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## **California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) Names First Executive Director**

**SACRAMENTO** - At today's California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) meeting, the five-member board voted unanimously to select former State Board of Education member and long-time educator, Dr. Carl A. Cohn, to serve as the first executive director of the recently-formed statewide agency tasked with advising and assisting student achievement across the state via the new Local Control and Accountability Plans.

Dr. Cohn's 45-year educational career began as a teacher/counselor in the Compton Unified School District and progressed to superintendent positions at school districts in Long Beach and San Diego Unified School Districts. Throughout his career, he has helped shape the educational leaders of tomorrow as a professor at multiple universities—including the University of Southern California and Harvard. Dr. Cohn is a recognized thought leader in the national educational arena, has presented at dozens of educational conferences throughout the United States and contributed to journal and media articles regarding educational leadership and reform.

"Dr. Carl Cohn, a highly respected leader in our profession, is the right voice to launch the significant work of the CCEE," said Sandra Thorstenson, Chair of the CCEE Board and Superintendent of the Whittier Union High School District. "The Collaborative Board is thrilled to have Dr. Cohn lead the work of providing support and assistance that will positively impact the lives of students across California."

In the role of Executive Director, Dr. Cohn will work collaboratively with State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, and with the 58 county superintendents across the state in supporting school districts as they work towards accomplishing the goals stated in their Local Control Accountability Plans.

Based in Riverside County, Dr. Cohn will likely establish one or more field offices in order to more readily engage with educational leaders across the state. His start date will be September 1, 2015.

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“I’m humbled and honored to be selected to head this new state agency, whose sole purpose is to get the right kind of help to schools and classrooms. We’re not building a new bureaucracy or replicating an existing one but, through collaboration and partnering, we’re focused on providing schools with the needed support and assistance to accelerate student performance,” said Dr. Cohn. “Creating a bright future for students throughout our state will be the ultimate measure of the work of this new state office.”

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 detailed information on Dr. Carl A. Cohn or CCEE-related topics, visit [www.ccee-ca.org](http://www.ccee-ca.org) or call 951.826.6161.

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