

Differentiated Assistance for Local Educational Agencies Facilitation Guide (2025-26 – Version 5.0)

California County Superintendents

Curricular and Improvement Support Committee (CISC)



CALIFORNIA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS



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Differentiated Assistance for Local Educational Agencies Facilitation Guide 2025-26 – Version 5.0

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PREFACE

This Differentiated Assistance Facilitation Guide, formally approved by the California County Superintendents, has been developed to serve as a foundational resource for county office staff across California. Its purpose is to establish a coherent and aligned process for supporting local educational agencies (LEAs) in alignment with the requirements of [Education Code Section 52071\(c\)](#). By providing clear direction and shared practices, this guide strengthens the capacity of county offices to deliver consistent and effective assistance statewide.

This guide is not only a practical tool for facilitators, but also a means of ensuring consistency and equity in how support is delivered, while being tailored to the unique context and individual needs of each eligible LEA. The State Board has also underscored the importance of consistency across the state, and this resource responds to that call by aligning practices, expectations, and language. In doing so, it reduces variability and helps guarantee that all LEAs receive high-quality, coordinated support regardless of their geographic location, creating a foundation for more impactful and equitable outcomes for LEAs and the students they serve.

Dear Colleagues,

It is my honor to share the 2025-26 Differentiated Assistance Facilitation Guide, version 5.0, developed by the California County Superintendents' Curricular & Improvement Support Committee (CISC). This guide has been created as a foundational tool for county office staff across California, providing clear direction and shared practices to support LEAs in alignment with Education Code Section 52071(c).

While each of California's 58 county offices operates within unique contexts, this resource establishes a common structure that promotes coherence, consistency, and equity in the delivery of support. By aligning practices, expectations, and language, we reduce variability and ensure that every LEA receives high-quality, coordinated assistance, regardless of geographic location.

This guide reflects our shared commitment to collaboration, fidelity in facilitation practices, and the integrity of California's Statewide System of Support. By grounding our efforts in this framework, we strengthen our collective ability to foster meaningful, equitable outcomes for LEAs and, most importantly, the students they serve.

In Partnership,



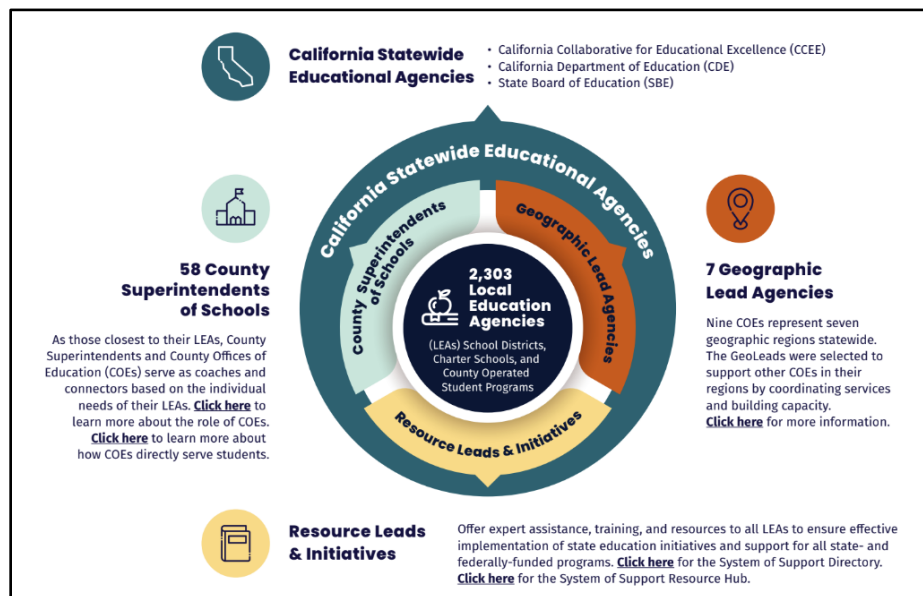
J. Todd Finnell, Ed.D.
President, California County Superintendents
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FOUNDATIONAL COMPONENTS

Background

“California’s educational system is founded on the belief that the LEA is the primary unit of change and plays the central role in supporting schools to implement and sustain improvement efforts. California’s diversity requires more than a “one size fits all solution” to help LEAs and schools successfully implement continuous improvement efforts and meet the needs of all learners, particularly those students most in need. Although they will be differentiated to meet local needs to the greatest extent possible, all of California’s supports and interventions for schools and districts will be implemented within the larger context of this statewide system of support.”[Source: [California's ESSA State Plan \(as amended January 2022, p. 78\)](#)]

California's Statewide System of Support (SSOS)



California’s Statewide System of Support is a vital component of the state’s public school accountability system. Established on the foundation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in 2013, this comprehensive system leverages coordination, collaboration, and integration with various educational entities, including County Offices of Education (COEs), Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), and charter schools. The ultimate goal of the Statewide System of Support is to provide coordinated, needs-based, and differentiated resources and support to LEAs that lead to

improved services for all students evidenced by the closing of opportunity gaps and improved student outcomes.

Lead Agencies, often situated within designated county offices, provide expertise, programs, and resources, to empower local educators to leverage the wide variety of resources and supports at the universal, targeted, and intensive levels, to help meet the needs of their individual LEAs.

Please consider the supports and resources available to COEs and LEAs within the Statewide System of Support while providing technical assistance, found [here](#).

Role of County Offices of Education

The State Board has identified the role of county offices in providing support to districts under LCFF: “County offices of education (COEs) are the primary unit of assistance under LCFF.” ([SBE Action Item #02, July 2017 Agenda](#))

The purpose of the systems of support is “to help LEAs and their schools meet 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.” ([SBE Memo, June 13, 2017](#))

Fullan and Gallardo, in [California's Golden Opportunity: Taking Stock - Leadership from the Middle](#), further elaborated on the shift in the role of county offices of education in the new system of support for districts. They stated that: “County offices have a crucial role to play, although one that is fundamentally different from the role most have historically played—from compliance, supervision and delivery of services to capacity building and continuous improvement”.

