

California Statewide System of Support: Core Working Group Report



Prepared for

**The California Collaborative for
Educational Excellence**

**1029 J Street
Suite 450
Sacramento, CA 95814**

June 2024

Prepared by

RTI International

**Jay Feldman, PhD
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Berkeley, CA 94704**

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Introduction

This report provides a summation of the investigation conducted by the Statewide System of Support Core Working Group. The Core Working Group explored the California Statewide System of Support (SSOS), a pivotal component of California's public school accountability and continuous improvement system. The System of Support has been in place for more than 7 years. The original intent of the System was to help LEAs and their schools meet the needs of each student they serve, with a focus on building local capacity to sustain improvement and to effectively address disparities in opportunities and outcomes. Inspired by the conceptual framework behind a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), California's statewide system of support aligns state and regional resources to support improvement for all schools and districts. This multi-tiered approach provide support to LEAs and schools within California's integrated local, state, and federal accountability and continuous improvement system and allows for LEAs to access resources that would meet the unique needs of their students and communities. However, perspectives from the field point out that not all LEAs believe the resources in the System of Support are universally accessible. We wanted to know Why.

The investigation by the Core Working Group aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of what the system is, how the system operates, and its impact on local educational agencies (LEAs). Using a phased approach of coordination, collaboration, and integration, the Core Working Group investigated the intricacies of the Statewide System of Support. Through rich discussion, reflection and continuous improvement the Core Working Group developed next steps that are aimed to remove barriers so that all resources in the System are accessible to all LEAs to reach the System of Support ultimate goal, to improve outcomes for students. This report will shed light on the effectiveness, challenges, and potential improvements that can be made to strengthen the system and support provided to LEAs to improve services to all students.



Education Code Establishing the Statewide System of Support

Under Ed Code 52059.5, The California State Legislature established a single system of support to local educational agencies and schools to build the capacity of local educational agencies to do all of the following:

- (1) Support the continuous improvement of pupil performance within state priorities
- (2) Address gaps in achievement between pupil subgroups
- (3) Improve outreach and collaboration with education partners to ensure that goals, actions, and services as described in school districts and county offices of education (COE) Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) reflect the needs of pupils and the community, especially for historically underrepresented or low-achieving populations.

The full text of the Education Code that guides the work of the System of Support is provided in Appendix A.



The California Statewide System of Support

At its heart, California's Statewide System of Support (SSOS) is focused on improving the outcomes of California's students. The overarching goal of California's SSOS is to help local educational agencies and their schools meet the needs of each student they serve, with a focus on (1) building local capacity to sustain improvement and to effectively address disparities in opportunities and outcomes and (2) improving outreach and collaboration with education partners to ensure that goals, actions, and services described in the school district and county office of education (COE) Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) reflect the needs of students and the community, especially for historically underrepresented or low-achieving groups.

The California SSOS provides three levels of support to LEAs and schools.

- **Universal:** General assistance, is made up of resources and assistance that are available to all LEAs and schools.
- **Targeted/Supplemental:** Differentiated Assistance, is targeted support that is available to LEAs that meet the eligibility requirements set by the State Board of Education (SBE).
- **Intensive:** Intensive Intervention, may be provided to LEAs that are identified as having persistent performance issues and a lack of improvement over four consecutive years.

Both State Agencies and Lead Agencies are responsible for advancing the goal and purposes of the system of support. The Lead Agencies are tasked with building capacity, developing, and providing support to particular entities or groups within California's education system. The State Agencies are also tasked with facilitating and coordinating the work of the Lead Agencies.

To see a list of lead agencies, please refer to the [Statewide System of Support 2023–24 directory](#).

The Statewide System of Support serves as the backbone of our educational infrastructure, guiding us toward a more equitable and effective system.

It is imperative that we strive for coherence in this system, weaving together coordination, collaboration, and integration. Only through this unified approach can we truly unlock the full potential of our educational endeavors, ensuring every student has access to the support and resources they need to succeed.

– Matt Navo, Executive Director, California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE)

I feel like the system is the right design.

As a district in Differentiated Assistance, having someone who can work alongside a school district to build our own capacity, reflect, and build our own solutions is the right path. The challenge is executing the system in a consistent way across the state. The process that we used to assess the current system was engaging and helped us reflect on what has gone well with the continuous improvement process and what areas need focus to create that consistency of support. I am already seeing tangible outcomes through the early implementation of some of our recommendations.

– Deb Kubin, Superintendent, Ukiah Unified School District

The Core Working Group

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), in partnership with the California Department of Education (CDE) and the State Board of Education (SBE), established the Core Working Group in 2022. The members of this group are deeply committed to the success of all California's students and are key decision makers and leaders in California's Statewide System of Support. In bringing educational partners from across the state to engage in this work together, the state agencies recognized that having a common understanding of and agreement around an ultimate goal for the Statewide System of Support would be critical to push against in the exploration of the system. The following statement was created to describe both what the SSOS currently does and what it is envisioned to do. Please note this language is intended only to operationalize the definition of the SSOS provided in Ed Code for the purposes of this work.

The ultimate goal of the Statewide System of Support (SSOS) is to provide coordinated, needs-based, and differentiated resources and support to LEAs that lead to improved services for all students evidenced by the closing of opportunity gaps and increased achievement.

The Core Working Group has been focused on:

- investigating the specifics of how the SSOS has been implemented,
- identifying what is working well in the SSOS, and
- making recommendations for identified areas for improvement.

The Core Working Group utilized improvement science strategies to investigate and better understand the need for more coordinated, needs-based and differentiated resources and support to LEAs to result in increased learning for all students. Utilizing phases of coordination, collaboration, and integration, the SSOS Core Working Group has generated recommendations in three key areas – coherence, accessibility, and alignment to support improvement at all levels of engagement with the SSOS. Recommendations for each key area represent the three levels of support and services within the SSOS: universal, targeted, and intensive. The Core Working Group has identified areas of strength, as well as where opportunities for improvement may exist.

In the early years of the System of Support, as we worked to build the structure and processes, state agencies received a great deal of input from the people and agencies charged with delivering support.

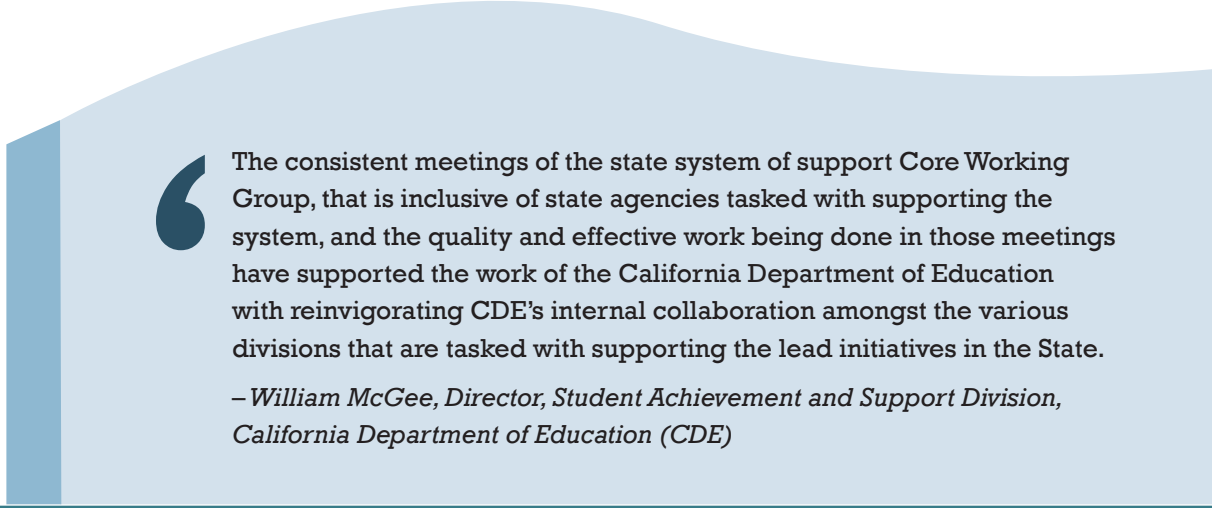
This project created a formal process for receiving feedback and problem solving with the people and agencies receiving the support. To create a user centered system, engaging in Continuous Improvement with the recipients of assistance is key to making adjustments to best support our students.

– Sara Pietrowski, Policy Director, State Board of Education

The Core Working Group encapsulates the work of individuals in an investigation at all levels of the SSOS. The investigation began by reviewing the intensive level of supports, moved through targeted/supplemental supports and finally the universal level of supports currently available in the system. Individuals were added to the Core Working Group, and only small adjustments in participants were made over time.

CCEE facilitated three investigations that corresponded to each of the tiers of support provided by the SSOS.

- The **Intensive Working Group** focused on how the SSOS provides support to local education agencies and/or schools with persistent performance issues and lack of improvement over a specified time period (see EdCode 52072, 52072.5, and 52072.1 and 52072.6 in Appendix A).
- The **Targeted/Supplemental Working Group** focused on how the SSOS provides focused support based on specific need(s) (see EdCode 52071 and 52701.5 in Appendix A).
- The **Universal Working Group** focused on supports within the SSOS that are available universally to all LEAs and are asset based and rooted in continuous improvement. Universal supports are nimble and relevant and allow for multiple entry points to access supports. This flexibility honors the complex and diverse learning environments throughout California and prevents a one-size-fits-all approach that meets the needs of students is informed by data and the local context.



“The consistent meetings of the state system of support Core Working Group, that is inclusive of state agencies tasked with supporting the system, and the quality and effective work being done in those meetings have supported the work of the California Department of Education with reinvigorating CDE’s internal collaboration amongst the various divisions that are tasked with supporting the lead initiatives in the State.

– William McGee, Director, Student Achievement and Support Division, California Department of Education (CDE)

System of Support Core Working Group and Reactor Team Members

The investigation into generating recommendations to improve the coherence, accessibility, and alignment of universal, targeted/supplemental, and intensive services and supports in the Statewide System of Support was strengthened with the interplay of two key groups – the Core Working Group and the Reactor Team:

- The Core Working Group, composed of representative members from the statewide agencies, county offices of education, and local educational agencies. The Core Working Group engaged in multiple opportunities to identify strengths, barriers, and opportunities for increased coherence, accessibility and alignment of SSOS services and supports.
- The Reactor Team, composed of a smaller representative group, whose responsibilities included “reacting” to the work produced by the Core Working Group at key intervals. This team provided feedback where needed for key ideas and concepts to be advanced.

The Core Working Group was organized around the three levels of support. The Core Working Group began with a thirteen-person team that investigated Intensive Services and Supports, according to EdCode. See 50702, 50702.5, and 5072.1 and 5072.6 in Appendix A. After the cycle of investigation of Intensive Services and Supports was concluded, additional members were onboarded to investigate the targeted/supplemental services and supports, and, finally, additional members were invited to join the group to discuss universal services and supports. Tables 1–3 identify when Core Working Group members first joined. Table 4 identifies the Reactor Team, which remained constant throughout the process. In the next section, we provide details about the improvement process that guided this work.



One of the key highlights for me as part of the Core Working Group and developing recommendations is that they were not done in siloed groups of state agencies or leadership.

From the very beginning they were intentional in co-creating and co-developing the recommendations of ways that the SSOS could accomplish its goal. We had voices of district superintendents and other district staff and there was a realization that unless you’re “in the know” and have personal relationships, information and resources are not available to everyone who needs. And so we were able to craft recommendations that will make communication and accessibility a strength of the system.

– Anissa Sonnenburg, Administrator, System of Support Office, California Department of Education (CDE)

Table 1. Intensive Support Working Group Team Members

| Name | Role | Organization |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Mike Fine | Chief Executive Officer | Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team (FMCAT) |
| Judy Flores | Superintendent | Shasta County Office of Education |
| Dave Gordon | Superintendent | Sacramento County Office of Education |
| Stephanie Gregson | Deputy Executive Director | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Chris Hartley | Deputy Executive Director | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Melissa Hodgson | Program Specialist | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| William McGee | Director, Student Achievement and Support Division | California Department of Education (CDE) |
| Matt Navo | Executive Director | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Sara Pietrowski | Policy Director | State Board of Education (SBE) |
| Ingrid Roberson | Former Assistant Superintendent; current Assistant Director | Alameda County Office of Education; California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Jana Rosborough | Facilitator | Limestone Education |
| Susan Rotermund | Senior Researcher | RTI International |
| Anissa Sonnenburg | Education Administrator, System of Support | California Department of Education (CDE) |
| Lindsay Tornatore | Director, Systems Improvement and Student Success | California County Superintendents (CSS) |

Through the Core Working Group, CCEE has displayed their commitment to fostering an inclusive dialogue which embraces diverse perspectives from across our communities.

By bringing together voices from various regions and backgrounds, we have gained invaluable insights into the unique needs and challenges facing our counties, schools, and educators. This collaborative effort allows us to identify and prioritize the essential supports necessary to ensure the success and well-being of all learners.

– Heather Richter, Ed.D., Administrator, Instructional Leadership, Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Table 2. Targeted/Supplemental Support Working Group Team Members
(in addition to Intensive Working Group Members)

| Name | Role | Organization |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Adam Clark | Superintendent | Mt. Diablo Unified School District |
| Tamara Clay | Executive Director | El Dorado County Office of Education |
| Mindy Fattig | Senior Advisor | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Jay Feldman | Senior Researcher | RTI, International |
| Lisa Gilbert | Deputy Superintendent | Kern County Superintendent of Schools |
| Deb Kubin | Superintendent | Ukiah Unified School District |
| John Malloy | Superintendent | San Ramon Valley Unified School District |
| Steven Sterling Mitchell | Assistant Director Community Engagement Initiative (CEI) | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Annie Sharp | Senior Director | Fresno County Superintendent of Schools |
| Jennie Snyder | Deputy Superintendent | Representing California County Superintendents (CSS) and Sonoma County Office of Education |
| Stacey Wedin | Assistant Director | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |

Table 3. Universal Support Working Group Team Members (in addition to Intensive and Targeted/Supplemental Support Working Group Members)

| Name | Role | Organization |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Sandra Azevedo | Improvement Facilitator | El Dorado COE/SELPA |
| Amanda Dickey | Executive Director of Government Relations | Santa Clara County Office of Education |
| Jose Guzman | Associate Superintendent | Kings Canyon Unified School District |
| Brad Huebert | Executive Director, Curriculum and Instruction | Fresno County Superintendent of Schools |
| Rebecca Kopecky | Coordinator, Academic Interventions | Orange County Department of Education |
| Mike McCormick | Superintendent | Val Verde Unified School District |
| Heather Richter | Administrator, Continuous Improvement Support | Kern County Superintendent of Schools |
| Colby Smart | Deputy Superintendent | Humboldt County Office of Education |

Table 4. Reactor Team Members

| Name | Role | Organization |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Dave Gordon | Superintendent | Sacramento County Office of Education |
| Chris Hartley | Deputy Executive Director | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Jennifer Hicks | Assistant Superintendent | Placer County Office of Education |
| Ed Manansala | County Superintendent of Schools | El Dorado County Office of Education |
| Matt Navo | Executive Director | California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) |
| Sara Pietrowski | Policy Director | State Board of Education (SBE) |
| Jana Rosborough | Facilitator | Limestone Education |
| Lindsay Tornatore | Director, Systems Improvement and Student Success | California County Superintendents (CSS) |



I am very grateful for the commitment each System of Support Core Working Group member brought to the process.

By modeling continuous improvement, sharing unique perspectives, listening to learn and grow, and remaining student focused, the final recommendations and strategic actions will improve accessibility and coherence within California's Statewide System of Support.

—Chris Hartley, Ed.D.; California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE)

Improvement Process

The Core Working Group engaged in an intensive process based upon key principles of improvement science. It began with a focus on intensive services and support within Statewide System of Support because Intensive Intervention is clearly defined in the Ed Code, allowing for a very focused investigation into this level of the system. Starting with one level of support allowed for a continuous improvement process in the workgroup by testing the improvement process within the Intensive Working Group and improving the process along the way.

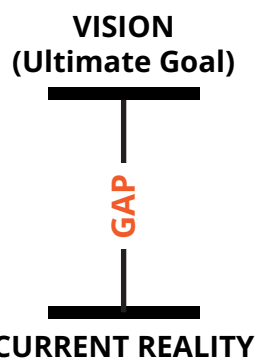
The process was grounded within a continuous improvement model (Exhibit 1), a strategy that involves the evaluation and revision of processes, methods, and practices within a system. The goal of continuous improvement is to make periodic changes to increase the efficiency, accuracy, and effectiveness of operations. Implementing continuous improvement begins by identifying a problem, planning solutions with a team, testing ideas, and monitoring changes.

Exhibit 1. Continuous Improvement Process Overview

Process Grounded in Continuous Improvement

Common approaches to address a gap between vision and current reality

- Announce changes
- Increase Accountability
- Provide professional development
- Roll out a new plan



Common approaches attending to improvement science to address a gap

- Ongoing effort
- Systemic perspective
- Problem-oriented
- Intentional investigation
- Learning from those who most experience the problem

