

**CALIFORNIA LEARNING ACCELERATION SYSTEM GRANT | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# Interim Evaluation Memo: Year 4 Findings (2024–25)

The COVID-19 pandemic led to lost instructional time and diminished academic outcomes for California students, particularly those in early grades and the most vulnerable student groups. In response, the governor approved Assembly Bill 130 (AB 130) on July 9, 2021. This bill allocated funding to provide professional learning for educators to support evidence-based learning acceleration strategies for all students. The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) operates the state's Learning Acceleration System Grant (LASG) program through this funding. The LASG program aims to establish statewide infrastructure to build local educational agencies' capacity to accelerate academic progress. The program's four goals focus on professional learning opportunities addressing evidence-based approaches and classroom practices, particularly in core academic subjects:



**Develop a robust statewide infrastructure** for professional learning.



**Implement evidence-based professional learning opportunities** or guidance for educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators to address students' learning acceleration.



**Increase learning** among educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators.



**Accelerate learning for all students impacted by COVID-19 learning disruptions**, including students with unique considerations.

CCEE created a proposal process and administration plan for the grants before awarding a total of \$45 million to the education offices of Lake County (Rural Math Collaborative), Santa Clara County (The California Collaborative for Learning Acceleration), and San Diego County (California Literacy Elevation by Accelerating Reading) to provide educators with these professional learning opportunities. Each grantee is providing varied support for accelerating math, literacy, or language development.

Education Northwest and our subcontractor Social Policy Research Associates are leading a systemwide evaluation of the LASG program from 2022–2026. We use an equity lens in every aspect of our work, including planning, development, implementation, and analysis. This memo is part of the larger evaluation that includes three phases (planning, formative, and summative)—though data collection will span phases where appropriate. Our approach focuses on the collection of qualitative and quantitative data and engages a team with expertise in coordinating findings from these data in all phases of the project.

Evaluation data sources include grantee and professional learning participant focus groups, a professional learning participant survey, observations, document review, administrative records, and the California Healthy Kids survey. This memo shares findings focused on data collected during the third grant year (2024–25) of the evaluation and is organized around the grant goals and evaluation questions.



## How are grantees developing a statewide infrastructure for professional learning?

We explored several factors to provide insight into LASG grantees' progress toward the first grant goal of developing a statewide infrastructure for professional learning. These include the characteristics of staff members served during the grant period as of June 2025, the systems and processes that supported grantees in developing evidence-based professional learning, the alignment of these systems and processes across grantees, and how grantees are leveraging technology in their efforts. **The fourth year of the LASG program (2024–25) saw a general shift from developing professional learning approaches to sustaining and refining established models, while also continuing to expand statewide infrastructure and increase the number of educators served.** Specific findings are presented below:

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**LASG grantees maintained and expanded partnerships** with county offices of education (COEs), with a total of 30 COE partners—an increase of one from the previous year.

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Participation in LASG professional learning more than doubled to over 2,100 educators<sup>1</sup> in 2024–25, with expanded reach into 52 counties, up from 40 in 2023–24, including new engagement from Central Coast regions.

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At this point in the grant, **grantees were focused on providing and refining professional learning offerings** rather than on the selection of evidence-based strategies.

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Grantees increasingly relied on internal evaluations, participant feedback, and expansion goals, rather than external sources like the What Works Clearinghouse, to refine professional learning offerings, while also using instructional frameworks to guide development.

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**CCEE continued to provide grantees with ongoing support** through mechanisms such as one-on-one check-in meetings and quarterly LASG professional learning network (PLN) meetings with a focus on building grantee relationships and fostering collaboration on problems of practice and new ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> This number was derived from grantee participant lists shared with the external evaluation team and represents an unduplicated count of participants; some individuals attended multiple opportunities. In the 2023–24 year, LASG professional development opportunities served 981 educators, according to grantees' participant lists.

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The alignment of systems and processes across grantees continued to strengthen, and there was an **increased focus on building coherence around the definition of learning acceleration and the core practices that support it.**

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Relative to last year, **grantees shared fewer insights on alignment across statewide initiatives.**

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Grantees continued to partner with county offices of education and local education agencies (LEAs) and use online strategies to support, enhance, and disseminate professional learning across California.

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Each LASG grantee **engaged with technology to increase access, support collaboration, and enhance the delivery of professional learning.**

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## How are grantees implementing evidence-based professional learning opportunities?

