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Regional Lead Roles in Statewide System of Support for School Districts

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Presented to:
Senate Committee on Education
Hon. Benjamin Allen, Chair

Assembly Committee on Education
Hon. Patrick O'Donnell, Chair

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Governor's Regional Lead Proposal

☑ **Establishes County Office of Education (COE) Regional Leads to Support COEs With Less Capacity**

- Provides a $4 million ongoing augmentation to create regional lead roles for six to ten COEs. Specific lead COEs would be identified through a competitive process.
- Each lead would assist COEs in the region to better support their districts and work with the California Department of Education and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (the Collaborative) to develop resources. Leads also could provide direct support to identified districts when requested by a COE in its region.

☑ **Establishes Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Regional Leads to Work With COEs**

- Provides a $10 million ongoing augmentation to fund six to ten SELPAs to serve as regional leads. Specific lead SELPAs would be identified through a competitive process.
- Each lead would assist COEs in the region to better support their districts.

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Assessment

☑ **Regional Lead Roles Appear Duplicative and Unnecessary**

- Under current law, 11 COEs already receive a total of $10 million to serve as regional leads to support districts and schools with performance issues.
- Under the Governor's package of proposals, the roles of the regional leads appear to overlap with many of the expressed roles of COEs and the Collaborative.
- Given growing prominence of virtual networks of experts and the ability to travel statewide, it is unclear if regional approach is needed.

☑ **SELPA Proposal Has Added Problem of Working Counter to Rest of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Approach**

- Pulling in SELPAs to address only special education issues could silo support and disconnect special education performance issues from other student performance issues. It also works counter to fostering better communication and planning between special education and general education.

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Recommendations

☑ **Reject Regional Lead Proposals**

- The regional lead roles are duplicative of the roles of COEs and the Collaborative.
- SELPA leads could silo support and disconnect special education issues from general education.

☑ **Require COEs to Conduct Root Cause Analysis of Identified Districts**

- COEs are well positioned to assist districts in reviewing data and identifying root performance issues. However, existing funding is more than sufficient to provide district support.

☑ **Require the Collaborative to Contract With Experts Interested in Providing District Support**

- The Collaborative would use a competitive grant process to select numerous support teams that have expertise aligned with districts' identified performance issues.
- The recommended system would take advantage of experts anywhere in the state who have the ability to help districts improve and provide districts with greater choice in selecting experts. Though not required, districts could work with the Collaborative to choose contracted experts best suited to help address their key performance issues.
- The recommended system is modeled off of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team—a longstanding agency with a track record of effective service in helping districts with problems.
- The recommended system clearly defines each agency's role, with COEs helping districts identify root issues and the Collaborative helping districts take action to address these issues.