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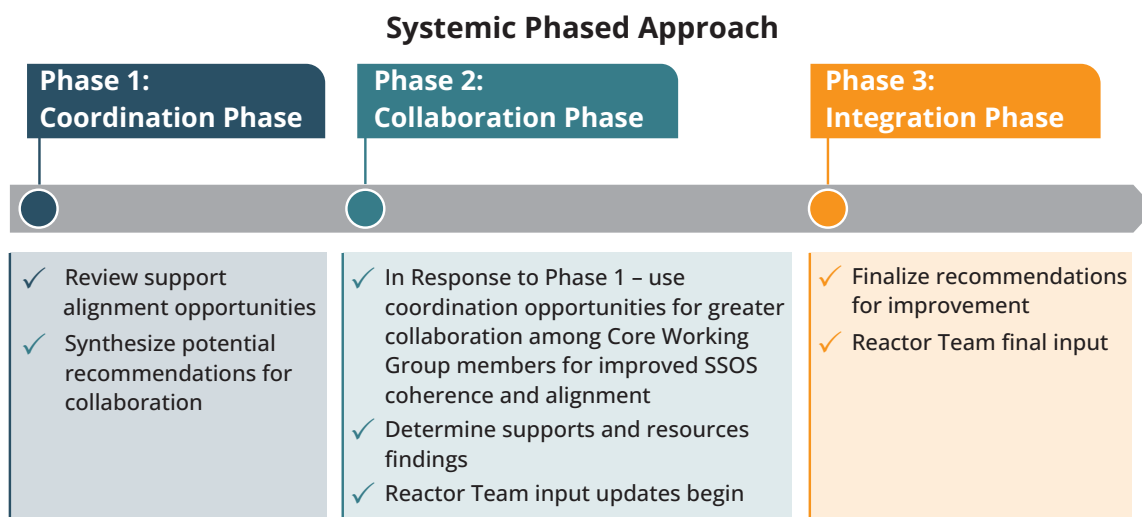
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For root cause analysis, the Core Working Group used the Force Field model, a well-established model used to analyze a situation and identify the forces that drive and resist change. This model helps individuals and organizations understand the dynamics of a situation or problem and determine possible places to improve the system. A Force Field analysis supports honest and open reflection regarding the root causes of a problem and ways to break down barriers.

Each working group conducted their own improvement investigation through three similar stages (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2. Continuous Improvement Phase Approach



1. Coordination Phase. In this phase, the group investigated the SSOS, reviewed elements in the system, grounded that review in Statute, and compared this to what is happening in the field.
2. Collaboration Phase. In this phase, which was the longest phase, the group identified driving and restraining forces and developed and documented findings.
 - Driving forces are the positive forces that influence or support the change initiative. These forces lead to new ideas or change.
 - Restraining forces are the negative forces that are against the change initiative. These forces tend to maintain the status quo and restrict the implementation of new ideas or changes.
 - The team documented findings by identifying the key strengths (drivers) and barriers (restrainers) within the System.

- The team identified the two restrainers, based upon their evidence, which were impacting the system.
3. Integration Phase. In this phase, the group generated change ideas and recommendations.
- Change ideas are specific work practices or interventions that represent an alteration to how work is currently done.
 - The team identified multiple change ideas, reviewed feedback from the larger Core Working Group, and ultimately identified key recommendations that, if implemented, would have the greatest positive impact on the SSOS and the students it serves.

The work that the Core Working Group has engaged in is an analysis of what is working and what we can improve within the Statewide System of Support.

It's an example of our statewide commitment to continuous improvement that is focused on ensuring that all educators have access and opportunity to work with content specialists to overcome local challenges and ultimately improve student outcomes.

–Lisa Gilbert, Ed.D, Deputy Superintendent, Instructional Support, Kern County Superintendent of Schools

I appreciate how the Core Working Group was designed, engaging local users as well as those responsible for designing and implementing the system.

This makeup demonstrates a dedication and commitment to using an improvement process to impact our work. This process has not been about trying to persuade users of the system to agree to the views of state agency representatives. The CDE, SBE, and CCEE used this process to listen to the people on the ground and let us provide input on how the system could best be designed. But they didn't stop there. The Working Group also provided ideas on how to best communicate the system, and we are engaging in the design of what these change ideas look like moving forward.

– Annie Sharp, Ed.D., Senior Director, Data Strategy and Improvement, Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

Identified Strengths in the Statewide System of Support

As part of the improvement work, the Core Working Group brainstormed key strengths at each tier of the Statewide System of Support (SSOS). These strengths were then categorized into three areas: the framework for the system of support, availability and access to resources, and the design and implementation of the system. This is not an exhaustive list of what is working well; its purpose was to help develop a common understanding of the System among Core Working Group members, and to acknowledge areas where the System could build from what is working well. Some of the strengths identified included the following:

- **Continuous improvement**, including a framework for continuous improvement and a commitment to continuous improvement at all levels of the system
- **Ability of the system to respond to need**, such as a focus on instruction, teaching, and learning, support that is differentiated according to need, and a user-centered approach
- **Leveraging of resources**, including an array of resources and supports with rich content to meet needs, an intentional focus that resources are invested in areas of need, and that the people in the system work together in new ways, across agencies, in a design that has been more inclusive of the people who are impacted



The Statewide System of Support has a rich array of resources to offer, and we are working diligently to design a system so that LEAs can access the right resources, in the right place, at the right time.

The [beauty] of the Core Working Group was having a collection of committed minds in the same room to work through the messiness of system design. There was conviction in the room that the SSOS was working, and a collective acknowledgment that we need to continue to highlight bright spots and work to ensure that every LEA has access to resources and supports that close equity gaps and drive success for all students.

– Tamara Clay, Executive Director, Special Services/SELPA/SIL,
El Dorado County Office of Education

Initial Recommendations for the Statewide System of Support

The purpose of the Core Working Group was ultimately to brainstorm a set of recommendations that would address the needs they saw across the Statewide System of Support (SSOS). The Core Working Group process did not include any systematic review of these identified recommendations. That is, they did not review recommendations for the quantity of resources required or level of effort needed to implement each recommendation. Nor did they discuss potential relative impact among the identified recommendations. Instead, the purpose was solely to generate multiple ideas to address system need. These initial recommendations that were advanced at each of the three levels of support—intensive, targeted/supplemental, and universal—are shown in Tables 5–7. In the next section, we discuss how the Core Working Group reconciled the recommendations from all three levels of the system to identify themes and actions to advance the effectiveness of the SSOS.

“The relationship between the county offices of education and the school districts was very prominent.

There were experienced people from both groups talking to one another about the best ways to get information to their colleagues. I think we built a *roadmap to access support* that will help connect school districts to System resources that are targeted to each district’s, large or small, individualized need in a timely fashion.

