



## UPK and Universal Preschool Coordination

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**Item Type:** Action

**Recommendation:** That the Board of Directors vote to create a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Task Force, under the UPK Advisory Group structure, to define and align the technical assistance (TA) and support expectations for UPK leads.

**Background:** The 2021 and 2022 Budget Acts included \$24.5 million (\$50 million total) for COEs to provide TA and support through 2026 to LEAs on implementation of UPK, including coordination with LEAs and community-based providers, workforce recruitment and development, facilities, etc. There is very little statutory guidance on how or what kind of ongoing TA and support COEs should be providing. The goal of the plans is to ensure that all children have access to full-day early learning options that meet the needs of parents.

The 2022 Budget Act also included \$18.3 million for 3 years (\$55 million total) to Local Planning Councils (LPCs) to engage in Universal Preschool Planning, including coordination with COEs, community-based providers, early learning infrastructure agencies, families, etc. 51 of the 58 LPCs are led by COEs. The goal of the plan is to expand access to preschool programs for 3 and 4 year-olds through a mixed delivery system.

With these new investments, each COE is now expected to identify a “UPK lead” who is responsible for implementing the new requirements to provide UPK TA and support. There is little statutory language defining the requirements for providing UPK TA and support, but staff at the California Department of Education and State Board of Education are beginning to ask what COEs are doing to define and align expectations for this new role. If COEs do not take the initiative to define the expectations of their new role and create alignment, the state is likely to dictate requirements via the budget trailer bill in 2023.

Furthermore, the state has heard from several districts that their COEs are not supporting them in UPK implementation, are not offering TA or communication on UPK, and/or do not have the needed expertise to provide UPK TA and support. The outcome of this investment is likely to impact future allocations to COEs; specifically, whether the state provides future TA and support funding to all 58 COEs (instead of competitive grants).

By establishing a UPK Task Force within the UPK Advisory Group structure, CCSESA can help foster alignment for the roles and expectation of UPK leads in all counties. This alignment will help to ensure that all COEs are supporting their districts with UPK coordination. This Task Force will be led by UPK leads from 10 to 12 COEs. The selected staff should have deep expertise in early learning and transitional kindergarten, and represent diverse COEs including small, rural, suburban, urban, northern, central, and southern California.

Within 6 months, the UPK Task Force will be responsible for providing recommendations on the following: 1) the essential TA and support activities that every county office of education (COE) should be providing to their districts, 2) how the Task Force will ensure all COE UPK leads have similar expertise so that they can provide aligned TA and support, and 3) what training and supports COE UPK



leads need to ensure that all districts receive the same quality TA and support regardless of what county they are in.

These recommendations will then be presented to the UPK Advisory Group before moving to the Board of Directors, for your approval.