

For information contact:

Craig Petinak, Director of PR & Communication Services
California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE)
3939 13th Street, Riverside, CA 92501
951.826.6679 cpetinak@rcoe.us

California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) Selects Experienced Educators to Lead Statewide Agency

Four directors include a current State Board of Education member, district superintendent, and district board member—three of whom began educational careers as classroom teachers in California

SAN DIEGO - At the December meeting of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), the five-member board voted unanimously to approve the hiring of four directors and an administrative assistant to work under the leadership of CCEE Executive Director Dr. Carl A. Cohn.

“These are all educators with strong backgrounds in rescuing kids who historically have been underserved in our schools,” said Dr. Carl Cohn, CCEE Executive Director. “Each of them is uniquely equipped to get the right kind of help and assistance to districts, charters and COE’s, which is the primary work and mission of the CCEE.”

Dr. Aida L. Molina has been selected as one of two Education Directors for CCEE where she will, along with Socorro Shiels, plan and execute the massive project of vetting all of technical assistance providers who will want to work for the CCEE. Dr. Molina was appointed to the California State Board of Education by Governor Jerry Brown in 2011. Since 2013, Dr. Molina has served as the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Improvement and Accountability for the Bakersfield City School District. From 2004 to 2007, she served as a commissioner for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Dr. Molina holds a doctorate of philosophy in education from Claremont Graduate University, a master of arts degree in educational administration from California State University, Sacramento, and a bachelor of arts degree in liberal studies from California State University, Sacramento. Her career in education began as a bilingual teacher at Fairsite Elementary School in the Galt Joint Union Elementary School District in Galt, California.

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Socorro Shiels has been hired as the second Education Director for the CCEE. Ms. Shiels has served as the Superintendent for the Santa Rosa City School District since 2012 and was recently selected as a board member for the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistant Team (FCMAT) to assist local educational agencies fulfill their financial and management responsibilities. In Sonoma County, she serves as a Health Action and First Five commissioner. Ms. Shields is currently enrolled in a doctoral program in educational psychology at the University of California, Davis with an expected graduation date in December of 2016. She earned a master of arts degree in educational leadership from California State University, East Bay and a bachelor of arts degree in Spanish from Bowdoin College. Her career in education began as a bilingual teacher at Belle Haven Elementary School in the Ravenswood School District in East Palo Alto, California.

Sujie Shin has been chosen as the Director of Research and Data Assessment for CCEE where she will manage the activities associated with the development of a data dashboard, research on best practices and implementation of new Common Core standards. Ms. Shin has served as the Co-Director of Research for Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Services at WestEd in San Francisco. Ms. Shin has held educational assessment and research positions in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York. Ms. Shin earned a master of arts degree in policy research, evaluation and measurement from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. She maintains a California clear elementary teaching credential. Her career in education began as a teacher at Norwood Elementary School in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Joshua Daniels has been selected as the Director of Outreach and Communications for CCEE where he will direct new efforts at training, implementation and development of inclusive LCAP strategies. Mr. Daniels has served as a staff attorney for the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and the Education Legal Alliance (ELA) since 2013. He is a current board member for the Berkeley Unified School District where he served as president in 2014. Mr. Daniels' legal expertise spans the arenas of school finance, administrative law, educational legislation, and constitutional law. He is a product of the Berkeley Unified School District and recently led the community engagement and coalition that successfully passed Measure D (Soda Tax) in Berkeley. Mr. Daniels earned a juris doctorate degree from the Berkeley School of Law and is a member of the California Bar. He earned a master of arts in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley. He earned a master of arts degree in mathematics and a bachelor of arts degree in mathematics and government from Wesleyan University.

Erika Gonzalez was hired in November 2015 as the Administrative Assistant to the CCEE Executive Director. Ms. Gonzalez previously served as an admissions technician at the Riverside County Office of Education's School of Career Education. She has held a variety of administrative roles in human resources and as an executive assistant in California's Coachella Valley region. Ms. Gonzalez earned an associate degree in business administration from the College of the Desert and is currently enrolled in a bachelor's degree program in human resources management at Ashford University with an expected graduation date in April of 2016.

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As per statute established by Governor Brown and the California Legislature, all CCEE personnel are considered employees of the Riverside County Office of Education as the fiscal agents of CCEE. The new employees will work from various locations around California and will start their new positions on or before February 1, 2016.

About the CCEE

The CCEE was established by the Governor and State Legislature to advise and assist school districts, county superintendents, and charter schools in achieving the goals set forth in their Local Control and Accountability Plans adopted under the provisions of the Local Control Funding Formula legislation. The CCEE Board may contract for services, hire staff, and direct activities of staff consistent with this purpose, and in accordance with the terms of the contract between the State and Fiscal Agent as set forth in Education Code section 52074.

The formation of the agency reflects a shift in California’s approach to improving student academic achievement—from the more punitive and compliance-based approach of the federal No Child Left Behind Act to directing focus on control and accountability on a local level. Guided by the five-member board that began meeting in February 2015, the CCEE will play a key role in supporting and assisting school districts with achieving their goals.

CCEE Governing Board Members include:

- * Sandy Thorstenson - Chair (appointed by the Governor)
- * Sue Burr - Vice-Chair (appointed by the President of the State Board of Education)
- * Tom Torlakson – Member – State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- * Michael C. Watkins – Member – Appointed by Senate Committee on Rules
- * Tim Sbranti – Member – Appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly

For more information on CCEE, visit www.ccee-ca.org or call 951.826.6161.

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