



Summary of Feedback on PLN Proposed Requirements and Draft Criteria

On Tuesday, March 28, 2017, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) released the proposed requirements and draft criteria for selecting the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Professional Learning Networks (PLNs). The proposed requirements and draft criteria were based, in part, on the CCEE's experience with the hosts, facilitators, and participants of the 6-month-long Early Adopter PLNs that began in January 2017. Feedback on the proposed requirements and draft criteria was due on Monday, April 10, 2017, although some feedback was also received and considered after that date. The proposed requirements and draft criteria was also presented to the CCEE Governing Board on April 6, 2017, for discussion and feedback. The following is a summary of some of the key pieces of feedback that were received along with how, if at all, the final Request for Letters of Interest (RFLOI) and/or the PLN Evaluation Matrix (Matrix) was modified as a result.

*The **Request for Letters of Interest Announcement**, which includes the criteria that should be addressed in Letters of Interest, is available online at <http://ccee-ca.org/documents/PLN%20RFLOI%20Announcement.pdf> and the **PLN Evaluation Matrix** is available online at <http://ccee-ca.org/documents/PLN%20Evaluation%20Criteria.pdf>.*

FEEDBACK & RESPONSES ON PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS

Number of Participating LEAs: Each participant of a PLN must be connected to an LEA (e.g., a board member, a staff member, a parent/guardian, or a community member from the LEA). A PLN must have participants that are connected to at least three different LEAs.

Feedback: The feedback included comments on the number of LEAs and the ways in which a participant must be connected to an LEA. With respect to the former, most respondents agreed with the minimum requirement of three LEAs. They noted that this number would allow for trust building, sharing of perspectives, and gaining a better understanding of other practices. A few respondents suggested that three would make it difficult for some entities to host a PLN while a few other respondents felt that a minimum number of three was too low. Some respondents also focused on whether it would be the participant or the CCEE that would define the way in which the participant was connected to an LEA and whether the initial list of how a participant can connect to an LEA (a board member, a staff member, a parent/guardian, or a community member from the LEA) was insufficiently inclusive.

Response: The RFLOI was not adjusted as a result of the feedback. Most respondents were comfortable with the minimum requirement of three LEAs. While there is the possibility that some entities might have a more difficult time identifying three LEAs to participate in their PLN, it is more important that the PLNs serve as an opportunity for

participants to learn from the experience of their peers. While research does not necessarily provide a specific minimum number of different entities for a learning network to be successful, the experience with the Early Adopter PLNs (EAPLNs) supports the involvement of at least three different LEAs.

In terms of the ways in which a participant may be connected to an LEA, the RFLOI was adjusted to clarify that a participant's position – i.e., how he or she is connected to an LEA – is determined by the host and the participant. No other adjustments to the RFLOI were made.

Host: A PLN host must be an LEA, a statewide association, or advocacy/non-profit organization. The host cannot be the same as any of the LEAs to which a PLN participant is connected.

Feedback: The feedback included comments on the requirement that the host cannot be the same as any of the LEAs to which a PLN participant is connected. Specifically, some of the respondents felt that this was an unnecessary restriction that could limit the ability of a host to learn from the PLN experience.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted slightly as a result of this feedback. It was clarified that a facilitator may invite a limited number of other employees of the host to attend one or more PLN meetings as non-participants. However, a facilitator needs to have full independence from all participants to be effective. This allows the facilitator to push and challenge each participant and allows each participant to speak freely regarding his or her experiences within their LEA. Having a facilitator – even a contractor – who is connected to a participant may significantly limit such independence. Thus, the RFLOI was otherwise left unchanged in this regard.

Facilitator: A PLN host must employ or contract with a facilitator or two co-facilitators to facilitate the PLN. Each facilitator must possess at least two years of facilitation experience, two years of experience providing training on LCAPs, and/or two years of experience providing continuous improvement training.

Feedback: The feedback included comments on whether experience providing trainings on LCAPs (as opposed to LCFF generally) was appropriate to include, whether the facilitator would need to be selected prior to submission of the Letter of Interest, and general support for the ability to select co-facilitators.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted as a result of this feedback. The RFLOI now reads that the facilitator must have at least two years of experience with at least two years of facilitation experience, providing training on LCFF (as opposed to LCAP), and/or continuous improvement training. It is LCFF – not LCAP – that is the better focus; additionally, the PLNs are not intended to be LCAP trainings and specifically having LCAP training experience as a possible facilitator requirement might imply otherwise.

The RFLOI maintained the option of co-facilitators at the host's discretion.

The RFLOI also was adjusted to clarify that the host must agree to provide to the CCEE a resume or other documentary proof that the PLN facilitator has met the experience requirement by August 1, 2017.

Sharing of Resources: Each PLN host and facilitator must agree to share with other PLNs (via their Professional Learning Exchanges) all documents and resources created for or by the PLN facilitator or PLN participants or used in the PLN.

Feedback: The feedback included comments in support of this requirement. However, questions were raised concerning whether ownership would be retained by a document or resource's creator and whether use of a document or resource would need to be attributed to the owner. Some respondents questioned whether the requirement would apply to sharing documents or resources that were previously created.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted to clarify that any shared documents or resources would remain the property of their original owner – e.g., host or facilitator – and must be attributed to the original owner if used or adopted by another PLN. However, the RFLOI was not adjusted to limit sharing to only those documents or resources that were previously created. The intent of PLNs is to learn collectively and, furthermore, is funded with public dollars. Both of these factors strongly support the need to share, without limit, documents and resources created for or by the PLN facilitator or PLN participants or used in the PLN.

FTE: Each PLN facilitator must be employed or contracted by the host for at least 0.25 FTE.

Feedback: The feedback included comments that supported and opposed the 0.25 FTE requirement. Some respondents felt that it was too little while others felt that it was much better than the 0.5 FTE required for the EAPLNs.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted to remove any minimum required FTE. Instead, the RFLOI now includes a criterion that asks information regarding the duties of the PLN facilitator and total associated facilitator FTE required to perform the duties. The Matrix was also adjusted to encourage a detailed list of the facilitator's duties and the associated FTE. Due to the list of suggested duties and the evaluation category description, it would be difficult in practice for a facilitator to be successful without dedicating at least 0.25 FTE to the position.

Purpose: Each PLN must focus on process – i.e., the focus must generally be on how to use the Dashboard and/or the LCAP as tools to support continuous improvement across the LCFF state priorities – and not on helping LEAs adopt a particular program or practice.

Feedback: The feedback included comments regarding the best language for the purpose description. Most of the feedback, however, concerned the possible impact of the PLNs and any evaluation of that impact.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted slightly to clarify that the Letter of Interest should include a description of the purpose of the PLN and how the collaborative nature of the PLN will help participants and the participating LEAs build capacity to use the Dashboard and/or the LCAP to establish or enhance a system of continuous improvement across one or more of the LCFF state priorities with respect to all students, with respect to one or more unduplicated student groups, or with respect to closing achievement gaps between student groups. This language relies on the direction provided in Senate Bill No. 828 (2015-16) and is consistent with the Legislature’s desire for the CCEE to focus specifically on building capacity in these areas. For the adjustments to the RFLOI in response to the comments regarding the possible impact of the PLNs and any evaluation of that impact, please see the Response to the “Primary PLN Outcome” in the Draft Criteria section.

General Feedback on Proposed Minimum PLN Requirements

Feedback: The feedback varied widely and many of the comments were incorporated and responded to above. However, a number of the comments addressed whether all PLNs would need to operate for two years and offered suggestions on including references to improvement or implementation science.

