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**California Institute for School Improvement: partnering with California school districts since 1984.**  
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Research and resources prepared by Susana Lopez, Brittani Muller and CISI staff.

## An Update on the Coronavirus

(UC Davis) - March 11, 2020

In response to current COVID-19 concerns, the University of California, Davis has taken measures to ensure the safety of its students and staff. The University announced in-person finals to be canceled for Winter Quarter, which is the week of March 16-20. In addition, the University is currently offering paid leave for employees who are ill with COVID-19 and allowing employees to work remotely as a preventative measure. Through a variety of measures, limiting face to face contact of students, faculty and staff. For access to UCD's full statement regarding safety precautions, click the link [HERE](#).

### World Health Organization (WHO)

As of March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization Director-General has declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic. Despite this conclusion, he reassures the public that WHO is taking the appropriate measure to ensure the disease does not spread any further. The following is an excerpt from his statement: 1) prepare and be ready, 2) detect, protect and treat, 3) reduce transmission, innovate and learn. To access WHO's full statement, click the link [HERE](#).

### Center for Disease Control (CDC)

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, K-12 schools must also take precautions to ensure the safety of their students. The following school prevention guidelines are excerpted from the Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC):

- Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs)
- Develop information-sharing systems with partners
- Monitor and plan for absenteeism
- Establish procedures for students and staff who are sick at school
- Perform routine environmental cleaning
- Create communications plans for use with the school community

In addition, the CDE also recommends sharing the following resources with parents and staff to ensure that precautions are being taken all around:

[What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Stop the spread of germs - help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19](#)

To access the full list of preventative guidelines, click the link [HERE](#).

## Beware of Coronavirus Online Scams

As we manage disruptions caused by the new coronavirus, watch out for online scams that seek to exploit concern about the disease.

Other scams involve email, such as a message from “management” that targeted people at particular organizations. It said some offices would temporarily close because of the virus, and included a list of affected regions/office.

Always think twice before clicking on links or opening attachments, advises information posted by the University of California:

- Even if they look like they're from someone you know.
- Whenever possible, go to web pages by a path you know is legitimate instead of clicking on a link in a message.
- If an attachment is unexpected, contact the sender by a method you know is legitimate to confirm they sent it.

## Organizing Schools to Serve Students with Disabilities

(PACE)

Students with disabilities are guaranteed a free and appropriate public education in a least restrictive environment by law. A least restrictive environment means that students with disabilities should interact with students without disabilities as much as possible. However, most teachers in the state of California are not properly trained on how to teach students with disabilities so it is often understood that they often times have unconscious biases. In 2019, California was in the category of “needs assistance (two or more consecutive years)” based on the level of compliance with federal law. The outcomes of students with disabilities in the state. The “more than two consecutive years” is a staggering 6 years that California has needed assistance and with more than 725,000 K-12 students receiving special education services, now is the time to work on bettering our school systems.

The following are excerpted facts on California and students with disabilities:

- In total, over 90% of California districts have pressing budgetary concerns for special education.
- The number of due process complaints (relating to SWD) in California is TRIPLE the national average
- 11.7% of California’s students qualify for special education
- Students with learning disabilities and speech/language impairments make up 59% of students with special needs
- Research shows that high quality early intervention can reduce developmental delays and that intervention is much more effective when its started earlier. Early intervention has led to long-term outcomes (students don’t have to repeat grades, are more productive, etc.) and has up to a 13% return on investment per child per year.
- In California districts, 2 out of 3 new recruits entering teaching responsibilities have not completed preparation meaning students with disabilities are being taught by those who are the least prepared.
- The teachers who are not prepared to work with students with disabilities leave at twice the rate of those who are fully prepared. There aren’t many new teachers who specialize in working with students with disabilities, partly due to difficult working conditions. Caseloads in California are between 28 and 32 students whereas in New York, it’s closer to 20-25 students.
- Many students with disabilities could benefit from mental and physical health services, but less than 5% of California’s Medi-Cal eligible students receive the mental health services they’re entitled to.
- Lack of proper teaching leads to lack of proper workforce preparation. To compare, California’s unemployment rate is 4% while the rate of unemployment for individuals with disabilities is 13%.

### What Can Be Done to Fix it?

There is no quick fix. Multiple things need to be done in order for California to make the proper improvements. To start with, California’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) needs more attention and resources to aid in implementation. MTSS is a framework for aligning systems to provide support to students for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success. Next, it is imperative to pay attention to transitions that students go through whether it be schools, grades or age. For example, menus of early intervention and/or services provided by the school should be available to families so they can better prepare for transitions. Mitigate service gaps, non-English speaking parents need interpreters so they can fully understand the information provided to them, and families should be involved in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) planning pertaining to their child. Resources from all these categories should be made readily available to the families well before it’s time to transition their child from childhood to adulthood. On the spectrum, educators should be trained to rid unconscious bias towards the idea of having a student with disabilities in their classroom. "A way to ensure teachers are sufficiently prepared is to look at what Florida did in 2014- update Educator Certification Renewal Requirements to include a provision stating that every educator applying for a certificate renewal must earn a minimum of one college credit or 10 hours of in-service training in teaching students with disabilities."

Overall, there is something for everyone to do in order to create a better environment for students with disabilities. Teachers should have a reduced caseload with more administrative support with more training and participating in development programs to better their understanding of how to teach students with disabilities. School leaders should specify and communicate the importance of inclusion. Lastly, to learn how to properly manage data to improve upon service delivery as well as resource allocation for students with disabilities.

Access the full article [HERE](#).

## Special Education in California in Need of Overhaul

(Edsource) - February 18, 2020

A summary by Policy Analysis for California Education made some recommendations concerning special education students in schools. Those recommendations include focusing on individual needs of students, higher quality training for teachers, & improved screening for young children. One of the biggest issues when it comes to special education is funding, especially because of the higher number of students in special education year after year. Without funding, none of the recommendations from Policy Analysis for California Education will ever be able to be put into practice. However, Governor Newsom recently proposed a new plan to improve special education. The biggest part of this plan is increasing the funding for special education by \$250 million on top of last year’s already large increase of \$1.5 billion. In order for the money to be put to good use, the system itself needs some work. Right now, the system is too confusing and uneven when it comes to low-income families or families whose first language isn’t English. Teaching also needs some work if inclusion is the goal. Most general education teachers are not aware of how to address the needs of special education students. Nonetheless, an increased budget is a great place to start in regards to starting the much-needed overhaul of special education.

Access the full article [HERE](#).

## 21st Century California School Leadership Academy

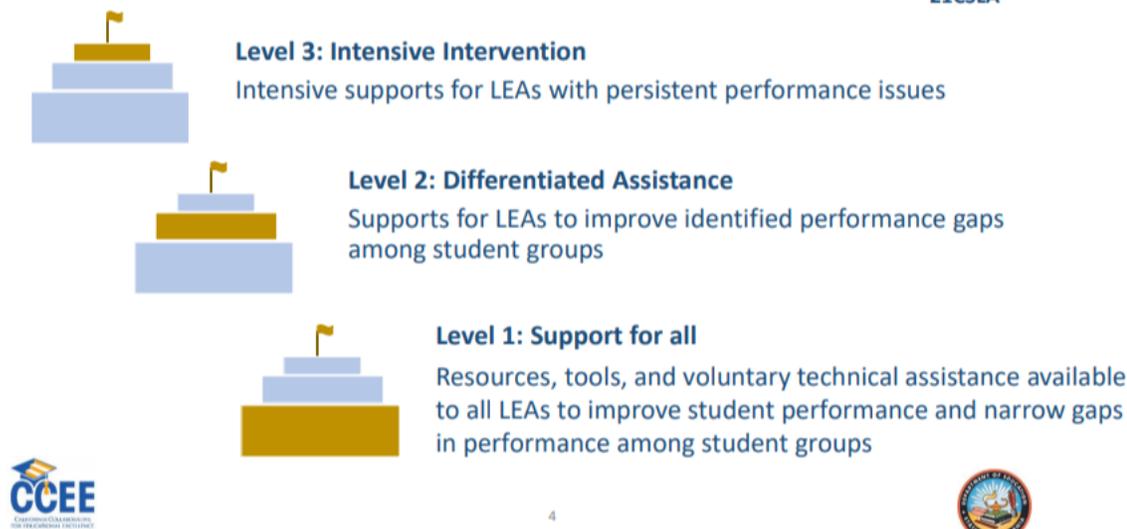
(California Department of Education)