– Dave Gordon, Superintendent, Sacramento County Office of Education

“I appreciate CCEE and the Core Working Group for bringing together leaders from all parts of our educational system to focus on school and district improvement in a collaborative way.

True collaboration transforms diverse insights into actionable strategies by leveraging the experience and the expertise of the group. This was my experience of the working group, and I trust our efforts will help improve outcomes for students across California.

– Dr. John Malloy, Superintendent, San Ramon Valley Unified School District

Preliminary Recommendations by Level of Support

Table 5. Intensive Support Preliminary Recommendations

| Impact and Integration of Intensive Supports and Resources | Technical Clarity of Intensive Supports and Resources | Alignment of Providers in Operationalizing Intensive Supports and Resources |
|--|--|---|
| Creation and use of tools, such as data and heatmaps, to demonstrate trends where intensive improvement (immediate and long-term) efforts are happening or anticipated | Markup of the Level 3 statute to determine if/ where additional clarity is needed and in relation to what is current reality, including those who are currently receiving intensive supports and resources, and CCEE, SBE SSPI, County Superintendents | Understanding and agreement of roles and responsibilities transitioning from Differentiated Assistance to Direct Technical Assistance and leveraging resources |
| Cross-agency collaboration on early warning system (Year 2 work), including early engagements with COEs | Communication/consensus decision tree(s) around points of action (referral, coordination, exit criteria, referral/entry, “where to start”) County Offices determine consistent basic markers to make referral to Geographic Lead Agencies for technical assistance | Clarity in process of referral for counties to Direct Technical Assistance |
| Revisit the current visual to determine improvements for clarity | Routine communication of proactive measures, trends, and status between state agencies and County Offices to accelerate LEA continuous improvement | Intentional coordination of support providers around the actions and the prioritization of those actions to support LEA improvement while being mindful of capacity |
| Feedback/communication loops established to advertise lessons learned and support broader improvement | Regular cadence of communication between state agencies and County Offices around intensive supports | Understanding and leveraging of capacity and expertise of support providers in the provision of intensive supports and resources |
| Co-creation and co-development of the improvement work—learning with the LEAs | Examination of the conditions precedent for the LEA, including but not limited to prior areas of focus and impact | |
| Intentionally modeling vulnerability with LEAs who need support | Ensure adequate resources (time, money, people, space) to support Geographic Lead Agencies as it relates to support of LEAs before (or to forestall) Direct Technical Assistance referral | |
| Intentional investigation about existing variance in system and conditions for exiting | | |

Table 6. Targeted/Supplemental Support Preliminary Recommendations

| Collective Why of Targeted/ Supplemental Support and Resources | Clarity and Consistency of Targeted/ Supplemental Support and Resources | Alignment of Providers in Operationalizing Targeted/ Supplemental Supports and Resources |
|--|--|---|
| Annual Differentiated Assistance (DA) provider training and space for listening/ discussions and session | DA provider learning summit | Create/develop professional learning structure for DA providers (similar to LCAP calibration training). Includes onboarding and extended learning |
| One system collective—a searchable database to connect to state leads, resources and supports | CCEE—One system collective—searchable database of what supports/resources are available through SSOS | Create resource map/directory/cross walk of lead agency and program support available to districts (Universal) |
| Convening on how to map out identification processes and plans to provide clarity -centering districts to the conversations and mapping | Identify models (eventually best practices and bright spots) for lead and initiative collaboration to support LEAs | Conduct assessment of current structures (as the egg) through the lens of identifying current mechanisms for calibration and communication as a starting point |
| Identify best practices and bright spots to lift up innovation and mental models | Create and expect a feedback loop between DA provider and DA receiver-incorporate feedback into supports and resources | Plan and create a structure that aligns with Geographic Lead Agency assurances and structure around, advisory, data, planning and implementation |
| Create expectations that DA providers seek feedback from LEAs and be reflective and responsive to the feedback in their DA support-empathy interviews, formative evaluations, and surveys | Include initiatives that are critical, but not thought of as leads | Gather data from LEA regarding 1) quality of service support 2) accessibility and clarity 3) input on LEAs own capacity and interest in providing support |
| Create a communication plan for SSOS partners, including LEAs, that includes the following: messaging of SSOS purpose and how relates to Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) to shift the mindset and approach around identification and supports | Build a regular communal structure that initiates and connects the resources/support services needs of LEAs | Create a process map/flow chart tool that helps districts identify how and the process for accessing support; includes description of what service and support is provided by any given agency. |
| Create documents that include identification information in an accessible manner | Identify, restate, and communicate SSOS theory or action to build clarity and purpose of SSOS | Geographic Lead advisory team consultancy model for coach and improvements |
| Create Community of Practice based on the best practices and bright spots to facilitate understanding and alignment | | Geographic Lead Agencies develop coordinated ability to provide and receive consistent quality support of DA providers |
| Two-year improvement cycle | | |
| Help develop criteria for measuring improvement | | |

Table 7. Universal Support Preliminary Recommendations

| Access to Universal Supports and Resources | Communication around Universal Supports and Resources | Design and Delivery of Universal Supports and Resources |
|--|---|---|
| Design an intake process for new leaders to determine knowledge/awareness of the SSOS | Consult with communication experts to develop branding and communication strategy to include the following: A. Defined roles, responsibilities, and pathways of communication B. Website/social media C. Successes D. Clarify purpose of SSOS E. Role of LCAP as an improvement document | Develop community of practices (COP) across COE driven by the focus on embedding opportunity for feedback in all activities and meetings. |
| Create a roadmap to guide accessing the array of available resources and support along with accompanying training materials on use of the roadmap | | Create process for collecting and disseminating information on needs |
| Build a central repository or clearinghouse for available resources and support; and a curation process for vetting resources | | Understanding your SSOS Summit |
| Define and create a shared understanding of universal supports and all entities and roles while broadening the access points for all universal supports and resources | Pathways: What happens when you reach outside a traditional pathway (ex: LEA reaches out to other COEs) | |
| Build capacity of the system to better provide access to support, especially for our smaller COEs and LEAs | | CCEE will develop a resource website (One-stop-shop) |
| Integration of Special Education and Universal supports within the entire SSOS —connecting compliance and program quality support for districts through the collaboration and deployment of all special education leads and SSOS leads | | CCEE will create an initiative inventory |



Key Recommendations for the Statewide System of Support

As noted, based upon these initial recommendations, the next step for the Core Working Group was to take the raw recommendations (listed in Tables 5–7) from all three levels of the system and organize them into cross-cutting themes. The Core Working Group will continue to study the recommendations to develop an action plan on implementing this initial prioritization of the recommendations. Not all recommendations are expected to be implemented, and the Core Working Group and Reactor Team will continue using a continuous improvement process to implement, learn, and revise the recommendations and the action plans.