Response: The RFLOI was slightly adjusted to clarify that all PLNs are expected to operate for two years (2017-18 and 2018-19). However, the RFLOI was not adjusted to include specific references to improvement or implementation science because the PLNs should be given as much latitude as possible (within the overall purpose of the PLN) to define the problems to be addressed and possible processes used to address them.

FEEDBACK & RESPONSES ON DRAFT CRITERIA

Primary PLN Purpose: Describe the purpose of the PLN. PLNs will rank higher if they possess a more specific focus on one or more of the unduplicated student groups.

Feedback: The feedback included many comments that focused on the statement that Letters of Interest would rank higher if they possess a more specific focus on one or more of the unduplicated student groups. Many of the respondents expressed their concern that this would disadvantage potential PLNs that had a focus on all students or on closing the achievement gaps for other student groups such as students with disabilities.

Response: The “Purpose” criterion in the Matrix was adjusted to categorize as “Excellent” those PLNs that focus on building capacity to use the Dashboard and/or the LCAP to establish or enhance a system of continuous improvement across one or more of the LCFF state priorities *with respect to one or more unduplicated student groups or with respect to closing achievement gaps between student groups*. However, a PLN can still receive “Sufficient” if it focuses on building capacity to use the Dashboard and/or the LCAP to establish or enhance a system of continuous improvement across one or more of the LCFF state priorities *with respect to all students*. This definition of “Excellent” was made to be consistent with LCFF’s fundamental focus on unduplicated students and on closing achievement gaps. However, the ability to still receive “Sufficient” in the “Purpose” criterion (and the multiple metric evaluation of each Letter of Interest) means that a PLN with a purpose focused on all students still stands a strong chance of being selected, all other factors being equal.

Primary PLN Outcomes: Describe the expected outcomes of the PLN. PLNs will rank higher if they include measureable outcomes that align with LCFF principles and/or LCFF state priorities.

Feedback: The feedback included a number of comments on different aspects of how the outcomes or impacts of the PLN would and should be measured. Some respondents focused on what type of data would and should be requested; other respondents focused on how to connect the PLN directly to educational outcomes.

Response: The RFLOI was significantly adjusted based on the feedback. However, rather than adjusting the criterion, the RFLOI now includes a Statement of Agreement, which must be included in the Letter of Interest, affirming that the host will develop, in partnership with the CCEE, measureable outcomes to help measure the impact of the PLN on participants, on participating LEAs, and on the educational outcomes of students in those LEAs. This adjustment was due to the fact that many PLNs are likely to develop their expected outcomes or impacts as part of their network processes.

Network Experience: Describe any experience the host has in running networks. PLNs with demonstrated and documented success in running networks will rank higher. To demonstrate and document such success, the Letter of Interest may include research or evaluations of past

networks run by the host, letters of support from participants in past networks run by the host, or other evidence to demonstrate the success of past networks run by the host.

Feedback: The feedback included comments on the description of a past network and its impact. One respondent suggested that any past network experience must demonstrate capacity building while another respondent suggested that any past network experience must demonstrate improvement in cultural systems.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted to include past experience supporting continuous improvement and capacity building as well as experience with past networks. The inclusion of experience supporting continuous improvement and capacity building is based on the fact that a PLN must generally focus on *building capacity* to use the Dashboard and/or the LCAP to establish or enhance a system of *continuous improvement*. Thus, the ability to host a successful PLN is improved by both experience hosting past networks as well as experience supporting continuous improvement and capacity building.

PLN Participants: List the number of participants the PLN is expected to have. Include whether the participants will be part of LEA teams and/or what LEA roles (e.g., superintendent, principal, parent) participants would fill. Also include how the PLN will select participants committed to participating in the PLN for the full two years. PLNs with 5-20 participants will rank highest. For a PLN with more than 20 participants to also rank highest, the Letter of Interest must describe (i) how host/facilitator will ensure that participation by participants and the relationships between participants will be as strong as if there were only 5-20 participants and (ii) how involvement by participants will be as impactful as if there were only 5-20 participants.