The second grant goal focused on the implementation of evidence-based professional learning opportunities. To explore grantee progress, we examined how the learning content is meeting participant needs and whether these needs vary by locale; the delivery methods that best meet participant needs and whether these vary by locale. We also explored how well professional learning aligns to CCEE's theory of action and essential design principles; participant perceptions of professional learning quality, relevance, and usability; and the strategies, structures, and supports participants perceived to be most effective. Finally, we examined whether professional learning opportunities address the needs of diverse learners, including early learners, English learner students, students with disabilities, students with dyslexia, students experiencing homelessness, low-income students, and foster youth. Year 4 findings are presented below:

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**The LASG provided support for various professional learning activities across the state during the 2024–25 year.** The activities differed in target audience, format, and duration, resulting in varying levels of reach and intensity. As in prior years, opportunities with broader reach tended to focus on building awareness or knowledge, while those with a more limited reach were typically aimed at supporting implementation.

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**As in prior years, grantees implemented professional learning opportunities across a range of content areas** focused on math, language development, and/or literacy.

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**Participants engaged in a variety of professional learning structures, ranging from asynchronous online courses to site-specific lesson study cycles and interventions.** Grantees intentionally included this variety to offer multiple entry points for educators to learn, apply, and/or lead others in implementing accelerated learning strategies—as well as to balance accessibility and continued engagement.

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**Grantees demonstrated strong alignment with the core components of the CCEE theory of action**, including the use of evidence-based strategies, a focus on equity, and an emphasis on continuous improvement. **Professional learning sessions consistently incorporated evidence-based learning acceleration strategies, formative assessment and individualized instruction. Professional learning documents also highlighted strong examples of alignment with the QRUbric<sup>2</sup> and quality professional learning guidelines<sup>3</sup>.**

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Participants continued to overwhelmingly report in the survey that **the professional learning opportunities they participated in were of high quality, relevant, and useful for enhancing instructional practice**. All professional learning focus group participants expressed appreciation for the professional learning opportunities they had received. Many wished that more staff within their schools and districts could engage in similar experiences.

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When asked about the effectiveness of different professional learning offerings across the grant projects, the percentage varied somewhat by the type of professional learning. **PLNs and networked improvement communities (NICs), graduate-level coursework, and coaching were rated as “very effective” or “effective” by the highest percentage of participants.**

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LASG professional learning participants **continued to greatly value opportunities to collaborate and network with other educators and work with mentors**. Additionally, **they appreciated the skills they learned and the impact they are starting to see on students as they put these practices into action.**

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Grantees and participants continued to share that **professional learning provides frameworks and approaches that can be used across settings to reach all students, increase attendance, engagement, and increase students’ feelings of belonging, provide multiple entry points for instruction and learning, and increase access to resources and materials.**

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Professional learning participants reported **that professional learning was intentionally designed with a strong focus on equity** and grantees shared that **asset-based approaches and equity were embedded as guiding principles. Similar to prior years, participants generally agreed that there was a focus on equity in their professional learning, but they felt the least prepared to address the specific needs of students with dyslexia and asked for more materials addressing the specific needs of diverse learners.**

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<sup>2</sup> (<https://ccee-ca.org/quality-relevance-usability/>)

<sup>3</sup> (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pl/qpls.asp>)



## How is the grant increasing learning among educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators?

The third grant goal focused on increasing learning among educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators. To examine progress toward this goal, the evaluation team explored whether participants accessed the professional learning materials and completed the learning objectives related to evidence-based accelerated learning strategies. Evaluators also gathered initial insight into whether professional learning leads to changes in the ability to address learning gaps or changes in instructional practice. Year 4 findings are presented below:

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Survey results suggested that **participants found professional learning accessible and that they successfully completed learning objectives.**

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Professional learning participants reported increased knowledge of learning acceleration strategies and asset-based mindsets, especially for participants who engaged with professional learning on a more regular basis.

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**Three-quarters (76%) of survey respondents said they had already made changes to their instructional practice** based on what they learned through LASG professional learning opportunities.

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**Educators shared initial descriptions of how their participation in LASG professional learning opportunities led to changes in their practice,** including a shift toward asset-based approaches, increased use of formative assessments and learning progressions, and the adoption of interactive and collaborative instructional strategies.

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Participants who worked with classroom teachers in roles such as instructional coach, teacher leader, or district administrator also felt their own participation in the grant had led to positive impacts on classroom teachers.