Technical (Differentiated) Assistance Legislation

The second level of intervention within the system of support is Technical Assistance, more commonly known as, “Differentiated Assistance.” The role of COEs in providing Differentiated Assistance to eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs) is outlined in statute:

[Education Code \(EC\) 52071](#) states *the county superintendent of schools shall provide technical assistance focused on building the school district's capacity to develop and implement actions and services responsive to pupil and community needs.*

This support includes: (c)(1) *assisting the LEA to identify its strengths and weaknesses in regard to the state priorities [as described in subdivision (d) of [EC Section 52060](#)];* (c)(2) *Working collaboratively with the school district to identify and implement effective programs and practices to address any areas of*

weakness; (c)(3) obtaining from the school district timely documentation demonstrating that it has completed the activities described in items (1) and (2); and (4) Requesting that the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide advice and assistance to the school district, pursuant to subdivision (g) of [Section 52074](#).

Purpose of Differentiated Assistance

To work jointly with Local Educational Agencies in affirming and/or supporting focus areas of work that:

- Builds capacity through professional expertise and local decision-making
- Fosters systemic collaboration
- Builds a culture of co-learning and reflective inquiry
- Promotes a climate of candor, evidence, and urgency to take action
- Results in improved student outcomes and leads to sustainable change

Criteria for Determining LEA Eligibility for Differentiated Assistance

School Districts are eligible for Tier 2 technical assistance, more commonly known as Differentiated Assistance if the LEA: (1) fails to improve pupil achievement across more than one state priority for one or more student groups (identified in EC 52052), (2) fails to meet Local Indicators in 2 areas for two or more years, (3) a combination of reasons 1 and 2, or (4) fails to meet the CALPADS data submission requirements of EC 60900 [\[Education Code 52071\(c\)\]](#).

As of July 1, 2021, Charter Schools are eligible for technical assistance if the LEA "fails to improve pupil achievement for one or more pupil groups, across two or more state or local priorities in two (2) consecutive years [\[Education Code 47607.3\]](#). Due to the need for two (2) years of Dashboard data to determine eligibility, the first cohort of charter schools eligible for County Office Differentiated Assistance was identified by the 2023 Dashboard Release (December 2023).

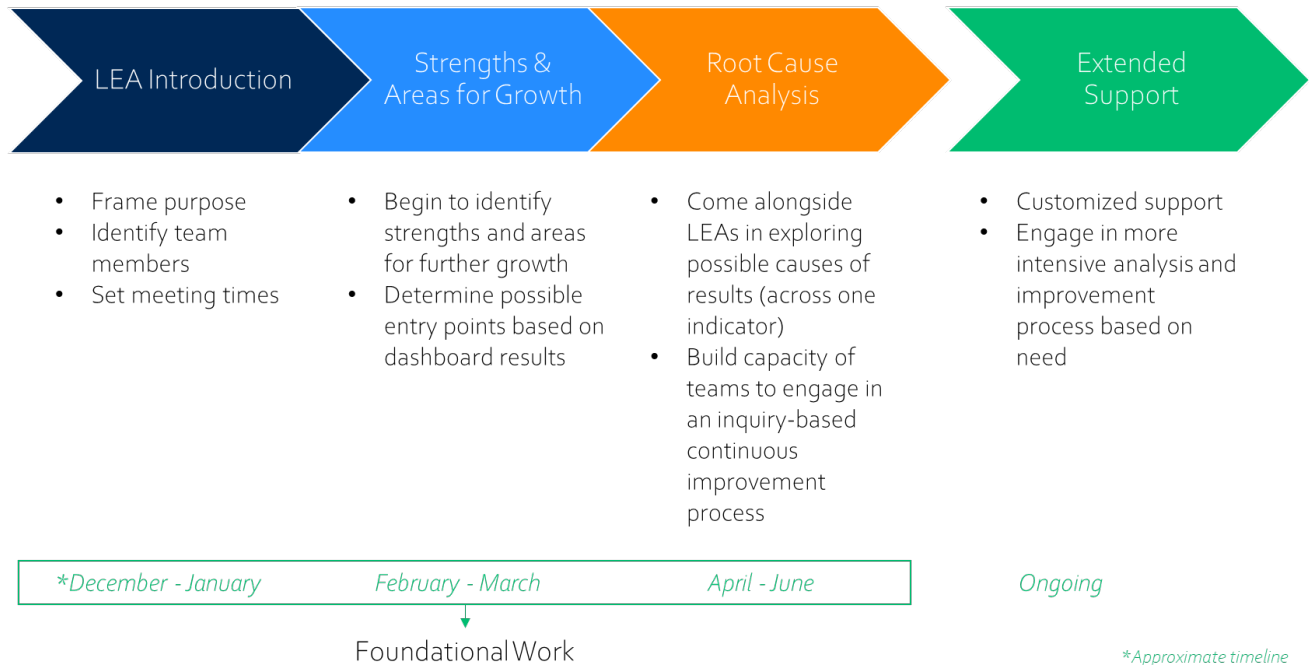
LEA Type:	School Districts [EC 50271]	Charter Schools [EC 47607.3]
Eligibility	<p>A School District is eligible if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It fails to improve pupil achievement across two or more state priorities for one or more student groups; or • It fails to meet its Local Indicators in two areas for 2 or more years; or • A combination of student group performance and local indicator results in two or more areas; or • It fails to meet the requirements of EC 60900(f); submission of CALPADS data "according to the processes and timelines established by the department." 	<p>A Charter school is eligible if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It fails to improve pupil achievement across two or more state priorities for one or more student groups; <u>or</u> It fails to meet its Local Indicators in two areas for 2 or more years; or • A combination of student group performance and local indicator results in two or more areas <p>For TWO consecutive years.</p>
State Priority		
Basic Services (Priority 1)	Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator	
Implementation of State Standards (Priority 2)	Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator	
Parent Engagement (Priority 3)	Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator	