Feedback: The feedback included comments that it would encourage greater interest by potential hosts if there was no limit on the number of participants. Other respondents commented that the names and/or positions of the participants should be included in the RFLOI to demonstrate interest in the PLN. Still other respondents stated that it would be important for each LEA to have a team participate in the PLN because this is the best way to bring about change within LEAs.

Response: The range for the number of participants was not adjusted. Based on the experience with the EAPLNs, a PLN with 5-20 participants still seems to be the optimal number to encourage and support rich dialogue in which everyone can participate. However, the RFLOI also maintains the option to go above 20 participants and still receive the same category (based on the Matrix) by offering a compelling explanation of how the host/facilitator will ensure that engagement by the participants and the relationships between the participants will be as strong as if there were only 5-20 participants.

The RFLOI was slightly adjusted with respect to the need to include at least the positions of the participants in the Letter of Interest. While some hosts may not be able to get all participants to commit to the PLN by the Letter of Interest deadline, it would be important

for the host to identify the types of participants (i.e., the positions) that would be in the PLN and for the types to support the purpose of the PLN.

The RFLOI was not adjusted in response to the suggestion that each LEA be required to have a team participate the PLN. While including LEA teams could potentially strengthen the ability of a PLN to bring about change within LEAs, the potential burden that this requirement would have on participating LEAs would be significant.

Unduplicated Student Percentages: List the unduplicated student percentages for each LEA to which a PLN participant is connected. The PLNs with higher unduplicated student percentage averages will rank higher. (The average will be unweighted – i.e., LEAs with higher enrollment will not be given greater weight in the calculation of the average.)

Feedback: Similar to the comments on Primary PLN Purpose, the feedback included many comments expressing concern that this criterion would disadvantage potential PLNs that had a focus on all students or on closing the achievement gaps for other student groups such as students with disabilities.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted to eliminate this criterion as a standalone criterion. As noted in the Response to “Primary PLN Purpose” criterion, LCFF’s fundamental focus is on unduplicated students and on closing achievement gaps. The Matrix was developed to support a fair and consistent process that, using a multiple measure evaluation of each LOI, would result in a list of high quality PLNs that (i) reflect the diversity of local education agencies across California such as difference in geography, student demographics, LEA type, and LEA size, (ii) allow all LEAs to benefit from the learnings from the PLNs, and (iii) generally ensure fidelity to the requirements set forth in Senate Bill No. 828 (2015-16). Thus, the ability to consider unduplicated student percentages is already present.

PLN Meeting: State the frequency of meetings and what type of meetings (in-person or virtual) the PLN is expected to have. Include locations (for in-person meetings) or online platforms (for virtual meetings) as well as dates, start times, and durations. The Letter of Interest may include additional details such as engagement strategies for in-person and virtual meetings, network development strategies, and other details important to the development of the PLN that will deepen learning, support capacity building, and become a catalyst for systemic change. PLNs will rank highest if they hold one in-person meeting a month (excluding July) and hold either (i) a second meeting a month (in-person or virtual) or (ii) hold additional sub-PLN meetings (with at least two PLN participants) a month such that the facilitator is scheduled to meet with each PLN participant a second time. For a PLN which does not meet this frequently to still rank highest, the Letter of Interest must describe (i) how host/facilitator will ensure that the relationships between participants will be as strong as if the PLN did meet as frequently as described above and (ii) how involvement by participants will be as impactful as if the PLN did meet as frequently as described above. In doing so, the Letter of Interest may also articulate any challenges (e.g., workload, distance) the PLN participants would have in participating fully in a PLN that did meet as frequently as described above.

Feedback: The feedback included comments that strongly supported the allowance for flexibility, with some citing the need to take into consideration the capacity of the participants and the multiple roles and responsibilities they carry outside of their PLN participation. Other respondents wanted the RFLOI to go even further and allow for fewer but longer meetings, noting the benefit of being able to go into more depth. Some respondents also expressed concerns that providing meeting dates and/or location two years in advance is unrealistic.

