

CALIFORNIA LEARNING ACCELERATION SYSTEM GRANT | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation Report: Year 5 Findings (2025–26)

The COVID-19 pandemic led to lost instructional time and diminished academic outcomes for California students, particularly those in early grades and the most vulnerable student groups. In response, the governor approved Assembly Bill 130 (AB 130) on July 9, 2021. This bill allocated funding to provide professional learning for educators to support evidence-based learning acceleration strategies for all students. The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) operates the state's Learning Acceleration System Grant (LASG) program through these funds. The LASG program aims to establish statewide infrastructure to build local educational agencies' (LEAs) capacity to accelerate academic progress. The program's four goals focus on professional learning opportunities for educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators that address evidence-based approaches and classroom practices, particularly in core academic subjects:



Develop a robust statewide infrastructure for professional learning.



Implement evidence-based professional learning opportunities or guidance for educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators to address students' learning acceleration.



Increase learning among educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators.



Accelerate learning for all students impacted by COVID-19 learning disruptions, including students with unique considerations.

CCEE created a proposal process and administration plan for the grants before awarding a total of \$45 million to the education offices of Lake County (Rural Math Collaborative), San Diego County (California Literacy Elevation by Accelerating Reading), and Santa Clara County (The California Collaborative for Learning Acceleration) to provide educators with these professional learning opportunities. Each grantee provides varied support for accelerating math, literacy, or language development.

Education Northwest and our subcontractor, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), led a systemwide evaluation of the LASG program from 2022–2026. We used an equity lens in every aspect of our work, including planning, development, implementation, and analysis. This report is part of the larger evaluation that included three phases (planning, formative, and summative). Our approach focused on the collection of qualitative and quantitative data and engaged a team with expertise in coordinating

findings from the data in all three phases of the project. This report shares findings focused on data collected during the fifth grant year (2025–26) of the evaluation and is organized around the grant goals and evaluation questions. Year 5 evaluation data sources included grantee and professional learning participant focus groups, a professional learning participant survey, document review, administrative records, and the California Healthy Kids Survey.



Developing a statewide infrastructure for professional learning

We explored several factors to provide insight into LASG grantees' progress toward the first grant goal of **developing a statewide infrastructure for professional learning**. These include the systems, structures, partnerships, and tools developed to support and scale professional learning opportunities across California. The fifth year of the LASG program (2025–26) saw a general focus on sustaining and refining established models, expanding statewide infrastructure, and increasing the number of educators served and the reach of professional learning at the school level. Specific findings are presented below:

Partnerships and systems expanded over the course of the grant period with the number of active partner county offices of education (COEs) growing from 29 to 34 by year 5 of the grant. A total of 36 counties, or about 60 percent of the counties in the state, have ever partnered or been involved in the grant, with a few counties starting and stopping their involvement in certain years.

Grantees have continued to use various structures for measuring progress and various approaches for strengthening and scaling professional learning throughout the grant.

The reach of professional learning at the school level has grown over time as LEAs strengthened their capacity to deliver professional learning and increasingly reached schools and classrooms directly.

Several factors played a role in facilitating the spread of professional learning, including strong relationships, buy-in, and word-of-mouth within LEAs; resources and support; and the ability to offer several access points.

Grantees noted two overarching challenges to building a statewide infrastructure for professional learning: communicating the funding expectations and program vision to all grant partners and addressing practical considerations such as capacity constraints and logistical barriers.



Implementing evidence-based professional learning opportunities

The second goal of the LASG program is **implementing evidence-based professional learning opportunities**. To explore grantee progress, we examined the content and structure of professional learning opportunities and alignment with CCEE's theory of action and essential design principles. We also gathered feedback from participants on program implementation and the effectiveness of the strategies, structures, and supports they received. Finally, we examined whether professional learning opportunities addressed the needs of diverse learners, including early learners, English learner students, students with disabilities, students with dyslexia, students experiencing homelessness, students from low-income backgrounds, and students in the foster care system. Year 5 findings are presented below:

The LASG provided support for various professional learning activities across the state over the course of the grant. Generally, opportunities with broader reach tended to focus on building participants' awareness or knowledge, while those with a more limited reach were typically aimed at supporting implementation.

Through the LASG, professional learning was implemented in at least 145 school districts and 390 schools over the course of the grant.

The schools that participated in the grant included a high representation of rural schools, were generally smaller than the average school in the state, and had slightly lower baseline proficiency scores than the state average.

In total, more than 4,300 educators participated in evidence-based professional learning opportunities implemented by grantees between 2022–23 and 2025–26.¹ Educators who participated in professional learning through the LASG held a range of roles, including general education K–12 teachers, school and district administrators, COE staff members, special education teachers, teachers on special assignment, and others.

In the survey, participants overwhelmingly reported that the professional learning opportunities they participated in were of high quality, relevant, and useful for enhancing instructional practice, and the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with those statements has increased meaningfully since the start of the grant.

¹ This number represents an unduplicated count of participants; some individuals attended multiple opportunities. Grantees each shared their participant lists with our team, and we counted the number of unique individuals participating. This number should be read as an estimate since several participants reached out to say that they registered but were unable to attend events, while some districts did not share participant lists for their opportunities.

Participants engaged in a variety of professional learning structures, ranging from asynchronous online courses to site-specific lesson study cycles and interventions. Through the survey, participants rated the universal offerings or standalone offerings as less effective than higher-touch offerings such as a lesson study cycle, professional learning networks, networked improvement communities (NICs), graduate-level coursework, and coaching.

As in prior years, participants generally agreed there was a focus on equity in their professional learning and that the professional learning offerings provided them with useful information on how to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Multilingual learners continued to be a common focus of professional learning through the LASG. Seventy percent of respondents participated in professional learning that was focused on multilingual learners.

