

# Agenda

Meeting No. 3: 2024-25



[9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242](#)  
[\(562\) 803-8338](#)

**Governance Council Meeting**  
**June 26, 2025**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**LACOE Education Center, Room 107**  
**9300 Imperial Highway**  
**Downey, CA 90242**

**Zoom Meeting Participant Information**  
**Join Zoom Meeting**  
**Meeting ID: 839-7207-1566**  
**Passcode: 870621**

## Governance Member Remote Participation

Josh Stock/Amber Cox	Lashon Academy & Lashon City – 7747 Kester Avenue, Van Nuys, CA 91405
Nadia Shaiq	ISANA Achernar - 3580 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1130 Los Angeles, CA 90010
Richard Moreno	Opportunities for Learning, Duarte - 1202 E. Huntington Drive, Duarte CA 91010
Yelena Shapiro	Opportunities for Learning, William S Hart – 27616 Newhall Ranch Rd. Santa Clarita CA 91355
Zack Hillewaert	Opportunities for Learning, Ridgecrest – 900 N. Norma Street, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Brock Champion/Kathryn Casey	Options For Youth, Acton -17216 Slover Ave Suite L-102, Fontana, CA 92337
Jason Marin	Westbrook Academy – 2340 Firestone Blvd., South Gate, CA 90280
Mailelei Penn	Granite Mountain Charter – 19632 Westwinds Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92646
Zuzy Chavez	Jardin de la Infancia – 1400 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90015
Beatriz Gutierrez	Soleil Academy – 3900 Agnes Avenue, Lynwood, CA 90262
Padmini Srinivasan/Patricia Hirano	ISSAC – 1770 Tustin Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92627
Loretta Burns	Blue Ridge Academy – 625 W. Covina Blvd., San Dimas 91773
Alejandro Gomez	Bridges Preparatory Academy – 400 S. Santa Fe, Compton, CA 90221
Wendy Shmaeff	Village Charter Academy – 7357 Jordan Avenue, Canoga Park CA 91303
Cathy Adams	Mayacamas Countywide Middle School – 983 Napa Street, Napa CA 94559
Jose Fernandez	Irvine International Academy – 4782 Karen Ann Lane, Irvine CA 92604
Loretta Burns	Blueridge Academy – 625 W. Covina Blvd., San Dimas CA 91773

## I. PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES

- A. Call to Order
- B. Ordering of the Agenda
- C. Approval of the Minutes
  - 1. May 22, 2025, Governance Council Meeting

## II. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Public Comment

## III. HEARINGS

- A. None

**IV. REPORTS / STUDY TOPICS**

- A. Membership Report – 2025-2026 SELPA Applications
- B. SELPA Reports

**V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. Approval of Los Angeles Leadership Academy for SELPA membership commencing July 1, 2025 for the 2025-2026 school year
- B. Approval of Sycamore Creek Community Charter School II for SELPA membership commencing July 1, 2025 for the 2025-2026 school year
- C. Approval of the Revised Independent Educational Evaluation Policies and Procedures dated June 4, 2025

**VI. CLOSING ITEMS**

- A. 2025-2026 SELPA Governance Council Calendar

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**



UNAPPROVED DRAFT  
No. 2: 2024-2025

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHARTER SELPA**  
**GOVERNANCE COUNCIL MEETING**

**May 22, 2025**

The Governance Council Meeting of the LAC Charter SELPA was held on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, California 90242 and remotely through Zoom.

**PRESENT:**

1. Rachel Villalobos (Academia Moderna)
2. Loretta Burns (Blue Ridge Academy)
3. Alejandro Gomez (Bridges Preparatory Academy)
4. Mailelei Penn (Granite Mountain)
5. Ty Davis (ICEF Inglewood Charter Elementary Charter Academy)
6. James McGrath (Intellectual Virtues Academy)
7. Jose Fernandez (Irvine International Academy)
8. Nadia Shaiq (Isana Achnar)
9. Padmini Srinivasan (International School for Science and Culture)
10. Zuzy Chavez (Jardin de la Infancia)
11. Alyssa Martinez (LACOE)
12. Maria Gennaro (Lashon Charter Academy)
13. Maria Gennaro (Lashon Academy City Charter)
14. Cathy Adams (Mayacamas)
15. Ricardo Moreno (Opportunities for Learning, Duarte)
16. Yelena Shapiro (Opportunities for Learning, William S. Hart)
17. Kathryn Casey (Options for Youth-Acton)
18. Rachel Villalobos (Prepa Tec – Los Angeles)
19. Victoria Luong (Sycamore Creek Community Charter School)
20. Tonya Kabia (The SEED School)
21. Wendy Shmaeff (Village Charter Academy)
22. Paola Tapia (Westbrook Academy)

**ABSENT:**

1. Victor Aguirre (Academia Avance)
2. Lynn Rodriguez (DaVinci RISE)
3. Danny DeLeon Jr (Edward B. Cole Sr. Academy)
4. Laura Schlottman (Explore Public Schools)
5. Courtney McCorkle (Heartland Charter School)
6. Beatriz Gutierrez (Soleil Academy)

**SELPA STAFF and GUESTS:** Damali Thomas (LACOE); Krystal Walton (LACOE) Alyssa Martinez (LACOE); Analay Mendoza (LACOE); Loretta Burns (Blue Ridge Academy); Marissa Russo (Opportunities for Learning – Ridgecrest); Cindy Hall (Opportunities for Learning – Ridgecrest); Zachary Hillewaert (Opportunities for Learning – Ridgecrest); Candice Varner (Opportunities for Learning – Ridgecrest); and Jeff Naslund (Opportunities for Learning – Ridgecrest).

## **I. PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES**

**A. Call to Order:** The meeting was call to order at 8:06 am

### **B. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**Moved Approval:** Rachel Villalobos; **Second:** Cathy Adams

**Aye:** 0; **Nay:** 0; **Abstention:** 0; **Motion:** Carried.

### **C. Approval of the Minutes**

February 27, 2025, Governance Council Meeting

**Moved Approval:** Rachel Villalobos; **Second:** Wendy Shmaeff

**Aye:** 0; **Nay:** 0; **Abstention:** 0; **Motion:** Carried.

## **II. COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. Public Comment –** Rachel Villalobos thanked Damali Thomas, Krystal Walton and Dr. Loretta Burns for their leadership and support.

## **III. HEARINGS**

**A. 2025-2026 Local Plan Sections:** D. Annual Budget Plan and E. Annual Service Plans and Attachments.

## **IV. REPORTS / STUDY TOPICS**

### **A. Membership Report**

Wendy Shmaeff shared the challenges of being an administrator, particularly the balance between leading with heart and maintaining relationships with families. Dr. Loretta Burns discussed CDE audits and the updates made this year, specifically the shift in focus to rendered versus not rendered services when determining provider availability. Rachel Villalobos noted that both of their schools offer the International Baccalaureate program. In PBIS, they are aiming for Gold recognition at both sites. She also highlighted a significant increase—approximately 500%—in i-Ready growth among students with disabilities.

Regarding SELPA applications, OFL-Ridgecrest is currently present and the Governance Council will take action. Sycamore Creek Countywide, Los Angeles Leadership Academy and Crete Academy are expected to apply for membership.

### **B. SELPA Reports**

Alyssa Martinez reviewed the Annual Budget Plan and shared key information with the LEA members, including total revenue by source and the total projected budget by object code. She noted that expenditures are higher than revenue, resulting in a required local contribution of \$17.8 million to balance the special education budget. She also reviewed the Allocation Plan, the SELPA office budget, and the Supplemental Aids and Services budget for low-incidence students across the SELPA. Attachments were provided with detailed breakdowns by LEA. James McGrath requested a report broken down by LEA.

Alyssa also presented the Fiscal Report, highlighting the May revisions. A 2.3% COLA will be applied. She discussed a recent article regarding the Administration's proposed education budget reductions, including the possible shutdown of the Department of Education. The proposal includes continuing 2024–25 funding levels into 2025–26, with Mental Health and IDEA funds expected to be flat funded.

Damali Thomas shared the Annual Service Plan, which outlines all available services, their descriptions, and the corresponding service codes that LEAs can use to support students with disabilities.

Damali Thomas reviewed several legislative items:

- **AB 1224** – Proposes increasing the number of days that substitute teachers can serve in the classroom.
- **AB 606** – Addresses credentialing for certificated employees who hold out-of-state credentials.
- **AB 1009** – Pertains to teacher credentialing and proposes an administrative services credential for occupational and physical therapists.
- **H.R. 2333**, the *Protecting Students with Disabilities Act* – Aims to enhance protections for students with disabilities.
- **H.R. 2598**, the *IDEA Full Funding Act* – Urges the federal government to fully fund Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

James McGrath explained the basics of the Local Education Agency (LEA) Billing Option Program. This is a Medi-Cal-based reimbursement program that allows schools to receive funding for Medi-Cal-related services provided by qualified health professionals. The updated version of the program emphasizes expanded behavioral health initiatives. He also outlined the differences between the LEA Billing Option Program, SMAA (School-Based Medi-Cal Administrative Activities), and CYBHI (Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative). Originally, the program was estimated to generate \$20,000–\$30,000 annually in additional funding. However, more recent estimates suggest potential funding of \$80,000–\$100,000 per year, based on serving 120 students, or approximately \$750 per ADA. The down part is the lengthy reimbursement timeline—typically around four years. James suggested the formation of a consortium to help streamline participation and implementation.

Yelena Shapiro provided an overview of Opportunities for Learning – Ridgecrest. Previously part of OFL – William S. Hart, it has now become its own LEA. The school will continue to offer resources and support to students in collaboration with the Sierra Sands School District and the SELPA.

Krystal Walton shared the Executive Summary of the SELPA membership application, which was received on April 18, 2025, prior to the Capacity Interview. The application earned a total of 145 out of 165 possible points. The recommendation is to approve SELPA membership with the following conditions:

1. Receipt of a signed and executed SELPA Participants Agreement by **July 1, 2025**.
2. Submission of board-approved and signed SELPA Assurances by **July 1, 2025**.
3. Submission of a signed Local Plan LEA Certification 5 by the Chief Executive Officer following SELPA approval on **May 22, 2025**, and no later than **July 1, 2025**.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Approval of OFL – Ridgecrest for SELPA Membership commencing July 1, 2025.

**Moved Approval:** Rachel Villalobos; **Second:** Cathy Adams

**Aye:** 17; **Nay:** 0; **Abstention:** 1; **Motion:** Carried.

B. Approval of 2025-2026 Local Plan Sections: D. *Annual Budget Plan* and E. *Annual Services Plan*.

**Moved Approval:** Rachel Villalobos; **Second:** Alejandro Gomez

**Aye:** 18; **Nay:** 0; **Abstention:** 0; **Motion:** Carried.

C. Approval of Governance Council Calendar of Meetings and other Committee Calendars.

**Moved Approval:** Rachel Villalobos; **Second:** Alejandro Gomez

**Aye:** 18; **Nay:** 0; **Abstention:** 0; **Motion:** Carried.

D. Approval Ad Hoc Chair Wendy Shmaeff to be the Governance Council Chair for the next two years 25-26, 26-27.

**Moved Approval:** Rachel Villalobos; **Second:** Cathy Adams

**Aye:** 17; **Nay:** 0; **Abstention:** 1; **Motion:** Carried.

## VI. CLOSING ITEMS

### A. SELPA Calendars

Damali Thomas shared the 2024-25 Calendars: Governance Council; Ad Hoc Committee; Program Council; and CAC.

Next Governance Council meeting will be held on June 26, 2025.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

### Meeting Adjournment

The Governance Council meeting was adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

Item IV.        **REPORTS / STUDY TOPICS**

**A.        Membership Report – Discussion and Information**

1. [2025-26 SELPA Applicants](#)
  1. Sycamore Creek Community Charter School II (Countywide)
  2. Los Angeles Leadership Academy
2. 2024-25 LAC Charter SELPA Members **(28 Members; 15 quorum)**
  1. Academia Avance
  2. Academia Moderna Charter School
  3. Blue Ridge Academy
  4. Bridges Preparatory Academy
  5. Da Vinci Rise Charter School
  6. Edward B. Cole Sr. Academy
  7. Explore Charter Academy
  8. Granite Mountain
  9. Heartland Charter School
  10. ICEF Inglewood Charter Elementary
  11. Intellectual Virtues Academy
  12. International School for Science & Culture
  13. Irvine International Academy
  14. Isana Academies Achernar
  15. Jardin de la Infancia
  16. Los Angeles County Office of Education
  17. Lashon Academy Charter
  18. Lashon Academy City Charter
  19. Mayacamas Countywide Middle School
  20. Opportunities for Learning, Duarte
  21. Opportunities for Learning, William S. Hart
  22. Options for Youth – Acton
  23. Prepa Tec Los Angeles Middle School
  24. Westbrook Academy
  25. SEED School of Los Angeles County
  26. Soleil Academy
  27. Sycamore Creek Community Charter School
  28. Village Charter Academy

Item IV.        **REPORTS / STUDY TOPICS**

- B.        SELPA Reports – Information and Discussion
  - 1. Finance & Governance
    - a. Finance Items
      - 2024-2025 Reports and Due Dates
      - 2025-2026 Reports and Due Dates
      - Low Incidence Reimbursement Requests Due June 30<sup>th</sup>
    - b. Current Governance Documents
      - [Local Plan](#)
      - [Allocation Plan](#)
      - [Participant's Agreements](#)
  - 2. Data, Accountability, Compliance & CDE, Informational
    - LACOE [Division of Special Education](#) Charter Collaborative
    - LACOE Division of Special Education Directors' Collaborative
    - Fiscal Report – Landmark Supreme Court Ruling Opens Doors to Compensation
    - [Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties](#)
    - Revised Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) Policy
    - IEP Implementation Data Collection Due June 30<sup>th</sup>
    - Small LEA Monitoring Cycle B [Corrective Actions](#) Due June 30<sup>th</sup>
    - CIM Progress Report Due July 10<sup>th</sup>
  - b. CALPADS
    - EOY 3 & 4 Submission Window: May 6<sup>th</sup> – July 25<sup>th</sup> 2025
    - Amendment Window Opens: July 26<sup>th</sup> - August 8<sup>th</sup> 2025
- 3. Ad Hoc Committee
  - a. No items
- 4. Ed Code, Policy and Legislative Updates – Open Discussion by Members
  - a. [AB 1381](#) (Muratsuchi) California School Finance Authority: Educational Workforce Housing Revolving Loan Fund – Support
  - b. [SB 389](#) (Ochoa Bogh) Pupil Health: Individuals with Exceptional Needs: Respiratory Services: Licensed Vocational Nurses – Consider Support Position
    - Bills to Watch
      - [AB 560](#) (Addis) Special Education: Resource Specialists: Special Classes
      - [AB 784](#) (Hoover) Special Education – DHH Services
      - [SB 373](#) (Grove) Special Education: NPS/NPA
      - [AB 1163](#) (Elhawary) Employees:



Workplace Violence Prevention Plans:  
Topics and Trainings

- [AB 1099](#) (Bryan) Developmental Services: Initial Intake
- [AB 1412](#) (Gonzalez) Pupil Transfers: Residency Requirements
- [SB 373](#) (Grove) Special Education, NPS/NPA: Change in Certification Status: Parental Notification
- [AB 1121](#) (Perez) Early literacy: Professional Development: Instructional Materials
- [AB 291](#) (Gipson) Teaching Credentialing & Apprenticeships
- [AB 753](#) (Garcia) Childcare: Facility licensure: Teacher Requirements
- [AB 1454](#) (Rivas) Pupil literacy: Administrative Services Credential Program Standards and Professional Development: Instructional Materials
- [AB 277](#) (Alanis) Behavioral Health Centers, Facilities, and Programs: Background Checks
- [AB 322](#) (Ward) Pupil Health: School-Based Health Services and School-Based Mental Health Services
- [SB 531](#) (Rubio) Course of Study: Mental Health Education
- [SB 845](#) (Perez) Pupil Instruction: CTE, Career Education, and Apprenticeships



**Fiscal Reporting Due Dates  
2024-25**

<b>Due date</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Due to:</b>
<b>August 23, 2024</b>	Extraordinary Cost Pool Claim (Prior Year)	<a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a>
<b>September 13, 2024</b>	Excess Cost Calculation MOE Report	<a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a> <a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a>
<b>February 21, 2025</b>	Federal Local Assistance-Report 1 for 2024-25 (for period 7/1/2024 to 12/31/2024)	<a href="mailto:Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu">Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu</a>
<b>March 14, 2025</b>	2025-26 Annual Budget Plan	<a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a>
<b>April 18, 2025</b>	Federal Local Assistance-Report 2 for 2024-25 (for period 1/1/2025 to 3/31/2025)	<a href="mailto:Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu">Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu</a>
<b>June 27, 2025</b>	Low Incidence Expense Reimbursement Claims	<a href="mailto:Walton_Krystal@laoe.edu">Walton_Krystal@laoe.edu</a>
<b>July 18, 2025</b>	Federal Local Assistance-Report 3 for 2024-25 (for period 4/1/2025 to 6/30/2025)	<a href="mailto:Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu">Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu</a>



**Fiscal Reporting Due Dates  
2025-26**

<b>Due date</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Due to:</b>
<b>August 22, 2025</b>	Extraordinary Cost Pool Claim (Prior Year)	<a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a>
<b>September 12, 2025</b>	Excess Cost Calculation MOE Report	<a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a> <a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a>
<b>February 20, 2026</b>	Federal Local Assistance-Report 1 for 2025-26 (for period 7/1/2025 to 12/31/2025)	<a href="mailto:Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu">Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu</a>
<b>March 13, 2026</b>	2026-27 Annual Budget Plan	<a href="mailto:Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu">Martinez_Alyssa@laoe.edu</a>
<b>April 17, 2026</b>	Federal Local Assistance-Report 2 for 2025-26 (for period 1/1/2026 to 3/31/2026)	<a href="mailto:Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu">Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu</a>
<b>June 26, 2026</b>	Low Incidence Expense Reimbursement Claims	<a href="mailto:Walton_Krystal@laoe.edu">Walton_Krystal@laoe.edu</a>
<b>July 17, 2026</b>	Federal Local Assistance-Report 3 for 2025-26 (for period 4/1/2026 to 6/30/2026)	<a href="mailto:Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu">Khatib_Jawwad@laoe.edu</a>



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**

Division of Special Education



# Charter Collaborative

A discussion of topics related to special education and charter schools by the Division of Special Education.



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**

## **Dates and Times:**

- Wednesday, October 1, 2025 (Virtual) 10:00–11:00  
Register here: [Link](#)
- Wednesday, January 28, 2026 (Virtual) 10:00–11:00  
Register here: [Link](#)
- Wednesday, April 29, 2026 (Virtual) 10:00–11:00  
Register here: [Link](#)

**We look forward to seeing you there!**

Special\_Education@lacoe.edu  
(562) 803-8300



# DIRECTORS' Collaborative

The LACOE Division of Special Education invites you to join us for news, updates and collaboration to help address the needs of students with disabilities.

**In Person - Monday, Sept. 15, 2025 | 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

REGISTER: <http://laoe.k12oms.org/2709-264557>

LA County Office of Education | 9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242 | LACOE Board Room  
8:30 - 9 a.m. Continental breakfast will be provided.

**Virtual - Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025 | 10-11 a.m. | REGISTER: <http://laoe.k12oms.org/2709-264560>**

**Virtual - Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026 | 10-11 a.m. | REGISTER: <http://laoe.k12oms.org/2709-264561>**

**In Person - Wednesday, Mar. 11, 2026 | 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

REGISTER: <http://laoe.k12oms.org/2709-264558>

LA County Office of Education | 9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242 | LACOE Board Room  
8:30 - 9 a.m. Continental breakfast will be provided.

**Virtual - Tuesday, May 5, 2026 | 10-11 a.m. | REGISTER: <http://laoe.k12oms.org/2709-264562>**



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**

Division of Special Education

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# FISCAL REPORT

PUBLIC EDUCATION'S POINT OF REFERENCE FOR MAKING EDUCATED DECISIONS

## Landmark Supreme Court Ruling Opens Doors to Compensation



BY [ANJANETTE PELLETIER](#)

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posted June 13, 2025

In special education law, it's critical to understand the distinct remedies available under different federal statutes. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures students with disabilities (SWDs) receive appropriate educational services—but it does not allow families to sue for monetary damages. However, a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling issued on June 12, 2025, has made it significantly easier for families to pursue compensation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

IDEA guarantees access to a *free appropriate public education* through an Individualized Education Program. When schools fail to meet this obligation, families may pursue remedies such as:

- Compensatory education services
- Reimbursement for private school placement
- Attorney's fees in certain cases

However, IDEA does not allow for monetary or punitive damages. Courts have consistently interpreted the law as corrective, not punitive—its primary purpose is to ensure access to educational services, not to compensate families for harm or emotional distress.

When families believe a school's actions go beyond educational failures and rise to the level of disability-based discrimination, they may seek relief under Section 504 or the ADA. These civil rights laws prohibit discrimination by public schools and programs receiving federal funding, and they do allow for monetary damages. Until now, however, families pursuing discrimination claims in the education setting faced a higher legal burden than plaintiffs in other contexts. That changed with the Supreme Court's decision in *A. J. T. v. Osseo Area Schools*.



On June 12, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously sided with SWDs, overturning a lower court ruling that had imposed a more stringent liability standard for education-related disability discrimination claims. In *A. J. T.*, a Minnesota student requested a modified school schedule as a medically and educationally necessary accommodation. Her family sued under Section 504 and the ADA after the school district denied the request. A lower court required the family to meet a higher burden of proof simply because the case involved educational services, leading to a Supreme Court challenge.

Writing for the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. stated, “ADA and Rehabilitation Act claims based on educational services should be subject to the same standards that apply in other disability discrimination contexts,” and not a “distinct, more demanding analysis.”

This decision equalizes legal protection for SWDs in education-related discrimination cases, affirming they are entitled to the same protections as any other plaintiff under these laws. This ruling is seen as a major victory for SWDs as it affirms their right to educational services, and to equal treatment and legal protection when discrimination occurs—without facing additional legal hurdles.

National education leaders are signaling potential impacts to schools in terms of programmatic and fiscal consequences, as the decision could lead to more litigation under Section 504 and the ADA. Local educational agencies are encouraged to seek legal guidance to understand how this affects their programs, services, and liability insurance.

### **Key Takeaways**

- IDEA remains the main avenue for resolving service-related disputes—but it does not allow for financial compensation
- Section 504 and the ADA are now more accessible tools for families seeking damages for discrimination or emotional harm
- Schools must take civil rights compliance seriously, as violations tied to educational services may now lead more easily to financial liability—particularly in cases of deliberate indifference or systemic failure

This Supreme Court ruling reinforces a powerful message: SWDs are not only entitled to appropriate educational support, but also to equal treatment under the law. As legal standards shift, it is essential for educators and administrators to understand the rights and responsibilities in this evolving legal landscape.





# Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties

Bonnie Garcia, Statewide Literacy Co-Director  
Gigi Ostrowsky, Education Programs Consultant

SELPA Administrators of California Association  
June 5, 2025



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Agenda

- Purpose of Screening
- Selection of Screening Instruments
- Screening Timelines
- Other Screening Requirements
- Addressing Reading Difficulties
- Consideration for Next Steps
- Resources to Support Implementation
- Questions & Answers

# “California for All Kids”

“All kindergarten through second grade students will be screened for risk of reading difficulties, increasing early identification and support.”

Quoted from the *Governor’s Budget Summary* —  
2025–26, pp. 13–14

# Required in California

- “Beginning in 2025–26, and annually thereafter, an LEA ... shall assess each pupil in kindergarten and grades one and two for risk of reading difficulties,” ... “including possible neurological disorders such as dyslexia ...” *Education Code (EC) Sec. 53008 (e) & (b)*
- LEAs shall use a “screening instrument ... adopted by their governing board” from “an approved list of evidence-based, culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate screening instruments ...” “... in languages reflecting the primary language of pupils in the state, to the extent assessments in those languages are available.” *EC Sec. 53008 (d), (b), & (c) (2)*



# Purpose of Screening

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Purpose of Screening (1)

- “Screening should be considered part of a schools’ **comprehensive instructional strategy**, and should be used ... to inform individualized instruction, measure progress, identify learning needs, & enable parents & educators to discuss learning needs in a more informed way.” *Education Code (EC) Sec. 53008 (a) (1)*
- [Screening] ... can help **families & teachers** achieve the best learning & life outcomes for all pupils and **close academic achievement gaps.**” *EC Sec. 53008 (a) (2)*

# Purpose of Screening (2)

- “Screening results shall be used as a **flag for potential risk** for reading difficulties, not as a diagnosis of a disability.” *EC Sec. 53008 (I)*
- “Results ... shall be used as a part of a **broader process** that further evaluates pupil needs and progress, identifies supports for classroom instruction, enables targeted individual intervention as needed, & allows for further diagnosis if concerns do not resolve.” *EC Sec. 53008 (I)*



# Selection of Screening Instruments

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction



# Selection of Screening Instruments (1)

- Screening instruments were selected by an expert panel, Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel (RDRSSP), appointed by State Board of Education (SBE) in accordance with *EC* Sec. 53008 (b), (c), & (g).
- The evaluation process & criteria developed by the RDRSSP was approved by the SBE.

# Selection of Screening Instruments (2)

- Evaluation Criteria: SBE considered the following factors to support adoption of high-quality screening instruments that minimize the over- or under-identification of students' risk of reading difficulties:
  - A. Use of direct measurement ... to determine if a pupil is at risk of a reading difficulty, including dyslexia.
  - B. Measurement of domains that may predict dyslexia and other reading disorders, ...
  - C. Evidence that the tool is normed and validated using a contemporary multicultural and multilanguage sample of pupils, with outcome data for pupils whose home language is a language other than English as well as those who are native English speakers.
  - D. Integration of relevant pupil demographic information, such as home language, English language fluency, and access to prekindergarten education, to more fully understand a pupil's performance.
  - E. Guidance and resources - how to administer screening instruments, interpret results, explain results to families, including in pupils' primary languages, and determine further educational strategies, assessments, diagnostics, and interventions...informed by the ELA/ELD Framework and the California Dyslexia Guidelines, as well as knowledge of effective interventions for the specific needs of individual pupils, and shall reflect a tiered interventions model aligned with the MTSS EC Sec. 53008 (g) (1) (A)–(E)

# Screening Instruments

- The RDRSSP identified appropriate instruments for screening on December 16, 2024.

Title	Grade Levels	Languages
Amira	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish
mCLASS with DIBELS Edition 8 and mCLASS Lectura	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish
Multitudes	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish
Rapid Online Assessment of Reading (ROAR)	Grade One and Grade Two	English only

**Information overviews are available on the California Literacy webpage.**

# Information Overview:

## Amira

- General Information

### Amira Overview

Reading Difficulties Risk Screening Selection Panel Screener Information Overview for Amira.

*Note: The information included on this web page is based on information provided by the publisher, is subject to change, and should be confirmed by potential purchasers.*

#### General Information

**Screening Instrument Title:**

Amira

**Organization:**

Distributed by Amira Learning or HMH (formerly Amira Learning, with HMH as distribution partners)

**Web page:**

[Amira Learning](#) 

**Contact Information:**

- Amira Learning, Dianne Henderson, Vice President Impact, [Dianne.Henderson@amiralearning.com](mailto:Dianne.Henderson@amiralearning.com)
- HMH official distribution partner, Edward Howard, Vice President of Product Management, [edward.howard@hnhco.com](mailto:edward.howard@hnhco.com)

**Recommended grade(s):**

- Kindergarten
- Grade one
- Grade two

**Recommended for use with the following student populations:**

- General education students
- Students with disabilities
- English learners
- Bi/multilingual learners (English–Spanish)

**Languages available:**

- English
- Spanish

# Information Overview:

## mClass w/ DIBELS Ed 8 & mClass Lectura

- General Information: Skills Measured

### Skills Measured (English):

Refer to the Key below the tables.

#### Required

Skills Measured per EC 53008	mCLASS Task (Required)	K	G1	G2
phonological and phonemic awareness	Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	Y	Y	NA
knowledge of letter names	Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	Y	Y	NA
decoding skills	Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)	Y	Y	Y
decoding skills	Word Reading Fluency (WRF)	Y	Y	Y
reading fluency	Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	NA	Y	Y
other: reading comprehension	Maze	NA	NA	Y

#### Additional/Optional

Skills Measured per EC 53008	mCLASS Task	K	G1	G2
rapid automatized naming	Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)	Y	Y	Y
vocabulary	mCLASS Vocabulary	Y	Y	Y
oral language; language comprehension	mCLASS Oral Language	Y	Y	Y
other: encoding (spelling)	mCLASS Spelling	Y	Y	Y

# Information Overview – Skills Measured

Skills Measured per 53008	[Name of] Task	K	G1	G2
---------------------------	----------------	---	----	----

Key: Y = Approved, Z = Not approved, NA = Not available

Screening Instrument	Amira	mCLASS – DIBELS 8 & mCLASS Lectura	Multitudes	ROAR
Categories of Skills Measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Screening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required</li> <li>• Additional/Optional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Universal Screening</li> <li>• Follow-up Screening</li> <li>• Additional/Optional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required</li> <li>• Recommended</li> <li>• Additional/Optional</li> </ul>

# Information Overview:

## Multitudes

- General Information (cont.)
- Administration

### Information about establishing student language proficiency to administer screener:

Detailed guidance and administration protocol are provided in the Administration Manual to support the determination of whether a student has the minimum English or Spanish language proficiency necessary for screening to be appropriate and valid. This includes information about necessary ELPAC levels for the English screener. If a student comprehends the directions and repeats at least three of the sentences, verbatim, they can proceed to screening.

### Supports for students who are not yet proficient with English:

Before beginning screening, screener administrators receive guidance as to which language(s) to screen the student in, and whether the student has sufficient language proficiency to be screened in said language(s). If the student does not yet have the minimum language proficiency necessary for universal screening in English or Spanish, local education agencies (LEAs) can use components of Multitudes that do not require English or Spanish language proficiency to support their evaluation of the student's risk of reading difficulties, in addition to the profile required per *EC* Section 53008. For Multitudes, guidance is provided for specific tasks that can be used. The Administration Manual provides the protocol, which is also available on the digital Multitudes platform within the Resources tab.

### Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans who participate in statewide universal screening efforts should receive any/all accommodations, per their IEP/504 plan. To complete Multitudes screening, students need to be able to see visual stimuli and hear audio stimuli presented through their digital devices. The Administration Manual includes related guidance for test administrators, such as creating a sensory-supportive environment, when and how to accommodate for articulation differences, and ways to keep students engaged during assessment.

### Administration

#### Mode:

Digital

#### Grouping:

One-on-one administration

#### Required technology:

Internet connection and two devices with internet connectivity: one device is needed for the educator (screener administrator) and one device is needed for the student.

#### Administration time in minutes:

- Kindergarten: Initial Universal Screening is 13 minutes on average; follow up for those "needing support" is 11.5 minutes on average, per student
- Grade one: Initial Universal Screening is 10 minutes on average; follow up for those "needing support" is 9.5 minutes on average, per student
- Grade two: Initial Universal Screening is 12.5 minutes on average; follow up for those "needing support" is 9.5 minutes on average, per student

# Information Overview:

## ROAR

- Training
- Scoring
- Cost Information

### Training

#### Time required for screener administrator training:

Spending 60 minutes with the video guides, Teacher Administration Guide, and other curated ROAR professional development educator resources will prepare a teacher for administering ROAR.

#### Type of training available for screener administrators:

ROAR Professional Development consists of a self-paced review of the following educator resources:

- Detailed video guides that describe how to access and use the student and teacher dashboards
- A comprehensive Teacher Guide, which includes all of the information from the video guides in pdf format and optional scripts in Spanish and English, which a teacher may share with their class to prepare for the ROAR assessments.
- A brief guide for paraprofessionals and classroom assistants who are supporting the ROAR administration
- Additional guidance for students receiving special education services and 504 accommodations
- Additional guidance for English language learners
- A Next Steps Guide for supporting teachers making instructional choices based on the ROAR assessments
- A Family Guide that can be shared with parents and guardians

### Scoring

#### Scores are calculated:

Automatically (computer-scored)

#### Scoring time in minutes:

Scored in real-time.

### Cost Information

#### Initial cost for implementing program:

ROAR is provided at no cost to schools and districts.

#### Basic pricing plan and structure:

When a school uses the no-cost ROAR browser-based assessment, they have access to the assessment, all educator resources, and score reports.

#### Bulk pricing plan:

Not applicable.

#### Replacement cost per unit for subsequent use:

Not applicable.



# Information Overview:

## Amira

- Communication & Resources

### Communication and Resources

#### **Types of resources available for educators, screener administrators, and families:**

For educators: Amira offers a comprehensive, research-driven training and professional development program and a range of mechanisms for teachers to track the screening process and view scores.

For parents: Parent Portal allows parents and guardians to access real-time reports and updates in English and Spanish on their child's reading progress.

#### **User interfaces and data management system:**

Teachers and leaders can access an interface for entering and viewing scores, including various reports at the student, classroom, and district level. Numerous data extracts are also available. Families can also access reports and resources in English and Spanish. Students, teachers, administrators, and families access Amira via the web; no additional equipment or plug-ins are required.

Amira supports Single Sign On (SSO) with Clever and Classlink natively, and can support most SIS systems through OneRoster import.

**Questions:** California Statewide Literacy Office | [statewideliteracycampaign@cde.ca.gov](mailto:statewideliteracycampaign@cde.ca.gov)

Last Reviewed: Thursday, January 9, 2025



# Screening Timelines

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# WHEN should SCREENING occur?

Beginning of year?

Middle of year?

End of year?

Notification  
at least 15  
days in  
advance

Screening  
Date

Notification  
of results  
within 45  
days

New  
Student

Screen  
within  
45 days

## Timeline Considerations:

- Conducted annually
- Sufficient instruction in foundational skills
- Frequency within year
- Tasks administered
- In English, Spanish, or both

# Additional Considerations

- “Local educational agency” means a school district, county office of education, or charter school. *EC Sec. 53008 (o)(3)*
- The Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties also applies to students in kindergarten through grade two placed in non-public school (NPS)
- LEAs should work with their contracted NPS sites to implement the LEA’s adopted screening instrument(s)
- LEAs should also work with their contracted NPS sites regarding all screening related parent notifications as well as annual screening schedules/timelines



# Other Screening Requirements

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Multilingual Learners (1)

- Students “who do not speak sufficient English to be screened with an English-language instrument” must be screened in their primary language (if an approved instrument is available). *EC Sec. 53008 (h)*
- To determine if students “speak sufficient English to be screened with an English-language instrument,” LEAs are advised to consult information provided by the approved screening instrument for guidance.
- Information Overview for each instrument includes sections on “Information about establishing student language proficiency...” & “Supports for students who are not English proficient.”

# Multilingual Learners (2)

- If no approved instrument is available in the student's primary language, the LEA must develop & implement a process for evaluating risk.  
*EC Sec. 53008 (h)*
- The process must
  - Analyze the student's developmental history, educational history, & literacy progress. *EC Sec. 53008 (h)*
  - Take into account the student's home background & evolving English language abilities, including speaking, listening, reading, & writing, consistent with *CA Dyslexia Guidelines*. *EC Sec. 53008 (h)*
- Components of screening instruments that do not require English language proficiency may be used in this evaluation. *EC Sec. 53008 (h)*

# Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

- Beginning in the 2025 - 2026 school year, accommodations for the Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties may be added to a student's IEP, as determined by each student's IEP team. It is anticipated that these accommodations may be added in the Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties section located within the Statewide Assessments portion of the student's IEP.
- A student's IEP team should consult the particular screening instrument's instructions/manual for information pertaining to accommodations for that screening instrument, including whether particular accommodations may not yield valid screening results.



# Opt-Outs & Exemptions

- Parents & guardians may opt out of screening but must do so in writing.  
*EC Sec. 53008 (e), (f), & (j)*
- Student may be exempted by parent/guardian in writing if the student:
  1. Has a current identification or diagnosis of reading difficulty, reading disorder, or other disability,
  2. Is eligible for special education services or has a 504 plan,
  3. Is in the process of being assessed for eligibility for special education or 504 plan.

*EC Sec. 53008 (i) (1)–(3)*

# Supports & Services for Students Identified as Being at Risk

If a student is identified as being at risk, LEAs “shall provide ... supports & services, appropriate to the specific challenges identified ..., which may include, among other[s], any of the following:

1. Evidence-based literacy instruction focused on specific needs.
2. Progress monitoring.
3. Early intervention in the regular general education program.
4. One-on-one or small group tutoring.
5. Further evaluation or diagnostic assessment.”

*EC Sec. 53008 (I)*

# Unacceptable Uses of Screening Results (1)

- Screenings shall not be “considered an evaluation or diagnostic tool to establish eligibility for special education ... services ... or ... a plan pursuant to Section 504.” *EC Sec. 53008 (g) (2)*
- However, screenings “shall not be used to delay the child find process” ... [&] “may be used ... to recommend that a student receive further assessment & evaluation to establish eligibility...” *EC Sec. 53008 (g) (2)*

# Unacceptable Uses of Screening Results (2)

- Screening results “shall not to be used for any high-stakes purpose, including but not limited to,
  - Teacher evaluation
  - Accountability
  - Grade promotion or retention
  - Identification for gifted or talented education
  - Reclassification of English learners
  - Identification as an individual with exceptional needs.”

*EC Sec. 53008 (m)*

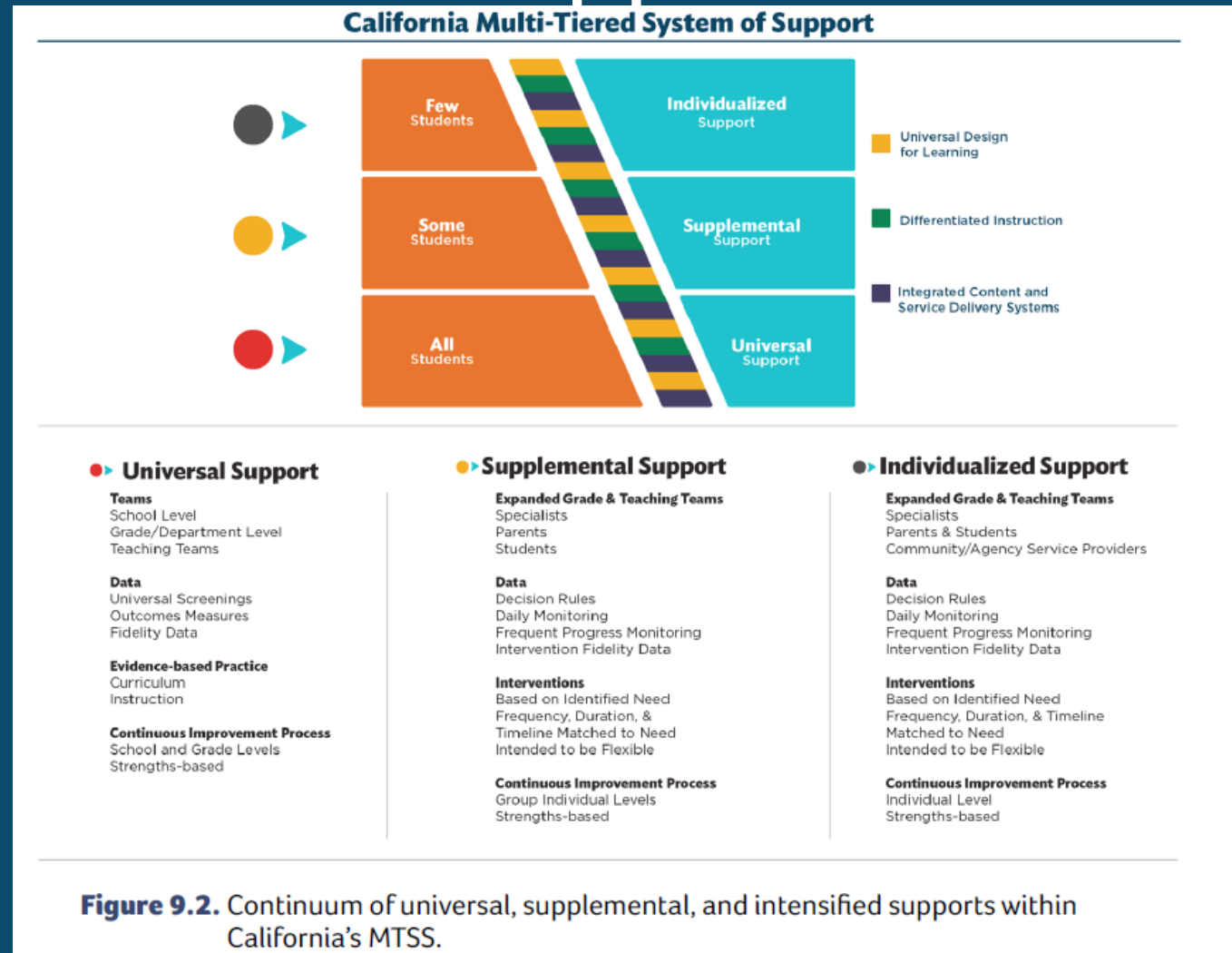


# Addressing Reading Difficulties

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Continuum of Supports within MTSS



[See long description MTSS](#)

# Best First Instruction

- Evidence-based instruction that
  - Teaches
    - Foundational literacy skills—print concepts, phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency
    - Oral language development, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, speaking, and listening skills
    - Integrated and designated ELD instruction
  - Promotes
    - Intentional approach to literacy that promotes carefully sequenced initial instruction, appropriate practice and reinforcement, intervention as necessary, and meaningful application in English language arts and other content areas.
    - Joyful, motivating, linguistically and culturally affirming, and developmentally appropriate literacy experiences that lead to strong content knowledge and effective communication skills.

# Evidence-Based Practices

- Pedagogy, instructional materials, assessments, and interventions that incorporate & integrate
  - **ELA/ELD Framework:** Five themes—foundational skills, meaning making, language development, effective expression, & content knowledge
  - **CCSS:** reading, writing, speaking, listening, & language
  - **ELD Standards:** interacting in meaningful ways, learning about how English works, and using foundational reading skills
  - **Comprehensive ELD:** integrated ELD & designated ELD
  - **Universal Design for Learning:** Principles and guidelines
  - **California Dyslexia Guidelines:** Systems, assessments, and instruction
  - **DISCIPLINES:** ELA & other content areas



# Supplemental and Intensified Instruction

- When students are identified as needing more individualized instruction, the next level of instruction is delivered in a more specialized model, which could be a small-group setting, with a more highly trained professional, and by using more intensive intervention strategies (California Dyslexia Guidelines, p 44).
  - Supplemental – approximately 15% of student population (i.e., some)
  - Intensified – approximately 2 to 5% of student population (i.e., few)

# Structured Literacy

- Principles
  - Systematic and Cumulative
  - Explicit
  - Diagnostic
- Elements
  - Phonology, Sound-Symbol, Syllables, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics

# Collaboration Between Service Providers

<b>504 Plans &amp; Supplemental Services</b>	<b>Accommodations/Supports</b>
<b>Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)</b>	

Considerations: Instructional Setting/Environment,  
Materials/Presentation, Response Modes, and Timing

# Considerations for Next Steps



# Considerations for Next Steps (1)

- Establish or strengthen MTSS – assessment, core instruction, intervention, family engagement, professional learning
- Review, evaluate, & pilot (if desired) screening instruments
- Obtain instruments & determine data management
- Determine screening schedule (month & time) & location
- Determine which assessment tasks will be administered, if any, beyond required tasks
- Determine who will conduct screenings & provide professional learning

# Considerations for Next Steps (2)

- Determine who will be screened in English, Spanish, or both
  - Consult screening instrument instructions for determining “sufficient English”
- Determine process if no instrument is available in the student’s language
- Develop & translate notification letters (before & after screenings, including all required elements)
- Determine supports & services for students identified as at risk, including resources for families and educators



# Resources to Support Implementation

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# California Literacy – Screening Tab (1)

[Announcements](#) [Learning Pack](#) [Literacy Roadmap](#) **[Screening](#)** [Policy and Guidance](#) [Initiatives](#) [Webinars](#) [Resources](#)

## Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties

### Overview

The Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties allows for early identification and intervention of reading difficulties, including dyslexia, for students in kindergarten to grade two. *Education Code* Section 53008 requires all California local educational agencies (LEAs) to adopt a screening instrument by June 30, 2025, and implement screening beginning no later than the 2025–2026 school year. The LEAs select their screening instrument from the list approved by the Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel (RDRSSP) appointed by the State Board of Education.

### Screening Instruments and Information Overviews

Organization	Title	Grade Levels	Languages	Information Overviews
Distributed by Amira Learning or HMH (formerly Amira Learning, with HMH as distribution partners)	Amira	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish	<a href="#">Amira Information Overview</a>
Amplify Education	mCLASS with DIBELS Edition 8 and mCLASS Lectura	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish	<a href="#">mClass with DIBELS Edition 8 and mClass Lectura Information Overview</a>
University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Dyslexia Center	Multitudes	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish	<a href="#">Multitudes Information Overview</a>
Stanford University, Brain Development and Education Lab	Rapid Online Assessment of Reading (ROAR)	Grade One and Grade Two	English only	<a href="#">ROAR Information Overview</a>




# California Literacy – Screening Tab (2)

## Communication and Resources

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
  - ✦ [Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties FAQs](#)
  - ✦ [RDRSSP FAQs](#)
  - ✦ [Literacy Screenings Professional Development FAQs](#)
- [Webinar Series: Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties](#)


### Letters to the field

- ✦ [Screening Students for Risk of Reading Difficulties, December 11, 2024](#)
- ✦ [Screening Students for Risk of Reading Difficulties, December 17, 2024](#)
- [Adoption Toolkit: Reading Difficulties Risk Screener, 2024](#) 

Developed by the Curricular and Improvement Support Committee of the California County Superintendents.

- ✦ Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this resource do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the California Department of Education (CDE). The CDE does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any information included in the resource.
- [Literacy Screening Professional Development Funding](#)  
\$25 million one-time funds for training to administer screenings to assess for risk of reading difficulties using an instrument from the approved list of screeners.

## Policy

- [Education Code Section 53008](#) 
- [Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel \(RDRSSP\)](#)
  - ✦ Information about the Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel authorized by California *Education Code* Section 53008.
- [California Dyslexia Guidelines](#) (PDF)

Questions: California Statewide Literacy Office | [statewideliteracycampaign@cde.ca.gov](mailto:statewideliteracycampaign@cde.ca.gov)

Last Reviewed: Tuesday, May 20, 2025

# Padlet: Webinar Series

Padlet

Benita Garcia • 1mo

Webinar Series: Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties

Conserving Materials and Resources

California Literacy

Join Our CDE-Literacy ListServ

To receive information and updates regarding California Literacy, including information about screening for risk of reading difficulties, please subscribe to the California Literacy mailing list by sending a blank message to [cdeliteracy@mlist.cde.ca.gov](mailto:cdeliteracy@mlist.cde.ca.gov).

Webinar 1: Overview of Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties

Recording

Webinar 1 Slides

Webinar 1 Handout

Webinar 2: The Role of Screening within a Multi-Tiered System of Support

Recording

Webinar 2 Slides

Webinar 2 Handout

Webinar 3: Screening Multilingual Students

Recording

Webinar 3 Slides

Webinar 3 Handout

Webinar 4: Addressing Reading Difficulties

Recording

Webinar 4 Slides

Webinar 4 Handout

Screening Resources

E.C. Section 53008

List of Screening Instruments

Information Overviews

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Superintendent's Letters

CISC Adoption Toolkit: Reading Difficulties Risk Screener, 2024

California Dyslexia Guidelines

Other Resources

Resource Guide to the Foundational Skills (2015)

California English Language Development Standards: Kindergarten Through Grade 12 (2012)

California Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (2010)

Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities (2019)

California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities

Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students: Research to Practice (2020)

Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel (RDRSSP)

Webpage

Supporting Documents

Funding

Webpage

Funding FAQs

Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

CDE Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

Resources

Professional Learning

2025 CA Literacy Conference Underscores the Right to Read

Project ARISE, Lead: Contra Costa County Office of Education (Contra Costa Office of Education)

California Collaborative for Learning Acceleration (CCLA) Lead: Santa Clara County Office of Education

Webinars

Webinar Series: Reentering the ELA/ELD Framework (Sessions 1-9) See Webinars Tab

Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties: LEA Considerations/ Questions

2025-2026 GB Budget Summary - TK-12 Education

Additional Handout(s)

See Padlet for all resources <https://tinyurl.com/cdescreenerwebseries>

# Funding to Support Screening

## 2024–25

- \$25 million one-time Prop 98 General Funds to support training for educators to administer screenings
- Funds apportioned January 2025 @ \$21.16 per K-2 pupil

## 2025–26 as proposed by the Governor

- \$40 million one-time Prop 98 General Funds to support the purchase of screening materials and training for educators to administer literacy screenings

# Professional Learning

- Project ARISE: Asynchronous learning modules
- California Collaborative for Learning Acceleration (CCLA): Asynchronous learning modules
- University of California/California State University (UC/CSU) Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning: Asynchronous learning modules
- English Learner Roadmap Power in Collaboration Across California (EPiCC): Regional Offerings by Zone
- California Dyslexia Initiative: Archived Videos and PPT Slides
- Getting Reading Right: Synchronous learning modules
- California Literacy Conference: Synchronous (virtual), June 17, 2025

# Professional Learning Pack

Provided to enhance and align literacy efforts across the state, operationalize California's Approach to Literacy and Biliteracy, and improve literacy outcomes for all California students.

Features two new literacy tools released in spring 2025:

- California Literacy Roadmap: Literacy Content Blocks for English-Medium Classrooms for Transitional Kindergarten Through Grade Five
- Preschool Through Third Grade (P–3) Learning Progressions in Language and Literacy Development(PDF)



# Questions & Answers

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Contacts



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# Contacts (2)



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916-982-2259



**SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION**

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**Policy:**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), at Title 34 CFR §300.502, specifies that the parents/guardians of a child with a disability have the right under this provision to obtain an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) of their child at public expense, subject to certain provisions.

Member LEAs within the LAC Charter SELPA are their own LEA for special education purposes. Therefore, the board-approved IEE policies and procedures of the LEA are the primary documents governing LEA decisions regarding the IEE process.

In the absence of LEA board-approved IEE policies and procedures, the LAC Charter SELPA IEE policy and procedure becomes the primary document governing the IEE process.

**Definitions**

- A. "Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)" means an evaluation conducted by a qualified evaluator who is not employed by the LEA.
- B. "Public expense" means that the LEA either pays for the full cost of the IEE within the established guidelines set out in the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) policy or ensures that the IEE is provided at no cost to the parent/guardian.

**Notification to LEA**

- A. A parent/guardian must notify the LEA that they disagree with a school's evaluation and that they are requesting an IEE at public expense. If the request for an IEE is made during an IEP meeting, the request should be included in the notes.
- B. A parent/guardian desiring an IEE at public expense must submit their request within two (2) years from the date of the LEA assessment to which they disagree. (20 U.S.C. 1415(b)(6)(B); Education Code 56505(I); Placentia- Yorba Linda USD, (2012) OAH Case No. 2012051153.)

**Los Angeles County Charter SELPA**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA (SELPA)**  
9300 Imperial Highway, CA 90241 \* Phone: (562) 803-8338 \* Fax: (562) 469-4238

**LEA Response to Parent/Guardian Request for an IEE**

- A. Following receipt of a request for an IEE at public expense from a parent/guardian, the LEA shall, without unnecessary delay:
- 1) ensure that the evaluation is provided at public expense; or
  - 2) request a due process hearing for a determination as to whether the LEA's evaluation is appropriate. (34 C.F.R. 300.502(b)(2)(i)-(ii).)
- B. If the LEA initiates a due process hearing and the final decision is that the LEA's evaluation is appropriate, the parent/guardian is not entitled to an IEE at public expense; however, the parent/ guardian still has the right to obtain an IEE at private expense. (34 C.F.R. 300.502(b)(3).)
- C. The LEA may ask a parent/guardian why he or she disagrees with school's evaluation but may not require the parent/guardian to provide an explanation and may not unreasonably delay either providing the IEE at public expense or filing a request for due process to request a hearing to defend LEA's evaluation. (34 C.F.R. 300.502(b)(4).)

**Information Provided to a Parent/Guardian**

Upon receipt of a request for an IEE, the LEA will provide the parent/guardian with information regarding where to obtain an IEE and LACOE SELPA criteria applicable to IEEs. (34

C.F.R. 300.502(a)(2).)

**LEA Criteria**

- A. The IEE must be in an area of suspected disability and must be conducted for the purposes of determining a student's special education needs.
- B. The evaluator shall follow all guidelines for LEA evaluations which include, but are not limited to, observing the student in an appropriate setting, classroom visitation(s), and interview(s) with parent/guardian and staff.
- C. It is the intent of the LEA and LAC Charter SELPA that IEEs are focused on student need and avoid any possible conflict of interest. Therefore, any evaluator who provides an IEE shall not be used as a provider for any services offered in a resultant individualized education program (IEP). It is acknowledged, however, that a student may have a need for which no other qualified provider may be available. Under this circumstance and in its discretion, the LEA may certify that no other qualified provider can be identified and may authorize an exception to this provision.

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9300 Imperial Highway, CA 90241 \* Phone: (562) 803-8338 \* Fax: (562) 469-4238

D. As part of an LEA contracted IEE, evaluators must:

- 1) provide the LEA with original protocols of all the assessments;
- 2) provide a written report at least five (5) days prior to the IEP team meeting; and
- 3) participate in the resultant IEP team meeting(s).

E. If an IEE is at public expense, then the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the cost of the evaluator, geographic location of the evaluator, and the qualifications of the evaluator, must be the same as the criteria the LEA uses when it initiates an evaluation to the extent those criteria are consistent with the parent's/guardian's right to an IEE. (34 C.F.R. 300.502(e).)

1) Cost-Containment Criteria

- a) The cost of the IEE must not exceed reasonable rates prevailing in the LEA's geographical area. See Attachment A to this policy for the current list of reasonable rates.
- b) Costs may include observations, administration and scoring of tests, report writing, and participation at an IEP team meeting.

2) Geographic Location Limitations

- a) For schools in Los Angeles County, evaluators will be located within Los Angeles and adjacent counties. For schools in other counties, evaluators will be located within 25 miles of the LEA's location. For LEAs who provide a virtual instructional program, the IEE assessor must be located within 25 miles of the student's residence if providing an in-person assessment or within the State of California if providing a virtual assessment.
- b) Any expenses beyond the evaluation and participation at an IEP meeting (i.e., lodging, transportation, mileage, technology, materials, etc.) are included in the cost cap for the IEE and may not be billed separately.

3) Minimum Qualifications of Evaluators

All assessments must be conducted in accordance with all requirements of Federal and State law including, but not limited to, observing the student in the appropriate setting (EC §56327) and conducting evaluations in accordance with EC §56320. Evaluators must meet the following credentialing criteria. All assessments, including all tests and subtests, must be conducted by persons competent to perform the assessment as determined by the LEA (EC §56322).

- a) All evaluators must meet the following minimum requirements:
  - i. a minimum of two (2) years of experience working with children and young adults ages three (3) to twenty-two (22).

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ii. updated copy of a resume, Curriculum Vitae, and Assessment report  
example may be requested of assessors who are not on the list of LEA approved assessors.

iii. An LEA may require that any examiner meet the LEA requirements for any school employee who works with children (i.e., TB testing, fingerprinting, background search, insurance, SAM insurance), as well as any other contract requirements enforced by the LEA.

iv. must provide proof of professional insurance currently in force in the indicated areas and minimum coverages.

Commercial General Liability Coverage "occurrence" form to include bodily injury and property damage for, including, but not limited to, premises and operations, contractual liability (Coverage for contractual liability shall be limited to liability assumed under the following indemnification clause.), independent contractors, broad form liability, and personal injury with a combined single limit of \$2,000,000 per occurrence.

Sexual Molestation and Abuse coverage with minimum limits of \$3,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 general aggregate. Coverage may be held as a separate policy or included by endorsement in the Commercial General Liability or the Errors and Omissions Policy.

v. LEAs are encouraged to adopt their own policies regarding appropriate levels of insurance. An assessor may be required to possess appropriate insurance. However, the amount of insurance coverage available should not be the only factor used to disallow an otherwise qualified assessor.

b) Psychological assessments must be completed by School Psychologists, Licensed Education Psychologists, or Clinical Psychologists with previous experience administering psychoeducational measures and development of IEPs.

c) Speech/language assessments must be completed by Licensed Speech- Language Pathologists who currently possess a valid license issued by the California Speech-Language Pathology.

d) Physical Therapists must currently possess a valid license issued by the Board of Medical Quality Assurance.

e) Occupational Therapists must currently possess a valid license with the California Board of Occupational Therapy.

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- f) All other evaluators must meet minimum requirements as set forth in LEA criteria. See Attachment B to this policy.
- g) Evaluators with credentials other than those identified will not be approved unless the parent/guardian can demonstrate the appropriateness of using an evaluator meeting other qualifications.

4) Timeline for IEEs

- a) In the interest of consistency between LEA evaluations and IEEs, parents/guardians are encouraged to choose an option for IEE evaluators within 15 calendar days of receiving LEA agreement to fund an IEE.
- b) After the parent/guardian selects an IEE evaluator that meets LEA criteria, the school will initiate a contract with the evaluator. If the selected evaluator indicates that he/she cannot complete the evaluation and provide a written report within 60 school days, the LEA will inform the parent/guardian and request selection of another evaluator.
- c) Once a contract for completion of an IEE is signed, the IEE must be completed by that evaluator absent extraordinary circumstances and exceptions authorized at the LEA's discretion.
- d) Once an IEE at public expense has been authorized and the LEA has completed required notices or contracts, parent/guardian is responsible for ensuring that the IEE is completed in a timely manner including, but not limited to, scheduling any assessment appointments, completion of written assessment reports, or submission of required documentation. (Mangum v. Renton School District, (2014 9th Cir.) 63 IDELR 277.)

F. Exceptions to any of the LEA's criteria applied to IEEs may be approved only on an individual basis, provided parents/guardians can demonstrate necessity based on the student's unique needs. (Letter to Parker, (2004 OSEP) 41 IDELR 155.)

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Consideration of IEE

- A. IEEs are designed to determine the educational needs of a student with a disability or a suspected disability. The IEP team is responsible for determining services and placement. While the LEA will consider IEEs, the LEA is not obligated to adopt the recommendations set out in any IEE.
- B. If a parent/guardian obtains an IEE at public expense, or shares an evaluation obtained at private expense with the LEA, the results of the evaluation:
  - 1) must, if the evaluation meets LEA criteria, be considered by the LEA in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the student; and
  - 2) may be presented by any party as evidence at a due process hearing regarding the student. (34 C.F.R. 300.502(c)(1)-(2).)

IEE Reimbursement

- A. The LEA is not obligated to reimburse the parent/guardian for any private evaluation:
  - 1) that does not meet all LEA criteria for evaluation;
  - 2) that was completed prior to the date the LEA's evaluation was completed; or
  - 3) was completed without written notice to the LEA that parent/guardian was seeking a publicly funded IEE.
- B. Unless otherwise agreed to by the LEA, reimbursement for the costs of an IEE funded at private expense shall not be made by the LEA until parent/guardian has provided the LEA with a full and complete copy of the IEE report and the evaluation's original protocols.

Limitation on Number of IEEs

A parent/guardian is entitled to only one IEE at public expense each time the LEA conducts an evaluation with which the parent/guardian disagrees. (Education Code 56329(b); 34 C.F.R.300.502(b)(5).)

Los Angeles County Charter SELPA  
Cost Table for Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs)

Evaluation	Cost Maximum
Academics	\$ 2,200.00
Augmentative Alternate Communication	\$ 2,000.00
Adapted Physical Education	\$ 950.00
Adaptive Functioning	\$ 2,200.00
Assistive Technology	\$ 1,750.00
Auditory Acuity, Auditory Perception, Central Auditory Processing	\$ 1,200.00
Behavioral/Functional Behavior Assessment	\$ 3,000.00
Functional Vision, Including Reading Materials Assessment for the Blind	\$ 950.00
Health	\$ 950.00
Language and Speech Therapy	\$ 1,750.00
Language and Speech Therapy (including Augmentative Alternate Communication)	\$ 2,000.00
Occupational Therapy	\$ 2,000.00
Orientation and Mobility for the Blind	\$ 950.00
Physical Therapy	\$ 950.00
Psycho-Educational Assessment (may include academic, adaptive functioning, cognition, psychological processing [auditory, visual, phonological processing], social emotional functioning, neuro-psychological)	\$ 6,500.00
Psycho-Educational Assessment and Functional Behavior Assessment	\$ 7,000.00
Recreation Therapy	\$ 950.00
Vision Therapy	\$ 1,800.00
Vocational	\$ 2,950.00

Los Angeles County Charter SELPA  
Evaluator Minimum Requirements

Evaluation	Minimal Requirements (At least one from each requested evaluation category)
Academics	(1) Credential issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) that authorizes service as a special education teacher; (2) Pupil Personnel Services Credential that authorizes School Psychology; (3) License as an Educational Psychologist; or (4) License as a Psychologist.
Adapted Physical Education	Credential issued by the California CTC that authorizes service in adapted physical education.
Adaptive Functioning	(1) Credential issued by the California CTC that authorizes service as a special education teacher; (2) Pupil Personnel Services Credential that authorizes School Psychology; (3) License as an Educational Psychologist; or (4) License as a Psychologist.
Assistive Technology	(1) License in Physical Therapy issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs, where the utilization of assistive technology services falls within the scope of practice of physical therapy as defined in Business and Professions Code section 2620 and implementing regulations; (2) License in Occupational Therapy issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs; (3) License in Speech-Language Pathology issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs or a valid document, issued by the California CTC, where the function of the assistive technology service is augmentative communication; (4) Baccalaureate degree in engineering with emphasis in assistive technology; (5) Baccalaureate degree in a related field of engineering with a graduate certificate in rehabilitation technology or assistive technology; (6) Certification from the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America and Assistive Technology Provider (RESNA/ATP); (7) Certificate in assistive technology applications issued by a regionally accredited post-secondary institution; or (8) Credential that authorizes special education of physically impaired, orthopedically impaired, or severely impaired pupils.
Auditory Acuity, Auditory Perception, Central Auditory Processing	(1) License in Audiology issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs; or (2) Credential authorizing audiology services in the state of California.



Evaluation	Minimal Requirements (At least one from each requested evaluation category)
Behavioral/Functional Behavior Assessment	(1) Pupil Personnel Services Credential that authorizes school counseling or school psychology; (2) Credential authorizing the holder to deliver special education instruction; (3) License as a Marriage and Family Therapist certified by the Board of Behavioral Sciences, within the Department of Consumer Affairs; (4) License as a Clinical Social Worker by the Board of Behavioral Sciences, within the Department of Consumer Affairs; (5) License as an Educational Psychologist issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs; (6) License as a Psychologist regulated by the Board of Psychology, within the Department of Consumer Affairs; or (7) Master's degree issued by a regionally accredited post-secondary institution in education, psychology, counseling, behavior analysis, behavior science, human development, social work, rehabilitation, or in a related field.
Functional Vision, Including Reading Materials Assessment for the Blind	(1) License as an Optometrist, Ophthalmologist, Physician or Surgeon, issued by a licensing agency within the Department of Consumer Affairs and authorizing the licensee to provide the services rendered; or (2) Credential authorizing vision instruction or services.
Health	Licensed Physician.
Language and Speech Therapy/Augmentative Alternate Communication	License issued by the California Speech-Language Pathology, and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board.
Occupational Therapy	License issued by the California Board of Occupational Therapy.
Orientation and Mobility for the Blind	Credential that authorizes services in orientation and mobility instruction in the state of California.
Physical Therapy	Physical Therapist license issued by the California Board of Medical Quality Assurance.
Psycho-Educational Assessment (may include academic, adaptive functioning, cognition, psychological processing [auditory, visual, phonological processing], social emotional functioning, neuro-psychological)	(1) Pupil Personnel Services Credential that authorizes School Psychology; (2) License as an Educational Psychologist; or (3) License as a Psychologist with previous experience administering psychoeducational measures and development of IEPs.
Recreation Therapy	(1) Certificate issued by the California Board of Recreation and Park Certification; (2) Certificate issued by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation; or (3) Certificate issued by the National Recreation and Park Association, authorizing services in recreation or therapeutic recreation.
Vision Therapy	(1) Licensed as an Optometrist; or (2) Licensed as an Ophthalmologist.
	(1) Adult education credential with a career development authorization; (2) Credential that authorizes instruction in special education or vocational education; or (3) Pupil Personnel

Vocational	Services Credential that authorizes school counseling.
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**SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS (IEEs)**

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**Procedure:**

If the parents request an independent educational evaluation at public expense, the parents may be asked the reason why they object to the evaluation conducted by the LEA. The LEA may not, however, require the parents to explain their reasons and may not unreasonably delay either providing an independent educational evaluation at public expense or initiating a due process hearing to defend its evaluation. If the LEA initiates a hearing and the final decision is that the evaluation conducted by the LEA was appropriate, the parent/guardian still has the right to an IEE, but not at public expense.

**Procedures for Parents When Requesting an IEE at Public Expense:**

Parents must indicate either verbally or in writing to the LEA or inform the LEA at an IEP meeting that they disagree with an evaluation conducted by the LEA and that they are requesting an independent educational evaluation at public expense. If the parent makes an oral request for an IEE during an IEP meeting, LEA staff shall document the request in the IEP meeting notes. If the request is made outside of the IEP meeting, the request shall be documented in SEIS in the Comments tab of the Current IEP.

The following information should be included in the request:

- a. Specific area(s) of disagreement or dispute in the LEA's assessment
- b. Requested area(s) of assessment
- c. Questions or issues with the LEA's assessment that would be addressed by the IEE; and
- d. If a specific IEE evaluator is desired, the name must be provided so that the LEA may consider the background, qualifications, and fees charged by the assessor.

**Procedures for LEAs when Parents Request an IEE at Public Expense:**

Once the parent communicates their disagreement with the evaluation(s) completed by the LEA and requests an IEE at public expense, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The parent will receive a copy of the IEE policy, which includes the agency criteria for independent educational evaluations.
2. The LEA will consider the request, without unnecessary delay, and provide a Prior Written Notice stating whether the LEA is providing or denying the publicly funded IEE

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assessment. If the LEA agrees to provide the IEE at public expense, the LEA will seek additional information:

- a. Assessor qualification, credentials, and/or licensure (if the assessor is not identified on the LAC Charter SELPA IEE Assessors list)
  - b. Assessor geographic location; and
  - c. Assessor fees
  - d. Assessor insurance certificate
3. The parent will be provided with a list of potential evaluators and how these evaluators may be contacted. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and is not intended to limit a parent's options in obtaining an IEE from other qualified professionals who meet the agency criteria outlined in this policy.
4. In the event that a parent/guardian requests to utilize an evaluator who does not meet agency criteria, including cost limitations, the LEA shall provide the parent the opportunity to demonstrate that there are unique circumstances to justify their selection of such an evaluator. The LEA will then make a determination if the use of the requested evaluator that does not meet agency criteria is warranted and respond to the parent with a Prior Written Notice.
5. The completed assessment must comply with the location limitations for the evaluation, the minimum qualifications for the examiner, cost limits, and use of approved instruments.

The proposed fees must be both reasonable and customary, similar to those performed by qualified professionals in the local area.
6. Parents will be required to sign a release and exchange of information between the IEE evaluator(s) and the LEA.
7. Independent education evaluators will be requested to write reports focusing on the "unique needs" of the child. Independent education evaluators will be requested not to identify specific providers of special education programs and services as to avoid any possible "conflict of interest" situations. Evaluators must be knowledgeable of and agree to comply with all provisions of the Federal Code of Regulations (IDEA) and California Education Codes governing special education, to include the criteria required to make recommendations for eligibility.
8. If the parent is seeking reimbursement for the IEE assessment, the parent is responsible to ensure that the IEE provider comports with the LAC Charter SELPA's Independent Educational Evaluation Policy prior to the LEA funding the IEE. If the LEA does not agree to provide the IEE at public expense, the LEA must file for due process, without unnecessary delay, to demonstrate that its assessment was appropriate.

If the parent obtains an IEE at private expense, the results of the evaluation (if the evaluation meets the agency criteria) must be considered by the LEA in making educational decisions as

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required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The evaluation may also be presented as evidence at a due process hearing regarding the child.

**Reimbursement for Completed Independent Educational Evaluations:**

If parents/guardians request reimbursement for a completed IEE, the evaluation must meet the agency criteria as defined in the IEE policy. It is the responsibility of the special education administrator of the LEA to determine whether the completed IEE meets the agency criteria.

Once the LEA receives a request for reimbursement, the special education administrator shall respond to the parent/guardian in a timely manner.

The parents will be promptly reimbursed for the costs of the previously obtained IEE if it meets the agency criteria as determined by the special education administrator for the LEA and the LEA does not elect to request a due process hearing. Reimbursement for IEE assessments shall be limited to the cost limitations set forth in this policy. If the LEA files for a due process hearing, the parents will not be reimbursed for the cost of the evaluation unless the LEA is ordered to reimburse the parents pursuant to a due process hearing decision.

The criteria, under which an IEE is obtained at public expense, including the location limitations for the evaluation, minimum qualifications of the examiner, cost limits, and use of approved instruments, must be consistent with the criteria set forth in the policy. In the event that the parent believes that due to the unique needs of their particular child it is necessary to select an assessor who does not meet agency criteria, Parent will be given an opportunity to explain factors that make such a selection necessary.

Parents will be required to sign releases to exchange information between the independent educational evaluator and the LEA as a prerequisite to the payment or provision of an IEE.

Independent evaluators must agree to release their assessment information, original testing protocols, report, and results to the LEA prior to receipt of payment for services. The results of the IEE will be considered in the eligibility determination, program decisions, and placement of the child with disabilities as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

If the LEA observed the child in conducting the evaluation with which the parents disagree or if its assessment procedures allow in-class observations, the independent examiner will be provided with an equivalent opportunity to observe the child in the current educational setting and to observe the LEA's proposed setting, if any. This opportunity shall also be provided if the parents obtain an evaluation at private expense.

The LEA shall define the nature and scope of an independent examiner's in-class observations consistent with the right to an equivalent opportunity to observe, but also consistent with its obligations to prevent unnecessary disruption in the class and to protect the privacy interests of

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other students. These parameters may include, but are not limited to, identifying the time constraints of such observation, LEA personnel who will participate in the observation and restrictions on student/teacher interactions.

To prevent unnecessary disruption in the classroom, and to protect the privacy interests of other students, but provide an independent examiner an equivalent opportunity to observe the student, observations are subject to reasonable restrictions outlined in LEA policy or practice.

Reasonable restrictions include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) scheduling the observations per Board policy; (2) identifying reasonable time limitations; (3) identifying LEA personnel to accompany the independent evaluator during the observations; and (4) outlining reasonable restrictions on interacting with the student and teacher during classroom instruction.

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**Legal References:** *California Education Code 56329; 56506; California Code of Regulations 3022; Government Code 7572*



June 17, 2025

**Applicant:** Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II  
**Membership Year:** 2025-2026

### **Executive Summary for the Governance Council**

Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II submitted a comprehensive application to the Los Angeles County Charter (LAC) SELPA on June 3, 2025. The LAC Charter SELPA reviewed the membership application on behalf of Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II for academic year 2025-2026. Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II desires to become its own LEA for special education purposes and agrees to operate a compliant program for students with disabilities. As such, they are seeking membership with the Los Angeles County Charter SELPA as required.

Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II is authorized by Orange County Office of Education and will begin operation on August 27, 2025. On January 16, 2025, the Board took action and approved the charter for a five-year term, July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2029.

### **SELPA Application Rationale:**

Sycamore Creek Community Charter School (SCCCS) is currently in operation and currently a member of LAC Charter SELPA. SCCCIS is a Waldorf-inspired public charter school. SCCCIS II will open a site in the city of Cypress in 2025-2026 to begin serving grades TK-8 and continue to expand by one grade level each year until 2030-31 when SCCCIS II will reach full grade level build out, serving grades TK-12. SCCCIS II will serve education to approximately 288 students in grades TK-8th in our first year. As educators, we value a developmentally-appropriate, arts-based, movement-enriched program to nurture children's cognition and creativity. The collective community has unified their desire for an alternative to traditional educational models prevalent in public schools. Sycamore Creek Community Charter School's vision is to provide a vibrant learning environment that meets the needs of all children, including those with unique learning and special needs. By agreement with our authorizer, OCDE, Sycamore Creek will continue to operate as its own LEA for special education. Partnering with the LAC Charter SELPA will continue to provide our school with the support necessary to maximize our capacity to serve our students with unique learning needs.



By securing LEA status SCCCS II is able to fully support teachers and staff. SPED professionals and non-public agencies will work collaboratively with our Waldorf teachers and staff who have intimate knowledge of Waldorf methods, curriculum, and philosophy. For this reason, our program will be experienced in a fluid, streamlined and uninterrupted manner by all students, including students with special needs. Along with having access to teachers, staff, and service providers that are all amiable to Waldorf philosophy and pedagogy SCCCS II also values the ability to operate its own SPED program. This is an integral reason for applying to be our own LEA for special education. As our own LEA, SCCCS II has more autonomy in hiring and deciding what special education supports and programs to build. Having authority and responsibility is appealing and necessary to maintain the integrity of our school's model and vision.

LAC Charter SELPA for the past six years has been a good match for our school: the SELPA offers robust training opportunities near our school, supports and guidance. We are confident that LAC Charter SELPA will allow Sycamore Creek Community Charter school to implement a Waldorf-inspired curriculum to students with unique learning needs. Operating as our own LEA would allow our teachers, staff, and special needs service providers to offer the full and complete Waldorf experience to students rather than be subject to district timelines, schedules, pedagogy, and other restrictions we are aware of at other Waldorf-inspired charter schools operating as schools of their authorizer. Our students, who would be fully integrated into our Waldorf-inspired curriculum, would experience this benefit first-hand. Furthermore, we believe LAC Charter SELPA, being in close proximity to our school and offering multiple training opportunities at the forefront of current state policy implications, will continue to be an invaluable partner for SCCCS II. We anticipate productive and successful collaboration with existing member schools and as a member of LAC Charter SELPA. We appreciate the opportunity to apply.

Because membership in a SELPA is genuinely a partnership, we want to share some essential aspects of our program that intentionally work to meet each child's individual needs to demonstrate why it is critical that SCCCS II has LEA status for purposes of Special Education.

LAC's established track record in supporting schools like Sycamore Creek is instrumental to our future success as our own LEA. Because of the small size of the LAC Charter SELPA we anticipate individualized support and a voice in the partnership.





## School Overview:

SCCCS II seeks to build on the success of Sycamore Creek Community Charter School ("SCCCS" or "Sycamore Creek") by creating a Countywide Benefit Public Waldorf Charter serving students in grades TK-12. SCCC II has secured a facility within the geographic boundaries of Cypress Elementary School District and Anaheim Union High School District in Cypress, CA. In 2024-25, SCCC II will open a site in the city of Cypress to begin serving grades TK-8 and continue to expand by one grade level each year until 2028-29 when SCCC II will reach full grade level build out, serving grades TK-12.

The Sycamore Creek community is ecstatic about the opportunity to continue to serve students across Orange County, to provide a comprehensive, Waldorf education from TK to 12th grade, and to have additional space in which to grow. Upon approval of the countywide benefit charter that provides a school guided by the Core Principles of Public Waldorf education to students from grades TK-12, SCCC II will be able to fulfill its mission of educating the whole child through young adulthood.

SCCCS II will fulfill the need in the county for families seeking an alternative educational option for their children. SCCC II will fulfill the need of providing a public Waldorf education that focuses on a "whole child" philosophy. We believe that children need to remain children for as long as possible and not grow up too fast. More importantly, the Waldorf methods allow for natural, developmentally appropriate education to enrich a child's life. The importance of providing a comprehensive TK-12 program is to realize the power of a public Waldorf education upon graduation.

Students are able to build on their experiences and aptitudes which opens a wide range of post-secondary opportunities. Students will have skills to read, write, and compute, as well as the ability to think critically, communicate empathetically, and solve problems. Every student plays an instrument, learns concepts of physics, chemistry, biology, loves math, speaks up to two world languages, participates in handwork and fiber arts, engages in visual and performing arts (drama, music, choir), and celebrates the diversity in the community and in the environment. Students develop their interests, intellect, social emotional resiliency, and physical capabilities. Students are equipped to become valuable members of a global community.

## Capacity Interview:

The Los Angeles County Charter SELPA conducted the application review process, which included a Capacity Interview for membership consideration for the 2025-2026 school year. Below are the findings of the SELPA review:

On June 16, 2025, a Capacity Interview was held to gather additional information about how the charter school will serve students with disabilities. LAC Charter



SELPA interview panel members were Damali Thomas, Executive SELPA Director; Krystal Walton, Project Director; Alyssa Martinez, Financial Operations Consultant; and Elisa Hendricks, Assistant Director of Special Education, Blue Ridge Academy.

Charter school representatives in attendance were Sarah Bach, Executive Director; Liz Thompson, Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II Board Member; Kimberly Telfer-Radzat, Principal; and Vyctoria Luong, Director of Finance and Operations.

The purpose of the capacity interview was to evaluate the LEA's understanding of the responsibilities relating to educating students with disabilities. The application materials can be accessed at the following link: [2025-2026 Charter SELPA Applications](#)

Based on the review of the application and capacity interview, Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II meets the minimum standards relating to all required elements. As such, LAC Charter SELPA recommends approval of Sycamore Creek Community Charter Academy II and that the Governance Council consider this recommendation for approval at its next meeting, scheduled for June 26, 2025.

**Application Overview and Summary:**

Category	Description	Points Awarded
Required Elements	Completed Application Charter Petition Audit report API Scores SARC Details of Credentialed Staff Signed SELPA Assurances SPED Pupil Count Notice of Withdrawal	45
Special Education Components	Child Find General Education Program Modifications Referral Process Assessment Procedures, IEP Development Process and Suspension & Expulsion Data	19
Special Education Services	DIS Services Specialized Academic Instruction NPS/NPA, Inclusion Transportation	21

Compliance	Section 504 Due Process State Complaints ADA Compliance Service of Students Administration Professional Development Process for Settling Disputes SELPA LEA Assurances	<b>27</b>
Fiscal	Budget Special Education Accounting Audit CMO Affiliation	<b>47</b>

**Total Points Possible:** 165

**Minimum Acceptable Points:** 134

**Total Points Awarded:** **159**

**Recommendation:** Approve SELPA Membership with the following conditions:

1. Receipt of a signed and executed SELPA Participants Agreement no later than August 1, 2025.
2. Signed Local Plan LEA Certification 5 by the Chief Executive Officer following SELPA Membership Approval no later than June 27, 2025.



June 17, 2025

**Applicant:** Los Angeles Leadership Academy  
**Membership Year:** 2025-2026

### **Executive Summary for the Governance Council**

Los Angeles Leadership Academy submitted a comprehensive application to the Los Angeles County Charter (LAC) SELPA on June 6, 2025. The LAC Charter SELPA reviewed the membership application on behalf of I for academic year 2025-2026. Los Angeles Leadership Academy desires to become its own LEA for special education purposes and agrees to operate a compliant program for students with disabilities. As such, they are seeking membership with the Los Angeles County Charter SELPA as required.

Los Angeles Leadership Academy is authorized by Los Angeles County Office of Education and will begin operation on Date. On April 15, 2025, the Board took action and approved the charter for a five-year term, July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.

### **SELPA Application Rationale:**

Los Angeles Leadership Academy is committed to providing equitable, high-quality special education services that support the diverse needs of all students with disabilities. Our application to join the Los Angeles County (LAC) Charter SELPA is driven by the following rationale:

#### **Commitment to Equity and Compliance**

We believe that all students, regardless of ability, deserve access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Joining LAC Charter SELPA will allow us to benefit from robust compliance support, technical assistance, and guidance in ensuring that our special education programs meet both state and federal requirements under IDEA.

#### **Access to High-Quality Professional Development**

LAC Charter SELPA offers specialized training and professional learning opportunities for educators, administrators, and support staff. These resources will enhance our capacity to deliver individualized, evidence-based services aligned with student needs, improve IEP development practices, and strengthen our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.



#### Improved Fiscal Oversight and Resource Allocation

We seek to join a SELPA that provides transparent and consistent fiscal oversight, including assistance with budgeting, reporting, and maximizing available funding streams. LAC Charter SELPA's fiscal accountability model and support systems will help ensure that we are able to allocate resources effectively to support students with disabilities.

#### Collaborative Support and Systems-Building

We value the opportunity to collaborate with a network of charter schools through the SELPA's inclusive governance structure. LAC Charter SELPA's commitment to partnership, innovation, and shared accountability aligns with our vision to build sustainable systems that support inclusive practices and long-term program success.

#### Programmatic Growth and Long-Term Planning

Our organization is actively expanding special education services and infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing student population. We are seeking a SELPA partner that not only supports compliance but also prioritizes student-centered innovation and systems improvement. LAC Charter SELPA's history of supporting charter schools in scaling and refining special education programs makes it an ideal partner in this next phase of our growth.

We are confident that this partnership will strengthen our ability to serve students with disabilities while maintaining the highest standards of legal compliance, instructional quality, and equity.



## School Overview:

Los Angeles Leadership Academy is a small 6-12 charter school that originally opened in 2002 and today is located in Lincoln Heights, just north of downtown Los Angeles. LALA is operated by the Los Angeles Leadership Academy, a California nonprofit corporation, which also operates Los Angeles Leadership Primary Academy charter school ("LALPA"), a small dual-language (English/Spanish) TK-5 charter school, also located in Lincoln Heights. Currently:

- LALA serves approximately 350 students in grades 6-12, with student enrollment 94.0% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged ("SED"), 22.1% English Learners ("ELs") and another 43.3% Reclassified Fluent English Proficient ("RFEP"), 12.9% Students with Disabilities ("SWD"), 5.7% Foster/Homeless Youth ("F/HY"), 94.6% Hispanic/Latino, 1.1% Asian/Filipino/Pacific Islander ("AFPI"), 1.4% White, and 0.6% American Indian or Alaska Native ("AIAN").
- LALPA, opened in 2011, serves approximately 262 students in TK-5 with an additional 12 students in a privately funded Expanded TK ("ETK") class; LALPA students are 85.1% SED, 46.2% EL, 13.4% RFEP, 12.6% SWD, 6.5% F/HY, 96.2% Hispanic/Latino, 1.9% AFPI, 0.8% White, 0.4% Two or More Races, and 0.4% are African American.

Across all grades, LALA and LALPA focus on engaging students through student-centered, constructivist problem-based learning, and culturally responsive approaches that actively engage each of our students in the learning process. Our students are scholars, activists, and creators who demonstrate commitment to our values of social justice and leadership.

## Capacity Interview:

The Los Angeles County Charter SELPA conducted the application review process, which included a Capacity Interview for membership consideration for the 2025-2026 school year. Below are the findings of the SELPA review:

On June 16, 2025, a Capacity Interview was held to gather additional information about how the charter school will serve students with disabilities. LAC Charter SELPA interview panel members were Damali Thomas, Executive SELPA Director; Krystal Walton, Project Director; Alyssa Martinez, Financial Operations Consultant; Elise Hendricks, Assistant Director of Special Education, Blue Ridge Academy; and Ifeyinwa Njubigbo, Director of Special Education, ISANA Schools.

Charter school representatives in attendance were Tina Butler, Chief Operations Officer/Director of Special Education; Arina Goldberg, Executive Director/CEO, Aimee Lopez, Special Education Case Manager; Nereida Lopez, Principal; and Kristin Dietz, EdTec CPA/Back Office Support.



The purpose of the capacity interview was to evaluate the LEA’s understanding of the responsibilities relating to educating students with disabilities. The application materials can be accessed at the following link: [2025-2026 Charter SELPA Applications](#)

Based on the review of the application and capacity interview, Los Angeles Leadership Academy meets the minimum standards relating to all required elements. As such, LAC Charter SELPA recommends approval of Los Angeles Leadership Academy and that the Governance Council consider this recommendation for approval at its next meeting, scheduled for June 26, 2025.

**Application Overview and Summary:**

Category	Description	Points Awarded
Required Elements	Completed Application Charter Petition Audit report API Scores SARC Details of Credentialed Staff Signed SELPA Assurances SPED Pupil Count Notice of Withdrawal	45
Special Education Components	Child Find General Education Program Modifications Referral Process Assessment Procedures, IEP Development Process and Suspension & Expulsion Data	20
Special Education Services	DIS Services Specialized Academic Instruction NPS/NPA, Inclusion Transportation	21
Compliance	Section 504 Due Process State Complaints ADA Compliance Service of Students Administration Professional Development Process for Settling Disputes SELPA LEA Assurances	24



Fiscal	Budget Special Education Accounting Audit CMO Affiliation	53
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**Total Points Possible:** 174

**Minimum Acceptable Points:** 134

**Total Points Awarded:** 163

**Recommendation:** Approve SELPA Membership with the following conditions:

1. Receipt of a signed and executed SELPA Participants Agreement no later than August 1, 2025.
2. Board Approved and Signed SELPA Assurances SED-LP-5 no later than August 1, 2025.
3. Signed Local Plan LEA Certification 5 by the Chief Executive Officer following SELPA Membership Approval on June 26, 2025 and no later than June 27, 2025.



# Certificated Staffing - Support Position

- [AB 1381](#) - (Muratsuchi) California School Finance Authority: Educational Workforce Housing Revolving Loan Fund.
- This bill would establish the Educational Workforce Housing Revolving Loan Fund in the State Treasury to be administered by the Authority
- Loans for the purpose of conducting educational workforce housing pre-development efforts
- No interest loan to be paid over an unspecified number of years
- Status - Eligible for a floor vote.





# Certificated Staffing - Consider Support Position

- [SB 389](#) - (Ochoa Bogh) Pupil health: individuals with exceptional needs: respiratory services: licensed vocational nurses.
- The act authorizes a licensed vocational nurse who is employed by a home health agency to perform respiratory tasks and services identified by the board.
- This bill would also authorize the performance of suctioning and other basic respiratory tasks and services by a licensed vocational nurse under the supervision of a credentialed school nurse.
- Status - Passed the Senate, first reading in Assembly -referred to Ed Committee





## 2025-2026 Governance Council Calendar of Meetings

8:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M.

Ad Hoc Meeting to Follow the Governance Council Meeting

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>VIRTUAL</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<b>February</b>	19th	<a href="#">2025-26 Governance Council Meeting Link</a>	Los Angeles County Office of Education 9300 Imperial Hwy. Ed Center Room 107 Downey, CA 90242
<b>April</b> (As Needed)	23rd	<a href="#">2025-26 Governance Council Meeting Link</a>	Los Angeles County Office of Education 9300 Imperial Hwy. Ed Center Room 107 Downey, CA 90242
<b>May</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> (from 21 <sup>st</sup> )	<a href="#">2025-26 Governance Council Meeting Link</a>	Los Angeles County Office of Education 9300 Imperial Hwy. Ed Center Room 107 Downey, CA 90242
<b>June</b> (As Needed)	25th	<a href="#">2025-26 Governance Council Meeting Link</a>	Los Angeles County Office of Education 9300 Imperial Hwy. Ed Center Room 107 Downey, CA 90242