The Core Working Group identified key recommendations for the need to enhance communication about the Statewide System of Support (SSOS) across all three levels, including:

Universal Support: Consult with communication experts to develop branding and communication strategy to include the following:

- A. Defined roles, responsibilities, and pathways of communication
- B. Website/social media
- C. Successes
- D. Clarify purposes of SSOS
- E. Role of LCAP as an improvement document

Targeted/Supplemental Support: Create a communication plan for SSOS partners, including LEAs, that includes the following: messaging of SSOS purpose and how relates to LCFF messaging to shift the mindset and approach around identification and supports; and an assessment after LCFF of current structures through the lens of identifying current mechanisms for calibration and communication as a starting point.

Intensive Support: Revisit the current visual to determine improvements for clarity; feedback/communication loops established to advertise lessons learned and support broader improvement; intentional investigation about existing variance in system; routine outline communication of proactive measures, trends, and status between state agencies and County Offices to accelerate LEA continuous improvement.



County offices of education play an essential role in the Statewide System of Support, providing universal and targeted assistance to districts and charters.

However, we know that districts and charters often lack clarity regarding available resources or may be unaware of them altogether. This Core Working Group has enabled us to lean into the question as to why some districts and charters feel disconnected from the services and supports offered by COEs. The California County Superintendents acknowledge the variance in our support across the state and are committed to strengthening our internal capacity to address the needs of all districts and charters, to ultimately enhance the impact of the Statewide System of Support.

— Lindsay Tornatore, Ed.D., Director, Systems Improvement & Student Success, California County Superintendents

Based upon these communication recommendations, CCEE has identified the following immediate actions, Table 8.

Table 8. Actions for CCEE to Undertake to Implement Revised Recommendations

| Objective/goal Development and implementation of a communication strategy supporting work of and access to the SSOS | Actions | Timeline |
|---|--|------------------|
| Coordination Sharing and disseminating moving into exchanging | CCEE convenes partners to determine communication needs of the SSOS, including audiences, roles and responsibilities, and pathways | May 2024 |
| Collaboration Engaging in work together over time | CCEE and partners engage with a communication expert to determine a branding and communication strategy | May to July 2024 |
| Integration Commitment to approach work through engagement and consensus building | Launch of communication strategy, including branding, with all SSOS initiatives committed to the use of developed materials and communication pathways | August 2024 |

Next Steps

The statewide partner representatives in the Core Working Group are developing a plan to implement and monitor many of these recommendations to make sure they are meeting the ultimate goal of the Statewide System of Support—to provide coordinated, needs-based, and differentiated resources and support to LEAs that lead to improved services for all students evidenced by the closing of opportunity gaps and increased achievement. The success of the Core Working Group in identifying key recommendations to improve the SSOS has established a statewide continuous improvement structure with representative educators from all levels of the system to monitor, guide, and improve the SSOS in the future.



Appendix A: Education Code

In this appendix, we provide the references to the education code that establishes the Local Control and Accountability Plans, and the Statewide System of Support.

A.1 Ed Code 52059.5

(a) A single system for providing support to local educational agencies and schools pursuant to this article and for federal programs pursuant to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.) is hereby established.

(b) The purpose of this statewide system of support is to build the capacity of local educational agencies to do all of the following:

- (1) Support the continuous improvement of pupil performance within the state priorities as described in Sections 52060 and 52066.
- (2) Address the gaps in achievement between pupil subgroups as described in Section 52052.
- (3) Improve outreach and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that goals, actions, and services as described in school district and county office of education local control and accountability plans reflect the needs of pupils and the community, especially for historically underrepresented or low-achieving populations.

A.2 Ed Code 52071

(a) If the governing board of a school district requests technical assistance, the county superintendent of schools shall provide technical assistance consistent with paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (c). If a school district has not been identified for technical assistance pursuant to subdivision (c) or for state intervention pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 52072, and if the service requested creates an unreasonable or untenable cost burden for the county superintendent of schools, the county superintendent of schools may assess the school district a fee not to exceed the cost of the service.

(b) If a county superintendent of schools does not approve a local control and accountability plan or annual update to the local control and accountability plan approved by a governing board of a school district, the county superintendent of schools shall provide technical assistance focused on revising the local control and accountability plan or annual update so that it can be approved.

(c) (1) For any school district for which one or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 meets the criteria established pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5, the county superintendent of schools shall provide technical assistance for a minimum of two years following the identification that shall be focused on building the school district's capacity to develop and implement actions and services responsive to pupil and community needs, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(A) Assisting the school district to do each of the following:

- (i) Identify its strengths and weaknesses in regard to the state priorities described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060. This shall include working collaboratively with the school district to review performance data on the state and local indicators included in the California School Dashboard authorized by subdivision (f) of Section 52064.5, including educator qualifications data and relevant local data to identify effective, evidence-based programs or practices that address any areas of weakness.
- (ii) Identify pupil subgroups that are low performing or experiencing significant disparities from other pupil subgroups as identified on the California School Dashboard. The county superintendent of schools may consult equity leads pursuant to Section 52073.5 to identify and implement effective programs and practices to improve the outcomes and opportunities for low-performing pupil subgroups or pupil subgroups experiencing significant disparities from other pupil subgroups.

