



Geo Leads 2021–2022 Evaluation Report

Within the System of Support are seven Geographic Lead Agencies (Geo Leads) housed within nine county offices of education (COEs): Shasta COE, Sonoma COE, Placer and Sacramento COEs, Alameda COE, Tulare COE, Kern County Superintendent of Schools, and Riverside and San Diego COEs.

In the following pages, we spotlight three aspects of the evaluation that provide insight into the Geo Lead roles and impact areas. We provide survey findings, highlight key Geo Lead activities, and share illustrative quotes from COEs about their experiences with the Geo Leads. We organize the findings by the three central Geo Lead roles stipulated by Statute to¹

1. build the capacity of COEs in their geographic areas,
2. coordinate and calibrate Differentiated Assistance across their geographic areas, and
3. identify existing resources and develop new resources in response to their local area needs.

¹RTI International administered surveys and conducted interviews to evaluate the work of the Geo Leads.

BUILD CAPACITY



SURVEY FINDINGS

Geo Leads build the capacity of the COEs in their areas in many ways, through building a culture of trust and strong relationships that allows them to identify and provide necessary supports. Examples of specific Geo Lead activities include:

- Providing professional development opportunities on topics such as Universal Design for Learning, Compassionate Systems, Implementation Science, and data visualization training.
- Providing training in best practices for implementation (in collaboration with the National Implementation Research Network) and supporting students with disabilities (in collaboration with the SELPA system improvement leads).
- Establishing a small county workgroup to address the unique challenges faced by small COEs.
- Ensuring that COEs can bring immediate questions and needs to their meetings and receive support and resources in return.

89% of COE respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Geographic Lead Agency **understands their needs**. (Statute A)

92% of COE respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Geographic Lead Agency provides access to **high-quality professional learning opportunities** that enable them to effectively support LEAs. (Statute A, D)

93% of COE respondents reported that their Geographic Lead Agency “often” or “always” offers **resources and suggested solutions** when they bring questions and challenges to their Geographic Lead Agency meetings. (Statute A, D)

BUILD CAPACITY

COE QUOTES

Based on work with our Geo Lead, we have focused on use of implementation and Improvement Science tools and strategies. It helps to have accountability partners for our work to address inequity, especially for English learners and students with disabilities. Our GL models transparency and practices to build high-trust relationships which we are able to emulate in our work with districts.

The network of support through our Geographic Lead Agency allows us to have access to those in similar positions and alleviates the duplication of effort in many instances. It allows us to facilitate our own System of Support within our County based on the knowledge and resources we gain from the collective group.

Our Geographic Lead Agencies have equipped our team to create spaces that are safe to discuss challenging topics such as inequity, discrimination, power, and privilege in school systems. They help us see opportunities to build these conversations in multiple sections of our department including connections to SEL, Native Ways of Knowing, Ethnic Studies, Special Education, and Multilingual Education. The Geo Lead participation has allowed us to build the critical consciousness of multiple leaders and teachers in multiple context.

The inquiry, reflection, and analysis we have engaged in with the support of the Equity Workgroup within our GEO group has not only provided us insight into our own practices and structures but has given us excellent tools and approaches for engaging our LEAs in similar activities.

DEVELOP & CURATE RESOURCES



SURVEY FINDINGS

Geo Leads develop and share multiple resources. Specific examples include:

- Publishing a paper titled “Addressing the Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness During the COVID-19 Pandemic.”
- Holding a statewide conference focused on improvement efforts.
- Developing a resource website.
- Providing resources on subjects such as Differentiated Assistance, Improvement Science, Equity, ESSER III, and COVID-19.
- Connecting COEs to other lead agencies through consultations and inviting agencies to their Geo Lead meetings to share their expertise.

91% of COE respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Geographic Lead Agency provides access to **high-quality tools or resources** that enable them to effectively support LEAs. (*Statute A, D*)

96% of COE respondents reported that their Geographic Lead Agency connected them to at least one other agency in the **System of Support for specialized assistance**, including MTSS/SUMS (**56%**), 21CSLA (**53%**), Equity Leads (**50%**), and SELPA (**44%**). (*Statute B*)

DEVELOP & CURATE RESOURCES

COE QUOTES

“ We were able to workshop tools that we have used to improve the tools and we have also been able to use tools that others have introduced as well. We have taken the suggestions given during our meetings to make edits and changes to our tools. We have also used strategies that we have learned from other COEs to modify what we are doing for our LEAs. ”

“ The opportunity to build out network resources among the Geo Lead community has supported our COE's work in many ways, including shared opportunities for PD offered by another county or accessing new ideas/strategies to respond to the responsibilities associated with CSI/DA. The Geo Lead collaborative is an essential resource for COEs and the support they provide COEs. ”

“ Our lead saved us a great deal of time by assimilating all the legislative changes and creating documents for us to share with our districts. These documents have helped our LEAs more efficiently and effectively write their multitude of plans (LCAP, ELOP, ESSER etc.) Ideally, when well written and effectively implemented these plans impact the quality of instruction and improve student outcomes. ”

“ The work of our EL Huddle has provided great resources which we have directly used with our districts to address bias and inequities for English learners. ”

COORDINATE & CALIBRATE SUPPORT



SURVEY FINDINGS

Geo Leads have built COE capacity to work with LEAs on Differentiated Assistance and other areas. Specific examples include:

- Facilitating learning and collaboration around equity within a Differentiated Assistance Cohort.
- Working with Systems Improvement Leads to examine state requirements and develop strategies to help COEs better meet the needs of their districts.
- Supporting COEs in addressing Differentiated Assistance using Improvement Science principles.
- Instituting huddles and/or workgroups for sharing information and developing resources on high-interest topics, such as data, English language development, comprehensive support and improvement resources, Differentiated Assistance, and equity resources.

87% of COE respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Geographic Lead Agency provides access to **technical assistance** that enables them to effectively support LEAs. (*Statute A, D*)

91% of COE respondents reported that other COEs “often” or “always” **offer resources and suggested solutions** when they bring questions and challenges to their Geographic Lead Agency meetings. (*Statute A, D*)

90% of COE respondents agreed that the work they have been doing with their Geographic Lead Agency has been **helpful in building their capacity** to work more effectively with their LEAs. (*Statute A, D*)

COORDINATE & CALIBRATE SUPPORT

COE QUOTES

Initially our work with DA districts ended with identifying root cause, but after working with our Geo Lead and other partners we began to go deeper into a cycle of learning with our district that focused on classroom instruction as being a targeted change idea. Our work in gathering data on this change idea is ongoing.

Discussions, trainings, and coaching for Learning Acceleration, Improvement Science, and Implementation Science have all helped me support districts in continuous improvement which, in turn, supports implementation of systems that impact student achievement. My DA meetings and facilitation of technical assistance to districts have drastically improved due to the Geographic Lead's work of providing PD, TA, networks, and coaching.

Our Geo Lead has supported building staff capacity in Improvement Science practices and protocols which have helped our work with our DA districts and really all of our districts to continuously refine our approaches to working with districts, sites, administrators, and classroom teachers to improve instruction for students.

For instance, within Differentiated Assistance, we (along with other COEs in our Geo Lead) discussed and adapted to the new guidelines in a manner that is more closely aligned to a multi-tiered system of support. This expands the level of service we provide to all LEAs which, in turn, adjusts what is offered under targeted assistance.

APPENDIX

ED Code 52073 subdivision B



(b) (1) A geographic lead agency shall have all of the following responsibilities:

(A) Assist in building the capacity of county offices of education within the geographic lead agency's defined geographic area to provide effective assistance and support to school districts under the state priorities identified in subdivision (d) of Section 52060 and federal programs.

(B) Coordinate and calibrate assistance and support provided to local educational agencies within its defined geographic area and with other geographic lead agencies, expert lead agencies identified pursuant to Section 52073.1, special education resource leads identified pursuant to Section 52073.2, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, and the department.

(C) Provide assistance and support if another county office of education within the geographic lead agency's defined geographic area is unable to provide appropriate assistance and support to one or more school districts in that county office of education's boundaries, or at the request of a school district or county superintendent of schools pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 52071.

(D) Identify existing resources, professional development activities, and other efforts currently available within its designated geographic area to assist school districts and county offices of education to improve outcomes under the state priorities identified in subdivision (d) of Section 52060 and subdivision (d) of Section 52066, and upon request, share information about these existing resources.

(E) Upon request by the department and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, develop new resources and activities, designed to build capacity within school districts and county offices of education across the state under the state priorities identified in subdivision (d) of Section 52060 and subdivision (d) of Section 52066 or other areas of identified need.

(F) Other duties as specified by the department and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence as part of the process to select geographic lead agencies.