The 21st Century California School Leadership Academy (21CSLA) Program will fund institutions of higher education, nonprofit educational providers and LEAs with expertise in providing professional learning, coaching, and mentoring to principals and other school leaders in public schools serving kindergarten and grades one to twelve to organize and offer high-quality professional learning, coaching, and mentoring for central office leaders, principals, and other school leaders, including teacher leaders, involved in school improvement efforts.

The following visual excerpted from the webinar demonstrate the levels of support the 21CSLA intends to offer LEAs:

## System of Support

21CSLA



Criteria as excerpted from the webinar are as follows:

### Design Requirements

- Training and coaching for principals and other school leaders in critical areas
- Training mentors for novice principals and teachers
- Training coaches to support leaders in high-need settings
- Training for central office leaders, principals, and other school leaders, including teachers, involved in school improvement efforts

### Eligible grantees:

- LEAs
- Institutions of higher education
- Nonprofit educational services providers

### Evaluation, Renewal and Conditions

- CDE and CCEE shall evaluate PLOs for effectiveness
- CDE and CCEE may renew grantees or reopen the selection process at the end of the grant period.
- Grantees shall provide information to the CDE and CCEE as a condition of receiving funds.

For access to the webinar and more information about the 21CSLA click [HERE](#).

## Essentials to Improving Schools: District Vision, District & State Support, & Principal Leadership

The following is excerpted text from research compiled by CDE and the CCEE in conjunction with 21CSLA Grant RFA due on March 3, 2020.

This research is part of a comprehensive effort to pinpoint the key leadership factors that improve student achievement and increase the number of high school graduates who are ready for college. In this study, SREB examined the role of the district office in providing principals with the working conditions they need in order to improve teacher effectiveness and student performance in middle school. Most relevant to this review is Strategy 4: Invest heavily in instruction-related professional learning for principals, teacher-leaders, and district staff. Strategies of Highly Supportive District

- Provide a balanced set of professional learning experiences at the district and school levels aligned with the district and school strategic plans, making it a priority to develop the capacity of principals and support staff to create rich and engaging experiences for students.
- Create active professional learning communities in which key district and school leaders have common learning experiences.
- Provide induction programs and mentoring for new principals and teachers.
- Provide time for professional development.
- Help school leaders develop a school culture based on the belief that students can succeed at high levels when they have a sense of belonging and support, can relate their learning activities to their own experiences, and are supported to make greater efforts to succeed.
- Have a professional learning plan that continuously increases the capacity of district staff to support principals and schools. Research has identified key characteristics of an effective professional learning system for schools and principals. Below are the strategies most pertinent to principal professional learning:
- Provide high-quality mentoring for principals throughout their first two years as school leaders and provide struggling principals with mentoring as needed.

- Obtain feedback from participants and use walkthroughs and student achievement data to analyze the effectiveness of professional learning.
- Organize learning for principals in study groups involving the principal and a team of teacher leaders, rather than in isolation.
- Provide professional development to address problems critical to high schools — low student motivation, low student engagement, low levels of student preparedness for college and advanced reading achievement, etc. — by identifying root causes and formulating and implementing actions to address these problems.

- Provide professional development to assist principals and teachers in using authentic problems and projects as a way to engage and motivate students to master essential academic knowledge

For access to the full report click the link [HERE](#).

