



**CCSESA**

## California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

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January 7, 2022

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond

President, California State Board of Education

California State Board of Education

1430 N Street, Room 5111

Sacramento, California 95814

**Subject: Agenda Item 2. Proposed Amendment California Community Schools Partnership Program Framework and Amendment to the Administrative Plan.**

Dear President Darling-Hammond and Members,

On behalf of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), representing the 58 county superintendents of schools, I write with respect to the proposed California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) Framework and the amendment to the Administrative Plan. We believe county offices of education can and should play an essential role in successfully implementing CCSPP as Technical Assistance Centers within a coherent system of supporting school districts.

As proposed in this item, the roles and responsibilities of a statewide Lead Technical Assistance Center (TAC) and Regional TACs reflect a framework for systems change that county offices are deeply familiar with. County offices of education have eagerly leaned into their role of developing community school partnerships and, more broadly, are providing regional and county-level technical assistance to school districts within the California System of Support. The CCSPP offers yet another opportunity to build upon this experienced structure.

County offices of education are fully invested in the transformational opportunities offered to students by community schools. For years, county offices have developed whole-child approaches that lean into robust local partnerships with community-based organizations, county mental health plans, Tribes, First 5 offices, local educational agencies, special education services, and county government, including departments of social services, mental health, public health, welfare, and others. As regional hubs of expertise within their local educational communities, the county offices have adeptly built capacity for direct supports and coordination. Equally important, county offices have developed expertise to help school districts navigate the myriad funding opportunities needed to create and expand sustainable community school programs.

The Los Angeles County Office of Education, for example, has supported the adoption of community schools framework in 15 districts, funded by a county pilot, with multiple levels of technical assistance. Some of their key partnerships include the Los Angeles County



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Departments of Mental Health, Public Social Services, and Public Health. The success of these partnerships is detailed further by the Learning Policy Institute in their brief titled, *Leveraging Resources Through Community Schools: The Role of Technical Assistance* (Maier, et al., pp. 3-8). Likewise, the Shasta County Office of Education has, since 2001, served their community's families and schools with the Bridges to School Success program. They have successfully sought out grants, from MHSSA and others, and partnered with First 5 Shasta County to provide Tier 1 prevention and intervention supports and training to children and families enrolled in 26 early learning and childcare programs, some coordination of care and home visitation for families needing more supports. These two examples are emblematic of the diverse initiatives we see across California being led by county offices.

Beyond these local initiatives, the California System of Support underscores the role of county offices in effectuating system-wide improvements to PK-12 education. Within the System, Geographic Lead Agencies – all county offices – build the capacity of the other county offices in their region to coordinate and provide Differentiated Assistance and identify and develop resources to directly respond to local school district needs. The System of Support's multi-tiered scaffolding mirrors the structure and respective responsibilities of the CCSPP's Lead and Regional TACs.

County offices of education played a similar role in the Healthy Start Initiative, which was funded between 1992 to 2006. This program supported comprehensive community services and activities to improve the well-being of families. The program included grants to local education agencies, many of which were county offices, to develop and implement the program. Many county offices still operate their own programs locally, long after the removal of state funding.

In short, we believe in the mission of the CCSPP and agree that local partnerships are the crux of the new Program. Across CCSESA's 11 service regions, there are countless examples of "strong and intentional community partnerships" being built to "ensure pupil learning and whole child and family development" (Education Code § 8901). We hope to work with you and your staff on the development of the forthcoming RFAs in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

Brianna Bruns  
Director, Policy and Advocacy  
California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

cc: Members, California State Board of Education  
Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction