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.

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[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

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[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.

A VISION FOR EXPANDED LEARNING IN CALIFORNIA

Quality Design Team

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Background

Strategic Planning Background

In 2011, the California Department of Education (CDE) sought to develop a road map for the future of Expanded Learning in California. The Expanded Learning Division (EXLD) and multiple partners in the field of Expanded Learning co-created a plan to support high quality programming across the state. In January 2014, the EXLD released the strategic plan, *A Vision for Expanded Learning in California with four strategic initiatives and accompanying goals and objectives*[1]. Since that time, collaborative processes were defined to meet the various objectives outlined in the strategic plan. In most instances collaborative work groups have been formed to tackle these objectives. The Quality Design Team (QDT) is one such group.

Quality Design Team Purpose

The QDT was formed to address Objectives 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 (outlined in the table below) to build on the work of the System of Support Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) Initiative[2] 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.

System of Support
Goal 1.1 Strengthen Expanded Learning programs by providing a comprehensive and coordinated system of support.
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.
Objective 1.1.3 Ensure the System of Support corresponds with the Quality Standards[3] for Expanded Learning Programs.

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[1] The strategic plan was developed as a guide for the work of both the Expanded Learning Division and colleagues throughout the State of California: https://www.caexpandedlearning.com/uploads/2/7/3/3/27335217/a_vision_for_expanded_learning_in_california_-_strategic_plan_-_2014-2016.pdf

[2] The System of Support Strategic Implementation Team was a smaller team within the strategic planning process that focused on the System of Support for Expanded Learning and improving quality in Expanded Learning programs: https://www.caexpandedlearning.com/goals--objectives1.html

[3] The Quality Standards for Expanded Learning were created with extensive field input and adopted by CDE in 2014. They are embedded in many of the structures that support Expanded Learning in California including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant making process and the cycle of quality improvement that is a legislated requirement for all CDE/EXLD grantees.

Quality Design Team Journey

The QDT was formed in early 2017 with the leadership of Jen Taylor as the EXLD Co-Lead and Mark Drewes from the Sacramento County Office of Education as the Field Co-Lead. Committee members were recruited to represent a diverse group of stakeholders and the group began meeting in March 2017 with a final meeting held in April 2018 to conclude the work of the group.

Selected committee members were comprised of representatives from EXLPs throughout California including rural locations, as well as various stakeholder groups including SSEL members (EXLD staff, Regional County Leads/Staff, and contracted Technical Assistance[4] (TA) providers), additional TA providers, and community based organizations (CBOs). Selected members were required to commit 8-10 hours of work per month for the duration of one year. Participation included attending in-person meetings, sub-committee conference call meetings, and additional time performing individual planning and preparation work between meetings.

This document represents the culmination of the committee's work as well as their final recommendations to the EXLD.

Understanding the System of Support for Expanded Learning (SSEL)

The EXLD currently provides 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)[5].

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.

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[4] Technical Assistance (TA) has been defined as ongoing, needs-driven support services to create effective and quality Expanded Learning programs. TA includes coaching, training, resource brokering, mentoring, consultation, and facilitation.

[5] California System of Support for Expanded Learning: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/cp/regntwrkcontacts.asp

The following report contains recommendations for consideration by the Expanded Learning Division. In most instances implementation of these recommendations will provide additional opportunities for engagement with the field.

Summary Recommendations

Below is a summary of the recommendations. More detail for each recommendation can be found in the sections that follow. Overarching themes through these recommendations include:

1. Deeper identification of needs and supports for Site Coordinators and other Expanded Learning staff.
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 consensus workshop[6] and other group brainstorming activities. Additional highlighted elements in the early stages of subcommittee work included identification of specific toolkits and continuous quality improvement (CQI)[7], but the group felt that these elements could fit into the three themes above. As a result, the QDT narrowed the focus of the committee work to three primary areas:

- **Deliver Equitable and Cohesive Technical Assistance:** Define strategies for equitable and cohesive TA with limited resources to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Empower Site Coordinators:** Support the empowerment of Site Coordinators with leadership, modeling, and mentoring.
- **Provide Promising Practices:** Identify Site Coordinators needs and demographics to determine and provide promising practices aligned with current resources.

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, including support for Site Coordinators.

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[6]Consensus Workshop is a Technology of Participation (ToP) method that uses a structured process in order to help a group reach consensus and awareness on a particular topic or question. https://www.top-network.org/facilitate-consensus-workshop (ToP Network, 2018).

[7] California Department of Education, Expanded Learning Division Guidance on the Continuous Quality Improvement Process: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/implemetation.asp