

DIFFERENTIATED ASSISTANCE FOR CALIFORNIA'S SYSTEM OF SUPPORT | FAQ's

1. What does differentiated assistance mean?

County superintendents, the California Department of Education, charter authorizers, and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide differentiated assistance for LEAs and schools, in the form of individually designed assistance, to address identified performance issues, including significant disparities in performance among student groups.

California's new accountability and continuous improvement system is based on a three-tiered framework, with the first tier made up of resources and assistance that is made available to all local educational agencies. Differentiated assistance is the second tier of assistance that one or more agency is required by statute to provide to local educational agencies or schools that meet certain eligibility criteria. The third tier is intensive intervention, which is generally required based on persistent performance issues over a specified period of time.

2. How is eligibility for differentiated assistance determined?

Qualification for differentiated assistance under California's accountability system is based on criteria set by the State Board of Education. While this system continues to evolve, the overarching structure centers on the eight state priorities under the Local Control Funding Formula, which are measured by both the state (color-coded rating) and local (met, not met rating) indicators, reported annually in the California School Dashboard.

3. What are the eligibility criteria for differentiated assistance?

In brief, the statute describes using the evaluation rubrics (California School Dashboard) as a tool to determine the qualification for assistance at different levels:

- County offices of education must offer differentiated assistance to a school district if any student group met the criteria for two or more LCFF priorities. EC 52071(b), 52071.5(b).
- As the accountability system moves forward, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, with approval of the State Board of Education, may intervene in a school district if three or more student groups (or all the student groups if there are less than three) met the criteria for two or more LCFF priorities in three out of four consecutive years. EC 52072, 52072.5.
- Charter school authorizers must offer differentiated assistance to a charter school, and may refer the charter school to the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, if three or more student groups (or all the student groups if there are less than three student groups) met the criteria for one or more state or school priority identified in the charter for three out of four consecutive school years. EC 47607.3.

CRITERIA FOR DIFFERENTIATED ASSISTANCE

Basics (LCFF Priority 1)

- Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator

Implementation of State Academic Standards (LCFF Priority 2)

- Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator

Parent Engagement (LCFF Priority 3)

- Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator

Pupil Achievement (LCFF Priority 4)

- Red on both English Language Arts and Math tests OR
- Red on English Language Arts or Math tests AND orange on the other test OR
- Red on the English Language Indicator (English Learner Student Group only)

Pupil Engagement (LCFF Priority 5)

- Red on Graduation Rate Indicator OR
- Red on Chronic Absence Indicator

School Climate (LCFF Priority 6)

- Red on Suspension Rate Indicator OR
- Not Met for Two or More Years on Local Performance Indicator

Access to and Outcomes in a Broad Course of Study (LCFF Priorities 7 & 8)

- Red on College/Career Indicator

4. How does my school district get out of differentiated assistance?

The Dashboard results are updated every fall based on the most recent year of data available. The criteria are applied each year. Improving the performance of the student group(s) that met the criteria will mean that in future years the student group will no longer meet the criteria and the school district will no longer be eligible for differentiated assistance.

5. Will the state post information about school districts identified for differentiated assistance?

Yes. We anticipate making that information available with the Fall 2017 Dashboard release. It will show the assistance status of all school districts, organized by county. For those school districts receiving differentiated assistance, it will also identify how the school district met the eligibility criteria (i.e., the student group(s) and relevant indicators).

6. Is there an opportunity to review the data for accuracy before it is publicly released?

Yes. Every fall, local educational agencies will have an opportunity to preview the Dashboard data prior to the public release.

7. How am I expected to communicate this information to local stakeholders?

A communications toolkit, which includes resources about the Dashboard and differentiated assistance, is available at www.cde.ca.gov/dashboard. Your county office of education can also support you in determining the best way to communicate with your local stakeholders.

8. What will differentiated assistance include? Will there be additional resources or funding?

The statute describes what differentiated assistance may entail through three examples but explicitly notes that these three examples are “among other things” that differentiated assistance may include. This definition reflects an intent that differentiated assistance be flexible and context-specific.

Consistent with the intent under the Local Control Funding Formula that differentiated assistance be tailored to locally identified needs, rather than imposed as a one-size-fits all solution, the approach to providing differentiated assistance has the following features:

- Support providers work alongside LEAs and their schools to identify key challenges and opportunities;
- Systemic approach tailored to locally identified needs and strengths; and
- Engaging with local educators and communities as part of decision making.

Additional information on this topic, including specific examples of what differentiated assistance may entail based on local circumstances, is provided in a November 2017 State Board of Education agenda item available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/nov17item04.doc>.