System of Support for School Districts

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Presented to:
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance
Hon. Kevin McCarty, Chair

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Governor's System of Support Proposals

☑ **Increases County Offices of Education (COE) Funding to Support Identified Districts**

- Provides a $55 million ongoing augmentation to COEs. Each COE to receive at least $200,000, with additional funding based on the size and number of districts in the county identified for assistance (with the largest COE receiving an estimated $4.9 million.)

- COE support can include conducting a root cause analysis, assigning an academic expert, asking the Collaborative to provide assistance, or undertaking any other activities at COEs' discretion.

- Identified districts can opt out of receiving COE support if they demonstrate they have received support from an academic expert.

☑ **Establishes COE Regional Leads to Support COEs With Less Capacity**

- Provides $4 million ongoing 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 (CDE) 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.

Governor's System of Support Proposals
(Continued)

☑ **Also Establishes Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Regional Leads to Support COEs**

- Provides $10 million ongoing to create regional lead roles for six to ten SELPAs. Specific lead SELPAs would be identified through a competitive process.

- Each lead would assist COEs in the region to better support their districts.

☑ **Provides $11.3 Million to the Collaborative to Support COEs and Districts**

- Consists of $6.5 million ongoing and $4.8 million unspent and repurposed prior-year funding.

- Of the total amount:

  - $5 million for supporting COEs and regional leads.

  - $3.3 million for base administrative costs.

  - $2.5 million for directly supporting identified districts.

  - $500,000 for statewide trainings.

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Assessment

☑ **Governor's Approach Minimizes District Choice**

- Districts must receive support from their COE, unless they use district funding to purchase alternative support. This could reduce quality and timeliness of support, as a COE might not have the expertise in all performance areas to address a district's particular issues.

☑ **COEs Well Positioned to Provide Certain Types of Support, Funding Already More Than Sufficient to Provide It**

- Given COEs approve district budgets, review Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs), and have access to Dashboard data, we think they are well positioned to examine causes of their districts' performance issues.

- COEs' existing funding is more than sufficient to conduct statutorily required support activities, including helping districts that have been identified with performance issues.

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Assessment   *(Continued)*

☑ **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 roles of COEs and the Collaborative.

- The growing prominence of virtual networks of experts and the ease of travel statewide calls into question the value of a regional approach.

☑ **SELPA Proposal Has Added Problem of Working Counter to Rest of LCAP Approach**

- Pulling in SELPAs to address only special education issues could silo support by disconnecting special education performance issues from other student performance issues. It also could further separate special education from general education, despite many students with disabilities being instructing in general education classrooms.

LAO Recommendations

☑ **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.

- COEs' existing level of funding is already more than sufficient to provide district support.

☑ **Reject Regional Lead Proposals**

- The regional lead roles are duplicative of the roles of COEs and the Collaborative.

- SELPA lead could silo support and disconnect special education issues from general education.

LAO Recommendations *(Continued)*

☑ **Fund 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.

- Grants would be open to COEs, districts, other providers of education services, and education consultants. The recommended system would take advantage of experts anywhere in the state who have the ability to help districts improve.

- The recommended system would 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 and establishes clear lines of accountability.