## How is the grant accelerating learning for all students?

The fourth grant goal focused on accelerating learning for all students. In this stage of the evaluation, we explored progress toward this goal by reviewing educators' perceptions of student outcomes. Fourth year findings are presented below:

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Eighty-four percent of professional learning participant survey respondents said they felt their participation had impacted students. **Participants who participated in LASG-sponsored opportunities with more frequency, or had participated for more years, were more likely to report an impact on students.**

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A total of 350 educators provided open-ended survey responses about student impact. About half mentioned **the impact of the LASG on educators and how this impact in turn makes a difference for students including providing inclusive instruction that is differentiated to meet student needs.** Additionally, responses suggested a positive impact on **student growth and learning, engagement and confidence, and collaboration.**

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Additionally, a review of grantee documents revealed that grantees have made initial plans and have generally begun to capture student data. Some grantees have already reported initial successes from these data collection activities as part of their internal evaluations.



## Challenges, bright spots, and lessons learned

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Several challenges continued into year 4, including **recruitment, generating enthusiasm and buy-in from potential participants, time commitments or capacity constraints, and challenges with implementation logistics.** Additionally, this year grantees described challenges due to the **shifting sociopolitical landscape** and **a disconnect in communication about values and objectives.**

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Professional learning participants also identified challenges including **competing school priorities and time commitment.** They continued to suggest that more **clarity of structure and communication** from grantees, especially at the start of the professional learning opportunity, would be helpful. Others made specific suggestions focused on the format of the professional learning opportunity, the time focused on collaboration and discussion, tailoring opportunities to specific populations such as multilingual learners and early learners, and the use of data to inform implementation.

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**Grantees acknowledged several bright spots** including a **continued pride in the content and/or model offered and in themselves** and often described these materials as strengthened through the feedback they've received, they highlighted **the number and distribution of county areas served or engaged through their professional learning**, and while many grantees acknowledged they are still in the early stages of their internal impact evaluation activities, **many perceived pre-and post-surveys, conversations with participants, and the perceived replicability of successes as indicators of the work's importance.**

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In earlier years, the evaluation revealed several lessons learned for future initiatives, centered on **developing materials, working collaboratively across partners, encouraging adaptability, and focusing on recruitment (i.e., expanding reach across the state)**. In more recent focus groups, lessons learned revolved around grantees' **growing understanding of how educators would perceive and engage with the professional learning.**

## **Recruitment and increased participation in professional learning**

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Continue to **expand access to high quality, ongoing, and job-embedded professional learning opportunities.** This year, grantees continued to offer opportunities for educators to participate in more extensive professional learning opportunities, such as lesson study cycles, cohort-based trainings, and job-embedded coursework. In survey data, participants who engaged on a more regular basis had stronger learning outcomes. It is important to maintain this focus on deepened professional learning opportunities going forward, while also balancing it with the accessibility benefits of shorter engagements.

Continue to **clearly communicate expectations and time commitments for LASG professional learning opportunities.** While grantees have offered an increasing amount of flexibility for participants' levels of involvement, participants continue to request greater transparency about their expected engagement. As a result, grantees should provide clearer guidance on what participants can expect to learn, how long activities will take, whether there is a cost or associated participation stipend, and whether participation can count toward professional development goals. These expectations should be built into the design and delivery of offerings as a clear road map for participants. This year's document review highlighted more examples of this practice than in previous years, with some offerings mapped out by timeline and learning objectives; however, participants continued to express a desire for more clarity. Transparent communication can support informed participation and help ensure professional learning opportunities are aligned with educators' capacity.

Continue to **offer professional learning in a variety of formats to maximize accessibility, participation, and distribution of professional learning resources.** Participants advocated for continuing to increase the reach of professional learning opportunities to additional educators and emphasized how these opportunities provide important avenues for collaboration and networking.

It is important to maintain a balance of virtual and in-person professional learning opportunities, as well as synchronous and asynchronous opportunities, to ease scheduling conflicts. In addition, seek ways to support professional learning participants with spreading information gained through professional learning via online and in-person means. As an example, one grantee created facilitator guides to accompany their asynchronous material so LEA teams across the state can use the materials to provide their own professional learning. Grantees may also accomplish this by creating newsletters, continuing to synthesize materials, and leveraging conference opportunities to disseminate information. It may also be beneficial to establish a presence on multiple platforms to disseminate information such as the CA Educators Together website.

## Implementation and continuous improvement of professional learning opportunities

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**Continue to expand topics and/or highlight connections to other subjects related to learning acceleration that might serve to advance progress on the grant goals. Overall, participants were happy with the topics presented and agreed that they aligned with their needs, but** many mentioned a desire for more of a focus on specific topics such as classroom management, trauma-informed practices, dual language instruction, developmentally appropriate practice, technology integration, play-based learning, and project-based learning. Other subject areas mentioned were writing, science, and social studies.