LEA Type:	School Districts [EC 50271]	Charter Schools [EC 47607.3]
Pupil Achievement (Priority 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red on both English Language Arts and Math tests; <u>OR</u> Red on English Language Arts or Math test AND Orange on the other test; <u>OR</u> Red on the English Learner Indicator (English learner student group only) 	
Pupil Engagement (Priority 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red on Graduation Rate Indicator <u>OR</u> Red on Chronic Absence Indicator 	
School Climate (Priority 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red on Suspension Rate Indicator <u>OR</u> Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator 	
Access to and Outcomes in a Broad Course of Study (Priorities 7 & 8)	Red on College/Career Indicator	
Coordination of Services for Expelled Pupils - COEs Only (Priority 9)	Criteria applies to County Offices of Education Only	
Coordination of Service for Foster Youth - COEs Only (Priority 10)	Criteria applies to County Offices of Education Only	
Timeline for COE Support	Eligible school districts are provided DA support for a 2-year period	Eligible charter schools are provided DA support for a 1-year period ("Dashboard to Dashboard")

DIFFERENTIATED ASSISTANCE PROCESS OVERVIEW

Differentiated Assistance Facilitation Process



The **Differentiated Assistance Facilitation Process** graphic above outlines the key steps COEs take in supporting LEAs. The approximate timeline begins with the release of the Dashboard and list of LEAs eligible for Differentiated Assistance. While all COEs follow a similar process in providing Differentiated Assistance, the timeline and specific activities vary depending on size and needs of LEAs within each county. The purpose and description of each step in the process, along with guiding questions, suggested activities and links to tools and resources are below.

LEA INTRODUCTION

Purpose: To frame the purpose of differentiated assistance for the LEA, establish positive relationships, identify team members and determine meeting time(s).

Guiding Questions:

- What makes an LEA eligible for differentiated assistance and what does the process entail?
- *What is the best way to communicate this message and begin relationship building?*

Description of the Process: After release of Dashboard and LEA is notified of Differentiated Assistance by the county superintendent or designee, COE contacts qualifying LEAs via a phone call or in person to describe the differentiated assistance process [Note: COEs eligible for Differentiated Assistance may receive support from the CDE, the CCEE or other COEs; Eligible Charter Schools, authorized by the COE, may receive support from their Geographical lead agency].

Points of discussion should include:

Approach:

- Shift from compliance to capacity building
- Identify strengths and weaknesses through review and analysis of data
- Self-identify or reaffirm 2-3 areas of focus to strengthen systems
- Support continuous improvement process and current efforts

Overview of process including:

- Initial inquiry process and ongoing continuous support activities
- COE team members to be included and their roles
- Timeline Overview
- Connection to LCAP development and support

Continued Support (may include):

- Focusing collective efforts to test, implement and monitor changes for improving outcomes across priority areas
- Review of current performance and further systems analysis
- Development and implementation of action plan, including Theory of Action, PDSAs feedback loops to inform adjustments, and monitoring for improvement
- Professional development and resources to support local capacity building

Relationship Building

One of the key roles of the county office in the differentiated assistance work is to be a collaborative thinking partner with each district identified for Level Two support. This support may look and feel different in each eligible district due to many factors including: the size of the district, past work with the district, reasons for eligibility, length of eligibility, etc. For each district, however, the process must be grounded in positive, trusting relationships that take time. Some districts may be ready to jump right into the work, and others may be hesitant, due to past experiences with accountability measures or preconceived notions about what the work ahead might entail. The process of building trust with the districts that are eligible for support is important and valuable. Taking the time to ensure positive relationships exist between the county office and the district personnel involved is essential in establishing the conditions for a deeper level of improvement work and developing system capacity. This period should not be rushed and is an ongoing condition of the journey. Its benefits are far-reaching.

Tools/Resources:

[Tools for Creating Compassionate Systems](#)

- Contemplative Practice (p. 10-11) or Check-Ins (p. 2)
- Generative Social Fields (p. 8-9)
- Ladder of Connectedness (p. 12-13)

Building LEA Teams

Team Composition

During the conversation or follow-up meeting with district leadership, discuss **the composition of the district team** in light of state indicators, student groups, or both (Central Office leaders should consider inviting educational partners from across their system such as site leaders, teachers, Human Resource officer, Special Ed Director and SELPA representatives).

“Those most affected by change have the greatest interest in designing it in ways that are meaningful and workable to them.” (Hilton, K. and Anderson, A. 2018). Change is hard and people resist it for many reasons, including a fear of failure, loss of control, and the shift from habit to uncertainty. There is both a science and an art to human behavior and as we prepare our districts for the work ahead, we need to attend to both. As COEs, we need to recognize the value in each person, regardless of identity or position. This is a call to work closely with our districts to activate

system-level, collective, and individual agency of all partners to help face any fear of change that might come with the eligibility of Differentiated Assistance

One way we can do this is by helping districts select the right team for this work. Improvement work is best done by those closest to the work, or in other words, the work needs to be *user-centered*. The chart below best describes how to think about the idea of co-design as it applies to the work ahead and who districts might want to select to be a part of the improvement team.

How does co-design accelerate the improvement process?

