

CCSESA Budget Request: Focus on Educational Equity and Accountability

Summary

As California's schools emerge from the pandemic, we are asking the state to double down on differentiated assistance, the system local educational agencies (LEAs) utilize to study and address the underlying conditions that prevent each and every student from reaching their fullest potential.

Background

The pandemic is widening the achievement gap—LEAs need support.

The [2021 California School Dashboard data](#) show English learners, low income, foster youth, students experiencing homelessness, and students with disabilities falling further behind.

In 2022, school districts will need more support and interventions to help students struggling to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

Continuous improvement is a foundational element of the state's TK-12 accountability system. When significant disparities are seen between student groups, the state requires LEAs to receive interventions—most commonly from county offices of education—called [differentiated assistance](#). Differentiated assistance (DA) is an intensive process that studies and addresses the underlying conditions that create disparities between student groups. To be effective, DA requires frequent meetings and *trusting relationships between the LEA and their DA provider*.

Underperforming charter schools will soon trigger mandatory interventions for the first time.

Under AB 1505 (2019), the county superintendent [must provide](#) differentiated assistance to charter schools beginning in 2022. While the law provides funding for school districts that qualify for differentiated assistance, charter schools are omitted from the formula.

Differentiated assistance is helping LEAs meet IDEA inclusion goals.

Across the state, LEAs are far below California's new federal inclusion targets. County offices are responding by providing support to increase inclusion rates and outcomes for students with disabilities. Topics such as

evidence-based teaching practices, targeted training, and shifting attitudes toward inclusion and equity are top priority.

COEs are the “boots on the ground” directly helping districts and charter schools change student outcomes.

For years, districts have been embracing, and county offices have been providing, supports to all LEAs and students to narrow disparities among student groups. We think that demand will grow. Technical assistance provided to an LEA is an essential function to ensure that sufficient attention is given to the conditions necessary to improve pupil outcomes.

The differentiated assistance model is correct, but funded backwards.

When done well, differentiated assistance addresses gaps and *prevents* future disparities by building LEAs' capacity to serve all students without the need for DA. Currently, however, it's designed based on reactive interventions, rather than preventative improvements. The state should flip these priorities.

Request

We urge the lawmakers to significantly increase differentiated assistance base grants for county offices of education. Specifically:

- Increase base grant to provide universal support for all LEAs and schools
- Apply ongoing cost-of-living adjustment to formula
- Incorporate charter schools in formula
- Address three-year averaging, given spike in qualifying LEAs

For more information: [CCSESA Response to the Governor's Budget](#)