**Address participant requests for additional, concrete strategies regarding the unique needs of diverse learners.** Multiple data sources reveal mentions of equity-focused professional learning, and several opportunities offered strategies to better serve multilingual learners. However, participants continued to express interest in learning more concrete strategies to support all groups of diverse learners, especially students with dyslexia, autism and neurodiverse learners more broadly.

**Continue to maximize the quality of professional learning opportunities based on participant feedback, data, and support.** It is important for grantees to communicate with professional learning participants about their experience with the offerings. This feedback, alongside internal evaluation data, should inform programming. Additionally, grantees should continue leveraging and maximizing CCEE's support in this capacity.

**Support professional learning participants with the application of strategies.** Participant feedback suggests that professional learning participants could benefit from additional support with implementation. Grantees should explore additional avenues for providing these types of support to maximize learning transfer and implementation of the strategies in the classroom.

**Support grantees as they navigate professional learning within the shifting sociopolitical environment.** As grantees continue to navigate the shifting sociopolitical environment, some have expressed particular concerns about their ability to market and scale their materials. This is particularly true for the grant offerings with an explicit focus on equity. For example, one grantee

expressed consideration of potentially removing or reframing content to better align with the shifting sociopolitical environment. This is an area for which CCEE may provide more explicit guidance to grantees.

## Data and measurement

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**Provide additional guidance to grantees on expectations and strategies for documenting participants' learnings and implementation of strategies gained through professional learning.** Grantees shared examples of how educators are applying new strategies, but current documentation practices vary. CCEE should continue to work with grantees to identify simple tools and/or provide guidance for tracking implementation that could help grantees more consistently capture changes in practice and identify where additional support may be needed. Given the variety and complexity of professional learning offerings, grantees should continue to proactively plan for ways to consistently measure and document the implementation of strategies for reporting to CCEE.

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**Support alignment between internal evaluation activities and the LASG's theory of change in preparation for final year reporting.** In the final year of the grant, grantees will summarize their professional learning impact. Grantees should review current internal evaluation plans and ensure they reflect clear, measurable goals that connect to the intended educator and student outcomes outlined in the LASG theory of change. At this point in the grant, small refinements—such as identifying indicators of educator practice change or implementation—can help strengthen final reports and improve coherence across grantees' submissions. Further, increasing alignment may help reduce participation burden, both within grantees' internal evaluation activities and across the external evaluation. These refinements may also support grantees in telling a clearer story of how their offerings contributed to the goals of the LASG.

## Systemwide and statewide collaboration

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**Continue to deepen systemwide alignment by sharing the knowledge gained through the first four years of the grant,** including lessons learned, best practices, and definitions of learning acceleration. Learning should continue to be shared systemwide, through avenues such as the LASG PLN meetings. Additionally, grantees could benefit from reviewing each other's grantee quarterly reports and case briefs that highlight the work of each grantee, to bridge gaps and help strengthen the culture of shared learning and expertise. Additionally, year 4 findings show strengthened alignment across grantees in how learning acceleration is defined and supported, and this knowledge-sharing can help deepen system coherence and sustain work beyond the life of the grant.

## Sustainability

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**Begin planning for sustainability in the broader state context.** As the grant enters its final year, grantees may consider identifying opportunities to sustain and scale their professional learning models beyond the life of the LASG. This could include considering how to align their strategies and tools with ongoing statewide initiatives or funding streams. For example, the LASG PLN could continue to serve as a venue to explore how grantee-developed frameworks, playbooks, or coaching models might be embedded in California's long-term professional learning infrastructure.

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**Leverage data to document and highlight key learnings across the grant** with a particular eye toward sustainability. In the final year of the grant, it is particularly important for the internal and external evaluators to work together to discern the strongest data sources for documenting key learnings across grantees. Creating opportunities for internal and external evaluators to interact and discuss data, such as the PLN and a meaning-making session with the internal and external evaluation teams, will be important.

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**Identify and establish grantee support mechanisms that will help with sustainability.**

While grantees have relied on CCEE's support throughout the grant, they must establish independent structures for sustaining their efforts beyond the LASG. In this final year of the grant, it may be important to reduce touch points with CCEE and increase encouragement for grantees to leverage standalone resources (e.g., the Learning Acceleration Playbook) alongside their institutional supports and other offerings from within their networks.