Professional learning participants emphasized the importance of receiving ongoing support around diverse learners, including collaboration with specialists as well as colleagues.



Increasing learning among educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators

The third goal of the LASG program is **increasing learning among educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators**. To examine progress toward this goal, the evaluation team explored the potential impact of the LASG opportunities on educators. Where possible, we looked back on multiple years of data to provide a clearer understanding of educator growth in addressing learning gaps and making changes to their instructional practice over the life of the grant. Year 5 findings include:

After participating in professional learning, educators were more aware of evidence-based practices and asset-based approaches and felt they had developed their knowledge and ability to lead others in those practices. Additionally, participants' knowledge and confidence with evidence-based practices have meaningfully increased since the start of the grant.

Participants who engaged in professional learning on a regular and ongoing basis were more likely to strongly agree that they gained knowledge, compared to those who participated occasionally or only once.

The percentage of survey respondents who said they had changed their instructional practice after participating in LASG professional learning has doubled since the start of the grant.



Accelerating learning for all students

The fourth goal of the LASG program is **accelerating learning for all students impacted by COVID-19 learning disruptions, including students with unique considerations**. In the evaluation's logic model, this extends beyond students' academic performance to include outcomes such as increased love of learning, student engagement (attendance), improved perceptions of school climate, and increased collaboration. In this summative stage of the evaluation, we look at a variety of data sources (e.g., publicly available statewide data, participant focus group data) to share the emerging story of how the LASG is changing student outcomes. We recognize, however, that even in the final year of the grant, measurable shifts in student outcomes may be limited. Professional learning and related changes in practice only began to reach scale in the 2024–25 school year, which is also the last year for which California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) data are currently available, and meaningful impacts on student outcomes often take time to materialize. Fifth-year findings include:

Schools participating in LASG showed patterns consistent with statewide trends across CAASPP English language arts and math performance, chronic absenteeism, and California Healthy Kids Survey indicators related to academic engagement and school climate.

Although participating schools did not outperform statewide gains in assessment proficiency or decreases in chronic absenteeism rates, their rates still improved over the duration of the grant.

The percentage of educators who believed their participation in LASG-supported professional learning opportunities had an impact on their students increased between 2025 and 2026, and educators who participated in those opportunities with more frequency were more likely to report that it had an impact.

A total of 253 educators provided open-ended survey responses about student impact. They described various impacts on student academic outcomes and student non-academic outcomes such as student engagement and collaboration, confidence, and “joy” with the overall learning experience.

Additionally, a review of grantee documents revealed that grantees have generally begun to capture student data, and some have reported initial successes from these data collection activities as part of their internal evaluations.

Sustaining the work of the grant

As California looks beyond the grant period, sustaining the impact of the LASG program requires intentional planning to maintain and scale what has proven effective. In the program's logic model, long-term success is defined by the extent to which systems, practices, and supports become embedded statewide. Progress to date demonstrates a strong foundation, including movement toward a robust infrastructure for high-quality professional learning, expanded use of evidence-based strategies, and increased support for students. During year 5 of the grant, educators were asked to reflect on the practices they intend to continue beyond the grant period, as well as anticipated barriers and areas where additional support may be needed. The recommendations that follow are designed to help ensure these gains are sustained, institutionalized, and strengthened over time.

Grantees expressed hope that program efforts will be sustained beyond the grant cycle, largely through other statewide programming and/or the continued availability of asynchronous materials.

Educators indicated a desire to sustain several aspects of the grant including collaboration, professional learning communities, instructional coaching and mentorship, literacy intervention, lesson study, asset-based practice and student-centered instruction, focus on equity, data-driven instruction and assessment, and stipends for participation.

Professional learning participants plan to continue using the new practices they learned through the LASG, and most felt confident in their ability to sustain instructional strategies independently.

Most professional learning participants believed that the LASG led to lasting improvements in their school, district, or COE and that their leadership plans to continue the work. They were somewhat less confident about whether their school, district, or COE had the structure in place needed to sustain the work, however, including whether they would sustain collaboration.

Professional learning participants identified notable challenges to sustainability, including lack of time and lack of funding and resources. They also identified several factors that would help ensure the sustainability of learning acceleration practices, including funding, financial support, protected time, district and school leadership support and buy-in, systems and structures, continued collaboration, ongoing professional learning, coaching support, and wider participation within schools.

Together, these findings point to strong foundational support and educator readiness to implement accelerated learning practices, while also underscoring the need for targeted investments in time, funding, and structures to fully institutionalize LASG-supported practices.

About the Evaluation Team

Education Northwest is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to helping all children and youth reach their full potential. We partner with public, private, and community-based organizations to address educational inequities and improve student success. While most of our work centers on the Pacific Northwest, our evaluations, technical assistance, and research studies have national impact and provide timely and actionable results. For this evaluation, Education Northwest is partnering with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR). SPR is an Oakland-based company that provides research, evaluation, and technical assistance to clients working at the national, state, and local levels. Over the past 30 years, SPR has partnered with educational agencies across California, including county offices of education (Alameda and San Diego) and school districts (Grossmont, Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Clara, and West Contra Costa). SPR has also worked with city and state agencies to improve educational and social and emotional outcomes for students.



Education Northwest

Elizabeth Gandhi, Camila Cigarroa Kennedy, and Da'Shon Carr



Social Policy Research Associates

Anna Marie Ramos and Taylor Redmond

CONTACT

Education Northwest
519 SW Park Ave., Suite 501
Portland, OR 97205-3206
educationnorthwest.org
503.275.9500