(B) Working collaboratively with the school district to secure assistance from an academic, programmatic, or fiscal expert or team of experts to identify and implement effective programs and practices that are designed to improve performance in any areas of weakness identified by the school district. The county superintendent of schools, in consultation with the school district, may solicit another service provider, which may include, but is not limited to, a school district, county office of education, or charter school, to act as a partner to the school district in need of technical assistance.

(C) Obtaining from the school district timely documentation demonstrating that it has completed the activities described in subparagraphs (A) and (B), or substantially similar activities, or has selected another service provider pursuant to subdivision (f) to work with the school district to complete the activities described in subparagraphs (A) and (B), or substantially similar activities, and ongoing communication with the school district to assess the school district's progress in improving pupil outcomes.

(D) Requesting that the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide advice and assistance to the school district, pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52074.

(E) A review of the school district's local control and accountability plan to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the identified goals, actions, and services, with a particular focus on those areas considered to be contributing toward meeting the increased or improved services requirement and all required goals.

(2) For any school district that fails to meet the requirements of Section 60900, the county superintendent of schools shall provide technical assistance focused on the school district's data management processes and building the school district's capacity to develop and implement actions and services responsive to pupil and community needs, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- (A) Assisting the school district to identify its strengths and weaknesses in regard to the state priorities described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060. This shall include working collaboratively with the school district to review performance data on the state and local indicators included in the California School Dashboard authorized by subdivision (f) of Section 52064.5, including educator qualifications data and relevant local data to identify effective, evidence-based programs or practices that address any areas of weakness.
- (B) Working collaboratively with the school district to secure assistance from an academic, programmatic, or fiscal expert or team of experts to identify and implement effective programs and practices that are designed to improve performance in any areas of weakness identified by the school district. The county superintendent of schools, in consultation with the school district, may solicit another service provider, which may include, but is not limited to, a school district, county office of education, or charter school, to act as a partner to the school district in need of technical assistance.
- (C) Obtaining from the school district timely documentation demonstrating that it has completed the activities described in subparagraphs (A) and (B), or substantially similar activities, or has selected another service provider pursuant to subdivision (f) to work with the school district to complete the activities described in subparagraphs (A) and (B), or substantially similar activities, and ongoing communication with the school district to assess the school district's progress in improving pupil outcomes.
- (D) Requesting that the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide advice and assistance to the school district, pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52074.
- (E) A review of the school district's local control and accountability plan to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the identified goals, actions, and services, with a particular focus on those areas considered to be contributing toward meeting the increased or improved services requirement and all required goals.
- (F) A review of the school district's data management policies and collection and submission processes, including monitoring and oversight of the student information system, to ensure the submission of accurate data according to the processes and timelines established by the department pursuant to Section 60900.

(d) Upon request of a county superintendent of schools or a school district, a geographic lead agency identified pursuant to Section 52073 may provide technical assistance pursuant to subdivision (c). A geographic lead agency identified pursuant to Section 52073 may request that another geographic lead agency, an expert lead agency identified pursuant to Section 52073.1, a special education resource lead identified pursuant to Section 52073.2, or the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide the assistance described in this subdivision.

(e) A school district shall accept the technical assistance provided by the county superintendent of schools pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c). For purposes of accepting technical assistance provided by the county superintendent of schools pursuant to subdivision (c), a school district may satisfy this requirement by providing the timely documentation to, and maintaining regular communication with, the county superintendent of schools as specified in paragraph (3) of subdivision (c).

(f) For any school district in which one or more pupil subgroups, identified pursuant to Section 52052, meets the criteria pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5 for three or more consecutive years, the school district's geographic lead agency, identified pursuant to Section 52073, shall, in collaboration with the county superintendent of schools, provide technical assistance to the school district pursuant to subdivision (c). The geographic lead agency shall evaluate whether the assistance of one or more expert lead agencies should be consulted as part of the technical assistance process.

(g) This section shall not preclude a school district from soliciting technical assistance from entities other than its county superintendent of schools at its own cost.

A.4

Ed Code 52071.5

(a) If the Superintendent does not approve a local control and accountability plan or annual update to the local control and accountability plan approved by a county board of education, or if the county board of education requests technical assistance, the Superintendent shall provide technical assistance focused on revising the local control and accountability plan or annual update so that it can be approved.

(b) For any county office of education for which one or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 meets the criteria established pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5, the Superintendent shall provide technical assistance for a minimum of two years following the identification that shall be focused on building the county office of education's capacity to develop and implement actions and services responsive to pupil and community needs, including, among other things, any of the following:

(1) Assisting the county office of education to do each of the following:

- (A) Identify its strengths and weaknesses in regard to the state priorities described in subdivision (d) of Section 52066. This shall include working collaboratively with the county office of education to review performance data on the state and local indicators included in the California School Dashboard authorized by subdivision (f) of Section 52064.5, including educator qualifications data and relevant local data to identify effective, evidence-based programs or practices that address any areas of weakness.
- (B) Identify pupil subgroups that are low performing or experiencing significant disparities from other pupil subgroups as identified on the California School Dashboard. The Superintendent may consult equity leads pursuant to Section 52073.5 to identify and implement effective programs and practices to improve the outcomes and opportunities for low-performing pupil subgroups or pupil subgroups experiencing significant disparities from other pupil subgroups.

(2) Working collaboratively with the county office of education to secure assistance from an academic expert or team of academic experts to identify and implement effective programs that are designed to improve performance in any areas of weakness identified by the county office of education. The Superintendent, in consultation with the county office of education, may solicit another service provider, which may include, but is not limited to, a school district, county office of education, or charter school, to act as a partner to the county office of education in need of technical assistance.

(3) Obtaining from the county office of education timely documentation demonstrating that it has completed the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2), or has selected another service provider to work with the county office of education to complete the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2), or substantially similar activities, and ongoing communication with the county office of education to assess the county office of education's progress in improving pupil outcomes.

(4) Requesting that the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide advice and assistance to the county office of education pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52074.

(5) A review of the county office of education's local control and accountability plan to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the identified goals, actions, and services, with a particular focus on those areas considered to be contributing toward meeting the increased or improved services requirement and all required goals.

