



CCSESA

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

1121 L Street, Suite 510, Sacramento, CA 95814 ■ P 916.446.3095 ■ F 916.448.7801 ■ www.ccsesa.org

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October 26, 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 #17: The California Community Schools Partnership Program Proposed Application Process and Administration Plan.

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

I am writing on behalf of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) to offer input on the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) technical assistance center (TAC) grants. County offices of education (COEs) are excited about this opportunity to grow our support for LEAs working toward implementing a “whole child” approach to education in a way that honors community input and need. To that end, we have two recommendations for the SBE and CDE:

We encourage the state to support the diversity of successful community schools by choosing a broad group of TAC grantees that can offer technical assistance (TA) on all funding models, frameworks, and programs. Through implementation of the first round of CCSPP and MHSSA, COEs have learned that there is no “right” way to create a community school as long as the work is guided by the four pillars – community engagement, integrated supports, collaborative leadership, and expanded and enriched services. Successful community schools are as diverse as the various communities they serve and need TA tailor-made to support their unique goals, populations, and funding mechanisms. For example, sponsoring a federally qualified health center (FQHCs) is a great way to help a community school reach sustainability but is contingent upon having a very high poverty rate, few providers, and securing a willing managed care partner. In areas where the poverty rate is lower, but community need is still high, LEAs would instead consider a blended funding model utilizing the LEA Billing Option program, managed care plan (MCP) billing, and local control funding formula (LCFF). In small counties with average poverty rates and only one Medi-Cal managed care organization (MCO), LEAs would instead explore partnerships with community-based organizations and the MCO. While all these funding models are right for certain schools, no TAC applicant is going to have expertise in all of them. Similarly, no TAC applicant is going to possess expertise on all the subcategories within expanded and enriched services. Some will have a robust experience integrating early learning into the community schools framework, while others will have expertise incorporating behavioral health services or addressing the homework gap through universal connectivity. We strongly encourage the state to not limit the success of community schools by choosing only five TAC grantees.

We encourage the state to take advantage of CCSESA’s long-standing, collaborative infrastructure by aligning TAC grants with CCSESA’s regions. COEs are the regional hub of the education system in every county and are essential providers of technical assistance and support to districts. In all counties, regardless of size, COEs bring the staff expertise, organizational consistency, and relationships needed to build economy-of-scale programs and services that benefit all schools and students in the county. In a handful of counties, COEs are already at the center of the community schools movement and are providing districts with administrative, business, staffing and technical assistance to launch new community schools.

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CCSESA, its steering committees, and the eleven regions, could provide the strong infrastructure through which guidance and technical assistance on community schools implementation is shared and grown. As you consider how to build the TACs into the system of support, we encourage you to consider how CCSESA's organizing structure and its eleven regions could facilitate and accelerate the proliferation of community schools.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and look forward to a continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hicks

Chair, CCSESA Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee