEs will complete a UDL trainer of trainers model this year, then select schools or districts within their respective counties to partner and support classroom teachers implementation. The model keeps the trainers of trainers together as a support structure during implementation while each COE delivers support to the partnering LEA or school. The partner LEAs will be identified during the 2021-2022 school year and will have a focused need to support students with disabilities to close the achievement gap. Training session one is complete for this team and we are looking forward to being in the field supporting local educators implementing UDL in literacy instruction. We believe we are better together as we continue to focus on building capacity to support LEAs in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.





### ***Getting Better at Getting More Equitable***

**Geo Lead Area:** Bay Area Consortium for Student Success (BACSS)

**Geo Lead Agency:** Alameda County Office of Education  
Jaguanana Lathan, Ed.D., Chief of Learning and Accountability,  
Educational Services, Alameda County Office of Education

The *Getting Better at Getting More Equitable* report is intended to dig further to advance equity in our K-12 educational system using equity-driven continuous improvement. The report includes research and findings from interviews with leaders from schools, districts, county offices of education, chief business officials, and state agencies. Interviews focused on experience using continuous improvement for educational equity, how continuous improvement is being used to advance equity including successes and challenges, strategies for building capacity within their organizations to use continuous improvement for equity, and advice for districts trying to do similar work.

Learn how some county offices of education are connecting continuous improvement and equity to improve systems.



### **Mid-State Collaborative ELEVATES Improvement**

**Geo Lead Area:** Mid-State Collaborative (MSC)

**Geo Lead Agency:** Tulare County Office of Education  
Jennifer L. Biagio, Mid-State Collaborative Director and Administrator of  
Differentiated Assistance, Leadership Support Services,  
Tulare County Office of Education

In April, the Mid-State Collaborative (MSC) launched the first improvement science virtual conference, ELEVATE. The purpose of ELEVATE was to bring improvers from across the state to share their learnings as they relate to continuous improvement, equity, technical assistance, coaching and so much more.

The afternoon was filled with 17 improvement projects represented by not only county offices from our MSC, but others throughout California. Presenters shared their improvement experiences and bright spots in the field so that participants could glean approaches, refine practices, and continue to build their own improvement infrastructures in local districts and counties. ELEVATE was fortunate enough to kick-off with PACE leader, Heather Hough who shared her work out of Stanford University and closed the afternoon with the equity focused-inspirational voice of Ben Daley of High Tech High. The overwhelming survey feedback from the participants was a request for more!

MSC is in the planning stages of ELEVATE 2.0 which we are delighted to be bringing back in spring 2022. One final component of the survey included an opportunity for YOU to get on the California improvement map. We invite you to add your network information [HERE](#) so that your work, expertise, and collaborative partnership may be recognized by all and utilized for potential connections in the future. To see presentations, dig into tools and resources, and learn more about ELEVATE, please visit our [MSC Website's ELEVATE tab](#) for more information.



### Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) County Office of Education (COE) Collaborative

**Geo Lead Area:** Southern California (SoCal) System of Support (SOS)

**Geo Lead Agencies:** Riverside County Office of Education and San Diego County Office of Education

Colleen Flavin, Ed.D., Administrator, Assessment, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement, Division of Educational Services, Riverside County Office of Education

The Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) COE Collaborative was established in 2019, as COE leaders from Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego recognized a need to enhance their collective capacity in providing assistance to LEAs and eligible schools.

Networking within the collaborative continues to be a powerful vehicle that yields the development of relationships, shared resources, modeling of improvement science tools, and consistent analysis of practices to promote school improvement. One resource the collaborative has developed is the [CSI/ATSI Toolkit](#) which includes curated resources to support eligible schools. The collaborative has showcased their work within their region as well as in partnership with the California Department of Education. The CSI COE Collaborative showcased a [breakout session](#) in Mid-State Collaborative's Elevate Improvement virtual conference and facilitated the CDE webinar [A Journey of Improvement: Evidence-based Strategies and Resource Inequities](#).

Additionally, COEs throughout the state of California have reached out to the CSI COE Collaborative for guidance, resources, and support. Knowing that continued support is needed for our LEAs, the work of this team forges ahead to ensure consistent communication and high-quality experiences are available across our five counties.

Recently, an LEA collaborative member supporting a CSI-eligible alternative education high school shared the following testimonials:

*"Thank you for allowing me to be involved in the school. In the past, I didn't have this opportunity."*

**-Parent**

*"I am so excited we are finally getting exactly what our students need as a result of this analysis."*

*(The analysis the teacher is referring to is the comprehensive needs assessment which includes: data analysis, identification of resource inequities, and root cause analysis to the identification/selection and monitoring of evidence-based interventions. This process chart includes each step of the analysis.)*

**-Teacher**

*"Even though I am graduating, I am so glad future students are going to benefit from all this hard work."*

**-Student**

*"I thought this place was just for credit recovery, now I see that it is so much more for our kids."*

**-Parent Liaison**

*"Going through the CSI process has been an educational experience and will affect my immediate work and goals for all of our high schools. I am extremely grateful we had the opportunity to work so closely with our COE to guide and support us."*

**-Assistant Superintendent**