Response: The RFLOI did not adjust the frequency or type of meetings permitted. To start, most of the respondents were supportive of the added flexibility. Additionally, meeting less frequently would have a negative effect on the ability of PLNs to impact change in participating LEAs. That is, one of the reasons to meet so frequently is that it better supports the implementation of the changes discussed at prior PLN meetings; meeting quarterly, for instance, would not provide the same level of implementation support.

The RFLOI was adjusted to only ask for meeting frequency and type because this is what is important for purposes of evaluating the Letters of Interest. The hosts will not be asked for additional meeting details such as start time, duration, and location until after being selected.

PLN Facilitator Duties & FTE: Describe the duties and associated hours of the PLN facilitator or co-facilitator. PLNs will rank highest if they included the duties and associated hours detailed in the table below. The Letter of Interest may also include other PLN facilitator or co-facilitator's duties beyond those listed in the original proposed requirements and draft criteria announcement.

Feedback: The feedback included comments asking for clarifications regarding the overlap of the duties and how to adjust the Letter of Interest if a potential host is interested in hosting multiple PLNs.

Response: The RFLOI was slightly adjusted to try to clarify how the listed duties do and do not overlap. Additionally, the RFLOI was slightly adjusted to encourage potential hosts to submit multiple Letters of Interest and that each could include an alternate list of duties and associated times if one proposed PLN was selected or if all proposed PLNs were selected.

Financial Support: Describe the total budget for the PLN (including a line item breakdown of how the total amount was determined) and the percentage of the budget that CCEE is being asked to financially support. The budget can include all costs (not just facilitator costs) required to host the PLN. PLNs will rank higher if the percentage (not the amount) of the budget that CCEE is being asked to financially support is lower.

Feedback: The feedback primarily included comments regarding whether this criterion would disadvantage certain types of hosts over others because certain types of hosts are better able to solicit outside funding and/or contribute their own resources to supporting a PLN.

Response: The RFLOI was adjusted in response to this feedback. In particular, the RFLOI now states that Letters of Interest should include the full cost of the PLN (e.g., estimated cost of the facilitator, administrative support costs, additional meeting costs) and what portion of the full cost the host will cover through in-kind contributions and what portion of the full cost the CCEE is being asked to cover. The RFLOI also asks that Letters of Interest detail the full cost of the PLN and states what kind of costs should not be included (i.e., indirect costs or costs that do not exclusively support the PLN). Additionally, the Matrix states that while those Letters of Interest that request the CCEE to cover a lower portion of the full cost of the PLN will generally be more favored, this factor will not outweigh the desire to (i) have the PLNs reflect the diversity of local education agencies across California such as difference in geography, LEA type, and LEA size, (ii) allow all LEAs to benefit from the learnings from the PLNs, and (iii) to generally ensure fidelity to the requirements set forth in Senate Bill No. 828 (2015-16). Thus, no type of host can be systematically disfavored by this criterion as that would contradict the need to (i) have the PLNs reflect the diversity of local education agencies across California such as difference in geography, LEA type, and LEA size, (ii) allow all LEAs to benefit from the learnings from the PLNs, and (iii) to generally ensure fidelity to the requirements set forth in Senate Bill No. 828 (2015-16).

General Feedback on Draft Letter of Interest Criteria

Feedback: The feedback varied widely and many of the comments were incorporated and responded to above. But one respondent asked for clarification regarding how the criteria would be evaluated and weighted against each other.

Response: The RFLOI makes clear that there are no content requirements with respect to the criteria – that is, there are not particular ways in which each criterion must be addressed. Rather, the Letters of Interest will be evaluated primarily based on the Matrix, enabling a multiple measure evaluation of each Letter of Interest rather than a single combined score.