(c) For any county office of education that fails to meet the requirements of Section 60900, the Superintendent shall provide technical assistance focused on the county office of education's data management processes and building the county office of education's capacity to develop and implement actions and services responsive to pupil and community needs, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- (1) Assisting the county office of education to identify its strengths and weaknesses in regard to the state priorities described in subdivision (d) of Section 52066. This shall include working collaboratively with the county office of education to review performance data on the state and local indicators included in the California School Dashboard authorized by subdivision (f) of Section 52064.5, including educator qualifications data and relevant local data to identify effective, evidence-based programs or practices that address any areas of weakness.
 - (2) Working collaboratively with the county office of education to secure assistance from an academic expert or team of academic experts to identify and implement effective programs that are designed to improve performance in any areas of weakness identified by the county office of education. The Superintendent, in consultation with the county office of education, may solicit another service provider, which may include, but is not limited to, a school district, county office of education, or charter school, to act as a partner to the county office of education in need of technical assistance.
 - (3) Obtaining from the county office of education timely documentation demonstrating that it has completed the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2), or has selected another service provider to work with the county office of education to complete the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2), or substantially similar activities, and ongoing communication with the county office of education to assess the county office of education's progress in improving pupil outcomes.
 - (4) Requesting that the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide advice and assistance to the county office of education, pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52074.
 - (5) A review of the county office of education's local control and accountability plan to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the identified goals, actions, and services, with a particular focus on those areas considered to be contributing toward meeting the increased or improved services requirement and all required goals.
 - (6) A review of the county office of education's data management policies and collection and submission processes, including monitoring and oversight of the student information system, to ensure the submission of accurate data according to the processes and timelines established by the department pursuant to Section 60900.
- (d) Technical assistance provided pursuant to this section at the request of a county board of education shall be paid for by the county board of education receiving assistance.

A.4**Ed Code 52072**

(a) If a school district meets the criteria established pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5 for three or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 or, if the school district has less than three pupil subgroups, all of the school district's pupil subgroups, in three out of four consecutive school years, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence shall determine, in consultation with the school district and any provider of technical assistance pursuant to Section 52071, if assistance from the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence is necessary. When making this determination, primary consideration shall be given to the needs of the pupils in the school district.

(b) Technical assistance provided pursuant to this section shall be facilitated by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, in collaboration with the county superintendent of schools with jurisdiction over the school district, and shall focus on building the school district's capacity to develop and implement actions and services responsive to pupil and community needs pursuant to Section 52071 in a manner that streamlines improvement efforts for the school district.

A.4**Ed Code 52072.1**

(a) The Superintendent may, with the approval of the state board, identify school districts in need of intervention.

(b) The Superintendent shall only intervene in a school district identified pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 52072 and where the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence determines that the school district meets either of the following criteria:

- (1) The school district has failed, or is unable, to implement the recommendations of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence.
- (2) That the inadequate performance of the school district, based upon an evaluation rubric adopted pursuant to Section 52064.5, is either so persistent or acute as to require intervention by the Superintendent.

(c) For school districts identified pursuant to subdivision (a), the Superintendent may, with the approval of the state board, do one or more of the following:

- (1) Make changes to a local control and accountability plan adopted by the governing board of the school district.
- (2) Develop and impose a budget revision, in conjunction with revisions to the local control and accountability plan, that the Superintendent determines would allow the school district to improve the outcomes for all pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 in regard to state and local priorities.

(3) Stay or rescind an action, if that action is not required by a local collective bargaining agreement, that would prevent the school district from improving outcomes for all pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 in regard to state or local priorities.

(4) Appoint an academic trustee to exercise the powers and authority specified in this section on the Superintendent's behalf.

(d) The Superintendent shall notify the county superintendent of schools, the county board of education, the superintendent of the school district, and the governing board of the school district of any action by the state board to direct the Superintendent to exercise any of the powers and authorities specified in this section.

A.4

Ed Code 52072.5

(a) If a county office of education meets the criteria established pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5 for three or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 or, if the county office of education has less than three pupil subgroups, all of the county office of education's pupil subgroups, in three out of four consecutive school years, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence shall determine, in consultation with the county office of education and any provider of technical assistance pursuant to Section 52071.5, if assistance from the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence is necessary. When making this determination, primary consideration shall be given to the needs of the pupils in the county office of education.

(b) Technical assistance provided pursuant to this section shall be facilitated by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, in collaboration with the department, and shall focus on building the county office of education's capacity to develop and implement actions and services responsive to pupil and community needs pursuant to Section 52071.5 in a manner that streamlines improvement efforts for the county office of education.

A.4

Ed Code 52072.6

(a) The Superintendent may, with the approval of the state board, identify county offices of education in need of intervention.

(b) The Superintendent shall only intervene in a county office of education identified pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 52072.5 and where the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence determines that the county office of education meets either of the following criteria:

(1) The county office of education has failed, or is unable, to implement the recommendations of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence pursuant to Section 52072.5.

- (2) The inadequate performance of the county office of education, based upon an evaluation rubric adopted pursuant to Section 52064.5, is either so persistent or acute as to require intervention by the Superintendent.
- (c) For county offices of education identified pursuant to subdivision (a), the Superintendent may, with the approval of the state board, do one or more of the following:
 - (1) Make changes to a local control and accountability plan adopted by the county board of education.
 - (2) Develop and impose a budget revision, in conjunction with revisions to the local control and accountability plan, that the Superintendent determines would allow the county office of education to improve the outcomes for all pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 in regard to state and local priorities.
 - (3) Stay or rescind an action, if that action is not required by a local collective bargaining agreement, that would prevent the county office of education from improving outcomes for all pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 in regard to state or local priorities.
 - (4) Appoint an academic trustee to exercise the powers and authority specified in this section on the Superintendent's behalf.
- (d) The Superintendent shall notify the county board of education and the county superintendent of schools, in writing, of any action by the state board to direct the Superintendent to exercise any of the powers and authorities specified in this section.