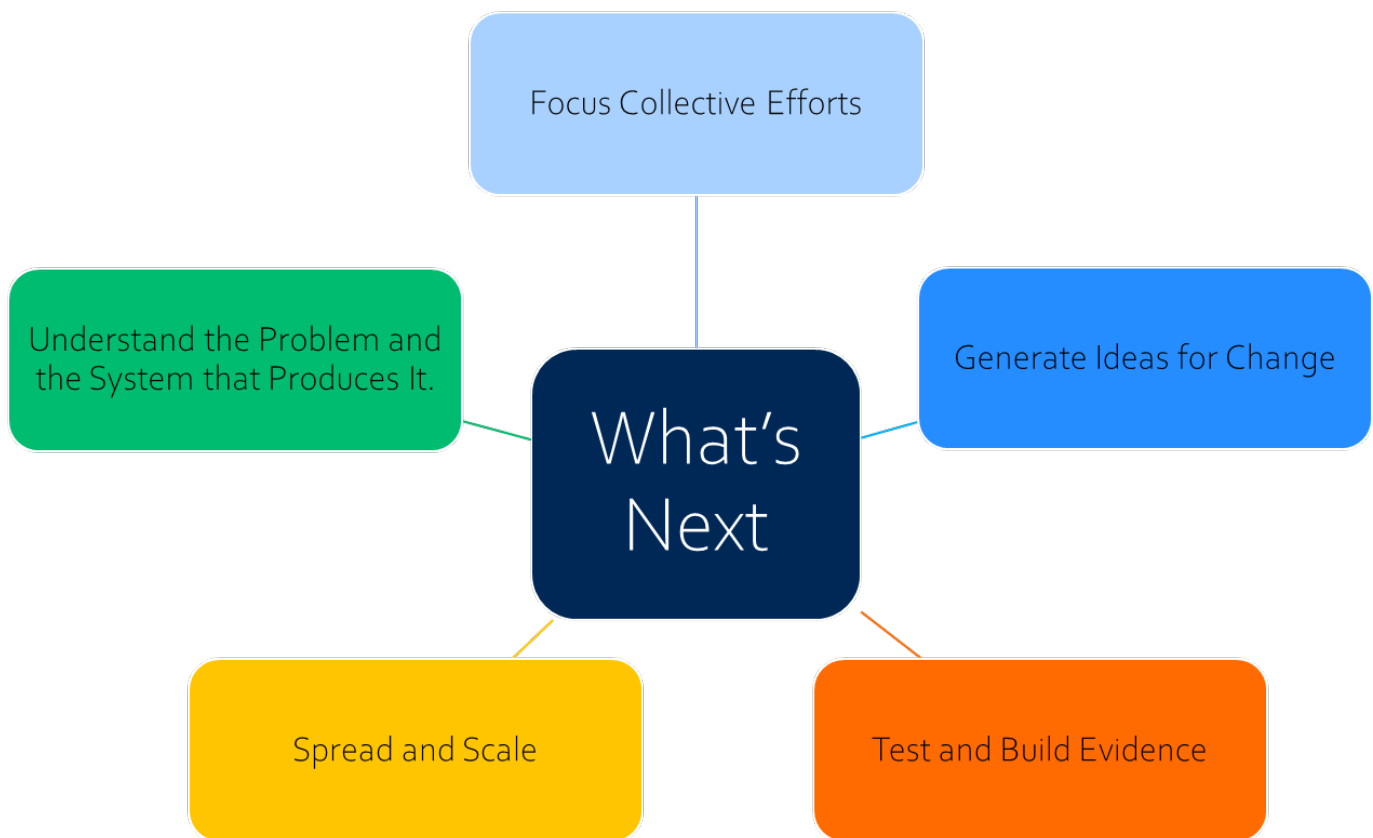
Focuses on the human side of change	All change happens in systems, and people are at the core.
Considers local context	Brings together people who understand the problem and most experience the problem.
Centers on the people affected by change	Focuses on the people directly and indirectly affected by change, recognizing that they all have value in activating people's agency .
Encourages multiple perspectives	Involves multiple stakeholders , and encourages multiple perspectives , and intentionally engages all voices .
Sees challenges as adaptive	Views change as complex , requiring changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and approaches to work.

Team Building Tools/Resources:

- [Building a Team Guide](#)
- [Team Roles and Expectations](#)
- [Team Membership Template](#)

Process Map

The graphic below is adapted from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and illustrates the improvement journey that COEs guide LEAs through during the Differentiated Assistance process and beyond. The Carnegie Foundation's work is rooted in Improvement Science, a methodology that uses disciplined inquiries to improve practice. Foundational to this practice is a process of learning what we need to know to improve practice and how we may come to know it. The resources and tools provided below act as a guide for COEs to support LEAs in the process of continuous improvement.



UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM AND THE SYSTEM THAT PRODUCES IT

STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR GROWTH AND ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Purpose: To begin to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and determine possible entry points based upon dashboard results during initial support [EC 52071(c)(1)].

Dashboard Analysis

Guiding Questions: How is the System Performing? How do we know?

It is critical for both COE and LEA staff to understand the data included, and the rules applied to produce the California School Dashboard. This clarity provides a stronger foundation for effective analysis and resulting actions. After ensuring all team members understand the sources of the data, COEs should provide a guided review and analysis to support the identification of strengths and weaknesses; this process can be aligned with the LEA's process for developing the LCAP Annual Update.

Description of the Process: Using the [Dashboard Analysis LCAP Summary Protocol](#) review performance on the Dashboard for the state indicators, for all students and student groups to identify performance strengths and weaknesses. (Below are some entry-level prompts; the LCAP Summary Protocol includes prompts for deeper exploration of student group performance gaps.)

- What were the strongest areas?
- What were the areas of greatest need?
- What were areas that showed the greatest growth?
- What patterns do you notice?

- What questions do you have?
- Are there outliers in the data that may need further investigation?
- What additional information is needed to understand the problem better?
- What actions and services were in the LCAP to address the needs of these groups, and how were they implemented?

Review performance on the local indicators on the Dashboard.

- What were the strongest areas of performance?
- What were the areas of greatest need?

Dashboard Analysis Tools/Resources:

- [Dashboard Analysis LCAP Summary Protocol](#)
- [California Dashboard Resources](#)
- [Local Control and Accountability Plan \(LCAP\): Annual Update](#)

Local Measures Analysis

Purpose: To surface other data or local measures to be reviewed to provide a full understanding of performance.

Guiding Question: What additional information provides insight into the system's performance?

Description of the Process: Inquiry questions generated during the Dashboard Analysis should be pulled in here, to identify local data that would be helpful to answer questions that were left unanswered in the Dashboard Analysis process. Time invested in assisting the LEA team in developing inquiry questions that will guide them in further investigating their problem and gathering additional data is critical at this point. Local data and information can help to clarify and pinpoint the system component(s) which is contributing to the problem.

Districts may need additional support to pull and analyze their local data. If possible, data support from the COE and/or even a data-sharing agreement might be needed to provide full support. Examples of local data could include looking at equity (e.g., do all students in this group have access to higher level coursework? What might be barriers to access?) or looking at systems (e.g., are Foster Youth staying in their school of origin? If not, why not?)

