

Recommendations to Further Advance the System of Support and Promote Quality in Expanded Learning Programs

Quality Design Team Purpose

The Quality Design Team (QDT) was formed to address Objective 1.1.2 (Develop and establish an effective and comprehensive statewide system of support structure for quality Expanded Learning Programs and their K-12 partners.) and Objective 1.1.3 (Ensure the System of Support corresponds with the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs.) to build on the work of the System of Support Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) Initiative of the strategic plan. The QDT was formed to provide recommendations to the EXLD outlining strategies for further expansion and coordination of the System of Support for Expanded Learning (SSEL) to meet the needs of Expanded Learning programs (EXLPs) and improve overall quality. In addition, the recommendations would highlight the importance of enhancing the skill sets, mindsets, and tool kits of Expanded Learning Site Coordinators statewide. The team was co-led by the field and EXLD and was comprised of 18 members representing various stakeholder groups including EXLD staff, county leads/staff, technical assistance providers, program providers, and community based organizations.

Understanding the System of Support for Expanded Learning (SSEL)

The EXLD currently provides technical assistance (TA) funding to 16 County Offices of Education (COEs) throughout 11 regions designated by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA). The COEs (Regional County Lead/Staff) receive funding to be part of a regional team to provide field-based TA to EXLPs that receive federal funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) sites and/or state funding for After School Education and Safety (ASES) sites in their counties. This TA structure, a result of California *Education Code (EC)* Section 8483.55 and Title 20 United States Code Section 7172 (c)(3), was developed to support needs-driven TA and to create a regional system of support. The regional system of support for California is called the System of Support for Expanded Learning (SSEL)¹. The purpose of the SSEL is to build the capacity of EXLPs to meet all grant requirements defined in California statute and to promote high quality programs and services. The SSEL consists of EXLD staff, designated Regional County Lead/Staff, and contracted Statewide TA Providers.

Recommendations

Overarching themes through these recommendations include:

1. Deeper identification of needs and supports for Site Coordinators and other Expanded Learning staff.

¹ California System of Support for Expanded Learning:
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/cp/regntwrkcontacts.asp>

SSEL—refers to the System of Support for Expanded Learning. The purpose of the California (SSEL) is to build the capacity of Expanded Learning programs to meet all grant requirements defined in California statute and to promote high quality programs and services. The SSEL consists of EXLD staff, designated County Leads/Staff, and contracted TA Providers.

2. Development of promising practices, tools, and models.
3. Strategic delivery and tracking of TA provided by the SSEL.

The QDT explored these elements through a variety of group brainstorming activities. Additional highlighted elements in the early stages of subcommittee work included identification of specific toolkits and continuous quality improvement (CQI), but the group felt that these elements could fit into the three themes above.

The recommendations represent a general consensus of the group. There were, however, varying opinions from team members on some of the more detailed aspects of the recommendations. In some instances, concerns or differing opinions are reflected in the detailed recommendations as additional items for the EXLD to consider when reviewing the recommendations. The recommendations are being made to the EXLD to support the SSEL Ecosystem,² including support for Site Coordinators.

Summary Recommendations

Deliver Equitable and Cohesive Technical Assistance: *Define strategies for equitable and cohesive Technical Assistance (TA) with limited resources to achieve desired outcomes.*

- Establish a Community of Practice for the SSEL
- Incorporate Needs Assessments and a Shared Vision in Delivery of Technical Assistance
- Provide Web-based Training
- Improve Current Data Collection Methods for Reporting TA

Empower Site Coordinators: *Support the empowerment of site coordinators with leadership, modeling, and mentoring.*

- Survey Site Coordinators Needs and Demographics
- Identify and Define Site Coordinator Leadership Competencies
- Prioritize and Map the Incremental Steps for Competency Trainings and Development
- Provide Coaching and Mentoring to Site Coordinators
- Continue to Address the Workforce Alignment of Site Coordinators

Provide Promising Practices: *Identify Site Coordinators needs and demographics to determine and provide promising practices realistic with current resources.*

- Collect Promising Practices
- Identify, Develop, or Enhance Tools and Resources for Expanded Learning Program Staff
- Disseminate and Centralize Tools and Other Resources

² **SSEL Ecosystem**— refers to the SSEL as well as statewide TA contractors, students, practitioners, TA providers, LEAs, schools, agencies, and other partners that are part of the Expanded Learning field.

Recommendations to build the capacity of the System of Support for Expanded Learning (SSEL) to raise the quality of Summer Learning programs in California.

Summer Learning Implementation Committee Purpose

The Summer Learning Implementation Committee (SLIC) was formed to make recommendations to build the capacity of the System of Support for Expanded Learning¹ (SSEL) to raise the quality of Summer Learning programs in California. This committee built on the work of the System of Support Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) and their vision for an effective statewide technical assistance (TA) network, in particular related to targeted funding to meet the critical needs of grantees related to summer programming. The team was co-led by the field and EXLD and was comprised of 23 members representing various stakeholder groups including EXLD staff, county leads/staff, technical assistance providers, Summer Learning organizations, K-12 educators, program providers, and community based organizations.

Why Summer?

Effective Summer Learning programs have emerged as a key component to youth educational attainment. The prevention of Summer Learning loss is important for many students. Research indicates that most students lose about two months' worth of math skills during a single summer.² In addition, low-income children lose 2+ months of reading achievement.³

Committee Work and Recommendations

The SLIC engaged in several group brainstorming activities at the first meeting to set four priority areas for the work of the committee:

- Curate a Summer Learning toolkit.
- Identify guidelines for a high quality Summer Learning program.
- Develop a scaffolded support system for Summer Learning programs and TA providers.
- Clarify and develop a comprehensive communication strategy for Summer Learning programs.

In some instances the SLIC created actual tools and resources, and in other instances they provided more refined recommendations to the EXLD for next steps to support Summer Learning programming. Following is a list of the tools, resources, and additional recommendations for each of the priority areas. The recommendations represent a general consensus of the work group that focused on each priority area. There were however, varying opinions from team members on some of the more detailed aspects of the recommendations.

¹ The purpose of the SSEL is to build the capacity of Expanded Learning programs to meet all grant requirements defined in California statute and to promote high quality programs nationwide. The SSEL consists of EXLD staff, designated county leads/staff, and contracted Technical Assistance providers.

² H. Cooper, K Charlton, J. Valentine, and L. Muhlenbruck, "Making the Most of Summer School: A Meta-Analytic and Narrative Review," *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 65. No. 1 (2000): 1 - 127.

³ Ibid.

Toolkit

- **Product:** A digital Summer Toolkit⁴ that includes 7 Summer Learning domains, to provide support to the SSEL with tools and resources to successfully provide TA to Summer Learning grantees.
 - Status: Under final internal review by CDE.
- **Recommendation:** Create a user-friendly section of the www.caexpandedlearning.com website to house Summer Learning materials including the Summer Toolkit. The content should help grantees access tools and resources to build quality Summer Learning programs.

Guidelines

- **Product:** A “Summer Learning Defined⁵ & Quality Indicators” digital resource
 - Status: Under final internal review by CDE.
- **Recommendation:** Ensure definition and quality indicators are integrated with other Summer Learning tools and resources.
- **Recommendation:** Create a section of the www.caexpandedlearning.com website where the definition and quality indicators can be posted.

Scaffold Support

- **Recommendation:** Create a mentoring program within the SSEL infrastructure. The program could pilot with a focus on Summer Learning and expand to cover other Expanded Learning topics.
- **Recommendation:** Calibrate all members of the SSEL team on Summer Learning and the TA framework.
- **Recommendation:** Create a matrix of suggested TA services and content that SSEL members can use as starting place to identify needs and actions to support program providers.

Communications

- **Product:** Summer Specific Frequently Asked Questions
 - Status: Under final internal review by CDE; to be released by Summer 2018.
- **Product:** Summer Communications Calendar
 - Status: E-blasts and other resources regarding Summer Learning have been integrated into the internal EXLD communication calendar.
- **Recommendation:** Create a section of the www.caexpandedlearning.com website where Summer Learning LCAP resources can be posted.
- **Recommendation:** Consider how Summer Learning data is collected by the EXLD. Data could potentially be utilized to communicate the stories of success related to Summer Learning programming.

⁴ The content for the toolkit was derived from the National Summer Learning Association’s (NSLA) “Summer Starts in September Planning Guide” and has been consolidated by the SLIC.

⁵ Summer Learning was defined as programs that promote academic achievement and healthy development by providing uniquely innovative opportunities for learning and enrichment to expand horizons for students who participate, especially those from low income communities.

System of Support

Provide a comprehensive and coordinated system of support and accountability to maintain and improve program quality while encouraging creativity and innovations in the field.

Goal 1.1: Strengthen Expanded Learning programs by providing a comprehensive and coordinated system of support.

Objective 1.1.1: Define Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs.

Complete	Twelve Quality Standards as well as Standards in Action descriptors for each standard were released in September 2014.
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Objective 1.1.2: Develop and establish an effective and comprehensive statewide system of support structure for quality Expanded Learning programs and their K-12 partners.

Ongoing	Beginning in 2016-17, the Expanded Learning Division (EXLD) funded 16 County Offices of Education (COEs) to provide broad-based and foundational technical assistance, establishing the System of Support for Expanded Learning (SSEL). The SSEL consists of those funded County Leads/Staff, EXLD staff and contracted Technical Assistance (TA) Providers. The ultimate goal of the SSEL is to build the long-term capacity of Expanded Learning programs (EXLPs) to deliver quality programs. The Quality Design Team has developed additional recommendations to further address the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the SSEL.
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Objective 1.1.3: Ensure the System of Support corresponds with the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs.

In Progress - High Priority	With the passage of SB 1221 in Sept 2014, all 21st CCLC, ASSETs, and ASES funded Expanded Learning programs in California are required to engage in a data-driven, continuous quality improvement (CQI) process based on CDE’s guidance on the Quality Standards. This is also further addressed by the Quality Design Team recommendations and the CAN is planning to redo the Quality Self Assessment Tool (QSAT) in alignment with the Quality Standards.
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Objective 1.1.4: Develop and deliver targeted interventions for programs at risk of losing funding, which includes a common protocol to assess the TA provided to programs.

In Progress - High Priority	Critical TA was initially addressed with a work group shortly after the strategic plan was released. However, with significant shifts within the SSEL, much of the recommendations from the work group were not implemented or were short lived. An ad-hoc group of individuals is currently reviewing the initial recommendations from the work group to redefine how Critical TA needs are identified and provide clear guidance on the process for delivering and assessing the effectiveness of Critical TA.
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Goal 1.2: Design and implement a process for guiding TA funding decisions.

Objective 1.2.1: Develop policies and procedures for TA allocation decisions.

In Progress	Policies and procedures have been developed to provide clarity regarding TA funding allocation decisions. However, these have not been clearly documented and communicated out widely to interested parties. To complete this objective the EXLD is currently working to document and communicate the TA funding process.
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Grant Administration and Policy

Develop and maintain clearly defined guidelines, program requirements, and processes supporting efficient program administration.

Goal 2.1: EXLD develops, implements, and maintains clear policies that support quality programs.

Objective 2.1.1: Develop, disseminate, and maintain a Policy Guide of current state ASES and federal 21st CCLC Expanded Learning programs policies that includes the regulatory source and corresponding levels of program accountability.

Complete	The Policy Guide has been replaced by a set of documents including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)'s, Policy Guidance, and E-Blasts to be housed on the CDE website. This information is also currently being placed on the Expanded Learning website (www.caexpandedlearning.com). An internal Communications Squad is currently reviewing dissemination practices for sharing this content.
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Objective 2.1.2: Develop and implement a timely and collaborative process for reviewing, revising, and notifying the field of new and existing policies.

In Progress - Near Complete	The Policy Committee was established as a permanent structure within EXLD to support a permanent collaborative process. EXLD is currently reviewing internal processes to insure internal review and public posting of policy changes is occurring in a timely manner.
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Goal 2.2: EXLD develops, implements, and maintains clear and consistent internal operational procedures.

In Progress - High Priority	The EXLD is currently in process of revamping internal operational procedures and has dedicated staffing and time to take on this project more aggressively in the coming year.
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Goal 2.3: EXLD ensures timely, efficient, and equitable grant award processes that support quality programs.

Objective 2.3.1: Define equity in grant eligibility and award distribution for state ASES and federal 21st CCLC programs.

Complete	The Defining Equity Committee was formed in Nov 2014 and their recommendations were released in Nov 2015. Since that time half of the recommendations were adopted (adding FPM and Audit Findings to Good Standing Indicators, funding by Geographic Distribution, adjusting priority points)and include in SB 2615 which passed in 2016. The EXLD is currently evaluating implementation of the others.
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Objective 2.3.2: Develop and implement a collaborative process for review and gather feedback on state (ASES) and federal (21st CCLC) equitable funding distribution processes.

Complete	This was done through the Defining Equity Committee. Implementation of additional recommendations will go through the Policy Committee to ensure collaboration with the field.
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Objective 2.3.3: Ensure timely and efficient state (ASES) and federal (21st CCLC) grant award processes.

In Progress - High Priority	In Sept 2014 three different focus groups were held and a survey was sent out to all grantees and modifications to the timelines were made accordingly. EXLD is currently reviewing internal CDE processes to ensure timeliness for future processes.
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Communication and Information Systems

Communicate with the field in a clear, timely, and transparent manner.

Goal 3.1: EXLD communicates information in a clear and timely manner using a variety of media.

Objective 3.1.1: Create a communication plan (standards, tactics, and various media sources as determined by messenger and respective audience.

In Progress - Near Complete	The EXLD has established a Communications Squad which has developed an initial communication plan for policy content and is in process of expanding the plan to include non policy content.
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Objective 3.1.2: Create an internal annual communication calendar.

In Progress - Near Complete	The Communications Squad developed an initial calendar for policy content and is in process of expanding the plan to include non policy content and revising dates to ensure timeliness.
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Objective 3.1.3: Expand and modify the EXLD webpage to effectively communicate information to the field.

In Progress	EXLD staff are currently ensuring content on the website is up to date and are working to reorganize content in a more accessible layout.
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Goal 3.2: EXLD develops and implements a system for fielding questions from, and providing high quality consistent responses to the field.

Objective 3.2.1: EXLD identifies and prioritizes the types of inquiries received from the field.

Objective 3.2.2: Develop and implement procedures and protocol to address field inquiries.

Ongoing	EXLD looked into developing a “Help Desk” for field inquiries. These systems have been created for RFA’s however it was determined that for other inquiries this method would not be the most effective and calibration was a better strategy to provide consistent responses to the field. EXLD will expand ongoing calibration internally within the Division and the entire SSEL.
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Goal 3.3: EXLD develops and implements an inclusive system for collecting stakeholder feedback and input to form EXLD decisions.

Objective 3.3.1: EXLD will identify and assess the existing system it utilizes for collecting stakeholder feedback.

Objective 3.3.2: EXLD utilizes various modalities, including technology, to increase field access to opportunities for providing EXLD with feedback and input.

In Progress	Will be fully addressed in the Strategic Plan 2.0.
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**The strategic plan originally focused on a CDE only Communications strategy, however it has become apparent through implementation work that a larger systems level strategy is also needed that includes collaborative partners. Draft recommendations from the SEL Planning Team and QDT currently recommend this type of strategy being developed. Building on those recommendations, the EXLD will convene a work group to focus on this issue beginning in Summer 2018.*

Expanded Learning/K-12 Integration

Champion Expanded Learning as a vital and integral part of the education system.

Goal 4.1: California Education Leaders promote “Expanded Learning.”

Objective 4.1.1: Document the case for Expanded Learning/K-12 Integration.

In Progress	This has been documented and shared in various formats including the Quality Standard videos and through social media. Materials were also developed as part of the Expanding Student Success campaign; EXLD is in process of determining how to make best use of those materials.
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Objective 4.1.2: Seek and demonstrate education leadership buy-in for the definition of Expanded Learning and the case for Expanded Learning-K-12 integration.

Ongoing	The EXLD engages in K-12 conferences, COE meetings, and collaborative work groups covering topics such as Whole Child, School Climate, Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Summer Learning.
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Goal 4.2: CDE Divisions support Expanded Learning/K-12 integration.

Ongoing	The EXLD has and will continue to increase partnerships with other Divisions and participate in CDE Wide Action Teams. To date this has provided the best opportunity to develop support.
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Goal 4.3: K-12 stakeholders support Expanded Learning and Expanded Learning/K-12 integration.

Objective 4.3.1: CDE supports K-12 and Expanded Learning stakeholders in developing, building, and evaluating integrated systems at various levels.

In Progress	Support is provided via 7 STEM hubs and COE content specialists working with EXLP staff, the 360/365 SEL Community of Practice, and SSEL teams engaging K-12 leadership in COEs and school districts.
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Objective 4.3.2: K-12 and Expanded Learning stakeholders leverage financial resources to support Expanded Learning programs to ensure continuity and sustainability.

In Progress	A growing number of districts are investing local resources including LCFF funds into Expanded EXLPs.
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Objective 4.3.3: K-12 and Expanded Learning stakeholders advocate for Expanded Learning programs that complement and enhance the impact of K-12 systems.

Ongoing	EXLD collaborates with multiple California and national organizations for advocacy efforts.
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Goal 4.4: The CDE and California Expanded Learning advocates champion Expanded Learning at the national level.

Objective 4.4.1: The CDE and advocates build national awareness and understanding of Expanded Learning through existing national forums and networks.

Ongoing	There is a growing number of invitations/opportunities for Expanded Learning stakeholders from California to present at national conferences and meetings.
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Goal 4.5: K-12 and Expanded Learning work together to implement strategies that lead to growth (social, emotional, behavioral) and learning (cognitive) for children and youth.

Objective 4.5.1: Expanded Learning and K-12 develop and demonstrate a shared commitment to improved student outcomes across academic, social, emotional, and physical domains.

In Progress - High Priority	The SEL Planning Team was formed in 2017 to address this objective and released recommendations in April 2018. The EXLD is currently planning implementation of these recommendations and has been invited to present these recommendations in national conferences and meetings.
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