## Still in the Game: How Coaching Keeps Leaders in Schools and Making Progress

*The following is excerpted text from research compiled by CDE and the CCEE in conjunction with 21CSLA Grant RFA due on March 3, 2020.*

This policy brief describes a recent study of the impact coaching has had on New York City principals who have been working with a leadership coach for at least five years. The NYC Leadership that these principals:

- Remained in their schools more than twice as long as the national average of a principal tenure in a school. In New York City, four out of ten new principals leave their first school within five years, all of the principals stayed in their first school for more than five years.
- Improved their ability to supervise staff, distribute leadership, communicate, and lead with resilience.
- Avoided complacency. After their schools made some initial progress, the principals in this study did not just coast. They worked with their coach to continue to make improvements at their schools.
- Benefited from coaching thanks to the trusting relationships they were able to develop over time with their coach.

### Recommendations

1. Make coaching a part of new principal induction.
2. Offer coaching beyond the first two years of principalship.
3. Budget coaching into per-pupil expenditures.
4. Take advantage of the flexibility offered by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
5. Provide principals with an ongoing, non-evaluative thought partner.
6. Re-envision the principal supervisor role as supportive, not just evaluative.
7. Consider cost-effective ways to supplement and enhance one-on-one coaching.
8. Develop coaching skills and monitor progress to ensure success.

For access to the full policy brief click the link [HERE](#).

## Great Principals at Scale: Creating District Conditions that Enable All Principals to be Effective

*The following is excerpted text from research compiled by CDE and the CCEE in conjunction with 21CSLA Grant RFA due on March 3, 2020.*

This report describes the set of conditions that effective school systems need to implement to enable principals to be successful. Effective systems include the following Strands:

1. Alignment among goals, strategies, structures, and resources, focused on student achievement;
2. Culture of collective responsibility, balanced autonomy, and continuous learning and improvement;
3. Effective management and support for principals with ongoing opportunities for development and feedback — and most notably, roles and responsibilities that are feasible; and
4. Systems and policies for principals to effectively manage talent at the school level.

Strand 3 emphasizes that principals can be more effective when districts implement holistic performance management systems that systematically develop, support, motivate, and retain quality leaders. Principals need to be managed in ways that facilitate ongoing learning and improve their practice over time. Effective systems provide principals with ongoing supervision and support from highly effective managers who partner with principals to improve student achievement, provide support and a sounding board, and who work to remove barriers to principal success. Effective school systems provide professional learning models that are grounded in the belief that leadership skills can be developed and expanded through ongoing, job-embedded opportunities for authentic practice, feedback, and reflection. Well-planned PL for principals creates direct connections between the district, the school, and the leader's goals. It focuses on building skills for adult leadership, developing and maintaining effective school cultures, improving instructional practices, implementing strategic plans, and supporting change management. Additionally, it provides opportunities and space for leaders to receive detailed feedback on their practice from peers and their managers — reinforcing a culture of continuous learning and improvement districtwide.

Access the full report [HERE](#).

## Principal Support Framework Action Area Resources and Tools

*The following is excerpted text from research compiled by CDE and the CCEE in conjunction with 21CSLA Grant RFA due on March 3, 2020.*

This collection of conceptual and practical resources and tools is intended to help districts as they use the Principal Support Framework (PSF) and the PSF District Self-Assessment and Planning Tool to implement new systems and practices that support principals as instructional leaders. The Principal Support Framework describes key actions of central offices that effectively support principals as instructional leaders. Based upon a broad understanding of how principals work to improve teaching and learning at scale, this framework provides guidance so that central office leaders can do the following:

- Develop a vision of what it means to support principals.
- Assess and determine strengths and next steps in their school system's approach to supporting principals as instructional leaders.
- Surface technical assistance needs.
- Highlight areas for inquiry and next-stage policy development.

## Common App Ready

(The Common Application)

The Common Application can be intimidating for students, but it is an important tool used to make the process easier for students to apply to universities of their choice. While the requirements differ for students and transfers, it is a counselor's role to assist students with their questions and concerns in order to minimize the panic that can arise from applying to college. The following guide, offered by the Common App, provides information about the best ways to support students. The information is broken down into sections, providing students with a timeline for completing the Common App. While the website offers different toolkits for students, parents and counselors, the following screenshot, taken directly from the webpage offers a look on what counselors can expect when accessing the website.