LCAP Reflection during Dashboard and Local Measures Analysis: Support LEAs in reflecting on the current LCAP, the Annual Update, and the areas of strength and need reviewed during the

analysis process; begin to hypothesize where there may be a need to explore developing or strengthening one or more components of an effective LEA system.

If the district has already put in place any actions/services to meet the identified need, then consider asking if they are noticing any effectiveness and/or what early progress monitoring is showing.

Data Review Tools/Resources:

- [DA Data Analysis Notetaking Guide](#)
- [Notice and Wonder Protocol](#)
- [DA Data Protocol with Equity Lens](#)
- [Data and Protocols to Support Differentiated Assistance](#)

Root Cause Analysis - One Identified Area

Purpose: Identity, through a deeper inquiry process, what might be contributing to strengths and/or weaknesses in one identified area through the use of improvement tools and processes

Guiding Question: What are the possible causes for the specific system outcomes?

Description of the Process: While supporting an LEA, it will be invaluable to take time to consolidate learning, share investigations, and debrief data analysis and interviews while continuing to maintain a learning stance.

Tools/Resources:

- [Empathy Interviews with Stakeholders](#)
- [5 Whys Protocol](#)
- [Fishbone Diagram Protocol](#)
- [Pareto Analysis](#)
- [Process Maps](#)

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Purpose: Identify the component(s) or subcomponent(s) where the problem may reside, review the research and effective practices that support LEA goals and continuous improvement [EC 52071(c)(2)].

Guiding Questions:

- How is the system designed? What is the capacity of your system?
- What is a possible area for growth or entry point?

Description of the Process: Based upon your data analysis, deeper investigation, interviews, inquiry, and reflection, use the [LEA Self-Assessment*](#), Fidelity Integrity Assessment (FIA) and/or instrument of LEA's choosing:

Identify the component that the LEA can use as an entry point for discussion:

- Ask the probing questions under each sub-component; record responses or listen; do not jump to solutions or judgments.
- In an effort to hear from all members of the team, plan for ways to invite different members to be the first response to sub-components and to add their perspective to each question. (Encourage the superintendent and other cabinet members to speak after other team members have shared their thinking)
- Be prepared with follow-up questions that will foster deeper inquiry to identify what is causing the results.
- Upon completion of each section, ask the team if there were areas that stood out that validated their current goals/focus areas and if there is anything that stood out that they might need to focus attention on. o Identify placement on the continuum/rubric.

Upon conclusion of the LEA Self-Assessment, lead a discussion which:

- Affirms district responses to findings already in place
- Identifies where additional information is needed from educational partners or others
- Prioritizes or reaffirms top 2-3 areas of focus
- Shares additional resources (i.e. LEA Self-Assessment Companion Resource)
- Identifies how they might communicate with key LEA educational partners the findings and resulting priorities of the LEA Self-Assessment
- Determine the need/interest to inquire deeper using additional resources

Systems Analysis Tools/Resources:

- [LEA Self-Assessment](#)
- [Abridged LEA Self-Assessment](#)
- [Fidelity Integrity Assessment \(FIA\)](#)
- [Empathy Interviews with Stakeholders](#)
- [Research & Practice Scans \(Suspension Rates\)](#)
- [Tools for Creating Compassionate Systems](#)
 - Systems Thinking Iceberg (p. 21-22)
 - Ladder of Inference (p. 14)
 - Shifting the Burden (p. 18)

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Purpose: Consolidate the information and analysis completed during the differentiated assistance process and identify improvement actions that will be included in the LCAP [EC 52071 (c)(3)].

Guiding Questions:

- What have we come to understand regarding the design of our system and the outcomes it produces?
- What are our strengths and weaknesses, and what might our next steps be?

Description of the Process: Summarize and agree upon findings for performance and system strengths and weaknesses.

- In closing, summarize the findings: Review the strengths, weaknesses, and areas of need, identify what was determined by the deeper inquiry of a single area of need, including reference to effective evidence-based programs aligned to the LEA goals and where in the LCAP the changes will be made.
- Consider discussing strategies for continued support as the LEA begins to plan for improvement.

This may result in late spring and summer ongoing support and could position the LEA and COE to be out in front of continuous improvement efforts and new indicator triggers.

Synthesis of Findings Tools/Resources:

- [Consolidation of Learning](#)

EXTENDED SUPPORT

Ongoing Continuous Improvement Support

Continuous improvement is an ongoing effort to improve services or processes within an LEA that is integrated into the daily work of individuals within the system. It uses evidence-based practices to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of services and systems toward the pursuit of better outcomes for all students.

As you continue to support an LEA in their improvement journey, there is a need to develop a collaborative process that will provide a framework to guide COEs and LEAs in “how to improve.” The proposed model includes a focused area of study informed by the initial problem and system analysis and any additional analysis conducted based on current dashboard indicators. A working Theory for Improvement will be developed and iteratively refined throughout this continued support. County offices of education will be asked to provide a Summary Action report that describes the support to LEAs as well as goals and metrics to gauge progress.

- Subject matter expertise can assist in helping LEAs identify evidence-based changes to test in addressing the target area of improvement.
- Learning sessions designed to build the knowledge and expertise of LEA team members, develop a working theory of practice improvement with identified change ideas, develop Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles (PDSAs) to test and build evidence towards the theory, and develop a plan for scaling improvement.
- Action periods run in between learning sessions and are supported by improvement coaching, allowing LEA teams to test and implement changes in their local context and collect data to measure the impact of change.

Through this process, the LEA team will learn on a small scale what works for whom, and under what conditions. This part of the process is based on [A Framework for Improvement \(Model of Improvement\)](#).

- What specifically are we trying to accomplish? (AIM)
- What changes might we make and why? (CHANGE & THEORY)
- How will we know if a change is an improvement? (MEASURE)

Focus Collective Efforts

Purpose: To identify a specific focus for change efforts. Ideas generated during this process may inform the development of goals in the LEAs LCAP.

Guiding Question: What specifically are we trying to accomplish?

Description of the Process: Based on the analysis of root causes, the team develops an aim statement that addresses the essential question: *what specifically are we trying to accomplish?* This aim focuses the work and serves as the starting point for theory development.

Useful aim statements clearly define success for the improvement effort by specifying:

- What will be improved? (clear, operational definitions)
- How much? (measurable, specific, numeric goals)
- By when? (time frame)
- For whom? (target population)

The aim statement may be revisited and refined as the development of potential change ideas and measures provides more detail about

- The resources required to work towards the aim
- The capacity and will of the people who will engage in the work

Focus Collective Efforts Tools/Resources:

- [AIM Statements Overview](#)
- [AIM Statements](#)
- [Developing AIM Statements](#)
- [Sentence Frame for Developing AIM Statements](#)

Generate Change Ideas

Purpose: Identifying evidence-based change ideas through a Theory of Practice Improvement process. Ideas generated during this process may inform the development of actions and services in the LEAs LCAP.

Guiding Question: What is our theory for how we think these changes will result in an improvement?

Description of the Process: Change ideas will be generated based on Research Knowledge, Practice Knowledge, or developed based on a deep understanding of one's system. These changes are based on an informed theory of how to reach the aim and should be considered *possibly wrong, and definitely incomplete*.

- This stage should be revisited as needed and should involve many educational partners, drawing on differing perspectives and expertise.
- All work towards an aim is informed by individual theories, which are often implicit. Coaching should heavily focus on making those theories explicit and shared across the team. A simple way to begin developing a theory is to express how each change will shift a piece of the system which will contribute to the aim.

Generate Change Ideas Tools/Resources:

- [Generating Change Ideas Protocol](#)
- [Driver Diagram](#)
- [Force Field Analysis](#)
- [Force Field Analysis Article](#)
- [Failure Mode Analysis](#)
- [4-Quadrant Prioritizing Document](#)
- [Change Ideas Task Card](#)
- [Template for Theory Development](#)

Test and Build Evidence

Purpose: To engage in small tests of change ideas to track progress and make adjustments.

Guiding Question: How will we know that a change is an improvement?

Description of the Process: One of the biggest issues with implementation in education is not identifying needed changes in the current system.

Plan/Do/Study/Act (PDSA) is a way to test changes; learning about how to get a given innovation or change to work under unique and varying contexts and the immediate impact of changes. Coaching support during the action periods is critical to this learning process. Teams will need support planning their PDSA, being disciplined in collecting and analyzing the results, and deciding how to respond as a result.

- Documentation is critical and often overlooked as an important step.
- Encourage individuals to record questions they have about how the PDSA will go and what they predict will happen for each question. This helps to expose bias-based assumptions and shape them as a learning opportunity.
- Collecting data regarding the change that was introduced helps to decide:
- Did the change occur?
 - Did the change occur as intended?
 - What is the immediate impact of this change?
- PDSAs should be run on a small scale and ramped up and tested in different contexts and more broadly in order to confirm reliability. Measures should be in place to capture the following:
 - Are the changes resulting in the improvement we theorized?
 - Are there any other improvements in the system?
 - Are there any negative impacts as a result of a change in the system?
 - PDSAs may provide LEAs with a variety of local measures that can be used to share progress and provide a rationale for decision-making.

Test and Build Evidence Tools/Resources:

- [Overview of PDSAs](#)
- [Blank PDSA Form](#)
- [PDSA Ramps](#)

Spread and Scale

Purpose: Once there is sufficient evidence and confidence of an improvement on a small scale, it is strategized to spread promising practices to other contexts and scale across the organization.

Guiding Question: What exactly should be scaled based on evidence from PDSA tests and other measures? Who will you spread the improvement effort to, and how will you support their effort? How will we continue to learn about the integration of change in growing and diverse contexts?

Description of Process: This work is largely based around 1) consolidating evidence from other phases of the effort, 2) creating a scale package, 3) strategizing how to scale that package to others, and 4) ensuring the new scale effort has measures in place to help the organization learn about how to “learn” those changes into their system.

- An improvement package is developed, which includes details about necessary changes, the outcomes of those changes as tested on a smaller scale, and resources and tips to go about the change.
- A spread and scale plan should be developed and include a strategy about who receives the package and how they are supported.
- A measurement plan should be considered, which helps to learn about how to implement the package and produce an improvement in a new context.

Spread and Scale Tools/Resources:

- [Change Package Template](#)
- [Scale Decision Matrix](#)

Continuous Improvement for Providing Differentiated Assistance

WestEd Reports



To understand the impact of DA on student performance, the state legislature selected WestEd to evaluate the system. WestEd's findings indicate that Differentiated Assistance positively impacts student outcomes, including for student groups experiencing the lowest outcomes. A triangulation of data across different sources for the evaluation indicates that DA has room for improvement, particularly in some districts and counties, but system leaders broadly support it.

- [Download the report](#) to explore the evaluation in-depth and the recommendations for the state to further refine and improve DA based on lessons learned from the first years of implementation.
- [Addendum to the Evaluation of California's Differentiated Assistance](#): This [2023 addendum](#) shares system leaders' and other education partners' perspectives on the original evaluation report's recommendations and highlights key insights that surfaced.

Additionally, in 2022, The Geographic Leads (Geo Leads) partnered with WestEd to research, summarize, and disseminate information on Promising Practices for Providing Differentiated Assistance. The report identifies six key themes: building a positive relationship with each LEA and becoming a trusted partner, ensuring that DA is truly value-added and expands LEAs' resources, connecting DA to the classroom, coaching local LEAs in the use of continuous improvement tools and processes, supporting effective implementation of improvement strategies, and improving system coherence and alignment of initiatives. These themes serve as a guide for effective DA practices and are further exemplified through specific vignettes that illustrate how these themes were applied within different COEs. [Download the full report here.](#)

DIFFERENTIATED ASSISTANCE SUPPORT PATHWAYS

As the technical assistance in the Statewide System of Support (SSOS) continues to expand, the following graphic is provided to promote clarity around eligibility and the role of different support providers:

 Technical Assistance Providers for Differentiated Assistance (DA) 						
Responsible Agency	COE DA EC52071.5	District DA EC52071(c)	Charter DA EC47607.3	GeoLead DA EC52071(f) <small>*Applies only to school districts</small>	Direct Technical Assistance EC52072	Intervention EC52072.1
CA Department of Education DA Team	✓					CA State Superintendent of Public Instruction Office
County Superintendent of Schools (County Office DA Team)		✓	✓	Geographic Lead Agency provides DA in collaboration with County Superintendent/designee.	CCEE includes County Superintendent or designee in DTA support with eligible LEA.	
Geographic Lead Agency		Upon request of County Superintendent of Schools or a school district (EC52071(d)).	For Charters authorized by County Boards of Education.	✓ Can request support from CA System of Support lead agencies.	Geo Leads are informed of DTA eligibility and invited to participate for any LEAs in Geo Area.	
CA Collaboration for Educational Excellence (CCEE)		Upon request of County Superintendent of the county in which district is located (EC52071(c)(1)(D)).	Upon request of County Superintendent of the county in which charter is located (EC47607.3(c)).	Upon request of Geo Lead.	✓	
Eligibility Notes	1+ student group 2+ priorities and/or Missed CALPADS data submission	1+ student group 2+ priorities and/or Missed CALPADS data submission	1+ student group; 2+ priorities; 2+ consecutive years	1+ student group; 2+ priorities; 3+ consecutive years* <small>*Districts will be identified starting with 2025 Dashboard; Does not apply to Charters/COEs.</small>	3+ student groups; 2+ priorities; 3 of 4 consecutive years	

COE DA: In accordance with [EC 52071.2](#), the CDE provides DA support for eligible COEs and their schools. COEs may be given the option to work with another COE in conjunction with CDE.

District DA and Charter DA: COEs provide DA to eligible school districts and charter schools located in their county, unless that COE is the authorizer of the eligible charter school; in that case, the Geographic Lead Agency for the COE will provide DA. In providing DA support, the COE, in consultation with the school district, may solicit another service provider to assist the eligible district.

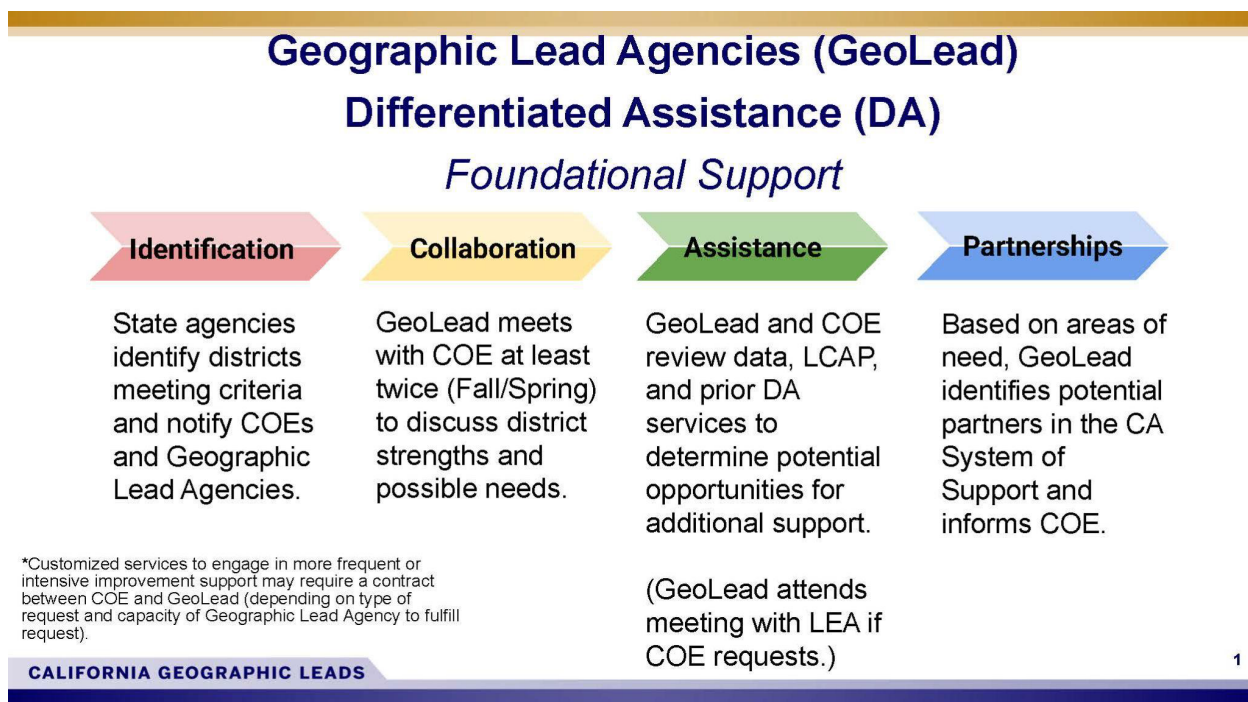
Geolead DA: Beginning with the release of the 2025 California School Dashboard, an additional layer of technical assistance will be provided, in collaboration with the county superintendent of

schools, by the Geographic Lead Agencies for LEAs meeting the eligibility requirements outlined in California’s Education Code 52071(f), as stated below:

[EC52071](#)(f) For any school district in which **one or more pupil subgroups** meets the criteria for technical assistance for **three or more consecutive years**, the school district’s **geographic lead** agency shall, in collaboration with the county superintendent of schools, provide technical assistance to the school district pursuant to subdivision (c)*. The geographic lead agency shall evaluate whether the assistance of one or more expert lead agencies should be consulted as part of the technical assistance process.

This additional layer of support is intended to provide another opportunity for COEs and Geographic Lead Agencies to partner in assisting eligible districts to improve outcomes for identified student groups and make connections to the resources available through the Statewide System of Support.

The graphic below outlines what support will be offered to COEs supporting the eligible districts:



Further details on the requirements of EC52071(f), along with flexible options and examples of activities that may be considered as part of the technical assistance, are included in this [document](#).

Direct Technical Assistance (DTA): The CCEE partners with COEs to provide Direct Technical Assistance to eligible LEAs in customized levels of depth and intensity. The CCEE’s role is to advise

and assist, as part of our theory of action, we work to build capacity and move toward a gradual release. CCEE can provide Direct Technical Assistance through such means as Collaborative Planning, Collaborative Facilitation, and Embedded Partnerships that will best support the LEA in meeting its goals.

COE ANNUAL DIFFERENTIATED ASSISTANCE REPORT

[EC Section 52066\(i\)](#) states, *commencing with the 2018-19 fiscal year and in each fiscal year thereafter, the county superintendent of schools shall prepare a summary of how the county superintendent of schools plans to support school districts and schools within the county* [not required for COEs with a single school district].

The summary shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, all of the following:

- Completing the review of LCAPs submitted by school districts
- Providing technical assistance to eligible school districts (EC 52071)
- Providing any other support in the implementation of this article

The report shall also contain:

- Metrics to assess the progress of identified goals
- Specific actions and expenditures to meet identified goals
- Steps to collaborate with CCEE, CDE, and other COEs to support school districts

Per EC 52066(i)(1), the Annual Report is to be presented to the county board at the same public meeting in which the LCAP is adopted. COEs submit the summary to the CDE, which then compiles all summaries into a single report and posts it on the CDE Website.

No specific, statewide template is required. CISC has created a [Sample COE Template](#) for your consideration.

APPENDICES

Appendix: Tools/Resource Links Addendum

[Abridged LEA Self-Assessment](#)

Used by District Leadership teams to examine the current status of systemic practices that have been consistently demonstrated through research to be the components of effective district systems.

[AIM Statements Overview](#)

Statements to create questions that lead to systems improvement.

[AIM Statements](#)

How to develop AIM Statements.

[Annual Update](#)

The LCAP contains an Annual Update section for LEAs to identify and review the actual measurable outcomes identified in the prior year's goals.

[Blank PDSA Form](#)

Template for documenting change ideas and data analysis throughout the PDSA cycle.

[California School Dashboard](#)

Shows how LEAs and schools perform on test scores, graduation rates, and other measures of student success.

[Change Ideas Task Cards](#)

Prioritize change ideas using a matrix tool to identify the best change to implement first.

[Change Package Template](#)

Template for documenting change ideas.

[CDE State Priority Related Resources](#)

To assist LEAs in addressing the state priorities in their Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Links to tools, promising practices, and research are posted on the Quality Schooling Framework website.

[Coherence Framework](#)

Michael Fullan's Coherence Framework: focusing directions; cultivating collaborative cultures; deepening learning; securing accountability.

[Consolidation of Learning](#)

Tool to capture and consolidate information and identify improvement actions during the Differentiated Assistance process.

[DA Data Protocol \(with Equity lens\)](#)

This protocol is to assist with data analysis to identify strengths and areas for improvement. As you use this protocol, consider the guiding questions to frame your data conversations.

[Dashboard Analysis and LCAP Summary Protocol](#)

To review performance on the Dashboard for the state indicators, for all students and student groups, identifying strengths and needs.

[Data Use Self Assessment](#)

A tool to help assess where an LEA is with regard to data culture and use.

[Developing AIM Statements](#)

Background and protocols for creating AIM statements.

[Driver Diagram](#)

Tool used to organize theories and ideas in an improvement effort. A Driver Diagram is a more advanced tool to articulate a working theory for improvement. It should be considered a working draft that evolves as evidence is collected.

[Education Code 52071, 52064.5 and 52074](#)

LCFF Technical Assistance

[Empathy Interview with Stakeholders](#)

To get a clearer picture of how the central office supports principals, and how it might be redesigned to align better, streamline, and improve their services in supporting site leaders around their improvement efforts.

[Failure Mode Analysis](#)

A systematic method to identify problems that may lead to the inability to achieve desired outcomes.

[Fidelity Integrity Assessment \(FIA\) 2.0 \(fillable\)](#)

Used by School Leadership Teams to examine the current status of school-wide practices. SWIFT Fidelity Integrity (FIA) is a self-assessment that has been demonstrated through research to provide a basis for successfully including all students who live in the school community.

[Fishbone Diagram Protocol](#)

To arrive at a deeper understanding of the problem we are trying to solve (before jumping to solutions).

[5 Whys Protocol](#)

To identify actionable root causes of problems.

[Force Field Analysis](#)

Tool to better understand the forces that support and hinder improvement efforts. This protocol can identify potential forces that may restrain or push against, or for change, and helps prioritize change ideas.

[Force Field Analysis Article](#)

Article explaining the steps of the Force Field Analysis technique.

[4 Quadrant Prioritizing Matrix](#)

Tool used to prioritize ideas to create focus on the goal. The 4-Quadrant Prioritizing Matrix can be used to identify high-leverage change ideas in the early stages of change idea generating. While generating change ideas as a group tends to be a flaring activity, the prioritizing matrix is a focusing activity.

[Generating Change Ideas Protocol](#)

Protocol for generating change ideas and selecting a path to move forward.

[LEA Self-Assessment](#)

Used by District Leadership teams to examine the current status of systemic practices that have been consistently demonstrated through research to be the components of effective district systems.

[Local Control and Accountability Plan \(LCAP\)](#)

A three-year plan that describes an LEA's goals, actions, services, and expenditures that support positive student outcomes that address state and local priorities.

[Overview of PDSAs](#)

The PDSA cycle creates changes that result in improvement.

[Pareto Analysis](#)

Used to analyze the frequency of problems or causes in a process. The Pareto Principle states that 80% of the problem is caused by 20% of the causes.

[PDSA Ramps](#)

Focus is on one change idea to test but composed of multiple PDSA cycles that result from the Study of the previous PDSA cycle.

[Process Maps](#)

A visual guide for picturing the steps and decision points involved in developing a process.

[Research & Practice Scans \(Suspension Rates\)](#)

Curated educational resources to support systemic improvement for decreasing student suspensions.

[Scale Decision Mix](#)

Evaluate and prioritize a list of ideas to determine participants' willingness for change.

[Sentence Frame for Developing AIM Statements](#)

Sentence frame for creating AIM statements that answer the questions, "What specifically are we trying to accomplish?"

[Theory Development Template](#)

Tool for determining the impact drivers and change ideas for developed AIM statements.

Thank you

Contact: info@cacountysupts.org

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CALIFORNIA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS