



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The CCEE Selects Nationally Recognized Special Education Leader to Spearhead Statewide Initiatives**

The **California Collaborative for Educational Excellence** has tapped **Dr. Karla Estrada**, one of the country's foremost experts in special education, to spearhead its ambitious effort to help reform California's fragmented special education system.

"Dr. Estrada is a real national leader in this field," said Dr. Carl Cohn, the CCEE Executive Director. "I don't think there is a better person in this country who has been at this work. We are absolutely delighted to have her on our team."



*Dr. Karla Estrada has been the Deputy Superintendent of Academic and Student Support Services for Boston Public Schools. She begins her tenure at the CCEE on April 30.*

Estrada was selected as the **CCEE's Director of Special Education**, a new position created in response to a statewide need and demand for technical expertise in this field.

Since 2015, Estrada – a California native – has been the Deputy Superintendent of Academic and Student Support Services for Boston Public Schools which educates more than 56,000 students.

BPS is one of the most diverse school districts in the nation. One in five BPS students has a disability, and half are economically disadvantaged.

Under her leadership at BPS, Estrada successfully led the district's strategic efforts to bring more rigorous instruction at all levels, develop crucial social and emotional programs, as well as close the district's opportunity and achievement gaps.

The CCEE selected Estrada because of her solid track record in transforming compliance-based educational systems into dynamic systems that are actively engaged in helping at-risk kids perform better in school.

"I am committed to eliminating the educational inequities among our most vulnerable students and with urgency," said Estrada, who has spent 20 years in education as an educator and administrator. "I believe that all students deserve the opportunity to fulfill the greatness within them. Students with disabilities have all the abilities needed to lead and excel in our schools and communities."

Student demographic data in California shows many students with disabilities are low-income students.

A disproportional number are also African American or Latino.

Estrada said that reality underscores why it is critically important that California addresses deep-rooted, systemic challenges preventing the neediest students from receiving a high-quality education.

Recent CA School Dashboard data shows 228 school districts have been flagged by the state this year as needing extra help under the state's new school accountability system. Two-thirds were identified because of the performance of their students with disabilities. Many of those districts are also suspending these students at a much higher rate.

In response, the CCEE and the California Department of Education recently launched the **Students With Disabilities Collective**, a coalition of educators and experts, to begin streamlining special education so there are stronger, more consistent, and successful programs for students with disabilities.

As the CCEE Director of Special Education, Estrada will be instrumental in leading the SWD Collective, as well as developing instructional strategies that county offices of education, school districts and charter schools can embrace and put into place.

"I look forward to utilizing my successful experience in academics and students support services to understand the needs, problem solve and build the capacity of our school communities with the aim of ensuring all students fulfill the great potential within them," Estrada said.

Before her tenure at BPS, Estrada spent nearly 15 years in the Los Angeles Unified School District in special education. Her last position was Administrative Coordinator for Special Education in LAUSD's Intensive Support and Innovation Center.

Estrada has presented nationally on the topics of establishing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) – two key educational frameworks designed to provide targeted supports for students who need the most help.

She has also reviewed education systems and policies for Cleveland Metro School District, Providence Public School District and Chicago Public Schools as a Council of Great City Schools team member.

Estrada begins her tenure with the CCEE on April 30<sup>th</sup>.



*Special education services are being provided to roughly 735,000 individuals, newborn through 22 years old, in California public schools.*

## ABOUT THE CCEE

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence is a state agency created in 2013 under California's groundbreaking Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). We offer personalized, immediate, and evidence-based support to county offices of education, school districts, and charter schools so they can take ownership in continually improving learning for all students.

The CCEE plays a key role in California's Statewide System of Support which acts like a safety net to help struggling districts and schools get back on track.