FIND A COLLEGE

Plan ▾

Apply ▾

Support your students ▾

Become a member ▾



Log in

Create an Account

# Common App Ready



A complete toolkit of tips and best practices designed to help your students complete their applications successfully and on time.



Counselors And Recommenders > Common App Ready ▾

First-year

Transfer

Getting started

Preparing your application

Telling your story

Working with recommenders and advisors

The following is an excerpt from what counselors can expect to learn from their toolkit:

- Select the correct registration type for their Common App
- Understand the Common App layout
- Search for colleges and add them to the My Colleges list

For access to the resource materials click [HERE](#).

## Superintendent Thurman on the Draft Ethnic Studies Curriculum

(Edsource) - February 6, 2020

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond values the importance of ethnic studies courses, stating the goal is to “acknowledge and honor the four fundamental groups.” The new instruction standards provide a more comprehensive history of African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos and Latinos and Native American groups. In a press conference, Thurmond also expressed his support for the recommendations offered for the new curriculum would honor “how we promote the beauty of the diversity of what our students represent in this state.”

Some ethnic and religious groups have criticized the draft, stating that the draft excludes important information regarding the struggles of these groups. Other criticisms come from many feeling the curriculum was biased and needed to be revised to offer a neutral perspective. Linda Darling-Hammond, the president of the state board was among these individuals, requesting a rewrite of the curriculum that was “free of bias, appropriate for all learners” and supported Governor Newsom’s visions for education in California.

The Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), comprised of 18 members, includes public members who have expertise in education and serve as either mentors or teachers. The IQC has taken on the task of creating the curriculum, following the guidelines provided by the state board to highlight core concepts such as “justice, equality, race and ethnicity.”

The following is an excerpt from the CDE outlining the how individuals are selected for the IQC:

“The IQC consists of 18 members as defined in *Education Code* Section 33530 (amended 2015).

- Thirteen public members appointed by the State Board of Education
- One public member appointed by the Governor
- One public member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly
- One public member appointed by the Senate Rules Committee
- One State Assembly Member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly

The implementation of a model curriculum would provide teachers the resources and guidance they need to successfully implement these courses in their classrooms. The curriculum serves to educate and Latino students, as a 2017 Stanford University study found. The study indicated a significant increase in grade point average and attendance for “at risk” students enrolled in ethnic studies courses.

The education department is set to present a revised version of the draft later this spring, with the intention of the draft going to the state board for final adoption by March 2021.

For more information regarding the Instructional Quality Commission, click [HERE](#).

Access the full article [HERE](#).

## Gov. Newsom's Ambitious Budget Proposals for Teacher Recruitment & Preparation

(Edsource) - February 12, 2020

In response to the existing teacher crisis, especially in rural and low-income areas, Gov. Newsom has increased the 2020-21 budget for recruitment and training to \$915 million to improve professional development for schools. According to the article, most of the money is going to “extend existing grant programs to recruit and train teachers, but more than \$300 million would create entirely new programs.”

The following are excerpted summaries of programs Newsom intends to invest in:

**California Teacher Credential Award Program** - Offers \$20,000 stipends over the course of four years to teachers who are willing to work in areas where there is a teacher shortage, whether general education or in subject matter. This includes working in low-income areas or teaching in the following subject matters: special education, bilingual instruction, science, technology, math or computer science.

**Workforce Development Grant Program** - Intended to help “recruit staff to provide counseling, speech therapy, mental and physical health services, clinical and rehabilitative services, social services and librarian media services.”

**Computer Science Supplementary Authorization Grant** - Provides funding for teachers to earn a “supplementary authorization on their credential to reach computer science.” Teachers will be eligible for taking time from work to complete the required coursework.

**Educator Workforce Investment Grant** - Provides professional development for teachers in literacy; school climate and mental health; special education; English Language learner instruction; science, technology, engineering and math. Requires school districts work with experts, and the grants will be administered over five years.

**Teacher Residency Program** - Similar to medical residency programs, this program provides potential teachers with the opportunity to work a full year with students under the supervisor of a qualified teacher and supervisor.

**California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program** - This grant provides funding for school employees to earn a bachelor’s degree and teaching credential.

**California Collaborative for Educational Excellence** - Funding will enhance the existing program, which serves to offer “technical assistance, professional learning networks and resources to support struggling school districts.”

For more information about the new grants and programs put in place by Gov. Newsom, click the link [HERE](#).

## Gov. Newsom's Big Bets: Community Schools, Competitive Grants & New Teacher Incentives

(Edsource) - February 18, 2020

Governor Newsom’s ambitious goals to address the teacher shortage and raise student achievement are outlined in an 85-page document addressing how he intends to spend the \$1.5 billion he has allocated in the K-12 2021-22 budget. His investment in staff development, is the biggest since former Gov. Jerry Brown invested \$1.25 billion for the training and materials of implementing Common Core standards.

Newsom may receive some pushback from education groups who argue that more money should be invested in the Local Control Funding Formula, who is currently receiving the minimum 2.3 percent annual living increase.

The following are excerpts of the emerging themes highlighted by the article:

- Although the bulk of the programs would be implemented through one-time funding, many of the grants in the program would be for four years, long enough to begin to judge their success before a potential recession.
- Some of the programs for recruiting and training new teachers and addressing teacher shortages date back to the administration of Gov. Gray Davis and were picked up by Brown and now Newsom on a much larger scale. State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond has championed the programs, particularly teacher residencies.
- But Newsom is charting a new approach to fixing low-performing schools. Instead of doling out dollars uniformly per student through county offices of education, as some had speculated with the current approach, competitive grants would determine in most cases which districts and charter schools get teacher training grants and money to fix low-performing schools. In some cases, grants to school consortia and partnerships with counties, universities and nonprofits may get priority.
- This process would not answer the question of how the state will provide assistance for struggling, poorly managed districts that don’t apply or win funding and how this new system would differ from the limited system we have now. Currently, county offices receive short-term funding to work with **hundreds of districts with low-performing student groups**. But those districts could underwrite their costs years before state law requires further help, and no additional funding would be earmarked for this work.
- Newsom is focusing on the most impoverished, struggling schools and districts — those where more than 90 percent of students qualify for the free lunch program. Several programs, such as community schools, would target them exclusively.
- Newsom would grant more authority to the **California Collaborative for Educational Excellence**, the state agency led by Tom Armelino, the former longtime Shasta County superintendent, with a staff of only 15. It would administer the \$300 million Opportunity Grants, the main funding for fixing low-performing schools and districts — creating uncertainty about the role of county offices. Brown and the Legislature established the collaborative in 2013 in part because the governor wasn’t confident that the California Department of Education’s bureaucracy could pivot to guide improvement under the state’s new guiding principle of local control. Newsom is counting on the collaborative to have the chops to handle a heap of new responsibilities. How much the collaborative’s budget will increase is unclear, however, since the \$18 million increase cited in Newsom’s January budget ([see page 76](#)) was changed in the trailer bill to an \$18 million grant program for the collaborative to administer.

Read the full article [HERE](#).

Based on analytics from the January 2020 E-bulletin, the following three items received the most clicks by CISI Members.

1. [English Language Learners and the Local Control Funding Formula](#)
2. [Children's mental health a cause for concern in report on California youth policies](#)
3. [Are Teachers Paid Enough? See the Average Pay for Every California School District](#)

Interested in seeing more on a particular topic? CISI would like to support your work in connecting research to practice. Please follow this link to let us know your thoughts and requests for specific

Any other feedback or suggestions? [LINK](#)

Also, keep a look out for new tweets on the [CISI Twitter Page](#), coming soon!

We look forward to hearing from you!

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The California Institute for School Improvement (**CISI**) provides education leaders at the school and district level with the accurate, unbiased, up-to-date policy and research information. District membership benefits supports superintendents, principals, and curriculum and instructional leaders through **monthly policy and research briefs**, **annual workshops**, resource guides and more.

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